
The effect of social norms on bystander intervention in cases of sexual harassment

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UNIVERSITÉ DE LIÈGE
FACULTÉ DE PSYCHOLOGIE, LOGOPÉDIE ET SCIENCES DE L'ÉDUCATION

**THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL NORMS ON BYSTANDER INTERVENTION
IN CASES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

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RÉSUMÉ

Un manque d'intervention dans les situations de harcèlement sexuel peut conduire à un environnement qui encourage ces comportements. Il est donc important d'apprendre à renforcer l'intervention des témoins. Les normes sociales semblent avoir le pouvoir d'influencer le comportement des gens, mais on n'en sait pas assez sur le type spécifique de norme sociale susceptible de favoriser le comportement d'aide dans les cas de harcèlement sexuel. L'objectif de cette étude était d'examiner l'effet des normes sociales sur l'intervention des témoins dans les cas de harcèlement sexuel au travail. Les personnes interrogées ont été soumises à des e-mails fictifs qu'elles pouvaient choisir de transmettre ou non au destinataire. Nous avons examiné si l'intervention des témoins variait en fonction de leur tolérance au harcèlement sexuel et des normes sociales qui leur étaient présentées. Trois conditions ont été créées pour les comparer : (1) normes descriptives/injonctives, (2) normes tendanciennes, (3) absence de normes. Les résultats obtenus auprès de 149 adultes ont montré que plus le niveau de tolérance des témoins à l'égard du harcèlement sexuel est élevé, moins ils adoptent un comportement d'aide. Une tendance à plus de comportement d'aide a été observée lorsque des normes quelconques étaient utilisées. Aucune différence significative n'a été constatée entre les normes descriptives/injonctives et les normes tendanciennes. Les participants présentant des niveaux élevés de tolérance et en l'absence de normes ont manifesté moins de comportements d'aide. Les variables de contrôle ont montré une tendance à un comportement plus aidant en fonction du statut légal de la personne. L'âge et le sexe se sont avérés être des prédicteurs importants de la tolérance au harcèlement sexuel. L'impact important des normes sociales, et en particulier de la tolérance au harcèlement sexuel sur le comportement d'aide a été mis en évidence. Nos résultats peuvent constituer une base importante pour de futures recherches concernant l'utilisation des normes sociales en vue d'accroître l'intervention des témoins dans les cas de harcèlement sexuel au travail. Les reproductions de l'étude devraient tenir compte des implications et limites évoquées.

ABSTRACT

A lack of intervention in situations of sexual harassment can lead to an environment which encourages these behaviours. Thus, it is important to learn how to increase bystander intervention. Social norms seem to have the potential to influence people's behaviour, but not enough is known about which specific type of social norm could increase helping behaviour in cases of sexual harassment. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of social norms on bystander intervention in cases of sexual harassment at work. Respondents were presented with fictional messages they could choose to relay or not to the receiver. We examined whether bystanders' intervention varied based their tolerance for sexual harassment and the social norms they were presented with. Three conditions were created to compare the conditions: (1) descriptive/injunctive norms, (2) trending norms, (3) no norms. Results from 149 adults showed that the higher levels of tolerance bystanders have for sexual harassment, the less helping behaviour they portrayed. A tendency of more helping behaviour was observed when any norms were used. No significant difference was found between descriptive/injunctive and trending norms. Respondents with high levels of tolerance and in absence of norms portrayed the least helping behaviour. Control variables showed a tendency of more helping behaviour dependent on one's legal status. Age and gender were found to be important predictors of tolerance for sexual harassment. The important impact of social norms and particularly tolerance for sexual harassment in helping behaviour was portrayed. Our results may constitute an important base for future research regarding the use of social norms to increase bystander intervention in cases of sexual harassment at work. Replications of the study should consider the discussed implications and limitations.

INTRODUCTION

“If you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write ‘me too’ as a reply to this tweet.”

These were the words of actress Alyssa Milano’s tweet on October 15 in 2017, which created the ultimate rise of the *#MeToo* movement (Langone, 2018).

Finally, the world was listening.

With the focus on sexual harassment and sexual violence rising, actual numbers started getting clearer. In 2019 for example, a survey regarding sexual harassment and sexual violence in Europe was conducted and published by the Jean Jaurès Foundation. The findings showed that 60% of European women, aged of 18 years and more, had already experienced some form of sexism or sexual harassment at their workplace (Clavière & Kraus, 2019). But how come people did not seem aware of the seriousness of this problematic? A social phenomenon called the bystander effect in which a diffusion of responsibility takes place when witnessing something in presence of other people (Darley & Latané, 1968), could be one explanation as to why sexual harassment at work has not been reported more (Johnson et al., 2016), and why the *#MeToo* movement was necessary to get people’s attention on its prevalence.

The question arising here is – What could be done to improve bystander intervention in cases of sexual harassment at work, and how can we get men to present themselves as allies in this fight against sexual harassment? Studies have shown social norms to have the power to influence people’s behaviour (Cialdini et al., 2006). Thus, the objective of this thesis will be to study the effect of social norms on bystander intervention in cases of sexual harassment at work.

This paper will be split in two parts, consisting of one theoretical-, and one practical part. The theoretical part will start with a literature review on sexual harassment and its societal and individual impacts, the bystander effect and its place in sexual harassment, the different social norms, and their impact on people’s behaviour as well as a literature review on the different organisational climates and the impact organisational support can have on its employees. This will be followed by the hypotheses and the literature they are based on. The practical part of this thesis will start with the methodology that was used, the statistical analyses and the results that were obtained. The entire thesis will be concluded through a discussion of the results, implications, limitations, recommendations for future work as well as a conclusion of the entire research project.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a very known and despairingly present problematic, especially in the everyday lives of women. Despite the fact that sexual harassment affects both genders, it is a reality that to this day, women still are the main victims of this type of harassment (Goblet & Glowacz, 2018). But what exactly is sexual harassment? This rather broad term can lead to confusion as to what precisely defines as sexual harassment and what not. Subsequently, over the years, different taxonomies have been created regarding sexual harassment, and a common ground seems to have been found in the classification developed by Fitzgerald et al. (1995). Fitzgerald and colleagues (1995) elaborated a classification distinguishing between three types of sexual harassment which are: sexual coercion, gender harassment, and unwanted sexual attention.

Sexual coercion characterizes as the act of extorting sexual favours from someone in exchange for either giving them a reward as for example a job promotion, or in exchange for not getting punished, as for example getting fired. Gender harassment on the other hand is not aimed at sexual cooperation but defined as a sexist behaviour. This behaviour carries a wide range of verbal and non-verbal offensive, adverse and demeaning attitudes about and towards women. Some examples for this would be sexual gesticulations, catcalling or intimidating acts. At last, unwanted sexual attention refers to verbal as well as physical behaviours which are off-putting, abhorrent, and unrequited. Examples for unwanted sexual attention would be touching someone without their consent, sexual comments, or giving someone objectifying looks (Dardenne et al., 2021; Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

According to Pina and Gannon (2012), the psychological consequences sexual harassment have on its victims has been documented extensively. To start with, Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) three-dimensional model of sexual harassment (sexual coercion, gender harassment, and unwanted sexual attention) divides the consequences of sexual harassment into two categories, which are the professional consequences, and the personal consequences victims may endure. Both these categories of consequences will be discussed in the following section.

Personal and societal impacts

When talking about the personal consequences sexual harassment has on the victims, there exists a large body of literature on the overall negative impact it holds on victims' psychological wellbeing (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Munson et al., 2000; Willness et al., 2007). Workers who have experienced sexual harassment describe having gone through a wide span of emotions counting fear, anger and sorrow, as well as depression, shame and mistrust (Pina & Gannon, 2012). Other victims also describe symptoms such as headaches, nausea, muscle pains, tachycardia, sleeping disturbances and exhaustion as a direct result of workplace sexual harassment (e.g., Pina & Gannon, 2012; Willness et al., 2007).

Regarding the individual professional consequences, sexual harassment at work has shown to greatly diminish peoples job satisfaction (Lapierre et al., 2005), to reduce their attachment and commitment to their organisation (Willness et al., 2007), to weaken the quality and quantity of work that is done as well as increase negative attitudes towards productivity (Lengnick-Hall, 1995). These individual professional consequences of sexual harassment in the workplace may lead to bigger societal and economic losses for the organisations due to the degradation of the work that is done, the absenteeism that can result from it and the decrease in workers productivity (Courtois et al., 2022).

Furthermore, it seems that when sexual harassment occurs at work, it is not only damaging for the victims, but also for the witnesses, and the entire organisation where the sexual harassment is taking place (Acquadro Maran et al., 2022). Acquadro Maran et al. (2022) conducted a study where they focused on the consequences sexual harassment at work can have for the witnesses. The results of their study showed that witnessing sexual harassment at work also made it more likely for the bystanders to suffer emotional and psychological consequences such as negative feelings, exhaustion, and disengagement. Previous research from more than 30 years ago (e.g., Shakoor & Chalmers, 1991), already talked about so called "co-victimization", which describes the experience of indirect exposure to violence and its relation to the development of negative psychological effects. Other researchers such as Glomb et al. (1999) even found that direct as well as indirect exposure to sexual harassment has an much greater influence than previously anticipated, bearing the same negative impact on peoples personal and psychological well-being as well as on their fulfilment at work.

Tolerance for sexual harassment

As already known, sexual harassment can take place in any part of society, for example at home, in public areas, or at work, with direct and indirect witnesses, and yet it still is a known fact that a lot of victims, as well as witnesses fail to report the incidents (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005). The question that arises is, why?

One very important factor is the degree of tolerance people have or do not have regarding sexual harassment. This aspect is crucial, considering that previous findings have shown that individuals who dispose of a lower level of tolerance regarding sexual harassment will consider a broader range of behaviours as sexually harassing, while people who have a higher level of tolerance will consider less behaviours as sexually harassing, and thereby accept more of them (Bitton & Shaul, 2013). In terms of age and gender differences, previous as well as more recent studies have suggested that younger people exhibit a higher tolerance for sexual harassment than older people (e.g. Ohse & Stockdale, 2008; Reilly et al., 1986). For example, Ford and Donis (1996) discovered that when both age and gender were considered, young men seemed to tolerate sexual harassment the most, as opposed to young women who appeared to tolerate it the least. Further, they discovered a rise in tolerance of sexual harassment for men aged over 50 and a drop for women aged over 50. Recent studies concord with their findings, showing gender differences regarding the perception of sexual harassment, with men generally tolerating more of it (Kara & Toygar, 2019; McCabe & Hardman, 2005; Rothgerber et al., 2021). Recently, Mallett et al. (2021) also found that women who disregarded sexist statements aligned their stance with their actions and showed more tolerance for sexual harassment than women who confronted the remarks.

Moreover, previous findings have indicated that attitudinal beliefs about sexual harassment, attractiveness and high social status were predictive of tolerance for sexual harassment (Angelone et al., 2009). This suggests that it potentially is a question of individual perception, and that behaviours are interpreted as problematic or not by different people, which would explain why some are never reported. However, it has also been shown that even when a behaviour is actually perceived as sexually harassing and problematic by both the victim and the bystanders, these behaviours are still not always reported (Cesario et al., 2018).

The role of hierarchy and power

So once again, one can only wonder – why do people fail to report sexual harassment? According to Johnson et al. (2016), there could be three main reasons for this phenomenon : fear of negative repercussions, the presence of a masculine culture which allows sexual harassment, and the bystander effect. The fear of negative repercussions is often linked to one's workplace and its hierarchy. Chappell and Di Martino (2006) indicate that in cases of sexual harassment at work, perpetrators often find themselves in higher positions of power than the victims. Hierarchy however does not only exist between the perpetrator and the victim, but also between the bystander and the perpetrator. This means that the fear of negative repercussions also applies to a bystander witnessing sexual harassment between two superiors of him. If both the victim and the perpetrator have superior hierarchical positions, the bystander is the one potentially risking even more negative repercussions by intervening or reporting it, considering his/her position.

A CEO in a workplace, or a surgeon at a hospital are good examples of people of power who can make someone's life more difficult if they want to, solely due to their rank in the hierarchy. Based on their position of power, they can also be perceived as having a higher social status. Thereby one could only assume that in the case of sexual harassment by a person in a position of power, the reason for not reporting the incident, may be due to the bystander effect, as well as a combination of fear of repercussions, with a higher tolerance for sexual harassment considering the perpetrator's position (Angelone et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2016).

The bystander effect

The bystander effect, also known as bystander apathy, is a phenomenon which was first discovered and studied by Darley and Latané (1968) following the violent murder of a young New Yorker, called Kitty Genovese. This case from 1964 stood out, because 38 witnesses had heard or seen the attack, and apparently not one bystander had sought to intervene. While it remains unclear how many witnesses were present, and how many actually tried to intervene, this event marked the beginning of research on the bystander effect (Benderly, 2012). Since this discovery, many studies have been conducted in order to investigate this surprising social phenomenon (Fischer et al., 2011). All in all, research has discovered that the likelihood of an individual to help in a critical situation decreases in the presence of other bystanders (Latané & Darley, 1970, as cited in Fischer et al., 2011). Campos-Mercade (2021) for instance found bystanders to be not only less likely but also slower to provide help when in groups, as compared to when they are alone.

In 1970, a psychological process of five steps was proposed by Latané and Darley (as cited in Fischer et al., 2011) which according to them needs to happen in order to get a bystander to intervene. At first the bystander must (1) recognize a critical situation, then he/she must (2) interpret the situation as a crisis, (3) acquire a sense of personal responsibility, (4) think that he/she has the abilities needed to be successful in helping and at last (5) make the decision to intervene. In addition to this five-step process, Darley and Latané, (1968) also identified three different reasons to why this effect takes place: diffusion of responsibility, evaluation apprehension and pluralistic ignorance.

Diffusion of responsibility, as it is named, represents how a tendency arises to diffuse one's personal responsibility to help, through all the other bystanders (Darley & Latané, 1968; Fischer et al., 2011). This means, the more bystanders there are, the less responsibility an individual will feel to help. Evaluation of apprehension refers to the fear an individual can have to be observed and judged for his/her intervention, which also is linked to the fear of making a mistake and looking foolish in public ((Darley & Latané, 1968; Fischer et al., 2011). At last, pluralistic ignorance refers to the tendency of people to rely on the reactions others around them are having when assessing an unclear situation, in order to determine the proper behaviour to adopt (Darley & Latané, 1968; Fischer et al., 2011). This means that the bystander effect reaches its peak when no one intervenes, because everyone will think that no one senses an emergency in the situation (Fischer et al., 2011; Latané & Nida, 1981).

The bystander effect in sexual harassment and sexism

As previously mentioned, the bystander effect might be a reason why people who are witnessing sexual harassment at their workplace for example, are not reporting it. Bystanders can either divide their personal responsibility with other colleagues who were present, be scared to be judged by their colleagues or superiors when reporting it, or genuinely think that the situation is acceptable, since no one else is intervening (Johnson et al., 2016). But why are we focusing on the witnesses to intervene instead of the victims reporting their experiences? Relying on victim-reporting in order to end or reduce sexual harassment is unlikely to succeed considering that most victims do not report the incidents for different personal reasons (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005). Bystander intervention is therefore an alternative method for regulating and hopefully reducing sexual harassment at work (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005). Moreover, the bystander effect, which consists in the non-intervention of bystanders in situations of sexual harassment, may even lead to an environment which encourages sexual harassment (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005). Furthermore, it has been shown that it is unlikely for perpetrators to change their behaviours, unless these are clearly identified as discriminatory, and proven to be harmful (Czopp et al., 2006; Mallett et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2018)

Hence, what have previous studies discovered about bystander intervention in situations of sexism or sexual harassment? When witnessing gender harassment for example, women generally believe they would confront the perpetrators (Mallett et al., 2021; Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001). Studies on the other side have shown that in reality women intervene much less than they actually anticipate on doing (Swim & Hyers, 1999; Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001). The reasons women are not intervening might be linked to the bystander effect and the previously mentioned fears of negative repercussions (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Good et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2016). This means that instead of intervening and confronting a perpetrator, women are more likely to ignore it (Mallett et al., 2021). The contradictive aspect here is very interesting, because not only may confronting sexism have positive internal consequences for women, but ignoring sexism actually appears to have negative social and relational consequences for both the perpetrators and the victims (Mallett et al., 2021). For example, it has been discovered that women who disregard sexism express more anger and regret, and are more predisposed to rumination, than women who confront it (Hyers, 2007).

Men acting as allies

Studies suggest that women tend to intervene much less than they anticipate on doing, but what about men? First of all, men seem to have more difficulties than women in even identifying sexism, or recognizing unfair treatment of women (Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Swim et al., 2001). However, in order to get men to be allies against sexual harassment and sexism, they must be aware of it and be able to acknowledge it so that they can take an active role and intervene (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014; Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Stangor et al., 2003). An interesting point is that when men do recognize harassment and confront the perpetrators, it is unlikely for them to be portrayed as complainers, as opposed to when women intervene (Drury & Kaiser, 2014). When men are the ones confronting harassment, their confrontation is actually perceived more positively, and they are taken more seriously than women (Drury, 2013, as cited in Drury & Kaiser, 2014). In general one can see that men seem to suffer fewer negative repercussions for speaking out against sexism than women (Drury & Kaiser, 2014).

But how come? Previous research by Tajfel and Turner (1979), has shown that people usually behave in the best interests of their group. Therefore, when women confront sexism or sexual harassment, it may be considered as an act conducted out of self-interest (Drury & Kaiser, 2014). The harder women seem to be attempting to help their gender group, the more others appear to react disdainfully and negatively (Roy et al., 2009). However, men do not instantly profit from confronting the perpetrators (Drury & Kaiser, 2014). Therefore, when men act as allies, they are not thought to act out of self-interest, and are even considered to have something to lose by intervening (Drury & Kaiser, 2014). Seeing that they do not act in the interests of their group, as expected by Tajfel and Turner (1979), their intervention may come as a surprise. This surprising effect may be crucial in enabling men to notice and acknowledge sexist or harassing conduct since it captures their attention and may cause them to carefully consider the specifics of the confrontation (Petty et al., 2001), making a fellow man's arguments more credible and persuasive than the ones of a woman (Drury & Kaiser, 2014).

Additionally, considering the actual costs that can lead women to ignore sexism instead of fighting it, having men confront harassment could help establish environments in which women face fewer negative consequences when confronting someone (Drury & Kaiser, 2014). If a male employee, for example, addresses sexual harassment in the workplace, his behaviour may have an impact on the norms, increasing the likelihood of women speaking up, and being taken seriously while doing so (Drury & Kaiser, 2014). Furthermore, their confrontation may inspire witnesses to confront similar situations, which may lead to a so-

called “snowball effect” and impact many more people (Swim & Thomas, 2006, as cited in Drury & Kaiser, 2014).

Having seen the impact men can have on bystander intervention by confronting harassment, and the importance their voice carries, one could only wonder; how could men be encouraged to act as allies in the combat to end sexual harassment? This is where the role of the different social norms and their possible influence on behaviour comes into the picture.

Social norms and their impact on behaviour

A world where people would not greet each other, where interrupting one another while talking occurred all the time, where one would not use clothes to walk around outside and where burping happened at restaurants as well as work meetings, would be a world without social norms as one knows them in today's society. Social norms could be defined as unwritten rules and principles which are known and understood by the members of a group on how they are expected to socially behave, without having to use the force of law (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). More specifically, social norms reassemble the main guidelines of a group regarding their behaviours, attitudes and beliefs (Cialdini & Jacobson, 2021).

The topic of social norms and their significance on human behaviour has been an important topic in psychology for many years (Gelfand et al., 2017). Research on this has led to the development of different models and theories, such as the "Return Potential Model" by Jackson in 1956 (as cited in Gelfand et al., 2017), the "Social Norms Approach" by (Perkins & Berkowitz, 1986), the "Focus Theory" by Cialdini et al. (1990), and several others. Existing research has shown that social norms have the power to stimulate and lead human behaviour, which explains why questions regarding their exact impact have emerged (Cialdini et al., 2006). The influential effects of social norms on behaviour have been presented in various different contexts such as in reducing binge drinking (Neighbors et al., 2004), promoting healthier eating habits (Robinson et al., 2013), reducing peoples energy consumption (Schultz et al., 2018), taking pro-environmental action by reusing towels at hotels (Goldstein et al., 2007), and many more (Cialdini & Jacobson, 2021; Mortensen et al., 2019). Even though social norms have been widely researched, when considering all the different interpersonal, intrapersonal, relational, cultural and countless other existing variables, one understands that there still subsists a lack of knowledge regarding their effects and impacts in different contexts (Gelfand et al., 2017).

Social norms approach

The social norms approach (SNA) (Perkins & Berkowitz, 1986) is an evidence-based approach which emerged through research on social norms over the years, and has been widely used in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and Africa (Berkowitz et al., 2022). The SNA, also called the *norms correction strategy*, is based on the observation that people have a tendency to mistakenly interpret the behaviour of others as being different from from their own, although it is not (Berkowitz et al., 2022). This strategy is mainly applied to

correct these misperceptions people may have between the perceived and the actual norms (Park & Smith, 2007). In order to correct these misperceptions, the SNA uses different methods of providing individuals, groups, and communities with feedback on the actual, healthy norm (Berkowitz, 2010; Berkowitz et al., 2022). According to Fabiano et al. (2003) studies have revealed that social norms interventions which are based on confronting misperceptions regarding rape-supportive normative environments may be successful in preventing sexual violence. In their own study regarding the SNA and ending sexual violence, Fabiano and colleagues (2003) found that men's inclination to intervene was significantly and strongly related to their expectations of how other men would act in comparable scenarios. Correcting these common underestimations of their male peers' intention to intervene could therefore make a significant contribution in reducing sexual violence. These findings also give credence to the concept that the SNA could encourage men to be allies of women in ending sexual harassment and violence by encouraging actions against other men's problematic conduct (Fabiano et al., 2003).

The SNA assumes that social norms ought to be divided into two different types, which are descriptive norms, referring to the prevalence of a behaviour, and injunctive norms, referring to the social approval of the behaviour (Cialdini et al., 1990). Nevertheless, when conducting research on literature about social norms one can learn that there are more types of norms existing apart from descriptive and injunctive ones. The three types that are relevant for this present study, are the descriptive norms, injunctive norms, and trending norms. Studies have shown that the use of these different mentioned norms may have different impacts on people (Cialdini et al., 2006; Park & Smith, 2007; Schultz et al., 2018).

Descriptive norms

Descriptive norms, as briefly explained previously, are norms that provide information on how other people act in similar situations, e.g. "*Men intervene when they witness a woman getting sexually harassed*". The reason descriptive norms are useful to people, is because they help them to make decisions, as they can compare their behaviour to the behaviour of the others (Cialdini et al., 1990). In practice, if for example a public parking would be full of litter, this would encourage individuals to litter even more, because littering is presented to be the descriptive norm (Schultz et al., 2018). On the other hand, if the parking lot were to be clean, people would be less encouraged to litter, because it is not presented to be the descriptive norm (Schultz et al., 2018).

However, descriptive norms have also shown to potentially be counter-productive and destructive in different settings (Cialdini et al., 2006; Schultz et al., 2018). For example, in the context of a study by Schultz et al., (2018), on the use of social norms to promote energy conservation, the use of descriptive norms alone revealed both a constructive and a destructive effect. The constructive effect was observed through a reduction of energy consumption in households which were told that they were using more electricity than others. However, a destructive effect was observed when low-consuming households were told that they were using less electricity than the others. The use of a descriptive normative message in this context resulted in a boomerang effect, leading the people with low-consuming households to increase their energy use. Though, when descriptive norms were used in combination with an injunctive message, such as showing the low-consuming households a positive message of social approval (e.g., a smiley face), these households did not increase their energy use and the boomerang effect was avoided (Schultz et al., 2018).

Injunctive norms

As already briefly mentioned, injunctive norms are pronouncing the valued social behaviour, which means they represent the degree to which most people accept or condemn a certain conduct (Schultz et al., 2018). An example of an injunctive norm would be: *“Men feel it is unacceptable to not intervene in situations of sexual harassment”*. In the previously discussed study by Schultz et al. (2018), one could see that adding an injunctive message helped to avoid a boomerang effect, suggesting that normative feedback has to be made motivational for the receiver. But why?

Intrinsically, humans wish to form and sustain meaningful social connections with others (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Furthermore, injunctive norms imply that if one behaves in ways that others approve of, others will approve them as well (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). As a result, people will employ acceptance and liking cues which can be found through injunctive norms, to aid in the development, maintenance and measurement of their connections and relationships with others (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). The wish of creating and maintaining meaningful relationships, which is linked to engaging in behaviours others approve of, shows why descriptive norms in combination with injunctive norms will motivate people to engage in a specific behaviour.

Trending norms

A third type of norms which was not yet specified, are trending norms. Trending norms refer to situations where the number of individuals behaving in a certain way is growing (Mortensen et al., 2019). An example of a trending norm would be: “*More and more men are intervening in situations of sexual harassment*”. Trending norms can also be employed for minorities, which one would call *trending minority norms*. Trending minority norms apply to situations where the number of individuals which are engaging in a behaviour is increasing among a minority of people (Mortensen et al., 2019). In a study by Mortensen et al. (2019), the researchers even found people to adhere more to trending minority norms than to conditions with only minority norms or no norms, despite the fact that the norms addressed behaviours which deviated from the target behaviour.

Considering that previous research has shown the use of norms to either be ineffective or to have the opposite effect when a minority of people are engaging in a behaviour, it could be interesting to make use of trending norms. Trending norms are based on the belief that change in one direction will continue that way (Mortensen et al., 2019), which means that possible outcomes which are becoming more likely, feel closer (Maglio & Polman, 2016; Mortensen et al., 2019). As a result, showing a behaviour as becoming more popular may lead to an impression of higher future popularity (Mortensen et al., 2019), and more chances of creating and maintaining meaningful social relationships. This way, trending norms could potentially be used to encourage people to engage in certain behaviours, even if the majority of people are not yet behaving that way.

The topic of trending norms has often been overlooked in prior research, which means there is not a lot to be found about them. Nonetheless, in 2019, in the context of her master thesis, Hüynen decided to study the impact of social norms on bystander intervention in cases of online sexual harassment. In this study, Hüynen found that participants who were presented with explicit trending norms intervened faster than participants that were presented with descriptive norms, or no norms.

Organisational climates

As seen earlier, sexual harassment at work does not only have consequences on the victims and witnesses, but also on the entire organisation where the harassment is taking place (Acquadro Maran et al., 2022). In this context, studies have shown the organisational climate of a company to play an important role in the prevalence of sexual harassment at work (O'Connell & Korabik, 2000; Pina & Gannon, 2012). An organisational climate is defined by different attitudes and values of an organisation. Hereunder one can find an organisation's judgment and leniency towards sexual harassment, along with the existence and adherence to policies and preventative measures (O'Connell & Korabik, 2000; Pina & Gannon, 2012). Every company and organisation will have a different view on what is considered as sexual harassment at work, as well as the importance of reporting of it. For example, there exists organisations which actively fight against, and prevent, sexual harassment by implementing security measures for the victims and serious consequences for the perpetrators, as well as clear and developed organisational policies with explicit indications on how to behave. Other organisations will have "zero-tolerance" policies where no sexual harassment will be tolerated, which however may have the potential to be misleading or counterproductive (Roehling, 2020). Be that as it may, the climate we are focusing on for this present research project, is the one with an absence of support in cases of sexual harassment at work.

The impact of their support

Absence of support consists in a climate where no support is given by the organisation to prevent as well as to act in cases of sexual harassment. This organisation or company has no strict policy regarding their tolerance for sexual harassment, nor any consequences of what would happen to perpetrators. Riger (1991), found that when there are no policies existing, or when these are unclear, women tend to hesitate to define the incidents as harassment, which results in under-reporting. Moreover, organisations which are more tolerant of sexual harassment have been shown to be significant predictors of harassment fatigue (consisting in feelings of anger, helplessness and/or emotional numbness), lower levels of resilience and an increased susceptibility to future harassment (Ford & Ivancic, 2020).

On the other side, studies have shown that if an organisation strictly enforces its anti sexual harassment policy, one can observe a diminution in major sexual harassment incidents such as sexual coercion (O'Connell & Korabik, 2000). Although the adherence to policies appears to be helpful in reducing more severe types of sexual harassment, their

impact in reducing other types of sexual harassment such as gender harassment is not yet fully known (O'Connell & Korabik, 2000).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Williams et al. (1999) discovered that when organisations offered robust anti-harassment policies, women were perceived to be more devoted to their workplace. More crucially, their findings also showed that the adoption of these policies lowered the frequency of sexual harassment incidents at work. Willness et al., (2007) who conducted a meta-analysis on "the antecedents and consequences of workplace sexual harassment", also found the relationship between sexual harassment and organisational commitment of the workers to be heavily affected by the organizational climate.

This present study

As we have just seen, sexual harassment at work has shown to not only be damaging for the victims, but also for the witnesses, and the entire organisation (Acquadro Maran et al., 2022). As a result, the question that emerges is why do witnesses fail to report it more? According to Johnson et al. (2016), there could be three main reasons for this : fear of negative repercussions, the presence of a masculine culture which allows sexual harassment, and the bystander effect. Bystanders either divide their personal responsibility with other colleagues who were present, are scared to be judged by their colleagues or superiors when reporting it, or genuinely think that the situation is acceptable, since no one else is intervening (Johnson et al., 2016). In addition, research showed that in absence of organisational policies, or when these are unclear, women may hesitate to define the incidents they experienced as harassment, which results in under-reporting (Riger, 1991). Now how could one increase bystanders interventions and the reporting of sexual harassment at work? In order to achieve this, social norms could be an interesting instrument as they have shown to have the ability to stimulate and lead human behaviour (Cialdini et al., 2006), as well as to correct misperceptions between perceived and actual norms (Berkowitz, 2010; Berkowitz et al., 2022; Park & Smith, 2007).

Based on the previous literature, the research question which arises is: *“What is the effect of different social norms and one’s tolerance for sexual harassment on the willingness of a bystander to intervene in a situation of sexual harassment at work? “*. In this context the association of the different social norms and tolerance for sexual harassment will be analysed to study the effect they have on the bystander effect in situations of sexual harassment by men on women. This will be studied in an organisational context which presents no specific support for victims of sexual harassment, as well as for the people reporting it. Considering the lack of literature regarding the effect of social norms on bystander intervention in cases of sexual harassment at work, this research project may lead to new and important knowledge. The findings of this study might be extremely valuable in improving the helping behaviour of bystanders in situations of sexual harassment at work, as well as encouraging the bystanders to report it.

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1

First of all, it is hypothesized that **(H1)** the higher the levels of tolerance bystanders have for sexual harassment, the less they will portray helping behaviour. This hypothesis is based on the study by Bitton and Shaul (2013), who found people with higher levels of tolerance to consider less behaviours as sexually harassing and therefore to accept more of them.

Hypothesis 2

Following, it is hypothesized that **(H2)** no matter the levels of tolerance for sexual harassment, the use of any norms will be linked to more helping behaviour than the use of no norms. This hypothesis is based on the fact that social norms in general have the ability to stimulate and lead human behaviour (Cialdini et al., 2006) and to correct misperceptions people may have between perceived and actual norms (Park & Smith, 2007).

Hypothesis 3

Thirdly, it is hypothesized that **(H3)** the use of trending norms will have more impact than the combination of descriptive and injunctive norms on bystanders helping behaviour. Considering the findings which showed trending norms to have the potential to encourage people to engage in certain behaviours (Mortensen et al., 2019), and this at a faster pace than with descriptive norms (Hüynen, 2019), one could expect trending norms to have a stronger impact on helping behaviour.

Hypothesis 4

Next, it is hypothesized that **(H4)** high levels of tolerance for sexual harassment, and no use of social norms will present the lowest levels of helping behaviour from the bystanders. For one part this supposition is based on Bitton and Shaul's (2013), findings about people with higher levels of tolerance to accept more sexually harassing behaviour. On the other side, there are no norms presented, so there is nothing influencing the misperceptions people may have (Park & Smith, 2007).

Hypothesis 5

Lastly, it is hypothesized that **(H5)** the use of trending norms combined with low levels of tolerance for sexual harassment will show the most helping behaviour from the bystanders. Literature has shown people with lower levels of tolerance for sexual harassment to consider a broader range of behaviours as sexually harassing (Bitton & Shaul, 2013), and trending norms to encourage people to act in a certain way (Hüynen, 2019; Mortensen et al., 2019). Therefore, one could predict that this precise combination of both variables would generate the most helping behaviour from bystanders.

METHODS

Participants

The population that was targeted in this research project were women and men from the general population. In order to be eligible to participate, the respective men and women had to meet the inclusion criteria, i.e., to be aged between 18 and 67 years and to be proficient in French.

