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# Coping Strategies Harassment and Perceived Insecurity; A Comparison Between Salesgirls and University Female Students

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**Abstract**

The present research explored the difference in harassment, coping strategies, and perceived Insecurity between salesgirls and female university students of Pakistan. It was hypothesized that sale girls are likely to experience more harassment and perceived Insecurity than students. Also, coping strategies would mediate in the relationship between the Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity. The sample consisted of 250 Pakistani females (130=students, 120= salesgirls). Experience of Harassment scale (Kauser, 2013), Perceived Insecurity Questionnaire (Kauser, 2015), and Coping Strategies Questionnaire (Kauser, 2001) were used for measuring the research variables. Data were analyzed through SPSS version 26. Correlation analysis, independent sample t-test, and mediation analysis were performed. Results indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity; two subscales of coping strategies (Active, practical coping subscale, and religious coping strategies) were negatively correlated with Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity, while the other two subscales (Active distractive and avoidance focused coping subscale) were positively correlated. Results also denoted that Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity was higher among salesgirls than students. Findings showed that coping strategies mediated the relationship between Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity.

**Keywords:** Harassment, Perceived Insecurity, Coping Strategies

## Introduction

Harassment is now a global issue which plagues individuals, groups and entire organizations in a unique manner. Sadly, aggressive and violent behavior against women is exceedingly common throughout the countries of the world. For centuries, the role of men in society has stayed far more static than that of women due to patriarch nature of society which made a mindset among people that men are more powerful and capable than those of women (Qayum et al., 2021).

Harassment is a common problem faced by Pakistani women especially working women. Gender is one of the systematizing rules of Pakistani culture. Male dominant values implanted in local customs and civilizing pre-established societal worth of sex. (Asian Development Bank

[ADB], 2000). Sexual harassment has been noticed to be a widespread form of violence based on gender in Pakistan (Anwar et al., 2019).

 Many Pakistanis claim that if they break the stereotype of remaining inside their homes and enter the male-dominated public domain, women deserve to be harassed (Anwar et al., 2019). Though Pakistani females have begun functioning outside their homes, financially, socially, and culturally, they have long struggled to acquire positive modifications in people's ideologies. The participation of females in organizations was restricted to sectors controlled by conventional sex roles, like food and draft, beauty parlor, health, education, weaving, tailoring, and wholesale and retail clothing trade. Still, the condition is little by little improving. Women are also in professions today, historically exclusively dominated by the male (Damocracywatch, 2014). In Pakistan, it has been difficult for women to fully contribute to their country's development because the environment to work in general is difficult and un-supportive. Women commonly face inappropriate behavior and harassment on the streets, at the workplace and in public places In Pakistani culture, the anticipation of sexual harassment incidences and the desire to avoid them seem to influence women's freedom in general. The problem is compounded because women are made to feel responsible for their own victimization by being told that if a man harasses them, it is because they have been doing something to provoke him (Nasir & Shaukat, 2013). There are stereotypes about certain occupations that are only for men. People are still under the perception that sales jobs are just for men (ADB, 2000). Salesgirls have to deal with and confront all types of people, so they are more subjected to threats and harassment. Previous research measured the prevalence of harassment across different countries and domains. The present study will investigate the difference in the majority of harassment and perceives Insecurity between salesgirls and female students to check whether the patriarchal gender-based stereotypes put them at more risk of harassment.

The existing literature has explored about the phenomena across different countries and departments and organizations. Some studies have explored the negative physical and psychological outcomes of harassment. This article adds in existing literature by comparing two independent groups of females (working salesgirls, non-working students) that are more challenged by cultural stereotypes and values. This study also sheds light on the prevalence of perceived insecurity and the type of coping strategies being employed by both groups.

