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Cultivating a Safe Work Environment:
Measuring and Addressing Sexual Harassment in
Cannabis Dispensaries

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Science
in Community Health Sciences

by

Rosario Isabel Majano

2020

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Cultivating a Safe Work Environment:
Measuring and Addressing Sexual Harassment in
Cannabis Dispensaries

By

Rosario Isabel Majano

Master of Science in Community Health Sciences

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Randall Kuhn, Chair

Sexual harassment continues to endure as a public health problem through its persistence in everyday life, but especially in the workplace. Sexual harassment permeates all workplaces but is especially pervasive in service industries such as retail, food, and hospitality. The current study aimed to shed light on sexual harassment in the context of cannabis dispensaries, as cannabis is a recently legalized industry whose occupational hazards remain largely understudied. A mixed methods design was used to investigate the prevalence of sexual harassment in cannabis as well as the organizational risk factors of cannabis store fronts. Survey data was collected from a convenience samples of dispensary workers in Los Angeles County (n=117) and 7 workers were recruited for in-depth interviews through snowball sampling. Multivariate analysis of the survey data revealed gender identity and sexual orientation as significant predictors of sexual

harassment. Women and lesbian, gay and queer identifying workers experienced greater frequency of harassment than men and heterosexual peers, respectively. Organizational risk factors identified through qualitative analysis of the interviews included tips, working in insolation and apathetic responses from managers. Findings from this study demonstrate the value of engaging in mixed methodologies to investigate the new burgeoning industry of cannabis.

The thesis of Rosario Isabel Majano is approved.

Jennifer Wagman

Michael Rodriguez

Randall Kuhn, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to cannabis workers, including those who have been unjustly incarcerated, who have and continue to be at the forefront of this burgeoning industry.

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Acronyms

- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
United States Merit Systems Protection Board (USMSPB)
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+)
Medicinal and Adult-Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MAUCRSA)
California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDFTA)
United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW)
Sexual Experiences Questionnaire-Department of Defense (SEQ-Dod)
Work Environment Survey (WES)
Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, or Queer (LGBQ)
Identification (ID)

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Completing my thesis was an extremely challenging and rewarding experience and I am deeply grateful to everyone who advised me and offered support and encouragement throughout this process. I am incredibly thankful for the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 770 who first took me on as an intern and later entrusted me to continue to this project. Special thanks to Jess, Reggie and “that one foo” (Armando). Their humor, patience and wit kept my spirits high through the trials and tribulations of data collection. Thank you to the workers who took the time to participate in the study and for their enthusiasm in being a part of this research. I also want to thank my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Randall Kuhn, whose impressive, unwavering faith in me kept me motivated and focused. Because of your mentorship, I am able to graduate UCLA a more confident and better researcher. Thank you to my committee members, Drs. Jennifer Wagman and Michael Rodriguez for their guidance and reassurance throughout this project. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Kevin Riley for encouraging me to pursue my interest in occupational health and for believing in me to further develop this project. To my partner Kevin Cruz, for supporting me throughout some of the most difficult parts of this journey, specifically figuring out the title. Thank you for not growing tired of my pet thesis and for reminding me of the *chingona* I am when I doubted myself. I am grateful to the friends I met at UCLA, Jess, Angel, Catie, Caroline, Rosie, Iris, Joana, Alex, and Arnold, who all showered me with encouragement, GIFs and memes to keep me going. To the doctoral students, James, Adrian and Anna-Michelle, who cheered me on and reminded me to stand boldly in the space I occupy within academia, thank you. *Para mi familia, Juana, Ernesto, y Andony, gracias a ustedes por su apoyo, me da mucho orgullo ver nuestro apellido como autor. Es un logro familiar.*

Introduction

Sexual harassment continues to endure as a public health problem through its persistence in everyday life, but especially in the workplace. Recently, thanks to efforts of the #MeToo movement, issues of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace have become significantly more visible in the public sphere. As defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment is defined in terms of “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment” and “when such conduct has the purpose or effect unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment” (2009). The EEOC also notes that sexual harassment in the workplace is classified as a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights act of 1964 as it is a form of sex discrimination. Workplace sexual harassment is further distinguished into two categories. First, quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs when a supervisor with the ability to impose rewards or disciplinary actions onto employees uses their position to coerce victims to oblige them with sexual favors (Crain, 1995). Second, a hostile work environment harassment exists when an employee regularly experiences sexual harassment because co-workers and/or supervisors frequently engage and allow such behaviors to occur in the workplace. Lastly, with the advancement of social media and virtual communication, sexual harassment does not require in-person interactions as harassment can occur virtually (Barak, 2005).

Although men and women are both victims of sexual harassment, women are most often burdened by such behavior. Studies indicate 15% of men experience sexual harassment at their work (Charney & Russell, 1994) compared to one in four women who report experiencing some form of sexual harassment in the work place and in 2018, 84% of charges alleging sexual

harassment while at work were filed by women (EEOC, 2018). Additionally, men more often perpetuate sexual harassment against women. The United States Merit Systems Protection Board (USMSPB) regularly conducts a survey to capture instances of sexual harassment among employees in the federal government. Their most recent report indicates men are perpetrators of sexual harassment in the workplace in 68% of all cases (USMSP, 2018). Yet, despite a greater prevalence of female victimization by males, it is important to remember men can still experience harassment perpetuated by either men or women.

In addition to understanding the prevalence of sexual harassment, it is important to be aware of how harassment is perpetuated in order to understand the severity and frequency of such behavior. Behaviors that constitute sexual harassment can range from nonverbal behaviors such as staring, verbal harassment including jokes and remarks of a sexual nature to unwanted physical contact and assault (FitzGerald et al., 1997; Hayes, 2005). The most common forms of sexual harassment reported by employees include unwanted verbal asides (e.g. jokes, whistling) as well as nonverbal behaviors including sexually suggestive looks and gestures of a sexual nature (Cleveland, 1994). Other common forms of sexual harassment experienced in the workplace include showing explicit material and persistently pressuring someone for a date (McCabe & Hardman, 2005). Although least reported, intense instances of assault and coercion are often acted out by supervisors as opposed to co-workers or customers (Cleveland, 1994; McCabe & Hardman, 2005).

Consequences of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Sexual harassment can have debilitating effects on victims both personally and interpersonally. For instance, negative psychological outcomes spurred by sexual harassment include stress, lower self-esteem and depression (Harned & Fitzgerald, 2002). Regardless of the

severity of the incident, frequent experiences with harassment at work can negatively affect a victim's psychological well-being and attitudes surrounding their job (i.e. satisfaction; Schneider et al., 1997). For example, in more severe cases of sexual harassment, one in ten women develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Dansky & Kilpatrick, 1997). A longitudinal study investigating sexual harassment experienced by young adults at work found that such experiences early in one's career can have long term effects such as depressive symptoms in adulthood among male and female victims (Houle et al., 2011). Such findings indicate that the mental health consequences of sexual harassment are not only immediate but can have a long-lasting impact on victims. Specifically, researchers propose that the stress caused by harassment can affect not only work, but other domains in one's life such as family relationships and friendships (Houle et al., 2011). Therefore, stress proliferation serves as a mechanism for linking sexual harassment to an increased risk of depression among victims (Houle et al., 2011).

In addition to effects on psychological well-being, sexual harassment also negatively affects an organization via a worker's ability to fulfill their work responsibilities. The aftermath of such an experience can affect a worker's ability to function in the very environment where they experienced and are at further risk of harassment. Sexual harassment can cause female workers to become withdrawn from their job, through their avoidance of tasks and refusal to show up to work altogether (Glomb et al., 1999; Schneider et al., 1997; Willness et al., 2007). Studies have also found that harassment by supervisors leads to lower employee satisfaction with their job, supervisors, promotions as well as lower job commitment by both male and female workers (Fitzgerald et al., 1999; Glomb et al., 1997; Morrow et al., 1994). Trauma and stress invoked by harassment can also cause workers to become distracted on the job and increases the risk of accidents occurring (Sugerman, 2018).

Harassment in the workplace significantly increases employee turnover, despite mediation of work satisfaction, particularly in studies focused on female workers (Laband & Lentz, 1998; Sims et al., 2005). As women are forced to leave their jobs because of harassment, they experience financial stress in the form of career disruption and wage loss (McLaughlin et al., 2017). Career disruption further results in loss of specific job-tenure and access to the social network provided by one's workplace (McLaughlin et al., 2017). Although it is difficult to assign a monetary value to injury (Sunstein & Shih, 2004), long-term wage loss resulting from workplace harassment can be explained by gaps in employment and reduced hours; both are actions taken by workers to reduce their exposure to an unsafe work environment (McLaughlin et al., 2017).

Furthermore, harassment in the workplaces can create a hostile work environment for all employees. Although fellow co-workers may not be the target of harassment, their exposure to it nonetheless can have a measurable impact as a workplace stressor. Co-workers can become exposed to sexual harassment by either directly witnessing the behavior or indirectly learning about it through a peer. Glomb and colleagues (1997) found that as the prevalence of harassment increased in the work environment, women who were not directly targeted were more likely to report lower job satisfaction and higher distress. Researchers have also found that as workers report greater instances of sexual harassment through personal experience or observation, these experiences are positively associated with greater team conflict among employees (Raver & Gelfand, 2005). Thus, the ramifications of sexual harassment in the workplace burdens not only targets of sexual harassment but their peers as well.

Lastly, individual and interpersonal consequences of sexual harassment also have repercussions for organizations and companies. USMSPB's report found that in 1994 the costs of

lower employee productivity, sick leave, and higher turnover rates related to sexual harassment cost the federal government approximately \$327 million (USMSP, 1994), equivalent to \$578 million in 2020 when accounting for inflation. Organizations may also be forced to absorb the financial costs of fees and settlements resulting from legal battles that ensue because of the inappropriate behavior. The possible news coverage tied to an instance of abuse and harassment in the workplace can consequently cost the organization its reputation and particularly in industries such as retail, this can ultimately impact a company's the bottom-line.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Organizational Theory

Sexual harassment in the workplace is dependent on several factors within an organization that allow for such behavior to occur. In their review of the literature on sexual harassment, Pina and colleagues (2009) conclude that the occurrence of harassment in the workplace can be explained by power differentials between victims and perpetrators, sexual permissiveness of the work environment, gendered occupations, as well as the policies that govern the likelihood of harassment and the consequences that follow (Glomb et al., 1997; Tangri et al., 1982).

Organizational theory of sexual harassment (Gruber, 1992; Tangri et al., 1982) primarily argues that harassment is the result of hierarchical structures created within organizations. The stratification of roles in the work environment and the authority attached to these roles allow supervisors, for example, to sexually coerce their subordinates who are vulnerable to work-related consequences if they resist (Tangri et al., 1982). Vulnerable populations especially (e.g. undocumented workers) who are low-ranking employees face a greater risk of being exploited by a supervisor (Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016). Additionally, societal norms attached to power differentials within hierarchies create an expectation that an exertion of power between the

powerful and powerless is normal and tolerable (Lips, 1991). An exertion of power can take many forms including but not limited to sexual harassment. Likewise, power differentials can help explain sexual harassment committed by subordinates as a means to gain power or eliminate the inequality in statuses (Cleveland & Kerst, 1993). In a study on workplace authority, researchers found that female supervisors were more likely to experience harassing behaviors than female employees, particularly from male co-workers (McLaughlin et al., 2012), suggesting that sexual harassment was motivated by a threat to traditional gendered power differences.

Thus, hierarchies and differences in power are further affected by gender. Although men are more likely to hold leadership positions in their place of work (Torpey, 2017) and act as perpetrators of sexual harassment (USMSP, 2018), the introduction of women into leadership positions does not necessarily deter harassment. Although power differences are often gendered, it is important to acknowledge that despite research findings pointing to men as common perpetrators of harassment against female subordinates (see Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; McCabe & Hardman, 2005; USMSP, 2018), abuse of power in the form of sexual harassment occurs regardless of gender and is bidirectional within a hierarchy.

