



Attitude and acceptability toward victims of sexual assault

Sidra Samar*, Dr. Uzma Ashiq Khan**, Aneeqa Razzaq***

* Student of MS Gender and development department – Lahore College for women university Lahore.
samararzu@gmail.com

** HOD Gender and Development Studies Department – Lahore College for women university Lahore.
uzma.ashiq@lcwu.edu.pk

*** Student of MS Gender and Development Studies Department – Lahore College for women university Lahore.
Aneeqa.razzaq@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The current research was designed to analyze the attitudes and beliefs of people regarding sexual assault. The study was conducted through a mixed-method approach in two phases. The first phase consisted of 12 interviews, whereas the second phase focused on the survey method involving 100 participants. Male and female students from public and private institutions were purposively selected for both phases. All participants were from various socio-economic backgrounds between the ages of 20 to 65 years. The interviews were taped, typed, and coded. The data gathered through interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Colleen Ward's Scale (Attitudes Toward Rape Victims) was used in phase two to measure the attitude toward rape victims of both sexes. The quantitative data was analyzed using ANOVA. The current study sought to investigate the victims of sexual assault in Pakistani society regarding attitudes, acceptance, and rape myths about them.



Introduction

Sexual violence is often viewed as a comprehensive concept encompassing all other terminologies, such as undesired and forced sexual contiguity. Rape and sexual assault are both included in this wide category (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2017).

Rape is a societal issue and a violation of the rights of humans. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 35% of females globally have suffered physical abuse with or without sexual assault. According to the World Health Organization, sexual assault is also a sort of rape (Jayalakshmi,

Choudhari, Mutalik & Bhogale, 2016). Prior study findings have emphasized that women face violence around the world. It varies from one culture to the next and from one civilization to the next. Sexual assault is a social issue that is also linked to public health since it has varying lengths, physical, emotional, and psychological impacts on victims and others around them. As a result, the problem demanded our absolute attention (Ali & Gavino, 2008).

Internationally, problem related to sexual assault is being discussed in a variety of forums all across the globe. Even in industrialized countries like the United States, Canada, and England, significant molestation cases have occurred yearly (Carson, 2007). An estimated 473,000 persons in England and Wales become victims of sexual crimes, including around 404,000 women and 72,000 men (Home Office and Ministry of Justice, 2013).

According to Ali and Gavino (2008), an interchangeable image exists in South Asian nations such as Pakistan. Women face prejudice and abuse on a daily basis in Pakistani culture as a result of cultural and religious traditions. Domestic abuse, spousal rape, acid assaults, honour murders, and burnings are all kinds of discrimination against women in Pakistan (Ali & Gavino, 2008).

Furthermore, the numbers revealed that Lahore has a higher-than-average number of rape cases reported in Punjab, with 107 child rape cases, 252 incidents of sexual assault on girls, and 1045 cases of sexual assault on boys (Gurumani, 2018). In terms of rape prevalence, it was discovered that rape cases are the least reported crime, with just 11% of rape cases being recorded globally (Hill & Marshall, 2018). Compared to other parts of the globe, Pakistan has the fewest recorded incidences of violence against women and rape (Kamal, Shaikh & Shaikh, 2010). According to the existing literature, the majority of rape victims opt not to disclose the crime owing to the shame connected (Egan & Wilson, 2012).

Rape survivors have encountered a variety of issues due to people's unfavorable views and rape myths about them. Many studies have attempted to draw attention to these attitudes and beliefs. Hostile attitude toward the victim (both adults and children) reanimates the victim's grief by holding them accountable for their sexual assaults and making them feel guilty (Clark, 2008). According to Frese, Moya, and Megas (2014), victims of molestation experience significant challenges in forgetting their history. Various fallacies about rape victims are gaining attention in society, with the victim being blamed for the incident due to their clothing, speech, behavior, and drug use. These forms of misunderstandings, stereotypes, or myths are used to condemn the victim while excusing the wrongdoing of the perpetrator (Frese, Moya & Megías, 2004).

