

Chapter 44

Using Grounded Theory Methodology to Explore Women's Sense of Insecurity

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this chapter is reviewing the studies on sexual harassment and sexual violence, focusing on definitions, statistics, forms, consequences, and prevention strategies. Moreover, it concerns the grounded theory (GT) as a qualitative research methodology and provides a comparison between this methodology and constructivist GT that is considered to be more compatible with feminist inquiry. To study the theories with inappropriate or inadequate features and to study the subject under investigation, such as the analysis of women's sense of insecurity, GT methodology seems most appropriate. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the impact of sexual violence on mental and physical health as well as social well-being, all of which may be equally long-lasting. Preventive strategies, as mentioned in this chapter, are concerned with changing people's attitudes and behaviors by formulating and implementing appropriate policies and empowerment programs.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1970s, women's sense of insecurity and violence against women have been widely discussed. There is some hidden form of bullying behind all forms of abuse, discrimination, prejudice, rape, assault and violence. Gender is the only aspect of identity which can affect the likelihood of experiencing sexual assault. As the World Bank (2018) reported, protection against violence can also guarantee women's economic empowerment. Since violence against women prevents employment and blocks access to financial resources, it undermines economic empowerment. Violence hinders women's free function in societies and the business world. The scope of existing legislations, in any, on violence against women is examined by the indicator of protecting women from violence such as domestic violence and sexual harassment. Domestic violence is gender-specific violence perpetrated by family members or intimate

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partners, which includes different types of abuse. Around the world, nearly 1 in 3 women have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner. As many as 38% of all murders of women were committed by their intimate partners. Domestic violence legislation as an important first step can take significant steps towards ensuring women's protection.

The focus of a qualitative research can be one or more characteristics of a sole individual, social group or category of population of a region or even an entire country. New approaches and explanatory theories have been developed within the framework of qualitative research, among which the feminist theories can be also found. The feminist researchers prefer using qualitative method, as compared to the quantitative one, since it does not have standard models or situations to examine. In qualitative research studies, there is no restriction imposed to the researcher by assumptions and selecting predetermined forms, and thus, s/he is encouraged to continuously discover new issues and see reality from the examined subjects' eyes. The most basic characteristics of feminist research conducted by women, who are feminist, is that the main focus is on women. Secondly, "male" quantitative methods must be differentiated from feminist qualitative ones. Thirdly, feminist research is considered as a political research since women are promoted to engage actively in changing their lives (Stanley and Wise, 1990).

This chapter focuses on grounded theory (GT) as a qualitative research methodology to examine current studies of sexual harassment and sexual violence. In addition, it compares constructivist GT and classic GT, and sexual harassment and sexual violence are defined by presenting their types, consequences, and preventive strategies.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Despite of greater risk of violence from an intimate partner, women are also exposed to other forms of violence. They may experience sexual harassment in the workplace and other arenas. Sexual harassment refers to the abuse of a position of hierarchy or a significant power disparity. Traditionally, it was linked to employment, but it may happen in other spheres including education.

More than four decades have passed since sexual harassment and insecurity have been of consideration but there is limited research on the issue of insecurity in the workplace. Even in some societies, such issues are considered as a kind of social taboos. Gender inequality is manifested, at the macro level, in forms of sexual harassment and feelings of insecurity in the workplace. Apart from various gender discrimination, women are even vulnerable to insecurity because of their bodies. Women in senior positions in an organization with both work and time management and ethical behavior are not also secure in the workplace.

Due to unreported harassments, Barker (2017) stated, there is no clear data about the statistics of sexual harassment. In addition, there were 6,862 sexual harassment claims were filed with the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, of which 92.5% were filed by female employees. Sexual harassment in the workplace negatively affects the employees, and the performance and image of an organization. Psychological and physical effects on employees, illnesses, and several negative work-related behaviors can be mentioned, among others, as the negative impact of sexual harassment in the workplace. The employees can prevent these negative effects and be productive and efficient members of the organization if they feel secure in their workplace. Sexual harassment in organizations is common; about 68% of women in the UK experience sexual harassment in their lifetime (Ministry of Defense, 2015).

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