Harassment, Coping Responses, Self-Objectification and Psychological Distress in Female Students Using Public Transport

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Abstract

Harassment is a social problem and has been an issue for women using public transport. Current research finds the relationship between harassment, coping responses, self-objectification and psychological distress in women used public transport. A purposive sample of 200 women only who use public transport was chosen in the present research from private and public institutes. Experience of harassment scale, Carver's brief cope, objectified body consciousness scale and depression anxiety stress scale were employed in this research. Descriptive research method was employed; more specifically, correlational research design. In order to calculate, Pearson Product Moment Correlational coefficient, Stepwise Regression Analysis with backward method was used. The findings showed positive correlation between harassment and psychological distress. The results of regression analysis further showed that among the positive predictors of depression for female adults, the coping strategies like problem-focused coping, active avoidance coping, and body shame were significant. Thus, the physical harassment and body shame configured as the positive predictors of the anxiety level. And stress was found to be knowledgeable by verbal passive harassment, active avoidance coping, and body shame. For the women, the counseling has to be worked out for them in order to implicate the results that indicate distress of harassment. Essentially, safety in public transport should be implemented to prevent the acts of harassment against women.

Keywords: Harassment, Coping responses, Self-objectification, psychological distress.

Introduction

Harassment is one of the adverse problems experienced by woman in any form (verbal, non-verbal or physical) and it is common in public transport especially where there are opportunities of physical closeness and approach due to small space in transport. This dilemma continues to affect the lives of women, causing emotional distress and even obstructs them in attaining their basic rights of social participation and achieving the life goals. The roles of stranger harassment acknowledgement and the requirement for women's protection in acknowledgement were lack in both Feminist literature and social science. Because of the violence against women, it becomes difficult for women to live their life, have rights and possibly exercise their freedom on the same capacity as men (Action Aid, 2011). Sir Lanka News reported that 70 percent of female reported that they face harassment during their travel in public transports (Sir Lanka News, 2011). Harassment on public transports is a daily trouble for woman due to which 92 percent of females prefer to travel in woman only public transport which is not available due to the financial crisis government faced reported in Pakistan Today (Pakistan Today, 2011).

Harassment

Harassment involves unwelcome behavior which is severe or pervasive enough to create discomfort or hostile environment for the victim or sufferer. There are three major types of harassment; non-verbal harassment, verbal harassment and physical harassment. Non-verbal harassment does not involve oral communication and physical contact while it involves staring, winking, lewd gestures, licking lips etc. Verbal harassment is one of the common types of harassment it involves whistling at someone, catcalls, and vulgar comments etc. Physical Harassment involves physical contact with the harasser such as touching the person's clothing, hair or body, rubbing oneself around another person etc. (Horri & Burgess, 2012). The aforementioned author Kearl (2010) offers a fairly brief yet more explicit definition of public sexual harassment, or street harassment, as gender-based harassment in the public domain; and more expansively as 'any words and actions of men in public places that invade the physical and psychological territory of stranger women in a creepy, disrespecting, scaring, insulting, or shocking way" and does not include bars/clubs under the category of "public place. A survey investigated sexual risk in commuter trains in Japan. Young women especially college and university students are the most common sufferers of harassment in Japan. This study shows that there are 48.7% chances that the woman whose age is 20 years or more had been experienced harassment at least once (Horri & Burgess's, 2012).