Tolerance of myths about rape and negative attitudes are two instances of how cultural norms contribute to sexual assault (Raines, 2006). Gender expectations are gendered responsibilities in which the male is the breadwinner, and the wife is responsible for the house and children. Other gender roles of men and women are concentrated in industrialized civilizations where women and men are equal, and both may conduct internal and external household responsibilities. An increasing mass of study on Western and Eastern cultures has investigated the relationship between acceptance of the rape myth and female perspectives (Hill & Marshall, 2018).

According to Kamal, Sheikh, and Sheikh (2010), the rape incidences in Pakistan are rising, with most instances being undetected. The study also suggested that this rise may be attributed to men's unfavorable societal ideas and attitudes about females, which increased the probability of a woman being raped. Acceptance of the rape myth by males and incorrect moral and cultural views are some of the reasons men rationalize crime by claiming that women are to blame. Myths about rape are defined as false ideas that are regularly maintained and altered to justify male sexual assault. According to one of the studies, acceptance of rape myths and attitudes toward victims among university students in Pakistan have not been thoroughly investigated (Kamal, Sheikh & Sheikh, 2010).

People generally have difficulties reporting sexual assault and rape situations due to personal humiliation, safety concerns, fear of reprisal from the rapist, and lack of faith in the criminal justice system. As a result, victims feel embarrassed to relate their sexual assault or rape experience. They try not to notify their friends or family about the rape. When a victim fails to report a sexual assault or rape, feelings of shame, fear, remorse, and self-blame ensue. They are also uneasy since they do not believe them (Sable, Danis, Mauzy & Gallagher, 2014).

According to studies, men who never faced being sexually assaulted are more prone to believe rape myths than men who faced. When the attacker was male, participants thought they were more likely to disclose sexual assault (Hammond, Ionone & Fewster, 2016).

Sexual assault victims encounter a slew of health linked to poor mental and physical health. There is a significant frequency of health concerns among sexual assault victims, including drug usage, alcohol use, unsafe sexual conduct, and attempted suicide. Victims of childhood sexual abuse are at a considerable risk of developing alcoholism, eating disorders, and drug addiction later in life (Ben-Nun, 2016).

Sexual assault also raised the probability of catching sexually transmitted illnesses (Freccero, Harris, Carnay & Taylor, 2011). Sexual assault victims have a variety of subconscious issues, including anxiety, stress disorders, low self-esteem, sadness, and insomnia (Freccero, Harris, Carnay & Taylor, 2011).

The study discovered that violence against women is common in communities with tightly defined gender roles and where masculinity is linked with toughness, authority, and superiority (Freccero, Harris, Carnay & Taylor, 2011).

McCarthy (1992) performed research on rape attitudes in which it was found that men were more likely to agree than women with the rape myth in response to the question "Myth of rape as it is woman's responsibility." Prokop and Pekarik (2006) performed mixed-method study of men's impressions of raped women, taking into consideration male participants' perceptions, and discovered that males have unfavorable perceptions of rape victims.

Jayalakshmi, Srinivas, Choudhari, Mutalik, and Bhogale (2016) did a cross-sectional study to investigate women's opinions and attitudes toward rape victims. According to the study, male students had fewer favorable sentiments about the victim than female students, while women have more rape myths than men.

Methodology

This study was conducted to explore people's acceptance and perceptions of rape victims. These factors were investigated both qualitatively and statistically. Both phases of the current study are unique as they focus on two theoretical frameworks: feminist theory and social disorganization theory.

The first phase of the current study focused on a qualitative exploration of the acceptance and myths surrounding rape. The study relied on interviews to investigate people's views on the acceptance of victims of sexual assault and the prevalent rape stereotypes in our society.

Whereas in the second phase, "Attitude toward Rape Victims Scale" was used to measure student attitudes about sexual assault victims (ATR).

Participants

In the first phase, six males and six females belonging to early and mature adulthood were taken. Early adulthood participants were between the ages of 20 and 30, whereas mid-adulthood participants were between 30 and 65. Erickson's eight developmental phases were used to encompass these two age groups (Sharma, n.d). Participants were drawn from the public (University of the Punjab) and private (University of Central Punjab) universities of Lahore.

In the second phase of the survey, 50 males and 50 females in their early and mature adulthood were recruited.

