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## Street harassment perception and its relations with self-objectification of women

### La percepción sobre el acoso en las calles y su relación con la auto-cosificación de las mujeres

**Abstract** | Between 7 and 36% of women around the world report having been victimized through a violent act (UN 2006). Street harassment is an implicit type of violence that deprives women's freedom of movement. There are no statistics of this type of violence in the Dominican Republic, but generally, cultural practice encourages both men and women to accept it. This study seeks to relate the perception of street harassment, self-objectification in women and their reactions to harassment. We used a non-probabilistic convenience sampling of 46 Dominican women working in a private university in Santo Domingo. Results indicate that the acceptance of sexual harassment has a low positive correlation with objectification, and a high positive correlation with the acceptance of myth of domestic violence. A lower acceptance of street harassment is related to higher levels of education and social status. A greater effort to prevent street harassment is associated with lower self-objectification of women.

**Keywords** | street harassment, self-objectification, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism, gender stereotypes, sexual terrorism, gender based violence.

**Resumen** | Entre el 7 y el 36% de las mujeres en todo el mundo informan haber sido víctimas de un acto violento (ONU 2006). El acoso callejero es un tipo implícito de violencia que priva a las mujeres de su libertad de movimiento. No existen estadísticas de este tipo de violencia en la República Dominicana, pero, en general, la práctica cultural alienta a hombres y mujeres a aceptarla. Este estudio busca relacionar la percepción de acoso callejero, autobjetivación en las mujeres y sus reacciones al acoso. Utilizamos un muestreo de conveniencia no probabilístico de 46 mujeres dominicanas que trabajan en una universidad privada en Santo Domingo. Los resultados indican que la aceptación del acoso se-

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xual tiene una baja correlación positiva con la objetivación y una alta correlación positiva con la aceptación del mito de la violencia doméstica. Una menor aceptación del acoso callejero se relaciona con niveles más altos de educación y condición social. Un mayor esfuerzo para prevenir el acoso callejero se asocia con una menor autobjetivación de las mujeres.

**Palabras clave** | acoso callejero, auto-objetivación, sexismo hostil y sexismo benevolente, estereotipos de género, terrorismo sexual, violencia de género.

VIOLENCE AGAINST women occurs frequently around the world, between 7 and 36% of women reported having experienced sexual abuse or some form of violence (UN 2006). At the same time 59% of women report have been victims of sexual aggression by her intimate partner before age 15. Street harassment is a type of violence against women that deprives them of accessing essential basics needs, sociocultural events, enjoyment, and impacts their mental and physical health. One type of sexual harassment that is frequently trivialized is sexual harassment in the streets (Bowman 1993).

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNW 2014) explains that street harassment is a type of violence that restricts the victim's movement, reducing their ability to attend school and work. Stop Street Harassment (SSH 2015) defines street harassment as an encounter between the perpetrator and the victimized person, in which the first one performs unwanted comments, gestures and forced actions without consent. Such actions are performed in terms of the ways the perpetrator perceives the gender, sex, gender expression or sexual orientation of the victim.

Street harassment represents a form of violence against the victimized person and may lead to significant experiences of psychological distress (Ekore 2012). Street harassment usually occurs between a man and a woman, the man being the perpetrator and the victim a woman (Candidate 2015). Bowman (1993) states that the potential victim of street harassment is any woman who is sexually developed, but not too old or beyond reproductive age, because stereotypically, an older woman is not considered a beauty standard. Street harassment is considered as "sexual terrorism", a type of systematic control and domination that men use against women through implicit violence (Kissling 1991).

Sexual terrorism and gender-based violence play a fundamental role in the subordination of women (Ayres, Friedman & Leaper, 2009). This type of violence usually provokes in the victimized person from mild discomfort to intense fear (Bowman 1993). Several studies report that street harassment generates feelings of terror for women and reinforces their fear of being raped and other acts of terrorism (Davis 1994). McMillan, Nierobisz & Welsh (2000) mentioned that

street harassment has a negative impact on women and increases their fear to be in public places, which makes them reduce their sense of security.