Parameters studied

The dependent variable is the helping behaviour of the witnesses in situations of sexual harassment, which was measured via the number of interactions that the participants allowed before intervening and stopping the conversations. Independent variables such as social norms and tolerance for sexual harassment were measured and utilized to observe their impact on the dependent variable.

Instruments and measures

This study was conducted as a randomized quantitative online study in French and was part of a larger research project aiming to understand the effect of social norms on bystander intervention in cases of sexual harassment in different organisational climates (absence of support, zero tolerance policy and active fighting against sexual harassment). This mentioned research project is composed of nine conditions (see Table 1), meaning that in addition to the measure of bystander intervention, social norms and tolerance for sexual harassment, there were also questionnaires and assessments about ambivalent sexism and rape myth acceptance. However, these measures are not relevant to the present study, which is why they will not be further mentioned. This present research project only focused on the conditions 1,4 and 7 which are all the conditions in the context of an organisation which presents no support in cases of sexual harassment (see Table 1).

The study was conducted online through the online survey tool by the UDI-Flpse of the University of Liège (UDI-Fplse & Sougné, n.d.). The participants did not obtain any specific information about the exact objectives of this study until the end, in order to avoid social desirability biases. This survey was divided into three different parts. The first part consisted of a socio-demographic questionnaire with self-formulated questions. These questions were followed by a pre-tested, self-formulated text regarding one of the different

social norms. Following, six different situations containing 12 messages were used, aiming to measure the effect of social norms on the bystander effect in cases of sexual harassment which occurred in the work environment. The final measure and part of the survey was the Sexual Harassment Attitude Scale (SHAS ; Mazer & Percival, 1989), which assessed participants' tolerance for sexual harassment.

Table 1

Conditions of the larger research project.

Organisational climates	AS	ZT	AF
Norms			
Trending norms	Condition 1	Condition 2	Condition 3
Descriptive/Injunctive norms	Condition 4	Condition 5	Condition 6
Absence of norms	Condition 7	Condition 8	Condition 9

Note. Conditions which are part of this research project are presented in bold. AS = absence of support. ZT = zero-tolerance policy. AF = actively fighting.

Socio-demographic data

A questionnaire with self-formulated questions was created to gather socio-demographic data from the participants. The socio-demographic data questionnaire included questions about their age, their gender, their legal status, their education, their professional status as well as their number of children.

Organisational climate and social norms

The organisational climate was introduced through a text the participants got to read (see Appendix A). The text presented the organisational climate of a fictional real estate company called “*Ventura & Co.*”, and described their internal policy, which in this present case was not providing any support regarding sexual harassment (see Appendix A).

Social norms were also introduced through two different texts the participants got to read depending on the condition they were placed in (see Appendix A). These texts presented the participants with some information about sexual harassment and bystander intervention, including either descriptive and injunctive norms, or trending norms.

A pre-test was conducted to check for the validity of the texts used regarding the social norms and organisational climates. The results of the pre-test led to a few adjustments in two of the three organisational climate texts in order to distinguish them more from each other, however the “absence of support” text was maintained as it was. Regarding the social norms, a few modifications were made in the descriptive/injunctive norms text. The trending norms text was kept as it was.

The bystander effect

To assess the bystander effect, participants were presented with six different situations of sexual harassment with each 12 message-interactions (see Appendix B). After each interaction they were asked to indicate whether they wanted to intervene and stop this situation, or if they wanted to wait. This method was inspired and adapted from previous research projects regarding sexual harassment and the bystander effect (Aanounou, 2022; Bayers, 2019; Hüynen, 2019; Massafi, 2022).

This means that after having read the introductory text regarding the organisation, the social norms and organisational climate, the participants were told in French (see Appendix C): *“At Ventura & Co. we care about the well-being of our employees. To this end, in association with the University of Liège, we are conducting a survey that will help us to better understand what behaviours to adopt for the well-being of the company and its employees. You will be asked to imagine that you are an employee in our company. Ventura has an internal instant messaging system that is currently under construction. Since the system is not yet fully functional, your task will be to decide whether or not messages between employees will be transferred. Some of the messages may seem similar to you, but we ask you to read them carefully. Please note that all questions must be answered before you can move on to the next question. It is also not possible to go back once the situation has been validated.”* After reading this, the participants were presented with six different situations, with each 12 message interactions they observed between female and male co-workers. The receivers of the messages were always women, and the senders were always men. Here an example of a situation: *“Mr. A. is a management assistant at the Ventura agency in Liège. Ms*

F. is a management assistant at the Ventura agency in Namur. Mr A. sends messages to Ms F."

Three of the 12 messages were neutral (A), four of them ambiguous (B), and five were of sexual nature (C). A neutral message could look like this: *"Good morning, don't forget we have a meeting tomorrow morning at 9am."*, while an ambiguous message could be presented like this: *"You looked really pretty today, that smile looked great on you."*, and one of sexual nature could sound like this: *"You're always telling me that you have too much work and that you're stressed. That's because your husband doesn't give you enough in bed to de-stress. I can fix that if you want"*. These interactions were presented in a certain order: A – A – B – A – B – C – C – B – C – B – C – C. As explained by Hüyner, (2019), the variation between the nature of the messages was incorporated in order to avoid ceiling- or floor effects. When being presented with each message, the participants were asked in French: *"As a witness, what do you decide to do about this message?"*. Following they had the choice to either intervene and stop this situation, which means they could choose to not transfer the message to their female co-worker, or to wait and still transfer the message to her. If the bystander decided to transfer a message, he/she was presented with the next message within the same situation and the same people. In the case that the bystander decided to intervene and to not transfer the message at some point, he/she was immediately presented with the next situation between two new people. Should the participants still not have intervened after 12 messages, they were automatically presented with the next situation. This way we were able to observe at what point bystanders believed it to be necessary to intervene. The different situations and interactions were all created in French.

Tolerance for sexual harassment

The Sexual Harassment Attitude Scale (SHAS) by Mazer and Percival (1989) was used to assess the tolerance for sexual harassment. The SHAS is a 19-item scale ranging from 1 = "strongly agree" to 5 = "strongly disagree" on a 5-point Likert-scale, with both item 4 and 7 being reverse scored (Lipschultz & Hilt, 1994; Mazer & Percival, 1989). Participants were asked to rate how much they agree with different statements about attitudes towards sexual harassment, such as: *"An attractive woman has to expect sexual advances and should learn how to handle them."* (Mazer & Percival, 1989; for all the items see Appendix C). The raw score is ranging from 0-95, and a higher score in the SHAS indicates a higher level of tolerance and acceptance for sexual harassment, as well as a lower level of agreement with modern feminist explanations of its origins. In previous studies by Angelone et al. (2009) and

Mazer and Percival (1989) the SHAS has shown good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha ranging from .80 to .84. A French translation of the scale, which was implemented in a study by Goblet and Glowacz (2018), was used during this research project. No Cronbach's alpha was mentioned in this article.

Procedure

Pre-test

The pre-test started with a short information text containing the objective of the research project, general instructions as well as information on data protection and on the upcoming questionnaire. At the end of that text the participants were given contact information of the researchers which they could contact in case of questions or remarks before, during or after the testing. Participants were presented with a consent form which they had to accept in order to proceed. In addition, they were informed that their consent could be retrieved by them at any moment if they want to, even after their participation. After providing their consent, participants started by answering the demographic questions. Following, the participants were randomly assigned to one of the five conditions. Every condition started with an identical presentation text regarding the organisation, followed by either a section regarding social norms (trending norms or descriptive/injunctive norms) or a text regarding the organisational climate (absence of support, zero tolerance policy or active fighting against sexual harassment). The text was followed by the 15 statements regarding the climate and norms, which were identical for every condition (see Appendix D). The participants were asked to rank these affirmations from 0 to 100 with for example 0 meaning "not at all" to 100 meaning "absolutely".

The survey

The survey was conducted via the online survey tool by the UDI-Flpse of the University of Liège (UDI-Fplse & Sougné, n.d.). The entire questionnaire was administered in French, and the inclusion criteria for the participants were to understand French and to be aged between 18 and 67 years. Participant recruitment was done online, via posts of a flyer and an invitation text on different social media platforms and groups.

At first the survey started with an information text containing some explanations about the purpose of the research project, general instructions as well as information on data protection and on the upcoming questionnaires. At the end of that text the participants were

given contact information of the researchers which they could contact in case of questions or remarks before, during or after the testing. Participants were presented with a consent form which they had to accept in order to proceed. In addition, they were informed that their consent could be retrieved by them at any moment if they want to, even after their participation.

After providing their consent, participants started by answering the demographic questions. Subsequently, the participants were randomly assigned to one of the nine conditions. Depending on the condition they were assigned to, the participants got to read a different text regarding the organisational climate and the norms. This means that each condition had the exact same six situations, the only part that differed was the paragraph about the norms (trending norms, descriptive/injunctive norms, absence of norms) and the paragraph about the organisational climate (absence of support, zero tolerance policy, active fighting against sexual harassment) in the introductory text of Ventura & Co.

After having read each interaction, the participants were asked to indicate what behaviour they would like to engage in (Bayers, 2019; Hüynen, 2019). Thereon, the participants were asked to complete the SHAS (Mazer & Percival, 1989), as well as the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Dardenne et al., 2007), and the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (FR-IRMA; Trottier et al., 2020), which were part of other research projects. At the end of the survey, the participants were thanked for their participation and a more detailed explanation was given regarding the objective of the survey (see Appendix E).

Data protection

Data protection was ensured through strict confidentiality of the responses obtained, the participants were given anonymity, which was kept throughout the entire survey. This means that no personal information which could allow to identify the participants was asked, and that access to all information given was limited to the principal investigators and the supervisor who were directly involved in the data collection.

RESULTS

Analysis plan

All data analyses were conducted using the Jamovi Computer Software for Macintosh, Version 2.3 (The jamovi project, 2022). At first exploratory data analyses and boxplots were used to control for outliers. Following, descriptive data analyses were conducted, and the validity of the measurement scales was verified through Cronbach's alpha analyses. At last, linear mixed model analyses, which are an extension of simple linear models were implemented to test the hypotheses. These analyses were used considering that mixed models allow a statistical analysis that includes both random-effect factors and fixed-effect factors which are key components of this present study.

Descriptive statistics

The participants

The collected data consisted in 152 participants. Three of these 152 participants had to be excluded, considering that they had consistently let all the 12 messages pass, which may indicate that they were not taking the study seriously. The final sample counted 149 participants which embodied 104 (69.8%) women and 45 (30.2%) men. The participants were aged between 18 and 67 years ($M_{age} = 36.5$, $SD_{age} = 14.4$). Total scores in the SHAS ranged between 20 and 66 ($M_{SHAS} = 37.3$, $SD_{SHAS} = 8.6$) throughout the final sample.

Table 2 gives a clear overview of the participant data regarding their profession, highest completed education level, the number of children they have and their legal status. For the analyses the profession categories were categorized in to "Working" (69.1%), "Not working" (2%), "Student" (27.5%), "Retired" (6%) and "Other" (28.9%). The highest completed education level was categorized in to "No diploma" (3.4%), "Baccalaureate and similar" (32.9%) and "Higher education" (67.1%).

Table 2*Frequencies of legal status, number of children, diploma, and profession.*

	<i>n</i>	% of Total
Legal status		
Married / Legal cohabitant	63	42.3%
Non-legal cohabitant	18	12.1%
Single	58	38.9%
Divorced / Separated	9	6.0%
Widowed	1	0.7%
Number of children		
Zero	85	57.0%
One	16	10.7%
Two	34	22.8%
Three	12	8.1%
Four	2	1.3%
Diploma		
Primary education	1	0.7%
Lower secondary	4	2.7%
Baccalaureate	44	29.5%
Bachelor	59	39.6%
Master	38	25.5%
Doctorate	3	2.0%
Profession		
Manual worker	8	5.4%
Employee	54	36.2%
Public servant	25	16.8%
Managerial position	4	2.7%
Liberal profession	5	3.4%
Retailer / Independent	4	2.7%
Unemployed / Looking for a job	3	2.0%
Unable to work/Receiving social welfare allowance	1	0.7%
Receiving social integration income	1	0.7%
Housewife / Househusband	1	0.7%
Retired	9	6.0%
Student	32	21.5%
Other	2	1.3%

The conditions

The trending norms condition counted 51 participants (34.2%), the descriptive/injunctive norms condition contained 47 participants (31.6%) and the absence of norms condition consisted of 51 participants (34.2%).

The number of accepted messages

In Table 3 one can see the number of accepted messages in the different situations, independently of the conditions the participants were assigned to. When analysing the three conditions separately, the mean number of accepted messages was at 2.49 ($SD = 0.971$) for the trending norms condition, 2.48 ($SD = 0.977$) in the descriptive/injunctive norms condition, and 2.61 ($SD = 1.09$) in the absence of norms condition. Each condition had a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 6 accepted messages.

Table 3

Number of accepted messages.

	Mean	Median	SD	Min.	Max.
Situation 1	1.75	2	0.829	0	5
Situation 2	2.28	2	1.03	0	5
Situation 3	2.94	4	1.67	0	6
Situation 4	2.08	2	1.20	0	6
Situation 5	1.83	2	1.22	0	5
Situation 6	2.24	2	0.991	0	5

Validity of the measurement scales

The validity of measurement scales is measured through Cronbach's alpha (Gavidia & Mariño, 2021). Cronbach's alpha coefficients are expressed in numbers between 0 and 1, which allow to control the internal consistency of the scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Throughout literature, differences can be found in the reporting of an acceptable Cronbach's alpha, however these values tend to fluctuate between .70 and .95 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). According to Gavidia and Mariño (2021) the values of Cronbach's alpha range as following: " $\alpha > .9$ = excellent, $\alpha > .8$ = good, $\alpha > .7$ = acceptable, $\alpha > .6$ = questionable, $\alpha > .5$ = poor and $\alpha < .5$ = unacceptable".

In this present research project, the SHAS presented a Cronbach's alpha of .76, which represents an acceptable internal consistency. These results are a bit inferior, but still similar, to the Cronbach's alpha Mazer and Percival (1989) had, which was ranging from .80 to .84.

Mixed models and statistical analysis of the hypotheses

For the statistical analyses of the hypotheses, a mixed model analysis, allowing to control for intra-participant and intra-situation correlations, was applied. All answers where a participant had accepted less than two messages were excluded from this analysis. This measure was taken considering that the first two messages were neutral, and the first ambiguous interaction appeared in the third message.

The dependent variable which we are trying to explain, is the number of messages participants accepted. The independent variables which are used in this analysis are the influence of trending norms, descriptive/injunctive norms, the absence of norms, and the level of tolerance for sexual harassment.

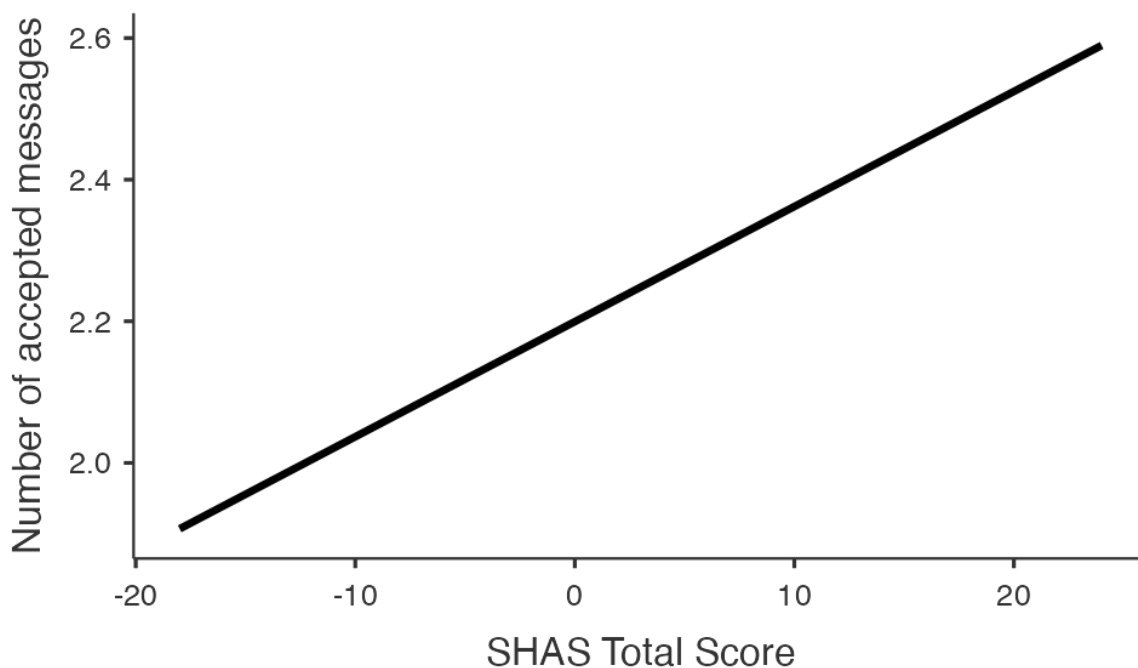
It is important to mention that all the variables are scaled which means that the mean is at 0. As previously explained, each participant was exposed to six situations. The mixed model analysis allowed to take intra-participant and intra-situation correlations (random effects) into account. In this context, the intercept estimate of the mixed models is at 2.20 when all the independent variables are at 0.

