

Exploring the relationship between personality traits and sexual harassment in Indonesian university students

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ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment in educational institutions has long been a global concern. Various studies on sexual violence have been carried out, but research on personality, power, and moral disengagement, which are associated with sexual harassment behavior among students in higher education, was still limited. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the influence of personality, power, and moral disengagement on sexual harassment behavior among students in higher education. This research involved 403 students from 5 universities in Balikpapan City, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. We used structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis to test the influence of each variable. According to the research's findings, moral disengagement, and personality both have a direct impact on sexual harassment. In addition, moral disengagement has been proven to be able to mediate between power and sexual harassment. The results of this research provide important implications for public policy makers in higher education, practitioners, researchers, and the public in identifying factors of sexual harassment among students in higher education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is a very scary thing that happens all over the world because it is very bad for a person's physical and mental health [1]. Sexual harassment happens when someone verbally or nonverbally makes comments, asks, threatens, intimidates, or forces someone to provide sexual services [2]. It aims to humiliate, humiliate, and sexually attack other people [3]. However, victims of sexual harassment are often seen as disgraceful, so sexual violence is very difficult to detect. Sexual crimes do not only occur in public spaces [4] but also occur in the workplace [5] and educational institutions [2]. This will have a negative impact on student achievement, both mental and physical, in the learning process on campus and in life outside campus [6]. Victims of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions give birth to various forms of risky behavior such as lower organizational commitment, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal ideation [7].

Empirically personality is one of the factors that influence sexual harassment, along with organization, environment, age, power, knowledge, and level of awareness [8]. Theoretically, personality plays an important role in building a person's perception of sexual harassment, so that it becomes an

important factor that encourages a person to commit acts of sexual harassment. For example, someone who has a high Machiavellian personality tendency has a relationship with rape myth acceptance [9]. In terms of personality, we focus on the big five personalities, which are the most common personality models in modern psychology and have been associated with a variety of behaviors, including aggressive and violent behavior [10]. Thus, the personality factor becomes an integral part of a person's perceptions and actions in committing sexual harassment, so that sexual harassment can be easily detected by analyzing a person's personality tendencies.

In addition to the "personality" factor, the "power" factor is another cause of sexual harassment that is often overlooked. Even though sexual harassment is mostly carried out by people who have more power than their victims. For example, when the male gender in a certain social group is considered to have more power than women, this causes men to have a greater tendency to sexism than women [11], which is shown by sexual jokes (gender harassment), and harassing comments (unwanted sexual attention). Even so, women also have the potential to commit sexual violence [12]. There has not been much research into the effect of power as a driving force for sexual harassment in studies on gender harassment [13]. Various studies show that the power possessed by a person has a major influence on the sexual harassment of people with less power [14]. The position of men who are stronger in various relationships with women renders women powerless, causing them to become objects of sexual harassment; in certain cultures, the full power of men can make women as victims the ones who are blamed [15]. In other words, power is the driving factor that underlies sexual harassment in various places, including at the university [16].

One of the main points of this article is that moral disengagement [17]. Can make sexual harassment easier and make it more likely to happen. Bandura [18] found that moral disengagement makes people more likely to be aggressive and break the law. This is a concern for experts to examine how the mechanism of the moral disengagement process is defined theoretically. The moral disengagement mechanism that operates as a self-serving cognition can make a person commit harassment that is contrary to the perpetrator's moral beliefs and self-concept as an individual who is usually good and obedient to applicable rules. There are many studies on sexual harassment, but little is known from the perspective or perception of actors [19]. Researchers like Pryor *et al.* [20] say that sexual harassment is a part of a larger, more general form of hostility toward women. Nonetheless, based on our research, few studies have examined the relationship between sexual harassment and broader (gender) like attitudes or personality traits, such as Brewer *et al.* [21] dan Hardies [22], as well as incorporating the influence of power and moral disengagement in a study. This model is used to deepen our knowledge of sexual harassment by considering the ways in which personality, power, moral disengagement, and environmental factors influence perceptions and actions of sexual harassment [22]. According to scholars, we cannot fully comprehend sexual harassment unless we consider the context in which it occurred [23].