Coping Responses to Harassment

Coping is the process of executing potential response to the threat. Carver (1997) has defined a wide range of coping responses in the presence of life stressors. Coping responses of every individual differ in greater extent. Some of these coping responses are functional while others are dysfunctional in nature. These were identified as: active coping, distraction, substance use, denial, social support seeking, aggressive disengagement, accepting responsibility, planning, humor, religious rumination, venting instrumental support, positive reframing, self blame. These coping responses were classified into four major types: They identify these coping ways as Problem focused Coping, Active Avoidance Coping, Religious Denial Coping and Positive coping. Probably, the definition of problem focused coping is to take some measures to alter the source of stress is the most accurate. Active Avoidance Coping is the procedure of finding a way to attempt to expel or avoid the stressor or to improve its effects. Religious Denial Coping is the type of coping which involves the tendency to turn to religion in the time of stress or denying the reality of the threatening events. Positive Coping is the type of coping with the purpose of overseeing the distress emotions instead of managing the stressors. According to Gruber (1989), the overall figure of women employing emphatic or active coping approaches was below 20 percent. Infrequently, women may respond to harassment by reporting offenders or by challenging the harasser, engaging in self-inculpation, or by considering the harassment as a compliment or favor (Fitzgerald, 1990).

Self-Objectification and Harassment

Fredrickson Roberts (1997) defined objectification as a process whereby a woman's body or part of it is used to stand for the woman. The reoccurring objectification process results in self-objectification, which entails internalization of women's objectification. Men who harass women make them Objectified, and if women do not meet culture standards, they will be full of shame. Objectification has been deemed to be linked with the following; body dissatisfaction, body shame, body monitoring, eating disorders, and appearance concern. Calogero (2004) anticipated that women would have higher social physique anxiety and body shame if they were anticipated by male gaze rather than a female gaze. The results support this prediction. And also revealed that this effect occurs when they expecting that they would be interacting with man while in reality they didn't n interact. Another study found that women who took more active coping strategies were less likely to be upset, unsafe and victimized than women who used passive strategies (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008).

Psychological distress to harassment

Decker (1997), operationalized psychological distress as problems with sleep, lack of enthusiasm, feeling downhearted or blue, feeling emotionally bored, feeling hopeless about the future, thoughts of suicide and losing interest in things. Mirowsky and Ross (1989) defined that psychological distress is an emotional state of depression and anxiety (being restless, worried irritable, tense, and afraid), which has both psychological and emotional manifestations. Gutek and Koss (1993) found that those females who experienced harassment, may make physical and psychological complaints. Physical impacts involve a sleeping disorder, headaches, gastrointestinal tract issues, neck and spinal issues, weight loss, gastrointestinal and dental issues while, psychological impacts involve irritability, anxiety, depression, guilt, fatigue, anger, confusion, denial, detachment, uncontrolled crying, shame, and embarrassment. Other researchers Horii and Burgess (2012) also reported increased mental health problem such as changes in self-esteem; feeling of living in a dangerous world; post-traumatic stress disorder, heightened perceptions of vulnerability, among the women who make their daily commute using public transport and experienced harassment. Regarding the mode of transport, it was suggested that women who uses buses and wagons in their journey are more prone to harass than those who travels in private vehicles (Social Research & Development Organization, 2011).

Indigenous Researches

Currently Public harassment is very common in Pakistan. Sabir (2015) studied social intelligence, coping strategies and sexual harassment experiences in bus hostess. This research findings that Regression Analysis yields shows bus hostesses' experiences of sexual harassment were predicted by coping styles known as avoidance, denial and endurance, accounting for 35% Variances. Social policy and development center (2014) reported the rapid assessment of sexual harassment in public transport and connected spaces in Karachi. Three-fourth of working women experienced harassment, followed by students which was 69 percent of them. Urban resource center (2001) conducted a study in which interviews were taken from women living in Karachi using Coach, Bus and mini-buses. The results reveal that different types of harassment women were experienced which mostly included physical harassment and non-verbal harassment.

Overall, it shows that harassment leads the women to use passive coping responses most of the time. As a result of harassment women also started self-objectification and develop feelings of disgrace and shame about their bodies or different body parts. Harassment also results in negative psychological impacts on women such as psychological distress.

Rationale of the study

Harassment is a social problem and has been an issue for women using public transport. With the increase tendency of women empowerment, it is important to study the problems woman face at public transport, and what are the most effective ways of dealing with these kinds of situations (Sumbal, 2022). It is quite a typical scenario observed in Pakistan where the culture differs a lot; and most of the women who venture out of homes for the purpose of study, at some point in their life have been harassed (Bargad, 2005).