Hypothesis 1

The higher the levels of tolerance bystanders have for sexual harassment, the less they will portray helping behaviour. A significant positive main effect of the SHAS tolerance level was found on the number of accepted messages (see Table 4). More specifically, one can observe that when tolerance of sexual harassment is increased by one unit, the mean of messages that are being accepted also increases by 0.02 ($\beta = 0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, $t(128) = 2.79$, $p = .006$). This means that the higher levels of tolerance bystanders have for sexual harassment, the more messages they accepted and the less helping behaviour they portrayed (see Figure 1). These results support our first hypothesis.

Figure 1

Number of accepted messages in relation to the SHAS total score.



Hypothesis 2

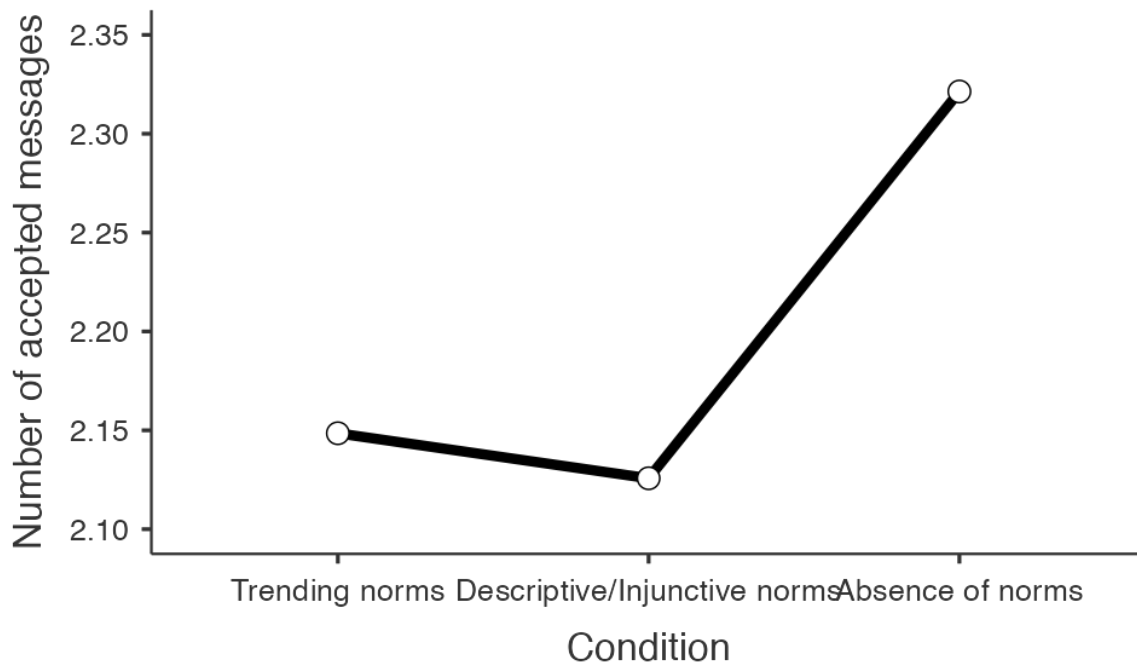
No matter the levels of tolerance for sexual harassment, the use of any norms will be linked to more helping behaviour than the use of no norms. No significant main effects were found between the use of any norms or no norms on helping behaviour (see Table 4). When analysing the difference of descriptive/injunctive norms and trending norms combined, to the use of no norms through Contrast Coefficient Tables and Post Hoc Analyses, no statistically significant result was found ($\beta = 0.19$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(133) = 1.95$, $p = .053$). However, .053 being so close to .05, and Figure 2 showing us a visual difference between the absence of norms condition and the others, one could suppose an existing tendency of more helping behaviour when using social norms. These findings partly support our second hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3

The use of trending norms has more impact than the combination of descriptive and injunctive norms on bystanders helping behaviour. No significant main effects were found between the conditions on helping behaviour (see Table 4). Moreover, no statistically significant effect was found regarding the use of trending norms in comparison to descriptive/injunctive norms ($\beta = -0.02$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(128) = -0.14$, $p = .88$). Further Post Hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni correction, between trending norms and descriptive/injunctive norms also confirmed the absence of statistically different responses ($MD = 0.02$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(122) = 0.14$, $p = 1.00$) (see Figure 2). This means that no significant difference was found in bystanders helping behaviour between participants in the trending norms or descriptive/injunctive norms condition. These results reject our third hypothesis.

Figure 2

Number of accepted messages depending on the condition



Hypothesis 4

High levels of tolerance for sexual harassment, and no use of social norms presents the lowest levels of helping behaviour from the bystanders. Table 4 shows that no significant main effect was found in the model regarding the interaction of tolerance for sexual harassment and the conditions, on the number of accepted messages. However, Simple Effects analyses presented a significant positive difference regarding the level of tolerance for sexual harassment in the absence of norms condition ($\beta = 0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, $t(133) = 2.43$, $p = .016$). This means that when tolerance for sexual harassment is increased by one unit, the mean of messages that are being accepted in the absence of norms condition also increases by 0.024. On Figure 3 one can observe how participants with high levels of tolerance and the absence of norms accepted more messages than any other participants. These results support our fourth hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5

The use of trending norms combined with low levels of tolerance for sexual harassment will show the most helping behaviour from the bystanders. As previously mentioned, no significant main effect was found in the model regarding the interaction of tolerance for sexual harassment and the conditions, on the number of accepted messages (see Table 4). Figure 3 shows how all conditions intervened similarly in the presence of low levels of tolerance for sexual harassment. This was confirmed as no statistically significant results were found through Simple Effects analyses regarding the trending norms condition and low levels of tolerance for sexual harassment ($\beta = 0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, $t(121) = 1.22$, $p = .226$). These findings reject our fifth hypothesis.

Figure 3

Accepted messages in relation to the SHAS total score, in the different conditions.

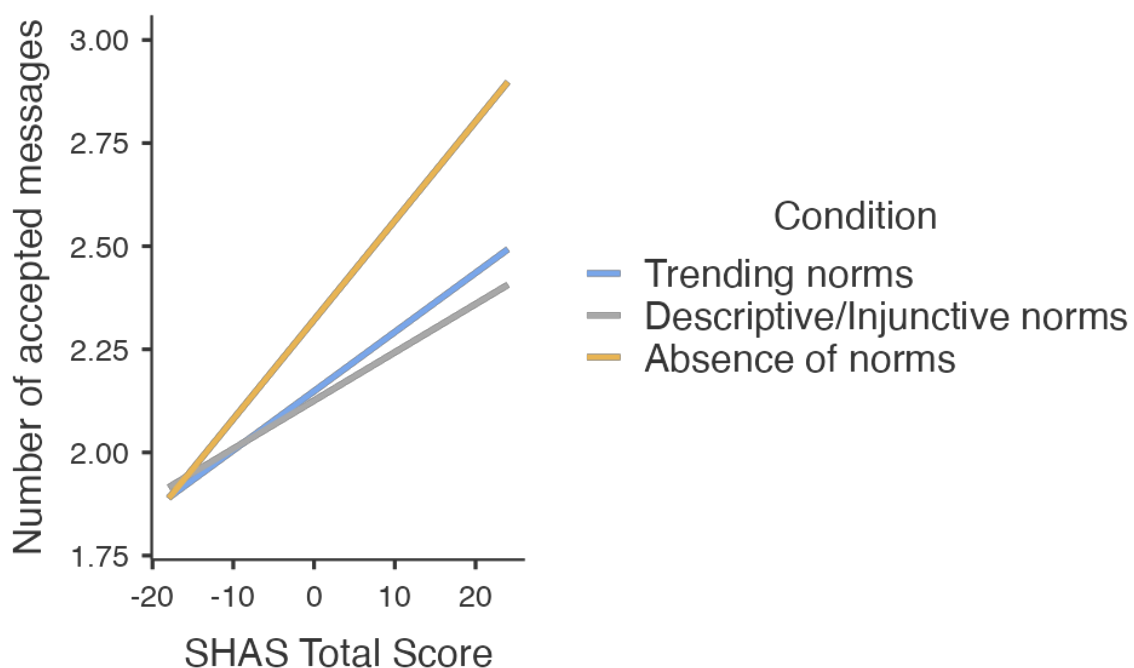


Table 4*Fixed Effects Parameter Estimates.*

	Estimate	SE	df	t	p
Intercept	2.199	0.275	13.8	8.002	< .001***
SHAS Total Score	0.016	0.006	128	2.788	.006**
Descriptive / Injunctive norms– (Trending norms)	-0.016	0.114	127.6	-0.144	.885
Absence of norms – (Trending norms, Descriptive / Injunctive Norms)	0.186	0.096	133	1.950	.053
Age	-0.004	0.005	140.1	-0.896	.372
Gender	0.047	0.103	130.2	0.455	.650
Number of children	0.075	0.062	130.5	1.201	.232
Student – (Retired)	-0.084	0.262	147.7	-0.319	.750
Other – (Retired, Student)	-0.659	0.443	155.8	-1.487	.139
Not working – (Retired, Student, Other)	0.147	0.259	125.7	0.569	.570
Working – (Retired, Student, Other, Not working)	0.249	0.152	145.7	1.639	.103
Baccalaureate and similar – No diploma	0.290	0.263	136.9	1.102	.272
Higher education – No diploma	0.274	0.262	137.4	1.045	.298
Non-legal cohabitant – Married / Legal cohabitant	0.062	0.162	131.5	0.383	.703
Single – Married/Legal cohabitant	0.244	0.135	136.2	1.812	.072

	Estimate	SE	df	t	p
Divorced/Separated – Married / Legal cohabitant	0.376	0.212	130.2	1.772	.079
Widowed – Married / Legal cohabitant	-0.395	0.570	165.7	-0.693	.489
SHAS Total Score * Descriptive / Injunctive norms – (Trending norms)	-0.002	0.013	129.3	-0.128	.899
SHAS Total Score * Absence of norms – (Trending norms, Descriptive / Injunctive Norms)	0.012	0.012	137.1	0.980	.329
SHAS Total Score * Gender	0.003	0.012	124.2	0.251	.802

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Further results

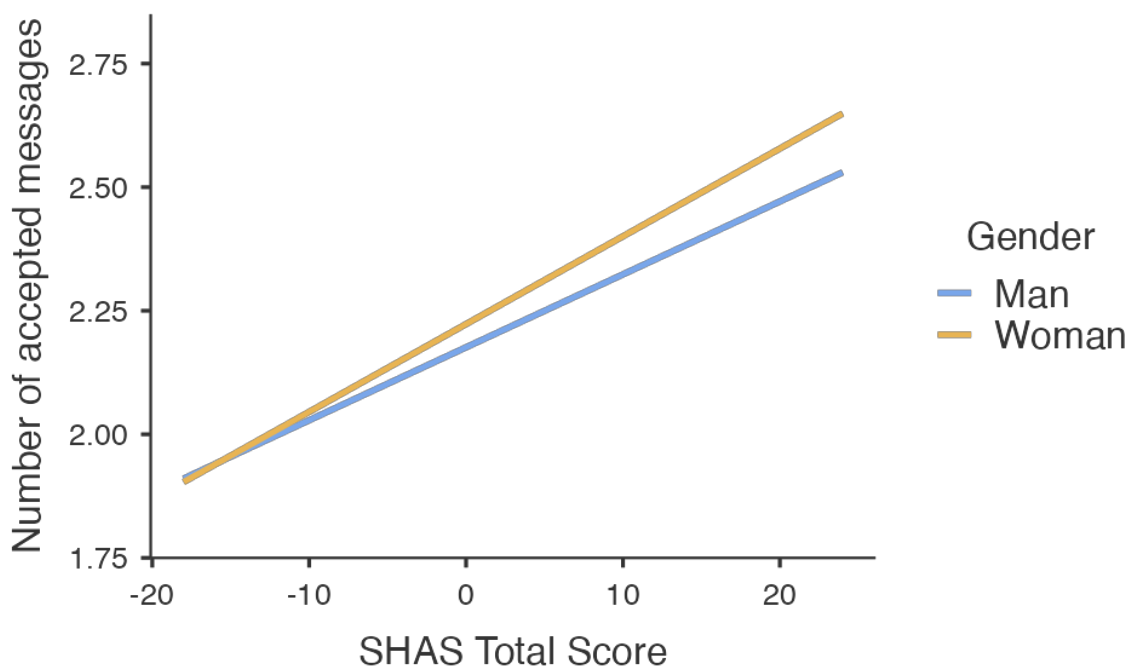
No other significant results could be observed in the previous model (see Table 4). However, when controlling for the different variables such as age, gender, number of children, highest educational level legal status and profession, a few interesting trends were discovered. First of all, one can observe a trend toward significance regarding the difference on helping behaviour between participants who are single and the ones who are married/legally cohabiting ($\beta = 0.24$, $SE = 0.13$, $t(136) = 1.81$, $p = .072$). Similar results were found when comparing the helping behaviour of divorced/separated participants to married/legally cohabiting participants ($\beta = 0.38$, $SE = 0.21$, $t(130) = 1.77$, $p = .079$). Contrast coefficients show that single and divorced/separated participants generally tended to accept more messages than married/legally cohabiting participants. Further Post Hoc comparisons confirmed these potential trends.

When analysing the interaction of gender and SHAS tolerance level, regarding the number of messages accepted, no difference was found in the mixed model (see Table 4). However, Simple Effects analyses showed highly significantly different results regarding the scores of women in the SHAS, and the number of messages they accepted ($\beta = 0.02$, $SE =$

0.01, $t(126) = 2.53$, $p = .013$). This means that statistically, women with lower levels of tolerance for sexual harassment, intervened significantly faster than women with higher levels of tolerance for sexual harassment. The result for men was not statistically significant with $p = .124$, however when looking at Figure 4, it may potentially indicate a tendency similar to the women.

Figure 4

Accepted messages in relation to the SHAS total score, depending on the gender.



Following, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted with the SHAS Total Score as a dependent variable, and age and gender as independent variables, in order to explore if age and gender predicted participants' level of tolerance for sexual harassment. Overall model results were significant ($R^2 = .089$, $F(2, 758) = 36.9$, $p < .001$). It was found that both age ($\beta = 0.102$, $p < .001$) and gender ($\beta = -4.358$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted SHAS Total Scores. When looking at Figure 5, one can also see that men generally tended to have higher tolerance for sexual harassment than women.

Looking further one can observe that both younger men and women had lower levels of tolerance for sexual harassment, and the higher in age they got, the more their tolerance climbed. Moreover, one can again see that men generally tended to have higher tolerance for sexual harassment than women, independently of their age (see Figure 6).

Figure 5

Scores in the SHAS, depending on gender.

