

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISRUPTED BODY IMAGE, AND DISTORTED EATING BEHAVIORS IN UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN AND MEN

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Introduction

- Women are harassed more often & are more distressed by sexual harassment (SH) compared to men resulting in worse outcomes (Cortina et al., 1998; Fitzgerald et al., 1999).
- Only a handful of studies explore the relationship between SH & eating disorder symptoms (Harned, 2000; Harned & Fitzgerald, 2002).
- Harned (2000) demonstrated the association between SH & eating disorder behavior in college women indicating a link between SH and distorted body image, binge-eating, self-induced vomiting, laxative use, diuretic use, & intense exercise.
- To our knowledge, no research exists presenting a link between SH & eating pathology & distorted body image in men.
- Our study indicates a link between SH & eating pathology, dietary restraint, eating concerns, binge-eating, body shape weight concern, & negative affectivity. After controlling for negative affectivity, a significant relationship still existed between eating pathology, eating concern, & binge-eating.

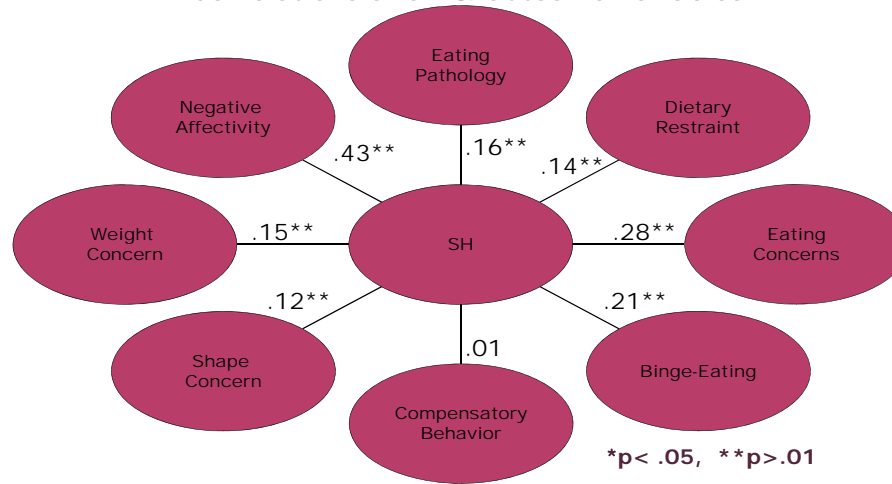
Objectives

- To investigate the relationship between SH & eating pathology & distorted eating behavior in college women & men.
- To examine the link between SH & overall eating pathology, dietary restraint, eating concerns, binge-eating, compensatory behavior, body shape & weight concerns, & negative affectivity.

References

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Correlations of SH & Outcome Variables



Regressions: Eating Pathology & Body Dissatisfaction Predicted by SH

	Eating Pathology	Dietary Restraint	Eating Concern	Binge-Eating	Comp. Behavior	Shape Concerns	Weight Concern
Total R²	.27**	.21**	.36**	.26**	.05	.23**	.26**
Negative Affectivity	.24**	.18**	.25**	.18**	.06	.26**	.23**
SH	.06*	-.06	.17**	.13**	-.01	.02	.05

*p < .05, **p > .01

Methods

Participants:

1400 undergraduate women and men

Measures:

- Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire* (EDE-Q; Beglin & Fairburn, 1992): assesses specific behaviors related to eating disorders and body weight concern
- Sexual Experiences Questionnaire* (SEQ; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, Drasgow, 1995) containing items assessing participants' experiences of specific behaviors that constitute sexual harassment.

Conclusions

- Results indicate a link between SH & increased eating pathology, dietary restraint, eating concerns, binge-eating, shape concern, weight concern, & negative affectivity.
- Individuals who experience SH find themselves with a unique set of eating pathology, they are more likely to binge eat & be concerned about their eating behavior.
- Results are consistent with previous findings that college women who experience SH also experience body image concerns (Harned, 2000).

Implications & Future Directions

- Counselors working with women & men that experience SH are encouraged to assess & monitor eating behaviors & body image distortions.
- Given the relational aspects of SH & disordered eating behavior & eating pathology, future studies should investigate the direct & indirect factors supporting this relationship.

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