Instrument

A qualitative method was used to examine acceptance and myths about rape and rape victims. In the first phase, an interview protocol was developed after using two scales, the McMahon and Farmer (2019) Illinois Rape Myths Scale and the Rape Victims Perceptions Scale by Afe, Ogunsemi Osalusi, Adeleye, and Ale (2017), and a review of the literature. Colleen Ward's Scale of Attitudes toward Rape Victims (1988) was used to examine attitudes toward rape victims after obtaining the authors' permission in the second phase.

Procedure

After the approval of the synopsis, the interview protocol was developed using two scales: the Illinois Rape Myth Scale (McMahon and Farmer, 2019) and the Rape Victim Perception Scale (Afe, Ogunsemi, Osalusi, Adeleye, and Ale, 2017). Rape misconceptions and acceptability were investigated, and demographic information such as respondents' gender, education, social status, and age (Subohi, 2006). Consent to perform this research was received from the University of the Punjab and the University of Central Punjab before collecting data. All of the interviews were taped and transcribed. Thematic analysis was applied to examine the acquired data. In the second phase, Colleen Ward's Attitude toward Rape Victim Scale (1988) was used to collect data on attitudes toward sexual assault victims. This scale included 25 questions and demographic data such as gender, age, education, and social status (Subohi, 2006). After items were updated with the author's agreement, the Attitude Toward Rape Victim Scale was administered. Permission was received from the University of Punjab and the University of Central Punjab to perform this research. Together with demographic information, the collected data was entered into SPSS, and the findings were produced after analysis.

Ethical Consideration

Before conducting the interviews, the informed consent of the participants was obtained. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study being conducted. In addition, participants were briefed on the overall research process, expected interview length, confidentiality, concerns about personal identification, and demographics.

Results

In phase one, a qualitative analysis of a deep understanding of rape myths and acceptance of the rape victim was performed. Thematic analysis was applied to analyze the data in phase one. Every interview was transcribed and coded. Using the theoretical framework as a guide, themes and sub-themes were generated from coded data. Six male and six female participants were focused in the first phase. The participants' average age was 21 years, and their average level of education was 16 years. The majority of the participants were first born. Everyone in the study was single and unemployed. The majority of the participants belonged to the middle socio-economic level and nuclear families.

Qualitative Analysis

Thematic analysis was used in this part of the current research, and the following themes were deduced from the data.

Victim mistake

As per the participants, the victims are not to blame, although male participants countered that there are some occasions when the victim is to blame, such as when a person does not cover oneself or wears exposing clothing and draws unwanted attention.

In contrast to prior considerations, the participants responded that there is no fault of the victim in the case of children since they are innocent. However, women feel that physical attractiveness and open conduct are reasons for sexual assault. A personal animosity may have sparked a rape melee in some instances.

Differences in perception of female and male victims

All participants rated their perceptions of female and male rape survivors. Male participants provided information from their point of view. Most of them showed compassion for the victims, but others said that people are hesitant to disclose rape incidents, while p3 stated that sex should not be included in such activities, and p4 stated that if we do not know the truth, we should not assume anything about the victims. According to p6, he feels sorry for the female victims.

One participant indicated that she saw female victims with sympathy and male victims with compassion; nevertheless, most interviewees indicated that they would be kind to the victims, encouraging them and offering love because they were already upset. One of the participants said that female victims face higher social expulsion issues.

Existence of rape myths

Participants were asked to characterize their understanding of rape and rape victims and their ideas regarding which gender is primarily responsible for rape culture to understand the presence of rape

myths better. All male participants believed that rape myths are common in our nation. According to participant 1, individuals perceive rape as a minor issue and believe that if one seeks to rape, they can simply shield themselves from punishment. Other male participants reported that most of the misconceptions center upon the victim's character. Participant 3 stated that most people believe rape myths, while another stated that people make up myths about where the rape occurred and that most victims (females) are more to blame than men. Participant 5 stated that individuals exaggerate stories about one issue, but participant 6 stated that people fabricate rape allegations.

Like the male participants, all female participants agreed that there are rape stereotypes in our society. Individuals create misconceptions about how people dress, according to female participant P7. P8 indicated that individuals hold incorrect views, so they do not permit their women to leave the house. According to P9, stereotypes regarding girls' dresses*- and long-term partnerships are widespread in society. Another participant, P10, stated that people invent stories about it.