While for many women street harassment is an intrusion into personal space, a humiliating experience, a potential threat a type of violence, and abuse against them (Kissling 1991; Packer 2008; Ekore 2012) that women and men differ in what constitutes street harassment. These individual differences underscore the importance of studying this type of gender base violence in the context of the cultural and societal structures that perpetuate male violence against women. The origins of violence against women are based on a sociocultural construction of gender, and power. Studies show that street harassment is one of the most common types of violence against women in the world (Bowman 1993; Fredrickson & Roberts 1997). The victim's response to street harassment is a very important component and can be particularly susceptible to the influences of culture (Wasti & Cortina 2002).

A typical response to street harassment is to ignore the perpetrator. The less frequent coping mechanism against street harassment is to report or face the perpetrator (Fairchild & Rudman 2008). When women have an active response against street harassment, the perpetrator usually criticizes, shouts and can possibly physically attack the woman. Women who create a habit of constantly ignoring the perpetrator can be considered as passive victims. It has been found that perpetrators that are ignored tend to feel free to repeat the harassment (Bowman 1993). When women often have an active reaction, it may be dangerous for them, because the perpetrator may react aggressively, leading women to be at the crossroads to have an active or passive reaction towards the harassment. This type of reaction can be difficult to accept for men, because they are part of the group of power and the culture in a society that is dominated by men. Although men can perceive street harassment cases as isolated and rare, for women it is an experience of sexual terrorism and violence against them that is chronic in nature and can lead to burnout (Candidate 2005).

Street harassment is a problem that occurs in many countries worldwide. For example, the SSH (2014) conducted a national survey that interviewed 2,000 participants with the aim of studying the prevalence of street harassment in the United States. This study found that 65% of women surveyed have experienced some kind of street harassment. Within this group, 23% have been sexually touched, 20% have been followed, and 9% have been forced to perform a sexual act such as oral sex or masturbation without their consent. Most of the time the perpetrator is a man, but both men and women can be victimized by street harassment. In the same study, 25% of men who have been harassed are part of the LGBTQI community and the kind of harassment they experienced were homophobic and transphobic insults.

McMillan *et al.* (2000) made a study with a sample of 12,300 Canadian women to research the impact of street harassment and their perception of their sense of security. The results indicated that 80% of women experienced street harassment by an unknown man, and that affected the way they perceived their safety on the streets. The UNW (2015) together with the European Union conducted a study of street harassment in Chile. The results indicated that 85% of the Chilean women have experienced some kind of street harassment. Also, Vallejo & Rivarola (2013) developed a study in Peru where they interviewed 800 women, the results showed that 60% of women have experienced street harassment and over 80% were between 18 and 29 years old. In general, these reports indicate that women are at a considerable risk of being victimized by men, and street harassment is the type of violence they use against women. Although street harassment may vary with race, economic status, or ethnicity of the victimized person, as well as the history of interactions between genders that she might had have, women tend to be victims of other type of violence such as sexism and objectification (Bowman 1993).

## Sexism and gender stereotypes

Glick & Fiske (1996) explain that sexism is a multidimensional construct that incorporates not only hostility towards women, but two attitudes sets such as sexism: benevolent sexism and hostile sexism. Benevolent sexism are the stereotypical and specific attitudes towards women according to the gender roles that society imposes, whereas hostile sexism are, the type of prejudices, hostile affections, and negative stereotypes towards women (Glick & Fiske 1996). When men and women are exposed to benevolent and sexist stereotypes, only women get high levels of self-monitoring, body shame, and appearance management.

These stereotypes remind women their subordination to men, positioning women as things and objects that need care and protection of men (Calogero 2013). Some argue that street harassment and other coercive behavior are part of larger dimension of hostility towards women (Ayres *et al.* 2009; Bowman 1993; Kissling 1991). Accordingly, although sexist hostility plays an important role in the perception of street harassment, ambivalent sexism is a predictor of tolerance towards it.