Finally, we specifically consider acts of sexual harassment based on a gender perspective. Although men are largely responsible for sexual harassment in the workplace, it is a fact that women also commit sexual harassment in the workplace [12]. This means that regardless of gender, a person still has the potential to become a sexual harassment victim, even though, based on research results, sexual harassment is mostly carried out by men in the public sphere, such as in universities. Referring to literature studies and empirical evidence from previous studies, there are many studies discussing perceptions and behaviors of sexual harassment, but studies discussing how sexual harassment is formed by involving personality, power, and moral disengagement in a collaborative manner are still limited. To our knowledge, only Brewer *et al.* [21], and Hardies [22] have linked personality with sexual harassment. Meanwhile, the relationship between power and sexual harassment was examined by [24], [25]. Navas *et al.* [26] investigated the effect of moral disengagement on sexual harassment. We have yet to come across studies that integrate the roles of personality, power, gender, and moral disengagement in sexual harassment among university students. Thus, this study aimed to combine all these variables in a study to determine the effect of personality, gender, power, and moral disengagement on perceptions of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions. The conceptual model of this study is shown in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows how each important factor that affects how people see sexual harassment is related to each other. Based on this, we have a few hypotheses for this study, which are:

- H1: personality has a positive effect on sexual harassment
- H2: personality has a positive effect on moral disengagement
- H3: sense of power has a positive effect on sexual harassment
- H4: sense of power has a positive effect on moral disengagement
- H5: moral disengagement has a positive effect on sexual harassment
- H6: moral disengagement mediates the effect of personality on sexual harassment
- H7: moral disengagement mediates the influence of a sense of power on sexual harassment

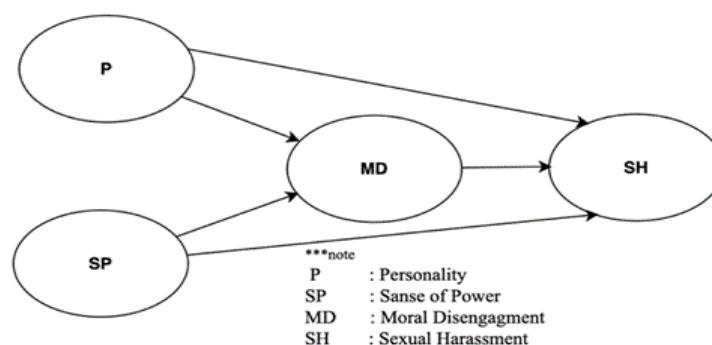


Figure 1. The conceptual framework

2. METHOD

This study employs a quantitative methodology. We asked new students at five different universities to complete questionnaires to acquire study data. A student population of 2,000. The researchers employed purposive sampling to choose a sample of 403 participants for this study. The determination of the number of samples in this study refers to the Raosoft® sample size calculator (<http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>) in determining the number of samples with a margin of error of 5% [27], [28]. Therefore, we consider this sample to be capable of representing the population and analyze it using structural equation modelling (SEM) [29]. The age of students ranges from 18 to 20 years. The students involved consisted of 156 male students (38.7%) and 247 female students (61.3%); 35. Descriptive information about the research subjects is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent descriptive data

Attribute	Categories	N	%
Gender	Male	156	35.5
	Female	247	64.5
Age	17-20	346	85.9
	20-25	56	13.6