**Harassment**

Harassment is defined by Brodsky (1976) as frequent and continuous efforts that disturb or irritate an individual. He also claims that harassment applies to an activity that intimidates, pushes, threatens, or otherwise inconveniences others (Malik, 2011). Hoel and Cooper (2000) contend that harassment against a person or group is repeated negative behavior by individuals. Harassment can be described by a superior, a colleague, a peer, or by any other person as any inappropriate aggressive and unhealthy act, remark, or behavior to disrespect, bully, assault, or damage a person (Skarlicki&Kilick, 2005; as cited in Malik, 2011). Lafontaine and Tredeau (1986) described sexual harassment as any activity happening in the workplace where females are viewed as targets of male sextile privilege irrespective of whether the perpetrator recognizes it as troublesome (Malik, 2011). Thus, in a patriarchal way, sexual assault commonly portrays the male attitude towards women (Pattinson, 1991; as cited in Malik, 2011). Sexual harassment can also involve smirking, mocking, derogatory remarks, frequent and unwelcome sexist remarks, sexual favors requests, and clothing or appearance-related unwanted comments (Farley, 1978; Kanekar& Menon, 1992; Mackinnon,

1979; as cited in Malik, 2011). Sexual harassment is sometimes divided into three categories, gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion (Anwar et al., 2019).

**Perceived Insecurity**

The public's perception of uncertainty has to turn out to be one of the most significant troubles in our areas with necessary mental and psychosocial implications (Amerio 1999; as cited in Carro et al., 2008). Typically, fear is linked to emotional characteristics, whereas vulnerability is congruent with both theories of risk and cognitive processes (Valera & Guardia, 2014). One recent study presented some main factors for its apprehension and inspection (Carro et al., 2008). These factors are personal and social level of crime, physical and social incivilities, urban life, and psychosocial elements, which relate the perception of Insecurity to an individual's failure to cope with the situation (Moser, 1985; as cited in Valera & Guardia, 2014).

**Coping Strategies**

Coping is described as continually evolving attempts to handle stressful cognitive and behavioral measures (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping may require direct action to minimize pressure or gain additional resources, or it may involve an assessment to adjust the significance of the situation and make it more feasible. The attitudes, cognitions, and expectations targeted at stressful life events are also seen as coping. McCubin (1987) says that a coping action is a particular attempt by a person or a family to handle or minimize the stress imposed on it (Kauser& Farooq, 2001).
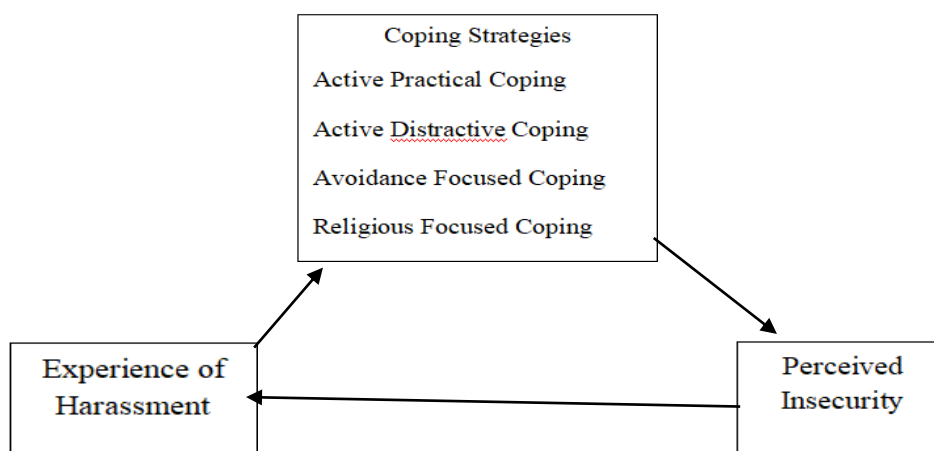


**Literature Review**

Fairchild and Rudman (2008) conducted a study to investigate stranger harassment in younger adult women. The study revealed that self-objectification was positively correlated with harassment and negatively associated with the well-being of women. This was true for women who used standard methods (passive, self-blame, or benign) to cope with international abuse, except those who implied an unusual, active coping strategy (e.g., facing and challenging the offender). Perceptions of foreign abuse and self-objectification were connected to women's fear and the perceived danger of assault. In addition, women who were afraid of assault limited their mobilization.