Sexism is linked to the root of culturally stereotypical traditional gender roles; there are reasons to believe that those who adopt traditional gender roles are more tolerant of street harassment (Russell & Trigg 2004). Gender stereotypes imposed by society to women could affect their perception and reaction to street harassment because stereotypes are enforced according to men's perspective and interactions. These stereotypes affect men's perception so they can't under-

stand women's needs and don't respect their rights (Davis 1994). In modern society the gender stereotypes imposed on women are as sex objects, while for men are as sex predators. These stereotypes are promoted through television, movies, advertising and magazines, particularly in media's focus on teens (Jewell & Spears 2013). Media and communications manage sexual objectification through visual presentation of bodies and content that highlights the importance of appearance (Aubrey 2006). Studies, additionally, indicate that the media often portray a limited and often elusive standard of women's physical beauty and link this standard with women's sexual identity and worth. When women have exposure to sexually objectifying media they can give more importance to beauty and appearance to define their individual's own self-worth (Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr 2011). Grabe, Shibley & Ward (2008) affirm that repeated exposure to media content leads viewers to begin to accept media portrayals as representation of reality. Consuming sexually objectifying and self-objectifying television, movies advertising and magazines can also increase self-objectification on girls and women. Culture affects media representation of girls and women through stereotypes and values them as sex objects. These stereotypes can possible limit women's self-perception and can impact their notion regarding the importance of appearance (Gordon 2008). Street harassment is based on the cultural domination of women, although women and men share the same culture, women are subordinate because the culture is sexist (Davis 1994).

### **Objectification and self-objectification**

Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) affirm that objectification occurs when women or any part of their bodies, or some sexual functions are separated from them, reducing them only to the state of instruments or things. In the other hand self-objectification occurs when people appraises their own bodies from the perspective of a third person, focusing only on the observables attributes of the body rather than the perspective of the first person, which focuses on non-observables privileges and attributes (Noll & Fredrickson 1998).

Several studies have shown that women who adopt the point of view of self-objectification, is because they have lived in a society that legitimizes sexist ideologies and gender roles in a culturally chauvinistic society (Calogero 2013; Fairchild & Rudman 2008). This is why street harassment can trigger both physical and psychological damage to a woman, because when a man makes an inappropriate comment or stares at a woman's body part it reinforces the objectification of women. Thus women dehumanize themselves and they learn through their experiences to associate emotions of humiliation and worthlessness as part of their sexual identity (Candidate 2005).

Davidson, Gervais & Shred (2013) conducted a study with 495 college women where they measured the impact related to street harassment and the objectification and self-objectification. The study reveals that while less known is the perpetrator to the victimized person, more likely the victim self-objectify. On the other hand, the authors explain that self-objectification has a ripple effect that leads not only to victim self-objectification, but also objectify others, therefore affects women's world vision.

### **Socioeconomic status and sexual harassment**

Kearl (2014) ruled a study which indicated that people of color, low income, and people who self-identified as lesbians, gay, bisexuals, or trans were disproportionately affected by street harassment. According to (Fredrickson & Roberts 1997), women of the aforementioned groups face an additional negative position as racism, classism, homophobia and transphobia. Women develop a coping mechanism where looks are more important to them so men can treat them better. These strategies are not necessarily conscious or deliberate. Society external pressure through subtle exposure of street harassment makes them seek to improve their physical beauty voluntarily or even naturally. This makes them self-objectify themselves, and makes them have less perception of street harassment and more acceptance of it (Bowman 1993).

