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The central purpose of this study was to explore sexual harassment experiences and behavioral responses among collegiate female student-athletes. This study extended previous research to a different cultural context, and used a different conceptual framework (i.e., Fitzgerald et al.'s three-factor structural model) to understand sexual harassment behaviors and coping responses in sport settings. Specifically, two psychology surveys reflecting the frequency of incidents and coping responses for the three behavioral elements of sexual harassment (gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion) were integrated into the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire for Sport (SEQ-Sport).

The survey sample included 82 female student-athletes with diverse demographic characteristics. The survey results revealed that approximately 63.4% experienced gender harassment at least once, 46.4% experienced unwanted sexual attention, and 5% experienced sexual coercion. The findings suggest that Puerto Rican female athletes appear to experience a higher level of gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention within their current collegiate sport than reported in other sports studies in industrialized countries. Furthermore, this study revealed important insights regarding athletes' coping strategies. According to survey results, female athletes appear to deal with gender harassment situations using cognitive appraisal or internally-focused responses, while athletes deal with unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion in a problem-solving

manner. The open-ended responses clearly reveal the impact of the socio-cultural context in experiencing and coping with sexual harassment situations.

The theoretical framework used in this study expanded the understanding of sexual harassment in sports. In addition, as the first attempt to investigate sexual harassment in Puerto Rican sport, this study fills a gap in the sport literature about the manifestations of sexual harassment and coping responses in a particular cultural context.

EXPERIENCES AND COPING RESPONSES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT
AMONG PUERTO RICAN FEMALE STUDENT-ATHLETES

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is a social phenomenon and an ethical issue across societies and settings, including sports. Sport is a unique institution, different from the workplace and academia, raising different challenges and calling for specific sexual harassment policies and practices. After three decades of investigation on sexual harassment in sport, it is still a sensitive issue hidden as part of the sport culture. Studies have suggested that victims of sexual harassment might present similar experiences across countries, but the manifestations and coping responses are influenced by the context, organizational structure, gender roles, and cultural values (Barak, 1997; Wasti & Cortina, 2002). Unfortunately, sport studies regarding the experiences and responses of Hispanic women in their countries are absent from the literature. Therefore, this is the first study that focuses on female athletes' sexual harassment experiences and coping responses, specifically within the Puerto Rican collegiate sport context.

Sexual harassment was first considered as a workplace environment issue in the 1960's and expanded to other social institutions such as academia and sport. In the United States (U.S.), *sexual harassment* is interpreted as unwanted sexual advances, demand for sexual favors and any other behaviors of a sexual nature (Boland, 2002; Fitzgerald, Gelfand & Drasgow, 1995; Fitzgerald, Swan & Magley, 1997; Oré-Aguilar

1997). Sexual harassment and sex discrimination in academic settings fall under Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 (Boland, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2008). This federal law prohibits sex discrimination including sexual harassment in all academic institutions that receive federal funding. These funded academic institutions and all activity programs within the organization must comply with Title IX (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Under Title IX sexual harassment is a form of discrimination and thus, protects student-athletes from sexual harassment incidents in extracurricular and athletic programs, regardless of the location.

Based on the U.S. legal definition there are two sexual harassment categories: the *quid pro quo* and hostile environment. The *quid pro quo* suggests that individuals tolerate harassment and sexual demands when submission becomes a condition to maintain or increase their academic standing – “something for something” (Boland, 2002; Oré-Aguilar, 1997). A *hostile environment* occurs when harassed individuals feel discomfort, hostility, and intimidation, interfering with their performance (Boland, 2002; Oré-Aguilar, 1997). Unfortunately, legal criteria mostly involve predetermined aspects and rarely consider the intensity, duration, behavioral responses, psychological outcomes, and frequency of the situation. These U.S. legal terms and harassment categories are applicable in Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico (P.R.) is a Hispanic-Caribbean commonwealth territory of the United States; P.R. has its own Constitution, but it is influenced by the political relationship with the U.S. (Duany, 2002, 2007; Morris, 1995). Consequently, P.R. adopted Title IX and the U.S. definition of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment in P.R.’s educational

institutions constitutes any type of conduct or unwanted sexual approaches (explicit or implicit) against any student within the institution (Senado de Puerto Rico, 1998, Law 3, Article 4). On January 4, 1998, the P.R. government established Law number 3 prohibiting sexual harassment in any (public or private) academic institution regardless of the U.S. federal funding benefits (Senado de Puerto Rico, 1998). Legally, every student is protected against unwanted sexual behaviors from academic (e.g., professors) and non-academic personnel (e.g., coaches). According to Article 3 of this law, a non-academic personnel includes every college employee who offers non-academic services that assist in the operation of the institution. All Puerto Rican student-athletes are legally protected against sexual harassment by Title IX and Law 3. However, the P.R. grievance procedures are vague and ambiguous, particularly for student-athletes. If a harassment incident occurs, these protocols evaluate the situation in line with the existing definition of harassment and scrutinize it from a legal standpoint. Athletes who are victims of harassment must follow the college's protocol to resolve the problem, even though the academic and sport contexts are distinct. Currently, universities in P.R. provide counseling support and have established procedures to deal with sexual harassment.

In contrast, psychology analyzes sexual harassment as a cognitive-behavioral process in which individuals perceive or do not perceive an offensive sex-based behavior depending on the context. Studies in psychology have contributed to understanding the factors that influence individuals' cognitive process. Fitzgerald, Gelfand, and Drasgow (1995) developed and tested a three-factor structural model of sexual harassment connecting the two U.S. legal terms with three documented behavioral categories of

sexual harassment: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion (see Appendix A). Previous studies have reported a sequential frequency rate in which women experienced higher levels of gender harassment, moderate levels of unwanted sexual attention, and lower levels of sexual coercion (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Schneider, Swan & Fitzgerald, 1997).

A variety of sexual harassment studies position power as a central feature of the phenomenon. Individuals with lower status and subordinated positions are more vulnerable to experience unwanted sexual attention in the institution (Fasting, 2005; Fitzgerald, Swan & Magley, 1997). Dougherty's (2006) study implies that forms of power are gendered; women view power as an ongoing negotiation process and men as part of a formal authority process. Gender roles and power relations seem to shape individuals' perceptions and standpoints regarding the issue of sexual harassment.

Multiple studies confirm that women are more likely than men to experience and perceive sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Kirby, Greaves & Hankivsky, 2000; Osman, 2004). Studies support that women are more vulnerable and tolerant than men for sexual harassment incidents if: 1) the institution (or organization) lacks preventive guidelines and avoids considering victims' complaints seriously, 2) women are part of non-traditional atmospheres, and 3) the organization maintains an unequal gender ratio (Fitzgerald, Drasgow & Magley, 1999; Fitzgerald et al., 1997). All these three key factors are detectable within the P.R. collegiate sports as: 1) the institution preventive and grievance procedures do not consider the unique sport context, 2) sport is still considered a man's world whereas female athletes seem to show gender conflict with societal

expectations (Aybar, 2006), and 3) the gender ratio is unequal with more male than female athletes and coaches.

Sport studies repeatedly suggest that the uneven gender ratio, the accepted masculine-heterosexual nature of sport, and the unquestioned authority figures' power facilitate sexual harassment incidents in sport settings (Brackenridge, 1997, 2001; Fasting et al., 2004; Volkwein & Sakaran, 2002). The emotional and physical dynamic occurring between athletes and other sport participants (e.g., coaches, administrators, medical staff, or other athletes) create a socio-normative arrangement in the sport context (Brackenridge, 1997, 2001; Brackenridge & Kirby, 2005; Fasting, Brackenridge & Sundgot-Borgen, 2004; Kirby, Greaves & Hankivisky, 2000; Leahy, Pretty & Tenenbaum, 2002). For example, sport traditionally displays high levels of physical contact, emotional connection, and visible male-dominated atmospheres that are socially accepted and could strongly influence athletes' harassment experiences and behavioral responses.

According to Brackenridge (1997, 2001) sexual harassment in sport is part of a sexual violence continuum (or grooming process) in which harassers slowly progress in gaining athletes' unconditional trust making the act seem consensual, permitted, and normal. The evolution and progression of trust leads to athletes' perceiving some sexual connotations as acceptable and part of the sport culture. Fasting, Brackenridge and Sundgot-Borgen (2004) suggest that athletes may be socialized into a sexist culture and learn to tolerate higher levels of harassment behaviors. In fact, some studies have found differences in how athletes and students (non-athletes) distinguish sexual harassment

behaviors. Volkewein-Caplan, Schnell, Devlin, Mitchell and Sutura's (2002) study reported that students (non-athletes) are more likely to perceive more sexually threatening behaviors from male teachers than student-athletes perceived from their male coaches. Clearly athletics and academics have different organizational contexts. Furthermore, studies imply that organizational tolerance of harassment incidents could impact individuals' coping responses (Bergman, Langhout, Palmieri, Cortina & Fitzgerald, 2002).

The perception of the sexual harassment experience depends on the socio-cultural norms, which influence individuals' coping mechanisms and behavioral approaches toward the issue (Wasti & Cortina, 2002). Previous research indicates that there are certain behavioral reactions that transcend cultures such as advocacy seeking, denial, social coping, and avoidance (Knapp, Faley, Ekeberg & Dubois, 1997; Wasti & Cortina, 2002). Fitzgerald, Swan, and Fisher (1995) suggest that coping processes are categorized as internally focused responses (individuals' cognitive effort to avoid the situation) or externally focused responses (individuals' problem solving). Studies confirm that regardless of the cultural group advocacy-seeking is the rarest coping response to deal with sexual harassment (Fasting et al., 2007; Wasti & Cortina, 2002). Meanwhile, Cortina (2004) found that Hispanic American women rely on social support (e.g., family and friends) and appear to be influenced by the harasser's social power because of the cultural values. Sport studies rarely report athletes' coping responses, and almost no research addresses Hispanic behavioral responses toward unwanted sexual situations.

Puerto Rico is a collectivist society that values family union, group harmony, self-respect, sympathy, and dignity where women have a significant and active role in society (Trent, 1965; Torres, 1998). However, women participating in sport are not perceived with the same value, respect, or admiration as male athletes because sport is still managed as a man's world (Aybar, 2006) - an important factor to consider with the sexual harassment process. Rodriguez and Gill (2009) report that female athletes were critical of the process for dealing with harassment situations, which appears to be inadequate for their sport life realities. The lack of organizational support and confidentiality dissolves the option of reporting harassment cases within the Puerto Rican sport structure. These findings support previous research indicating that organizational climate and lack of policies influence individuals' harassment experiences and coping responses.

Therefore, this study examines current female student-athletes' sexual harassment experiences and their viable alternatives for coping with this issue. In order to understand the essence of the phenomenon within the Puerto Rican context, this study will adopt the sexual harassment definition in Law number 3 that relates to the Puerto Rican population. Sexual harassment is considered a violation of civil rights in many countries, including P.R., but personal factors, organizational structure, and cultural values impact individuals' perceptions of their experiences as well as their coping responses in relation to this social phenomenon.

Rationale for Study

The central purpose of this study is to explore sexual harassment experiences and behavioral responses among female student-athletes within the Puerto Rican sport

context. Sexual harassment has worldwide recognition and is the most widespread form of violence against women (Wasti & Cortina, 2002). In sport, unwanted sexual behaviors are hidden as part of the traditional sport culture and often overlooked by sport participants and members.

Various studies in and outside sport settings suggest that sexual harassment involves unwanted (physical, verbal, non-verbal) sexual attention against an individual in which power imbalance plays a vital role. In sport, physical and emotional connections among sport members are frequent and sometimes necessary in training sessions, unlike in academic settings. Regarding sexual harassment, academic institutions rely on policies that clearly restrict, delimit, and prohibit the physical approaches that are considered inappropriate behaviors within the institution, but in collegiate sport the inappropriate behaviors are not clearly delimited.

Studies looking at sexual harassment within the sport sub-culture commonly used Brackenridge's sexual violence continuum model with sexual harassment as part of a spectrum that goes from sexual discrimination to sexual abuse (Brackenridge, 1997, 2001; Fasting & Brackenridge, 2005). However, the present study attempts to separate sexual harassment from sexual abuse or sexual discrimination incidents. Therefore, this study uses Fitzgerald, Gelfand and Drasgow's (1995) three-factor structural model reflecting three psychological elements of sexual harassment behaviors (gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion). This model provides an ideal theoretical framework to understand Puerto Rican female student-athletes harassment experiences while expanding the current sport literature. Furthermore, in

order to expand the knowledge of collegiate female athletes' surroundings, this study explores athletes coping responses within a cultural sport context.

The application of Fitzgerald et al.'s theoretical framework and integration of two psychology measurement instruments into the sport setting offers a different approach from previous sport research. In addition, most sport research in this area comes from industrialized countries such as the U.S., Canada, England, Norway, and Australia, whereas published sport and exercise psychology literature does not present any analysis in Hispanic-Caribbean countries, particularly P.R..

Puerto Rico's collegiate sport presents an ideal setting for investigating the behavioral manifestations of sexual harassment. The present study includes female student-athletes from the two largest universities in P.R.; one has an equal gender ratio between men and women and the other one has more women in the campus. However, in collegiate sport both universities exhibit a similar gender ratio. The main purpose is to determine the frequency and types of sexual harassment experiences as well as coping responses. An electronic survey format is used to target a large diverse sample. In addition, open-ended questions are included to provide descriptive details regarding athletes' experiences, feelings, and coping responses. By examining experiences and coping responses within the Puerto Rican sport context, this study expects to contribute to the sport psychology knowledge base on gender and culture, and specifically on sexual harassment.

Statement of Purpose

The primary purpose of this study is to examine female student-athletes' sexual harassment experiences and coping responses within the Puerto Rican collegiate sport context. This study considers participants' cultural context, and uses a conceptual framework to understand the three types of sexual harassment behaviors and coping responses in sport settings. Furthermore, this study attempts to address the lack of sport literature on the Hispanic population in their own countries. This project should expand the understanding of female athletes' sexual harassment and their coping responses. The survey method could be used in other Hispanic countries, and the findings may drive organizational policies on sexual harassment in sport, as well as provide direction for further sport research.

Research Questions

Consequently, the current sexual harassment study focuses on the following research question:

- How do Puerto Rican student-athletes' experience and respond to sexual harassment?

More explicitly, this research question considers two specific elements:

- How often do student-athletes experience each of the three types of sexual harassment (gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion)?
- How do students-athletes cope with sexual harassment?

Research questions will be answered using a survey method providing descriptive data on the Puerto Rican female student-athletes. Particularly, this study assesses participants' sexual harassment experiences and coping responses using an electronic survey version (SEQ-Sport) ensuring anonymity. This methodological approach should gather a survey sample with varied backgrounds, sports types, and levels of competition.

Significance of the Study

Since the 1960's, industrialized societies have acknowledged the issue of sexual harassment as a phenomenon in different social settings. The majority of sport studies have addressed this issue as part of a sexual violence continuum spectrum, focusing on the physical and psychological interactions among sport members. Only a few studies have considered the analysis of female athletes' socio-cultural context and sexual harassment experiences (e.g., Fejgin & Hanegby, 2001). It is even rarer for sport studies to investigate athletes' harassment coping responses. Furthermore, no published research has been done with Hispanic female athletes in relation to this phenomenon. This study addresses the issue using a different conceptual framework, Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) three-factor model, hoping to generate another conceptual angle to interpret sexual harassment experiences. This is the first study that attempts to understand female student-athletes' sexual harassment experiences and coping responses in P.R.. Thus, this study will contribute to the sport psychology knowledge base on gender and cultural diversity as well as enhance the understanding of sexual harassment within the Puerto Rican collegiate sport context.

Summary

This chapter provided the rationale, purpose, research questions, and significance for the current study. In addition, a synthesis of the existing literature, which is expanded in chapter two, and the methodological approach, which is detailed in chapter three, provide an understanding of the essence of this study and the structure of this investigation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sexual harassment is considered a social issue in academic institutions, and an ethical challenge for the sport system. Traditionally, physical contact and emotional connections among sport members are important features for team success. Previous studies suggest that sexual harassment victims are influenced by certain individual and organizational variables, regardless of the social institution (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand & Magley, 1997). However, there are some differences between sports and other social institutions, particularly between academia and the collegiate sport environment. Bearing in mind the fact that collegiate sports follow the national legislation and procedures that prohibits sexual harassment in educational institutions, this study focuses on the life experiences and responses related to sexual harassment among female collegiate athletes within the Puerto Rican sport context.