The second phase of the study was to explore views regarding rape victims. The results were statistically examined using Colleen Ward's Attitude Toward Rape Victim Scale (ATR) (1988). Based on the calculated scores, male and female participants' attitudes toward male and female victims were evaluated. Higher scores reflect more positive sentiments toward rape victims, whereas lower scores suggest more negative attitudes. Independent sample T-test and ANOVA were applied to analyze the data.

Demographic data included 50 male and 50 female individuals. The participants' average age ranged from 20 years to 30 years (young adulthood), with an average of 16 years of education degree. The majority of participants were middle born. On average, the study participants were single, and the majority were not from the job group. The majority of the participants belonged to the nuclear family structure and came from affluent backgrounds.

Table 1

Independent sample T-test scores of male and female participants on the Attitude toward Male Rape Victim Scale (N=100)

Variables	Male		Female		<i>t(df)</i>	<i>P</i>	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
*ATR (Male version)	44.40	9.03	44.81	10.86	-18(81)	.851	-4.79	3.96

*ATR= "Attitude toward Rape Victim Scale"

Independent sample t-test results showed that there was no significant difference between male (M=44.40, SD=9.03) and female (M=44.81, SD 10.86) participants in the Attitude Towards Male Rape Victims Scale".

Table 2

Independent sample T-test scores of male and female participants on Attitude toward Female Rape Victim (N=100)

Variables	Male		Female		<i>t(df)</i>	<i>P</i>	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
*ATR (Female version)	45.57	12.46	43.18	11.17	.95(83.10)	.345	-2.60	7.37

*ATR= "Attitude toward Rape Victim Scale"

Independent-sample t-test's results showed that there was no significant difference between male (M=45.57, SD=12.46) and female (M=43.18, SD=11.17) participants in the Attitude Towards Victims of Female Rape Scale".

Table 3

Independent sample T-test scores of male and female working and non-working participants on "Attitude toward Male Rape Victims Scale" (N=100)

Variables	Non-working		Working		<i>t(df)</i>	<i>P</i>	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
*ATR (Male version)	43.57	9.60	47.68	10.86	-1.48(27.04)	.149	-9.79	1.57

*ATR= "Attitude toward Rape Victim Scale"

The independent-sample t-test showed a non-significant difference between non-employed male and female participants (M=43.57, SD=9.60) and employed participants (M=47.68, SD=10, 86) on the attitude scale toward male rape victims.

Table 4

Independent sample T-test scores of male and female working and non-working participants on "Attitude toward Female Rape Victims Scale" (N=100)

Variables	Non-working		Working		<i>t(df)</i>	<i>P</i>	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		<i>Cohen's d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	

*ATR (Female version)	42.45	11.25	48.90	10.91	2.34(34.17)	.025	-12.02	-.87	0.5
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*ATR= "Attitude toward Rape Victim Scale"

Independent-sample t-test results showed that there was a significant difference between male and female non-working participants (M = 42.45, SD = 11.25) and working participants (M = 48.90, SD = 10.91) in the "Attitude toward Female Rape Victims Scale". Cohen's d was 0.5, showing a medium effect size.

Table 5

Independent sample T-test scores of male and female participants on university basis on "Attitude toward Male Rape Victims Scale" (N=100)

Variables	Public		Private		t(df)	P	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
*ATR (Male version)	46.52	9.45	42.46	10.20	1.87(77.95)	.065	-.25	8.37

*ATR= "Attitude toward Rape Victim Scale"

The results of the t-test for independent samples showed that there was a non-significant difference between public (M=46.52, SD=9.45) and private (M=42.46, SD=10.20) males and females University respondents in the "Attitude toward Male Rape Victims Scale."