### **Gender based violence in the Dominican Republic**

In the last 10 years, Dominican Republic has experienced one of the highest rates of gender-based violence compared to previous years. In 2015, 93 women were killed while 61 were killed in 2014. Existing data state that 6,608 gender based violence cases has been reported in 2015 (Procuraduría General de la República 2015). However, national statistics systems aren't trustworthy, characterized by reports absence, and conflicting information can be found. There's anecdotal evidence provided by non-profit organizations (NGOs) that claim that gender-based violence's figures are higher than reported (Oficina Nacional de Estadística 2014). In the Dominican Republic have been carried out several studies about sexual harassment without regard of street harassment. The Ministerio de la Mujer de la República Dominicana (2010) prepared a study on sexual harassment and moral harassment at work, where they conducted surveys in 19 public institutions and 38 private companies located in Santo Domingo. The results indicate that 31.9% of the women working in the public sector have experienced sexual harassment, and 31.4% of the women working in the private sector were victimized by sexual harassment in the Dominican Republic. The difference between the groups was not significant.

## Legislation on sexual harassment

There's no law in the Dominican Republic that penalizes street harassment, but there's an article in the Labor Code that penalizes sexual and moral harassment. The Article 49.9 of the Labor Code of the Dominican Republic explains that the employer cannot take any action that is considered sexual harassment, as well as intervene or support in the case of his representatives. Despite the aforementioned, there's no sanction, which means that the inspectors cannot take any act against the employers. On the other hand, the penal code promulgated Law 24-97 on Interfamily Violence, which includes sexual harassment, this law defines sexual harassment in its article 333-2 as the order, threat, obtain favors of a sexual nature, performed by a person who abuses his duties; this infraction entails a year of imprisonment and from RD\$5,000 to RD\$10,000 of fines (Ministerio de la Mujer 2010).

According to Bowman (1993), there are few studies on street harassment because there are few legal remedies in this regard; it is almost impossible to legally subject a stranger to street harassment because it disappears immediately, and it is unlikely that lawmakers will support any law against such violence. The United Nations Human Rights (2015) passed a Law 30314, which explains that sexual harassment in public places should be prevented and punished. It also explains that street harassment is a type of violence against women, and as all public and private entities must adhere to this Law. In the United States, all states have laws that penalize harassment, but not all specifically target street harassment, for example, in the state of Hawaii implemented Harassment Act 711-1106, which explains that if a man continues talking to a person in the streets even though a woman tells him to stop; if a person insults, harasses and uses offensive words, or puts offensive physical contact to other person; can be reported to the authorities (Hawaii State Legislature 2006).

The first country in Latin America to create a law against street harassment was Peru. This law explains the responsibilities of its public institutions to prevent and punish such violence. It mentions that it is the obligation of the Ministry of Education to create a curriculum for teaching and prevention of it, at the same time, mentions that the Ministry of Transport and Communications must issue notices against street harassment on public transport. It mentions that this law does not have penal sanctions, but fines (Congreso de la República de Perú 2015).

While it is true that governments in different parts of the world are aware that street harassment involves sexual terrorism in the form of implicit oppression of women, and that they are taking various actions in this regard. In many cases, the victim does not realize that he or she is a victim of street harassment, as it is culturally an "accepted" fact. The studies and surveys conducted are bi-



ased, if the alleged victim does not find out that she has been violated. Likewise, it is important to know if the victim, even though she knows she is a victim, accepts harassment as part of “being a woman”.

## Objectives and hypotheses

As street harassment is a form of implicit violence that develops through cultures that are based on gender stereotypes, hostile and benevolent sexism, it mainly affects women and girls. They learn that the female body is a sexual object and were created to please men; in this way they learn to self-objectified and objectified others. The present study seeks to establish the relationship between perceived sexual harassment on the street, the self-objectification of women and their reaction to harassment. Specifically, we propose the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1:* The greater acceptance of street harassment, the greater the self-objectification.

*Hypothesis 2:* The greater the socioeconomic and educational level of women, the less their acceptance of street harassment.

*Hypothesis 3:* We hope that a greater effort to avoid street harassment is related to a decrease in self-objectification.