The Legal Concept of Sexual Harassment

Since 1989, Puerto Rico (P.R.) has been a territory of the United States (U.S.) developing a socio-political relationship with the mainland which has influenced the legislation of various social issues such as sexual harassment. In the U.S. and P.R. sexual harassment is illegal, and students are protected by Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972. Title IX is an extension of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act stating that

sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination in the workplace. Discrimination based on sex is described by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2009) as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decision affecting such individuals, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

In addition, the U.S. Education Department (2008) clearly states that Title IX protects students within any of the academic, extracurricular, or athletic activities in schools or colleges that receive federal funding.

The U.S. Supreme Court identified two sexual harassment categories (quid pro quo and hostile environment) that meet legal standards. The concept of quid pro quo suggests that individuals in lower power positions in the institution tolerate sexual demands when submission becomes a condition to maintain or increase their academic standing (Boland, 2002). In athletics, quid pro quo could occur if an athlete's unwillingness to submit to the harasser's sexual demands is penalized or rewarded with grants, scholarship, or starting position (Wolohan & Mathes, 1996). This category is the most noticeable and clearly manifested within sexual harassment legal concepts. Quid pro quo claims may be based on a single incident, unlike hostile environment claims (Conte, 1997).

The second legal category, hostile environment, occurs when harassed individuals feel discomfort or intimidation, and that hostility interferes with the individual's

performance (Boland, 2002; EEOC, 2009). Individuals who claim hostile environment declare that academic practices are changed by the consistent verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature (Conte, 1997). This particular legal concept includes many manifestations of sexual discrimination behaviors. Examples of hostile environment include unwelcome verbal expressions of a sexual nature, graphic sexual comments about a person's body or clothing, sexually degrading language or jokes, repeated request for sexual favors, humiliating sexual vulgarities, and offensive language that may embarrass or offend an individual (Conte, 1997; Wolohan & Mathes, 1996). In addition, sport literature adds other forms of sexual harassment such as written/verbal threats, taunts about marital status/sexuality, ridiculing performance, sexual or homophobic graffiti, intimidating sexual remarks, persistent invitations, domination of meetings/play space/equipment, undermining self-respect/performance, physical contact, pinching, kissing, vandalism on sex basis, offensive/persistent phone calls, bullying, and sport initiations (Brackenridge, 1997, 2001; Kirby & Wintrup, 2002; Volkwein & Sakaran, 2002). P.R. and the U.S. consider these two legal concepts as a means to determine what could be judged a sexual harassment event in academic institutions.

Beyond the federal regulations and restrictions of Title IX, the government of P.R. established Law number 3 (January 4, 1998) prohibiting sexual harassment in any (private or public) academic institutions, regardless of federal funding (Senado de Puerto Rico, 1998). The development and implementation of this law places P.R. in a novel position in comparison with other Latin countries (Silva, Muñoz & Torres, 2002). Interpreting this law from a collegiate sport standpoint, Article 3 refers to non-academic

personnel as the employees that offer non-academic services in the institution (e.g., coaches, personal trainers, and athletic department personnel) and they are required to follow the legal regulations established by the government. Furthermore, this law defines sexual harassment as “any type of conduct or unwanted sexual approaches (explicit or implicit) against any student within the institution” (Senado de Puerto Rico, 1998, Article 4, p.4). Section a, b, and c in Article 4 states that unwanted sexual attention will be considered if any of the following situations occur: a) there are threats or offensive behaviors that interfere with the student’s life atmosphere, b) the rejection of the unwanted approach could influence students’ education, and/or c) students’ experienced offensive behaviors in order to join the academic institutions. The sport context is not mentioned directly in law number 3, although it is implied through non-academic programs. Consistent with the description of this law, sexual harassment might be considered if the event interferes with students-athletes’ academic standing, but the law does not specify negative implications within the sport environment.

Law 3 stipulates that every academic institution in P.R. must inform, prevent, and maintain a sexual harassment-free environment. If a sexual harassment incident occurs, then the academic institution will be responsible and penalized (Law 3, 1998, Article 6). However, this law states that sexual harassment cases will be judged by all the details surrounding the events, particularly if unscrupulous people or students might defame personnel because of the protection of this law (Law 3, 1998, Article 12, p.5). Relating law 3 and sexual harassment incidents with collegiate sport: 1) the universities in P.R. must have an organizational mechanism to deal with any harassment incident, 2) the

harassment event might influence student-athletes' academic standing, not necessarily athletic career, and 3) student-athletes must present evidence to support claims of harassment in the institution.

The difficulty in defining or judging what constitutes sexual harassment stems from the view that any harassing behavior depends on the individual's interpretation of the situation; what is harassment for one person might not be harassment for another person in the same situation (Fasting, 2005; Osman, 2004; Ringer, 1991). Since the appearance of sexual harassment as a legal term in the 1960's, the ambiguous concept has presented a challenge for researchers, particularly when it is still considered a sensitive subject. Currently, the legal system tries to evaluate and control incidences of sexual harassment, while researchers try to understand the psychological process, antecedents, and possible outcomes of this social occurrence.

The Conceptual Framework of Sexual Harassment

Since the appearance of sexual harassment as a legal concept, psychology research has attempted to understand the factors that facilitate the perception of these offensive behaviors. While the legal term of sexual harassment has an ambiguous meaning and negative connotation in the public eye, psychology research has conceptualized the events of sexual harassment as a psychological process. Fitzgerald and colleagues (1995) developed a conceptual model that connects the harassment legal construction with the psychology process and construct. Fitzgerald and colleagues (1988, 1995) proposed a *three-factor structural model* connecting the two types of sexual harassment with three sex-offensive behaviors (e.g., gender harassment, unwanted sexual

attention, and sexual coercion). See Appendix A for the model. These three sexually oriented behaviors originated from Till's (1980) work that classified the experiences of college women into five types of sexual harassment: gender harassment, seductive behaviors, sexual bribery, sexual coercion, and sexual imposition. Till's sexual harassment typology was tested through the Sexual Harassment Questionnaire (SEQ) and simplified into a three-factor structural model (Fitzgerald, et al., 1988). Eventually, this model merged into a larger theoretical framework, Integrated Model of Antecedents and Consequences of Sexual Harassment, but remained the main measure of the three types of harassment behaviors (Fitzgerald, et al., 1997; Fitzgerald, et al., 1999).

According to Fitzgerald's conceptual model the three types of sexual harassment are similar but distinct (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). *Gender harassment* refers to the range of insulting and offensive attitudes against women. Behaviors in this category include but are not limited to sexual epithets, slurs, taunts, and obscene gestures; gender-based hazing, bullying, and threats; undermining self-respect and performance. This type of harassment behavior degrades the individual's gender and sex role, and could be manifested as verbal, physical, and symbolic gestures, but does not require sexual cooperation (Fitzgerald, Swan & Magley, 1995). Gender harassment appears to be the most common, least reported, and most tolerated by women (Barak, 1995; Fitzgerald, et al., 1995). From the legal standpoint, not all gender harassment situations are considered sexual harassment, but could be considered under the sex discrimination law (Fitzgerald, et al., 1995). The psychology perspective implies that gender harassment provokes

distress and negative affect in the victim, even though it is the most subtle harassment manifestation (Parker & Griffin, 2002).

The second type of sexual harassment, *unwanted sexual attention*, offers an extensive range of verbal and non-verbal behaviors that constitute offensive and sex-based approaches. Sexual behaviors could include unwanted or unexpected kisses, touches, dating invitations, staring at the body; a sexual-based comment, remarks, jokes; sexual/homophobic graffiti, and other offensive actions. This particular harassment category could be viewed as mild harassment.

The third harassment category, *sexual coercion*, involves extortion of sexual cooperation in exchange for victim's benefits or rewards (Fitzgerald, et al., 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1995). This is the most severe, explicit, and offensive category. Examples of sexual extortion could include exchange of favors for a position in a team, scholarship, starting position, or financial reward. In this category, the power imbalance plays a crucial role. Authority figures (e.g., coaches, athletic directors, or medical staff) demand sexual interaction in return for the athlete's advantage in a school or athletic program.

Studies in different social settings (workplace and academia) and populations seem to present similar patterns of psychological resistance for the three types of sexual harassment. Fitzgerald et al. (1988) found that 31% of college students experienced some form of gender harassment, 20% encounter unwelcome sexual behaviors, and 2% experienced sexual coercion. In a cross-cultural study, Gelfand, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow (1995) compared the frequency of sexual harassment between Brazilian and American

students. The study found similar frequency on gender harassment (32.3% Brazilian and 34.2% Americans) and sexual coercion (3.0% Brazilian and 2.4% American). However, a discrepancy was observed in the unwanted sexual attention category, where Brazilian (21%) report higher frequency than American (11.8%), although no statistical difference was found. Scholars have been suggested that women who experienced one type of the three sexual harassment categories might be more likely to encounter the other harassment manifestations, particularly if the victim remains in the same social structure (Gelfand, et al., 1995; Cortina, 2001).

Victims of sexual harassment experience a process in which certain psycho-social factors influence the course of events and outcomes. Psychology research has found three consistent variables affecting individual's harassment experiences: uneven gender ratio, power imbalance, and harassment tolerance in the organizational structure.

The gender variable implies that gender may influence the awareness of sexual harassment situations. Quantitative data reveal that women are more likely than men to experience sexual harassment (Fitzgerald, et al., 1997; Street, Gradus, Stafford & Kelly, 2007). Women with prior victimization tend to have more sensitive perception (or appraisal) for further encounters. Rotundo, Ngyen and Sackett's (2001) meta-analysis examined 62 studies of sexual harassment gender differences, finding that women perceive broader ranges of sexualized behaviors than men, more so for hostile environment than quid pro quo. In social settings where the unbalanced gender ratio and non-traditional atmospheres prevail, sexual harassment incidents are more likely to occur (Berman et al., 2002; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Fitzgerald et al., 1999). Berdahl (2007)

found that working women in non-traditional roles are more sexually harassed than women in traditional roles. Women's vulnerability to sexually-based behaviors seems to increase when they challenge the organization's traditional gendered space.

The second element, hierarchical power implies that the power imbalance between the harasser and the harassed could facilitate unwelcome sexual behaviors in the organization. Many scholars in this area have suggested that sexual harassment is about power, not about sex. Dougherty's (2006) qualitative study explored the gendered construction of power about sexual harassment, and found persistent gender differences. Men tended to view power as a result of a formal authority process within the organizational hierarchy that could increase or decrease over time. Meanwhile, women tended to view power as a complex negotiation process in which they have to create some form of power to survive in a male environmental context. These women mentioned that harassers try to feel powerful and harassment is a way of doing power. Women in this study stated, "In order for power to exist, there had to be interplay between self-perceived power and other-perceived or socially granted power" (Dougherty, 2006, p.501). Extending those thoughts into a cultural context, individuals in cultures with stricter socio-cultural norms with power positions that are unquestionable might encounter higher frequency of harassment experiences. Cortina and colleagues (2002) studied ($n=184$) Latina's sexual harassment experiences and salient cultural factors. They explained that Latino communities highly value and respect the social hierarchy ("power-distance") responding differently depending on the individual's distinct social level. The results of this particular study showed a correlation of power with sexual harassment ($r=.46$).

Regardless of the cultural values, a variety of studies suggests that harassed victims may feel intimidated and fearful to reject, avoid, or confront the harasser sexual remarks, particularly if a hierarchical power difference exists.

The third element affecting sexual harassment occurrence is the organizational structure and climate. Various studies suggest that an organization facilitates incidents of harassment when: 1) the organization lacks ethical and confidential complaint procedures, 2) individuals feel at risk of losing their position if they file a complaint, and 3) individuals perceive the complaint process as worthless (EEOC, 2009; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Fitzgerald et al., 1999). A variety of studies suggest that harassed victims may feel too intimidated and fearful to reject, avoid, confront, or report the harasser sexual remarks, particularly if the victim does not feel protected by the organization.

Overall, studies consistently imply that organizational climates tolerating sexual harassment, unbalanced gender context, and powerless positions are strong predictors for the three types of sexual harassment events (e.g., gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion). These findings from the psychology literature can be extended to the sport arena, but differences in the context must be considered.

Sexual Harassment in Sport Settings

The issue of sexual harassment is seldom discussed in sport and often perceived as a social taboo. Nevertheless, with the evolution of civil rights and the awareness of sexual harassment as a moral issue, this phenomenon has shaken the sport foundation, leading to a call for viable alternatives that could protect female athletes from unwelcome sexual behaviors. Hence, psychology variables that influence the experiences of

sexualized behaviors apply in sport, but may apply differently depending on the sport context and the human interaction in sport settings.

Along with variables identified in the psychology literature, the non-traditional gender role and a tolerant sport organization seem to facilitate female athletes' harassment experiences. For years, the sport system has been viewed as a male-heterosexual domain, where women's participation is perceived as intrusion and a threat to the traditional masculine and feminine roles. Sport has maintained the male-dominated space while female athletes have learned to tolerate the traditional hyper-masculine atmosphere as part of the sport culture.

Meanwhile, studies have shown that hierarchical power in sport reflects a key element for sexual harassment occurrence. Traditionally, the sport structure requires high levels of physical contact and encourages emotional bonding among members. Sport studies reveal that athletes experience higher level of sexual harassment from coaches and peer athletes (the closer members) than any other sport authority personnel (Kirby, Greaves & Hankivsky, 2000). However, athletes have higher negative consequences from coaches than peer athletes. When an athlete experiences harassment from a trusted individual (e.g. coach, administration personnel, or medical staff), an athlete appears to feel trapped in compliance (or obedience) to the person they trusted for physical and mental training preparation, and with whom they have developed an emotional connection for years (Brackenridge, 1997; Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005). Unconditional trusted positions are related to power positions in the sport context. The ongoing physical and emotional connection seems to be a major difference from other

social institutions; in sport the harasser seems to camouflage the sexist remarks and sexual interest as a normal trusted interaction with athletes. A Canadian study with elite athletes reported that athletes experienced insults regarding their gender or sexuality, 37.2% from coaches, and 37% from other athletes. Twenty-eight percent experienced sexually suggestive comments about their bodies, and 6.5% had sexual relations with authority figures because of fear of losing their team position. Twenty-six percent of the sexually coerced athletes also suffered physical punishment such as being slapped, hit, punched, or beaten by authority figures (Kirby et al., 2000). However, there is little knowledge about the alleged perpetrator's point of view regarding their behaviors and this phenomenon.

Currently, most sport studies conceptualize athletes' experiences of sexual harassment and emotional bonding with the harasser using the Sexual Exploitation Continuum Model (Brackenridge, 1997). Brackenridge's conceptual map suggests that sexual harassment in sport falls between institutional responsibility (sexual discrimination) and personal aggravation (sexual abuse). This model presents all sex-based behaviors on a continuum spectrum without separating sexual harassment as a distinctive phenomenon. The model proposes that sexual harassment incidents are a subset of sexual abuse, creating an unconscious mind set that could proceed to an abusive dependence cycle (Toftegaard, 2001). Brackenridge (2001) refers to athletes' progression of trust as the grooming process in "which the perpetrator [in sport] isolates and prepares an intended victim...entrapment may take weeks, months or years and usually moves steadily so that the abuser is able to maintain secrecy and avoid exposure"

(p.35); another distinctive difference from other social settings. According to Brackenridge's model, athletes' progress through a psychological and behavioral adaptation increasing their tolerance of physical, verbal, and sexually abusive situations within the sport environment that athletes would not normally accept outside the sport context. For example, Volkwein-Caplan, Schnell, Devlin, Mitchell and Sutura (2002) compared college athletes' and non-athlete students' (n=400) sexual harassment perceptions. The study found that students perceived more threatening behaviors that could turn to potential sexual harassment situations than did college athletes. Volkwein-Caplan et al., (2002) explained that athletes may learn to socialize in a sexist sport culture, tolerating unconsciously inappropriate sexual behaviors.

Regardless of athletes' tolerance of unwanted sexual behaviors, there have been reported immediate emotional consequences. Previous qualitative studies indicate that female victims of sexual harassment confront emotional feelings involving disgust, fear, irritation, guilt, and anger (Fasting, Brackenridge & Walseth, 2007; Rodriguez & Gill, 2009). Fasting, Brackenridge and Walseth (2002) studied elite female athletes' sexual harassment consequences, reporting that athletes mostly experience negative feelings (e.g., destroy relationship with the coach, dissatisfaction with sport, or affect a view of men in general), while some report no apparent consequences. According to Fasting et al. (2002) mild harassment seems to present major negative consequences, but somehow athletes learn to cope with adverse circumstances and maintain their physical-elite standing. Similar findings are reported among Puerto Rican female former athletes (Rodriguez & Gill 2009). Although athletes' narratives reveal that most of them tolerated

sexualized attitudes against them mainly to maintain team harmony, they were aware of the inappropriate behaviors. Athletes' harassment tolerance seems to be common only in certain situations.