The sexual harassment questionnaire Worke *et al.* [30] developed the sexual stereotypical perception scale to assess student reports of sexual harassment on campus. The scale consisting of 11 items is designed to assess perceptions of sexual harassment on campus (for example, "Sexual harassment is an offer of a new job in exchange for sexual advances"). Students are asked to rate the extent to which others would judge the behavior as acceptable on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.91 for the present study. We used the ten item personality inventory (TIPI), which was created by Gosling *et al.* [31] to measure the big five personality dimensions (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness). TIPI consists of ten items, such as "Extroverted and enthusiastic." For each item on the TIPI, participants used a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 to rate how much a certain personality trait applies to them (strongly disagree). This short form has a strong relationship with the longer big five personality test [32]. Because TIPI has also been tested by Kang *et al.* [32] tested TIPI and found that internal consistency was satisfactory for the neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness subscales in males (Cronbach's alpha=0.83, 0.82, 0.79, 0.82, 0.90) and females (Cronbach's alpha=0.74, 0.83, 0.85, 0.81, 0.92).

We developed a sense of power scale from [33] which consists of 8 item scales with Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 for the present study (e.g., "I have a lot of power in my relationship with my friends). The sense of power is consistent across relationships, but it also has many differences. Moral disengagement questionnaire was developed from Bandura [18], [34] theory regarding the mechanisms of moral disengagement scale (MMDS) which had been tested by Concha-Salgado *et al.* [17] with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.85 (e.g., "Slapping and shoving someone is just a way of joking"). This questionnaire has 10 items on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Violence, including bullying and sexual harassment, is influenced by moral disengagement [35].

Data collection uses a self-administered online questionnaire method. We administered surveys to participants online through the Google Forms platform. One of the lecturers at each tertiary institution helps

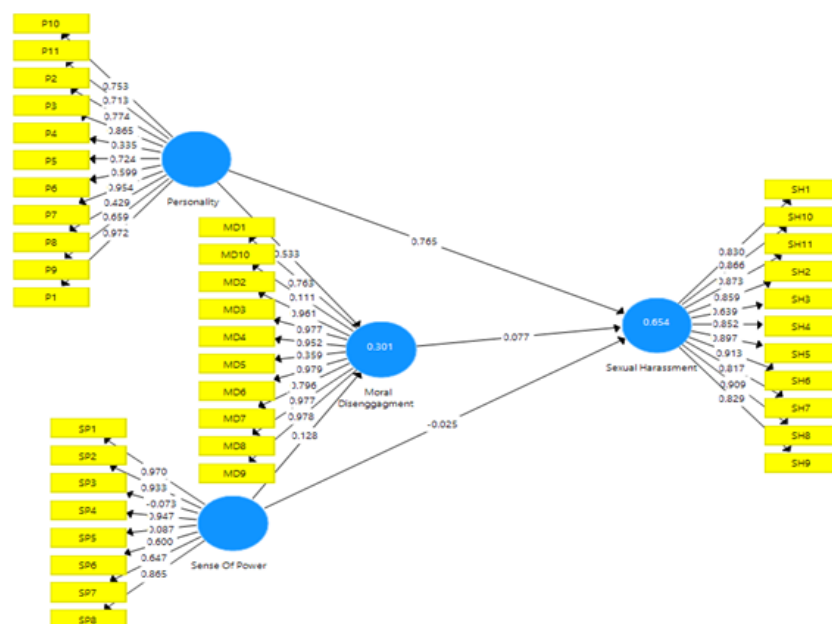
distribute online questionnaire links to students on campus via the WhatsApp Group. Completing the complete questionnaire takes approximately 10 minutes. In addition, we provide random awards to students in the form of e-money balances (GoPay). Participants are given steps to collect data on their perceptions of sexual harassment, the big five personality traits, power, and moral disengagement. The current study uses only the Indonesian version of all measurements.