Previous researches that conducted in Pakistan did not study the relationship or impact of self-objectification and coping responses on psychological distress due to the experiences of harassment that women faced in public transport. This study also helped to increase the knowledge about self-objectification because little research has been done on harassment and self-objectification topic in Pakistan.

Hypothesis

H1. There will be a significant relationship among harassment, the coping responses, self-objectification and psychological distress.

H2. There will be a significant positive correlation between harassment, self-objectification and psychological distress in women using public transport.

H3. Harassment, coping responses and self-objectification will be the predictors of psychological distress in women using public transport.

H4. Harassment, coping responses and self-objectification will be the predictors of depression in women using public transport

H5. Harassment, coping responses and self-objectification will be the predictors of anxiety in women using public transport

H6. Harassment, coping responses and self-objectification will be the predictors of stress in women using public transport
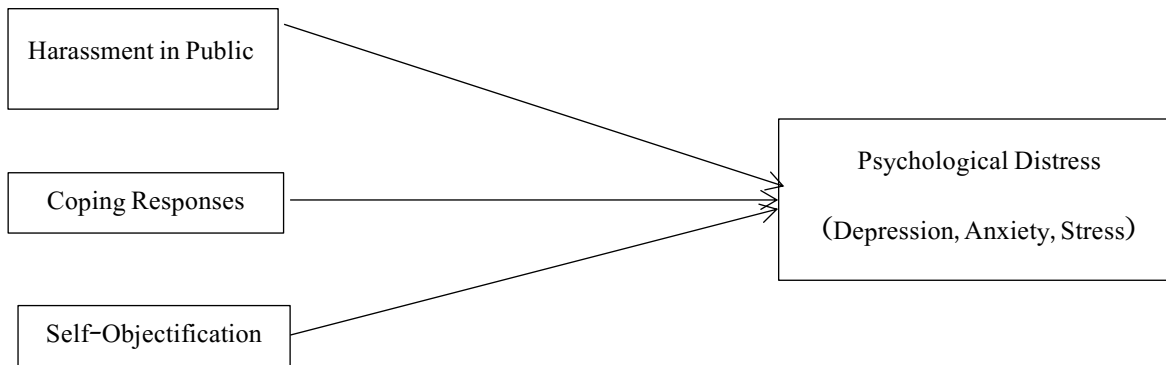
Proposed model

Figure 1. Hypothetical model of current study

Method
Research Design
A correlational research design was applied with a view to determining the extent of the relationship between the type of harassment experienced by female students and their Coping Responses, Self-Objectification as well as Psychological Distress while using public transport.

Participants
The sample consisted of 200 female students using public transport with the age range of 18-25 years, M= 20. 21 SD= 1. 45 studied in public and private institutes were selected through purposive sampling strategy.

Inclusion criteria
Females meeting the following criteria were included in present study.
- Females who were using public transport on daily basis
- Females who experienced harassment (verbal, non-verbal, physical) in past or present at least for once
- Females in the age range of 18-25 years old

Exclusion criteria
Females meeting the following criteria were not included in the present study.
- Females who suffered from severe and chronic psychological problems
- Females who had a physical disability
- Females who were not experiencing any type of harassment while traveling in public transport.

Assessment Measures
Demographic information sheet
Demographic Information like age, education, family system, duration of travel, reaction and prevention to harassment, etc. were collected according to the requirement of the study. The participants were approached at their universities Table 3.1 shows the demographic characteristics.