Rodriguez and Gill (2009) found that sexual harassment in sport is expected only in particular contexts. In a phenomenological study, six Puerto Rican former female athletes agreed that sexualized attitudes were anticipated and tolerated from male spectators and individuals that were visibly harassing other female athletes. Athletes reported that mild harassment (e.g., jokes, sexual looks) was anticipated and socially tolerable (Rodriguez & Gill, 2009). Participants mentioned that they expected rude sexual approaches from male spectators. A volleyball athlete stated, "the spectators are almost touching you and telling you this and that...butts here, tits there...everything was direct...it was very uncomfortable, but you learn to deal with it" (Rodriguez & Gill, 2009, p.11). These female athletes mentioned that when they faced spectators in competitions, it was the only time they felt like sexual objects, that their bodies were being sexualized. However, the narratives of these former athletes revealed that when the harasser was a trusting person (e.g., coach or masseur) the harasser's sexual approach was unpredictable and inconsistent. None of the former athletes reported a sexual coercion experience. Three of the six athletes withdrew from their sport or team for sexual harassment events. Athletes agreed that even though they got used to gender harassment (listening to sexist and sexual comments), none of them ever felt comfortable within the environment, but they learned to deal with it.

Beyond the three consistent variables found in the psychology literature (i.e., unequal gender ratio, non-traditional role, and organizational tolerance), sport studies suggest that sport type (individual vs. group sport) and the sport culture (feminine vs. masculine) might increase the frequency for sexual harassment experiences. Fasting, Brackenridge, and Sundgot-Borgen's (2004) study examined sexual harassment prevalence in 56 different sports among 553 female athletes. The study found that female athletes in socially masculine sports (e.g., judo, taekwondo) experienced higher harassment (59%) than the neutral (46%) and feminine (50%) sport groups ($p < .013$). Twenty-eight percent of athletes reported sexual harassment in sport, of which 15% were from authority figures and 19% were from peer-athletes (Fasting et al., 2004). The authors concluded that sport type is not the central dilemma of sexual harassment; instead it is female participation within a masculine organizational structure. In elite and competitive sport, sexual harassment research has presented similar patterns of victim experience and tolerance; however, athletes seemed to differ on how they reacted toward the situation, particularly when sport organizations are influenced by national regulations.

Sexual Harassment Coping Responses

Predominately, studies of sexual harassment in sport have focused on coach-athlete relationships, prevalence, and athletes' experiences of the issue. Little attention has been paid to athletes' responses toward sexual harassment. Furthermore, it is imperative to assimilate research outside the sport arena in order to understand the possible coping responses within the sport setting. In this study, coping responses refer

to how student-athletes' manage sexual harassment situations and their behavioral or cognitive reactions toward a sexual harassment event.

Commonly, researchers categorize sexual harassment victims' behaviors as direct or indirect responses (Dansky & Kilpatrick, 1997). Indirect responses could include rejecting the sexual invitation using body language, avoiding physical proximity with the harasser, or withdrawing from the sport. Meanwhile, direct responses could entail confronting the harasser or communicating the unpleasant feelings about the seductive attitudes. From the legal standpoint, indirect or passive responses could be considered ineffective responses, because there are national and organizational policies that protect students against sexual harassment with standardized complaint procedures. However, these procedures are not always accessible and practical for women. Ringer (1991) analyzes sexual harassment grievance procedures and mentions that these procedures are not aligned with women's needs and perspectives of their real life experiences. "The way that policies define harassment and the nature of dispute resolution procedures may better fit male than female perspectives," discouraging women's formal complaints (Ringer, 1991, p.497). A variety of research supports the incongruence between what sexual harassment victims should do (e.g., fill a formal complaint or confront the harasser), and what victims really do (e.g., ignore or avoid the situation). Indeed, Berman, Langhout, Palmieri, Cortina and Fitzgerald's (2002) study found that reporting sexual harassment often triggers retaliation against the victim in which harassed women find that the more reasonable action is to avoid the incident than report the incident. Results imply that

certain organizational environments predispose victims to avoid reporting the situation, particularly if the harasser has a high-power status.

Psychology researchers have developed a number of schemes classifying sexual harassment behavioral responses. Gutek and Koss (1993) proposed a 2 x 2 typology of responses combining indirect and direct behavior responses. In 1997, Knapp, Faley, and DuBois (1997) employed Gutek's 2 x 2 model developing more descriptive coping response dimensions. Knapp et al.'s conceptual model integrated two dimensions (focus of responses and mode of responses) including avoidance, negotiation, confrontation, and advocacy seeking in the four cells. Meanwhile, Fitzgerald, Swan and Fischer (1995) classified 10 behavioral responses from focus group data in two categories (internally or externally focused responses). These 10 categories were developed into a measure (Coping with Harassment Questionnaire) using her framework classifications.

Internally-focused responses tend to involve cognitive efforts to ignore or avoid the reality of the situation. Commonly, the responses in this category occur with mild sexual harassment situations. The five coping responses are:

- *Detachment*, individuals attempt to diminish the severity of the situation by treating the harassment as unimportant or a joke.
- *Endurance*, individuals tolerate the harassment because they believe it is unavoidable and others will not believe them. Responses might include fear of retaliation and feelings of hopelessness, mainly for the lack of personal alternatives. This response often occurs in less severe harassment situations (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Paludi & Barickman, 1998).

- *Denial*, victims pretend the situation did not occur or did not have negative effects on them (Fitzgerald, et al., 1995).
- *Relabeling*, individuals reconsider the harassment situation by excusing the harasser's behavior or by interpreting the harasser's intentions as inoffensive or unharmed.
- *Self-blame* (or illusory control), victims take responsibility for harassers' conduct or self-blame for the harasser sexual approaches toward them (Fitzgerald, et al., 1995; Paludi & Barickman, 1998).

A review of Fitzgerald's coping responses showed that 72.8% of female participants use detachment, 69.9 % endurance, 64.4% denial, 48.4% relabeling, and 23.1% self-blame (Magley, 1999).

The second of Fitzgerald's dimensions is externally focused responses. This category involves individuals' problem-solving when the intensity and frequency of the harassment increases. The intensification of the harassment tends to elicit more formal complaint and from the legal perspective is an "assertive" reaction from the victim.

Externally coping responses are:

- *Avoidance*, individuals try to stay away from the harasser by creating physical or emotional distance, appearing to be the most common coping response (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).
- *Social support*, victims seek support from others to validate their harassment perceptions about the situation (Fitzgerald et al., 1995, Paludi et al., 1998).

People who enjoy more family and friend resources seem to rely more heavily on this coping approach (Moss & Schaefer, 1993).

- *Confrontation*, individuals refuse the harasser's sexual demand and confront (verbally or physically) the situation.
- *Institutional or organizational relief*, individuals report and file a formal complaint against the harasser. This coping strategy is an uncommon coping behavior (Paludi & Barickman, 1998).
- *Appeasement*, individuals use a non-confrontation approach in order to evade the harassment. Some behaviors could include humor, creating excuses or arriving late into training.

Magley (2002) reports that 74.3% of female participants use avoidance, 69.9% social support, 57.3% confrontation, 36.2% organizational relief, and 29.5% appeasement.

Conceptually, Fitzgerald's cognitive appraisal model describes sexual harassment as a stressful life situation. This model explains that individuals have subjective perceptions (or primary appraisals) of the harassing situation as a stressful life incident. "Severity of the stressor is not considered to inhere in the event itself; rather, it is an individual's evaluation of the situation, as influenced by factors" (Fitzgerald, et al., 1995, p.124). Meanwhile, the secondary appraisal is how individuals choose their coping resources in a particular situation (Fitzgerald, et al., 1995). In other words, if an individual perceives a sexual harassment behavior, then the event could be considered a stressful life situation affecting their coping responses. The way individuals perceive the situation, thus should influence how people select the responses.

In sport, athletes' sexual harassment coping responses are hardly ever reported, but the few studies have found similar behavioral responses as in the psychology research. Fasting, Brackenridge and Walseth (2007) investigated sexual harassment experiences and behavioral responses among 25 female athletes. The descriptive data grouped behavioral responses in four categories: passivity (the acceptance and hope the harassment will stop eventually), avoidance, direct confrontation, and confrontation with humor. All categories (except passivity) could be grouped in Fitzgerald's externally focused responses.

Also, Rodriguez and Gill (2009) found similar results with a study of six Puerto Rican female former athletes' sexual harassment experiences and coping responses. Participants deal with the issue through avoidance, social support, resistance, confrontation, and advocacy seeking. Again, the responses fall under Fitzgerald's externally-focused responses category. These Puerto Rican athletes' reactions toward sexual harassment are directly related to the country's organizational structure, culture, and viable alternatives at the moment of the incident. According to their stories, most of them were able to refuse and confront the harasser's sexual demands, but they were very conscious about previous retaliation against other female athletes. Puerto Rico is a small island where "everyone knows everyone," which seems to change the patterns of reactions. In this study, all participants attributed the recurrent and rude unwanted sexual attention to the "typical Puerto Rican machismo" (Rodriguez & Gill, 2009). Some athletes separated themselves from the population because they believe that society does not consider them as "normal women." Participants explained that most people in P.R.

excused male sexual behaviors as “part of the culture.” Previous studies suggest that coping responses depend on socialization, values, gender roles, and other cultural factors that are often overlooked (e.g., Wasti & Cortina, 2002).

The Puerto Rican Culture

Over 3 million people live in P.R. This Caribbean island is densely populated, and space has significant meaning for people and the gender profile (Goldman, 2008). P.R. has a strong colonial heritage that has shaped the current socio-cultural values and customs. In order to understand Puerto Rican women regarding sexual harassment, it is imperative to describe some of the major historical events that influenced people up to today.

P.R.’s first inhabitants were Tainos (native) Indians with a patriarchal government. Historical documents mentioned that in the 1500’s women sometimes held the highest chief position, bringing the influence of the matriarchal role (Burgos & Diaz, 1986; Mocada, 1986). However, the first big cultural (and gender role) shift began in 1493 with Spain’s military occupation. Spain imposed their Spanish language as well as their cultural and religious institutions on the island. For more than 400 years Spain controlled the population and transformed the political and social structure into a stricter patriarchal system of family structure, with the concept of respect (Díaz et al., 1986; Duany, 2002; Morris, 1995). Gender roles were ruled by Catholicism and patriarchal norms, controlling some of the liberal antecedents of Puerto Rican women’s characteristics. After native Indians vanished, Spain intensified the development of the colony bringing Africans as slaves with their collectivist mind (Duany, 2002; Díaz et al.,

1986). In 1898, P.R. was occupied by the U.S. military force, inserting another political, social, and cultural norm into the island. Puerto Rican literature describes the U.S. infiltration as bringing another major shift in the socio-cultural and gender roles, particularly for women (Acosta-Belén, 1979; Briggs, 2002). Centuries of racial interaction between these four cultures formed the Puerto Rican nationality. Puerto Ricans do not self-identify as Latino, Hispanic, Caribbean or Americans, but only as Puerto Ricans segregating themselves as a distinctive nation (Morris, 1995). Overall, P.R. is a Caribbean Spanish-speaking country that shares some of the early socio-cultural history with other Latin countries, but has a unique culture influenced by Anglo-Americans affecting the current gender and sex roles.

Studies regarding the Puerto Rican culture indicate that the population values family, unity, respect, and dignity (Trent, 1965; Torres, 1998). Torres (1998) reports that individuals attempt to obtain respect and dignity for the self and family. The concept of *respeto* (respect) dictates the appropriate behavioral approach toward others, particularly on the basis of age, economic status, and authority position (Torres, 1998). Meanwhile, the concept of *dignidad* (dignity) is commonly promoted by family referring to self-worth as a human being (Torres, 1998). For women, respect and dignity is related to their gender role (Acosta-Belén, 1979). Violation of those cultural norms could establish what is unacceptable for P.R. society.

Puerto Rico has a heterogeneous population, but literature has highlighted certain gender characteristics based on the country's heritage and changeable society. Acosta-Belén (1979) mentions women living in P.R. have shown stricter and more marked

gender roles than men. Puerto Rican women appeared to be “strong, persevering, achieving, ambitious, determined, and active” (Acosta-Belén, 1979, p. 52). Indeed, De León’s (1993) study reported that Puerto Rican women living in P.R. appear to have higher masculine gender roles than Puerto Rican women living in the U.S. This atypical feminine role seems to be rooted in the colonial baggage that helped to debunk the Latina stereotype and turn it into strength and stability for the overall culture (Acosta-Belén, 1979). Other studies suggest that women are key elements in maintaining the socio-cultural values in this country. Documents describe gender role conflicts where women are pulled away from (or contradict) the expected social values with their personal liberal aspiration (Acosta-Belén, 1979; Aybar, 2006). Female-appropriate social behaviors are strongly marked in relation to their sex role, dress code, family sense, and type of physical activities.

In contrast, Puerto Rican literature suggests that men seem to manifest the *machismo* ideology, where sexual conquest and numerous physical encounters is a showcase for sexuality (Acosta-Belén, 1979; Ramírez, 1999). The contradiction and confrontation between gender roles are indicated by Silva, Muñoz, and Torres (2002) who mentioned that men believe that “women like to receive any type of sexual pressure” and women are victims of sexual incidents because “they are morally deficient and they like to sexually provoke men,” while women believe that men’s sexual and offensive behaviors against them are part of their sexual nature (p. 62). In line with these P.R. studies the apparent gender role conflict may influence women’s experiences of sexual offensive behaviors and their behavioral responses. Unfortunately, the lack of literature

about Puerto Rican female athletes limits the understanding of their experiences, perceptions, and conflicts within the sport context.

Aybar (2006) investigated 268 Puerto Rican female athletes and their manifestation of gender role conflict between being an athlete and their feminine social expectations. The study found that 46% of the sample experienced role conflict implying that female athletes struggle to manifest a sympathetic role in sport and acceptance within society. Aybar mentions that women that want to participate in sport can only do so if they respect and maintain their feminine role. If a woman tries to challenge the cultural stereotypes in the gender hierarchy, she faces higher risks for role conflict, discrimination, harassment, and violence within the P.R. sport context. Indeed, a compilation of memories from three P.R. pioneer female athletes illustrates the social resistance for a traditional female gender role regardless of the athletic success (Concepción & Echevarría, 1997). According to Aybar (2006), society does not perceive female athletes with the same value, respect, or admiration as male athletes because Puerto Rican sport is still considered a man's world. In fact, sport is considered a national symbol of the contemporary P.R. (Morris, 1995).

Sport power derives from the international competitions that acknowledge the island's sport autonomy or sport citizenship (Domenech, 2001; Morris, 1995). Apparently this sport sovereignty helps generate and maintain some of the country's cultural identity. Furthermore, the socio-cultural values and sport structure maintain low levels of support for female athletes, but little is known about the sex-based offensive behaviors that faced female athletes.

Consistent with experiences of women in P.R., Rodriguez and Gill (2009) report that three of the six female athletes mentioned that sport organizations undervalue their athletic career, and they struggled to maintain a “neutral” feminine image. One former female athlete participant stated, “for [...] sport agency I am a whore and for the [...] sport agency I am a lesbian... for them [authority figures] I am not a normal woman” (Rodriguez & Gill, 2009). Even though the Puerto Rican culture seems to present more liberal values than other Latin countries, women seem to continuously wrestle for their active role and self-worth in the sport arena.

Higher Education System: University of Puerto Rico

The University of Puerto Rico (UPR) is the only public institution, with 11 different academic campuses across the country. The system of the UPR provides affordability and the multiple locations making it accessible for the population to attend. In spite of this affordability, student admissions are restricted to students with the highest academic standing helping to control students’ numbers.

The UPR has two main Campuses recognized as the best and largest academic organizations in the country, Rio Piedras (UPR-RP) and Mayaguez Campus (UPR-M). The current overall student enrollment in all UPR campuses is 69,292 students (Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2009). In the 2008-2009 academic year, the UPR-RP (east-north of the island), where the majority of the population lives, had 18, 653 students (27% of UPR population), with 6,344 men and 12,309 women (University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, 2009). The UPR-M (west area) had 12,244 students (17.7% of UPR population) in which 6,805 are men and 6,519 women (University of Puerto

Rico, Mayaguez Campus, 2009). The greatest number and most heterogeneous students are represented by these two academic campuses. In addition, both campuses have distinctive populations (UPR-M with equal gender ration and UPR-RP with significantly more female students) that might provide insights about the organizational tolerance for sexual harassment cases and the P.R. sport context.

Collegiate Sport Structure

In Puerto Rico, most universities are part of the Intercollegiate Athletic League (*Liga Atletica Interuniversitaria*, LAI) regulations. This is a non-profit organization that promotes and regulates collegiate sport competitions. One of the main principles of the organization is to scrutinize student-athletes academic standings. According to the LAI regulations student-athletes are eligible to compete in collegiate sport after completing 24 academic credits in good standing. After the academic eligibility is achieved, athletes are only qualified to compete four consecutive years (LAI, 1987, section D). The approximate student's age range is 18 to 23 years old.