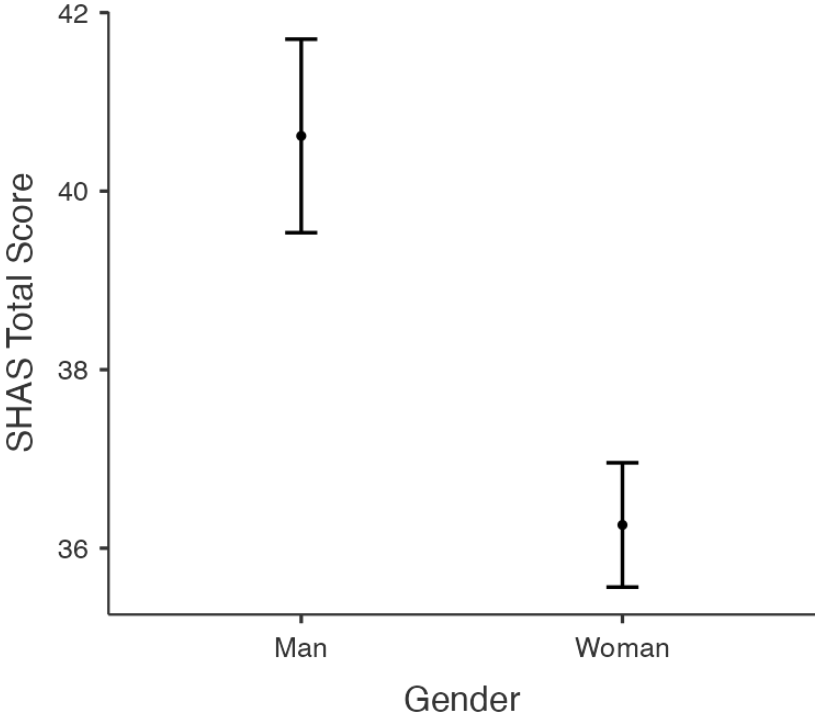
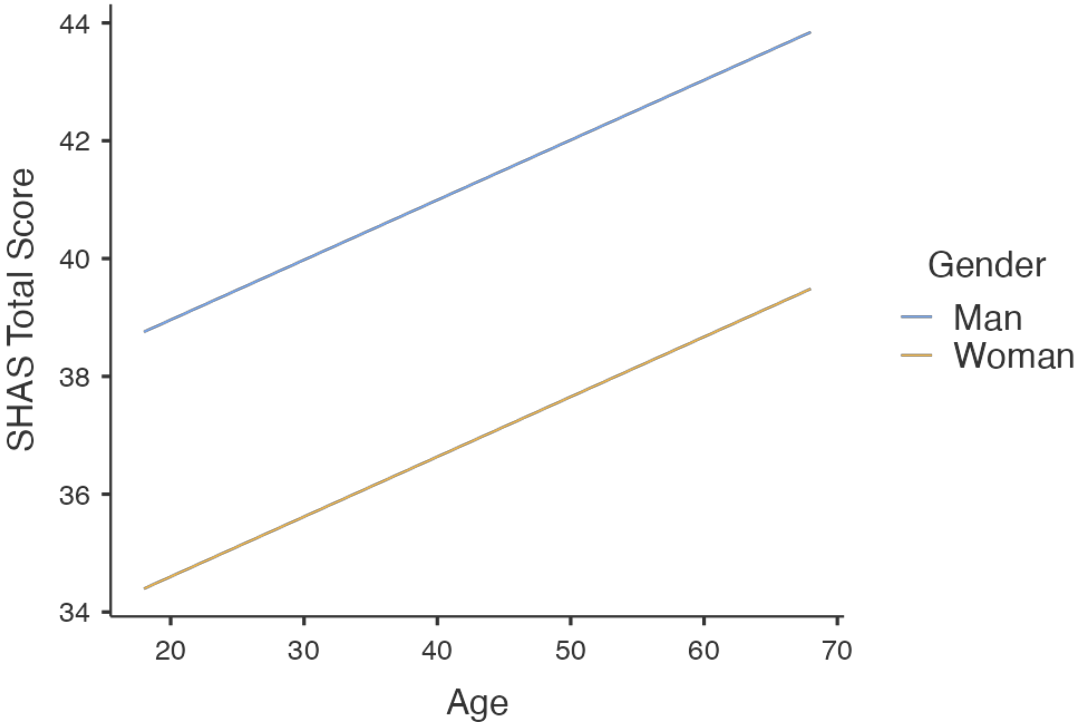


Figure 6

Scores in the SHAS, depending on age and gender.



In order to dive deeper into these gender differences, a general linear model was conducted with the SHAS Total Score as a dependent variable, and age and gender as independent variables. This ANOVA allowed us to compare the means between both gender groups as well as the interaction between age and gender. The general model results were significant for gender ($F(1) = 44.08, p < .001$) and age ($F(1) = 19.93, p < .001$), which is concordant with the regression results, but no significant results were discovered for their interaction ($F(1) = 0.20, p = .656$) (see Table 5). Post Hoc Comparisons with Bonferroni Corrections confirmed that statistically men and women were highly different in their SHAS Total Score ($MD = 4.38, SE = 0.66, t(757) = 6.64, p < .001$).

Table 5

ANOVA Omnibus tests.

	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Model	3	24.657	< .001***
Gender	1	44.076	< .001***
Age	1	19.929	< .001***
Gender * Age	1	0.199	.656

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

DISCUSSION

Even though there exists research on sexual harassment and its negative impacts (e.g. Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Munson et al., 2000; Willness et al., 2007), the effects social norms can have on behaviour (e.g. Cialdini et al., 2006; Cialdini & Jacobson, 2021; Fabiano et al., 2003; Goldstein et al., 2007; Mortensen et al., 2019; Neighbors et al., 2004; Robinson et al., 2013; Schultz et al., 2018), and on bystander intervention (e.g. Mallett et al., 2021; Swim & Hyers, 1999; Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001), there is a lack of research analysing the impact social norms can have on bystander intervention in cases of sexual harassment. Therefore, this present study aimed to investigate the research question: *“What is the effect of different social norms and one’s tolerance for sexual harassment on the willingness of a bystander to intervene in a situation of sexual harassment at work?”*

The relation between tolerance for sexual harassment and helping behaviour

The relationship between tolerance for sexual harassment and helping behaviour was analysed through our first hypothesis. Our results indicate that higher levels of tolerance for sexual harassment comes with less helping behaviour, which means that people who tolerate more sexually harassing behaviours, seem to intervene less than people who tolerate fewer of these behaviours. These findings were expected and coincide with previous literature by Bitton and Shaul (2013) who found people with higher levels of tolerance to consider less behaviours as sexually harassing, and thereby accept more of them. A recent publication by Brown and Biefeld (2023) explains the existence of this phenomenon in adults via the developmental process people go through in their childhood and adolescence, in which an environment is created where sexual harassment on women can flourish. More specifically, they mention the bioecological theory of sexual harassment of girls (Brown et al., 2020), which presents the high numbers of sexual harassment and tolerance for sexual harassment as being developmental repercussions of specific sociocultural contexts we grow up in. This development seems to be linked and happen through different distal and proximal contexts such as media usage, gendered socialisation, interpersonal interactions, and educational settings that foster dominant and aggressive behaviours in boys, while girls are encouraged to be passive and objectified (Brown & Biefeld, 2023). This developmental process by Brown and colleagues (2020) may be an explanation for our results indicating that some people have higher levels of tolerance for sexual harassment than others, and thereby intervene less.

The relation between social norms and helping behaviour

Following, we analysed the relationship between social norms and helping behaviour through our second and third hypothesis. Our results suggest that there is no relation between the use of social norms and helping behaviour, which means that social norms do not seem to have any direct effect on people's helping behaviour within this context. However, we could observe that there seems to be a difference in helping behaviour when comparing people who were not confronted to any norms to people who were. People who were confronted to social norms, tended to portray more helping behaviour than people who were not confronted to any norms. Even though these results only portrayed a tendency and no actual significant difference, this tendency is so close to a significant result, making it valuable and interesting to research further in the future, while taking the upcoming limitations and recommendations of this study into account.

The presence of this tendency, and potentially significant result, partly corresponds with the expectations we had based on previous literature (e.g. Cialdini et al., 2006; Park & Smith, 2007). As discussed earlier, Park and Smith (2007) explained how the SNA may be used to correct people's misperceptions between perceived and actual norms, which again could influence them to change their behaviour. Accordingly, our findings portray that the use of social norms may potentially have the power to increase peoples' helping behaviour. However, further research is needed to study and reanalyse this relationship in order to obtain more precise insights.

A more recent study by Reynolds-Tylus et al. (2023) analysed the impact of trending and descriptive norms on college students alcohol consumption. Their results also concord with our expectations, observing more positive behavioural change in participants which were confronted with any social norms than those who were not confronted to any norms. However, even if this study supports our hypothesis about social norms having an impact on peoples behaviour, their study did not analyse the impact of social norms on specifically helping behaviour, which is our main interest. Thus, future studies on this topic are necessary in order to get more clarity regarding the use of social norms in bystander effect prevention.

The results of the third hypothesis indicate that bystanders did not intervene differently depending on the specific type of social norms they were presented with (trending norms or descriptive/injunctive norms). These findings were unexpected considering previous research having observed trending norms to lead to more helping behaviour than descriptive norms (Hüynen, 2019; Mortensen et al., 2019). Newer research on the impact of social norms, presents experimental evidence that the use of trending norms messages decreases students'

sedentary behaviour (Anderson et al., 2022). In this study, Anderson et al. (2022) compared four conditions which were trending norms, dynamic norms, descriptive norms and a control condition. Trending norms and dynamic norms are very similar, considering that both represent the idea that people are increasingly changing their behaviour, although they differ in one specific aspect (Anderson et al., 2022). However, according to the author, trending norms explicitly give two time points between which the behavioural change has taken place, while dynamic norms do not mention a specific time frame (Anderson et al., 2022; Mortensen et al., 2019). Hence, the interesting part is that even if both those norms are very close to each other, Anderson et al. (2022) still found trending norms to have a significantly stronger effect on participants' behaviour than all the other norms, which portrays the strong effect trending norms can have on people's behaviour. While these observations were in line with what we were expecting, they were not consistent with our findings. Taking Anderson and colleagues (2002) study into consideration, our trending norms text may have not been clear enough in specifying both time points between which the alleged change had taken place, which may have made the text less impactful. Nonetheless, one can also find some new research on the effect of social norms where no behavioural differences were observed in participants when confronted to either descriptive or trending norms (Geber et al., 2022; Reynolds-Tylus et al., 2023), which again coincides with our findings. Be that as it may, none of the three aforementioned studies analysed the impact of social norms on specifically helping behaviour and can therefore not be used as direct comparisons to our findings. This again reinforces the idea that more research regarding the impact of the different social norms on specifically helping behaviour in situations of sexual harassment is needed.

For both our analyses regarding the relation between social norms and helping behaviour, our findings were not significant, yet interesting, and important. The non-significant outcomes could potentially be due to the norms texts not being impactful enough, not making the presence and difference of norms clear enough to the participants. This may be the case considering that a significant difference was expected in both cases, and has previously been found in older (e.g. Cialdini et al., 2006; Hüynen, 2019; Mortensen et al., 2019; Park & Smith, 2007) as well as newer studies (e.g. Anderson et al., 2022; Reynolds-Tylus et al., 2023).

The impact of social norms and tolerance for sexual harassment on helping behaviour

In this next step, we analysed the impact of both social norms and tolerance for sexual harassment on peoples helping behaviour through our fourth and fifth hypotheses. Our results show that people with higher levels of tolerance for sexual harassment, which are not presented with any social norms, portray the least helping behaviour of all participants. These findings were expected considering it previously has been shown that people with higher levels of tolerance accept more sexually harassing behaviour (Bitton & Shaul, 2013), and that when no norms are presented, there is nothing influencing and correcting the misperceptions some people may have (Park & Smith, 2007). Comparing this to our previous findings regarding the relation between social norms and helping behaviour only, we did find a nearly significant difference between the use of any or no norms. The fact that adding the variable of tolerance for sexual harassment to the social norms strengthened our findings, could point in the direction of our social norm texts not being sufficiently distinct to yield a significant result.

Still, even if one could expect it, our findings do not show the use of trending norms and low levels of tolerance for sexual harassment being linked to the highest levels of helping behaviour. In fact, no difference could be observed in helping behaviour for participants with low levels of tolerance for sexual harassment when comparing between the presence of trending norms, descriptive/injunctive norms, or no norms. Knowing that previous literature has shown people with lower levels of tolerance for sexual harassment to consider a broader range of behaviours as sexually harassing (Bitton & Shaul, 2013), and trending norms to encourage people to act in a certain way (Hüynen, 2019; Mortensen et al., 2019), these findings may appear surprising. Nevertheless, taking our previous findings into consideration, where no differences could be found between the use of trending or descriptive/injunctive norms, this could explain the absence of significant results in this specific analysis.

Further findings

Legal status

Further interesting results were discovered through our analyses. First of all, it seems like people's relationship status may play a role regarding their willingness to help in situations of sexual harassment. Our findings show that single and divorced/separated participants tended to portray less helping behaviour than married or legally cohabiting participants. The results not being significant, but portraying a trend, makes one question if people really act differently based on their relationship status. In a previous study by Kara and Toygar (2019) on gender differences in people's attitude towards sexual harassment, the authors found marital status to impact male and female participants answers in certain situations. More specifically, the authors compared people's attitude in three different factors combining items that either explained sexual harassment as being a form of provocative behaviours, normal flirtations, or discrimination. When controlling for marital status, answers significantly differed between male and female participants in the factor describing sexual harassment as normal flirtations (Kara & Toygar, 2019). These findings could explain our results which are showing a tendency to portray more or less helping behaviour depending on someone's legal status.

Another presumption one could make, is that participants that have a partner may portray more helping behaviour, as they may imagine their partner being the person that is getting harassed, which may push them to intervene faster. Simultaneously, it may be possible that single participants do not make this connection pushing them to intervene, as they do not have a partner they can imagine being in this situation. It is however important to keep in mind that this is an assumption, and that further research on this topic would be needed in order to understand why and if people's relationship status plays a role in helping behaviour.

Helping behaviour, gender & tolerance for sexual harassment

It seems like women with lower levels of tolerance for sexual harassment portrayed a lot more helping behaviour than women with higher levels of tolerance for sexual harassment. Having seen that tolerance of sexual harassment has an impact on helping behaviour through our own findings, as well as through supporting literature (Bitton & Shaul, 2013), these results were not surprising. However, the particularly interesting aspect of our results is that this difference was not found among men in the same situation. In other words, men with lower levels of tolerance for sexual harassment did not show more helping behaviour than men with higher levels. One could then only wonder why this difference is not observable for

men. A first possible explanation could be that because our study counted twice as many female respondents than male, the smaller data pool did not allow to observe a clear difference between male participants. Another consideration on why this difference between men and women may be the case, will be discussed in the next section.

Tolerance for sexual harassment, age & gender

By conducting some additional analyses, we discovered that age and gender play an important role in predicting tolerance for sexual harassment. First of all, in our analyses men seem to generally have a higher tolerance for sexual harassment than women. Both men and women's tolerance levels increase with age; however, men still seem to maintain a higher level of tolerance than women, which is in line with previous research (Bitton & Shaul, 2013; Kara & Toygar, 2019; McCabe & Hardman, 2005; Rothgerber et al., 2021). This could partly explain our previous findings regarding men not showing any difference in helping behaviour independently of their tolerance of sexual harassment. If one considers that men generally have higher levels of tolerance for sexual harassment than women and knowing that higher levels of tolerance lead to less helping behaviour; this may be the reason why even with lower scores, men do not present more helping behaviour than with higher scores.

Moreover, younger participants seem to be the least tolerant for sexual harassment, with their tolerance clearly increasing with age. These results contradict previous findings by Ohse and Stockdale (2008) as well as Reilly et al. (1986) which suggested the opposite with younger people exhibiting higher tolerance for sexual harassment than older people. Our findings also contradict Ford and Donis's (1996) findings where tolerance for sexual harassment increased for men aged over 50 and decreased for women aged over 50.

An explanation for these different observations could be that all these previously mentioned studies are from before the #MeToo movement. With young people becoming more politically engaged by actively participating in demonstrations (Melo & Stockemer, 2014) and being more conscious of sexual harassment following the #MeToo movement, this may explain why younger people seem to be the least tolerant when it comes to sexual harassment nowadays. Before #MeToo and the rise of mediatisation, people may have been aware of the existence of sexual harassment, but it was a more of a concealed, individual issue, that was not talked about openly. With younger generations being the main social media consumers, they probably are the part of the population that has been exposed to the #MeToo movement the most. They have had the most time to learn and understand the impact sexual harassment can have on people's lives, and were part of transforming "individual

narratives into a collective story” (Dalton & Smith, 2023, p.167). The amount of insight younger people may have gotten on victims and bystanders experiences might thus have impacted their attitude towards sexual harassment and lowered their tolerance for it.

As previously seen, when considering both age and gender, Ford and Donis (1996) found that young men tolerated sexual harassment the most, as opposed to young women who appeared to tolerate it the least. However, while our results also show young women to be the least inclined to tolerate sexual harassment, it appears that older men tolerate sexual harassment the most, which also contradicts the previous results by Ford and Donis (1996). Having seen that tolerance for sexual harassment develops over time (Brown et al., 2020; Brown & Biefeld, 2023), and that men generally present higher levels of it (Bitton & Shaul, 2013; Kara & Toygar, 2019; McCabe & Hardman, 2005; Rothgerber et al., 2021) this could explain why old men were found to be the most likely to tolerate sexual harassment.

