

Cross-Cultural Understanding of Power Harassment in Higher Education



Welcome to the first in a series of newsletters about the Cross-Cultural Understandings of Power Harassment in Higher Education Project.

The purpose of this newsletter is to introduce you to the study, demonstrate a range of opinions about harassment experiences, and invite you to reflect on this kind of harm in our community.

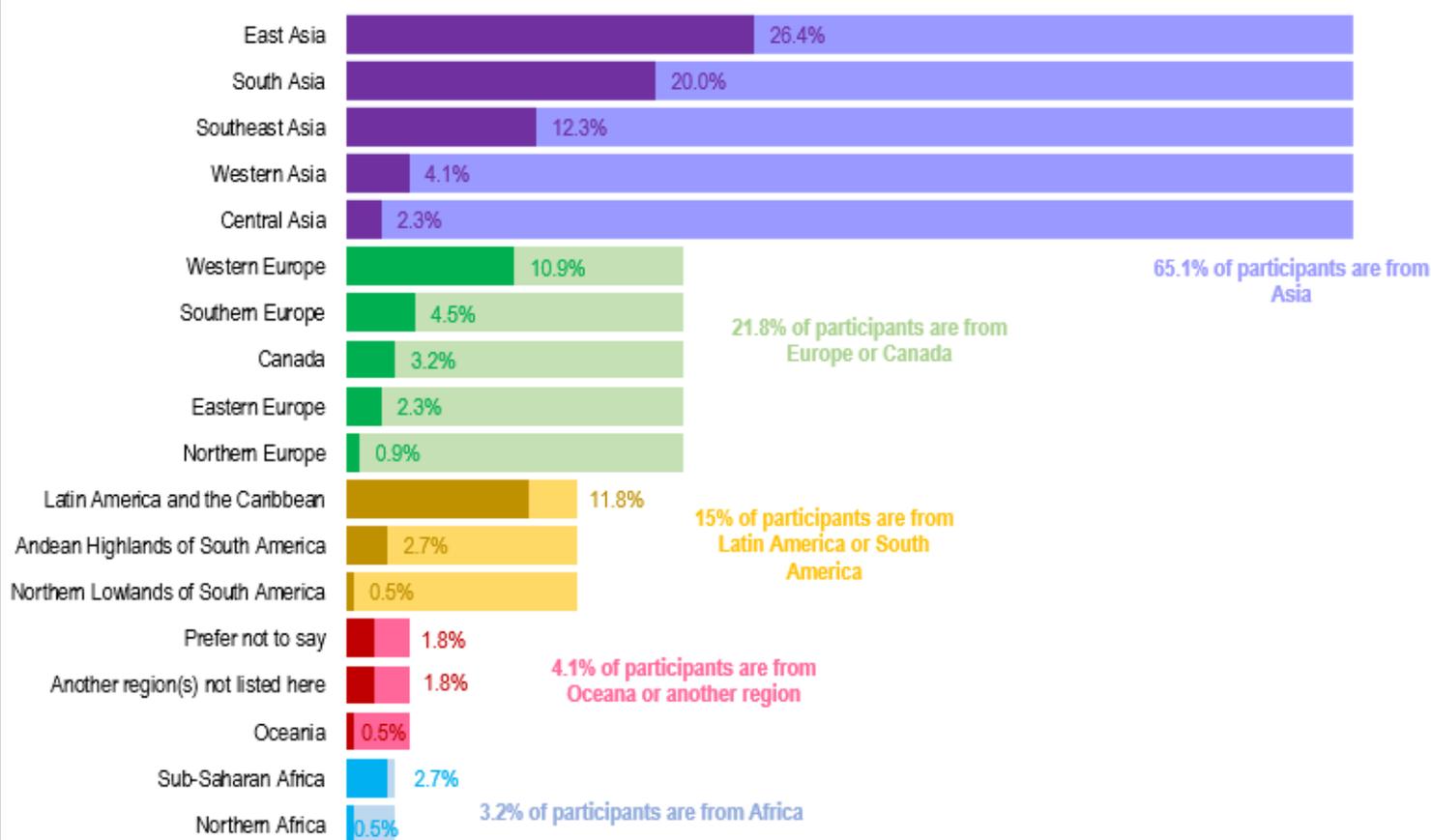
What do you count as power harassment?

The purpose of this study is to explore how international students, faculty, and staff perceive and understand gender-based inequality and power harassment in the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. 223 participants completed any survey items. Just under half (49.3%) had lived in the United States for less than four years. Most participants (61.4%) were women; 15.9% were LGB and less than 10 participants were transgender. Mean age was 30.38 with a standard deviation of 9.62 years. Most participants (59.2%) were graduate students, followed by undergraduates (16.1%), staff (8.5%), faculty (8%), and postdocs and visiting scholars (7.2%). This newsletter includes descriptive findings from selected survey items. Not all participants completed these survey items.

