SEX DIFFERENCES, GENDER IDENTITY & THE CONSTITUTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

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Abstract
The prevalence of sexual harassment is ubiquitous, however, there is room for interpretation of the events that may make up sexual harassment including the severity of the incident, gender identity of the victim, and sex of the judge. Current research practices have failed to provide an inclusive representation of trans individuals who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace and other relevant areas. We examined how the sex of the judge (male or female) and the gender identity of the victim (transgender or cisgender) affected the perception of an ambiguous sexual harassment vignette including sexist remarks. We predicted that men will be less likely to perceive the incident as sexual harassment, assign the perpetrator less accountability and punishment, and will have more anti-trans prejudice and victim blame compared to women. We predicted that participants will perceive the transgender victim more negatively than the cisgender victim. A one-way analysis of variance was carried out for each of the hypotheses and found significant results of the sex of the judge on anti-trans prejudice $F(1,418) = 8.31; p = .004$, and an effect of the sex of the victim on believability $F(1,421) = 8.76, p = .003$.

Keywords: workplace sexual harassment; gender identity; sex differences; anti-transgender prejudice; accountability; punishment; victim blame; believability