It is important to mention that the LAI does not promote sport for the general public (as U.S. collegiate sport), but instead only focuses on the university community. This organization primarily arranges the competitive structure for collegiate sport, while monitoring student-athletes academic requirement. Collegiate female sport involves 11 competitive sports (track and field, swimming, softball, judo, wrestling, weight lifting, tennis, table tennis, basketball, volleyball, and cheerleading). Collegiate sports are considered an extracurricular university program in which every public campus of the UPR is part of the LAI (LAI, 1987).

The majority of student-athletes are Puerto Ricans. Meanwhile, more than 80% of coaches are male. Athletic departments from UPR-RP reported four female coaches and UPR-M three female coaches. In each university, only one male athletic trainer joins the sport team in competition, but not in practice training.

Public universities only provide benefits for the varsity student-athletes such as early registration to accommodate a good class schedule, free class registration, and competitive sporting gear. Because of the limited university housing capacity, only outstanding athletes or those with financial need have the opportunity to live at the only university housing. All the expenses (college registration, housing, and utilities) are part of the athletic scholarship and athletic housing. No monetary compensation is provided, and it is prohibited.

Regarding sexual harassment incidents, LAI does not have any specific policies or the organizational principles, but the academic institutions are expected to address the issue, particularly when national legislation protects student from sexual harassment situations.

Summary

Sexual harassment is a phenomenon that influences every social institution and appears to be the most common form of violence against women (Fitzgerald & Ormerod, 1993). The literature review indicates that psychology and sport studies show similar variables that facilitate sexual harassment incidents across cultures. Women participating in nontraditional roles, organizations with unbalanced gender ratio, and organizational

tolerance of sexual harassment seem to facilitate sexual harassment, and influence women's coping responses (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

Little information is known about women's sexual harassment experiences and responses in Hispanic cultures, particularly for Hispanic female athletes. P.R. shares similar socio-cultural ideologies with other Hispanic countries, but the Anglo-American influence in the culture and the political legislation about sexual harassment provide a unique cultural setting for the investigation of women's experiences with sexual harassment in collegiate sport.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter describes the methodological strategies used in this study to address the research questions. First, a brief overview of the study is presented followed by sections describing participants, measurement instruments, and procedures.

Overview of the Study

This study examines female student-athletes sexual harassment experiences and coping responses within the collegiate sport context in Puerto Rico (P.R.). Sexual harassment is examined using Fitzgerald et al.'s three-factor framework differentiating gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. In addition, the methodological design of this study connects athletes' experiences in each of the three types of sexual harassment with their coping responses. Consequently, this study focuses on the following research question:

- How do Puerto Rican student-athletes experience and respond to sexual harassment?

The two main surveys used in this study (Sexual Experience Questionnaire and Coping with Harassment Questionnaire) focus on individuals' sexual harassment experiences and their coping responses, respectively. Both instruments have been shown to be valid and reliable in psychology research (Arvey & Cavanaugh, 1995; Magley, 2002). The structure of the Sexual Experience Questionnaire (SEQ) takes into account

the three-factor structural model. Meanwhile, the design of the Coping with Harassment Questionnaire (CHQ) captures how individuals deal with harassing situations. A variety of studies have used both questionnaires as the main instruments, but no published article has directly connected the SEQ and CHQ (Cortina & Wasti, 2005; Schneider, Swan & Fitzgerald, 1997).

For the purpose of this investigation, these two questionnaires have been adapted for the sport context and combined together in one measure referred to as the Sexual Experience Questionnaire in Sport (SEQ-Sport), the primary measuring instrument. The electronic survey organization and incorporation of the questionnaires were intended to advance the previous research in and outside sport literature. The SEQ-Sport includes a section with demographic information, followed by the primary measure of sexual harassment experiences and coping responses, which combines the SEQ, harasser profile and CHQ, and finishes with open-ended questions. The structure of the survey provides an appropriate measure to examine athletes' detailed experiences, emotions, and reactions toward their sexual harassment incidents.

Survey

Participants

This study sample included a wide range of female student-athletes from the two largest public university campuses (UPR-M and UPR-RP) in P.R.. Currently, these two campuses have the largest number of female athletes, particularly among public universities. The sample expectation for this study was 50% of the total 2009 active female athletes ($n=300$) in these two universities. However, only 193 e-mails were sent

and 23 of those had wrong e-mails addresses, limiting the overall possible sample to 170. In other words, 56.6 % of the expected female athlete population in these two campuses was contacted in this study. From 170 possible participants (all female athletes that received the invitation to participate in the study), a total of 82 (48%) participants accessed the electronic survey. Forty-three participants (52.4%) are from UPR-RP and 39 (47.6%) are from UPR-M, they are diverse in terms of demographic information including academic year, sport types, housing status, and coaches' gender. A detailed description based on participants' demographic information is available in chapter IV.

Instrument: The SEQ-Sport

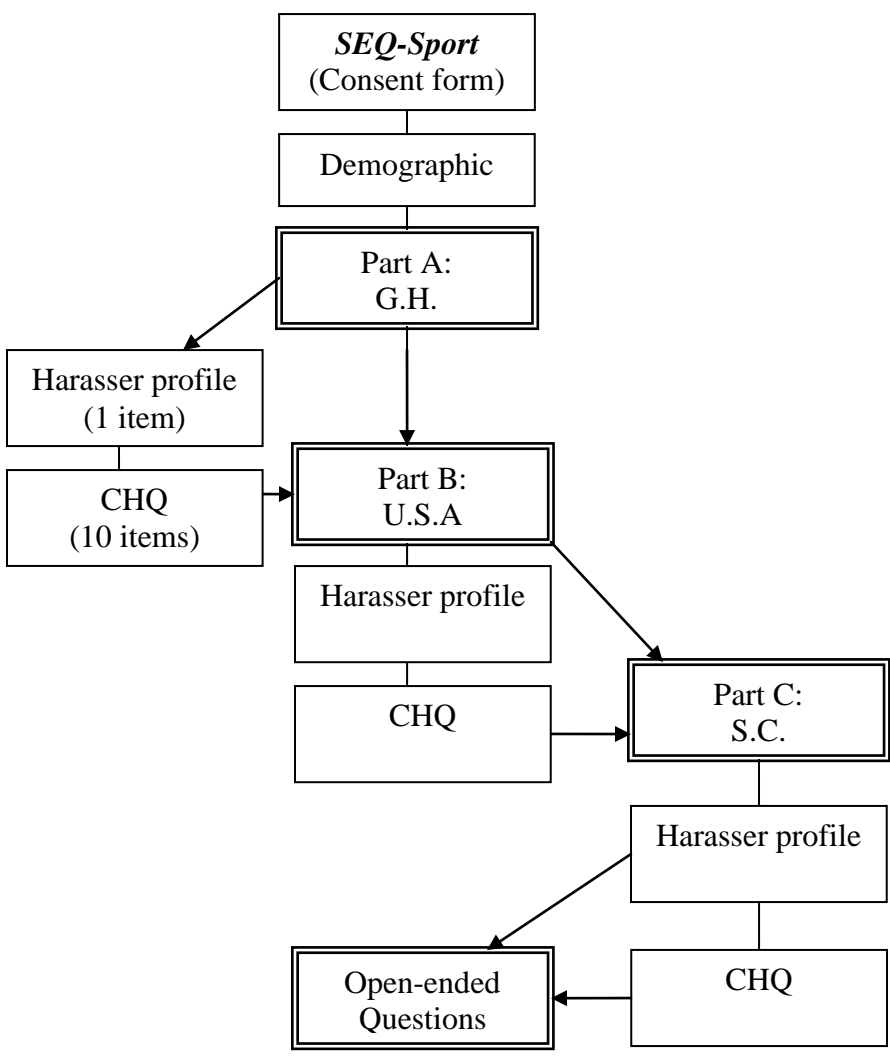
The SEQ-Sport integrates two main questionnaires from psychology literature (SEQ and CHQ), and includes exploratory items. The complete survey has three sections (demographics, experiences and responses, and personal experiences) with a total of 59 items and 4 open-ended questions in an electronic format (see Appendix B and C for the complete SEQ-Sport English version). The electronic version was created using the surveymonkey website, providing convenient direct access that fits student life styles and maintains participants' anonymity.

The SEQ-Sport incorporated the original SEQ items with one harasser profile item and the 10 items in the CHQ. Consequently, the SEQ items were divided into three subscales: gender harassment (5 items), unwanted sexual attention (9 items), and sexual coercion (5 items). These three harassment domains were labeled as part A (gender harassment); part B (unwanted sexual attention), and part C (sexual coercion). Therefore,

each part (A, B, and C) included the respective SEQ items, the harasser profile item, and the 10 CHQ items. See figure 1 for the electronic design of the SEQ-Sport.

Figure 1

Electronic Design of the SEQ-Sport



Note: GH=gender harassment; USA=Unwanted sexual attention; SC = sexual coercion; CHQ =coping responses questionnaire.

Because of the electronic format, the survey was designed to automatically direct participants into the appropriate section depending on their responses. For example, if participants endorsed any sexual harassment item in part A, B, and/or C, then the electronic survey moved into the harasser profile item, immediately followed by the coping responses items. If the respondent reported no experiences in the harassment domain, then the survey skipped the harasser profile and the CHQ for that particular domain.

Sexual Experience Questionnaire (SEQ). The SEQ is a psychometric instrument that assesses three behavioral categories of sexual harassment (gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion) in a three-factor model (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). The original SEQ has demonstrated internal consistency with a coefficient of .92 (Fitzgerald, et al. 1988). Gelfand et al.'s (1995) confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the SEQ has 5 items in gender harassment, 9 items in unwanted sexual attention, and 4 items in sexual coercion. Gelfand et al. (1995) reported coefficient alphas of .81 in gender harassment, .82 for unwanted sexual attention, .41 for sexual coercion, and .89 for the total scale.

All the different versions of the SEQ appear to be universally interpreted in the same manner by people from different backgrounds. Multiple studies have used the SEQ in different settings (i.e., academic and workplace), with diverse samples (e.g., female, males, professional, college students, clerical personnel, and blue-collar workers), translated in other languages (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese, Hebrew, and Turkish), and in a cross-cultural settings (e.g., Turkey, Brasil), documenting the consistency in diverse

settings (Barak, 1997; Fitzgerald, et al., 1995; Gelfand, Fitzgerald & Drasgow, 1995; Wasti, Bergman, Glomb & Drasgow, 2000; Wasti & Cortina, 2002).

The term sexual harassment only appears in the last item in order to avoid participant bias. However, this last item (not scored with the other items) is commonly considered a criterion item, and used to compare with responses in other domains. The SEQ-Sport responses uses a 5-point Likert scale distribution (1=never, 2=once or twice, 3=sometimes, 4=often, and 5=most of the time).

Currently, studies have not applied the three-factor model or used the SEQ in the sport settings. The use of this inventory should expand understanding of athletes' psychological processes related to sexual harassment within the sport context in a conceptual framework.

Harassers' Profile Item. The SEQ-Sport provides a transitional item from the SEQ to the CHQ to establish a profile of perpetrators referred to on sexual harassment experiences items. A single item asks participants to indicate how much people in the sport setting (coaches, athletic department staff, spectators, or other athletes) bother them on a scale of "1" for "none" and "4" for "a lot" that item is immediately followed by the CHQ, measuring athletes' sexual harassment coping responses.

Coping Harassment Questionnaire (CHQ). The CHQ assesses 10 different harassment coping responses in two categories: internally focused responses (i.e., endurance, denial, detachment, relabeling, and self-blame) and externally focused responses (i.e., avoidance, appeasement, confrontation, social support, and institutional relief) (Fitzgerald, et al., 1995). See table 1 for item abbreviations. Regardless of the

different CHQ versions, Magley (2002) identified ten items that are consistent in most of the CHQ versions. Fortunately, the CHQ is commonly used to work with the SEQ, but researchers rarely report the reliability and validity.

Table 1

<i>Abbreviated Items for the CHQ</i>	
<i>Coping Strategies</i>	<i>CHQ items</i>
<i>Internally Focused Responses</i>	
Endurance	Q10. I just put up with it
Denial	Q9. I tried to forget it
Detachment	Q2. I told myself it was not really important
Relabeling	Q5. I assumed this person meant well
Self-blame	Q7. I blamed myself for what happened
<i>Externally focused responses</i>	
Avoidance	Q1. I tried to stay away from this person
Confrontation	Q4. I tried to let this person know I didn't like what he/she was doing
Appeasement	Q6. I made up some excuse
Social Support	Q3. I talked about it with someone I trusted
Institutional relief	Q8. I talked to a university student service or athletic department

Modifications of the Questionnaires. Puerto Rico is a Spanish-speaking country, consequently the inventories were translated and culturally modified. Cortina (2001) adapted the SEQ and CHQ for the Latin culture living in the U.S. and translated it into a Spanish version (SEQ-L). The SEQ-L has a coefficient alpha of .96 and high inter-factor correlations with the SEQ (Cortina, 2001). Unfortunately, the SEQ-L excluded the sexual coercion category. Therefore, the SEQ-Sport incorporated and translated the 4 sexual coercion items from Gelfand et al. (1995). A copy of the SEQ-L version was obtained from the author and modified to fit the sport setting and Puerto Rican culture.

The main adaptation for the SEQ and CHQ was in the instructions, time frame of the incident, statement preceding the items, and the incorporation of both genders in the items. For example, instead of only identifying males as the harasser, this survey adapted the items by using “this person,” “he/she” or “his/her.” In addition, the SEQ-Sport changed the responses option (e.g., yes, ?, or no) from the CHQ Spanish version to a 4-point Likert scale (1=yes, and it made things better, 2= yes, but it made no difference, 3=yes, and it made things worse, and 4=no, I did not do this). This scale was previously used by Edwards, Elig, Edwards and Riener (1997) in a study with a military sample. According to Magley (2002), the “yes” and “no” responses are as efficient as the CHQ standard response scale (1=not all descriptive to 5=extremely descriptive).

SEQ and CHQ Limitations. The SEQ has presented some limitations that are relevant to this study. Among the three factors, sexual coercion has shown poor reliability, which is connected to the low frequency in this particular harassment subscale (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). Also, various studies have reported a problem with the SEQ 5-point Likert scale, occasionally using a different distribution format (Cortina, 2001; Fitzgerald, et al., 1995; Gelfand et al., 1995; Gutek, Murphy & Douma, 2004). The main problem with the response scale is that it provides atypical normal distribution. Some researchers have solved this statistical problem by dichotomizing the data (i.e., transforming “0” for “never” and “1” for the rest of the responses) and using a tetrachoric correlation matrix (Cortina, 2001; Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

Open-Ended Questions. Beyond the quantitative information, the SEQ-Sport includes four open-ended items to assess athletes’ real life experiences, in which three are

directly connected with each of the sexual harassment domains. Participants were asked “yes” or “no” if they “ever felt devalued or degraded as a female athlete” (first harassment question); if they “ever experienced unwanted sexual attention in their sport” (second harassment question); and if they ever experienced “a request for sexual favor in their sport” (third harassment question). The electronic survey format automatically moves participants into different questions, depending on their responses (see figure 2). If participants responded “yes”, then the survey moved ahead with three subquestions regarding with their a) experiences, b), responses and c) feelings. But, if participants responded that they have never experienced gender harassment (question one), then the survey moved to the unwanted sexual attention question, skipping the three subquestions. However, all participants where asked to answer the fourth question. This last question provided participants an additional place to add any comments or concerns about sexual-based experiences in their collegiate sport.

Fourteen participants provided descriptive information about their experiences, feelings, and coping responses. All participants rejected having a sexual coercion experience. Meanwhile, eleven participants provided additional comments about the sexual experiences in their sport.

Procedures

The main criteria used to identify participants were age (older than 18 years old), academic enrollment at the UPR-RP or UPR-M, and active female member of college athlete team. Participants received a study invitation by e-mail with the direct access to the SEQ-Sport. Because e-mail is considered personal information, the researcher could

not have access to them. Thus, each athletic department director chose a staff member to send a group e-mail to all female athletes. The researcher contacted the athletic department directors from both universities in order to set up the contact with female athletes via e-mail. The researcher provided all the information that was needed to send an appropriate recruitment message to participants. For a period of three-weeks, e-mails were sent to all female student-athletes. During the first week, the recruitment e-mail messages communicated the upcoming study's purpose, procedures, confidentiality process, and dates of the data collection. In addition, a complete consent form was attached. After the second week, the electronic survey was available for data collection and students began accessing the survey. During the second and third-weeks (data collection period), athletes received reminder e-mails every other day about the study and direct internet link to the SEQ-Sport, Spanish version.