Anwar et al. (2018) administered a study to examine three types of sexual harassment in Pakistan's public places. The sample consisted of 543 female students of Pakistan. The instrument used measured three types of sexual harassment: physical, verbal and non- verbal

harassment, and four types of responses to sexual harassment. Results revealed that sexual harassment was most regular and frequent in markets. The harasser was more frequently a stranger, and oral sexual harassment was the most frequent type of harassment. Sexual harassment was related to negative psychological consequences.

Vohlidalova (2015) conducted qualitative research to investigate students' coping strategies who deal with sexual harassment. He completed 18 semi-structured interviews with the students of public higher education institutions of Prague, Czech Republic. The study revealed that students used both internal and external ways of coping to deal with sexual harassment. Macmillan et al (2000) administered a survey to examine the effect of sexual harassment on women's perception of safety. The sample consisted of Canadian women. The results revealed that harassment by unfamiliar was more widespread and immense than harassment by familiars. Harassment by familiars most frequently affected the perception of Insecurity among women.

Damocracy watch (2014) researched the background of salesgirls, the nature and challenges of the job, and causes of choosing this job, and how they can improve the surrounding for more women to join this profession. The sample consisted of 120 respondents from Dhaka city. Results revealed that most of the respondents belonged to low-income families, and their family financial system influenced them to join this profession. The participants made several suggestions like job security, increased income, fixed working hours, transport facility to improve the environment for more women to join.

Carro et al. (2008) conducted a study to discover the perceived Insecurity among users of Barcelona's community spaces. In this study, they explored the key elements in the comprehension and understanding of perceived Insecurity. The sample consisted of 358 people. The model was collected through chance sampling. Participants were the users of the communal space of Barcelona's Poble Sec district. The findings suggested low relative causality indices for ecological elements, while those linked to spatial depiction, urban recognition, housing contentment, communal support, and personal skills provide high prognostic ability. It was concluded that experiences of vulnerability in public spaces are also closely related to processes of social contact and social construction.

**Method**
**Sample**

The sample consisted of 250 Pakistani females. The calculated sample size was 620 females (310 salesgirls and 310 students). The final sample size was 250 (130 students, 120 salesgirls). Convenient sampling and snowball sampling was used to collect data from salesgirls and students, respectively. Salesgirls and university female students of age 18 and above with all marital status types were included. Females with physical disabilities and females doing online marketing jobs were excluded.

**Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Participants**

To know the sample characteristics, the participants' demographic details were collected and summarized in the following table.

**Table 1**

*Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Participants*

| Sample characteristics | Salesgirl | | | | University Students | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | % | M | S.D | F | % | M | S.D |
| Education | | | | | | | | |
| Matric | 18 | 15 | | | - | - | | |
| Inter | 57 | 47.5 | | | 1 | .8 | | |
| Graduation | 39 | 32 | | | 95 | 73.1 | | |
| Masters | 6 | 5 | | | 34 | 26.2 | | |
| Marital Status | | | | | | | | |
| Married | 15 | 12.5 | | | 6 | 4.6 | | |
| Unmarried | 104 | 86.7 | | | 123 | 94.6 | | |
| Divorced | 1 | 0.8 | | | 0 | 0 | | |
| Separated | 0 | 0 | | | 1 | .8 | | |
| Family system | | | | | | | | |
| Joint | 73 | 39.2 | | | 59 | 45.4 | | |
| Nuclear | 47 | 60.8 | | | 71 | 54.6 | | |
| Religion | | | | | | | | |
| Islam | 106 | 88.3 | | | 127 | 97.7 | | |
| Christian | 14 | 11.7 | | | 3 | 2.3 | | |
| Monthly Income | | | | | | | | |
| 10-20 thou | 74 | 61.7 | | | - | - | | |
| 20-30 thou | 37 | 30.8 | | | 4 | 3.1 | | |
| 0 thou | 9 | 7.5 | | | 68 | 52.3 | | |
| 40-above | - | - | | | 58 | 44.8 | | |
| Age | | | 21.92 | 4.43 | | | 22.15 | 3.10 |