Table 6

Independent sample T-test scores of male and female participants on university basis on "Attitude toward Female Rape Victims Scale" (N=100)

Variables	Public		Private		t(df)	P	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Cohen'd
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
*ATR (Female version)	48.51	10.45	40.08	11.63	3.61(87.00)	.001	3.78	13.05	0.7

*ATR= "Attitude toward Rape Victim Scale"

The results of the independent sample t-test showed that there was a significant difference between participants from public universities (M = 48.51, SD = 10.45) and private universities (M = 40.08, SD = 11.63) in the "Attitude toward Female Rape Victims Scale". Cohen's d value was 0.7, indicating a medium to large effect size.

Table 7

Independent sample T-test scores of male and female participants on education basis on "Attitude toward Male Rape Victims Scale" (N=100)

Variables	BS/MA/MSc		MS/MPhil		<i>t(df)</i>	<i>P</i>	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
*ATR (Male version)	44.10	9.74	52.60	11.10	1.67(4.40)	.164	-22.12	5.12

*ATR= "Attitude toward Rape Victim Scale"

T-test results of independent samples showed that there was no significant difference between the educational levels of BS/MA/MSc (M= 44.10, SD= 9.74) and MS/MPhil (M= 52.60, SD= 11.10) in the "Attitude Towards Male Rape Victims Scale."

Table 8

Independent sample T-test scores of male and female participants on education basis on "Attitude toward Female Rape Victims Scale" (N=100)

Variables	BS/MA/MSc		MS/MPhil		<i>t(df)</i>	<i>P</i>	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
*ATR (Female version)	43.88	11.83	51.40	8.98	1.78(4.85)	.137	-18.46	3.42

*ATR= "Attitude toward Rape Victim Scale"

The results of the independent sample t-test showed that there was no significant difference between the educational levels of participants with BS/MA/MSc (M=43.88, SD=11.83) and MS/MPhil (M=51, 40, SD = 8.98) in "Attitudes towards female rape victims scale".

Table 9

Independent sample T-test scores of male and female participants on have you faced sexual harassment on "Attitude toward Male Rape Victims Scale" (N=100)

Faced	Not-Faced
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Variables	M	SD	M	D	t(df)	P	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							LL	UL
*ATR (Male version)	46.69	10.97	43.81	.52	1.18(81)	.241	-1.97	7.72

*ATR= "Attitude toward Rape Victim Scale"

Independent-sample t-test results showed that there was a non-significant difference between male and female responses of faced (M=46.69, SD=10.97) and not faced (M=43.81, SD= 9.52) on the "Attitude toward Male Rape Victims Scale".

Table 10

Independent sample T-test scores of male and female participants on have you faced sexual harassment on "Attitude toward Female Rape Victims Scale" (N=100)

Variables	M	SD	M	SD	t(df)	P	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							LL	UL
*ATR (Female version)	46.42	14.00	43.43	43.43	1.09(88)	.279	-2.45	8.42

*ATR= "Attitude toward Rape Victim Scale"

The results of the independent sample T-test showed that there was no significant difference between the male and female responses of the confronted (M = 46.42, SD = 14.00) and not confronted (M = 43.43, SD = 43.43) on "Attitude toward Female Rape Victims Scale."

Table 11

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) measuring different income groups on "Attitude toward Male Rape Victims Scale" (N=100)

Variables and source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Between groups	70.465	2	35.232	.349	.706
Within groups	8071.198	80	100.890		
Total	8141.663	82			

*F value is non-significant at p>.05

The ANOVA results are presented in Table 13. According to the analysis, there were no statistically significant differences in the Attitude Towards Male Rape Victims Scale among the different income groups F (2, 82) = .349, p = .706. The results showed that people between the income groups under 4000 to as much as 20000 (M=47.11, SD=9.50) scored higher than those in the other income

groups of 50000 to 100000 or less (M=44.66, SD=10.57) and 20000 to 100000 or more (M = 44.02, SD = 9.70).

Table 12

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) measuring different income groups on "Attitude toward Female Rape Victims Scale" (N=100)

<i>Variables and source</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Between groups	1450.029	2	725.014	5.779	.004
Within groups	10914.871	87	125.458		
Total	12364.900	89			

*F value is significant at p<.05

The ANOVA results are presented in Table 14. According to the analysis, there are statistically significant differences in the "scale of attitudes towards female rape victims" between different socio-economic groups $F(2,89) = 5.779, p = 0.004$. Results showed that people in income groups under 4,000 up to 20,000 (M=56.75, SD=13.45) scored higher than other income groups of 50,000 to 100,000 or less (M=44.17, SD=11.03) and 20,000 to 100,000 or more (M=42.09, SD=10.93).