This electronic version permits simple and rapid survey formatting appropriate for students' busy life styles. In addition, the electronic format permits anonymous participation essential for the sensitive topic of sexual harassment where participants share their current experiences. The approximate time to answer the survey was 15-20 minutes. The consent form was incorporated into the survey; participants could not access the survey if they did not accept the form. At the end of the survey, contact information from the Counseling departments in both universities was provided. At the end of the data collection period (two consecutive weeks), a thank you e-mail was sent to all participants. The electronic survey was closed after the second week.

Data Analysis

Numeric Data

The SPSS program was used for all the statistical analysis. First, descriptive analysis was used in order to answer the main research question, targeting the frequency of sexual harassment experiences with three categories (gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion) and their coping responses. This analysis provides the frequency distribution, means, and standard deviation for all of the SEQ-Sport items. Further analyses examined the differences among the three types of harassment.

Meanwhile, the reliability of the survey was determined by computing internal consistency for each section separately. Some previous studies dichotomized the data; however, this study maintained the 5-point Likert scale and did not transform the data into categorical data.

Open-Ended Data

The analysis of the open-ended survey section is guided by a theoretical lens based on Fitzgerald et al.'s three-factor structural model. According to Creswell (2009) a theoretical perspective helps to “shape the questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change” (p. 62). This approach should provide consistency with the statistical data and a method to validate information. Consequently, the four open-ended questions were coded separately for themes (i.e., gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion). Each question has 3 subquestions: a) experiences, b) feelings, and c) responses. Raw data were organized by predetermined sexual harassment classification into smaller data clusters and turned into

categories. These procedures and the use of rich and full descriptions of the themes should assist in the data validation, and identify different manifestations under each domain. Frequent reading of responses assisted the researcher in obtaining the general meaning of the data in each of the subquestions.

Summary

The SEQ-Sport provides numeric and narrative data on the Puerto Rican female student-athletes' sexual harassment experiences, coping responses, and demographic characteristics. This study uses an electronic survey because it provides: 1) an ideal approach to assess a currently sensitive topic among participants, 2) an economically efficient method, 3) communication between researcher and participants while respecting their privacy, 4) anonymous participation, and 5) a viable setting for students to answer questions with honesty regarding their current sport context. This methodological approach provides a valuable foundation for further research regarding sexual harassment in sport settings.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The central purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of this study. In order to answer the research questions this study used a survey method, including established measures and open-ended items. The SPSS statistical program was used for all statistical analyses. Statistical results provided a description of the current sexual harassment experiences and responses among female student-athletes, while the open-ended items provided added information to complement the survey results. This chapter focuses on the results for the three types of sexual harassment and includes the perpetrator's profile and coping responses in each domain.

Survey

Data Treatment

The distribution and missing data were examined before statistical analysis. The responses in the SEQ-Sport present a non-normal distribution. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed with three possible options: the original 5-point scale (1=never, 2=once or twice, 3=sometimes, 4=often, and 5=most of the time), 3-point scale (1=never, 2= once or twice and sometimes and 3=often and most of the time) and dichotomized (1=never and 2= all other answers). The results of this test indicated that all the items of the survey deviated from normality ($p < .05$). Each of the three options violated the assumption of normality, and thus, collapsing the data does not solve the

statistical problem. It is important to mention that the data include multiple outliers affecting the distribution; however, these outliers are relevant for the analysis. Thus, this study did not transform the data.

Missing data are evident, but not alarming. In each sexual harassment section the majority of participants responded to all the items. Specifically, in the first 5 items of the SEQ (i.e., gender harassment) only two items had missing data (item 4 and 5), while in the unwanted sexual attention section three items had 3 missing responses (items 6, 8, and 9), five items had two missing responses (item 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), and item 7 had one missed response. All the items in sexual coercion had two missing values. Because of the low range of missing data, missing values were not replaced, but were reported whenever they occurred.

Reliability of the SEQ-Sport

Reliability of the SEQ-Sport subscales was examined with the current data. Previous studies using the SEQ reported a coefficient alpha of .81 for gender harassment, .82 for unwanted sexual attention, .41 for sexual coercion, and .89 for the total scale (Gelfand et al., 1995).

In this study, the SEQ-Sport demonstrated an overall internal consistency coefficient of .87. Meanwhile, the coefficient alpha in each domain was: gender harassment .80, unwanted sexual attention .87, and sexual coercion .36. Clearly, the sexual coercion domain has poor reliability, similar to previous studies. This domain is highly skewed because nearly all respondents ($n=79$) reported “never” to each item. However, item 1 and 2 were perfectly correlated ($\alpha=1.00$) with one respondent answering

both items. For item 3 (i.e., threaten by lack of cooperation) no one reported an incident, while for item 4 (i.e., experienced negative consequences) three other respondents reported “1” or “once or twice.” Even though the sexual coercion domain is not a reliable scale, the modifications made on the SEQ-Sport (Spanish version) improved the measure for sport settings.

Survey Results

Demographic Profile

This section asked for participants’ demographic information and athletic background including: campus location, academic year, housing status (i.e., living with parents, living with other family members, athletic housing, student apartment with roommates, and student apartment without roommates), type of financial support (i.e., PELL grant, legislative grant, athletic scholarship, and other financial aid), sport discipline (i.e., track/field, basketball, softball, volleyball, judo, tennis, swimming, cheerleading, table tennis, soccer, taekwondo, chess, and weightlifting), coaches gender (male or female), and their highest athletic accomplishments (i.e., collegiate sport, national team, Centroamerican games, Panamerican games, and Olympic Games). This survey section provided valuable information regarding the participants’ profile.

Participants’ academic year ranged from freshman (1 year) to senior (5 years), $M=3.13$, $SD=1.24$. Specifically, participants included athletes in second ($n=21$, 25.6%), third ($n= 18$, 22%), fourth ($n= 22$, 26.8%), and fifth year ($n= 13$, 15.9%) with only 8 (9.9%) participants who were freshman. Most of these athletes reported living in their parents’ house ($n= 38$, 46.3%) or in an apartment with roommates ($n=21$, 25.6%). Only

13 (15.9%) of 82 athletes live in the athletic housing. All participants received some sort of financial aid; 81.7% ($n=67$) were supported by the university athletic scholarship and 51.2% ($n=42$) have the federal PELL grant; 11% ($n=9$) received grant from the P.R. government, and 12% ($n=10$) specified other financial aid such as SMART grant, veterans benefits, or honor awards. See table 2 for complete demographic information.

Table 2.

Demographic Information of Participants

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Campus Location</i>		
UPR-RP	43	52.4
UPR-M	39	47.6
<i>Academic Year</i>		
1	8	9.8
2	21	25.6
3	18	22
4	22	26.8
5	13	15.9
<i>Housing Status</i>		
Living with parents	38	46.3
Living with extended family	1	1.2
Athletes housing	13	15.9
Apartment with roommate	21	25.6
Apartment without roommate	9	11
<i>Financial Aid</i>		
Athletic scholarship	67	81.7
PELL Grant	42	51.2
Legislative Grant	9	11
Other Grant	10	12
<i>Coach Gender</i>		
Male	64	78
Female	18	22

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Sport Type</i>		
Track and field	23	28
Softball	17	20.7
Swimming	15	18.3
Judo	6	7.3
Volleyball	5	6.1
Weightlifting	4	4.9
Tennis	4	4.9
Basketball	3	3.7
Soccer	3	3.7
Wrestling	1	1.2
Cheerleading	1	1.2
TKD	0	0
Table tennis	0	0
<i>Sport Accomplishment</i>		
Collegiate sport	78	95.1
National team	27	32.9
Centroamerican games	3	3.7
Panamerican Games	5	6.1
Olympic Games	1	1.2

Regarding sport characteristics, most participants were from track and field ($n=23$, 28%), softball ($n=17$, 20.7%), and swimming ($n=15$, 18%) with smaller numbers in volleyball, judo, weightlifting, tennis, basketball, wrestling, soccer, and cheerleading. No athletes from table tennis or TKD answered the survey. The design of electronic format permitted participants to choose only one sport, but participants' open-ended responses indicated that some athletes participate in multiple sports. Most participants ($n=63$; 78%) are trained by a male coach and only 22% ($n=18$) by a female coach.

Ninety-five percent ($n=78$) of participants indicated that collegiate sport is their highest athletic accomplishment, while 27 (32.9%) were part of the national team, five

(6.1%) participated in Panamerican Games, three (3.7%) in Centroamerican Games, and only one (1.2%) in Olympic Games.

Experiences of Sexual Harassment

This study examined the prevalence of the three types of sexual harassment in P.R. collegiate sport, using Fitzgerald et al.'s three-factor structural model. This section presents the results of each domain separately.

Gender harassment is considered the most prevalent and tolerated harassment type (Fitzgerald et al., 1997). This section included 5 items targeting different attitudes that insult women in general as well as other sexual behaviors that could offend women. According to the results, athletes most frequently experienced sexual jokes ($n=38$, 46.3%, $M=1.98$, $SD=1.23$), insults against women ($n=30$, 37%, $M=1.86$, $SD=1.33$), and sexual comments ($n=25$, 30.5%, $M=1.62$, $SD=1.09$) in their sport settings. Specifically, from the 38 (46.3%) participants experiencing sexual jokes, 12% ($n=10$) reported "once or twice," 21.9% ($n=18$) "sometimes", and less than 10% "often" or "most of the time." Notice, that the item number 4 (insult against women) had the highest score in the scale distribution regarding the frequency of the incidents. Approximately 10% ($n=8$) of participants experienced insults against women "often" and 7.4% ($n=6$) "most of the time." Meanwhile, 30.5% ($n=25$) experienced sexual comments in sport settings, whereas 10.9% ($n=9$) reported "once or twice" and ($n=9$) "sometimes." Only 17 (21.2%) participants reported feeling pressure about their gender role ($M=1.43$, $SD=.98$) (i.e., expect certain behaviors from me because you are a woman). Finally, the item "called me lesbian" shows the lowest frequency with only 14 (17%) participants experiencing it

at least once ($M=1.22$, $SD=.54$). See table 3 for frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation for the three types of sexual harassment experiences.

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis of the Three Types of Sexual Harassment Experiences

<i>Items Abbreviations</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>					<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		<i>Never</i>	<i>Once or twice</i>	<i>Some-times</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>		
<i>Gender Harassment</i>						8.06	4.01	
Q1. sexual jokes	82	44 (53.7)	10 (12.2)	18 (22)	6 (7.3)	4 (4.9)	1.98	1.23
Q4. insults against women	81	51 (63)	10 (12.3)	6 (7.4)	8 (9.9)	6 (7.4)	1.86	1.33
Q2. sexual comments about me	82	57 (69.5)	9 (11)	9 (11)	4 (4.9)	3 (3.7)	1.62	1.10
Q5. expect certain behaviors	80	63 (78.8)	8 (10)	4 (5)	2 (2.5)	3 (3.8)	1.43	.98
Q3. called me lesbian	82	68 (83)	11 (13.4)	2 (2.4)	1(1.2)	-	1.22	.54
<i>Unwanted Sexual Attention</i>						11.4	4.43	
Q3. sexual looks	80	54 (67.5)	10 (12.5)	5 (6.2)	8 (10)	3 (3.7)	1.70	1.18
Q2. commented about my body or appearance	80	56 (70)	10 (12.5)	8 (10)	4 (5)	2 (2.5)	1.58	1.03
Q7. uncomfortable touch	81	65 (80.2)	8 (9.8)	6 (7.4)	2 (2.4)	-	1.32	.72
Q1. talked about sexual things	80	65 (81.2)	9 (11.2)	3 (3.7)	2 (2.5)	1 (1.2)	1.31	.77
Q6. obscene comments	79	65 (82.2)	10 (12.6)	3 (4.6)	1 (1.2)	-	1.25	.65
Q5. insisted on a date	80	68 (85)	10 (12.5)	1 (1.2)	1 (1.2)	-	1.2	.51
Q4. sexual relations	80	70 (87.5)	9 (11.2)	1 (1.2)	-	-	1.14	.38
Q9. sexual advantages	79	72 (91.1)	5 (6.3)	1 (1.2)	1 (1.2)	-	1.13	.46
Q8. tried to touch the body	79	73 (92.4)	3 (3.9)	2 (2.5)	1 (1.2)	-	1.13	.49
<i>Sexual Coercion</i>						4.06	.29	
Q4. experience negative consequences for refusing a sexual cooperation	80	77 (96.2)	3 (3.7)	-	-	-	1.04	.19
Q2. asked you for sexual cooperation as an exchange of benefits	80	79 (98.7)	1 (1.2)	-	-	-	1.01	.11
Q1. subtly bribed you with reward for sexual cooperation	80	79 (98.7)	1 (1.2)	-	-	-	1.01	.11
Q3. threaten for lack of sexual cooperation	80	80 (100)	-	-	-	-	1.00	.00
<i>Criterion Item</i>								
Q5. sexually harassed	80	73	5	2	-	-	1.11	.39

In Cortina's (2001) study, the item "called me lesbian" was deleted from the SEQ-L because of low variance among participants. Some sport studies suggest that female athletes in non-traditional sports seem to experience higher harassment and comments about their sexuality than athletes in traditional sport (Fasting et al., 2004), but this was not the case in this study. Of the 14 participants who experienced comments about their sexuality, 50% ($n=7$) were from track and field, swimming, tennis, and volleyball, commonly considered traditional sport for female athletes; while the other 50% were from non-traditional sports (e.g., basketball, judo, softball, and soccer). Athletes in wrestling and weightlifting did not report any sexist remarks.

The second harassment category is unwanted sexual attention, referring to particular sex-based behaviors that could be intrusive from a woman's perspective. This section has 9 items addressing physical touches, sexual insinuations, comments, and advantages. Athletes reported experiencing higher frequency of unwanted sexual behaviors on the following items: sexual looks ($n=26$, 32.5%, $M=1.70$, $SD=1.18$), inappropriate comments about their bodies ($n=24$, 30%, $M=1.58$, $SD=1.03$), uncomfortable touches ($n=16$, 19.7%, $M=1.32$, $SD=.72$), sexual talk ($n=15$, 18.7%, $M=1.31$, $SD=.77$) and obscene comments ($n=14$, 17.7%, $M=1.25$, $SD=.65$). Meanwhile, the less frequent rates in this category were for direct sexual approaches items such as "insist on a date" ($n=12$, 15%, $M=1.2$, $SD=.51$), "insinuations for sexual relations" ($n=10$, 12.5%, $M=1.14$, $SD=.38$), "sexual advantages" ($n=7$, 8.8%, $M=1.13$, $SD=.46$), and "body touch" ($n=6$, 7.6%, $M=1.13$, $SD=.49$). In this category, less than 32% report

experiencing an unwanted sexual attention incident across items, and the majority of these participants experienced a lower frequency (i.e., “once or twice” and “sometimes”).

The third domain is sexual coercion, considered the most severe manifestation of sexual harassment and categorized as quid pro quo. In this category, approximately 95% of participants reported “never” experiencing sexual coercion. Descriptive analysis indicates that three participants experienced negative consequences for refusing sexual advances ($n=3$, 3.7%, $M=1.04$, $SD=.19$), and only one participant reported being asked for sexual favors as exchange for benefits (1.2%, $M=1.01$, $SD=.11$) and being sexually coerced for sexual relations (1.2 %, $M=1.01$, $SD=.11$). The same participant indicated both incidents. In this category, the responses “often” and “most of the time” are absent. No participant reported experiencing threats for lack of sexual cooperation. These results support previous psychology investigations regarding the low frequency in the sexual coercion domain.

In order to determine how many participants have experienced at least one manifestation of sexual harassment within each domain, a cross-tabulation analysis was used. All the items within the same harassment category were grouped into one variable. This procedure focused and informed the responses within subjects, not within items. See table 4 for details.

The alarming results showed that 63.4% ($n=52$) of female collegiate athletes have experienced at least one form or instance of gender harassment, 46.4% ($n=37$) unwanted sexual attention, and 5% ($n=4$) sexual coercion. These results reveal that 69% ($n=57$) of the sample have experienced some form of the three types of sexual harassment.

Interestingly, from those participants that reported experiencing any manifestation of sexual harassment, the majority are from UPR-RP ($n=35$, 81.3%) and 56.4% ($n=22$) from UPR-M. Unfortunately, participants' demographic information did not uncover a behavioral pattern. Larger samples could reveal a possible relationship between participants' demographic profile and sexual harassment experience.