*Note. a= Students, b=Salesgirls N=250 ($n^a$=130, $n^b$=120)*

**Assessment Measures**

***Experience of Harassment Scale***

The indigenous tool was used to measure the Experience of harassment. Gull and Kausar (2001) developed the Experience of Harassment scale. It is a four-point rating scale ranging from 1(mostly experienced) to 5 (never experienced). It consists of 45 items. Total scores range from 45 to 225. Higher scores on the scale indicate less harassment, and lower scores indicate more Experience of harassment. Alpha reliability for this scale is 0.96.

***Perceived Insecurity Questionnaire***

Valera (2010) developed the Perceived Insecurity Questionnaire. Butt and Kausar (2015) translated the questionnaire into Urdu. Translated Urdu version was used in the present study. It has 30 items. This is a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (very unsafe) to 4 (very safe). It measures the constructs of perception of Insecurity, previous Experience of threat, social representation of Insecurity, personal control or coping skills, a potential aggressor in public places, neighborhood identity, and perceived environmental quality. Cronbach's alpha for the global scale is .846.

## Coping Strategies Questionnaire

Kausar (2001) developed the Coping Strategies Questionnaire. It is an Indigenous tool. It has 62 items. This is 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 (not true about me) to 5 (very true about me). It measures four types of coping, active practical coping (problem focused coping), active distractive coping (recreational emotion focused coping), avoidance (emotion focused), and religious focused coping. It has 4 subscales named on type of coping strategy involved. The Active-Practical Coping Sub-scale consists of 16 items, the Active Distractive Coping Sub-scale consists of 9 items, Avoidance focused Coping Sub-scale consists of 24 items and Religious focused Coping Sub-scale consists of 13 items. Item No 3,5,23,29,39,41,42,52,54,55,57,58,59,60,61 and 62 are included in Active-practical coping sub-scale. Item No 7, 8,13,14,17,21,35,43, and 49 are included in Active-distractive coping subscale. Item no 1, 4, 10, 11, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27,28,30,31,33,36,38,44,45,46,47,50 & 56 are included in Avoidance-focused coping sub-scale. Item no 2,6,9,15,19,25,32,34,37,40,48,51, & 53 are included in Religious-focused coping sub- scale. Alpha reliability for CSQ is 0.89.

## *Psychometric Properties of the Scales*
**Table 2**
*Reliability Test of the Scales*

| Scale | *M* | *S.D* | Actual Range | Potential Range | Cronbach's α |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EOH | 163.09 | 30.94 | 45-225 | 56-223 | .956 |
| PIS | 76.25 | 10.83 | 30-120 | 30-106 | .722 |
| CS | 192.74 | 22.29 | 62-310 | 157-248 | .786 |
| APC | 52.43 | 7.03 | 16-80 | 24-79 | .672 |
| ADC | 27.17 | 5.74 | 9-45 | 14-45 | .740 |
| AFC | 71.13 | 9.53 | 24-120 | 34-105 | .209 |
| RFC | 41.99 | 8.73 | 13-65 | 20-65 | .504 |

Note. N=250. *M*= mean; *S. D*= Standard deviation; *EOH*= experience of harassment; *PIS*= perceived insecurity; *CS*= coping strategies; *APS*= Active practical coping; *ADS*= Active distractive coping; *AFS*= Avoidance focused coping; *RFC*= Religious focused coping.