Again, taking Brown and Biefeld’s (2023) explanation regarding the development of tolerance for sexual harassment into account, one can understand that evolving in an environment which encourages passiveness and objectification in girls, while promoting dominance and aggressiveness in boys, may lead to future adult women and men accepting sexual harassment as a cultural norm, with men also being the perpetrators. Even though people seem to have gotten more aware of the presence and dangers of sexual harassment after the #MeToo movement (Langone, 2018), cultural acceptance of sexual harassment is still a reality to this day (Brown & Biefeld, 2023). It is therefore highly interesting to observe that even as women grow up accepting sexual harassment as a cultural norm, they still seem to be less tolerant of such behaviours than men, independently of their age. The assumption that can be made is that as women are still the main victims of sexual harassment (Goblet & Glowacz, 2018), it might be easier for them to understand the negative consequences of this type of behaviour, whereas the perpetrators, being mainly men, are often unaware of the impact it has on the victims (Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Swim et al., 2001). Putting this in relation to our findings where men generally portray higher levels of tolerance, and high tolerance leading to less helping behaviour, it strongly emphasizes the necessity of making men aware of the negative impact such behaviour has. In making them aware of the consequences, one may reduce their tolerance, increase their helping behaviour, and encourage them to act as allies.

Implications

The findings of this present study introduce some implications for researchers as well as organisational managers on the development and knowledge on the use of social norms to reduce sexual harassment and encourage helping behaviour. The findings of this present study are very relevant as they may constitute an important base for future research regarding the use of social norms to increase bystander intervention in cases of sexual harassment at work. Further research on our findings may contribute to creating or reinforcing sexual harassment prevention programmes at work as well as developing organisational climates, leading to improved working conditions, and enhanced employee wellbeing. Developing research on this topic may allow to extend the scope of literature on sexual harassment, social norms, and bystander intervention.

First of all, our results show the presence of social norms to have a tendency to impact people's behaviour more, than when no norms are presented. Our findings also suggest that people with higher levels of tolerance do not only consider less behaviours as sexually harassing (Bitton & Shaul, 2013), but also actually portray less helping behaviour when witnessing situations of sexual harassment at work. In addition, we found that when people have higher levels of tolerance for sexual harassment, and no social norms are presented, they portray the least helping behaviour. All these results build on existing evidence of social norms and tolerance for sexual harassment being able to influence people's attitude (e.g. Bitton & Shaul, 2013; Cialdini et al., 2006; Neighbors et al., 2004; Schultz et al., 2018). With tolerance of sexual harassment seemingly having such an important impact on helping behaviour in situations of sexual harassment, it makes people's level of tolerance a crucial aspect to take into consideration when creating preventive training programmes hoping to reduce sexual harassment and increase helping behaviour. Our findings show that tolerance of sexual harassment may be one of the first aspects to study and to work on in order to increase helping behaviour in situations of sexual harassment in the future. Researching further, one may then find which combination of social norms works the best on increasing helping behaviour depending on people's level of tolerance for sexual harassment.

Following, having found that age and gender also seem to be important predictors of tolerance for sexual harassment, and that one's legal status may also play an important part in helping behaviour in cases of sexual harassment at work, this information can be used when researching further on how to lower people's tolerance for sexual harassment and increase helping behaviour. Given that our results show that young people are the least tolerant, which is challenging previous research (i.e. Ohse & Stockdale, 2008; Reilly et al., 1986), one could,

if further research supports our findings, use this knowledge to one's advantage. Based on Brown and Biefeld's (2023) explanation on development of tolerance of sexual harassment in childhood and adolescence, as well as the suggested bioecological theory of sexual harassment of girls (Brown et al., 2020), our findings may constitute a base allowing to study how to keep peoples levels of tolerance low and steady, preventing the rise of one's tolerance as early as possible, and thereby possibly increasing helping behaviour.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

In this upcoming section, the various limitations encountered during this research project will be discussed and recommendations for future research will be formulated. These limitations and recommendations will allow improved replications of this present study in the future.

One first limitation, is the fact that this present research project was composed of three individual studies. As previously explained, the three respective studies differed in their organisational climates (absence of support, zero tolerance policy or active fighting against sexual harassment), and in one independent variable (tolerance for sexual harassment, ambivalent sexism, or rape myth acceptance). This means that the duration of the study was quite long, considering that participants had to answer all the questionnaires, independently of the condition they randomly were assigned to. If we consider the participation and drop-out rates of the entire combined research project, it is possible that the duration may have led many to interrupt their participation, which could have provided valuable data for our study. In order to avoid this phenomenon in the future, one could try to just focus on one of the three different conditions, by conducting individual studies, shortening the duration and thereby encouraging respondents to remain focused and to complete their participation.

Another recommendation could be to compare all three organisational climates, which means comparing the data of the three respective studies that have been conducted. Previous research has shown the importance of organisational climates regarding the prevalence of sexual harassment at work (e.g. O'Connell & Korabik, 2000; Pina & Gannon, 2012). Newer research by Xie and Zheng (2023) reconfirmed the importance of organisational climates by studying peoples psychological well-being in relation to the organisations tolerance of sexual harassment and bullying. Therefore, comparing these three specific climates or reproducing a study comparing the climates could be beneficial and interesting for organisations, regarding their policies around sexual harassment and how to ensure their employee's well-being.

As seen in our results, some of our important analyses show a nearly significant result, which means the p value is not strong enough for one to be able to talk of a definite significant effect. As previously mentioned, this could potentially have been due to the social norms texts not being different enough. The social norms texts were pre-tested, and a few modifications were made in the descriptive/injunctive norms text in order to make it differ more from the trending norms text. However, it may be possible that the texts still were not sufficiently distinct for participants to act highly differently. In 2019, Hüynen had found a significant result for the use of trending norms on helping behaviour in her study, by using

posters with an image and text to present the norms. Another recent study in which one wanted to see if social norms presented through posters could help to reduce bribery, the authors found their poster campaign to have an impact (Köbis et al., 2022). Therefore, one could try to add images, graphs, and/or figures to the text, accentuating the social norm one is trying to present in more than one manner in future studies. One could also conduct pre-tests again with the added images, figures and/or graphs to be sure the texts have clear and dissimilar impacts on the reader.

Further, it is important to acknowledge that our study was conducted online. Online studies are very practical considering people do not have to be physically present to participate, however this may also be a disadvantage. For example, online studies can lead to sample bias (Alessi & Martin, 2010), as participants might share the questionnaire with friends having comparable opinions and interests, possibly leading to an disproportionate representation of a particular perspective (Ball, 2019). Moreover, our study analysed bystander intervention, but did not allow to clearly measure the bystander effect, considering that no other witnesses were physically present. In case of a replication of this study in the future, one could still conduct it on a computer, but in a specific experimental setting where participants could be in presence of other witnesses. In this case the researchers would also be present which would also allow participants to directly ask questions if needed, which again might decrease dropout rates.

Another important aspect is the fact that the sexually harassing behaviour may not be taken as seriously when reading it as if it is being heard or seen. One could assume that some people may be more or less shocked when seeing, hearing or reading sexually harassing things. Taking this into account, an idea for future research could be to either present participants with videos where they can observe the different situations, and/or voice recordings where they get to hear them. This way one could discover if seeing or hearing sexually harassing behaviours may have another impact on helping behaviour than reading it. Further research on this topic may be very important considering that trainings and prevention programmes may need to be adapted based on the different forms people can be witnesses and bystanders to sexual harassment at work.

One of the main objectives of this research project was to find ways how one can turn men into allies in cases of sexual harassment at work, by studying the use of different social norms. We have found that the use of any norms probably has more impact than no norms, however our findings could not reveal more detail on the different specific norms. Be that as it may, using the findings of this entire research project, by replicating it with some

improvements, one may be able to get some clearer answers in the future on how men can be turned in to allies in situations of sexual harassment, what social norms have the most impact, and which organisational climate encourages it the most. It would however also be important to conduct research on how to also encourage women to be allies in the future. Even if men would have the most impact when intervening (Drury & Kaiser, 2014), previous studies have shown that women actually intervene much less than they anticipate on doing (Swim & Hyers, 1999; Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001), and that they are more likely to ignore it (Mallett et al., 2021). Surely, having both men and women acting as allies would be more beneficial than any of them tolerating sexually harassing behaviours. Considering the previous findings by Mallett et al. (2021) where they discovered that women who disregarded sexist statements aligned their beliefs with their actions and showed more tolerance than women who confronted it, it is important to also make women aware of this phenomenon which may lead to the bystander effect and therefore less helping behaviour.

Moreover, this means organisations could try to implement more trainings and preventive exercises for their employees in order to teach them how, and when, to report and intervene in a safe and compassionate manner. Trainings like these may potentially reduce the bystander effect, increase helping behaviour and thereby maybe even reduce sexual harassment by creating a safe and caring work environment.

At last, in our study we only focused on adults ages 18 and more, such as most studies on this topic do when talking about sexual harassment at work. However, it could be important to focus more on bystander effect and sexual harassment prevention in children and adolescents from early on. As we have seen through previous studies (e.g. Brown et al., 2020; Brown & Biefeld, 2023), tolerance for sexual harassment can already develop during infancy and adolescence, which means that may be the best time to intervene if one wants to have more adults acting as allies and not tolerating sexual harassment. Thus, if one manages to do preventive work from early on, one may have less adults that tolerate sexually harassing behaviours, which may consequently lead to more bystander intervention and less sexual harassment.

CONCLUSIONS

This present study was conducted in order to analyse the effect of social norms and one's tolerance of sexual harassment on bystander intervention in cases of sexual harassment at work. Despite its limitations, our study provides some interesting insight on the relationship between social norms, tolerance of sexual harassment and bystander intervention in cases of sexual harassment. Our results showed that social norms generally lead to a tendency of more helping behaviour than the use of no norms, and that tolerance of sexual harassment has a strong impact on helping behaviour. Consequently, we found high levels of tolerance and the absence of norms to lead to the least helping behaviour in bystanders. Moreover, our findings showed that participants without a partner generally tend to present less helping behaviour than participants having one.

Regarding age and gender, we discovered both to be important predictors of tolerance for sexual harassment. Men generally presented higher levels of tolerance for sexual harassment than women, independently of their age, and the older they were, the more the tolerance climbed for both. A novel finding of this research project was that young people portray much lower tolerance for sexual harassment than older people, which challenges previous findings (Ohse & Stockdale, 2008; Reilly et al., 1986).

The importance of social norms but even more of tolerance of sexual harassment in relation to helping behaviour in cases of sexual harassment, is demonstrated through our results. These aspects should be taken into consideration when creating new, as well as when using more of the already specifically created trainings or interventions aiming to prevent sexual harassment and encourage bystander intervention. In the context of future studies, it would be of great importance to analyse more in depth which social norms have the most impact on bystander intervention in situations of sexual harassment at work. At last, focusing on preventing the rise of tolerance for sexual harassment with age would allow to have less adults that tolerate sexually harassing behaviours, which could consequently lead to more bystander intervention.

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APPENDIX A

Climate and social norms texts

Absence of support

« La politique de notre entreprise est avant tout l'égalité, le respect et le professionnalisme. La santé tant psychique que physique de nos employés sera toujours une priorité. Il est important de savoir travailler en harmonie, néanmoins l'autonomie et l'indépendance de chaque employé est mise en avant. Cependant, toute forme de harcèlement ou de discrimination va à l'encontre de notre politique. »

Descriptive / injunctive norms

« Le harcèlement sexuel au travail est une réalité qui est de plus en plus présente. Toutefois, des enquêtes antérieures ont révélé que 4 hommes sur 5 interviennent en situation de harcèlement sexuel pour y mettre un terme. On observe donc que la majorité des hommes réagissent et reportent les gestes ambigus. De plus, lorsqu'ils sont interrogés sur l'importance qu'ils accordent à intervenir lorsqu'ils sont témoins d'une situation de harcèlement sexuel, 85% des hommes estiment que c'est inacceptable de ne pas réagir et qu'il est normal de mettre fin au harcèlement sexuel dont ils sont témoins. Dès lors, il est naturel et attendu de tout le personnel de notre entreprise d'agir concrètement à l'encontre de tout geste de harcèlement sexuel, en les dénonçant et/ou en intervenant directement. »

Trending norms

« Le harcèlement sexuel au travail est une réalité qui est de plus en plus présente. Toutefois, des enquêtes antérieures ont révélé une augmentation de l'intervention des tiers lors de situations de harcèlement sexuel. Concrètement, bien que ce phénomène ne soit encore le fait que d'une minorité, on observe que de plus en plus d'hommes réagissent dans ces situations et reportent les gestes ambigus. En effet, on remarque, chez les employés masculins, que les cas de dénonciation de faits de harcèlement sexuel sont de plus en plus nombreux et la tendance semble prendre de l'ampleur chaque année. »

APPENDIX B

Situations and messages

Situation 1

« Monsieur B. et Madame V. sont agents immobiliers chez Ventura. Depuis le déménagement des locaux de Ventura, les bureaux de Monsieur B. et Madame V. sont adjacents. Monsieur B. envoie des messages à Madame V. »

1. Je me permets de vous dire que je suis content de travailler avec vous, vous êtes très professionnelle.
2. Permettez-moi de vous dire que vous êtes très douée, vous êtes faite pour ce travail !
3. Je tenais à te dire que j'aime beaucoup te regarder marcher quand tu passes devant mon bureau.
4. Bonjour, j'aimerais fixer un rendez-vous avec vous pour que nous discutons de votre méthode et efficacité dans votre travail.
5. Encore une vente réalisée de ta part comme celle d'aujourd'hui et je ne te promets pas d'arriver à te résister.
6. J'adore sentir tes lèvres contre ma joue quand tu me fais la bise, ça me fait un de ces effets !
7. Encore une journée de travail agitée comme celle-ci avec toi, et je sens qu'on transpirera pour d'autres raisons !?
8. On peut se retrouver demain, je sens qu'on arrivera à trouver une méthode à vendre la maison d'une manière aussi séduisante que ta façon de parler.
9. J'aimerais beaucoup voir comment tu t'actives dans un contexte plus intime...
10. L'atmosphère de travail était chouette aujourd'hui. On devrait collaborer étroitement plus souvent...
11. Tout à l'heure j'ai vu la façon dont ta bouche bouge quand tu parles aux clients... à mon avis tu dois savoir faire plein d'autres choses avec.
12. Tu me dis tout le temps que t'as trop de travail et que t'es stressée. C'est que ton mari ne te donne pas assez au lit pour te détresser. Je peux y remédier si tu veux.

Situation 2

« Monsieur A. est assistant de direction de l'agence Ventura à Liège. Madame F est assistante de direction de l'agence Ventura à Namur. Monsieur A. envoie des messages à Madame F. »

1. Bonjour, n'oubliez pas que nous avons une réunion demain matin à 9h.
2. Pourrions-nous fixer un rdv ensemble afin de discuter des projets?
3. Salut ma belle, aurais-tu du temps pour qu'on se voit afin d'affiner nos recherches ?
4. Bonjour, par rapport aux projets, sauriez-vous m'envoyer les documents nécessaires pour les annexes ?
5. Si tu as besoin d'autres conseils, notamment sur des choses qui ne sont pas en rapport avec le travail, n'hésite pas à m'envoyer un message...
6. Tout à l'heure j'ai vu la façon dont ta bouche bouge quand tu parles aux clients... à mon avis tu dois savoir faire plein d'autres choses avec.
7. Bonjour, je me réjouis de notre réunion de projet, votre poste vous donne une allure de femme dominatrice et cela me plaît beaucoup. Vivement lundi!
8. L'atmosphère de travail était chouette aujourd'hui. On devrait collaborer étroitement plus souvent...
9. Tu me dis tout le temps que t'as trop de travail et que t'es stressée. C'est que ton mari ne te donne pas assez au lit pour te détresser. Je peux y remédier si tu veux.
10. Coucou beauté, en parlant de projet tu n'en aurais pas un en anatomie avec moi par hasard ?
11. Salut toi, vu la manière dont tu t'occupes bien du projet, je me demandais si tu pouvais aussi bien t'occuper de moi ?
12. On peut se voir demain pour discuter ? Je m'occuperai de trouver un endroit calme pour notre rendez-vous, en mode : baisse ta culotte, c'est moi qui pilote !