Table 4

Results of Sexual Harassment Within Subjects Responses

<i>Harassment Domain</i>	<i>Responses within items</i>		<i>Responses within subject</i>	
	<i>“Never”</i>	<i>Experienced harassment</i>	<i>“Never”</i>	<i>Some form of harassment</i>
	<i>n (%)</i>		<i>n (%)</i>	
<i>Gender Harassment</i>			30 (36.5%)	52 (63.4%)
Item 1	44 (53.6)	38 (46.3)		
Item 4	51 (62.9)	30 (37)		
Item 2	57 (69.5)	25 (30.5)		
Item 5	63 (78.7)	17 (21.2)		
Item 3	68 (83)	14 (17)		
<i>Unwanted Sexual Attention</i>			44 (53.6%)	38 (46.3%)
Item 3	54 (67.5)	26 (32.5)		
Item 2	56 (70)	24 (30)		
Item 7	65 (80.2)	16 (19.7)		
Item 1	65 (81.2)	15 (18.7)		
Item 6	65 (82.2)	14 (17.7)		
Item 5	68 (85)	12 (15)		
Item 4	70 (87.5)	10 (12.5)		
Item 9	72 (91.1)	7 (8.8)		
Item 8	73 (92.4)	6 (7.6)		
<i>Sexual Coercion</i>			78 (95%)	4 (4.8%)
Item 4	77 (96.2)	3 (3.7)		
Item 2	79 (98.7)	1 (1.2)		
Item 1	79 (98.7)	1 (1.2)		

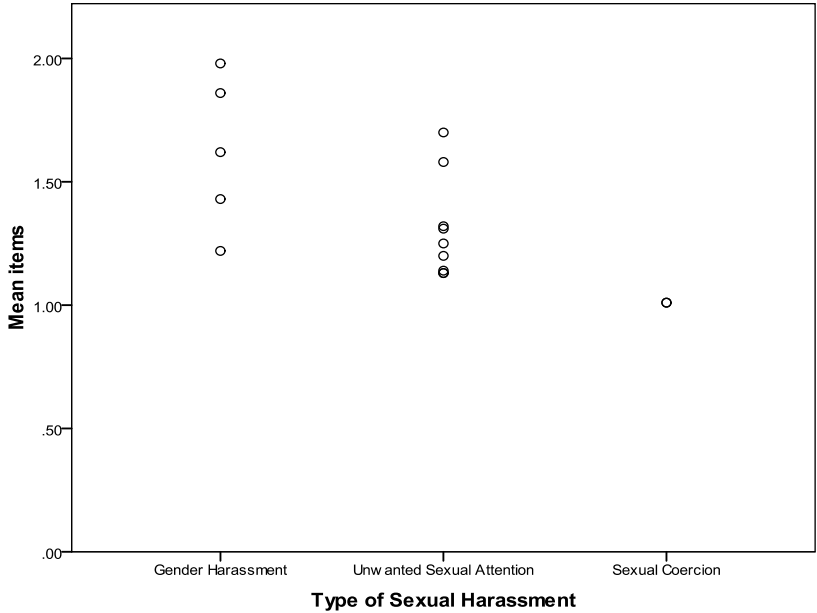
Note: Experienced harassment synthesized the frequencies of “once or twice,” “sometimes,” “often,” and “most of the time” from table 3.

On the criterion item (“have you ever experienced sexual harassment?”), only 7 out of 80 (8.75%) reported experiencing a harassment incident. Interestingly, all the five participants reporting sexual coercion also report a sexual harassment incident, but three other respondents also reported being sexually harassed in the collegiate sport context. All these eight participants answered the harasser profile and coping responses section for sexual coercion.

Descriptive analysis clearly showed that gender harassment was the most frequent domain among the three types of sexual harassment. The Kruskal-Wallis (non-parametric ANOVA) test revealed a significant difference among the three types of harassment, $H(2)=7.85, p<.05$. Therefore, a Mann-Whitney test was used to compare each pair of the three domains with Bonferroni correction to level of significance ($\alpha=.0167$), correcting for Type I error. These tests did not reveal any significant differences between the three sexual harassment categories. However, without the Bonferroni correction, gender harassment ($U=.00, r =-.74, p <.05$) and unwanted sexual attention differed significantly from sexual coercion ($U=.00, r =-.64, p <.05$). These mixed results are in line with previous research. Figure 2 shows the differences across the three sexual harassment domains.

Figure 2

Boxplot of the Three Types of Sexual Harassment Differences



Harasser's Profile

From the total sample ($n=82$), 52 experienced at least one gender harassment behavior, 37 experienced unwanted sexual attention, and 8 sexual coercion. This last domain includes the responses from the sexual coercion and the criterion item. All those reporting experiencing any harassment incident were able to identify a harasser profile, but unfortunately this section did not identify the harasser gender. See table 5 for descriptive results.

Table 5

Harasser Profile for the Three Sexual Harassment Domains

<i>Harasser Profile</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Frequency</i>				<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		None	Not a lot	Some	A lot		
<i>Gender harassment</i>							
Coaches	51	31	9	10	1	1.63	.87
Athletic department personnel	51	37	9	5	-	1.37	.66
Spectators	52	20	9	20	3	2.12	1.0
Other athletes	52	14	17	16	5	2.23	.96
<i>Unwanted Sexual attention</i>							
Coaches	37	25	5	6	1	1.54	.871
Athletic department personnel	34	28	6	-	-	1.18	.39
Spectators	35	20	8	6	1	1.66	.87
Other athletes	35	6	13	12	4	2.40	.91
<i>Sexual Coercion</i>							
Coaches	8	3	2	3	-	2.0	.92
Athletic department personnel	8	6	2	-	-	1.25	.46
Spectators	8	4	1	2	1	2.0	1.19
Other athletes	8	1	4	-	3	2.63	1.19

Findings show that athletes and spectators more frequently initiate gender harassment and unwanted sexual behaviors against female athletes than do coaches and athletic department personnel. On gender harassment, athletes ($M=2.23$, $SD=.96$) and spectators ($M=2.12$, $SD=1.0$) bother female athletes more regularly than coaches ($M=1.63$, $SD=.87$) and athletic department staff ($M=1.37$, $SD=.66$). In addition, 29 participants reported experiencing sexual attention from other athletes ($M=2.40$, $SD=.91$), while 14 reported it from spectators ($M=1.66$, $SD=.87$), 12 from coaches ($M=1.54$, $SD=.87$), and 6 from athletic department personnel ($M=1.18$, $SD=.39$). Incidents in the last category, sexual coercion, came mainly from peer athletes ($M=2.63$, $SD=1.19$), coaches ($M=2.0$, $SD=.92$), and spectators ($M=2.0$, $SD=1.19$).

The three sexual harassment categories showed consistent results regarding the harasser's status. The findings suggest that power status seems not to influence in the amount of harassment that athletes received. In all the three categories athletic personnel present the lowest frequency, while athletes are perceived consistently as a harassment source. Previous studies suggest that athletes and coaches sexually harassed more often than any other sport personnel (Fasting et al., 2004; Kirby et al., 2000). However, this study reveals spectators as perpetrators, even though studies rarely mention that possibility. Rodriguez and Gill's (2009) study found that spectators and athletes seem to represent strong sources of harassment among Puerto Rican female former athletes.

Coping Responses

The CHQ has two categories (external and internal responses) with five items in each domain representing different coping responses. Higher scores on internal responses items indicate that participants deal with harassment from a cognitive perspective, while external responses imply that participants cope in problem-solving manner. Responses were set as 1 for "yes, made things better", 2 for "yes, it made no difference", 3 for "made things worse", and 4 for "no"; thus, the coping response with the lowest mean is the most frequent response.

According to the results in this study, athletes more often use the internal responses ($M=2.78$, $SD=1.14$) to deal with gender harassment than the external responses ($M=2.91$, $SD=1.24$). Participants report using detachment ($M=1.98$, $SD=1.13$) and denial ($M=2.29$, $SD=1.33$) more often than any other coping responses. Meanwhile, the most common external responses were avoidance ($M=2.38$, $SD=1.42$), social support ($M=2.51$,

SD=1.41), and appeasement (M=2.88, SD=1.28). Regardless of the coping responses approach (internal or external), the majority of participants reported “made things better,” but 12 reported “made things worse.” Table 6 presents descriptive analysis for the coping responses among the harassment categories.

Table 6

Frequency of the Internally-Focused and Externally-Focused Responses

<i>Item Abbreviations</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Frequency</i>				<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		Yes, made things better	Yes, it made no difference	Yes, made things worse	No		
<i>Gender harassment</i>							
<i>External Responses</i>							
Q1. avoidance	50	23	6	-	21	2.38	1.42
Q3. social support	49	20	6	1	22	2.51	1.41
Q6. appeasement	49	11	10	2	26	2.88	1.28
Q4. confrontation	49	13	5	1	30	2.98	1.34
Q8. institutional relief	49	3	-	1	45	3.8	.73
Total						2.91	1.24
<i>Internal Responses</i>							
Q2. detachment	50	22	17	1	10	1.98	1.13
Q9. denial	48	20	11	-	17	2.29	1.33
Q10. endurance	49	11	13	2	23	2.76	1.27
Q5. relabeling	49	9	8	2	30	3.08	1.24
Q7. self-blame	49	3	-	2	44	3.78	.74
Total						2.78	1.14
Grand mean						28.4	5.97
<i>Unwanted Sexual Attention</i>							
<i>External Responses</i>							
Q1. avoidance	34	20	7	1	6	1.79	1.15
Q3. social support	34	12	7	2	13	2.47	1.33
Q6. appeasement	34	13	4	1	16	2.59	1.42
Q4. confrontation	34	10	3	2	19	2.88	1.36
Q8. institutional relief	34	4	-	-	30	3.65	.98
Total						14.82	4.0
<i>Internal Responses</i>							
Q10. endurance	34	13	9	-	12	2.32	1.31
Q2. detachment	34	14	5	1	14	2.44	1.4
Q5. relabeling	34	9	4	3	18	2.88	1.32
Q9. denial	34	4	3	-	23	3.47	1.08
Q7. self-blame	34	2	2	-	30	3.71	.83
Total						13.38	3.9
Grand mean						28.1	6.36

<i>Item Abbreviations</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Frequency</i>				<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		Yes, made things better	Yes, it made no difference	Yes, made things worse	No		
<i>Sexual Coercion</i>							
<i>External Responses</i>							
Q1. avoidance	8	3	4	-	1	1.88	.99
Q3. social support	8	2	4	-	2	2.25	1.16
Q6. appeasement	8	2	2	-	4	2.75	1.39
Q4. confrontation	8	2	1	-	5	3.0	1.41
Q8. institutional relief	8	1	2	-	5	3.13	1.24
Total						2.60	1.24
<i>Internal Responses</i>							
Q10. endurance	8	1	3	-	4	2.88	1.24
Q9. denial	8	1	3	-	4	2.88	1.24
Q5. relabeling	8	2	2	-	4	2.75	1.39
Q7. self-blame	7	1	2	-	4	3.0	1.3
Q2. detachment	8	1	2	-	5	3.13	1.24
Total						2.93	1.28
Grand mean						26.0	8.5

In the second harassment category statistical findings also show that female athletes used internal responses ($M=13.38$, $SD=3.9$) to deal with unwanted sexual attention more often than external responses ($M=14.82$, $SD=4.0$). The responses in this domain were mixed. The order of the coping responses frequency is: avoidance ($M=1.79$, $SD=1.15$), endurance ($M=2.32$, $SD=1.31$), detachment ($M=2.44$, $SD=1.4$), social support ($M=2.47$, $SD=1.33$), appeasement ($M=2.59$, $SD=1.42$), relabeling ($M=2.88$, $SD=1.32$), confrontation ($M=2.88$, $SD=1.36$), denial ($M=3.47$, $SD=1.08$), institutional relief ($M=3.65$, $SD=.98$), and self-blame ($M=3.71$, $SD=.83$). Again, the majority of participants reported “made things better” while 10 reported “made things worse.”

In the last sexual harassment category, sexual coercion, only eight participants answered this portion of the survey. Different from the other domains results showed that athletes use external coping responses ($M=2.60$, $SD=1.24$) more frequently than

internal responses ($M=2.93$, $SD=1.28$) to deal with sexual coercion. The highest coping responses frequency were avoidance ($M=1.88$, $SD=.99$), social support ($M=2.25$, $SD=1.16$), appeasement ($M=2.75$, $SD=1.39$), and relabeling ($M=2.75$, $SD=1.39$). Notice that in this domain no participant mentioned negative consequences (“made it worse”) regardless of the coping approach.

Overall, participants seem to try different coping strategies in order to deal with sexual harassment. Results in this section shows that female athletes in P.R. use internally-focused responses to cope with gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention in sport settings. Meanwhile, these participants favored using external coping responses more often than internal responses to deal with sexual coercion. Regardless of the harassment category, participants consistently use avoidance and social support within the four most frequent responses.

Open-Ended Responses

In order to understand sexual harassment among Puerto Rican female athletes, the last section of the SEQ-Sport included three broad open-ended questions related to each of the three types of sexual harassment. Participants were asked: 1) Have you ever felt de-valued or degraded as a female athlete in your collegiate sport?, 2) Have you ever experienced unwanted sexual attention in your collegiate sport?, and 3) Has anyone in your collegiate sport requested sexual favors (e.g., sexual interaction, physical touch) in exchange for any academic, athletic, or economic privilege? If participants responded “yes” to any of the main questions, then the survey automatically advanced into more descriptive questions targeting their experiences, responses, and feelings. In addition, the

survey provided a space for comments about any related sexual harassment situation in sport settings.

The categorization of the open-ended responses was guided by Fitzgerald's conceptual model, which could assist to validate the survey results. In order to analyze the qualitative data, the researcher literally read the responses and grouped them into each of the pre-determined harassment experiences domains (e.g., gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion) and coping responses (e.g., social support, avoidance, and denial, among others). Pre-determined categories are related to the survey items (i.e., sexual looks, sexual relationship, and sexual comments, among others). Consequently, qualitative data was clustered based on the frequency of similar events. For example, a participant mentioned "there are some looks that make me feel uncomfortable" and another participant stated "it is hard to concentrate in the race when more than a 100 men are looking at you with bad intentions." These two phrases were categorized together as sexual looks, but only groups with three or more statements were grouped as a main theme (see table 7 for categorizations). Unfortunately, sexual coercion, was not coded because no participant responded to this open-ended question.

Clearly, participants' experiences and responses were clustered into particular pre-determined categories. Only a few participants mentioned multiple experiences and mixed feelings in a single statement. In these cases, if the experiences were based on different occasions or referred to a different harasser, then the statement was split and grouped into the appropriate category. It is important to mention that participants'

open-ended responses were in Spanish and the categorization was made in participants' native language. Only the significant statements reported in this study were translated into English by the researcher.

Table 7.

Summary of Open-Ended Responses for Two Sexual Harassment Categories

	<i>Gender harassment (n)</i>	<i>Unwanted Sexual Attention(n)</i>
<i>Experiences</i>	Sexist comments (7) Sexual talk (4) Gender discrimination (3)	Sexual approaches (8) Sexual looks (3) Comments about physical appearance (4)
<i>Responses</i>	Endurance (9) Institutional relief (3)	Endurance(7) Appeasement (4) Confrontation (3)
<i>Feelings</i>	Angry (14)	Angry (7) Ashamed (5) Uncomfortable (4)

Fourteen participants (17% of the sample) described their experiences regarding gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention. None of the participants that mentioned experiencing sexual coercion in the earlier part of the survey shared their experiences in the open-ended section. Eleven participants added comments to explain their concerns about this social phenomenon. Some of the responses were extremely descriptive, exposing the vulgar tone and rude comments used by the harassers.

Gender Harassment

Research suggests that gender harassment is highly tolerated and rarely reported by women. In this study participants appear to be aware of their rights as a woman, athlete and student, expressing their discomfort with gender harassment situations.

All participants reported feeling “angry.” Feelings of anger were manifested when prejudice and disrespectful comments related to their gender or their role as an athlete emerged. Participants stated feeling “angry because of people’s ignorance” or “angry, because they judge me without knowing me.” It is important to mention that the cultural trait, respect, was highlighted throughout some participants’ statements - “I feel angry because they do not respect me...oh well, they are men and no one blames them” or “angry because sport entities should provide equal rights but most of all, respect for each other.” One participant perhaps uncovered why gender harassment situations seem to not overshadow athletic performance, “[I feel] angry, but all those prejudice situations motivate me to continue practicing sport.” These statements are consistent with findings of a qualitative study among Puerto Rican female former athletes (Rodriguez & Gill, 2009). Apparently, feelings of gender oppression motivate athletes to pursue higher levels of athletic performance. Further studies are needed in order to understand those underlining motives that differ from other social institutions. Interestingly, all participants’ responses in this category reported the same emotion, “All the bad moments make me feel very angry.”