## Procedure

Data was collected from Lahore and Gujranwala city of Pakistan. Permission was taken from higher authorities of universities, Malls, stores, and shops before data collection. Data were collected in both hard form and soft form (through online Google forms for students due to pandemic). Informed consent was taken from participants. Participants were instructed to read the statements carefully and rate each item according to their Experience and perception. Approximately 700 (150 students & 550 salesgirls) women were approached, and 270 (150 students & 120 Salesgirls) of them responded. The purpose and nature of the research were explained before the distribution of questionnaires. Twenty forms were discarded due to incomplete responses. Final data of 250 participants (130 students and 120 salesgirls) was then entered into SPSS 26, and demographic statistics and psychometric properties were calculated using. Independent sample t-Test analysis was used to compare both groups to see the difference in their Experience of harassment, perceived Insecurity, and coping strategies. Mediation analysis was used to explore the mediating role of coping strategies in the Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity. Pearson product-

moment correlation was used to see the relationship between Experience of harassment, perceived Insecurity, and coping strategies.

## Results

It was hypothesized that there would be a difference in salesgirls and students in Experience of harassment, perceived Insecurity, and coping strategies. As hypothesized, the results indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between salesgirls and students in the Experience of harassment, perceived Insecurity, and coping strategies. Significance values for Experience of harassment (p= .006), perceived Insecurity (p=.003), and Coping Strategies (p=.003) are less than $CI$ ($p<.05$). Mean values of both groups presented in Table 3 indicate that salesgirls experienced more harassment and perceived Insecurity than students. Avoidance-focused and active distractive coping strategies were more frequently used by salesgirls, while the mean score of active practical and religious focused copings was higher in students.

**Independent Sample t-Test**
**Table 3**
*Mean Difference of Salesgirls and Students in Experience of Harassment, Perceived Insecurity and Coping Strategies*

| Variables | Salesgirls [a] | | University Students [b] | | T | P | Cohen's *d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *S.D* | *M* | *S.D* | | | |
| EOH | 117.64 | 39.25 | 98.44 | 33.43 | -4.42 | .006 | .53 |
| PIS | 67.45 | 16.17 | 51.88 | 23.98 | -6.07 | .003 | .76 |
| APC | 42.81 | 12.04 | 59.77 | 14.96 | 9.91 | <.01 | 1.25 |
| ADC | 32.19 | 6.53 | 26.63 | 7.39 | -6.30 | .103 | 0.80 |
| AFC | 81.21 | 14.46 | 64.57 | 17.60 | -8.19 | <.01 | 1.03 |
| RFC | 33.90 | 9.24 | 48.56 | 12.42 | 10.64 | <.01 | 1.34 |

*Note.* N=250. *M*= mean; *S.D*= Standard deviation; *EOH*= experience of harassment; *PIS*=perceived insecurity; *CS*= coping strategies; *APS*= Active practical coping; *ADS*= Active distractive coping; *AFS*= Avoidance focused coping; *RFC*= Religious focused coping.

[a] n =130. [b] n=120

*\*p< .05\*\*p<.01*

It was hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity. The results confirmed a significant positive correlation between Experience of Harassment and Perceived Insecurity for both groups. Table 4 indicates a statistically significant negative correlation between Experience of harassment and active practical and religious-focused coping strategies in both groups. The table also shows that active distractive and avoidance-focused coping strategies are positively associated with Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity in both groups.

**Pearson Product Moment Correlation**
**Table 4**
*Intercorrelation of Experience of Harassment, Perceived Insecurity, and Coping Strategies*

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experience Of Harassment | - | .37** | -.24** | .032 | .22* | -.14 |
| Perceived Insecurity | .22* | - | -.65** | .53** | .71** | -.57** |
| Active Practical Coping | -.27** | -.46** | - | -.66** | -.80** | .79** |
| Active Distractive Coping | .33** | .44** | -.72** | - | .70** | -.60** |
| Avoidance Focused Coping | .34** | .47** | -.84** | .81** | - | -.69** |
| Religious Focused Coping | -.24** | -.41** | .83** | -.72** | -.73** | - |