## Method

### *Participants*

This study was carried out with women who work both in the cleaning area and in the administrative area at a private university in Santo Domingo. Based on a non-probabilistic sampling for convenience, 46 women with a range between 19 and 54 years old ( $M = 33.15$ ,  $S = 9.13$ ) participate voluntarily in this research. All the participants were of Dominican nationality, being 56.5% single, 26.1% in free union and 17.4% married. 65.2% said they had children compared to 30.4% who said they did not have children, 4.3% did not answered the question. Regarding the educational level of the participants, 21.7% reached the middle school, 23.9% high school, 39.1% college, a 8.7% specialty or master degree and 6.5% did not respond. Finally, the level of income reported was higher for incomes between RD\$6,000 and RD\$12,000 with 41.3%, then those with incomes higher than RD\$50,000, with a 17.4%, followed by 13.0% for incomes of RD\$12,000 to RD\$20,000, 10.9% for income between RD\$20,000 and RD\$30,000, 8.7% for income of less than RD\$6,000 and 8.7% for income between RD\$30,000 and RD\$50,000.



## Instruments

Participants were given a sociodemographic questionnaire that assessed aspects such as age, marital status, and number of children, educational level and income level. In addition, the participants completed a battery of instruments composed of the following scales:

- Domestic violence myth acceptance scale (DVMAS), developed by Peters (2006) and translated into Spanish by the author of this research, was used to measure the acceptance of domestic violence myths. The scale has 18 items divided into 4 sub-scales called personality fault (7 items), behavioral fault (5 items), exoneration (3 items) and minimization (3 items). The full scale features an Alpha Cronbach of .81, while the sub-scales range from .64 to .88.
- Objectified body consciousness scale (OBCS), developed by McKinley (1996) and translated into Spanish by the author, was used to measure self-objectification. It consists of 24 items divided into 3 sub-scales of 8 items: vigilance, shame towards the body and belief control; with reliabilities of .89, .75 and .72, respectively. The full scale has a reliability of .93.
- Sexual harassment was measured using the Sexual experiences questionnaire (SEQ), developed by Fitzgerald (1995) and translated into Spanish by the author. It has 23 items divided into 4 sub-scales: sexist hostility (4 items), sexual hostility (8 items), unwanted sexual attention (6 items) and sexual coercion (5 items), with reliabilities of .83, .91, .85 and .95, respectively.

In all scales the items were answered based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *Not agree* (1) to *Completely agree* (5). In addition, scales were elaborated by the author to measure the constructs of *efforts to avoid unwanted sexual experiences* (9 items), *acceptance of street harassment* (31 items), *victimization of street harassment* (12 items) and *frequency of harassment sexual orientation* (21 items). The items of these scales were elaborated from a focal group of 8 people, who suggested indicators of street harassment.

Table 1 presents the descriptive results and skills for the instruments used, both the total scales and their sub-scales. The least reliable scales are those of sexist hostility ( $\alpha = .49$ ), considered as unacceptable; and minimization ( $\alpha = .53$ ), considered to be poor. The other scales are in ranges ranging from questionable to good ( $\alpha = .61$  to  $\alpha = .89$ ). Among the most reliable scales are the acceptance of street harassment ( $\alpha = .89$ ) and frequency of street harassment ( $\alpha = .89$ ), developed for the purposes of this research.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics and reliability for used scales.

Scale	Min.	Max.	Mean	DT	$\alpha$
S1. Age	19	54	33.15	9.131	–
B1. Personal guilt	1	5	3.19	.807	.61
B2. Behavioral guilt	2	5	2.59	.847	.78
B3. Exoneration	1	5	3.26	1.199	.76
B4. Minimization	1	5	2.97	.999	.53
BT. DVM acceptance	2	5	3.00	.773	.85
C1. Sexist hostility	1	5	3.11	1.025	.49
C2. Sexual hostility	1	5	3.24	1.032	.82
C3. USA	1	5	3.33	1.181	.69
C4. Sexual coercion	1	4	1.86	.787	.62
CT. Sexual experiences	1	4	2.88	.786	.87
DT. EAUSE	1	5	2.42	.715	.67
ET. SH acceptance	1	4	2.32	.643	.89
FT. Victimization against SH	2	4	2.65	.624	.84
GT. SH frequency	2	4	2.48	.511	.89
H1. Body shame	1	4	2.09	.704	.64
H2. Feeling control	1	5	3.20	.876	.75
H3. Self-monitoring	1	5	3.02	.817	.81
HT. Self-objectification	1	4	2.77	.627	.80

Note. N = 46; USA: unwanted sexual attention; EAUSE: efforts to avoid unwanted sexual experiences; SH: Street Harassment; DVM: domestic violence myths.