Table 13

Multiple comparisons of different socio-economic groups on "Attitude toward Female Rape Victims Scale"

	<i>below 4000 much as 20000= (1),</i>		<i>50000-100000 or less= (2)</i>		<i>20000-100000 or above= (3)</i>		Post hoc
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Socio-economic groups	56.75	13.45	44.17	11.03	42.09	10.93	1>2&3

Socioeconomic groups below 4000 to 20000 = (1), 50000 to 100000 or less = (2), 20000 to 100000 or more = (3). According to the table above, the mean of group 1 is higher than that of group 2 and group 3.

Table 14

Multiple comparisons of two different socio-economic groups

	<i>below 4000 much as 20000= (1),</i>		<i>20000-100000 or above= (3)</i>		Post hoc
	M	SD	M	SD	
Socio-economic groups	56.75	13.45	42.09	10.93	1>3

Tukey's post hoc result indicates a highly significant difference between different socio-economic groups. The only significant difference was found between the group of less than 4000 to 20000 and the group of 20000 to 100000 or more, $p=0.004$

Discussion

The current study was administered better to understand the attitudes and perspectives of sexual assault victims. Prevalent myths about rape and acceptance of sexual assault victims in the younger generation were also noted. The current study was essentially a mixed-method assessment to gain a comprehensive picture of sexual assault victims in society. Study one discovered that most participants had a decent understanding and awareness of rape. They saw rape as forced intercourse but had limited understanding of sexual assault, similar to forced sexual contact. Rape is another term for sexual assault (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2017).

Rape-related violence appears in Pakistani society in many forms in various parts of the nation. Domestic violence, spousal rape, honor killings, acid assaults, and burnings are all examples of violence against women in society (Ali & Gavino, 2008; Uks-A Research, Resource and Publication Centre on Women and Media, 2011). Participants of the present study were asked on the prevalence of rape in our culture. The results showed that all participants were aware of the notion of rape. They all responded that rape occurs in all countries and that incidences are growing daily, corroborated by the literature (Manzoor, Hashmi & Mukhtar, 2010). The source of their information is socialization and media since several of them mentioned Zainab's rape story during their debate.

According to current research, the majority of sex crime victims are women, as reported by participants. In Third World nations where women battle for their rights, survival, and status, women are considered easy targets for violence. These findings pertain to sexual assault survivors and are supported by previous studies (Jamel, 2008; Victim service worker handbook, 2007).

There were no variations in participants' perceptions about the victim's fault in the current study. Some of the participants believed rape victims to be innocent. Other participants confirmed that it is the victim's fault because it gives another person a chance and attracts others with clothes. We live in a patriarchal system where males are the family's leaders. People have an unwavering view on women's dress and gender equality.

According to the findings of the current survey, the majority of individuals feel sorrow and unfairness for victims of sexual assault. People hold a favourable opinion of victims of forcible rape. The literature backs these findings of empathetic views toward rape victims (Burczyk & Standing, 1989). This data lends credence to the concept that the vast majority of men are the perpetrators of sexual assault (Jewkes, Sen & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Greathouse, Saunders, Matthews, Keller & Miller, 2015).

The majority of male participants and, with some skepticism, most female participants agree with comments concerning physical attractiveness. They feel that a person's looks are important when it comes to rape. The literature emphasizes the importance of physical appearance, particularly in situations involving female victims (Avais, Chandio & Brohi, 2014). According to the research, the victims are not explicitly blamed by society but rather for how they dress. Another research discovered that women attract males by their conduct and clothing (Kamal, 2010).

People frequently hold erroneous thoughts and preconceptions regarding sexual assault without realizing the facts. A sizable student proportion feels that myths about rape are widespread in our society. According to participants, society is more likely to blame female than male rape victims. They often criticize victims' clothing, open conduct, and personality. The research also confirmed similar conclusions about society's views and perceptions of the victim (Gravelin, Biernat & Bucher, 2019). All participants agreed that a female victim suffers more than a male rape victim, which the research support (Victim service worker handbook, 2007).