*Note.* The results for the salesgirls' sample (n=120) are above the diagonal. The results for the student sample (n=130) are below the diagonal.
*p< .05, **p< .01

It was hypothesized that coping Strategies would play a mediating role between Experience of harassment and perceived insecurity relationship. As hypothesized, all types of coping strategies play a significant mediating role. The standardized coefficient for each subscale of coping strategy presented in Table 6 shows that all of them play a significant mediating role in the relationship of Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity as the *p<.01* for all of them. Beta coefficient values show that active practical and religious focused coping were negatively linked, while the other two, avoidance focused and active distractive, were positively correlated with harassment and perceived Insecurity.

**Mediation Analysis**

**Table 5**

*Mediating role of coping strategies in the relationship between Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity*

| Variables | | PIS | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | *S.E* |
| Block 1 | | | |
| ID | | -.15 | 12.63 |
| F.S | | .03 | 1.61 |
| Religion | | .06 | 3.22 |
| | | | |
| Block 2 | | | |
| APC | | -.53*** | .67 |
| ADC | | .44*** | .74 |
| AFC | | .54*** | .84 |
| RFC | | -.48*** | .68 |
| Block 3 | | | |
| EOH | | .16*** | .02 |
| R | .77 | | |
| $R^2$ | .60 | | |
| F | 45.92*** | | |
| $\Delta R^2$ | .59 | | |

*Note.* N=250. *S.E*= Standard error; *EOH*= experience of harassment; *PIS*= perceived insecurity; *APC*= Active practical coping; *ADC*= Active distractive coping; *AFC*= Avoidance focused coping; *RFC*= Religious focused coping.
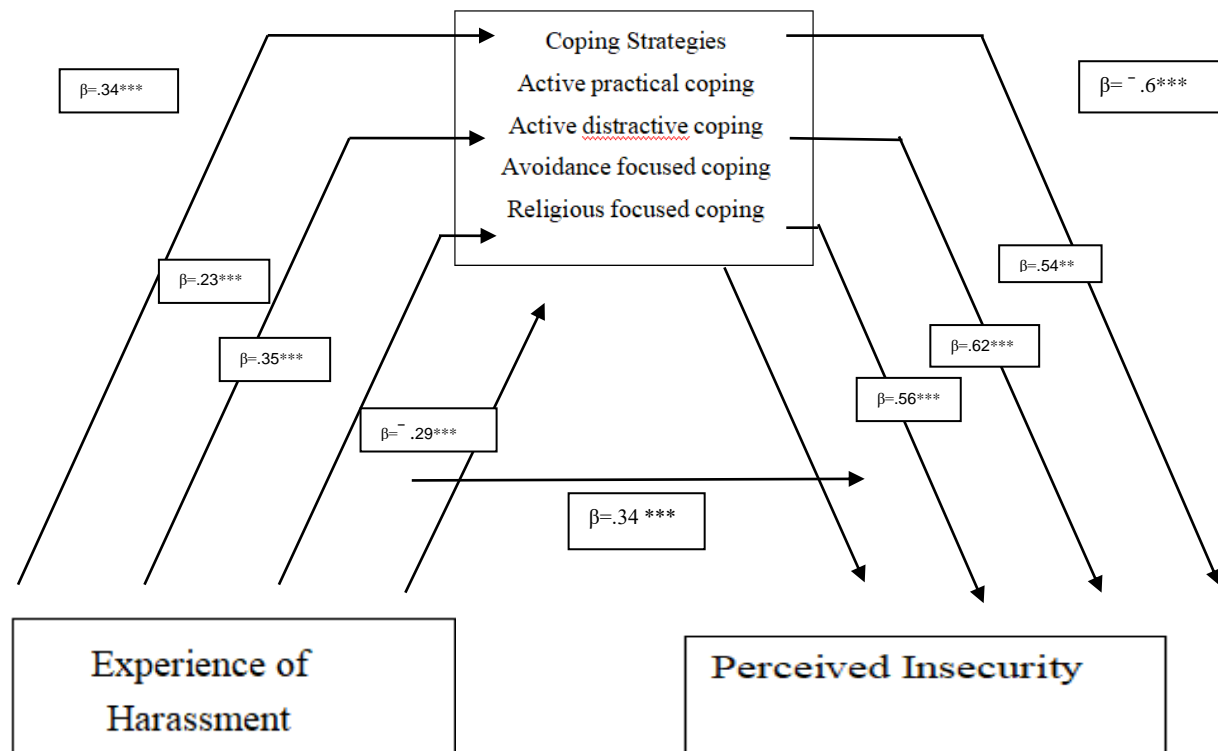****p<.001*

