



SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

#metoo, women, men, and the gig economy

From the Marketplace-Edison Research Poll
June 2018

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In the fall of 2017, the #metoo social media movement surfaced in the United States and worldwide. #Metoo gained momentum as a series of sexual harassment accusations emerged among those in the film industry, politics, and other places of prominence in today's culture. The movement resonated with the public to the point that the "Silence Breakers" of the #metoo movement were named Time's Person of the Year in 2017.

A few months later, in early 2018, Edison Research and Marketplace fielded the latest iteration of the Marketplace-Edison Research poll. This study asked a module of questions about sexual harassment in the workplace, and the results provide insights about this issue among American workers.

More than one-quarter of women indicated ever experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace. A surprising number of men reported having been sexually harassed at work as well (14%). Both men and women said that the harassment was not properly handled by their employers and had a negative effect on their careers. The poll also shows that some regions of the country and types of communities are more likely than others to have workers who have experienced sexual harassment at work. Additionally, the poll illustrated that an individual's race and level of educational attainment affects their likelihood of experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace.

The survey uses a national sample of the United States population aged 18 and older. There were 1,044 interviews conducted via landline phone, cell phone, and online. Interviews specific to the topic of sexual harassment were conducted from February 14, 2018 to February 20, 2018. This is the first time that the Marketplace-Edison Research poll has included questions about sexual harassment at work.

While evaluating the data, one should consider the following: Those who report having experienced sexual harassment in the workplace could have had those incidents at any point in their working life and not necessarily at their current place of employment. The data is not a measure of how many employees reported the incidents of harassment. Behaviors that are classified as sexual harassment are self-defined by the respondent, not by the interviewer.

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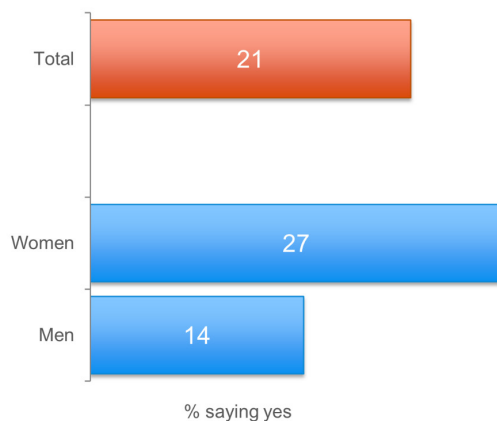
21%

of Americans have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace

Twenty-one percent of Americans ages 18 and older say that they have personally experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. This number is not reflective of how many respondents reported the harassment or at what point in time the incidents occurred.

Have you personally ever experienced sexual harassment in the workplace?

Sex



Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

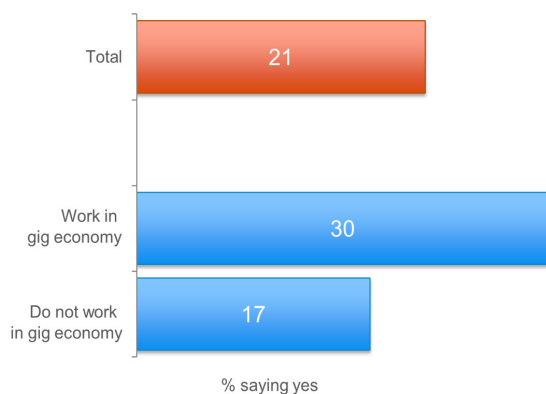
More than one-quarter of women say they have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace

Twenty-seven percent of women and 14% of men say that they have been harassed at some time as an employee. Although the #metoo movement has been primarily focused on women, and women are indeed far more likely to have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace, this is a problem affecting men in significant numbers as well.

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Have you personally ever experienced sexual harassment in the workplace?