In this study participants manifested a variety of gender harassment experiences similar to those on the SEQ. However, an additional dimension in the gender harassment

domain emerged. The following categories are placed in sequential order, beginning with the most frequent:

- Sexist comments. This category includes situations where athletes' sexuality is generalized in the sport atmosphere. Four of the seven sexist comments were related to the item "called you lesbian or dyke;" however, the survey results showed low frequency on this item among participants. Participants described situations in which people stereotyped female athletes' sexuality saying: "[my] sport is for men," "all softball athletes are lesbians," "less feminine," or "it's a man sport, you are a butch." Other sexist comments directed against female athletes were, "sport is for men and strong women look disgusting," and that "women do not have the same power as men." Clearly, direct sexist comments and remarks about female athletes' sexuality and gender stereotyped were prevalent.
- Sexual talk. The experiences similar to two SEQ items ("told sexually offensive stories" and "said crude or gross sexual things") were grouped together. Participants' reported sexual comments related to their physical appearance such as "all that [referring to their body parts] is yours" or "damn, you're fine!" One participant explained that sexual talks are not limited in the sport setting, "I face uncomfortable comments whenever you are running in the streets or in the track." Meanwhile, participants experiencing sexually offensive conversations in sport settings could be represented by this participant story:

I was in the gym and the track [X] was talking with a male athlete about how men have sex and the different types of women: Latinas vs. *gringas*. I remembered that one of the comments that shock me was when they said, and I am quoting: “does not matter, Latinas scream more than *gringas* and we know who the best one is.” Another thing that they said was “...if you put in a broom stick in their pussy, do you know how much they will scream.” Obviously, I felt offended because I was the only women in the gym at that moment.

All the sexually explicit conversations referred to women as sexual objects.

According to Ramirez (1999), Puerto Rican males tend to generate this type of sexual talk in order to highlight their heterosexuality.

- Gender discrimination. Participants were far more descriptive explaining their frustration regarding the constant discriminatory events, particularly by the athletic department. For example, a participant described the current situation among Puerto Rican female athletes – “every time there is no funding the first thing they [the administration] think to drop-off is a female sport...so, after months of training we couldn’t even participate,” another participant mentioned that her “team does not have a court to practice on because male teams are prioritized” with sport facilities. The majority of participants’ statements reflect that they do not feel that the university “valued female sport equally with male sport.” Items of gender discrimination were not included on the SEQ. However, in this study athletes’ narratives indicate that participants feel trapped, undervalued, and harassed because of their gender.

In addition, other participants’ relevant experiences (with less than two statements) referred to verbal insults against women such as “women are worthless.” One participant

mentioned that her coach called her offensive names in front of others -“look at this bitch.” Unfortunately, participants did not provide additional explanation or thoughts about these situations. According to participants’ comments in this study, female athletes appear to be in a powerless gender status within the collegiate sport atmosphere. Despite the consistent and straight forward issues mentioned by participants, they mainly responded with two coping responses:

- Endurance. This theme grouped participants that indicated harassment tolerance in the sport environment. Seven participants mentioned, “ignore the comments” or “I only ignore.” Participants revealed tolerating gender harassment situations, “I didn’t pay attention because I am used to the situation” or “I didn’t do anything because I want to avoid problems.” Studies suggested that people using endurance responses might be influenced because fear of administrative retaliations or the situation is unavoidable (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Paludi & Barickman, 1998).
- Institutional relief. Participants’ awareness of their legal rights was clearly manifested in this section. Participants gave assertive responses of “talking with the athletic director,” “talking with the administrative personnel,” and even “talking with the *Procuradora de las Mujeres* (government agency that protects women’s rights) and other officials, but at the moment we haven’t seen any result.” This category is rarely declared by female athletes as a coping response in previous studies, particularly regarding gender harassment situations (Fasting et al., 2007; Rodriguez & Gill, 2009).

Most of the open-ended responses support the survey results. Participants in this study seemed to cope with gender harassment situations by managing their emotional thoughts by using internally-focused responses. It is important to note that the only external coping response theme is institutional relief, which was rated as a low frequency coping response in the survey findings. Additional external coping response categories with less than three statements were confrontation “we protested in the male wrestling competition in order to make our voices heard,” and avoidance “I try to wear more clothing while I warm up in practice.” Even though only fourteen athletes shared their current experiences, participants in this study appear to be extremely bothered and angry by gender harassment situations challenging the Latina stereotype as passive and submissive.

Unwanted Sexual Attention

Previous studies suggest that unwanted sexual behaviors could include endless verbal and non-verbal behaviors (Fitzgerald, et al., 1995). In this study, the sex-based behaviors were mainly directed to an individual’s body. Participants mentioned feeling angry, ashamed, and uncomfortable. The majority of participants feel “angry” whenever they face unwanted sexual situations, but only one participant explained - “angry, because he was a person in a relationship.” Other participants were more descriptive about their feelings and emotions. Some declared, “I felt ashamed and offended” or “I felt used because they looked at me with dirty eyes.” Meanwhile, other participants described feeling uncomfortable, “I didn’t know how to feel, if flattered or angry...but definitely I know I felt uncomfortable because a *viejo verde* (dirty old man) was looking

at me;” while another participant emphasized the importance of being respected, “[I feel] angry and uncomfortable because he disrespect me.” Consistently, participants in this study indicated that respect is a significant cultural value.

Participants’ open-ended responses on unwanted sexual attention complemented the survey findings, but the relative frequency of the responses was slightly different from the survey. Participants’ experiences from open-ended items were grouped in three different categories from the sexual harassment domain as follows:

- Sexual approaches. This theme included all the statements that referred to direct sexual approaches, dating insinuations, and sexual propositions. For example, a participant recalled - “he told me that he wants me like crazy and he didn’t make any sexual move because of his status at the university, but he wants to bite my butt and other disgusting comments.” Another participant remembered, “he told me that I have a big breast and he wants to suck it.” Meanwhile, two participants mentioned that they been asked to be kissed. According to participants, the perpetrators appear to be directly asking for intimate interactions (e.g., “[he told me] do you want to go to a dark room?”) or consistently pursue dating relationships. No participant implied consenting to any sexual interaction.
- Comments about physical appearance. Most of the responses referred to sexual comments about their body shape such as “your butt looks so fine and tasty...then, he slaps my butt” or “insinuations about my physical appearance.” Only one participant mentioned receiving negative comments about her physical

appearance, “he told me that I am fat and he touched my belly.” Overall, most participants received sexual comments about their body in front of others.

- Sexual looks. Only three participants brought up the notion of the “intense sexual looks.” However, this theme was the most frequently mentioned in the survey findings; the three athletes did not explain the incidents.

On the survey results the item “talked about sexual things” was often reported, but only one participant described an incident in the open-ended responses. She mentioned that during practice the coach continuously talked about sex in front of everyone.

...we were doing an exercise and the coach always used nasty comments. For example, he was talking with a male athlete and he told him: how do you put it [referring to his penis]? You can't put it that way...you have to do it this way...and he started to demonstrate. In every practice they talk or comments about sex, is like a pattern.

Most of the participants' open-ended responses appeared to use an assertive manner to the unwelcome sexual behaviors toward female athletes. Participants' coping responses were grouped in three themes endurance, appeasement, and confrontation in which two categories are externally-focused responses.

- Endurance. Participants mainly coped by “ignoring the comments” or “ignoring without leaving the courtesy because I don't want to have problems.”
- Appeasement. This theme referred to when athletes make excuses in order to evade the harasser. All participants using appeasement responses differed in the strategy. For example, participants described “I only talked with him if somebody else is there, so he won't have any opportunity for sexual comments,” “I stopped

talking to him, I told him that I was studying,” or “I tried to not look this person, I evaded him as much as possible.” According to Magley’s (1999) study, appeasement is the least common response among the external coping responses. This behavior is viewed as non-confrontational action, but in the eyes of the victim could represent a direct rejection of the harasser.

- Confrontation. This coping response appears to be employed after trying other coping responses. For example, a participant described “that at the beginning I told him that he was crazy, but then I started to feel more uncomfortable because it wasn’t normal [his sexual behaviors] and I told him. Then, he stopped bothering me, but the sexual looks continued.” Another participant recalled confronting him saying: “I am not fat at all...then I left.”

Participants’ responses helped to understand the life experiences in the collegiate sport in P.R. In this study, participants’ statements clearly show the importance of being respected, a central characteristic for the gender role in P.R. Surprisingly, social support and avoidance were not reported in any of the open-ended responses themes but were reported in the survey findings. All of the perpetrators in the harassment situations were males, particularly coaches, sport facility director, peer athletes, and masseur.

Additional Comments

Eleven participants responded to this question. Seven of the responses were based on gender harassment incidents (e.g., “sometimes are sexual jokes” or “my only complaint is the attitude of the immature guys that said inappropriate comments”), one on gender discrimination incident, two complaints about the sexualized athletic gear, and one about

a sexual coercion event in high school. Regardless of the incident (gender harassment or sexual coercion) participants repeatedly mentioned the disappointment in how they were treated as an athlete. This section provided a space to gather additional details about athletes' experiences within collegiate sport context. They repeatedly compared themselves and their athletic benefits with male sport, generating a common theme – “I think that a lot of coaches are unfair in granting benefits...while others grant benefits only because of the sexual interest.” Meanwhile, a participant explained the negative consequences when she reported the sexual harassment to the administration.

The coach [somehow] knew that I filed a complaint with the athletic department about him...he took away all my athlete's rights and kept me away from competing in the *Justas* [national collegiate competition]...he treated me bad during practice...he took away my financial aid and he didn't give me athletic gear. Let me tell you, I didn't let him put me down. The next year, I got all the information that I needed about my legal rights and I spoke directly with him.

Another two athletes recommended confronting the harasser. One participant believes that female athletes might not consider it important to stop the sexual harassment situations, “if men see that women do not say anything, they will believe they are entitled to sexually harass you,” while another participant thinks that not stopping the constant sexual jokes keep men from recognizing the inappropriate behaviors.

Participants' statements consistently indicated that the revealing athletic uniform appears to present an issue for female athletes. Athletes believe that the athletic uniform exposes their body in a sexual manner generating sexual comments. “Currently, a lot of coaches and athletes make comments and do offensive actions against female athletes.

For example, I don't run with stretch pants because I feel they look at me too much and that makes me feel very uncomfortable." Interestingly, in every sexual harassment domain at least one participant connects the sexual athletic gear with the prevalence of sexual harassment situations. Most of the responses in this section were comments about sexual incidents and what they did in order to prevent such unwelcome behaviors.

Summary

This chapter has presented the survey and open-ended item results. The findings show that female athletes experienced a higher frequency of gender harassment (63.4%) than unwanted sexual attention (53.6%) and sexual coercion (5%) in their current collegiate sport. Sexual harassment most often comes from peer athletes and spectators, but the open-ended responses revealed incidents with administrative personnel (e.g., coaches, facility director, and masseur). Survey results indicated that when participants faced gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention they use internal coping responses more often than external responses, while assertive responses (or external coping) were used to deal with sexual coercion. Overall, the SEQ-Sport provides reliable information about the sexual harassment experiences in sport settings and the open-ended responses complement the understanding of the collegiate sport context.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Sexual harassment has a consistent negative connotation, but varies with societal ideologies. In the current Puerto Rican collegiate sport structure, offensive behavior related to gender stereotyping and sexuality are common. The traditional masculine-heterosexual sport atmosphere appears to perpetuate the notion of female athletic performance as insignificant and athletes as sexual objects. Indeed, the unequal gender ratio in sport organizations sets female athletes aside as intruders suggesting that they tolerate sexual conduct as part of the sport culture (Brackenridge, 2001). Individuals' gender role, cultural values, and the organizational structure influence reactions toward sexual harassment situations (Barack, 1997; Wasti & Cortina, 2002). Unfortunately, studies rarely consider the impact of the cultural context in athletes' experiences and coping responses and little attention has been paid to the Hispanic population. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to report the prevalence of sexual harassment experiences among Puerto Rican female collegiate athletes and their coping responses.

This chapter presents the study findings and implications in relation to sport and the Puerto Rican literature. Specifically, the conceptual framework of this research is based on the three-factor sexual harassment structural model, differentiating this study from other sport studies. This chapter organizes the discussion in three main areas: 1) types of sexual harassment, 2) sexual harassment coping responses, and 3) the Puerto

Rican socio-cultural context. In addition, study limitations, directions for future research, and professional implications are provided.

Types of Sexual Harassment

Psychology literature often uses Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) three-factor sexual harassment structural model to interconnect gender harassment (i.e., insults against women), unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion domains with a legal concept. Previous studies reported a sequential frequency rate from gender harassment to sexual coercion. According to Barak's (1997) review, approximately 30% of female students experienced gender harassment, 20% unwanted sexual attention, and 2% sexual coercion in academic settings. Clearly, this framework separates sexual harassment into three different, but related behaviors.

Schneider and colleagues' (1997) study found that women experiencing higher frequency of gender harassment also experience unwanted sexual attention. The results of this study also suggest that participants' sexual harassment experiences in the three categories are related, but distinct. Unfortunately, only a few participants (17% of the sample) shared their experiences in the open-ended items, limiting the connection between survey and open-ended findings

The results of this study show that 69% of the sample experienced some form of sexual harassment in any of the three types of harassment behaviors. Specifically, 63.4% of female collegiate athletes have experienced at least one incident of gender harassment, 46.4% unwanted sexual attention, and 5% sexual coercion. It is important to highlight that these results show the prevalence of harassment in the current collegiate sport

setting. Even though this study cannot be directly compared with other sport investigations, Kirby and colleagues (2000) also reported slightly higher sexual harassment frequency rates in sport than other social settings. Kirby et al. stated that 37% of female athletes experience insults regarding their gender or sexuality, 28% sexually offensive comments, and 6.5% sexual coercion. It is alarming that the main two public universities in this country have not implemented efficient regulatory procedures to diminish sex discrimination and sexual harassment incidents in sport settings. Moreover, this study exposes the importance of considering the cultural context while analyzed sexual harassment experiences.

Gender harassment was the most common harassment type among Puerto Rican female athletes, exhibiting higher frequency rate (63% vs. 30%) than in other reported studies. Survey results show that sexual jokes, insults against women, and sexual comments were reported most often.

Surprisingly, in the open-ended responses participants commonly mentioned insults related to gender and sexuality. Clustered as sexist comments (“sport is for men and strong women look disgusting”), this category leads the majority of participants’ responses. In addition, participants indicated that Puerto Rican sport atmosphere appears to be sexualized with women as sexual objects, grouped as sexual talks. Meanwhile, participants primarily expressed anger whenever sport administrators undervalued their athletic skills grouped as gender discrimination.

For these participants, gender harassment situations are unreasonable and unjust in the sport settings. A variety of sex discriminatory situations were commonly

mentioned - “the sports that I play are dominated by men (judo, wrestling, and soccer)...I have felt de-valued in these sports because they [administrative personnel] don’t respect my rights as a female athlete and they don’t provide the same benefits.” Participants referred to gender discrimination and other sex-based forms that are considered within the unwanted sexual attention domain. Indeed, there is a fine line between sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

According to Franke (1997) sexual harassment is a manifestation of sex discrimination in which normative gender stereotypes are maintained and enforced by society. However, not all gender discrimination is considered sexual harassment. The gender discrimination (i.e., prescriptive component) that could be considered a form of sexual harassment is the one that disparate unequal treat throughout hostile environment or a devaluation of individuals’ performance (Burgess & Borgida, 1999). Psychology evidence suggests that women who do not follow the gender stereotype of femininity are negatively punished or sanctioned for violating the cultural norms (Burgess & Borgida, 1999). Some participants’ narratives in this study suggest that their experiences of gender discrimination should be analyzed and considered as sexual harassment. It was clear that participants felt extremely angry about the sexist conduct directed against them. Unfortunately, the SEQ did not provide specific gender stereotypes situations that should be considered sexual harassment; if gender stereotypes items are included even higher sexual harassment frequency would be expected in future studies.

In the second harassment category, unwanted sexual attention, survey results show a sequential rate from non-intrusive sexual situations (e.g., sexual looks, comment

about body, uncomfortable touches, and sexual talks) to intrusive sexual situations (e.g., insist on a date, attempt sexual relations, sexual advantages, and body touch).

Meanwhile, participants' open-ended responses exposed incidents of sexual approaches for a date or sexual relations, sexualized comments about their bodies, and the sexual looks indicated direct offensive behaviors against them. Among athletes' statements, the rude and crude sexual manifestations were particularly noticeable, "[he told me:] your butt looks so fine and tasty....then he slaps my butt." Similar straightforward statements have not been found in other sport settings, but Rodriguez and Gill (2009) reported comparable comments from Puerto Rican female former athletes. This study implies that athletes seem to be aware of the inappropriate behaviors and they do not accept such sexual attitudes.