When discussing power differentials and harassment as the manifestation of abuse within organizational theory, researchers cannot ignore the intersection power, gender and race as factors influencing the experience of sexual harassment (Richardson & Taylor, 2009; Rospenda et al., 1998), as not all victims experience or are targeted for harassment equally. Particularly for women of color, their experiences of harassment are not only rooted in gender discrimination but racial discrimination as well (Chen, 1997; St. Jean & Feagin, 1997) as is evidenced by studies indicating women of color are more often targeted compared to their White counterparts in the workplace (Bergman & Drasgow, 2003). Furthermore, women of color are also more likely to

internalize their experiences with harassment and are more hesitant to report such instances (Welsh et al., 2006).

Organizational theory also posits that a work environment's permissiveness serves as a predictor of workers falling victim to sexual harassment (Pina et al., 2009; Willness et al., 2007). Such a permissive environment is created through a lack of workplace policies, such as a sexual harassment training, procedures for reporting harassment, protection for workers who report and a no tolerance policy (Pina et al., 2009). These policies, when enforced, ideally aid in minimizing the prevalence of sexual harassment. Without them, perpetrators in the workplace are left unchecked, and likewise, victims are left more vulnerable. Permissive work environments are also characterized by a high tolerance for flirting, sexual jokes, and obscene language (Bowes-Sperry & Powell, 1999). Studies investigating sexual harassment through an organizational approach have found that if workers perceive their organization to be tolerant of sexual harassment in the workplace, they are more likely to experience instances of harassment (Glomb et al., 1997). Co-workers are also less likely to recognize (Bowes-Sperry & Powell, 1999) and intervene during an instance of sexual harassment. Studies find that workers weigh the efficaciousness of their actions against the authority of their employer as the sexual permissiveness in a workplace is usually maintained, if not promoted, by managers and higher-ups (Pryor et al., 1993).

Contributing to a sexually permissive environment is also the idea of working in an overly sexualized work environment. Through the lens of sexualized labor, Warhust and Nick (2009) separate sexualization that is inherent to certain workplaces (e.g. exotic dancers) from work that becomes sexualized at the organizational level. They argue that organizations utilize the aesthetics of workers as a marketing strategy which then gives rise to sexualized labor (2009)

and consequently gives perpetrators a (false) sense of justification to enact inappropriate behaviors towards employees. Sexualized labor begins to take form when organizations specifically recruit employees who they consider to be handsome or beautiful (Warhurst & Nickson, 2009) as the archaic idea that sex sells remains prevalent. Although the sexualization of workers in no way justifies sexually abusive actions taken against them by co-workers, managers or clients, workers are nonetheless expected to endure unwelcome comments, stares and actions as inevitable consequence (Adkins, 1995).

Work environments that lend themselves to becoming overtly sexualized are those that rely heavily on customer interaction and satisfaction such as retail, food, hospitality and casinos (McGinley, 2006; Warhurst & Nickson, 2009). Not surprisingly, these are the same industries who historically have high rates of sexual harassment (Gettman & Gelfand, 2007; Hughes & Tadic, 1998; Rodriguez et al., 2014). Between 2000 and 2015, the combination of these industries made up 28% all sexual harassment charges filed to the EEOC (Frye, 2017). Such industries put employees at greater risk to experience sexual harassment, especially by customers and clients who sexualize workers and feel entitled to their services. Particularly in service sector industries, there is a prevailing belief in the mantra “the customer is always right” that both allows customers to becoming sexually forward without fear of consequences and employees to respond informally to such behavior as to not upset the customer (Good & Cooper, 2014, 2016).

An additional risk associated with working in the service industry involves the opportunity to earn tips. A study by the Restaurant Opportunities Center found that women employed in restaurants who earn a sub-minimum wage of \$2.13 per hour as tipped workers were twice as likely to experience harassment from supervisors, co-workers and customers, compared to women employed in restaurants who received a sub-minimum wages greater than

\$2.13 per hour (Rodriguez et al., 2014). The large reliance on tips creates an environment where workers, particularly women, are undervalued and forced to endure injustices for the sake of their income.

Individual and Interpersonal Risk Factors for Sexual Harassment

Additional risk factors for sexual harassment can be identified at the interpersonal and individual level. At the interpersonal level, working in isolation is also associated with reports of harassment and general workplace violence. Environments in which workers are forced to become isolated from peers gives harassers easy access to targets and leaves workers with fewer chances to interact with others in their environment and signal to others if they are in need of assistance (Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016). Additional interpersonal risk factors in the workplace include power differentials and the abuse of power, discussed in more detail below.

Individual risk factors associated with a worker's vulnerability include gender, sexual orientation and age. As previously mentioned, although anyone can experience sexual harassment, women are most often victimized and thus at greater of risk of experiencing harassment than men (EEOC, 2018; USMSP, 2018). Likewise, studies repeatedly indicate perpetrators are most likely to men. Aside from women, individuals who identify as queer, either in their sexual orientation or gender expression, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) folks also face great risks of experiencing general discrimination and sexual harassment. A meta-analysis of 386 studies on the victimization of LGBT individuals found that approximately of 50% of individuals in all samples experience sexual harassment (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012). Although comparative studies examining rates of sexual harassment between heterosexual and LGBT samples have mixed findings determining effect sizes, they lean towards

sexual minorities experiencing greater victimization than heterosexual identifying individuals (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012).

In addition to the risks posed by one's gender and sexual orientation, young and unmarried female workers are most often targeted as victims of sexual harassment (Workman, 1993). Most service sector employees are relatively young adults between the ages of 15-25 years who face greater risks of harm in the workplace (Smiljanic, 2004). Because of their age, workers are often unaware of their rights which include a safe work environment that is free of harassment as well as entitlement to fair pay (Smiljanic, 2004). Consequently, they may not be equipped with the information or tools to formally handle an experience of sexual harassment (Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016; Smiljanic, 2004).

Responses to Sexual Harassment

Responses and coping mechanisms to sexual harassment are just as critical to understanding the context of harassment in the workplace as are the individual and organizational risk factors that predict harassment among vulnerable workers. However, while the majority of studies focus on investigating the frequency and prevalence of harassing behaviors, many do not address how workers react to such behavior. According to the USMSP (2018), individual based responses to behaviors can be categorized as active responses (e.g. filing a complaint), avoidance (e.g. avoiding the harasser or harassers) and toleration (e.g. making a joke of the behavior). Among the three categories, the top three behaviors employed by federal workers in response to harassment were asking the harasser to stop, avoiding the harasser, and ignoring the behavior or simply doing nothing (USMSP, 2018).

The action, or lack there-of, that an employee takes to address sexual harassment is related to multiple levels of influence: the severity of the incident, the power they as an

employee hold in their place of work, the social support provided by their workplace and their own cultural profile (Cortina & Wasti, 2005). Studies investigating coping mechanisms have found strong connections between both the severity and frequency of the harassment to response patterns (Cortina & Wasti, 2005; Gruber & Smith, 1995). For example, engaging in detached behaviors (i.e. absence of coping efforts) was associated with significantly lower frequency of unwanted sexual attention than engagement in simultaneous avoidance of the behavior and negotiation with the perpetrator (Cortina & Wasti, 2005), however the direction of this relationship is ambiguous. Studies have also found non-assertive actions to address sexual harassment to be more common if the sexually harassing behavior was not considered to be severe (e.g. jokes or requests for dates; Gruber & Smith, 1995).

Workers also opt for non-assertive responses when the source was someone other than a supervisor (e.g. customer; Gruber & Smith, 1995). This is consistent with previous studies which have found workers do not take action against customers to avoid crossing an ambiguous boundary between providing “good customer service” and protecting themselves (Good & Cooper, 2014, 2016). Studies have found that workplaces with few policies in place regarding sexual harassment are associated with passive responses to sexual harassment (Gruber & Smith, 1995). This is not surprising given a lack of formal venues for filing complaints. Women whose workplace only employed informal policies for addressing harassment, were also less likely to engage in any form of direct response for similar reasons (Gruber & Smith, 1995).

Finally, cultural and social factors can influence a worker’s reaction and coping to harassment. The study by Cortina and Wasti (2005) found that White women more likely to practice detached behaviors compared to Latina women who practiced avoidant-negotiating behaviors and whose culture is historically more patriarchal and communal. Despite cultural

differences, both styles of coping are ultimately non-confrontational. This general lack of combative action can also be explained by the shame women are socially taught to feel in response to harassment (Culbertson et al., 1992), as well as the responsibility they feel towards protecting the perpetrator (Gutek, 1985).

Sexual Harassment in the Cannabis Industry

Understanding that sexual harassment is common in the service sector, the current study seeks to shed light on sexual harassment in the context of cannabis dispensaries, a recently legalized industry, within the context of Los Angeles County. With the passage of Proposition 64 during November 2016, the possession, use and retail of recreational marijuana was decriminalized in California through the Medicinal and Adult-Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MAUCRSA; Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training [POST], 2018). Beginning in January 2018, California began to issue licenses for the legal operation of medical and adult use cannabis shops, and by the end of year, the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDFTA) reported cannabis shops produced \$345 million in tax revenue (CDTFA, 2019) for the state with the highest concentration of shops located in Los Angeles (POST, 2018).

While there are many studies that focus on cannabis consumers – health outcomes and public safety issues related to the legalization and use of cannabis (see Akre et al., 2010; Biehl & Burnham, 2015; Cuttler & Spradlin, 2017; Gibson et al., 1983) – little attention has been paid to workers in the industry. The small amount of occupational safety and health literature that does exist regarding the cannabis industry focuses on the biological, chemical, and physical hazards associated with cannabis flower and its production into various cannabis derived products

(Walters et al., 2018). However, the hazards that affect the safety of cannabis workers extends beyond the flower and stems from the industry's long and complicated history with sexual abuse.

In a 2016 article by Reveal News, female trimmers from the Emerald Triangle of Northern California shared stories of sexual abuse including being asked to trim topless and forced to perform sexual acts in order to receive payment (Walter). Similarly, in 2019, Vice also published an article documenting unfair work practices within the industry including 10 to 15 hour shifts, and sexual harassment of female budtenders from shop owners (Fox). Until recently, cannabis flourished in the black market where it was produced, cultivated and distributed with little to no formal monitoring or regulation. Given the risks associated with being involved in the cannabis industry prior to legalization, it was a very secretive industry to navigate. The secrecy associated with the industry helped to establish a “culture of silence” against reporting abuses in the workplace, particularly regarding sexual harassment and exploitation (Walter, 2016). Because of the industry's history, there is a need to assure that workers entering the business are protected and treated with respect, as with any other workforce.

Institutionalized sexism permeates several aspects of the industry and cannabis companies are not exempt for marketing strategies that use sex appeal to sell products. For example, the brand Ignite pairs images of half-naked women with animals, and poorly formed cannabis puns (Figure 1), showcasing the misogyny and harassment that exists within the industry (Fox, 2019). The sexism which breeds harassment is not only evident through advertising, it is also apparent in hiring practices as women have historically been hired to not only sell product but to simultaneously serve as attractive promotional models for a brand (Fox, 2019). Although this is more common in illegal retail fronts known as “trap shops,” it is a

distinguishing characteristic of the industry. This in turn has led to accounts from workers describing instances of overtly touchy customers and co-workers as well as instances of their product knowledge being undermined because of their appearance and gender (Weiss, 2019).