This study employs SEM analysis based on partial least squares (PLS). PLS is widely employed for multivariate data analysis in the management and strategy fields [36]. This study uses the normed fit index (NFI) and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) scores to determine the criterion for goodness of fit. A model is deemed well-fitting if its NFI is greater than 0.8 and its SRMR is less than 0.08 [37]. In the PLS-SEM study, the outer model (measurement model) explains the role of indicators in the creation of latent variables. The loading factor parameter and the average variance extracted (AVE) value are employed to validate the measurement model. The parameter value for the loading factor must exceed 0.7, and the AVE value must exceed 0.5 [37]. In addition, bootstrapping hypothesis testing on smart PLS 3.2.9 tests the direct or indirect effect. This study is based on 403 bootstrap sub samples with a confidence level of 95%.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Validity and reliability

Before moving on to the subsequent analysis, validity and reliability of the instruments used for evaluating personality, power, moral disengagement, and sexual harassment. Confirmatory factor analysis of the extended SEM model is performed in this test using Smart-PLS 3.0. The initial model output is displayed in Figure 2. Smart-PLS analysis of the outer SEM model indicates that there are still questionnaire indicators with loading factors of less than 0.7 [37]. Based on the results of the outer model analysis, it shows that there are indicators that have a value lower than 0.7, such as personality indicators, there are 4 indicators (P4, P6, P8, and P9), then there are 4 indicators of sense of power (SP3, SP5, SP6, and SP7), while moral disengagement only has 2 indicators (MD5 and MD5), and there is one indicator of sexual harassment (SH3). Then, the model is eliminated of these components, then, after invalid indicators have been removed from the model shown in Figure 3.



Note: P1-P11= indicator of personality, SP1-SP8= indicator of sense of power, MD1-10= indicator of moral disengagement, SH1-11= indicator of sexual harassment

Figure 2. First SEM model

Figure 3 shows how the loading factor test was used to acquire validity and reliability test scores for the personality quality questionnaire, sense of power, Moral disengagement, and sexual harassment. All variables within the outer model analysis were found to be valid (0.770~0.976) and reliable with Cronbach's alpha (0.927~0.976), and composite reliability (0.942-0.980). The loading factor for each item used to test

validity is greater than 0.70. Tests of dependability also reveal an AVE greater than 0.50, as seen in Table 2. This finding indicates that the survey instrument employed in this study is reliable for gauging personality, sense power, moral disengagement, and sexual harassment.

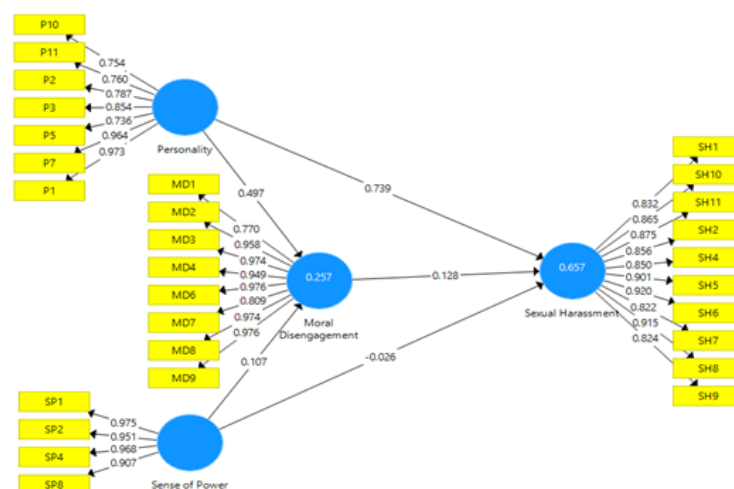


Figure 3. Modification of SEM model

Table 2. Validity and reliability

No	Variable	Indicator	Validity	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
1	Personality	P1-P3, P5, P7, P10-11	0.973~0.854, 0.736, 0.964, 0.865~0.875	0.927	0.942	0.702
2	Sense of power	SP1-SP2, SP4, SP8	0.975~0.951,	0.966	0.974	0.904
3	Moral disengagement	MD1-MD4, MD6-MD9	0.770~0.949, 0.976~0.976	0.976	0.980	0.859
4	Sexual harassment	SH1-SH2, SH4-SH11	0.832~0.856, 0.850~0.875	0.963	0.968	0.751

3.2. Hypothesis testing

Before conducting the path coefficient test to test the hypothesis, it is necessary to determine if the model fits the criteria for goodness of fit. Using the goodness-of-fit criterion test NFI and SRMR. The model is considered fit if its NFI is greater than 0.8 and SRMR is less than 0.08 [38], [39]. Based on the results of the Smart-PLS SEM model fit test, NFI and SRMR values meet the requirements outlined with values of NFI (0.890 and SRMR (0.703).