Experience of harassment scale ([EHS] Gull & Kausar, 2013)
It is an indigenous scale developed by Gull and Kausar (2013). The total item in the scale consists of 45 items with six subscales. Six subscales include Nonverbal active, Nonverbal passive, Verbal active, Verbal passive, Physical and Vulgarity. Nonverbal active subscale consists of items e.g., "tried to take a photograph from mobile phone". The Nonverbal passive subscale consists of items e.g., "start smiling, winking". The Verbal active subscale consists of item e.g., "discussing your appearance and clothes". The Verbal passive subscale consists of items e.g., "whistling for gaining your attention". The Physical subscale consists of items e.g., "pinching". The Vulgarity subscale consists of items e.g., "made an obscene gesture". The responses can be assessed with 5-point rating scale to indicate the frequency where 1 indicates "most of" the harassment and 5 indicate as "never". Reliability of this tool was 0.96. Written Permission from the original authors for the use of tool was taken. Internal consistency was calculated on present sample that found to be 0.93.

Brief COPE (Carver, 1997)
This tool measures the different coping responses used by women. It was a 28-item questionnaire based on a 4-point Likert scale ranges from 1 = haven't been doing this at all, 2 = I've been doing this a little bit, 3 = I've been doing this a medium amount, and 4 = I've been doing this a lot. The questionnaire divided into four subscales: Problem Focused coping, Active Avoidance coping, Religious Denial coping and Positive coping. Active Avoidance coping include items e.g., "giving up attempt to cope". Problem focused coping include items e.g., "getting support from others". Positive coping includes items e.g., "making jokes about the incident". Religious Denial coping include items e.g., "refusing the incident had happened or tried to find comfort in spiritual believes". The reliability ranges from 0.59-0.90 for the original version of brief- COPE. The Urdu version translated by Malik and Bawar (2007) was used in the current study. Written Permission for the use of tool was taken from the original author and also from the authors who translated the tool. Internal consistency calculated for the present sample was 0.84.

Objectified body consciousness scale ([OBCS] McKinley & Hyde's, 1996).

Self-objectification was measured by using McKinley and Hyde's (1996) Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS). Three subscales make up the OBCS (surveillance, body shame, and control beliefs) to which participants respond on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Each scale has 8 items; thus, the total number of items is 24. The translated version (Thaseen & Yousaf, 2015) was used in the current study. Written permission was granted by the original authors of OBCS and also from the authors who translated the tool for its use in the current research project. Internal consistency calculated for the present sample was 0.76.

Depression anxiety and stress scale ([DASS-21] Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995).

The DASS-21 is a measure that assesses three negative emotional states: Depression, Anxiety and Stress (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Each emotional state has 7-items. Depression subscale consists of items e.g., "couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling". Anxiety subscale consists of items e.g., "experienced breathing difficulty". Stress subscale consists of items e.g., "found it difficult to relax". When DASS-21 is compared to other validated measures of anxiety and depression, it does show good convergent and discriminant validity. The Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and Total DASS-21 scales had reliability values of .88, .82, .90, and .93, respectively. The translated Urdu version by Aslam (2005) was used in the current study. Permission from the original authors and author who translated the tool was taken. The internal consistency calculated for the present sample of the DASS-21 was 0.88.

Procedure & Ethical Considerations

Firstly, the current topic was approved from the departmental committee of Center for Clinical Psychology, University of Punjab, Lahore. Departmental approval would be taken before collecting data. The permission of the scales was taken from authors. Additionally, permissions from the relevant departments and universities were requested for the collection of data. Prior to gathering data for the main research, a pilot study was carried out to evaluate the degree of understanding pertaining to the questionnaire items. An Information Sheet explaining the purpose of the study, confirming confidentiality, and outlining the participants' rights was given to each willing participant by the researchers during the data collection process. Whether or not they use public transportation was the first screening question, as was whether or not they have ever been the target of harassment while doing so. Next, formal consent was obtained from every participant who participated in the study. Results were reported without any fabrication.

Results

The results consisted of Psychometric properties and Inferential Statistics. Data Was analyzed using SPSS 26.0 Version. The psychometric properties of the scales were determined through reliability analyses of the study measures (See Table 1). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to find out the relationship among study variables (See table 2). Stepwise Regression analysis with backward method was used to determine the predictors of psychological distress (See Table 3, 4 & 5).