**Table 6**

*The significance level of Mediation of Coping Strategies*

| Variable | Sobel Value | *S.E* | P |
|---|---|---|---|
| APC | 0.469 | .67 | <.01 |
| ADC | 3.44 | .74 | <.01 |
| AFC | .498 | .84 | <.01 |
| RFC | 4.12 | .68 | <.01 |

*Note.* ****p<0.01,* N=250. *S.E*= Standard error; *PIS*= perceived insecurity; *APC*= Active practical coping; *ADC*= Active distractive coping; *AFC*= Avoidance focused coping.

## Discussion

This study was designed to investigate the difference in harassment, perceived Insecurity, and coping strategies among salesgirls and students. This study was also intended to explore the mediating role of coping strategies concerning Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity. The sample consisted of 250 (130 students, 120 salesgirls) females. The sample was collected from universities, malls, and stores of Lahore and Gujranwala city. Experience of Harassment scale (Gull &Kausar, 2013), Perceived Insecurity Questionnaire (Valera, 2010), and Coping Strategies Questionnaire (Kausar, 2001) were used for data collection. SPSS version 26 was used. Independent sample t-test, Pearson product-moment correlation, and mediation analysis were performed to test the hypotheses, respectively.

The study's first hypothesis was that salesgirls are likely to experience more harassment and perceived Insecurity than students. The hypothesis was accepted, and Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity was more profound in salesgirls. Salesgirls included in the study were not highly educated; also, the mean age of salesgirls was 21.9. This could be a reason that they did not have proper awareness and guidelines about what behaviors are right and acceptable. Also, the current young generation has legitimized many incivilities such as glazing, smirking, asking for a phone number, etc., only as a sign of attraction or interest and do not consider such incivilities as condemnable.

Sale girls work at public places like Malls stores where all types of people come. Harassment mostly occurs in public areas. They have to face all kinds of people every day. They have to deal with strangers. That's why they are more subjected to threats, aggressors, and mistreatment. Anwar et al (2019) researched to explore sexual harassment in public places of Pakistan. He concluded that in different countries like Canada, the US, Iran, and India, the harassers in public places were mostly strangers.

The sales job is low status and male-dominated position. Pakistan is a patriarchal society, and pre-existing social and local customs determine the worth of gender. In

Pakistan, sexual harassment has been established as an uncontrolled form of gender-based violence. Earlier, women were only involved in fields that were considered for women according to traditional gender roles. But the condition is getting better little by little. Women are also in professions today, historically exclusively dominated by the male (Damocracywatch, 2014). There are stereotypes about certain occupations that are only for men. People are still under the perception that sales jobs are only for men (ADB, 2000).

Anwar et al (2019) researched to explore the types of harassment experienced at public places. He stated that in Pakistan, natives consider that women are more liable to harassment, and they deserve to be harassed if they breach the social stereotype of staying at home and go out or join the male-dominant public domain.

The second hypothesis of the research was that Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity are likely to correlate positively. The second hypothesis was also accepted as Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity were positively correlated.

Macmillan et al (2000) researched the effect of street harassment on women's perception of safety. They stated that Perceptions of security and Insecurity are related to the fear of victimization, sexual harassment, especially when strangers are involved. The results revealed that stranger harassment is more widespread and immense than non-stranger harassment and that non-stranger harassment most frequently affects the perception of Insecurity among women. When women experience harassment, they tend to suspect that harassment can reoccur and feel insecure outside. Feelings of Insecurity are more related to stranger harassment. With more Experience of harassment, women perceive themselves as more insecure.

It was also deducted that active, practical coping strategies were negatively correlated with harassment and perceived Insecurity. Smith et al. (2015) researched to explore the psychological outcomes of coping strategies. In his study, he narrated that task-oriented coping strategies focus on eliminating the primary cause of stress and handling the aversive life events. They also concluded that reliance on these coping strategies was positively associated with better psychological outcomes and negatively associated distress and poor psychological outcomes. Harassment is a threat to emotional and psychological effects, and it could result in many adverse outcomes like distress, anxiety, depression, fear, poor mental health, and psychological well-being (Anwar et al., 2019). Problem-focused coping (active practical) outer or inner. Outer problem-focused coping strategies include such as dialogue that can eliminate a conflict, reporting about mistreatment, asking for help. Internal problem-focused coping includes correcting illogical thoughts. Some skills serve both inner and outer functions. Seeking social support is one such strategy that can produce emotional, practical, and informational help from others (Kausar, 2018). Women who use active, practical coping, take appropriate steps against the offender, have confidence in their competence, and seek social support are less likely to experience harassment and Insecurity.

Results showed that religious coping strategies were also negatively correlated with Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity. Kausar (2018) conducted a study to explore the coping strategies used by mothers of children with disabilities. The study narrated that religion plays an essential role in Pakistani people's lives. Religion is considered a source of power and support while facing adverse life events. People also seek help and support from God. Reliance on religious coping can reduce stress as seeking help from God has been emphasized in Quran. Women who use religious coping and seek help from God and have faith experience less harassment and Insecurity.

The present study concluded that Experience of harassment and perceived Insecurity was more prevalent among salesgirls. Moreover, students' active practical and religious coping was more commonly used, and it had a negative association with harassment and perceived Insecurity, while salesgirls more frequently used avoidance and distractive coping and were positively correlated with harassment and perceived Insecurity. The study also confirmed the mediating role of coping strategies.

**Implications**

This study highlights the negative effect of harassment on the perception of security and safety and the role of healthy and unhealthy coping strategies. This study highlights the serious issue, and it can draw the attention of authorities and government officials to take steps and enforce laws to protect women from harassment. This study can also help the entrepreneurs realize their female employees' problems and need to make policies to protect their female employees during workhours. This study helps educational institutions guide and educate their students and conduct seminars and increase awareness among students.

**Limitations and Suggestions**

The sample size was small, which included a limited age range, making it difficult to assess the sample's representativeness. Instruments and scales used in the study were too long, resulting in decreased response rate, refusal to participate, and incomplete responses due to laziness and boredom. Future researchers should use qualitative research design like IPA to explore the phenomena more depth as it is more suitable for phenomena under study. The prospective researcher should include broader areas such as all Pakistan cities to increase the generalizability of the findings. Future researchers are recommended to investigate and compare the phenomena of harassment across all cities. The prospective researcher should use shorter questionnaires and are advised to propose some positive reinforcement to increase the response rate. Future researchers should also include women with other low-status jobs like the waitress, bus hostesses and see the difference in their Experience of harassment and Perceived Insecurity.

**Ethical Compliance Section**
**Funding**
"The authors have no funding to disclose."

**Compliance with Ethical Standards**
All procedures performed in the present study were following the Departmental Board of Studies' ethical standards and Board of Advance Studies and Research, Lahore Garrison University, Pakistan, and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

**Conflict of Interest**
The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Informed Consent**
Written informed consent was obtained from all individual participants of the study.

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