The surveys were distributed through listservs provided by the DMI, newsletters on campus (such as E-week and newsletters of the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations and College of Law), and the Humanities Research Institute (HRI) and Women & Gender in Global Perspectives (WGGP) websites.

In this newsletter, we provide summary findings of our survey. Quotes that appear throughout are from survey participants. We invite you to reflect on your own ideas on how harassment is perceived on our campus.

Most participants called a country in **Asia** home, with ~26% hailing from **East Asia**, and 20% from **South Asia**.



"[In] my home country, the level of power harassment exists and in some places is acceptable as well. I do not think that is possible in the US."

"I don't know any research on it so it is difficult for me to say how big of a problem it is."



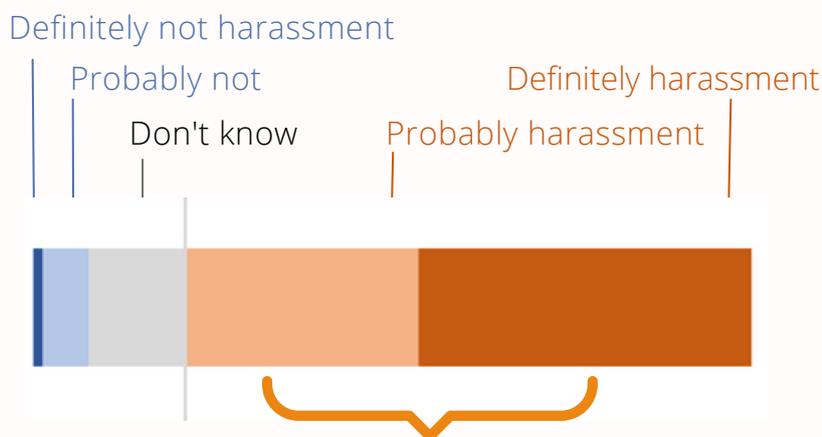
Imagine that...

A STAFF MEMBER FLIRTS WITH
A STUDENT AT A GROUP
MEETING

What do you think:

Is it flirting or hurting?

Survey participants thought...

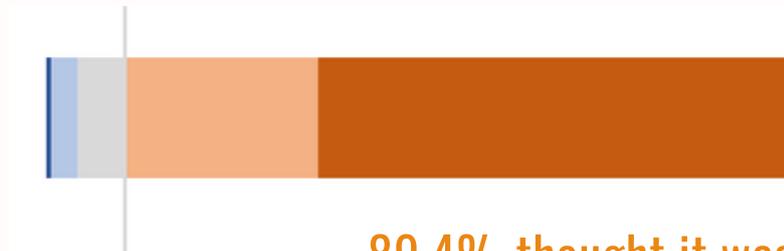


Imagine that...

AN INSTRUCTOR JOKES
OFTEN ABOUT WOMEN NOT
BEING GOOD AT STEM
SUBJECTS AT A SEMINAR.

What do you think:

Are you joking along or jumping in?



89.4% thought it was harassment

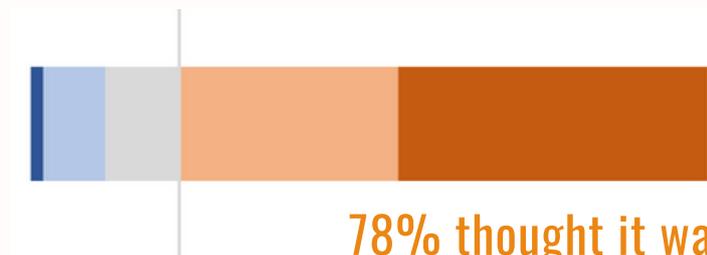


Imagine that...

A PROFESSOR ASKS HIS
ADVISEE, AN INTERNATIONAL
GRADUATE STUDENT WHOSE
FATHER IS A POWERFUL
FIGURE IN A RENOWN
FOREIGN UNIVERSITY, TO
ARRANGE AN INVITED TALK
AT THE FATHER'S SCHOOL.

What do you think:

Is it networking or not appropriate?



78% thought it was harassment

What do you count as power harassment?

Thank you for reflecting with us!

You are one person reflecting on this topic, and this is one study's selected and descriptive findings.

The selected items demonstrate that, while there is a range of categorizations of various scenarios, by and large study participants did encode these experiences as harmful. It is noteworthy that a sizeable minority (around 20% for some scenarios) either did not recognize behaviors as harassment, or were unsure. These interpretations have possible implications for trainings, awareness-raising, and policy actions in higher education institutions.

What do you think?

"When language is a barrier, people have more trouble recognizing that someone is being offensive/discriminatory, especially when it is subtle. There needs to be more education..."

Where do **you** want to go from here?

To contact the research team, email ccph-highered@illinois.edu. This email is for research and administrative purposes only; it is not consistently monitored. If you need assistance or want support: <https://wecare.illinois.edu> loveisrespect.org.

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