As a result of sexual assault, most of the present study's participants reported having reproductive issues. According to the research, rape victims encounter a variety of pregnancy difficulties (Jewkes, Sen,

& Garcia-Moreno, 2002),

In the second phase of the current study first hypothesis was that "there would be a substantial difference between the scores of male and female participants on the Rape Victims Attitude Scale." According to the current study's respondents, positive attitudes towards sexual assault and rape victims were observed. While the paltry difference was noted in male participants' attitudes toward the female rape victim, males have somewhat less favorable attitudes toward the female rape victims as collated with female respondents. Literature also backs up the findings (Boxley, Lawrance & Gruchow, 1995). Another study supported that too. (Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre & Morrison, 2005)

Other findings were based on students' opinions at public and private universities. The current study found that participants in private colleges had a non-significant difference in male rape victims compared to participants in public universities. This insignificant difference suggests a favorable attitude toward male rape victims. The sentiments of participants regarding female rape victims varied significantly. Participants at the public university have opposing views on female rape victims. It is due to the difference in socio-economic class, with the lower socio-economic class having more traditional attitudes than the upper socio-economic class. The reason for the insignificant difference in attitudes may be that most students are from the middle and lower classes.

The current study indicated a non-significant gender difference in sentiments toward male and female rape victims among individuals with BS and MS. The mean ratings of MS/MPhil participants on female and male sexual assault victims differed, indicating that participants rated higher than BS participants. The non-significant variations in views across groups are due to both groups having a high degree of education.

According to the current study, there was a non-significant difference in the opinions of employed and unemployed individuals regarding male rape victims. In the present study, there is a significant difference between employed and non-employed participants regarding female rape victims. People who are employed exhibit fewer favorable sentiments than non-employed participants. These disparities can be explained by the fact that the working participants operate in a male-dominated atmosphere. Since Pakistan is a patriarchal society and females working in different fields are still considered taboo, men have a more conventional mentality, which is supported by the literature (Hockett, Saucier, Hoffman, Smith & Craig, 2009).

On the "Attitude toward Rape Victim scale," no significant differences were identified between male and female participants who were or were not subjected to sexual harassment, according to other findings from the present study. However, it was shown that individuals subjected to sexual harassment had a bigger mean difference than those not subjected to sexual harassment. The analysis of sentiments toward female rape victims revealed a substantial difference across income categories, indicating that persons with lower incomes have less positive opinions about rape victims. According to the findings, persons with greater incomes have more understanding views toward rape victims (Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre & Morrison, 2005).

Conclusion

This research reveals that sexual assault and rape exist in our culture, and women as rape victims are more in numbers. Because of the patriarchal structure and rape myths, rape victims confront several challenges. Their acceptability in society is being questioned, as are numerous socio-biological issues. In general, the participants in the present study showed a positive perception and an understanding attitude towards the rape victim and accepted her as their life partner. However, we found and observed conflicting statements about the victim's physical appearance, victim-blaming, and gender equality.

The findings revealed non-significant gender differences between male and female participants regarding the victims. Furthermore, non-significant gender differences were found in sexual harassment, BS/MS, employed/unemployed vs. male victim, university-based, and income groups vs. male victim. Quantitatively with the help of the "Attitudes toward Rape Victims Scale," results show substantial gender differences across public and private universities, employees and non-workers, and economic categories. (Female version).

Limitations

Present study's limitations are as follow:

1. The inability of the researcher to incorporate additional individuals in the quantitative portion of the study.
2. The researcher was unable to include additional individuals in this study.
3. Only young adults were focused on in this study.

Future suggestions

1. Rape victims have numerous issues in their lives. When they make incorrect assumptions about themselves, their lives get more complicated; thus, people should discourage them from making incorrect conclusions without knowing the truth.
2. Data for the current study was gathered from two universities. Data from more than two institutions can be collected in the future study.
3. Future research can focus on additional significant elements and viewpoints while studying this phenomenon.
4. For the government, it is suggested that awareness programs for demolishing rape myths should be introduced, and consultation should be provided to victims for betterment.

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