**Male Victims of Sexual Harassment in Hospitality: A Need for a Critical Review of Literature**

**Authors:**   
Mx Giulietta Williamson [st20103646@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:st20103646@cardiffmet.ac.uk)

Dr Nic Matthews [nmatthews@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:nmatthews@cardiffmet.ac.uk)   
Dr Xiaoni Ren [xren@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:xren@cardiffmet.ac.uk)   
Dr Darryl Gibbs [dgibbs@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:dgibbs@cardiffmet.ac.uk)

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Sexual harassment (SH) experienced by men is often overlooked in society (Park *et al.*, 2022). This paper seeks to review recent research conducted on this phenomenon to help understand the causes and implications of sexual harassment conducted against male employees working in hotels and restaurants.

SH toward employees is a well-known issue within the hospitality industry (La Lopa and Gong, 2020) and currently there is an overall lack of scholarship on male victims of sexual harassment (Scarduzio, Wehlage and Lueken, 2018). Therefore, this study proposes to conduct a critical review of literature surrounding male victims of SH within hotels and restaurants. The aim of a critical literature review is to assist in furthering understanding of what is already known on a particular phenomenon (Jesson and Lacey, 2006). Literature gathered for review will include articles published between 2013-2023. Due to the limited nature of the research, there will be no geographical constraint applied to the search of literature. Literature included within the review will require to be based on primary research that includes male participants who worked within hotels and restaurants at the time of the data collection. Reviewing the existing literature on this topic will allow for research gaps to be clearly identified. This will assist future researchers in furthering knowledge on how this phenomenon impacts commonly overlooked and under researched gender identities and experiences.

SH refers to an individual engaging in the unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature toward another (Equality & Human Rights Commission 2020). SH is often viewed as an act perpetrated by men and experienced by women (Cassino and Besen‐Cassino, 2019, Park *et al.*, 2022) – however, SH can be experienced by anyone regardless of their gender or biological sex (Baltag *et al.*, 2021). Essentialist views of men as powerful and women as powerless further reinforces gender inequality (Dzubinski and Diehl, 2018),solidifying women as perpetual victims and men as eternal perpetrators. However, when men are included in samples to research sexual harassment in hospitality they are also found to have also received harassment (Ram, Tribe and Biran, 2016).

Male victims of SH may have been historically overlooked because of a tendency to only view power through the lens of gender, and rather than other dynamics of power.For example,the power of a customer or manager over an employee (Poulston, 2008).Customers are able to harass employees as the mentality ‘the customer is always right’ can prevent employees from retaliating (Baltag *et al.*, 2021). Since the COVID-19 pandemic customer misbehaviour has reportedly worsened with one study revealing that 41% of service workers had experienced a notable change in the frequency of SH from customers (Booyens *et al.* 2022). Furthermore, both male and female customers expect hospitality workers to be willing to flirt with them, and that SH by customers is acceptable (Booyens *et al.*, 2022).Different models of power can be used to conceive SH as a phenomenon, such as a dependency framework or French and Raven’s (1959) typology of the bases of power that demonstrates the role of power across individual, organisational, and societal levels (McDonald, 2012).

Previous research shows that 25% of male students in hospitality and tourism work placements have experienced SH from other staff members (Ram, 2018).Harassers choose victims perceived to have less power in order to assert their own dominance (Cassino and Besen‐Cassino, 2019). Therefore, to protect employees of all genders within the hospitality workforce it is necessary to empower them in order to reduce their vulnerability.

Furthermore, SH negatively affects motivation at work (Baltag *et al.*, 2021) and has a negative impact on employees’ mental wellbeing (Park *et al.,* 2022). Poor wellbeing is associated with employees’ intention to leave (Hennicks, Heyns and Rothmann, 2022),and high turnover rates have a negative impact on organisational performance and reputation (Khan, Khan and Bodla, 2021). Additionally, men who have experienced SH are more likely than women to develop Stockholm Syndrome – as they may face pressure to be the breadwinner in their household (Hurley and Morganson, 2022).

To conclude, SH conducted towards male employees has an adverse effect on individuals and organisations (Park *et al.,* 2022). Currently, there is a severe lack of literature that examines the causes and effects of SH on men (Park *et al*., 2022), which has hindered challenging non-gendered dimensions of power that lead to SH.By challenging the current concept of women as victims and men as perpetrators, it may be possible to identify methods that organisations can implement to reduce the levels of SH and create safer workplaces for all. Therefore, more research that includes male victims of SH should be conducted in the future.

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