Situation 3

« Monsieur R., et Madame U. sont assistants administratifs chez Ventura depuis 2014. Actuellement ils collaborent sur un nouveau projet. Monsieur R. envoie des messages à Madame U. »

1. Bonjour, j'aimerais fixer un rendez-vous avec vous pour que nous discutons de votre méthode et efficacité dans votre travail.
2. Je me permets de vous dire que je suis content de travailler avec vous, vous êtes très professionnelle.
3. L'atmosphère de travail était chouette aujourd'hui. On devrait collaborer étroitement plus souvent...
4. Bonjour, n'oubliez pas que nous avons une réunion demain matin à 9h.
5. Salut ma belle, aurais-tu du temps pour qu'on se voit afin d'affiner nos recherches ?
6. Salut ma belle, je te donne rendez-vous demain après le repas de service pour un petit dessert...
7. Salut toi, vu la manière dont tu t'occupes bien du travail du projet, je me demandais si tu pouvais aussi bien t'occuper de moi ?
8. Coucou beauté, en parlant de projet, tu n'en aurais pas un en anatomie avec moi par hasard ?
9. Ça tente de venir essayer le canapé de mon bureau demain ?
10. Tu n'avais pas l'air d'aller super bien aujourd'hui, quelque chose ne va pas avec ton mari ?
11. Tu me dis tout le temps que t'as trop de travail et que t'es stressée. C'est que ton mari ne te donne pas assez au lit pour te déstresser. Je peux y remédier si tu veux.
12. Salut, je vais aller franco. Si tu veux que je fasse tout le travail et que je mette ton nom à la fin, il suffit que tu me fasses une gâterie. Alors proposition acceptée ?

Situation 4

« En tant que directeur des ressources humaines, Monsieur H. est chargé de s'occuper des licenciements, et de veiller au bon fonctionnement des nouveaux employés. Une nouvelle co-directrice est arrivée dans l'entreprise, Madame C., et il doit la contacter par e-mail pour faire un point sur son premier mois de travail. Monsieur H. envoie des messages à Madame C. »

1. Je me permets de vous dire que je suis content de travailler avec vous, vous êtes très professionnelle.
2. Bonjour, n'oubliez pas que nous avons une réunion demain matin à 9h.
3. Si tu as besoin d'autres conseils, notamment sur des choses qui ne sont pas en rapport avec le travail, n'hésite pas à m'envoyer un message...
4. Permettez-moi de vous dire que vous êtes très douée, vous êtes faite pour ça !
5. Coucou beauté, en parlant de projet tu n'en aurais pas un en anatomie avec moi par hasard ?
6. Salut toi, vu la manière dont tu t'occupes bien du travail du projet, je me demandais si tu pouvais aussi bien t'occuper de moi ?
7. On peut se voir demain pour discuter ? Je m'occuperai de trouver un endroit calme pour notre rendez-vous, en mode : baisse ta culotte, c'est moi qui pilote !
8. Je te trouve très intéressante, tu me donnes très envie d'en connaître davantage sur toi.
9. Tout à l'heure j'ai vu la façon dont ta bouche bouge quand tu parles aux clients... à mon avis tu dois savoir faire plein d'autres choses avec.
10. L'atmosphère de travail était chouette aujourd'hui. On devrait collaborer étroitement plus souvent...
11. Ça tente de venir essayer le canapé de mon bureau demain ?
12. Tu me dis tout le temps que t'as trop de travail et que t'es stressée. C'est que ton mari ne te donne pas assez au lit pour te détresser. Je peux y remédier si tu veux.

Situation 5

« Monsieur T. est chef de l'équipe de vente chez Ventura. Il collabore avec Madame Y., chef de l'équipe logistique, à qui il communique régulièrement ses données sous forme de rapports bimensuels. Monsieur T. envoie des messages à Madame Y. »

1. Permettez-moi de vous dire que vous êtes très douée, vous êtes faite pour ça !
2. Bonjour, je ne suis pas sûr d'avoir toutes les informations dont j'ai besoin pour mon rapport, on peut se voir quelques minutes ?
3. Tu étais vraiment ravissante aujourd'hui, ce sourire t'allait à merveille.
4. Permettez-moi de vous dire que je suis très content de travailler avec vous, vous êtes très professionnelle.
5. Tu n'avais pas l'air d'aller super bien aujourd'hui, quelque chose ne va pas avec ton mari ?
6. Bonjour ma chère collègue, j'ai oublié de te dire que je partirai plus tôt cet après-midi, est-ce grave ? Ou vais-je recevoir de ta part une bonne punition ?
7. Tu me dis tout le temps que t'as trop de travail et que t'es stressée. C'est que ton mari ne te donne pas assez au lit pour te détresser. Je peux y remédier si tu veux.
8. L'atmosphère de travail était chouette aujourd'hui. On devrait collaborer étroitement plus souvent...
9. Tout à l'heure j'ai vu la façon dont ta bouche bouge quand tu parles aux clients... À mon avis tu dois savoir faire plein d'autres choses avec.
10. Salut ma belle, aurais-tu du temps pour qu'on se voit afin d'affiner nos recherches ?
11. Salut, je vais aller franco. Si tu veux que je fasse tout le travail et que je mette ton nom à la fin, il suffit que tu me fasses une gâterie. Alors proposition acceptée ?
12. Salut toi, vu la manière dont tu t'occupes bien du travail du projet, je me demandais si tu pouvais aussi bien t'occuper de moi ?

Situation 6

« François G. et Manon S. sont en formation d'agent immobilier au sein de Ventura et sont amenés à travailler en binôme. François G. envoie des messages à Manon S. »

1. Bonjour, serait-il possible que nous organisions une rencontre avant la fin de notre formation pour que nous puissions signer les papiers manquants ?
2. Bonjour, par rapport aux projets, sauriez-vous m'envoyer les documents nécessaires pour les annexes ?
3. Salut ma belle, aurais-tu du temps pour qu'on se voit afin d'affiner nos recherches ?
4. Pourrions-nous fixer un rdv ensemble afin de discuter des projets ?
5. L'atmosphère de travail était chouette aujourd'hui. On devrait collaborer étroitement plus souvent...
6. Tu me dis tout le temps que t'as trop de travail et que t'es stressée. C'est que ton mari ne te donne pas assez au lit pour te détresser. Je peux y remédier si tu veux.
7. Salut belle gosse, pour la partie juridique "Droit des propriétés" du rapport, tu ne voudrais pas qu'on essaye l'article 69 ? ;-)) On peut se voir demain pour le mettre en application ?
8. Je vous invite à prendre un verre ensemble afin que nous discussions en privé de notre formation ?
9. Salut toi, vu la manière dont tu t'occupes bien du projet, je me demandais si tu pouvais aussi bien t'occuper de moi ?
10. Je te trouve très intéressante, tu me donnes très envie d'en connaître davantage sur toi.
11. Je m'occuperai de trouver un endroit calme pour notre rendez-vous, en mode : baisse ta culotte, c'est moi qui pilote !
12. Bonjour, je me réjouis de notre réunion de projet, votre poste vous donne une allure de femme dominatrice et cela me plaît beaucoup. Vivement lundi!

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire Example of Condition 1 (Trending norms)

Information sheet and consent form



Faculté de Psychologie, Logopédie et Sciences de l'Education

Systeme d'enquetes en ligne

Module administrateur : vous gérez vos questionnaires [Aide...](#)

Enquête sur un système de communication professionnel interne en phase de développement.

Cette enquête a pour objectif de tester un système professionnel de communication interne qui est en phase de développement, dans diverses situations sociales sur le lieu de travail. Il vous sera demandé de répondre à plusieurs questions en lien avec un texte court. Cette enquête prend 15 à 20 minutes à compléter. Cette enquête est anonyme.

D'avance, merci pour votre participation !

Informations Éthiques

▼ Détails

Toutes les informations récoltées au cours de cette étude seront utilisées dans la plus stricte confidentialité et seuls les expérimentatrices et responsables de l'étude, auront accès aux données récoltées. Toutes les données acquises dans le cadre de cette étude seront traitées de façon anonyme. Vous avez le droit de mettre fin à votre participation à tout moment, et ce, sans aucune justification nécessaire. Vos données privées conservées dans la base de données sécurisée sont soumises aux droits suivants : droits d'accès, de rectification et d'effacement de cette base de données. Pour exercer ces droits, vous devez vous adresser au chercheur responsable de l'étude ou, à défaut, au délégué à la protection des données de l'Université de Liège, dont les coordonnées se trouvent au bas du formulaire d'information. Les données issues de votre participation à cette recherche (données codées) seront quant à elles stockées pour une durée maximale de quatre ans. Si vous changez d'avis et décidez de ne plus participer à cette étude, nous ne recueillerons plus de données supplémentaires vous concernant et vos données d'identification seront détruites. Seules les données rendues anonymes pourront être conservées et traitées de façon statistique. Les modalités pratiques de gestion, traitement, conservation et destruction de vos données respectent le Règlement Général sur la Protection des Données (UE 2016/679), les droits du patient (loi du 22 août 2002) ainsi que la loi du 7 mai 2004 relative aux études sur la personne humaine. Toutes les procédures sont réalisées en accord avec les dernières recommandations européennes en matière de collecte et de partage de données. Ces traitements de données à caractère personnel seront réalisés dans le cadre de la mission d'intérêt public en matière de recherche reconnue à l'Université de Liège par le Décret définissant le paysage de l'enseignement supérieur et l'organisation académique des études du 7 novembre 2013, art.2. Une assurance a été souscrite au cas où vous subiriez un dommage lié à votre participation à cette recherche. Le promoteur assume, même sans faute, la responsabilité du dommage causé au participant (ou à ses ayants droit) et lié de manière directe ou indirecte à la participation à cette étude. Dans cette optique, le promoteur a souscrit un contrat d'assurance auprès d'Ethias, conformément à l'article 29 de la loi belge relative aux expérimentations sur la personne humaine (7 mai 2004).

Personnes à Contacter

▼ Détails

Vous avez le droit de poser toutes les questions que vous souhaitez sur cette recherche et d'en recevoir les résultats. Si vous avez des questions ou en cas de complication liée à l'étude, vous pouvez contacter les personnes suivantes :

- Cassielle.Auverlau@student.uliege.be (mémorante),
- Lea.Hackenberg@student.uliege.be (mémorante),
- Gaele.Pirard@student.uliege.be (mémorante),
- Asilvestre@uliege.be (chercheuse responsable).

► Détails

Pour participer à l'étude, veuillez cliquer sur le bouton "Commencer".

Cliquer sur ce bouton implique que :

- Vous avez lu et compris les informations reprises ci-dessus
- Vous consentez à la gestion et au traitement des données acquises telles que décrites ci-dessus
- Vous avez entre 18 et 67 ans
- Vous donnez votre consentement libre et éclairé pour participer à cette recherche

**COMMENCER**

Demographic questionnaire



Module administrateur : vous gérez vos questionnaires [Aide...](#)

* Quel âge avez-vous ?

* Quel est votre sexe ?

* Quel est votre état civil ?

* Quel type de profession exercez-vous ?

* Combien d'enfants avez-vous ?

* Quel est le plus haut diplôme que vous ayez obtenu ?

SUIVANT

Instructions



Module administrateur : vous gérez vos questionnaires [Aide...](#)

Au sein de Ventura & Co. Nous nous préoccupons du bien-être de nos employés. Pour cela, en association avec l'Université de Liège, nous réalisons une enquête qui nous aidera à mieux saisir quels comportements adopter pour le bien-être de l'entreprise et ses employés.

On vous demandera donc de vous imaginer que vous êtes un(e) salarié(e) dans notre entreprise.

Ventura dispose d'un système de messagerie instantané interne qui est en cours de construction. Étant donné que le système ne fonctionne pas encore parfaitement, votre tâche sera de décider si les messages échangés entre les employés seront transférés ou pas. Certains messages peuvent vous paraître similaires, mais nous vous demandons toutefois de les lire attentivement.

Attention, il est nécessaire de répondre à toutes les questions avant de pouvoir passer à la question suivante. Il n'est également pas possible d'effectuer de retour en arrière une fois la situation validée.

SUIVANT

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Organisational climate and trending norms text



Module administrateur : vous gérez vos questionnaires [Aide...](#)

Avant de commencer, veuillez s'il vous plaît lire la présentation de Ventura

Ventura & Co. est une société d'agence immobilière fondée en 1989. Depuis lors, nous nous engageons à offrir un accompagnement de qualité et une expertise orientée aux besoins des clients. Que ce soit pour louer, acheter, mettre sous location ou vendre, nos agents immobiliers seront présents à chaque étape. Le marché immobilier étant très instable, nos employés font preuve de rigueur et de compromis. En échange : un environnement de travail agréable, soutenant et encadrant est notre idéal.

La politique de notre entreprise est avant tout l'égalité, le respect et le professionnalisme. La santé tant psychique que physique de nos employés sera toujours une priorité. Il est important de savoir travailler en harmonie, néanmoins l'autonomie et l'indépendance de chaque employé est mise en avant. Cependant, toute forme de harcèlement ou de discrimination va à l'encontre de notre politique.

Le harcèlement sexuel au travail est une réalité qui est de plus en plus présente. Toutefois, des enquêtes antérieures ont révélé une augmentation de l'intervention des tiers lors de situations de harcèlement sexuel. Concrètement, bien que ce phénomène ne soit encore le fait que d'une minorité, on observe que de plus en plus d'hommes réagissent dans ces situations et reportent les gestes ambigus. En effet, on remarque, chez les employés masculins, que les cas de dénonciation de faits de harcèlement sexuel sont de plus en plus nombreux et la tendance semble prendre de l'ampleur chaque année.

SUIVANT

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Situations measuring bystander intervention



Module administrateur : vous gérez vos questionnaires [Aide...](#)

Situation 1

Monsieur B. et Madame V. sont agents immobiliers chez Ventura. Depuis le déménagement des locaux de Ventura, les bureaux de Monsieur B. et Madame V. sont adjacents.

Monsieur B. envoie des messages à Madame V.

« Je me permets de vous dire que je suis content de travailler avec vous, vous êtes très professionnelle. »



Que décidez-vous de faire face à ce message?

- Je permets à Mme V. de recevoir ce message
- J'empêche ce message d'être réceptionné par Mme V.