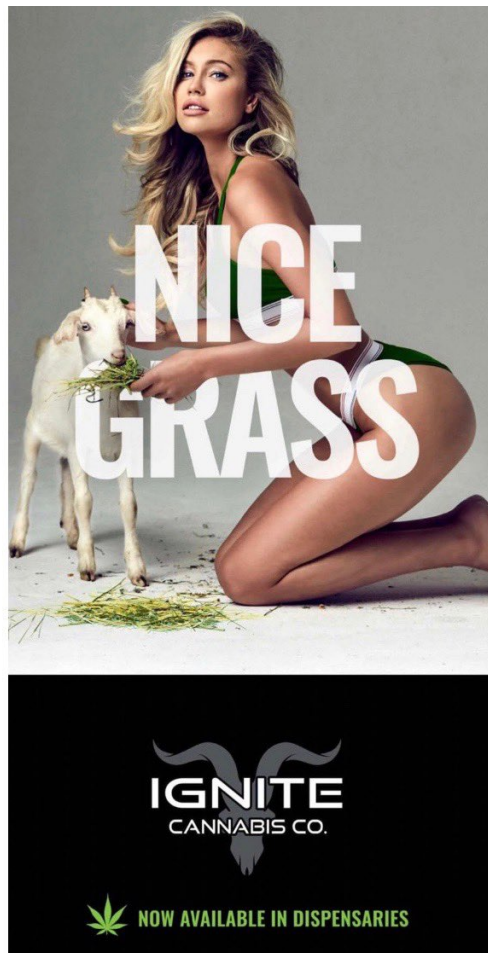


Figure 1. Billboard Advertisement for Ignite Cannabis Company (Blizerian, 2018)

Although there does exist a report documenting the prevalence of sexual abuse in the cannabis industry published by New Frontier Data, a company whose primary mission is to collect and analyze data relevant to cannabis to better inform businesses and investors, the report is not publicly available to better examine its methodology, study sample, or results (Frontier Financials Group, 2017). Despite challenges with accessibility, the major findings of the report

have been published through cannabis related news outlets (Bloom, 2018) and suggest that, of the 1,741 workers in the cannabis industry who participated, there are high levels of workplace violence relative to other industries (Frontier Financials Group, 2017).

Sexual harassment is also a widespread issue in the industry, with nearly 27% of participants reporting they have either witnessed it and 18% reporting they have experienced it themselves (Frontier Financials Group, 2017). An additional one-third (33%) of participants reported that they knew someone who had been sexually harassed in the industry (Frontier Financials Group, 2017). When filtered to only include responses from female employees working in non-ownership or management positions (i.e. lower-level staff and interns), the percent of workers who have experienced sexual harassment decreased slightly to 14% (Frontier Financials Group, 2017). Concurrently, the percentage of those who know of someone who has experienced harassment increase to 49% (Frontier Financials Group, 2017), indicating the effect of power structures in the likelihood to experience harassment.

Labor Unions and their Role in Addressing Sexual Harassment

As the cannabis industry continues to expand within California and across the United States, it is becoming closely intertwined with the labor movement through its growing union representation. Among the many groups that have fought to legalize cannabis, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) was the first union heavily involved in the 2010 campaign for Proposition 19, a previous attempt to legalize the recreational use of cannabis in California. Although the campaign failed, UFCW continued to support the market for cannabis in California and especially in Los Angeles. In 2012, the city of Los Angeles attempted to ban all sales on cannabis. UFCW Local 770 fought the ban in order to protect the jobs of dispensary

workers in the city and their efforts resulted in Proposition D, passed in 2013, that protected 135 medical marijuana dispensaries that had earned their licenses before 2007. UFCW continued their efforts to protect jobs in cannabis with their support of the 2016 campaign for MAUCRSA. As part of MAUCRSA, UFCW negotiated labor peace agreements in medical and recreational use laws. The provision deems that any cannabis shop in California with 20 or more workers is allowed the opportunity to join a union (Fimrite, 2017).

However, despite the labor movement's progressive ideology that serves to protect workers' rights, it is important to address the complicated history that labor unions also face with sexual harassment as protecting women's rights and workers' rights have not always been advocated for concurrently. For example, during the *Jenson v. Eveleth Taconite Co.* class-action lawsuit against workplace sexual harassment, the United Steelworkers Local 6860, responsible for representing the female workers and plaintiffs in the case, was found to be an inadequate source of protection for their female members reporting incessant harassment and abuse from co-workers (Bingham & Gansler, 2003). Union representatives refused to file sexual harassment grievances against other union members (Bingham & Gansler, 2003). Such responses to sexual harassment by labor unions have largely been shaped by the sexism rooted in the birth of the labor movement (Avendaño, 2018). It is the same male-centered philosophy that breeds the sexual harassment unions are intended to protect workers against. The first labor unions were overrepresented by male workers and as such, they discouraged women from reporting harassment by other union members, reinforcing labor unions as organizations perpetuating patriarchy (Crain, 1995).

Despite the tumultuous past unions have had with sexual harassment, many are now taking a proactive approach to address the issue. UNITE HERE, in particular, has worked on

addressing sexual harassment in the hospitality industry in cities across the country. Their Chicago Hands Off Pants On campaign, involved a member survey which found 58% of hotel workers and 77% of casino workers had been sexually harassed by a guest (Lyons, 2016). The survey gave the union the data it needed to push for protections through both collective bargaining and eventually a city wide ordinance to protect both union and nonunion Chicago hotel workers (Lyons, 2016). Moreover, in 2016, California members of the Service Employees International Union began their *Ya Basta* campaign and succeeded in winning statewide legislation in California requiring all janitors in the state to receive training on rape and sexual harassment prevention (SEIU, 2019).

Because of the growing relationship between labor unions and the cannabis industry, labor unions serve as a unique point of intervention for addressing sexual harassment in this particular workplace. Specifically, it is useful to consider the social-ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979). His model had been referenced and adopted to fit several public interventions including violence prevention (Krug et al., 2002). The individual, relationship, community and societal levels of the social ecological framework focus on personal factors, interpersonal relationships involving family, friends workplaces and neighborhoods, and broader structural factors such as health systems and policies, respectively (Krug et al., 2002). Each level of the model can be addressed to holistically grapple with the issue of violence, including sexual harassment in the workplace. Therefore, this particular study seeks to explore the community level as an opportunity for intervention, specifically through the growing relationship between the cannabis industry and labor unions.

Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

This study is focused on understanding the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment in the cannabis industry, specifically in dispensaries. The present study sought to answer the following four research questions using a mixed methods approach and primary data collected from cannabis employees between October 2019 and February 2020.

Research Question 1. How common is sexual harassment in cannabis dispensaries?

Hypothesis 1. Sexual harassment will be equal or more prevalent in dispensaries than other retail spaces.

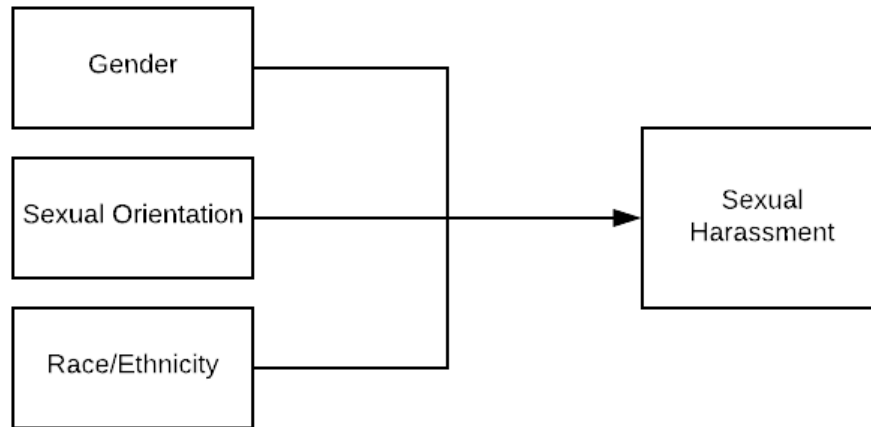


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of the Relationships Between Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race/Ethnicity and Sexual Harassment

Figure 2 models the relationships between gender, race and sexual orientation, all individual factors previously found to predict higher levels of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Research Questions 2. What are the relationships among race/ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation and sexual harassment in the workplace?

Hypothesis 2a. There are gendered differences in the likelihood to experience sexual harassment. Women will be more likely to report experiences of sexual harassment than men.

Hypothesis 2b. There are racial/ethnic differences in propensity to experience sexual harassment in the workplace such that racial minority workers will be more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment.

Hypothesis 2c. Individuals who do not identify as heterosexual will be more likely to report instances of sexual harassment than individuals who identify as heterosexual.

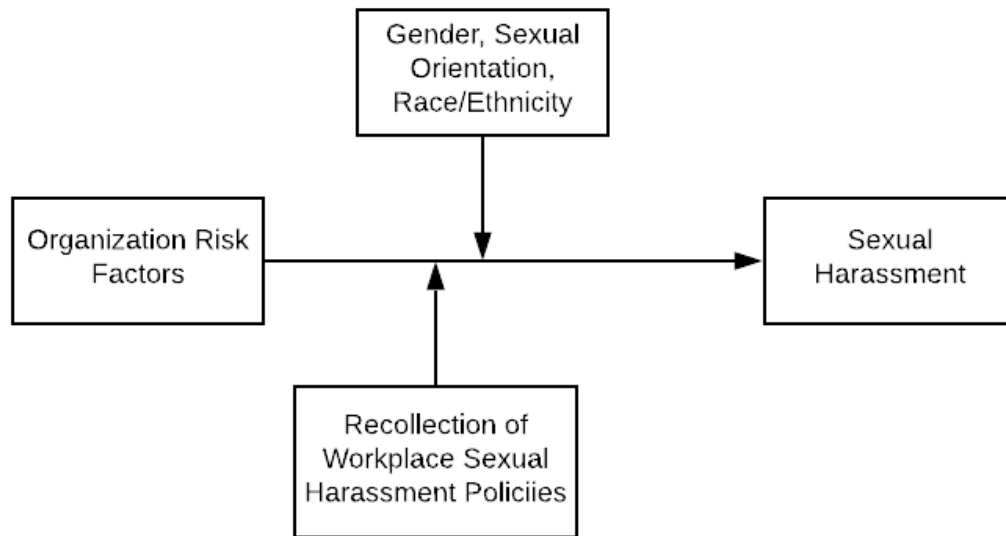


Figure 3. Conceptual Model of the Relationships Between Organization Risk Factors, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race/Ethnicity, Recollection of Workplace Policies and Sexual Harassment

Research Question 3. What is the relationship between knowledge of workplace policies regarding sexual harassment and experiences with sexual harassment?

Hypothesis 3a. There will be negative relationship between number of policies recalled and sexual harassment. The more policies workers are aware of, the less likely respondents will be to report experiences sexual harassment.

Research Question 4. What are organization risk factors of cannabis dispensaries that expose workers experiencing sexual harassment?

Research Question 5. What interventions would workers like to see implemented in their workplace to address sexual harassment?

Methods

The following section describes the study population, methods used to carry out the study, and the analysis of data collected. The University of California, Los Angeles Institutional Review Board has approved the current study (Protocol #19-001624).

Target Population and Setting

The study population was drawn from a source sample of cannabis employees represented by UFCW in Los Angeles County. Currently, UFCW Local 770 represents 20 dispensaries in Los Angeles County and approximately 400 workers to-date. In order to participate in the study, participants had to be at least 21 years of age, employed in a dispensary shop in Los Angeles County and had to be a current member of Local 770. As of August 2018, California is home to at least 358 retail stores with varying levels of permission including Temporary Approval or License to sell Medicinal or Adult-Use cannabis and cannabis products (Cutchin, 2019). Of the 358 legal stores located in the state, 188 are located in Los Angeles County (McVey, 2018), confirming Los Angeles area as an optimal location to investigate sexual harassment in the retail sector of the cannabis industry.

Study Design

This was a mixed methods study using a cross sectional design to analyze survey data from a convenience sample of dispensary workers represented by UFCW Local 770 in Los Angeles County. Surveys were used as part of this study to assess the demographics of the workforce, prevalence, frequency, types of sexual harassment occurring in the workplace, and workers' knowledge on workplace policies regarding sexual harassment. In-depth interviews were conducted to better understand organizational risk factors of sexual harassment that are specific to cannabis dispensaries.

