



Pergamon

Child Abuse & Neglect 26 (2002) 149–166

---

---

Child Abuse  
& Neglect

---

---

## Sexual harassment in Jewish and Arab public schools in Israel<sup>☆</sup>

Anat Zeira<sup>a,\*</sup>, Ron Avi Astor<sup>b</sup>, Rami Benbenishty<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The Paul Baerwald School of Social Work, Jerusalem, Israel*

<sup>b</sup>*The University of Michigan, School of Education and School of Social Work, Ann Arbor, MI, USA*

Received 8 March 2001; received in revised form 16 July 2001; accepted 16 July 2001

---

### Abstract

**Objective:** Current empirical literature on sexual harassment in schools is mostly based on nonrepresentative samples of middle-class high-school Caucasian female students. Thus the scope of research regarding gender, age, and cultural differences is very limited. This article reports on findings on sexual harassment in Jewish and Arab schools in Israel with regard to gender, age, and cultural differences.

**Method:** The study is part of the first national survey on school violence in Israel. The representative sample includes 10,400 students in grades 7 through 11 attending public schools in Israel. Students were asked to report whether they were victims of specific acts of sexual harassment in school during the month before the survey.

**Results:** Overall, 29.1% of the students were victims of at least one act of harassment. The more common acts were to show offensive pictures or to send obscene letters, to take off or to try to take off part of the student's clothing, and to try to kiss a student. The most vulnerable groups are the Arab boys and 8th grade students. Report rates were the lowest among Arab girls.

**Conclusions:** Sexual harassment is prevalent in Israeli schools. The pattern of victimization is different for boys and girls and for students in Jewish and Arab schools. These patterns are a complex phenomenon that must be considered in the intervention and policy measures addressing sexual harassment at school. © 2002 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

*Keywords:* Sexual harassment; School violence; Gender violence

---

<sup>☆</sup> The study was funded by a grant from the Israeli Ministry of Education.

\* Corresponding author address: School of Social Work, The Hebrew University, Mt. Scopus, Jerusalem 91905, Israel.

## Introduction

Over the past decade many sexual harassment studies have explored victimization of school students mainly in the US and other English-speaking cultures (Fineran & Bennett, 1998). Most of these studies were conducted using small convenience samples and were not nationally representative of their school-aged populations (Bagley, Bolitho, & Bertrand, 1997; Fineran & Bennett, 1998; Kopels & Dupper, 1999; Stein, 1995; Stein, Marshall, & Tropp, 1993; Roscoe, Strouse, & Goodwin, 1994). Furthermore, sexual harassment studies have generally not addressed gender and development related questions in diverse cultural settings; most, if not all, of the empirical literature is focused primarily on middle-class Caucasian students. As a start in extending the study of school sexual harassment to other cultures, this is the first representative study of sexual harassment issues in Middle Eastern schools.

Here we describe victimization by sexual harassment in Jewish and Arab public school populations in Israel. We examine the frequency of specific behaviors that are considered forms of sexual harassment and explore how they vary with the students' culture, gender, and age. The data presented here derive from a larger study on issues of school violence (Benbenishty, Zeira, & Astor, 2000; Zeira, Benbenishty, & Astor, in press) and are based on a nationally representative sample of 10,400 Arab and Jewish students attending grades 7 through 11 at public schools in Israel.

Israel's population is multicultural, with many diverse religious and ethnic groups. The two largest groups are Jews and Arabs. The public schools of these two groups are segregated by language, and both are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Ninety percent of the Jewish population is secular or practices a modern Orthodox Judaism that identifies strongly with Western values and culture, tends to be more liberal about gender roles, rules of dress dealing with modesty, and open discussion on sexual issues in general. At the same time, 10% of the Jewish-Israeli population is Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox. This latter group is highly resistant to Western values, does not adhere to the same liberal Western values and gender roles, and has its own private educational system that is not supervised by the Israeli Ministry of Education.

Almost a fifth of Israel's population is Arab (19.6%). This Arab population is highly diverse in religion (Muslim, Christian, and Druze) and ethnic background. Even so, Arab groups within Israel share a similar history, language, and culture. Despite variation in liberal versus conservative attitudes within the Arab groups, many polls, articles, and surveys suggest that Israeli-Arabs, as a group, are generally conservative, traditional, and hierarchical with regard to sex roles, the centrality of the family, and socio-cultural hierarchy (Haj-Yahia, 1997).

This study provides an epidemiologic perspective on sexual harassment of two non-English speaking cultures. The cultural segregation and the distinctness of Arab and Jewish schools in Israel provides a unique opportunity for investigating the phenomenon of school-based peer sexual harassment in the two very different cultures.

### *Background and definitions*

Sexual harassment in schools is one of many behaviors considered to be part of school violence and student victimization. Acts of sexual harassment are diverse sets of behaviors

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات