

**LinkinOut Harassment:  
A targeted social media experiment to reduce workplace harassment towards women.**

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The #metoo movement brought to the forefront the pervasiveness of sexual harassment in the workplace. About one in two women experience sexual harassment at some point in their work lives, with half of them experiencing three or more incidents. Despite wide agreement that this is a pressing problem, eliminating sexual harassment is a huge social challenge. An important piece of the puzzle is understanding what works to reduce harassment faced by women in the workplace.

That is why we ask ourselves the following questions: ***To what extent can a social media campaign targeted at changing men's harassment behavior towards women reduce women's harassment experiences in the workplace? Does the reduction in harassment due to the intervention affect well-being and labor market outcomes of women?*** Social media provides a tool to target audiences with a low cost at a large-scale, making it a promising way to generate social change. But at the same time there is an overwhelming amount of information and disinformation, as well as limited attention spans. Thus, its power to generate cultural change remain to be tested.

We will leverage the targeting power of social-media to design an experiment in order to identify an answer to these questions. First, we will target the female employees with a survey to gather data on their experience, well-being and outcomes. Next, by randomizing at the firm level, we will target their male coworkers with a social-media campaign. We hypothesize that our intervention will have an impact on workplace culture by changing individual beliefs and behaviors. In a third step we will target again the female coworkers with the same survey. By comparing changes in the survey responses between women in firms that were targeted against those who were not targeted we will be able to disentangle the effect of our intervention. We will also be able to measure the effect on other variables such as life satisfaction and job changes, among others, providing a causal link between harassment and these outcomes.

Why do men perpetrate harassment towards women in the workplace? We will be able to target male workers with different ad campaigns that focus on different motivations of the perpetrators. In this way, we will be able to identify their motivations and be able to generate more robust policy recommendations. We test two different hypotheses. First, perpetrators underestimate the costs of sanctions conditional on being reported. Second, they underestimate the cost of sexual harassment faced by the victims. The ads will differ only on the key information provided and will be designed as a short as-it-is-consumed social media ad such that users will not be able to identify it from a normal social media video ad. We also conduct a discrete choice experiment to provide estimates of willingness to pay for a harassment free workplace and how these might change due to the intervention.

Despite the high labor market cost to victims and firms, research is limited on interventions that are effective to reduce workplace harassment, this is the first major contribution of this research. Most studies focus on trainings and videos at a small scale within firms. A recent study in a University setting

estimates that a harassment workshop targeted at men is able to significantly reduce harassment reported by women. Our study differs from prior research two regards: first, using social media allows for a large-scale targeting of the intervention. Secondly, the context of a workplace might differ in the kinds of costs of reporting and sanctions, networks, types of incidents and duration of exposure to incidents of harassment as compared to incidents at educational institutions, public spaces or households. Finally, we focus not only on understanding impacts on experiences of harassment but also on the resulting labor market outcomes and well-being.

Our second major contribution to a literature on leveraging social media as a tool for behavioral change. Typically targeted advertisement on social media has been used by firms for marketing, in recent years, this has become a tool for NGOs and public organizations for socially-relevant messaging, campaigns and public service announcements. Two recent papers in economics highlight the positive impact of targeted ads on social media for behavioral change – one on increasing adoption of COVID-19 measures, and one on improving gender attitudes. Our research, thus, also fits within the broader space of studies aimed at understanding mass media -- radios, soap opera, TV shows -- as a tool for promoting improvements in outcomes for women, e.g., health, education, women's empowerment, as well as in broader social cohesion.

Finally the collection of large scale data on sexual harassment including less severe forms in itself is a more practical contribution of our study. There is a limited availability of data on harassment in the workplace, making it a field that is understudied with empirical evidence. Administrative datasets, either contain only severe cases through police reports or limited questions on the extensive margin. We will translate the findings of this study into practical know-how for practitioners through developing a toolkit on what works to reduce harassment in the workplace and how can organizations utilize their own social media platforms for behavioral change.