Source: Self elaboration.

## Procedures

The educational center where the study was conducted was chosen for convenience. After having the approval of the ethics committee of the institution to carry out the research, the battery was developed to be used. In the first instance, the offices responsible for personnel involved in the investigation were contacted, then contacted directly and obtained their informed consent, which guarantees the confidentiality of their information, as well as the voluntary nature of their participation. They could withdraw at any time without any consequence. Finally, the participants completed the battery, which was numbered and stored to maintain confidentiality. Due to the type of information that the battery handles, the participants were given a flyer with information on how to get therapeutic help in case they needed it.

The managed battery information was tabulated and stored for analysis in SPSS version 20 database (for Mac). After obtaining the descriptive results, the

Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) was used to calculate the reliability of the scales, which was interpreted according to the guide provided by George and Mallery (2003), which suggests that  $\alpha \geq .90$  can be considered as excellent,  $\alpha \geq .80$  as good,  $\alpha \geq .70$  as acceptable,  $\alpha \geq .60$  as questionable,  $\alpha \geq .50$  as poor, and  $\alpha < .50$  as unacceptable. Finally, Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was used to evaluate the degree of relationship between the different variables. According to Cohen (1998), values of  $|r| \geq .50$  indicate high correlations,  $|r| \geq .30$  median correlations, and,  $|r| \geq .10$  low correlations.

## Results

### Correlations between variables

Table 2 shows the correlations between some sociodemographic variables and the totals in the scales used. First, with regard to *hypothesis 1* that higher street harassment (SH) is associated with greater self-objectification, the results indicate a low positive correlation between SH *acceptance* and *self-objectification* ( $r = .29$ ,  $p < .05$ ). On the other hand, SH acceptance shows a high positive correlation with the *acceptance of myths of domestic violence* ( $r = .58$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and with age ( $r = .52$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

The results also support *hypothesis 2*, which states that a lower acceptance of SH is related to a higher educational and economic level, indicating a high negative correlation with the *educational level* ( $r = -.51$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and negative

**Table 2.** Correlations between sociodemographic variables and total scales.

	S1	S2	S3	BT	CT	DT	ET	FT	GT	HT
S1. Age	1									
S2. Education level	-.57**	1								
S3. Socioeconomic level	-.32*	.65**	1							
BT. DVM acceptance	.23	-.51**	-.56**	1						
CT. Sexual experiences	-.04	-.27	-.04	-.01	1					
DT. EAUSE	-.10	.28	.33*	-.16	-.06	1				
ET. SH acceptance	.52**	-.51**	-.39**	.58**	-.03	.01	1			
FT. SH victimization	-.28	.46**	.32*	-.29*	-.15	.48**	-.06	1		
GT. SH frequency	.10	-.24	-.13	.37*	.42**	.16	.19	-.12	1	
HT. Self-objectification	.15	-.36*	-.28	.43**	.10	-.48**	.29*	-.23	.24	1

Note. N=46; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$ ; DVM: domestic violence myths; EAUSE: efforts to avoid unwanted sexual experiences; SH: street harassment.

Source: Self elaboration.

with the *socioeconomic level* ( $r = -.39, p < .01$ ). Likewise, the educational level and the economic level correlated negatively with the acceptance of domestic violence myths ( $r = -.51, p < .01$  and  $r = -.56, p < .01$ , respectively). In addition, victimization of SH correlated positively with the educational and socioeconomic level ( $r = .46, p < .01$  and  $r = .32, p < .05$ , respectively).