SUIVANT

Sexual Harassment Attitude Scale


 Module administrateur : vous gérez vos questionnaires [Aide...](#)

Vous trouverez, ci-après, une série d'affirmations. Indiquez dans quelle mesure vous êtes d'accord ou pas d'accord avec chacune d'entre elles :

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Indécis	Plutôt d'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
* Une femme attirante devrait s'attendre à des avances sexuelles et devrait apprendre à les gérer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Beaucoup d'hommes sont aguichés par la plupart des femmes avec lesquelles ils interagissent sur le lieu de travail ou à l'école.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* La plupart des femmes qui sont sexuellement insultées par un homme provoquent son comportement par leur manière de parler, d'agir ou de s'habiller.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Un homme doit comprendre que le « non » d'une femme à ses avances sexuelles veut vraiment dire « non ».	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Il est tout à fait naturel pour une femme d'utiliser sa sexualité comme un moyen d'avancer à l'école ou au travail.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Un homme attirant devrait s'attendre à des avances sexuelles et devrait apprendre à les gérer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Je crois que l'intimidation sexuelle est un sérieux problème social.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Il est tout à fait normal pour un homme de faire des avances sexuelles à une femme qu'il trouve attirante.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Des flirts innocents rendent la journée de travail ou d'école intéressante.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Encourager l'intérêt sexuel d'un professeur ou d'un supérieur est fréquemment utilisé par les femmes afin d'obtenir de meilleures notes ou d'améliorer leur situation au travail.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Je crois que l'intimidation sexuelle est un sérieux problème social.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Il est tout à fait normal pour un homme de faire des avances sexuelles à une femme qu'il trouve attirante.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Des flirts innocents rendent la journée de travail ou d'école intéressante.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*	Encourager l'intérêt sexuel d'un professeur ou d'un supérieur est fréquemment utilisé par les femmes afin d'obtenir de meilleures notes ou d'améliorer leur situation au travail.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*	Un des problèmes avec le harcèlement sexuel est le fait que certaines femmes ne savent pas plaisanter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*	Les attitudes ou comportements d'un professeur en classe ne peuvent pas être considérés comme du harcèlement sexuel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*	De nombreuses plaintes pour harcèlement sexuel sont superficielles et vindicatives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*	Beaucoup de ce que les gens appellent harcèlement sexuel est juste un flirt normal entre hommes et femmes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*	L'agression sexuelle et le harcèlement sexuel sont deux choses complètement différentes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*	Le terme « harcèlement sexuel » fait référence à des avances sexuelles non désirées sans grande gravité.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*	Le harcèlement sexuel a peu de choses à voir avec le pouvoir.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*	Le sexisme et le harcèlement sexuel sont deux choses complètement différentes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*	Toutes ces inquiétudes à propos du harcèlement sexuel rendent plus compliquées les relations normales entre hommes et femmes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SUIVANT

APPENDIX D

Pre-test Items

- 1. L'entreprise Ventura applique une politique interne contre le harcèlement sexuel qui :**
0 ne punit pas les personnes impliquées - 100 punit sévèrement les personnes impliquées

- 2. L'entreprise Ventura s'implique dans la lutte contre le harcèlement sexuel :**
0 pas activement - 100 très activement

- 3. L'entreprise Ventura s'intéresse au bien-être de ses employé.es :**
0 pas sérieusement - 100 très sérieusement

- 4. L'entreprise Ventura met en place des actions pour lutter contre le harcèlement sexuel :**
0 peu concrètes - 100 très concrètes

- 5. L'entreprise Ventura soutient la lutte contre le harcèlement sexuel :**
0 aucun soutien - 100 beaucoup de soutien

- 6. Le climat au sein de Ventura est :**
0 pas du tout sécurisant - 100 très sécurisant

- 7. L'entreprise Ventura a des règles strictes concernant la façon dont les employé.es doivent se comporter :**
0 complètement en désaccord - 100 complètement d'accord

- 8. L'entreprise Ventura affirme que le harcèlement sexuel est :**
0 acceptable - 100 inacceptable

- 9. Le niveau de sécurité du bien-être au sein de l'entreprise semble être :**
0 absent - 100 omniprésent

10. En cas de harcèlement sexuel, les sanctions appliquées à l'auteur sont :

0 minimales - 100 considérables

11. Les hommes employés chez Ventura réagissent lors d'une situation de harcèlement sexuel :

0 jamais - 100 toujours

12. Les hommes employés chez Ventura dénoncent les actes de harcèlement sexuel :

0 jamais - 100 toujours

13. Les hommes employés chez Ventura pensent que le harcèlement sexuel est :

0 inacceptable - 100 acceptable

14. Les hommes employés chez Ventura pensent qu'intervenir lors d'une situation de harcèlement sexuel est :

0 pas normal - 100 normal

15. En cas de harcèlement sexuel, un employé masculin de Ventura interviendra :

0 jamais - 100 toujours

APPENDIX E

Debriefing letter



FIN

ATTENTION: VEUILLEZ CLIQUER SUR "SUIVANT" AVANT DE FERMER LA PAGE SVP

Merci pour votre participation.

Le but de la présente étude était de savoir dans quelle mesure les normes sociales pouvaient interférer avec l'intervention d'un ou une témoin lors d'une situation de harcèlement sexuel au travail.

En effet, l'être humain étant un être social par nature, nos comportements sont essentiellement influencés par ce que l'on observe du comportement des autres, ce que l'on pense alors être la norme. Les normes sont un ensemble de règles, établies par et pour les membres d'un groupe social. Elles sont souvent tacites et régissent notre comportement social. Nous tentons de voir si l'utilisation des normes sociales peut mener à un changement de comportement chez les personnes témoins de harcèlement sexuel au travail.

Nous souhaitons également savoir si la tolérance au harcèlement sexuel, le sexisme ambivalent ainsi que l'adhésion aux mythes du viol, pouvaient avoir un impact sur la rapidité de réaction.

Si vous avez des questions, vous pouvez contacter:

-
-
-
-

Lea (Lea.Hackenberg@student.uliege.be) - étudiante en master

Gaëlle (Gaëlle.Pirard@student.uliege.be) - étudiante en master

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Aude Silvestre (asilvestre@uliege.be) - chercheuse responsable

SUIVANT

APPENDIX F

Statistical analyses

Descriptive analyses

Descriptives.

	Legal status	Children	Diploma	Profession	Gender	Age
N	149	149	149	149	149	149
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	2.11	0.859	3.93	5.46	1.70	36.5
Median	2	0	4	3	2	31
Mode	1.00	0.00	4.00	2.00	2.00	24.0
Standard deviation	1.05	1.11	0.894	4.33	0.461	14.4
Minimum	1	0	1	1	1	18
Maximum	5	4	6	13	2	67

Descriptives messages accepted.

	Sit1msgaccept	Sit2msgaccept	Sit3msgaccept	Sit4msgaccept	Sit5msgaccept	Sit6msgaccept
N	149	149	149	149	149	149
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1.75	2.28	2.94	2.08	1.83	2.24
Median	2	2	4	2	2	2
Standard deviation	0.829	1.03	1.67	1.20	1.22	0.991
Minimum	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum	5	5	6	6	5	5

Frequencies of Legal status

Legal status	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Married / Legal cohabitant	63	42.3 %	42.3 %
Non-legal cohabitant	18	12.1 %	54.4 %
Single	58	38.9 %	93.3 %
Divorced / Separated	9	6.0 %	99.3 %
Widowed	1	0.7 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Children

Children	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	85	57.0 %	57.0 %
1	16	10.7 %	67.8 %
2	34	22.8 %	90.6 %
3	12	8.1 %	98.7 %
4	2	1.3 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Diploma

Diploma	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Primary education	1	0.7 %	0.7 %
Lower secondary	4	2.7 %	3.4 %
Baccalaureate	44	29.5 %	32.9 %
Bachelor	59	39.6 %	72.5 %
Master	38	25.5 %	98.0 %
Doctorate	3	2.0 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Profession

Profession	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Manual worker	8	5.4 %	5.4 %
Employee	54	36.2 %	41.6 %
Public servant	25	16.8 %	58.4 %
Executive	4	2.7 %	61.1 %
Liberal profession	5	3.4 %	64.4 %
Commercant/self-employed	4	2.7 %	67.1 %
Unemployed/looking for a job	3	2.0 %	69.1 %
Unable to work / receiving benefits	1	0.7 %	69.8 %
Receiving social integration income	1	0.7 %	70.5 %
Housewife/Househusband	1	0.7 %	71.1 %
Retired	9	6.0 %	77.2 %
Student	32	21.5 %	98.7 %
Other	2	1.3 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Gender

Gender	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Man	45	30.2 %	30.2 %
Woman	104	69.8 %	100.0 %

Reliability Analysis***Sexual Harassment Attitude Scale***

Scale Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's α
SHAS	0.757

Item Reliability Statistics

	If item dropped Cronbach's α
SHASIt1	0.741
SHASIt2	0.754
SHASIt3	0.741
SHASIt4R	0.765
SHASIt5	0.754
SHASIt6	0.738
SHASIt7R	0.750
SHASIt8	0.741
SHASIt9	0.740
SHASIt10	0.746
SHASIt11	0.737
SHASIt12	0.744
SHASIt13	0.736
SHASIt14	0.730
SHASIt15	0.754
SHASIt16	0.753
SHASIt17	0.755
SHASIt18	0.755
SHASIt19	0.751

Mixed Model

Fixed Effect Omnibus tests

	F	Num df	Den df	p
SHAS Total Score	7.7739	1	128	0.006
Condition	1.9115	2	130	0.152
Age	0.8025	1	140	0.372
Gender	0.2074	1	130	0.650
ProfComb	0.9162	4	137	0.457
Children	1.4420	1	130	0.232
DiplComb	0.6094	2	136	0.545
Legal status	1.8501	4	139	0.123
SHAS Total Score * Condition	0.5297	2	133	0.590
SHAS Total Score * Gender	0.0629	1	124	0.802

Note. Satterthwaite method for degrees of freedom

Fixed Effects Parameter Estimates

Names	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		df	t	p
				Lower	Upper			
(Intercept)	(Intercept)	2.19948	0.27486	1.6607	2.73819	13.8	8.002	< .001
SHAS Total Score	SHAS Total Score	0.01625	0.00583	0.00483	0.02768	128.0	2.788	0.006
Condition1	Descriptive/Injunctive norms - (Trending norms)	-0.01643	0.11382	0.23952	0.20667	127.6	0.144	0.885
Condition2	Absence of norms - (Trending norms, Descriptive/Injunctive norms)	0.18654	0.09568	9.99e-4	0.37407	133.0	1.950	0.053
Age	Age	-0.00430	0.00480	0.01372	0.00511	140.1	0.896	0.372
Gender1	Woman - (Man)	0.04697	0.10313	0.15517	0.24911	130.2	0.455	0.650
ProfComb1	Student - (Retired)	-0.08374	0.26240	0.59804	0.43055	147.7	0.319	0.750
ProfComb2	Other - (Retired, Student)	-0.65883	0.44308	1.52724	0.20958	155.8	1.487	0.139
ProfComb3	Not working - (Retired, Student, Other)	0.14740	0.25911	0.36045	0.65525	125.7	0.569	0.570
ProfComb4	Working - (Retired, Student, Other, Not working)	0.24860	0.15169	0.04871	0.54591	145.7	1.639	0.103
Children	Children	0.07483	0.06231	0.04730	0.19696	130.5	1.201	0.232
DiplComb1	Baccalaureate and similar - No diploma	0.28998	0.26315	0.22580	0.80575	136.9	1.102	0.272

Fixed Effects Parameter Estimates

Names	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		df	t	p
				Lower	Upper			
DiplComb2	Higher education - No diploma	0.27370	0.26191	-0.23964	0.78704	137.4	1.045	0.298
Legal status1	Non-legal cohabitant - Married / Legal cohabitant	0.06193	0.16189	-0.25538	0.37923	131.5	0.383	0.703
Legal status2	Single - Married / Legal cohabitant	0.24413	0.13473	-0.01994	0.50819	136.2	1.812	0.072
Legal status3	Divorced / Separated - Married / Legal cohabitant	0.37587	0.21211	-0.03985	0.79160	130.2	1.772	0.079
Legal status4	Widowed - Married / Legal cohabitant	-0.39512	0.57004	-1.51238	0.72214	165.7	-0.693	0.489
SHAS Total Score * Condition1	SHAS Total Score * Descriptive/Injunctive norms - (Trending norms)	-0.00169	0.01319	-0.02753	0.02416	129.2	-0.128	0.899
SHAS Total Score * Condition2	SHAS Total Score * Absence of norms - (Trending norms, Descriptive/Injunctive norms)	0.01190	0.01214	0.01190	0.03571	137.1	0.980	0.329
SHAS Total Score * Gender1	SHAS Total Score * Woman - (Man)	0.00300	0.01196	-0.02045	0.02645	124.2	0.251	0.802

Random Components

Groups	Name	SD	Variance	ICC
Participant	(Intercept)	0.359	0.129	0.163
situation	(Intercept)	0.515	0.266	0.287
Residual		0.813	0.661	

Note. Number of Obs: 761 , groups: Participant 149, situation 6

Contrast Coefficients

Condition

Name	Contrast	level=Trending norms	level=Descriptive/Injunctive norms	level=Absence of norms
Condition1	Descriptive/Injunctive norms - (Trending norms)	-0.5	0.5	0
Condition2	Absence of norms - (Trending norms, Descriptive/Injunctive norms)	-0.333	-0.333	0.667

Note. Intercept computed for sample mean

Gender

Name	Contrast	level=Man	level=Woman
Gender1	Woman - (Man)	-0.5	0.5

Note. Intercept computed for sample mean

ProfComb

Name	Contrast	level=Retired	level=Student	level=Other	level=Not working	level=Working
ProfComb1	Student - (Retired)	-0.5	0.5	0	0	0
ProfComb2	Other - (Retired, Student)	-0.333	-0.333	0.667	0	0
ProfComb3	Not working - (Retired, Student, Other)	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	0.75	0
ProfComb4	Working - (Retired, Student, Other, Not working)	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	0.8

Note. Intercept computed for sample mean

DiplComb

Name	Contrast	level=No diploma	level=Baccalaureate and similar	level=Higher education
DiplComb1	Baccalaureate and similar - No diploma	-0.333	0.667	-0.333
DiplComb2	Higher education - No diploma	-0.333	-0.333	0.667

Note. Intercept computed for sample mean

Legal status

Name	Contrast	level=Married / Legal cohabitant	level=Non-legal cohabitant	level=Single	level=Divorced / Separated	level=Widowed
Legal status1	Non-legal cohabitant - Married / Legal cohabitant	-0.2	0.8	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2
Legal status2	Single - Married / Legal cohabitant	-0.2	-0.2	0.8	-0.2	-0.2
Legal status3	Divorced / Separated - Married / Legal cohabitant	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	0.8	-0.2
Legal status4	Widowed - Married / Legal cohabitant	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	0.8

Note. Intercept computed for sample mean

Post Hoc Tests

Post Hoc Comparisons - Condition

Comparison							
Condition	Condition	Difference	SE	t	df	p _{bonferroni}	
Descriptive/Injunctive norms	- Absence of norms	-0.1947	0.111	1.751	128	0.247	
Trending norms	- Absence of norms	-0.1783	0.111	1.599	123	0.337	
Trending norms	- Descriptive/Injunctive norms	0.0164	0.114	0.144	122	1.000	

Post Hoc Comparisons - Gender

Comparison							
Gender	Gender	Difference	SE	t	df	p _{bonferroni}	
Man	- Woman	-0.0470	0.103	-0.455	124	0.650	

Simple Effects

Simple effects of SHAS Total Score : Omnibus Tests

Moderator levels					
Gender	F	Num df	Den df	p	
Man	2.41	1.00	117	0.124	
Woman	6.41	1.00	126	0.013	

Simple effects of SHAS Total Score : Parameter estimates

Moderator levels		95% Confidence Interval						
Gender	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	df	t	p	
Man	0.0148	0.00951	-0.00408	0.0336	117	1.55	0.124	
Woman	0.0178	0.00701	0.00388	0.0316	126	2.53	0.013	

Note. Simple effects are estimated keeping constant other independent variable(s) in the model

Simple effects of SHAS Total Score : Omnibus Tests

Moderator levels				
Condition	F	Num df	Den df	p
Trending norms	1.48	1.00	121	0.226
Descriptive/Injunctive norms	1.81	1.00	122	0.181
Absence of norms	5.92	1.00	133	0.016

Simple effects of SHAS Total Score : Parameter estimates

Moderator levels			95% Confidence Interval		df	t	p
Condition	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper			
Trending norms	0.0131	0.01079	-0.00823	0.0345	121	1.22	0.226
Descriptive/Injunctive norms	0.0114	0.00850	-0.00538	0.0283	122	1.35	0.181
Absence of norms	0.0242	0.00994	0.00452	0.0439	133	2.43	0.016

Note. Simple effects are estimated keeping constant other independent variable(s) in the model

Further analyses

Multiple linear regression

Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R ²	Overall Model Test			
			F	df1	df2	p
1	0.298	0.0888	36.9	2	758	< .001

Model Coefficients - SHAS Total Score

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept ^a	36.924	0.9823	37.59	< .001
Age	0.102	0.0212	4.81	< .001
Gender:				
Woman – Man	-4.358	0.6576	-6.63	< .001

^a Represents reference level

General Linear Model

ANOVA Omnibus tests

	SS	df	F	p	η^2p
Model	5001.0	3	24.657	< .001	0.089
Gender	2979.9	1	44.076	< .001	0.055
Age	1347.4	1	19.929	< .001	0.026
Gender * Age	13.4	1	0.199	0.656	0.000
Residuals	51180.1	757			
Total	56181.2	760			

Fixed Effects Parameter Estimates

Names	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		β	df	t	p
				Lower	Upper				
(Intercept)	(Intercept)	38.4560	0.3298	37.8086	39.103	0.0000	757	116.604	< .001
Gender1	Woman - (Man)	-4.3790	0.6596	-5.6739	-3.084	0.5093	757	-6.639	< .001
Age	Age	0.0989	0.0221	0.0554	0.142	0.1627	757	4.464	< .001
Gender1 * Age	Woman - (Man) * Age	0.0197	0.0443	-0.0672	0.107	0.0325	757	0.446	0.656

Contrast Coefficients

Gender

Name	Contrast	level=Man	level=Woman
Gender1	Woman - (Man)	-0.5	0.5

Note. Intercept computed for sample mean

Post Hoc Tests

Post Hoc Comparisons - Gender

Comparison		Difference	SE	t	df	p _{bonferroni}
Gender	Gender					
Man	- Woman	4.38	0.660	6.64	757	< .001