Next step on SmartPLS 3.0, the bootstrapping approach is used to analyze the testing of each path's hypothesis. The bootstrapping method is a novel sampling technique that uses original data repeatedly [40]. In addition, the bootstrapping approach was utilized to examine the importance of the mediating role in the research model [39]. This study uses 403 bootstrap samples with a confidence level of 95%. The results of this study's hypothesis testing are shown in Table 2.

According to Table 3, the general research hypothesis regarding the regression path is supported. If the obtained p-values are less than 0.05, the choice is reversed. The findings of this study show that personality has a positive effect on sexual harassment and moral disengagement with significance values of 0.000 and 0.000, respectively, indicating support for the first and second hypotheses, while the results of testing the effect of power on sexual harassment do not show positive results with a significance value of 0.365, indicating that the third hypothesis is rejected, but power has a positive influence on moral disengagement with a significance value of 0.365, indicating support for the first and second hypotheses. Testing the fifth hypothesis revealed a p-value of 0.000, showing that these results confirm the fifth hypothesis, namely that moral disengagement has a positive effect on sexual harassment.

It is also important to investigate the role of simple mediation in this investigation. This study shows that Moral disengagement mediate between personality and sexual harassment. The p-values obtained from this hypothesis test are statistically significant (0.000), indicating that the sixth hypothesis is supported. In addition, mediation is also shown in the seventh hypothesis where moral disengagement can mediate between power and sexual harassment with a significance value (0.026). These findings support the seventh hypothesis in this study, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypothesis testing result

Path	(O)	P	Result
Personality -> Sexual harassment	0.739	0.000	Sig
Personality -> Moral disengagement	0.497	0.000	Sig
Power -> Sexual harassment	-0.026	0.365	Not Sig
Power -> Moral disengagement	0.107	0.013	Sig
Moral disengagement -> Sexual harassment	0.128	0.000	Sig
Personality -> Moral disengagement -> Sexual harassment	0.064	0.000	Sig
Power -> Moral disengagement -> Sexual harassment	0.014	0.026	Sig

***Original Sample (O), Values (P), Significant (sig)

4. DISCUSSION

Sexual harassment is a crime that is not only influenced by one factor, but sexual harassment is influenced by valuable variable forms such as personality, power, and moral disengagement and various other variables that are not described in this study. Sexual harassment is a study that is very complex and has physical and psychological impacts that are very dangerous for human health. Various studies have examined sexual harassment, but there are still limited studies that simultaneously discuss how sexual harassment interacts with personality, power, and moral disengagement factors in a study. Therefore, this study uses SEM analysis to investigate sexual harassment behavior by involving personality, power, and moral disengagement factors.

The first hypothesis is tested to see whether personality has a direct effect on sexual harassment. The results of the study show that a person's personality has a positive effect on sexual harassment. Thus, a person's personality plays an important role in sexual harassment. Pryor *et al.* [20] contend that personality has the potential to play a significant role in the occurrence of various forms of sexual harassment. Other research indicates that lower levels of openness are associated with higher levels of sexual harassment in both men and women. Furthermore, for both men and women, the link between openness and sexual harassment behaviors is stronger if the individual feels that their peers accept sexual harassment more. For men, sexual harassment actions are also related to age, myth acceptance regarding sexual harassment, and lower levels of conscientiousness. In contrast, higher degrees of extraversion and neuroticism are connected with sexual harassment behaviors among women [21]. In other words, this study shows consistency with research on the effect of personality on sexual harassment in previous studies.