Referring to *hypothesis 3*, which argued that a greater effort to avoid street harassment would be related to lower self-objectification, the results show a mean negative relationship between the *effort to avoid unwanted sexual experiences* and *self-objectification* (EAUSE;  $R = -.48, p < .01$ ), as well as a mean positive correlation with *SH victimization* ( $r = .48, p < .01$ ). The last variable also showed a low negative correlation with *DVM acceptance* ( $r = -.29, p < .05$ ).

Interestingly, the *age* variable showed a high negative correlation with educational level ( $r = -.57, p < .01$ ) and mean negative correlation with socioeconomic status ( $r = -.32, p < .05$ ). Likewise, it shows a high positive correlation with SH acceptance ( $r = .52, p < .01$ ).

Table 3 shows the correlations between the sub-scales of the instruments used. First, the *control feeling* sub-scale, belonging to the *self-objectification* scale, shows a high positive correlation with the *personal guilt* sub-scales ( $r = .53, p < .01$ ) and *behavioral guilt* ( $r = .53, p < .01$ ); ( $r = .39, p < .01$ ) and *minimization* ( $r = .34, p < .05$ ), belonging to the scale of *acceptance DVM*. Also, the *self-monitoring* sub-scale, on the self-objectification scale, shows mean positive correlations with *personal guilt* scales ( $r = .41, p < .01$ ) and *behavioral guilt* ( $r = .43, p < .01$ ). However, it should be noted that the body-shame scale did not show significant correlations with any of the other sub-scales.

The relationship between SH acceptance and self-objectification is specifically linked to the *control feeling* sub-scales, showing a mean positive correlation with it ( $r = .34, p < .05$ ). The acceptance of SH showed a high positive correlation with the *exoneration* sub-scale ( $r = .62, p < .01$ ) and mean positive with the *minimization* sub-scales ( $r = .35, p < .05$ ), *personal guilt* ( $r = .47, p < .01$ ) and *behavioral fault* ( $r = .35, p < .05$ ), belonging to the *DVM acceptance* scale. On the other hand, the *SH frequency* shows a high positive correlation with *sexual hostility* (USA;  $r = .51, p < .01$ ) and positive mean with *unwanted sexual attention* sub-scale ( $r = .48, p < .01$ ), belonging to the scale of *sexual experiences*.

Finally, *efforts to avoid unwanted sexual experiences* show a mean positive correlation with *SH victimization scale* ( $r = .48, p < .01$ ), a mean negative correlation with the *control feeling* sub-scale ( $r = -.30, p < .05$ ) and high negative with the *self-monitoring* sub-scales ( $r = -.61, p < .01$ ), belonging to the *self-objectification* scale.

**Table 3.** Correlations between scales and subscales used.

	B1	B2	B3	B4	BT	C2	C3	CT	DT	ET	FT	GT	H2	H3	HT
B1. Personal guilt	1														
B2. Behavioral guilt	.65**	1													
B3. Exoneration	-.52**	.51**	1												
B4. Minimization	.45**	.56**	.49**	1											
BT. Acceptance of DVM	.78**	.82**	.82**	.78**	1										
C2. Sexual hostility	.18	-.01	-.14	.28	.08	1									
C3. USA	.07	-.03	-.02	.17	.06	.61**	1								
CT. Sexual experiences	.05	-.12	-.14	.20	-.01	.85**	.82**	1							
DT. EAUSE	-.13	-.25	-.04	-.13	-.16	-.17	.17	-.06	1						
ET. SH acceptance	.47**	.35*	.62**	.35*	.58**	-.04	-.04	-.03	.01	1					
FT. SH victimization	-.42**	-.32*	-.05	-.24	-.29*	-.19	-.04	-.15	.48**	-.06	1				
GT. SH frequency	.35*	.23	.19	.42**	.37*	.51**	.48**	.42**	.16	.19	-.12	1			
H2. Control feeling	.53**	.53**	.39**	.34*	.54**	.21	.03	.00	-.30*	.34*	-.25	.28	1		
H3. Self-monitoring	.41**	.43**	.24	.29	.41**	.40**	.01	.18	-.61**	.10	-.38**	.23	.60**	1	
HT. Self-objectification	.45**	.43**	.29	.25	.43**	.30*	.02	.10	-.46**	.29*	-.23	.24	.82**	.86**	1