Recruitment

Recruitment flyers with a description of the study were posted in the 20 Los Angeles dispensaries represented by Local 770. The recruitment flyer included an online link and a quick response code to the survey for workers to easily access the survey through a mobile device. The recruitment flyer included an invitation to participate in an additional interview. The majority of recruitment occurred at shops as I explained the study to workers, and they volunteered to participate. Interview participants were recruited through snowball sampling. Each interview participant was provided a consent form, was explained the objectives of the study, and agreed to have their interview digitally recorded. Participants were assured that no identifiable information (e.g. legal name, place of employment) would be collected and any identifiable information that may have been mentioned throughout the interview was redacted from the transcript.

Data Collection

Each interview took between 40 and 60 minutes and occurred at a location of the interviewee's choosing (e.g. coffee shops, bars). Each participant was compensated for their time with a 15-dollar gift card. In total, seven participants were interviewed as a part of this study.

The interview protocol included providing participants with a copy of the interview questions so that they could follow along with the line of questions. In addition to interview questions, participants were provided with a formal definition of workplace violence and sexual harassment in order to establish a common understanding of the terms I would be using throughout the interview. Interviewees were first asked to explain their regular workday and their work responsibilities as well as their employment tenure in cannabis. They were then asked about sexual harassment in their workplace, if they had experienced, witnessed or heard about instances through word-of-mouth. They were also asked to explain the protocols of their

workplace aimed at preventing harassment and protecting workers who seek redress. In an effort to be mindful of discussing the sensitive topic of sexual harassment, the questions focused more on factors leading up to harassment and the actions taken by workers, co-workers and their management as a result of such events. Finally, workers were also asked to describe interventions they would like to see implemented in their workplace to address harassment. Throughout data collection, questions were added, removed, and re-written based on feedback from participants.

Survey participants completed the survey on their mobile device or self-administered it in-person with a tablet. While visiting stores for recruitment, interested workers could take the survey on tablets provided by Local 770. Once the study was complete, all data collected, except for the city of employment variable, were made available to UFCW with additional information and recommendations on how they may better support members of their cannabis division. The final sample for the survey was 117 participants. All data were collected between October 2019 – February 2020.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument consisted of 37 questions designed to take no more than seven minutes to complete. The first section included questions on workplace city, duration of employment in the current workplace and total employment experience in the cannabis industry. The second section asked about sexual harassment policies in the workplace (e.g. what policies does your retail company have regarding sexual harassment) followed by questions regarding experiences with sexual harassment (e.g. in the past 12 months, how often did someone touch you when you did not want to be touched), perpetrators, and responses (e.g. filing a formal complaint). The fourth section asked workers to select, from a list of examples, interventions

they believed could be implanted to prevent or better handle instances of harassment in their workplace. The fifth and concluding section included basic demographic questions (e.g. age, gender, race, sexual orientation).

Measures

Dependent Variables

Sexual Harassment. In order to capture sexual harassment in the workplace, I adopted nine questions from Fitzgerald and colleague's Sexual Experiences Questionnaire – Department of Defense Items ([SEQ-Dod]1999). The SEQ-Dod was originally developed to measure sexual harassment of in the Armed Forces (Fitzgerald et al., 1999) but has also frequently been adopted to capture harassment in the workplace (e.g. Leskinen et al., 2011; McLaughlin et al., 2012). The original 24-item measures four dimensions of sexual harassment: sexist hostility, sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion. As defined by Fitzgerald (1999), sexist hostility is defined as gender-based harassment, sexual hostility is also a form of gender-based harassment but involves behaviors that are more overtly sexual in nature, unwanted sexual attention is characterized by attention and behaviors that are unprompted and unreciprocated by the receiver, and lastly sexual coercion is more explicitly extortionist in nature and considered quid pro quo harassment. The tool has also since been shortened to capture the original four dimensions of sexual harassment in 16 questions (Stark et al., 2002). For this study, only the first three dimensions of sexual harassment were measured.

The version of survey specifically adopted for this study was from the National Park Service's Work Environment Survey (WES) as their study addressed shortcomings of the original tools including issues of recall bias and a lack of examples which constitute sexual harassment (Arvey & Cavanaugh, 1995; Gruber, 1992; Ilies et al., 2003). All survey participants

responded to 12 different questions of sexual harassment behaviors (e.g. receiving messages of a sexual nature via email, direct message, text or on social media). Participants indicated how often they experienced the behavior in the last 12 months using a 6-point scale ranging from never (0), “once” (1), “once or less a month” (2), “2-3 times a month” (3), “once a week or more” (4), “to once or more times a day” (5). Because the 12 questions were adopted from the original instrument, a reliability analysis conducted to determine if the 12 items were interrelated produced a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.88, indicating good internal consistency. The Cronbach alphas for the three subscales of sexist hostility, sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention were 0.88, 0.84, and 0.36, respectively.

Consistent with the scoring used in the WES report (CFI Group, 2017), responses to these questions were summed and averaged across items to determine a sexual harassment score per subscale. Sexual harassment scores ranged from one to five; the greater the sexual harassment score, the greater frequency of harassment experienced by a worker. Prevalence of specific dimensions or behaviors of harassment among respondents was calculated by the percentage of respondents who reported experiencing an example of harassment at least once. The greater the percentage, the more employees experienced either a specific dimension or behaviors of sexual harassment.

Independent Variables

Perpetuator. Respondents who answered experiencing sexual harassment at least once in their workplace were asked to report who had sexually harassed them. Options included a fellow employee (i.e. co-worker), subordinate, manager, customer and other or an unknown individual. The five possible options were coded as separate dichotomous variables and scored as one if selected and zero if left blank. Participants were also asked if they had ever experienced

sexual harassment by someone of the same gender. Responses options were “yes” (1), “no” (2), and “unsure” (3).

Sexual Harassment Policies. To gauge awareness of sexual harassment policies, a question was adopted from UFCW’s questionnaire on sexual harassment in the workplace. The survey provided by UFCW was originally designed for their grocery worker division and was intended to capture worker’s knowledge of workplace policies protecting them against sexual harassment as well as the impact of sexual harassment on employee work schedules. Respondents were asked if they were aware of their retail company’s policies regarding sexual harassment. They either responded “yes” (1) or “no” (0). If they responded “yes,” they were further asked to select specific policies that applied to their workplace from a list of six examples (e.g. a clear no-retaliation policy for reporting sexual harassment). All examples were coded as dichotomous variables. If selected, the item was coded as a one, and if left blank, the item was coded as zero. A response score ranging from one to six was calculated by summing the responses to all six items. A larger score equates to workers having a greater awareness of policies in the workplace to protect them against sexual harassment. The Cronbach alpha for these six items was 0.83, indicating good internal consistency.

Interventions in the Workplace. As part the translational nature of the project, respondents were asked if they wanted more support in their workplace to protect workers against sexual harassment. This item as also adopted from UFCW’s questionnaire. If respondents selected “yes” (1), they were asked to indicate which actions, from a list of seven examples, they would like to see taken in their workplace to address the issue of sexual harassment (e.g. publicize complaint channels, protect victims from retaliation). Respondents were asked to choose all options they felt were applicable to their workplace. All seven options were converted

into a dichotomized variable and scored as one if the option was selected and zero if left unselected. An intervention score was created by the summing responses to seven options. This data will be especially beneficial to informing the union how they may better service their members.

Covariates

Covariates included in my analysis include the age of workers, their race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation and employment status. Age (21 years of older) was treated as a continuous variable in analysis. Respondents provided their race and ethnicity by selecting from the six provided categories, all the options they felt best applied to their identity. A seventh option for “other” was provided if they wanted to write in their response. Responses for race/ethnicity were first categorized into seven levels: White, Black, Asian, Latina/o, Asian, Native American, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and other. Gender identity was collapsed into a 3-level categorical variable; transgender and non-binary were recoded to “self-described.” Additionally, I controlled for sexual orientation as a binary variable: lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, or queer (LGBQ) and heterosexual.

Lastly, there were three variables measuring employment included in the analysis. Employment status was treated as a dichotomized variable with full-time scored as one and part-time scored as zero. Employment tenure in cannabis was also treated as a dichotomous variable to in order to gauge seniority in the industry, pre-legalization of recreational cannabis. Employment tenure in the cannabis industry less than two years was scored as zero, and employment tenure longer than two years was scored as one. Employment tenure for a respondent’s current workplace was assessed as a four-level categorical variable. Respondents

chose one of four options, “less than 6 months” (1), “6 months to 1 year” (2), “1 year to 2 years” (3), and “more than 2 years” (4).

Analysis Plan

Survey data were analyzed using the statistical program, STATA version 16. Univariate analysis was initially conducted to identify observations with missing data and assess demographic information of the sample. Bivariate analyses, using chi-square, were conducted to investigate the relationships between the three dimensions of sexual harassment and independent variables. Significance was assessed at an alpha level equal to 0.05. Multivariable linear regressions were used to assess relationships with frequency of harassment for the 3 subscales and the independent variables. Significance for the logistic regression models was also assessed at an alpha level equal to 0.05.

Interviews were transcribed by and coded using Dedoose version 8.3.17. All interviews were coded twice in order to develop and solidify the codebook. Interviews were analyzed using a deductive approach and thematic content analysis (Pope et al., 2000) to identify salient responses to organizational risk factors of sexual harassment.

Results

In the following section, I describe my univariate (Tables 1 – 7) and bivariate findings (Tables 8 – 10) as well as the results of the multilevel analysis (Tables 11 – 14) used to answer my research questions. Following the quantitative analysis, I present the results of the in-depth interviews.

Univariate Analysis

Table 1 presents sample characteristics of the study participants. In the sample of cannabis workers (N=117), the age employees ranged from as 22 to 83 years age, averaging 28.5 years. The majority of workers identified as women (64.1%) and regarding race, 44.4% of workers were Latina/o, followed by White (23.9%), Black (12%), Asian (7.7%), other (6.8%), Native American (3.4%) and Native Hawaiian of Pacific Islander (1.7%). More than two-thirds (71.8%) of the sample identified their sexual orientation as heterosexual. Only one-third (33.3%) of the sample were part-time workers and approximately half of the sample (48.7%) has been employed in the cannabis for longer than two years. When asked about their current workplace 21.4% of workers surveyed have been employed for less than 6 months, 20.5% have worked between 6 months and 1 year, 29.9% have been with their current employer between 1 and 2 years and the remaining 28.2% have been with their employer longer than two years. When asked to recall policies in their workplace regarding sexual harassment, respondents, on average could recall two out of six policies. Lastly, the most common type of sexual harassment experienced by workers at least once in past 12 months was sexual hostility (68.4%), followed by sexist hostility (62.3%) and unwanted sexual attention (46.2%).

Table 1. Characteristics of Sample (N=117)	
Variable	n (%) or Mean (sd)
Age (yrs) ¹	28.5 (7.3)
Gender Identity	
Men	36 (30.8)
Women	75 (64.1)
Self-Described	6 (5.1)
Race/ethnicity	
White	28 (23.9)
Black	14 (12.0)
Latina/o	52 (44.4)
Asian	9 (7.7)
Native American	4 (3.4)
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2 (1.7)
Other	8 (6.8)
Sexual Orientation	
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Queer	33 (28.2)
Heterosexual	84 (71.8)
Employment Status	
Full-time	78 (66.7)
Part-time	39 (33.3)
Experience in Cannabis	
Less than 2 years	60 (51.3)
More than 2 years	57 (48.7)
Employment Tenure in Current Workplace	
Less than 6 months	25 (21.4)
6 months to 1 year	24 (20.5)
1 to 2 years	35 (29.9)
More than 2 years	33 (28.2)
Total Number of Policies Recalled ¹	2.1 (2.0)
Experiencing Sexual Harassment At least Once in The Past 12 Months	
Sexist Hostility	74 (63.2)
Sexual Hostility	80 (68.4)
Unwanted Sexual Attention	54 (46.2)

Table 2 presents the means, distributions and Cronbach alpha scores of sexist hostility reported by respondents about their workplace. Frequency of harassment was ranged from a score of zero for “never” and five for “one or more times a day.” An average frequency of 1.47

¹ Continuous Variable

for being told sexist stories or jokes that were offensive represents a frequency between “once” and “once a month or less.” Therefore, this item was the most prevalent form of sexist hostility reported by participants. The least prevalent form of sexist hostility reported was condescending actions and comments regarded at a participant because of their gender, with an average frequency of 1.09.

Table 3 captures frequency, distribution and Cronbach alpha scores for sexual hostility reported by participants. The most frequent item reported was listening to verbal remarks of a sexual nature (e.g. teasing jokes or questions) at an average frequency of 1.47, representing an occurrence of once to one or more times a month. Respondents least frequently experienced sexual hostility in the form of persistent and unwanted invitations for discussions of a sexual nature. The average frequency for this item was 1.09. In other words, amongst the study sample, workers experienced harassment in this form on average once in the last 12 months.

Unwanted sexual attention (table 4) was, overall, the least common dimension of sexual harassment experienced by respondents, as demonstrated in table 1. The most frequent item reported in this particular category was uninvited touching, experienced less than once by the entire study sample (mean = 0.79). The item least reported was being witness to obscene images in the workplace (mean = 0.39). For bivariate and multivariate analysis, items two and three were removed from the dimension of unwanted sexual attention as they had the lowest response rates, and the highest Cronbach alphas, 0.31 and 0.39, respectively.

Table 2. Estimated Average Frequency and Distribution of Sexist Hostility (N=117)								
Type of Sexual Harassment	Never	Once	Once a month or less	Two-three times a month	Once a week or more	One or more times a day	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's Alpha
Sexist stories or jokes that were offensive to you	42.7%	7.7%	21.4%	18%	8.6%	1.7%	1.47 (1.48)	0.84
Offensive remarks about your appearance, body or sexual activities	52.1%	11.1%	12.8%	14.5%	6%	3.4%	1.21 (1.51)	0.86
References to people of your gender in insulting or offensive terms	53.9%	8.6%	18.8%	11.1%	5.1%	2.6%	1.12 (1.43)	0.83
Condescending actions or comments toward you because of your gender	57.3%	9.4%	12.8%	12%	4.3%	4.3%	1.09 (1.5)	0.85

Table 3. Estimated Average Frequency and Distribution of Sexual Hostility (N=117)								
Type of Sexual Harassment	Never	Once	Once a month or less	Two-three times a month	Once a week or more	One or more times a day	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's Alpha
Verbal remarks of a sexual nature (e.g. teasing jokes or questions)	42.7%	7.7%	21.4%	18%	8.6%	1.7%	1.47 (1.48)	0.77
Gestures of a sexual nature including exposure of any private parts	52.1%	11.1%	12.8%	14.5%	6%	3.4%	1.21 (1.51)	0.83
Engage in lustful staring at you or a part of your body	53.9%	8.6%	18.8%	11.1%	5.1%	2.6%	1.12 (1.43)	0.76
Make persistent and unwanted invitations for discussions of a sexual nature	57.3%	9.4%	12.8%	12%	4.3%	4.3%	1.09 (1.5)	0.78

Table 4. Estimated Average Frequency and Distribution of Unwanted Sexual Attention (N=117)

Type of Sexual Harassment	Never	Once	Once a month or less	Two-three times a month	Once a week or more	One or more times a day	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's Alpha
Touch you when you did not want to be touched	65.8%	8.6%	13.7%	6.8%	5.6%	2.6%	0.79 (1.29)	0.11
Messages of a sexual nature to you via email, direct messaging, text or on social media	88.9%	9.4%	0.9	0.9	-	-	0.13 (0.43)	0.31
Obscene images in the workplace on calendars, desktop screens, posters or other location that is publicly visible	95.7%	4.3%	-	-	-	-	0.04 (0.2)	0.39
Persistent and unwanted invitations for a date	72.7%	11.1%	6%	4.3%	3.4%	2.6%	0.62 (1.24)	0.25

Among the sample of respondents who reported experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace (n=84), univariate analysis revealed that 63 (75%) reported customers as perpetrators, the most common offender (Table 5). Customers as perpetrators were followed by co-workers and other employees in the workplace (29.7%). Instances of harassment by managers were combined with co-workers as there was only one instance of a manager reported as a perpetrator.

Table 5. Reported Perpetrators of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (N=84)²	
	n (%)
Customer	63 (75)
Co-Workers	25 (29.7)

Table 6 presents the awareness workers demonstrated about different policies their workplace has regarding protections against sexual harassment. Of the total sample, 83 (70.1%) indicated they were aware of their retail company's policies. From this subset of the sample, most respondents (73.5%) reported their workplace has some form of policy on sexual harassment. The second most common policy reported was a posted notice informing employees of their rights; 51 (61.4%) respondents could recall this policy in their workplace. On the other hand, only 13 (15.7%) of employees were aware of a hotline used for reporting sexual harassment. On average, workers who aware of their workplace's policies could recall 2 policies (Table 1).

Table 6. Awareness of Workplace Policies Regarding Sexual Harassment (N=83)	
	n (%)
A posted notice informing employees of their rights	51 (61.4)
A policy on sexual harassment	61 (73.5)
A clear no retaliation policy for reporting sexual harassment	38 (45.8)
Mandatory training for all employees	47 (56.6)
Mandatory training for all supervisors	35 (42.2)
A reporting hotline	13 (15.7)

² Workers were allowed to choose more than one option for tables 5, 6 and 7.

Table 7 highlights interventions workers believe would be effective in preventing or taking action against sexual harassment in their workplace. Of the 92 respondents who answered this portion of the survey, the most popular item selected was sexual harassment-based training for all employees (73.9%) followed by establishing and publicizing policies regarding sexual harassment in the workplace (67.4%). The least popular item selected by 49 (53.3%) workers was enforcement of stronger penalties against perpetrators.

Table 7. Desired Workplace Interventions to Address Sexual Harassment (N=92)	
	n (%)
Establish and publicize policies on sexual harassment	62 (67.4)
Sexual harassment-based training for all employees	68 (73.9)
Publicize penalties that can be imposed against perpetrators	49 (53.3)
Publicize complaint channels	39 (42.4)
Protect victims from retaliation	53 (57.6)
Sexual harassment-based training for managers and supervisors	61 (66.3)
Enforce stronger penalties against perpetrators	49 (53.3)

Bivariate Analysis

Tables 8 through 10 present the results of chi-square and t-tests performed to establish the relationship between independent and the dependent variables of sexist hostility, sexual hostility and unwanted sexual attention. In order to perform bivariate analysis, race was transformed from a seven-category variable to a five-category variable. Race categories for Native American and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander were collapsed into “Other” in an effort to improve sample size. All other race categories remained the same.

Results from table 8 show there were no statistically significant relationships between the age of a cannabis worker ($t = -0.439$, $p=0.66$), the number of policies they could recall ($t = 1.219$, $p=0.23$) and whether they reported experiencing sexist hostility in their workplace. There was also no significant relationship between reporting sexist hostility, gender identity ($X^2=3.346$, $p=0.19$), race ($X^2=2.829$, $p=0.59$) and employment status ($X^2=0.018$, $p=0.89$). However, there

was a significant relationship between a respondent's sexual orientation and sexist hostility. Of the respondents who identified as LGBTQ, 78.8% reported at least one instance of sexual harassment ($X^2=4.775$, $p=0.029$). The chi-square tests also revealed significant relationships between the outcome of interest and employment tenure in both cannabis and the respondent's current workplace. Of the workers who are relatively new to cannabis and have worked in the industry less than two years, 76.7% reported an instance of harassment ($X^2=9.54$, $p=0.002$). However, for employment tenure in current their workplace, workers with 6 months to 2 years of experience reported more harassment. Of the 24 workers, who have been employed between 6 months and one year, 79.2% experienced at least one form of sexist hostility and of the 36 workers who have been tenure 1 to 2 years, 77.1% reported experiencing sexual hostility ($X^2=11.118$, $p=0.011$).

Table 8. Sample Characteristics, by Self-Reported Experiences of Sexist Hostility (N=117)			
	Never, n=43 n (%)	Once or More, n=74 n (%)	T-test, p-value
Age	28.1 (5.3)	28.8 (8.3)	-0.439, 0.66
Total Number of Policies Recalled	2.4 (2.1)	2.0 (2.0)	1.219, 0.23
			X ² , p-value
Gender Identity			3.346, 0.19
Men	17 (47.2)	19 (52.8)	
Women	23 (30.7)	52 (69.3)	
Self-Described	3 (50.0)	3 (50.0)	
Race/ethnicity			2.829, 0.59
White	9 (32.1)	19 (67.9)	
Black	4 (28.6)	10 (71.4)	
Latina/o	21 (40.4)	31 (59.6)	
Asian	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	
Other	7 (50.0)	7 (50.0)	
Sexual Orientation			4.775, 0.029
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Queer	7 (21.2)	26 (78.8)	
Heterosexual	36 (42.9)	48 (57.1)	
Employment Status			0.018, 0.89
Full-time	29 (37.2)	49 (62.8)	
Part-time	14 (35.9)	25 (64.1)	
Employment Tenure in Cannabis			9.54, 0.002
Less than 2 years	14 (23.3)	46 (76.7)	
More than 2 years	29 (50.9)	28 (49.1)	
Employment Tenure in Current Workplace			11.118, 0.011
Less than 6 months	13 (52.0)	12 (48.0)	
6 months to 1 year	5 (20.8)	19 (79.2)	
1 to 2 years	8 (22.9)	27 (77.1)	
More than 2 years	17 (51.5)	16 (48.5)	

Similar to table 8, results from table 9 indicate no significant relationship between the following sample characteristics and a likelihood to report sexual hostility in the workplace: age ($t = -0.64$, $p = 0.52$), number of workplace policies recalled ($t = 1.555$, $p = 0.12$), race ($X^2 = 2.304$, $p = 0.68$), and employment status ($X^2 = 0.079$, $p = 0.78$). However, unlike table 8, a respondent's gender identity was significantly associated with experiencing sexual hostility ($X^2 = 8.413$,

p=0.015). Fifty-eight (77.3%) women identifying respondents experienced sexual hostility in the past 12 months as well as four (67.7%) self-identifying respondents. Sexual orientation was still found to be significantly associated with sexual hostility; 84.8% of respondents who identified as LGBQ experienced sexual hostility in their workplace ($X^2=5.768$, $p=0.016$). There were also a significant association between employment tenure in cannabis ($X^2=3.915$, $p=0.048$). Similar to the relationship between tenure in the current workplace and sexist hostility, respondents with 6 months (91.7%) to 2 years (82.9%) of experience reported the most harassment ($X^2=18.554$, $p<0.001$).

Table 9. Sample Characteristics, by Self-Reported Experiences of Sexual Hostility (N=117)			
	Never, n=37 n (%)	Once or More, n=80 n (%)	T-test, p-value
Age	27.9 (5.0)	28.8 (8.2)	-0.64, 0.52
Total Number of Policies Recalled	2.6 (1.9)	2.0 (2.0)	1.555, 0.12
			X ² , p-value
Gender Identity			8.413, 0.015
Men	18 (50.0)	18 (50.0)	
Women	17 (22.7)	58 (77.3)	
Self-Described	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)	
Race/ethnicity			2.304, 0.68
White	8 (28.6)	20 (71.4)	
Black	5 (35.7)	9 (64.3)	
Latina/o	18 (34.6)	34 (65.4)	
Asian	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	
Other	5 (35.7)	9 (64.3)	
Sexual Orientation			5.768, 0.016
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Queer	5 (15.2)	28 (84.8)	
Heterosexual	32 (38.1)	52 (61.9)	
Employment Status			0.079, 0.78
Full-time	24 (30.8)	54 (69.2)	
Part-time	13 (33.3)	26 (66.7)	
Employment Tenure in Cannabis			3.915, 0.048
Less than 2 years	14 (23.3)	46 (76.7)	
More than 2 years	23 (40.4)	34 (59.6)	
Employment Tenure in Current Workplace			18.554, <0.001
Less than 6 months	13 (52.0)	12 (48.0)	
6 months to 1 year	2 (8.3)	22 (91.7)	
1 to 2 years	6 (17.1)	29 (82.9)	
More than 2 years	16 (48.5)	17 (51.5)	

Table 10, presenting bivariate results for the outcome of unwanted sexual attention indicated only sexual orientation was significantly related. Sixty percent of LGBTQ identifying respondents have experienced unwanted sexual attention in their place of work ($X^2 = 4.346$, $p=0.037$). All other variables were not significantly associated with reported instances of unwanted sexual attention.