In addition, the second hypothesis shows that personality influences moral disengagement. This study shows that personality is one of the supporting factors for the birth of moral disengagement. This is consistent with previous research, which describes that personality has a positive relationship with moral engagement [41]. A person's personality not only influences a person's decision but also has a dominant influence on moral disengagement [42]. Moral disengagement is typically characterized by anti-social personality traits such as violence and a self-serving personality [43].

Furthermore, this study shows that the power possessed by a person does not directly affect sexual harassment. The results of this study are different from some of the results of research by experts, which show that power is one of the keys and important factors in the occurrence of sexual harassment in various workplaces [44]. This occurs naturally because previous research employed methods that differed from those used in this study (see, Crowley [45]). Furthermore, according to the researchers' search, there has been no research that quantitatively examines sexual harassment associated with the power factor. Another thing that has the potential to cause the results of this research to be different from previous studies is that the statement "power is a major problem in sexual harassment" is incorrect and vague, because the term "power" has so many meanings [46]. Power, according to Pick [47] is the result of a person's social, organizational, interpersonal, or individual factors. In the context of the study, the definition of power is a person's ability to influence other people in general. Therefore, everyone has a different interpretation of the power definition.

Another finding from this study is that power has an impact on moral disengagement behavior, in other words, a person's power influences a person's moral disengagement. According to Bandura's [18] theory of moral disengagement, moral disengagement occurs through a variety of mechanisms, including moral justification, euphemistic labeling, advantageous comparison, displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, distortion of consequences, dehumanization, and attribution of blame. Individuals who commit moral violations do not want to be blamed because other people also commit violations. In line with the findings of this study, Gawronski and Brannon [48] describe that power has an influence on various forms of behavior that are considered moral and immoral in people's lives. Several other experts who studied morals and power explained that someone who has more power tends not to pay attention to his moral actions because he is more focused on his own needs [49]. Even someone who has very strong power can justify sharing forms of immoral acts with the power they have [50].

The fifth hypothesis in this study shows that moral disengagement has an impact on sexual harassment. These findings support previous research conducted by Navas *et al.* [26], which revealed that moral disengagement is an important cause of various forms of sexual harassment in the workplace. Furthermore, Page and Pina [51] describe in another study how moral disengagement may allow individuals to self-regulate their proclivity to harass. The results of this study suggest that someone who has high moral disengagement has the potential to commit sexual harassment.

Moral disengagement as a mediation between personality and sexual harassment is investigated in this study. Based on the findings of this study, moral disengagement significantly mediates the effect of personality on sexual harassment. This finding further emphasizes that personality has an influence on sexual harassment, both directly and indirectly. The existence of moral disengagement as a mediating variable strengthens various research results on the impact of personality on various forms of sexual violence in various situations and conditions. Thus, personality should be an important consideration in conducting studies and formulating policies regarding sexual harassment.

The final section of this study investigates how moral disengagement mediation influences power over sexual harassment. The results of this study show that power doesn't have a direct effect on sexual harassment, but it does have an indirect effect through the role of moral disengagement as a mediator in this study. These findings indicate that sexual harassment is not only caused by one factor but is influenced by various kinds and forms of other factors that have not been studied in this study, such as an unprofessional environment in the workplace, a sexist atmosphere, and a lack of knowledge about the organization's formal grievance procedures [52].

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study point to the importance of personality in various forms of sexual harassment. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that sexual harassment is influenced by several factors, including moral disengagement and the influence of power, which has an indirect impact on sexual harassment. This research further emphasizes that a person's personality and authority influence the perception and behavior of sexual violence. Even though the authority or power a person has in education institutions does not have a direct impact, if they have moral engagement, it will be a potential bridge to sexual violence against victims.

This study has limitations due to its focus on sexual harassment factors that only look at personality and moral disengagement in various work contexts. In addition, the influence of power on sexual harassment has not been written comprehensively in this paper. As a result, we believe that future research will look more broadly at the various factors that contribute to sexual harassment. Researchers and the public can learn a lot from the results of this study about how to fight and avoid different kinds of sexual harassment in private and public spheres.

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