Table 1

Psychometric properties of Questionnaires

Variables		M	SD	Range	α
Experience of Harassment Scale		26.42	7.38	45-225	.93
	Nonverbal active	36.78	7.19	10-50	.79
	Nonverbal passive	19.88	4.20	6-30	.63
	Verbal Active	37.20	6.57	10-50	.74
	Verbal Passive	7.43	1.91	2-10	.36
	Physical	36.78	6.88	9-45	.84
	Vulgarity	33.85	5.27	8-40	.79
Brief COPE		57.54	12.95	28-112	.84
	Problem focused Coping	16.55	4.55	7-28	.73
	Active Avoidance Coping	18.75	4.65	10-40	.61
	Religious Denial Coping	9.52	3.03	4-16	.63
	Positive Coping	14.23	4.238	7-28	.66
Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS)		94.13	11.69	24-168	.76
	Surveillance	30.56	6.59	8-56	.54
	Body Shame	30.30	7.82	8-56	.52
	Control Belief	33.27	6.33	8-56	.58

		42.32	20.48		
Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS)				0-63	.88
	Depression	12.92	8.22	0-42	.76
	Anxiety	13.09	7.73	0-42	.72
	Stress	16.31	7.07	0-42	.67

The Cronbach alpha for the experience of harassment scale ($\alpha = .93$) showed higher inter-reliability of the items. Whereas, the Cronbach calculated for brief COPE ($\alpha = .84$) also showed higher inter-reliability of items. Cronbach alpha for the objectified body consciousness scale ($\alpha = .76$) indicating satisfying internal reliability of items. And the Cronbach alpha for depression anxiety stress scale ($\alpha = .88$) also showing higher inter-reliability of items.

Results of table 2 showed that there was a significant relationship among study variables which confirmed the first hypothesis. Results also revealed that harassment, active avoidance coping was significantly positively correlated with psychological distress. Problem-focused coping was significantly negatively correlated with depression. The findings also showed that self-objectification had positive relationship between self- psychological distress which was again confirmed from the results. Results showed significant positive relationship between the variables ($p<.01$). This means that women who experienced harassment of various forms while using public transport were more likely to be psychologically distressed.

Table 2

Inter-Correlation among harassment, coping responses, self-objectification and psychological distress

	Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	NVA	.73**	.76**	.59**	.58**	.66**	.86**	.11*	.27**	.11*	.12*	.20**	.13*	-.03	-.11	-.00	.00
2	NVP	-	.69**	.58**	.62**	.60**	.84**	.02	.21**	.10	.00	.11	.07	.12*	-.13*	.05	.15*
3	VA		-	.55**	.57**	.67**	.84**	.04	.22**	.07	.01	.11*	.04	.05	-.20**	-.05	.07
4	VP			-	.53**	.58**	.79**	-.04	.00	-.08	-.18**	-.09	-.04	.14*	-.16**	-.02	.08
5	Phy				-	.70**	.80**	-.12*	.17**	-.01	-.10	-.01	.10	.22**	-.09	.15*	.24**
6	Vul					-	.83**	-.12*	.12*	.01	-.13*	-.03	.04	.07	-.11*	.01	.09
7	EHS						-	-.02	.19**	.03	-.06	.04	.06	.12*	-.16**	.02	.13*
8	PFoc							-	.41**	.57**	.66**	.83**	-.26**	-.14*	-.05	-.27**	-.17**
9	AAvo								-	.48**	.50**	.77**	-.01	.17**	-.06	.06	.27**
10	RDen									-	.49**	.76**	-.17**	-.04	-.08	-.17**	-.02
11	Pos										-	.82**	-.16*	-.17**	-.01	-.21**	-.04
12	BCop											-	-.18**	-.05	-.06	-.17**	.01
13	Surv												-	.02	.16*	.66**	.14*
14	BSha													-	-.24**	.55**	.33**
15	CBel														-	.47**	-.03
16	OBC															-	.29**
17	Dep																-
18	Anx																
19	Stress																
20	DASS																