Table 10. Sample Characteristics, by Self-Reported Experiences of Unwanted Sexual Attention (N=117)

	Never, n=64 n (%)	Once or More, n=53 n (%)	T-test, p-value
Age	27.3 (4.6)	30.0 (9.5)	-1.952, 0.053
Total Number of Policies Recalled	2.1 (2.0)	2.2 (2.1)	-0.028, 0.98
			X ² , p-value
Gender Identity			3.786, 0.15
Men	24 (66.7)	12 (33.3)	
Women	36 (48.0)	39 (52.0)	
Self-Described	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)	
Race/ethnicity			3.879, 0.42
White	19 (67.9)	9 (32.1)	
Black	7 (50.0)	7 (50.0)	
Latina/o	28 (53.8)	24 (46.2)	
Asian	3 (33.3)	6 (66.7)	
Other	7 (50.0)	7 (50.0)	
Sexual Orientation			4.346, 0.037
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Queer	13 (39.4)	20 (60.6)	
Heterosexual	51 (60.7)	33 (39.3)	
Employment Status			2.087, 0.15
Full-time	39 (50.0)	39 (50.0)	
Part-time	25 (64.1)	14 (35.9)	
Employment Tenure in Cannabis			2.015, 0.16
Less than 2 years	29 (48.3)	31 (51.7)	
More than 2 years	35 (61.4)	22 (38.6)	
Employment Tenure in Current Workplace			5.304, 0.15
Less than 6 months	17 (68.0)	8 (32.0)	
6 months to 1 year	13 (54.2)	11 (45.8)	
1 to 2 years	14 (40.0)	21 (60.0)	
More than 2 years	20 (60.6)	13 (39.4)	

Multivariate Analysis

A linear regression was modeled for all three dimensions of sexual harassment as one outcome and each dimension separately using averaged scores for each category (Tables 11 – 14). Although employment tenure cannabis was moderately associated with sexist hostility in table 1, it was not included in the multivariate analysis. Table 11 presents the results of modeling

all three dimensions of sexual harassment as one outcome. The model was significant $F(13, 103) = 3.81, p < 0.001, R^2 = 32\%$ and indicates gender as a significant predictor of sexual harassment. Specifically, women significantly reported greater levels of sexual harassment than men ($\beta = 0.70, p < 0.01$). Additionally, Black respondents also reported significantly higher levels of sexual harassment compared to white respondents in the sample ($\beta = 0.64, p < 0.05$). At an alpha level of 0.10, respondents identifying as LGBQ experienced greater instances of harassment than their heterosexual peers ($\beta = 0.35, p < 0.10$). Employment tenure in the current workplace also significantly predicted levels of sexual harassment. Respondents with experience ranging from 6 months to 2 years reported significantly higher levels of sexual harassment than recent hires with less than 6 months of employment tenure ($\beta = 0.67, p < 0.05$; $\beta = 1.03, p < 0.01$).

Table 11. Linear Regression for Sexual Harassment (N=117)		
Variable	Model 1	
	β	Std. Error
Age	0.01	(0.01)
Total Number of Policies Recalled	0.01	(0.05)
Gender Identity		
Men	-	-
Women	0.70**	(0.22)
Self-Described	0.30	(0.43)
Race/ethnicity		
White	-	-
Black	0.64*	(0.31)
Latina/o	-0.09	(0.23)
Asian	0.33	(0.36)
Other	0.04	(0.32)
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	-	-
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Queer	0.35+	(0.21)
Employment Status		
Part-time	-	-
Full-Time	0.14	(0.22)
Employment Tenure in Current Workplace		
Less than 6 months	-	-
6 months to 1 year	0.67*	(0.28)
1 to 2 years	1.03***	(0.26)
More than 2 years	0.05	(0.27)
Constant	-0.32	(0.44)
Observations	117	
R-squared	0.32	
AIC	325.2	
BIC	363.9	
-2 Log Likelihood	-148.6	
df	13	

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Overall, both models 2 and 3 (table 12) predicting frequency of sexist hostility were significant, $F(13, 103) = 3.19, p<0.001, R^2 = 29\%$; $F(16, 101) = 6.43, p<0.001, R^2 = 49\%$, respectively. Model 2 indicates women experienced more instances of sexist hostility compared to men ($\beta = 0.68, p<0.05$). Additionally, at an alpha level of 0.10, Black respondents were found

to experience greater instances of sexist hostility compared to White respondents ($\beta = 0.72$, $p < 0.10$). LGBQ identifying workers also experienced greater sexist hostility than their heterosexual peers ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$). Similar to the bivariate analysis for sexist hostility (Table 8), employment tenure in current workplace was a significant predictor. Specifically, workers employed 6 months to one year ($\beta = 0.86$, $p < 0.05$) and 1 to 2 years ($\beta = 0.88$, $p < 0.01$) experienced more sexist hostility than respondents with an employment tenure of less than 6 months. No other predictors in model 2 were statistically significant. Controlling for the two other subscales of sexual harassment in model 3, only the relationship between sexual orientation and sexist hostility remains ($\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.05$). Gender, race, and employment tenure did not predict frequency of sexist hostility in model 3. Although sexual hostility was predictive of sexist hostility ($\beta = 0.53$, $p < 0.001$), unwanted sexual attention was not, indicating that as the level of sexual hostility increases, so does sexist hostility. According to the information criteria, AIC and BIC, model 2 is the better fitting model for predicting sexist hostility.

Table 12. Linear Regression for Sexist Hostility (N=117)				
Variable	Model 2		Model 3	
	β	Std. Error	β	Std. Error
Age	0.00	(0.02)	0.00	(0.01)
Total Number of Policies Recalled	0.05	(0.06)	0.06	(0.05)
Gender Identity				
Men	-	-	-	-
Women	0.68*	(0.27)	0.25	(0.24)
Self-Described	0.53	(0.54)	0.37	(0.46)
Race/ethnicity				
White	-	-	-	-
Black	0.72+	(0.39)	0.37	(0.34)
Latina/o	0.15	(0.28)	0.31	(0.24)
Asian	0.46	(0.45)	0.36	(0.39)
Other	-0.04	(0.40)	-0.04	(0.35)
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	-	-	-	-
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Queer	0.62*	(0.26)	0.57*	(0.22)
Employment Status				
Part-time	-	-	-	-
Full-Time	0.18	(0.27)	0.12	(0.23)
Employment Tenure in Current Workplace				
Less than 6 months	-	-	-	-
6 months to 1 year	0.86*	(0.34)	0.44	(0.31)
1 to 2 years	0.88**	(0.32)	0.12	(0.30)
More than 2 years	-0.20	(0.34)	-0.35	(0.29)
Sexual Hostility			0.53***	(0.13)
Unwanted Sexual Attention			0.10	(0.26)
Constant	-0.32	(0.54)	-0.22	(0.47)
Observations	117		117	
R-squared	0.29		0.49	
AIC	376.3		341.4	
BIC	415		385.6	
-2 Log Likelihood	-174.2		-154.7	
df	13		15	

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.1$

Table 13 includes models 4 and 5 for sexual hostility, and both models are significant $F(13, 103) = 3.31, p < 0.001, R^2 = 29\%$; $F(15, 101) = 15.4, p < 0.001, R^2 = 70\%$, respectively. In model 4, gender identity was a significant predictor of sexual hostility. Compared to men,

women experienced a greater frequency of sexual hostility in the workplace ($\beta = 0.77, p < 0.01$). Similar to the models for sexist hostility, employment tenure in the workplace was also a significant predictor. Workers employed 6 months to 1 year ($\beta = 0.77, p < 0.05$) and 1 to 2 years ($\beta = 1.35, p < 0.001$) experienced more sexist hostility than respondents with an employment tenure of less than 6 months. When controlling for the other dimensions of sexual harassment in model 5, sexual orientation negatively predicted sexual hostility ($\beta = -0.34, p < 0.05$). The relationship between employment tenure in the workplace, however, remains consistent in model 5. Both categories, tenure ranging from 6 months to a year ($\beta = 0.47, p < 0.05$) and 1 year to 2 months ($\beta = 0.65, p < 0.01$) remained significant predictors. As levels of sexual hostility ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.001$) and unwanted sexual attention increases ($\beta = 1.25, p < 0.001$), so does the level of sexual hostility experienced by a respondent. According to the information criteria, AIC and BIC, model 5 is the better fitting model for predicting sexual hostility.

Table 13. Linear Regression for Sexual Hostility (N=117)				
Variable	Model 4		Model 5	
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error
Age	0.00	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)
Total Number of Policies Recalled	-0.02	(0.06)	-0.05	(0.04)
Gender Identity				
Men	-	-	-	-
Women	0.77**	(0.26)	0.22	(0.18)
Self-Described	0.32	(0.51)	0.27	(0.34)
Race/ethnicity				
White	-	-	-	-
Black	0.61	(0.37)	0.07	(0.25)
Latina/o	-0.28	(0.27)	-0.22	(0.18)
Asian	0.15	(0.42)	-0.24	(0.28)
Other	-0.03	(0.38)	-0.25	(0.25)
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	-	-	-	-
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Queer	0.07	(0.24)	-0.34*	(0.17)
Employment Status				
Part-time	-	-	-	-
Full-Time	0.10	(0.25)	-0.03	(0.17)
Employment Tenure in Current Workplace				
Less than 6 months	-	-	-	-
6 months to 1 year	0.77*	(0.32)	0.48*	(0.22)
1 to 2 years	1.35***	(0.30)	0.65**	(0.21)
More than 2 years	0.27	(0.32)	0.27	(0.21)
Sexist Hostility			0.28***	(0.07)
Unwanted Sexual Attention			1.23***	(0.15)
Constant	-0.11	(0.51)	0.43	(0.34)
Observations	117		117	
R-squared	0.29		0.70	
AIC	363		268.6	
BIC	401.7		312.8	
-2 Log Likelihood	-167.5		-118.3	
df	13		15	

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 14 presents the linear regression models for predicting unwanted sexual attention. Both models 6 and 7 were significant $F(13, 103) = 2.27, p=0.011, R^2 = 22\%$; $F(15, 101) = 10.36, p<0.001, R^2 = 61\%$, respectively. Like in previous models, gender is a predictive variable of

experiencing unwanted sexual attention in model 6. Compared to respondents who are men, women experienced significantly more levels of unwanted sexual attention ($\beta=0.29$, $p<0.05$). Employment tenure in the current workplace was also a significant predictor, specifically tenure between 1 to 2 years. Respondents who fell in this category experienced significantly greater levels of unwanted sexual attention than respondents who have worked less than 6 months at their current workplace ($\beta=0.72$, $p<0.05$). Model 7 controlled for levels of sexist and sexual hostility. Age, in model 6, was found to be a significant predictor at an alpha level 0.10; older respondents experience greater levels of unwanted sexual attention ($\beta = 0.02$, $p<0.10$). Although the relationship between 1 to 2 years of employment tenure does not remain in model 6, employment tenure ranging from 6 months to 1 year negatively predicts unwanted sexual attention at an alpha level 0.10. Respondents who fall into this category experience fewer instances of unwanted sexual attention ($\beta= -0.44$, $p<0.10$). Finally, although sexist hostility does not predict increased level of unwanted sexual attention, sexual hostility does. The more sexual hostility a respondent experiences, unwanted sexual attention increases as well ($\beta=0.65$, $p<0.001$).