Employment Type



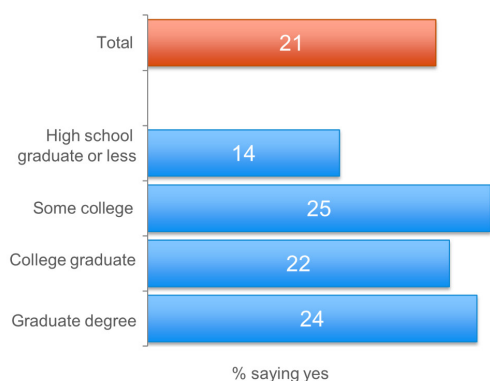
Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

Almost one-third of those working in the gig economy have experienced sexual harassment at work

The gig economy, where workers participate in a series of short-term assignments or freelance work as independent contractors, sees a much higher percentage of those who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. Among the 24% currently working in the gig economy, 30% report having been harassed in the workplace, compared to 21% of the total population. While we can't say that those in the gig economy experienced harassment while on gigs, we do know that the correlation clearly exists.

Have you personally ever experienced sexual harassment in the workplace?

Education



Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

Those with at least some college education are more likely to indicate experiencing sexual harassment at work, compared to those with a high school diploma or less. One-quarter of those with at least some college education have been harassed, compared to 14% with a high school education or less.

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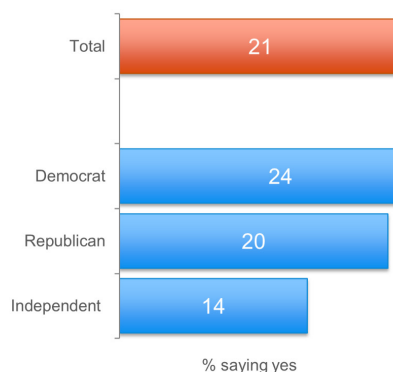
Democrats are more likely than Republicans or Independents to indicate experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace. Again, it is worth keeping in mind that the respondent self-defines what behaviors they consider to be classified as sexual harassment.

Respondents from rural areas are more likely to have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace

Twenty-six percent of those in rural areas report having been sexually harassed at work, versus 18% of those in suburban communities, and 21% of those in urban communities. We can speculate that these differences may stem from the community dynamics in rural areas – there may be fewer protective measures, fewer resources, and fewer job alternatives for those experiencing sexual harassment in a place with a small population.

Have you personally ever experienced sexual harassment in the workplace?

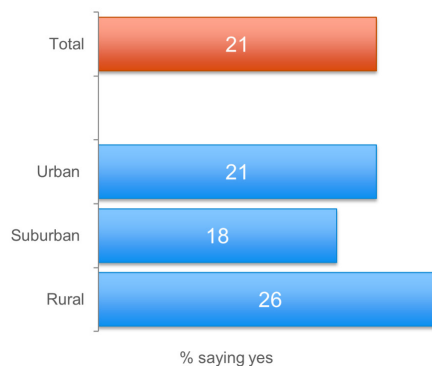
Party ID



Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

Have you personally ever experienced sexual harassment in the workplace?

Community Type

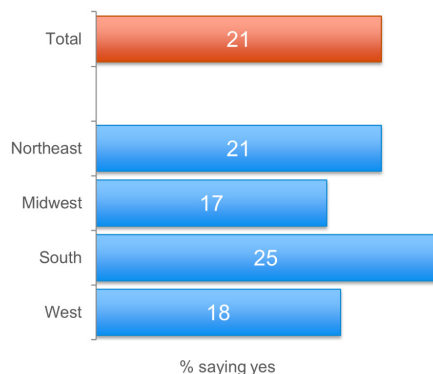


Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

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Have you personally ever experienced sexual harassment in the workplace?

Census Region



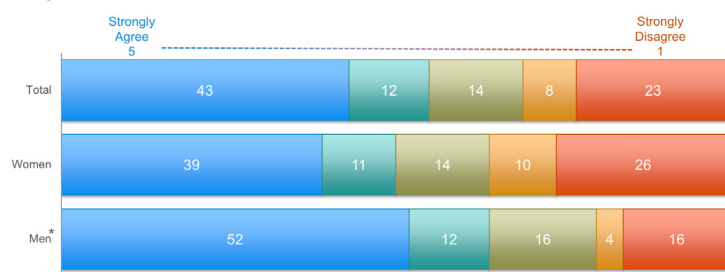
Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

Regionally, those in the South (25%) are the most likely to have experienced sexual harassment at work. The Northeast is the next highest at 21%, which is on par with the average of the total population. The West and Midwest are the lowest at 18% and 17%, respectively.

Over half (55%) agree that the experience of being sexually harassed in the workplace hurt their career

How much do you agree or disagree that your experience...