Note: **p<.01 (one tailed) *p<.05 (one tailed), NVA= Nonverbal active, NVP= Nonverbal passive, VA= Verbal active, VP= Verbal passive, Phy= Physical, Vul= Vulgarity, EHS=Experience of Harassment, PFoc=Problem focused, AAvo=Active avoidance, RDen=Religious denial, Pos=Positive, BCop=Brief cope, Surv=Surveillance, BSha=Body shame, CBel=Control belief, OBC=Objectified Body Consciousness, Dep=Depression, Anx=Anxiety, DASS=Depression Anxiety Stress Scale

To investigate the predictive relationship harassment, coping responses and self-objectification variables were entered as predictors and depression as outcome variable.

Table 3

Coping responses and self-objectification predicting depression related to harassment

Variables	Model		
	B	β	95% CI
Constant	2.43		[-3.75, 8.61]
Problem Focused Coping	-.52	.12***	[-.77, -.27]
Active Avoidance Coping	.62	.12***	[.37, .86]
Body Shame	.24	.06***	[.11, .38]
R^2	.22		
F	19.17		
ΔR^2	-.00		
ΔF	2.35		

*N=200 *p<.05, **p<.01, *** p<.005*

The model experienced 22% variance with F (3, 196) = 19.17, p<.001. Problem focused coping, active avoidance coping and body shame were significant predictors of depression. Negative regression had shown between problem focused coping and depression. It means that women whose coping responses were acting in order to bring change in source of harassment they were less likely to feel depression. Positive regression was found between active avoidance coping and depression. Among objectified body consciousness, body shame was appeared as significant positive predictors of depression.

Table 4 Investigating the predictive relationship for this purpose harassment, coping responses and self-objectification variables were entered as predictors and anxiety as outcome variable.

Table 4

Harassment and self-objectification predicting anxiety related to harassment

Variables	Model		
	B	β	95% CI
Constant	1.71		[-2.62, 6.05]
Physical Harassment	1.49	.34***	[.81, 2.17]
Body Shame	.19	.06***	[.05, .372]
R2	.14		
F	17.16		
$\Delta R2$	-.01		
ΔF	2.44		

N=200 *p<.05, **p<.01, *** p<.005

The model experienced 14% variance with F (2, 197) = 17.16, p<.001. Among Harassment, physical harassment has predictive relationship with anxiety. And amongst self-objectification, body shame was appeared as a significant positive predictor of anxiety.

Table 5 investigating the predictive relationship: harassment, coping responses and self-objectification variables were entered as predictors and stress as outcome variable.

Table 5

Harassment, coping responses and self-objectification predicting stress related to harassment

Variables	Model		
	B	β	95% CI
Constant	4.96		[-.35, 10.29]
Verbal Passive Harassment	.62	.25***	[.12, 1.12]
Active Avoidance Coping	.22	.10*	[.01, -.43]
Body Shame	.14	.06*	[.01, -.26]
R^2	.09		
F	6.47		
ΔR^2	-.00		
ΔF	.75		