Table 14. Linear Regression for Unwanted Sexual Attention (N=117)				
Variable	Model 6		Model 7	
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error
Age	0.02	(0.01)	0.02+	(0.01)
Total Number of Policies Recalled	0.02	(0.05)	0.03	(0.04)
Gender Identity				
Men	-	-	-	-
Women	0.58*	(0.24)	0.06	(0.18)
Self-Described	-0.17	(0.48)	-0.39	(0.35)
Race/ethnicity				
White	-	-	-	-
Black	0.54	(0.35)	0.13	(0.26)
Latina/o	-0.17	(0.25)	0.01	(0.18)
Asian	0.41	(0.40)	0.30	(0.29)
Other	0.37	(0.36)	0.39	(0.26)
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	-	-	-	-
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Queer	0.38	(0.23)	0.32+	(0.17)
Employment Status				
Part-time	-	-	-	-
Full-Time	0.13	(0.24)	0.06	(0.17)
Employment Tenure in Current Workplace				
Less than 6 months	-	-	-	-
6 months to 1 year	0.08	(0.31)	-0.44+	(0.23)
1 to 2 years	0.72*	(0.29)	-0.17	(0.22)
More than 2 years	0.11	(0.30)	-0.07	(0.22)
Sexist Hostility			0.03	(0.07)
Sexual Hostility			0.65***	(0.08)
Constant	-0.73	(0.49)	-0.65+	(0.35)
Observations	117		117	
R-squared	0.22		0.61	
AIC	349.8		274.4	
BIC	388.5		318.6	
-2 Log Likelihood	-160.9		-121.2	
df	13		15	

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Qualitative Analysis

Although the surveys served as the primary source of data for this study, in-depth interviews were conducted in order to provide more descriptive and clarifying insights into the context of sexual harassment that occurs in dispensaries. I was particularly interested in learning from workers how organizational factors may exacerbate experiences of harassment or serve as protective factors. This information was not collected through the survey as it was more exploratory in nature and hearing from workers directly would offer the most accurate insight. Themes of organizational risk factors were drawn from the data by closely examining examples of harassment described by workers. Their responses often did not focus on the details of the incident itself but its antecedents and consequences. Additional themes captured from the interviews included apathy towards experiences of harassment and a desire for union led training focused on worker's rights and de-escalation tactics.

Although being a victim of harassment was not a requirement for participating in the interviews, all workers described varying levels of experience with sexual harassment in their work environment. Experiences ranged from personally being a target of harassment, witnessing their co-workers being harassed or learning about instances through co-workers. Among the interviewees, two identified as men, and the rest as women (n=5). The age of interviewees ranged from 27 to 32 years of age. All interviewees, except one, had previous experience in illegal dispensaries (i.e. trap shops) as well as non-union represented shops. This is important to note as respondents often used their past work experiences as a point of reference for describing their current workplace as well as recent experiences with harassment and their company's responses. The names of workers have been altered in order to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents.

Experiences with Harassment

Similar to the survey results, interviewees most often cited customers as the primary sources of sexual harassment in their workplace followed by co-workers and the occasional manager. Perpetrators were also often described as men and experiences with harassment ranged from verbal being the most common form experienced to explicit exposure and physical groping in the workplace. Verbal harassment experienced by workers was often in the context of customers repeatedly flirting with them or being “overly nice,” to the point where it made them uncomfortable during an interaction. Many of these experiences were shaped by their organization’s approach to sexual harassment as organizations are responsible for protective measures that influence a worker’s capacity to confront perpetrators in their work environment.

Organizational Risk Factors

Organizational factors highlighted by workers included workplace policies that shape their regular workday and indirectly, their experiences with sexual harassment. They also made several references to their managers as leaders of their organization responsible for handling and addressing instances of harassment.

Tip Systems

Workers whose place of work utilizes a tip system described instances where harassment was directly linked to tips. For example, Alex whose workplace only recently removed the tip system described previously overhearing his manager verbally harass his co-worker, he recounted his manager telling a worker:

““It was really nice seeing you bent over like that...Maybe when you're ringing someone up, if you bend over the counter more, show cleavage...If you're leaned over, maybe you'd get better tips.””

Maria, whose workplace still has a policy on tips, explained how this particular characteristic of her job impacts her even before she steps foot into the dispensary. She explained:

“[Harassment is something] you have to deal with as [a] girl. Am I presentable for the day, do I look good enough? Do I look enough to get some sales? Should I put some makeup on today because [customers] will tip me more.”

Similar to other industries where sexual harassment is prevalent including restaurants, tips in the cannabis industry serve as a risk factor for increasing the prevalence of sexual harassment as workers are monetarily incentivized to sexualize themselves and endure inappropriate behaviors.

Working in Isolation

Additionally, workers also commonly discussed being put in a position where they were working alone as a risk factor for experiencing not only sexual harassment but other forms of workplace violence as well. By law, all dispensaries are required to check customers' identification (ID) to ensure they are 21 years or older in order to engage in legal transactions involving cannabis. In all dispensaries visited for this study, ID checks occurred in one of two ways: immediately outside the retail front before a customer stepped into the dispensary or in a designated reception area separated from the retail floor and product. In both scenarios, there exists the potential for a worker to interact with a customer alone and separated from their co-workers. Workers highlighted these specific ID check as concerns, not only for experiences sexual harassment but for overall safety. Jasmine, whose dispensary is located within a larger building, checks ID outside of the store, in a hallway leading to the dispensary. She described her concerns for encountering a potentially dangerous worker and lack of options for getting help:

“I guess I can [say], ‘I need a manager,’ but by that point, the situation has already happened. And that might make the customer more mad. And now I'm in the hallway alone with the mad customer and he knows I just told on him. So that's something that's been a little scary because you don't know if people carry weapons. We don't search. You don't know who these people are.”

Similar to bars and clubs which require identification prior to entering, this is an organizational risk relevant to the cannabis industry and the lack of protective policy surrounding these particular tasks puts workers at risk. The task of checking identification was also described by some workers as relegated to new workers as it is not a popular work responsibility. This further increases the likelihood of conflict arising between a worker and a customer if they lack experience in interacting with customers. Security guards are also required to be hired by dispensaries in California, and although some were described as being stationed alongside a worker to check IDs, this was not the case across respondents. Reliability on security guards in these situations was inconsistent as guards were described as constantly changing and the priorities of the guards were unclear if it was to protect the retail front or the workers in the event of an altercation.

Responses from Managers

Additional risk factors described were the overall responses from management teams which many workers deemed unsatisfactory. When discussing their workplace's response, many workers mentioned that they themselves or co-workers did not feel comfortable disclosing instances of harassment because they did not feel their managers would take them seriously or sympathize with their situation. For example, all workers specifically referenced their company's policy on banning customers as a venue for directly addressing perpetrators. However, they also described these policies with varying levels of efficiency associated with how serious their management team took sexual harassment. Terry, in particular, expressed greater faith in her management team when she worked in a trap shop than her current employer to address the issue of sexual harassment. When explaining her current employer's banning policy as it applied to sexual harassment, she said:

“Before I feel like it was a no tolerance policy for [sexual harassment] and [customers] were banned immediately. Now I feel like, how many times does a person have to do it before they’re banned. I think they have to really piss off management or steal some shit to be banned.”

When asked to explain why there was difference in approach between the legal and illegal establishment, she responded:

“I think it's because in retail, the customer is always right and you know, money.”

Her commentary alludes to the greater culture shift within the cannabis industry that has occurred with the legalization of the industry. As cannabis transitions into the formal retail space, corporations are also prioritizing customers’ satisfaction over all else.

Eric, on other hand, described his workplace as having a particularly effective system for banning customers that was instantaneous. He spoke highly of his manager’s approach, stating:

“There [was] a customer that called one of my co-workers a bitch. Instant ban! No conversation. My store manager came over and said ‘You cannot speak to anyone here in that tone. I’m going to need you to leave. You are not going to be welcomed back’ and instant ban. Zero Tolerance.”

Unfortunately, a banning policy tied to a manager’s personal discretion as opposed to set criteria was described as an inadequate approach towards protecting workers from threatening customers.

Likewise, workers described a manager’s reaction or handling of sexual harassment in the workplace as a precedent for how workers would themselves respond. Terry described an experience her co-worker endured where a stranger outside the store exposed himself:

“The girl who dealt with the guy outside that was jerking off – she was visually bothered. She was crying and shit and I came from lunch like ‘What happened? Who did you tell?’ She was just like [the manager] and she was really bothered by how he responded more so than what happened.”

Terry explained their manager was more immediately focused on figuring out if the situation was serious enough to warrant intervention by asking if the man had laid a hand on the worker. When

it was revealed the perpetrator did not, the gravity of the situation became lost on their manager. Such a dismissive response to an obviously traumatizing event allows for the “culture of silence” inherent to cannabis prior to illegality to plague legal retail fronts. It creates distrust between workers and their management team and further contributes to the underreporting of sexual harassment in the workplace. This in turn can lead to the internalization of victimhood where workers prefer to keep uncomfortable experiences to themselves in order to avoid a second confrontation with their management team. Arguably, apathy towards victims of sexual harassment and assault is not unique to cannabis and is present in all industries where harassment occurs. However, it is impacted by the history of the cannabis industry as a once overtly sexualized industry.

Legacy of Trap Shops

Many workers understood experiences with sexual harassment as the lingering effects of an illegal industry that once sexualized women in order to sell product. Bernice, who is required to wear a uniform at the dispensary where she is currently employed expressed her feelings towards her uniform and the impact it had on interactions with customers:

“When cannabis was first introduced, it was only known to be sexy 420 nurses and it sucks because we're [the] cannabis industry and we're still in that realm. Even though we do wear uniforms, these are cute little uniforms. I hear ‘Oh, your uniforms are so cute.’ What the fuck? I don't want to hear that.”

She further described her uniform as a “façade” she is required to put on for customers that reminds them of the environments that once existed in trap shops. Although she also expressed that uniforms in the workplace have the potential to serve as a protective factor against harassment, she believed that her particular uniform was designed to intentionally draw attention to her body and give customers the impression they could speak to her inappropriately.

Haley, who also had several years of experience in cannabis prior to legalization detailed the rampant misogyny from her former manager:

“I was a budtender. It was pretty terrible. My boss was incredibly misogynist. I remember one time he made one girl like not be a budtender anymore. He told her she didn't dress sexy enough. It was intense. Tips were really good. But the work environment was really toxic. There was nothing but women and he was the only boss... initially it was mostly the idea of ‘sex sells,’ so put the pretty women up front push the product and it's always like this man in the background like ‘yes the younger the better.’”

Misogynist managers are not unique to the cannabis industry, but prior to legalization, the industry certainly created a venue for it to go unimpeded. Consequently, it is not surprising to see a similar attitude still directed towards female workers as the sexualization of women was once commonly accepted in this retail space.

When referring to her past experiences in trap shops, Terry described her first experience in a retail store for cannabis similar to seeking employment in a strip club:

“Budtenders were like bottle girls. That's when I got hired. You [worked] for tips and based off of the interview you knew, not saying we were out here signing up for a strip club, but you knew what you were signing up for. That's what was encouraged then, a sexual element to cannabis and it was like mainly girls, like 80% of employees [were] girls whereas it's different now.”

As previously mentioned, the system of tips has not been completely removed from the retail aspect of cannabis. Unlike most retail establishments where customers walk in and need little to no assistance choosing a product to purchase (e.g. clothes), shopping for cannabis often necessitates the guidance of an informed expert as the quickly growing customer base needs to be educated on the several strains of cannabis that exist, their different functions, the infinite number of methods for consumption, all of which are quickly expanding as more research and resources are devoted to the industry. Thus, such thorough instruction every time a customer enters a store explains the need for a tip system to adequately compensate the service provided

by a budtender. However, as previous studies have found and workers have described, a tip system poses its own risks to the safety of workers.

Workplace Interventions

Towards the end of each interview, workers were asked, what interventions they would like to see implemented in their workplace to address sexual harassment. More specifically, they were asked, what they would like to see done by their union, UFCW Local 770. As part of the collaboration with UFCW, interviews with their cannabis members provided a unique opportunity to communicate back with the union about the specific requests workers had for addressing this particular workplace hazard.