Hurt your overall career



Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

Base: Experienced sexual harassment in the workplace
* Sample size under 100

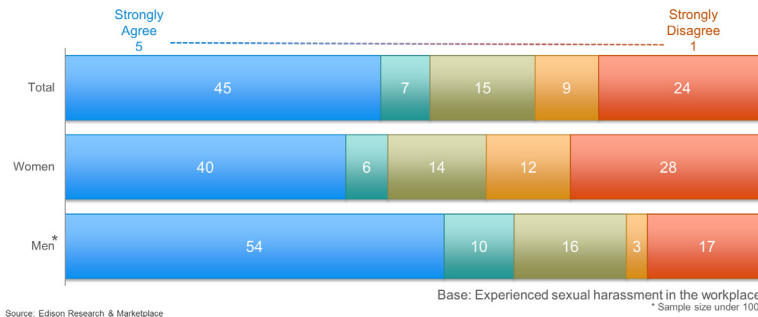
Fifty-five percent of those who have experienced harassment agreed that the harassment hurt their overall career. While far more women have experienced harassment, men are more likely to say the harassment had a negative impact on their career.

Sixty-four percent of men who experienced sexual harassment at work (52% strongly agree and 12% agree) said that the experience hurt their overall career. Fifty percent of women (39% strongly agree and 11% agree) said their overall career was hurt. This is an important finding because not only is sexual harassment at work something that is rarely spoken of, the impact on the victim's career is spoken of even less.

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How much do you agree or disagree that your experience...

Caused you to change your job or position



Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

Whether or not one's overall career has been damaged is subjective, but whether or not the harassment caused one to change jobs or positions is concrete.

Half of those experiencing sexual harassment said it caused them to change jobs

Men were more likely to agree that the sexual harassment caused a job change than women. A good direction for further research would be to examine why those who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace remain in their jobs.

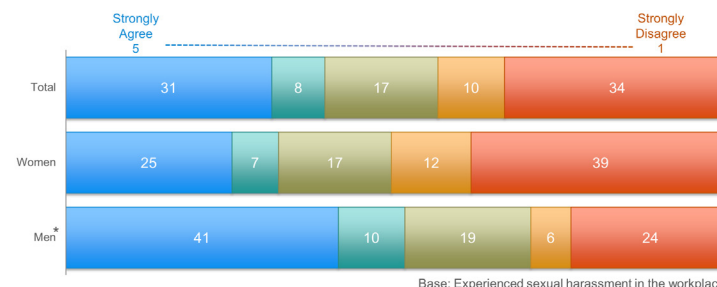
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Only 32% of women agreed that the harassment was something they could report to their employer without fear

We asked respondents how they were able to interact with their company regarding the harassment. Only around a third of the women (32%) said they could report the incident to their employer without fear, versus over half (51%) of the men.

How much do you agree or disagree that your experience...

Was something you could report to your employer without fear



Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

Base: Experienced sexual harassment in the workplace

* Sample size under 100

Only 30% of women strongly agree that their employer handled the harassment situation properly

Fifty-three percent of the men strongly agree that the harassment was handled properly by their employer, with only 13% strongly disagreeing that it was handled properly. Women reported a different experience. Only 30% of the women strongly agree that the harassment was handled properly by their employer, with an equal number (31%) strongly disagreeing.

How much do you agree or disagree that your experience...

Was handled properly by your employer



Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

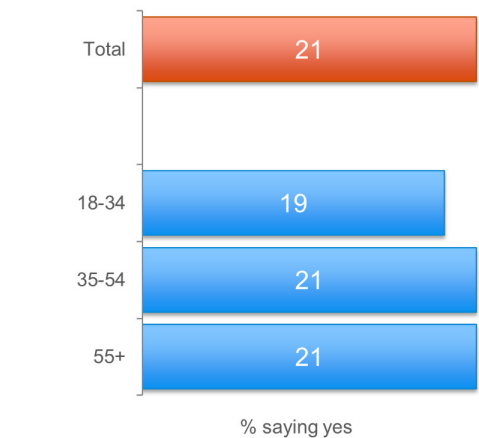
Base: Experienced sexual harassment in the workplace

* Sample size under 100

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Have you personally ever experienced sexual harassment in the workplace?