N=200 *p<.05, **p<.01, *** p<.005

Final model was found significant, F (3, 196) = 6.47, p<.001, R2 .09. The 9 ٪ of variance accounted for stress due to predictors (verbal passive harassment, active avoidance coping and body shame). Among harassment, verbal passive harassment appeared as a significant positive predictor of stress. Among coping responses, active avoidance coping was appeared as a significant predictor of stress. Among self‑objectification, body shame was emerged as a significant positive predictor of stress.
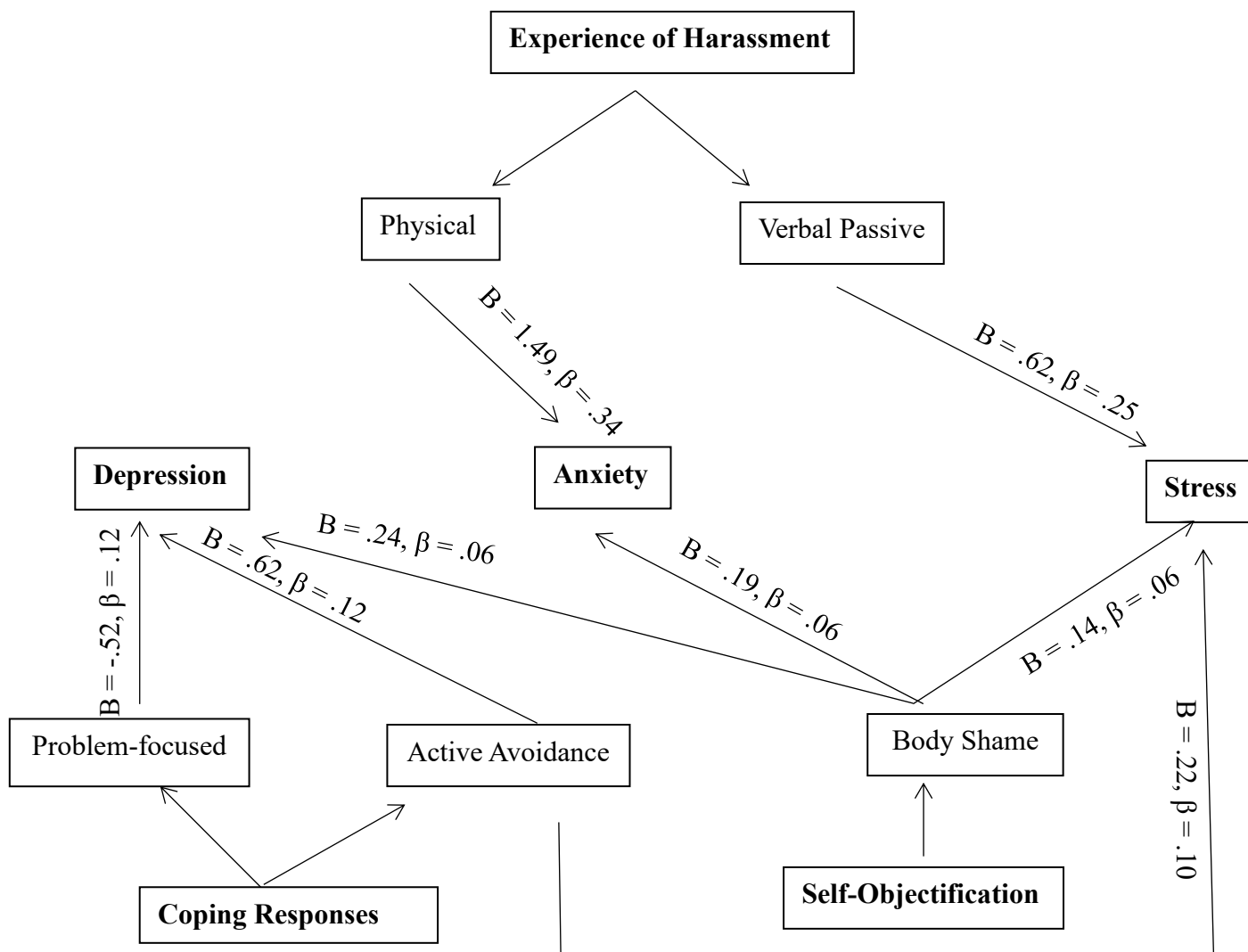
Figure 2: Emerged Model representing predictive relation of study variables to depression, anxiety and stress

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between harassment, coping responses, self‑objectification and psychological distress in women using public transport. The findings of present research showed high prevalence rate of harassment in women, 54 ٪ women reported that they harassed some times while travelling in public transport and 40 ٪ of them reported that they were the victims of harassment many times. Harassment was a significant type of degradation and shame that targets women who travel in public transport and also prone to undermine the quality of their lives. Fundamentally, harassment transforms public transport into a hostile place for women (Jagori, 2010).