Several workers described the possible benefit of having some sort of poster or sign explicitly detailing the definition of harassment and step-by-step procedures for what to do in the event they experienced or witnessed harassment or other inappropriate behaviors. They mentioned that a poster in the workplace that is visible to everyone would serve as a constant reminder for how workers can protect themselves and could be used to defend themselves against apathetic managers. In describing the information relevant to her workplace that she would like to see on such a poster, Jasmine said:

“If we had a sign that said all closers can request a security guard to be walked to their vehicle, everyone would probably request it because now they know like, ‘Oh, that's an option.’”

Closers refer to the workers with the last shift of the night responsible with closing the store and ensuring valuable items are secured and locked away. Consequently, they are workers who likely need more security when leaving the premise, but workers were described as being unsure if they could request the addition support from a security guard. Hence, having guidelines explicitly promoted in the workplace would offer more safety and assurance to workers.

Additionally, workers also described the need for an anonymous hotline they could use to voice their concerns and experiences. Although some workers mentioned their workplace already had a hotline, they also described that it was not often used out of either distrust or simply forgetfulness. Workers were not always made aware a hotline was available to them. Eric, specifically, described his interest in having an anonymous hotline that led directly to the union as he in particular expressed greater trust in the union to listen to the concerns of his co-workers.

“Corporate said that they would have some type of anonymous [human resources] hotline or whatever, it's not anonymous. No one wants to use it at all. I feel like if there was something that the union had that was like hey, it's anonymous just if you want to say a little something...I think that would [make them] feel safe.”

Finally, workers discussed an intervention focused on training workers to be pro-active witnesses to someone experiencing sexual harassment. As previously mentioned, not all workers directly experienced harassment but they all had at one point witnessed it or heard of it happening to a fellow co-worker. Although all workers were frustrated by the prevalence of harassment, only one worker interviewed described having received training through an external source on how to professionally and calmly handle inappropriate and possibly dangerous confrontations with a customer. Consequently, the remaining interviewees discussed interest in receiving training on best practices for intervening on behalf of someone experiencing sexual harassment. For example, when asked to describe the ideal curriculum on a possible training focused on sexual harassment, Haley responded:

“How to be a good ally, a good bystander would be a good one, because a lot of the time, we don't know what to do or we don't want to necessarily get anyone in trouble and look at it as a misunderstanding, but what do you do?”

Discussion

This exploratory study sought to shed light on the issue of sexual harassment in retail store fronts of the cannabis industry as a newly legalized and emerging industry. Findings from this study aligned with previous research documenting the high prevalence of sexual harassment in other retail and service sector industries (Frye, 2017; Gettman & Gelfand, 2007; Good & Cooper, 2014, 2016; Rodriguez et al., 2014). Of the 117 study participants, 63, 68, and 46% reported experiencing at least one instance of sexist hostility, sexual hostility and unwanted sexual attention, respectively, in their place of work during the past 12 months. Although conducting a comparative analysis between the prevalence of sexual harassment in cannabis dispensaries and other retail and service industries goes beyond the scope of this study, past literature on harassment in retail provides a reference point for responding to hypothesis one. For example, a study investigating sexual harassment in the restaurant industry found 50% of women and 47% of men experienced scary or unwanted sexual behavior while at work (Rodriguez et al., 2014). While the two studies may vary in their methodologies and exact study population, they reach the same conclusion. Sexual harassment is an occupational hazard of retail and service sector industries. Therefore, a cursory comparison suggests harassment in the cannabis industry is equal, if not more prevalent than in other comparable industries.

Studies regarding hazards of the retail and service sector industries also point towards customer sexual harassment as the specific context of harassment in retail fronts (Hughes & Tadic, 1998; Rodriguez et al., 2014). The combined results of the multivariate analyses revealing gender identity to be a significant predictor of harassment, and the majority of perpetrators reported to be customers (75%) in this study highlights the harassment of women identifying budtenders from customers as the specific workplace issue needing to be addressed.

Furthermore, although only the bivariate analysis for sexual hostility revealed gender identity to be significantly associated with experiencing specific subscales of sexual harassment (table 9), results from the multivariate analysis, confirmed hypothesis 2a; gender identity is a significant predictor of all three subscales of harassment. Women were more likely to experience a greater frequency of harassment than the men in the workplace. This finding aligns with the literature on sexual harassment in the workplace, confirming women as the primary targets and victims of sexual harassment (Charney & Russell, 1994; Cleveland, 1994; EEOC, 2018; Hayes, 2005; USMSP, 2018; Workman, 1993). These findings were also triangulated through interviews as sexual harassment was always discussed in the context of a female bartender targeted by customers, co-workers and managers alike.

Only models one and two of the multivariate analyses alluded to hypothesis 2b regarding the racial and the ethnic differences in the likelihood to experience harassment. Model one predicting all form of sexual harassment and model 2 predicting sexist hostility indicated Black respondents experienced a greater frequency of harassment than White respondents. However, this finding was not supported by interview data as workers never revealed the race of the victims targeted for sexual harassment. This may be because they were not explicitly prompted to do so or because they did not believe the race of the victim to be a risk factor. For this particular thesis, the findings on race and ethnicity are inconclusive, however, future studies may seek to investigate how the actions taken to address sexual harassment may vary by the racial and ethnic background of the victim. We know from previous studies investigating sexual harassment that it is often enacted concurrently with racial harassment as a manifestation of power and dominance against minority groups (Ellis, 1981).

Hypothesis 2c was confirmed through both bivariate and multivariate analysis,

suggesting LGBQ individuals face substantially greater risks of experiencing sexual harassment in terms of both prevalence and frequency compared to heterosexual individuals. This finding is supported by past literature indicating sexual minorities are more likely to experience sexual harassment than their heterosexual counterparts throughout their lifetime (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012). Although workplace protections for LGBQ individuals have increased in recent decades, this study, alongside others documenting discrimination, harassment and assault of the LGBQ community in work environments (Badgett et al., 2009; Giuffre et al., 2008; Ineson et al., 2013), demonstrates the continued need and obligation of employers to prevent the victimization of LGBQ workers. It should be noted that the interviews also did not reveal a connection between sexual orientation and sexual harassment as the primary goal of the interviews was to investigate organizational risk factors.

Because previous studies have identified a relationship between workplace policies and the actions workers take to address sexual harassment (Gruber & Smith, 1995), I investigated the possible linkage between a worker's awareness of their employer's policies to protect them from harassment and the likelihood to report such experiences. My prediction in hypothesis 3a of a negative relationship between the number of policies recalled and the likelihood to experience harassment was not supported by either bivariate or multivariate analysis. Quantitative analysis suggested there was no significant relationship between the number of policies recalled and the likelihood to experience harassment nor the frequency of harassment. However, qualitative results showed workers did feel workplace policies directly affected their likelihood to experience harassment while working. Specific policies described were policies on banning customers and how different stores decided to check the identification of customers which could leave workers in vulnerable positions if left alone with a customer. The conflicting results may

be explained by a distinction between policies intended to shape retribution of harassment and policies that indirectly create opportunities for harassment to take place. The latter is more difficult to capture through surveys as the investigator has to have a preconceived notion of what to ask, thus highlighting the benefits of conducting mixed methods studies, particularly in new and understudied environments.

In response to research question four, results from the qualitative interviews specifically highlighted tip systems and working in isolation as organizational risk factors for experiencing harassment. Tips in particular have previously been cited in occupational research as a risk factor for harassment as they incentivize workers to sexualize themselves and tolerate abuse from customers for their income (Rodriguez et al., 2014). Responses by managers was a common theme discussed by workers as managers have the direct ability to ban customers based on inappropriate behavior and were often the first point-of-contact for workers to report an experience of harassment. The risk of continued harassment is exasperated by apathetic management teams who were described as prioritizing customer satisfaction over workers' safety.

Workers also illustrated the unique history of cannabis as a heavily sexualized industry whose legacy continues to permeate the industry today and negatively impact worker's experience with sexual harassment. According to interviews, workers believed that customers either could not or refused to distinguish legally operating dispensaries from trap shops where women were explicitly used as props to sell product. The lack of distinction encourages the entitlement customers feel towards exploiting cannabis workers without repercussions. Interview results presented a paradox within the cannabis industry in which legalization introduced new protections to workers while simultaneously ushering in the corporate model of the "customer is

always right,” which previous studies highlight as a detriment to the ability of workers to protect themselves from threatening customers (Good & Cooper, 2014, 2016).

Furthermore, regarding research question five, data indicated workers were most interested in sexual harassment-based training for all workers, managers and supervisors as well establishing and publicizing clear policies on harassment. Findings from the survey were triangulated by interview results. As previously mentioned, insufficient handling of sexual harassment cases by managers was a common theme among all interviewees, highlighting the need for their additional training. Through interviews, workers were able to explain, in more detail, what they would like to see covered in a sexual harassment training (e.g. options for intervening). Likewise, interviews provided the opportunity for workers to explain exactly what policies or guidelines they would like established and publicized in their workplace. Examples of policies included being able to ask a security guard to walk you home, an anonymous hotline number and permission to ask security guards for assistance in closing a store for the night.

Limitations and Future Studies

Given the unique study population of this project, there are several limitations to consider when interpreting the results. As previously mentioned, the sample of survey respondents was a convenience sample of cannabis employees represented by UFCW Local 770; respondents were not randomly sampled from all cannabis retail employees in Los Angeles County. Likewise, interview participants were also recruited through snowball sampling and were not randomly selected. All workers in the study sample are represented by a labor union and therefore the generalizability of the findings to all workers in the cannabis industry is limited as rank-and-file cannabis members of UFCW represent only a small subset of the cannabis industry. Future studies should recruit a larger sample size as it will allow for greater generalizability and further

analyses. And as labor unions continue to grow their membership among cannabis workers, additional studies should compare the experiences with sexual harassment among unionized and non-unionized workers.

A second limitation of the analysis was the sample size of the data. The small sample size ($n=117$) reduced the power of the study and created challenges for isolating effect sizes between the outcomes of interest and the independent variables, particularly in the multivariate models. With the understanding that sexual harassment is an underreported phenomenon, the analyses were likely impacted by respondents who reported never experiencing sexual harassment as it is possible workers simply did not feel comfortable disclosing such information. A larger sample size of workers across the state or ideally the nation as more states legalize the consumption and commerce of cannabis may also reveal regional differences in the effects of laws and policies that protect workers' safety.

There were also several issues regarding the survey tool. Although the survey was able to gauge frequency of harassment experienced by respondents using a Likert scale, it was not conducive to creating a discrete variable of harassment and consequently incidence rate could not be calculated. For example, the response option "once a month or less" could imply harassment was experienced anywhere from two to 12 times in the last 12 months as it was the second option after reporting experiencing harassment "once" in the past 12 months. Providing more definitive response options may aid in developing more epidemiologically accurate variables. Questions from the SEQ-DoD were also originally developed to measure sexual harassment as it is experienced by women and studies show it is not as effective for capturing the experiences of men (Donovan & Drasgow, 1999). In order to capture more precisely the

phenomena of sexual harassment by all participants, future studies should utilize a more comprehensive survey for sexual harassment.

Recall bias was also present in data collection as respondents were asked to remember specific examples of sexual harassment and the frequency at which those experiences occurred in the last 12 months. Finally, without a direct comparison to another workplace or industry applying the same methodology, it is difficult to make definitive statements about prevalence of sexual harassment in cannabis relative to other industries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provided a unique insight of sexual harassment from a once highly secretive industry as it begins to enter mainstream commerce. The use of mixed methods allowed for a more thorough investigation of harassment and its risk factors, both individual and organizational. This study highlights the benefits of such methods as it became evident that survey data alone cannot capture the nuances of a particular industry and interviews, although rich in detail, limit generalizability. Finally, results from this study demonstrate the continued need for public health researchers and professionals to investigate and intervene in the occupational hazard of sexual violence, particularly in cannabis.

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