Note. N = 46; \*\*p < 0.01; \*p < 0.05; DVM: domestic violence myths; USA: unwanted sexual attention; EAUSE: efforts to avoid unwanted sexual experiences; SH: street harassment; sub-scales C1 (Sexual hostility), C4 (Sexual coercion) y H1 (Body shame) eliminated because they did not presented significant correlations with the other scales.  
 Source: Self elaboration.

## Discussion

In a culture that legitimizes sexist ideologies and gender stereotypes towards women (Calogero 2013), street harassment becomes a type of violence that has proved to be limiting to women adequate performance in the society (UNW 2014). Self-objectification is a component that underlies this type of culture where the female body is sexually objectified (Fredicson & Roberts 1997). The main objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between the perception of street harassment, the self-objectification of women and the reaction to street harassment. In this sense, the general findings of this research suggest that the greater the acceptance of street harassment, the greater the self-objectification of women. At the same time, there is a relationship between the acceptance of violence's myths and the acceptance of street harassment. On the other hand, according to (Karl 2014), the people who most accept street harassment are people of low socioeconomic status.

The results indicate that women with higher socioeconomic and educational level scored less acceptance of street harassment and myths of violence. However, these women tend to victimize more. It was also shown that, while women make more effort to avoid unwanted sexual experiences, they have fewer possibilities to self-objectify. In spite of this, these women also tend to have greater victimization. It was shown that women who make more effort to avoid unwanted sexual experiences tend to have less acceptance of the domestic violence myths. An interesting fact that should be highlighted in the results of this research is that older women tend to have a greater acceptance of street harassment. In the same order, it was observed that the more sense of control over their bodies, the more they tended to experience more personal guilt and more behavioral guilt which also related to the exoneration of the perpetrator and the minimization of domestic violence myths. Also, it was shown that the more women self-monitor their bodies, the more personal and behavioral guilt they experience. It is important to mention that when a woman is exposed more frequently to street harassment she is more vulnerable to sexual hostility and unwanted sexual attention. This agrees with (Gilck & Fisk 1996), that sexual hostility adversely affects the perception of women, making them more tolerant of street harassment. Finally, it was shown that women who make an effort to avoid unwanted sexual experiences tend to become more victimized by street harassment and monitor their bodies less. The above results agree with the international literature and explains that street harassment is an implicit type of violence that is part of the continuity of violence and sexism against women which is linked to gender stereotypes imposed by society. This study showed that gender stereotypes, and the power group (men) play an important role in the tolerance of street harassment (Russell & Trigg 2004).

## Limitations

The following research is not without limitations. First, the size of the sample was small to be representative of the population of Santo Domingo, according to the international literature it is more likely that street harassment occurs in large cities (Bowman 1993). On the other hand, the short time during which the research was carried out prevented the elaboration of a parallel social experiment as planned. The lack of studies on the subject limited the creation of a standardized instrument and had to join several pre-existing ones, where the researcher had to make an instrument to measure specific and contextualized street harassment.

## Recommendations

It is recommended to conduct a research at a national level that takes into account street harassment and to use a statistically representative sample to be aware of this type of violence that affects the majority of women and girls in the world as expressed in the literature and this study demonstrates. With scientific research like this one, what is intended is to change public policies in favor of the general population, we also recommend that efforts be initiated to work on a bill that penalizes street harassment so the culture stops allowing it as natural behavior. In addition, an instrument that can measure street harassment in the Dominican Republic should be created and standardized in order to improve citizen security and prevent this type of violence. Ending street harassment requires an effort by all, not only as individuals, but also an effort as a community and as a society. To make these changes we must involve boys and men by educating community leaders, state leaders, lawyers, entrepreneurs and ministries of education so that we can create safer places. ■

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