The findings revealed that women who experienced harassment while travelling in public transport inflicts with psychological distress in the form of depression, anxiety and stress. It was very much reported that mental distress not just interferes with women rights and decline their psychological wellbeing, but also influences adversely their coping abilities. The findings were supported by Collinsworth, Fitzgerald and Dragow (2009) who found that women who were the victims of harassment reported high level of psychological distress. Another study showed that harassment and unfair behavior instigated by strangers in public transport results in unwanted consequences such as feelings of self‑blame, negative psychological impact etc. (ActionAid, 2011). According to interpersonal theory of psychological distress, maladaptive behaviors in a relationship were the significant predictor of psychological distress. As human being were social animals and they had to interact with different people daily when the interaction was unhealthy it results in mental distress. In the current study women who used public transport faced unhealthy interaction with the strangers which leads to mental health issues. It might be contended that the classic patriarchal framework and the prejudicial state of mind of the male‑commanded Pakistani society towards ladies might be one reason behind harassment in public transports in Pakistan (Kamal, 1995). This is a dominant schema that present in our general public that if a lady ventures out of her home she had to face harassment on the grounds that more often it is viewed as that those ladies who were working or concentrating on alongside men don't have a decent good character. This clarification is as per socio‑cultural theory, which expressed that the current sexual orientation imbalance and bias creates harassment in a general public (MacKinnon, 1979; Thomas &

Kitzinger, 1997). In the current study high prevalence of harassment among women using public transport showed prejudiced arrogance and inequality because of male-dominated society.

The findings also showed a strong correlation between psychological distress and coping responses. Women were more likely to use active avoidance coping strategies in response to harassment they face while travelling in public transport and less likely to use assertive and problem focused coping responses. Women who typically ignore and avoid the harasser were more likely to feel distress rather than those females who engaged in such activities like told others about the problem or confront the perpetrator, not blaming themselves for the unethical incident were less likely to feel depression. In contrast to active and confident coping processes, women were more likely to engage in passive and un-emphasized coping strategies or reactions, according to sufficient observational evidence (Cox, Dorfman & Stephan, 2005).

Moreover, among the three subscales of Objectified Body Consciousness, Body Shame exhibited a significant correlation with the Reaction to Harassment subscale. This suggests that women who encounter more harassment on public transportation are more likely to feel like horrible people for not conforming to social expectations regarding their physical appearance. This result explicitly demonstrates an association with self-objectification, since the authors of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale validated the Body Shame subscale as a measure of the internalization of social body guidelines (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). The current research shows that women who feel more body shame start considering that their body parts were their representative. The findings showed that as a result of self-objectification, women were more likely to feel psychological distress.

As per the self-objectification theory proposed by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), women who experience self-objectification tend to become more anxious about their physical appearance and feel more body shame and unease about their physical security. This, in turn, can lead to depression, sexual dysfunction, and disordered eating. Additionally, prior studies indicate that women's self-objectification is associated with a higher risk of depression, anxiety, and disordered eating (Calogero 2004; Moradi, Dirks & Matteson 2005; Roberts & Gettman 2004).

The present study was substantially supported with previous and overall explanation; those women who were harassed using non-assertive coping responses and begin to start self-objectification, which ultimately leads to psychological distress. Their response towards harassment was typically avoidance as instead of standing up to the culprit or reported the occurrence to the police headquarters. Therefore, there were long lasting negative effects on the mental health of women. Initiatives should be taken to provide basic protection to the women so that they move anywhere in the society without any fear of being harassed.

Limitations

· Sample was only consisting of young female university students.

· The study used only close ended questioning

· There was no comparison study which highlights the information about woman who faced public harassment and those who didn't face.

Recommendation for Future Research

· The current study suggested that more research be done on the relationship between sexual harassment and objectification. Women who are harassed by well-known offenders (in the workplace or at school, for example) might also experience similar outcomes.

· In order to generalize the results, future studies should examine the connection between harassment and self-objectification in a range of women, including rape victims, working women, housewives, and maids of various ages.

· A qualitative study should be carried out in order to get in depth information related to the predictors of study variables.

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