Age



Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

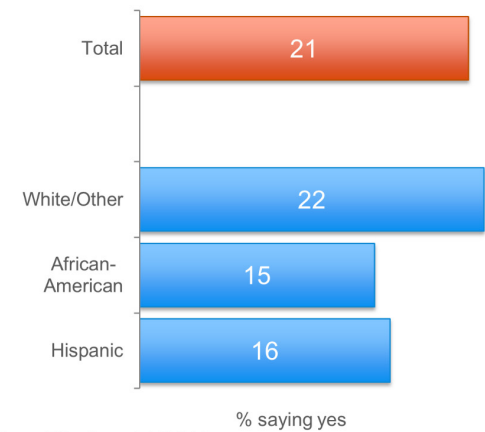
There were minimal differences by age of those experiencing sexual harassment.

Those aged 55+ are just as likely to have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace as those aged 35-54, and slightly more than those aged 18-34

The issue of sexual harassment at work affects all age groups. This could be explained by at least two factors. First, workers in the older demographics could have been participants in the workforce for many years, meaning they had more opportunities and environments in which they could have been harassed. Second, cultural changes in workplaces have occurred over time. The age difference in these groups spans multiple decades. Within that time, workplace environments and systems for preventing and reporting workplace sexual harassment have evolved.

Have you personally ever experienced sexual harassment in the workplace?

Ethnicity



Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

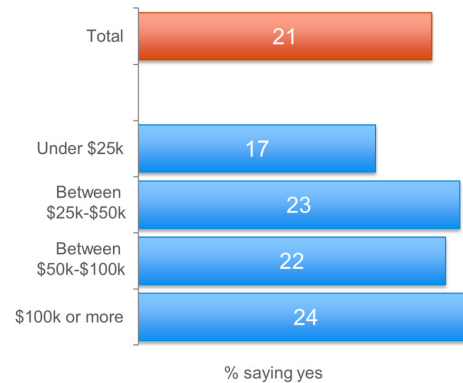
Twenty-two percent of White/Other respondents indicated having been sexually harassed at work, compared to 15% of African-American respondents and 16% of Hispanic respondents.

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When looking at annual household income, there is little difference between the higher income categories (\$25k-50k, \$50k-100k, and \$100k or more). Those who live in households with an income of less than \$25K are less likely to say they have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

Have you personally ever experienced sexual harassment in the workplace?

Annual Household Income



Source: Edison Research & Marketplace

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CONCLUSIONS

As the #metoo movement has brought sexual harassment offenses to light, we find that 21% of Americans have experienced sexual harassment at work at some point in their employment.

More than one-quarter of women have experienced sexual harassment at work. Additionally, 14% of men have also been affected.

Both women and men have experienced career fallout and job changes because of sexual harassment at work. Over half of those who have experienced sexual harassment agree that their career had been hurt and that they made a job change because of the harassment. Although much less likely to experience sexual harassment in the workplace, men in the survey who said they had been sexually harassed were much more likely than women to say that their careers had been hurt and that they made a job change because of harassment.

Women don't feel as comfortable as men in reporting sexual harassment "without fear" to their employers, and women are also less likely than men to say that the incident was handled correctly by their employer.

Employees in rural communities and in the South are more likely to experience sexual harassment at work. One could look at rural community infrastructure and available resources to protect workers from sexual harassment, for some context on this point.

Workers in the gig economy are much more likely to have experienced sexual harassment at work than those in positions of traditional employment. This finding is notable and something that researchers should continue to track because the gig economy is a rapidly growing sector of employment and little is known about how the structure of the gig economy affects its workers.

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About Edison Research:

Edison Research conducts survey research and provides strategic information to a broad array of commercial clients, governments and NGOs, including AMC Theatres, The Brookings Institution, Disney, The Gates Foundation, Google, the U.S. International Broadcasting Bureau, Oracle, Pandora, The Pew Research Center, Samsung, Spotify, SiriusXM Radio, and Univision Communications. Edison Research works for media companies throughout the world.

Since 2004, Edison Research has been the sole provider of Election Day data to the National Election Pool, conducting more than 100,000 interviews in a single day. For the 2018 and 2020 U.S. elections, Edison will provide exit polls and will tabulate the national vote across every county in the United States for ABC News, CBS News, CNN, and NBC News.

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