Previous sport studies suggest that the sport culture traditionally permits physical and emotional bonding (e.g., hugs, kisses, slaps, or intimate talk) between sport participants and it is socially acceptable in this particular setting. It is implied that athletes unconsciously created tolerance for sexual harassment conduct because they are part of the sport culture – "that's the way it is" (Fasting, Brackenridge & Walseth, 2002). However, this study could argue that the direct and rude sexual approaches permit athletes to be alert and conscious about unwanted sexual conduct. Perhaps, the awareness for sexual conduct in this study could be explained by the lack of emotional bonding with authority figures. It is possible that female athletes' limited bonding and dependence on other sport participants influenced the harassment awareness in sport settings.

In the last sexual harassment category, only a small portion of the sample described experiencing sexual coercion. Multiple studies show that sexual coercion is the least frequent, but most severe manifestation of sexual harassment (Barak, 1997; Gelfand et al., 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1997). The survey findings show that a few participants experienced negative consequences for refusing sexual cooperation. Because of the limited sample and intimidating topic, no participant shared their life experiences, limiting understanding of this harassment domain. In this study, the low frequency rate might be explained as, 1) sport members in collegiate sport are aware of the legal implications, 2) athletes might not report their experiences to avoid jeopardizing their athletic future in collegiate sport, or 3) simply that participants have never experienced a sexual coercion situation. Previous studies suggest that individuals are more likely to report experiences when they do not have contact with the harasser(s). This type of sexual harassment behavior is the most identifiable manifestation, particularly when legal regulations proclaim sexual coercion as *quid pro quo* that is strictly penalized. Sexual coercion is mostly viewed as the real form of sexual harassment. In this study, only 9% ($n=7$) of athletes reported “been sexually harassed” in collegiate sport, evaluated as a criterion item. The low percentage of the criterion item is not associated with the other sexual harassment domains (gender harassment or unwanted sexual attention).

For all three types of sexual harassment, this study revealed that athletes and spectators lead the harasser profile. Studies continuously suggest that sexual harassment is about power, not sex. Perpetuators have some form of social power that allows control toward the individual, but spectators and athletes do not possess the traditional power

status. Previous studies suggest that female athletes are frequently harassed by male athletes, and the harassment from authority (or power) figures negatively impacts female athletes (Fasting et al., 2000). In this study, athletes' statements imply that administrative personnel (e.g., coaches, sport facility director, and masseur) should be responsible for maintaining a harassment-free environment. Specifically, participants feel undervalued by sport administrative personnel, while athletes and spectators sexualized women's bodies with rude and vulgar harassment manifestations. The overall findings support previous sport studies suggesting that female athletes are still considered intruders in sport settings facilitating the harassment experiences (Brackenridge, 2001).

Sexual harassment is a social phenomenon manifested across the world; however, these sex-based forms are more noticeable in sport settings. Sexism is expected as part of the traditional sport culture and powerless individuals have learned to tolerate their position within the sport structure. In particular, these offensive attitudes against women represent a deeper complexity about the power dynamic in sport. Regardless of the severity and frequency of sexual harassment, these behaviors are inappropriate and illegal, creating a negative impact for an individual's well-being.

This study unveils female student-athletes harassment experiences and responses from a Hispanic-Caribbean country, Puerto Rico. Even though specific socio-cultural characteristics may influence the perception of participants' experiences and their reactions, this study confirms that sexual harassment in sport prevails in any society. Indeed, international sport studies confirm that sexual harassment is a recurrent practice.

The findings in this study represent a mirror of the rigidity (or inflexibility) of the traditional sport system and culture.

Sexual Harassment Coping Responses

Research rarely reports sexual harassment coping responses, especially connecting the three types of sexual harassment with individuals' behavioral reactions. The SEQ-Sport format expanded our understanding on how individuals respond to particular sexual harassment event.

The findings in this study suggest that female athletes use internally-focused responses more frequently than external responses to deal with gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention. Individuals using internally-focused responses made cognitive efforts to ignore the reality of the situation, particularly in mild harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Paludi & Barickman, 1998). Fitzgerald et al. (1995) explained that coping responses depend on individuals' cognitive appraisal of sexual harassment as a stressful life situation.

Stress literature suggests that individuals using this type of coping strategy (i.e., internally-focused response) attempt to regulate stressful emotions in a passive manner (Lazarus, 1999). Perhaps, the non-confrontational approach might be influenced by athletes' 1) socio-cultural values, 2) commitment with sport, and/or 3) perpetrator power status.

Puerto Rico highly values respect and dignity, considering these characteristics significant for their gender roles (Acosta-Belén, 1979). Perhaps, athletes' perception that they are violating these socially valuable characteristics may influence their responses.

However, this study expected that participants would use direct coping responses to deal with sexual harassment, considering the non-traditional gender role among Puerto Rican women.

In addition, female athletes are emerged within the traditional sport culture, generating an emotional commitment with their sport and personal goals. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), emotional commitment is a personal factor influencing individuals' cognitive appraisal of stressful situations, in this case a sexual harassment event. Individual's commitment "underlie the choices people make or are prepared to make to maintain valued ideals and/or to achieve desired goals" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 56). Perhaps, the tendency to react in a passive manner reflects the emotional and committed aspect of their sport participation.

Athletes' passivity in response to situations of gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention also might be influenced by the perpetrators' power status. Sexual manifestations from athletes and spectators are considered and judged as part of the sport culture – "I ignore the comments." Meanwhile, sexual harassment from authority figures is considered (legally) inappropriate and unethical. Perhaps, athletes might respond differently if the harassment comes from an authority figure.

Indeed, the results of this study indicate that sexual coercion, in which 62% of participants considered coaches a harasser, was the only harassment domain reporting higher frequency rates for externally-focused responses. Participants open-ended responses manifested confrontation (e.g., "I stopped talking to him" or "I told him...he stopped bothering me"), but these responses do not represent the overall results of this

sample. The use of externally-focused responses suggests that in intense and repeated harassment events, individuals tend to act in a proactive manner.

Sexual coercion is a straightforward sexual manifestation, which is more difficult to perceive as a non-intrusive behavior. This type of harassment is commonly considered a stressful life event in comparison with the other harassment domains. According to Lazarus (1999) individuals that attempt to immediately alter the environment by changing the source of stress (in this case sexual harassment), are acting in a problem-solving manner (i.e., externally-focused response).

Overall, the sexual harassment categories indicated that athletes' coping responses were mixed between internal and externally coping responses. The survey results indicated that avoidance and social support were consistently the top favored responses, regardless of the harassment domain. The results of this study support previous studies indicating that athletes do not use a single or preferred strategy to deal with sexual harassment situations; instead athletes appear to use multiple coping strategies.

The Puerto Rican Socio-Cultural Context

Beyond the statistical findings, this study attempted to provide insights into sexual harassment within the Puerto Rican sport context. Puerto Rican literature describes the woman in P.R. in a stricter gender role than the man. Women are presented as strong and ambitious in a variety of social settings (Acosta-Belen, 1979; De Leon, 1993), while men are presented as double (or twofold) standard. Previous studies suggest that men are protective of female family members, but in presence of other men they constantly manifested rude sexual behaviors in order to display their heterosexuality (Ramirez,

1999). In this study, all participants referred to men as the main perpetrator. It is possible that the incongruence between gender roles could influence athletes' perceptions and reported frequency of sexual harassment situations.

In this study similar frequency rates for gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention were anticipated. Previous studies suggested that female athletes in P.R. are expected to maintain a visible feminine-sensual role, particularly because sport is mainly perceived as men's space (Aybar, 2006; Concepcion & Echevarría, 1997; Rodriguez & Gill, 2009). The results of this study implied that gender role conflict is manifested with frequent insults against women and de-valued female performance. Consequently, the repeated gender harassment and sex discrimination influence female athletes to respond in a passive manner. Higher levels of gender harassment could reflect the organizational climate, directly affecting athletes coping responses.

In addition, this study revealed the prevailing cultural characteristics that influence the sexual harassment experience and responses for the Puerto Rican female athletes. This population strongly values family unit, respect, and dignity (Trent, 1965; Torres, 1998). According to Acosta-Belen (1979) self-respect and dignity are related to women's gender role in which these two cultural values dictate the appropriate behavior response. This study confirms that respect and dignity are important socio-cultural values for the Puerto Rican female athletes. Participants reported feeling angry and ashamed because sexual harassment is considered a disrespectful behavior. One participant clearly explained, women's struggle in a male-dominated society and how athletes considered it a disrespectful situation to the self.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of women today that has to deal with inappropriate sexual behaviors against themselves. It is considered that things are change, and there is not doubt that something has changed...until certain level. There is still a visible difference on male athletes and female athletes' treatment. We have learned to protect ourselves pretty good against these behaviors, but it will always be a "*safao* [slang for a person who do not respect]" that crosses the line between a joke and the lack of respect. I think this study will help to open our eyes and be more careful about the injustices against female athletes.

Considering this participant's point of view, athletes are aware of their unprivileged position in the sport structure, but also are aware of their civil rights, a condition that might be different from other Hispanic countries. The political relation with the U.S. seems to generate a suspicious and alert mindset among female athletes, while men appear to maintain the Latino "macho" stereotype. Clearly, the results of this study provide information and understanding about the current situation in collegiate sport setting.

Recommendations

A wide range of literature has recommended general strategies to prevent or combat sexual harassment (Volkwein & Sankaran, 2001; Brackenridge, 2001). These studies suggest that the organizations: a) must openly reprimand all type of sexual harassment incidents, b) must create specific guidelines and procedures to deal with victims' complaints, and c) must develop efficient policies that ensure victims confidentiality. Furthermore, the recommendations of this study are based on the current collegiate sport setting in P.R., which provides valuable recommendations to tackle the issue of sexual harassment. The main recommendations focus on sport policy development and behavioral intervention.

Sport Policy Development

Currently, law number 3 protects student-athletes from any sexual harassment incident and provides counseling services in the university. However, the unique sport culture is not considered in this law, leaving student-athletes without adequate or efficient policies that could protect their needs. In order to establish an inclusive and proactive policy, the following steps are imperative: 1) expand the current law regarding the unique sport atmosphere, differentiating the sex-based behaviors from academic setting; 2) establish clear and simple guidelines and procedures to deal with sexual harassment incidents; 3) create and promote ethical codes for athletes, coaches, athletic department personnel, and spectators, and 4) generate a database regarding all the harassment cases.

Considering that Puerto Rico is a small island and “everyone knows everyone,” this study suggests that the development and implementation of the sport policy should rely on the non-profit organization (i.e., athletic intercollegiate league, LAI) that organizes collegiate sport in P.R. This organization could assist universities in combating the harassment issue, while empowering victims to report harassment. If student-athletes complain directly to the LAI, this non-profit organization could ensure a proactive solution while protect athlete confidentiality. This organization is not part of the university; however it provides service for the university.

Preventive Intervention

Currently, there is not an agenda to educate and develop awareness about the manifestations and implications of sexual harassment behaviors. Therefore, in order to begin a steady foundation to combat this social phenomenon, it is important to educate all

sport members including athletes, coaches, athletic department personnel, and spectators. Behavioral changes could be modifying by changing habits. This study recommends the following steps: 1) the organization should implement regular educational activities (at least twice at year) including conferences, workshops, and articles publicized for the community, and 2) create and promote an efficient mediation system for victims and harassers, ideally by the assistance of the counseling department at the university. Education and awareness are key elements to eradicate or tackle sexual harassment in sport, particularly when the popular notion is that “everyone does it.”

Study Limitations

This study revealed current sexual harassment experiences and coping responses among Puerto Rican female athletes from two public universities. The frequency of sexual harassment experiences might not be generalized to other sport organizations such as national teams, private universities, or community groups, but does present a consistent picture about the experiences and responses among the Puerto Rican female athletes. During the pilot study, six former athletes revealed similar harassment patterns (Rodriguez & Gill, 2009).

This study is considered the first attempt to investigate sexual harassment experiences and coping responses within the Puerto Rican sport context, a key step in enhancing the understanding of the Hispanic population. In addition, this study provided a unique conceptual and methodological approach for the sport psychology literature. The SEQ-Sport (electronic version) integrated two psychology instruments (SEQ and CHQ) presenting a reliable method for the sport settings. The format of the SEQ-Sport

also directly connected the harassment experiences and coping responses. However, this study also presents limitations that are important to consider. First, the data do not present a normal distribution limiting the statistical analysis. This study focused on the harassment frequencies, and analysis such as Pearson correlation, linear regression, and factor analysis were not performed. The second limitation is related to the process of the data collection. This study used students' e-mails to recruit participants and provide access to the electronic survey. E-mails are considered confidential, and the athletic department had responsibility for (or control over) e-mail lists. Unfortunately, the athletic departments were unable to provide all the e-mails (only 50% of the population) and the study information was not consistently provided to students. Third, the harasser profile did not identify harassers' gender, limiting the full understanding of the process. Finally, the short version of the CHQ (one item per category) and lack of established reliability and validity is a limitation.

Considering the limitations, this study provided useful information regarding the sexual harassment experiences among female athletes. Particularly, this study provides a useful measure (integration of SEQ and CHQ) to enrich understanding of how individuals' respond to different sexual harassment experiences. Overall, the frequency of the harassment experiences and interpretation within the Puerto Rican sport context contribute to the sport psychology knowledge on gender and cultural diversity.

Future Research

This investigation identified the frequency of sexual harassment experiences and behavioral reactions, revealing a profile for the Puerto Rican collegiate female athletes.

The conceptual framework provided a different standpoint from other sports studies while also considering the socio-cultural context of this country's sport structure. Based on the findings, the experiences of female athletes seem to be influenced by the organizational tolerance for sexual harassment, power gender imbalance, and gender stereotyping. The apparent elevated frequency of sexual harassment experiences, particularly gender harassment and rude sexual-based behaviors, are influenced by the socio-cultural values. There is a little research and understanding about the Hispanic population in sport settings, yet there are several research areas and methodological approaches that should be investigated to identify the role of cultural norms within sexual harassment situations. Therefore, this section provides a progressive research line to advance the investigation of sexual harassment, within the Hispanic community, particularly Puerto Rico.

The SEQ-Sport (Spanish version) appeared to be a reliable instrument that could be implemented in other sport settings such as the national team, amateur sport groups, and private universities. These sports settings differ on the purpose of the sport activities and organizational climate; thus identifying behavioral patterns in different sport organizations is a relevant step. However, the SEQ-Sport could be improved by taking the following steps: 1) gather input from several focus groups on athletes' sexual harassment life experiences and coping responses, 2) incorporate and test additional (simple and plain) items in the sexual coercion domain, 3) include the long version of the CHQ to generate sub-scales and provide a stronger measure to compare experiences and

coping responses, and 4) compare P.R. with other Hispanic countries in a cross-cultural study.

Another research area that must be considered is male perception of sexual harassment and behavioral responses. Participants in this study indicated that rude and direct sexual-based conducts are part of a male behavioral pattern in the sport structure. Investigation of male perceptions and behaviors is a key element in understanding sexual harassment conduct within a cultural context. Understanding the perceptions, interactions, and ideologies about sexual harassment in sport are particularly relevant for educational and preventive programs. Based on this study, it is recommended that athletes' sexual harassment experiences should be separated from sexual abuse in future research. In addition, anonymity and confidentiality are crucial for small countries, where "everyone knows everyone" (Rodriguez & Gill, 2009, p.17). Ensuring anonymity could empower female athletes to communicate their experiences without fear of negative consequences.

Summary

This study revealed that 63.4% of female student-athletes experienced gender harassment at least once, 46.4% experienced unwanted sexual attention, and 5% experienced sexual coercion. The open-ended responses clearly exposed the socio-cultural context of female collegiate athletes in Puerto Rico. Participants indicated feeling de-valued and discriminated against, mainly regarding their athletic skills and benefits. The findings in this study support previous studies about the powerless position for Puerto Rican female athletes.

In addition, this study has demonstrated that female athletes cope with different types of sexual harassment situations in different ways. Specifically, athletes experiencing gender harassment situations tended to use internally-focused responses (e.g., detachment, denial, endurance, relabeling, and self-blame) in order to deal with insults against women. Meanwhile, athletes experiencing unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion tended to use a problem-solving method or externally-focused responses (e.g., avoidance, social support, confrontation, appeasement, and institutional relief).

In Puerto Rico, incidents of sexual harassment in academic institutions are protected by Title IX and Law 3. However, the elevated frequency of gender harassment and the coping responses strategies could imply that some forms of sexual harassment are impacted by the socio-cultural context, particularly where sport is still considered a male space.

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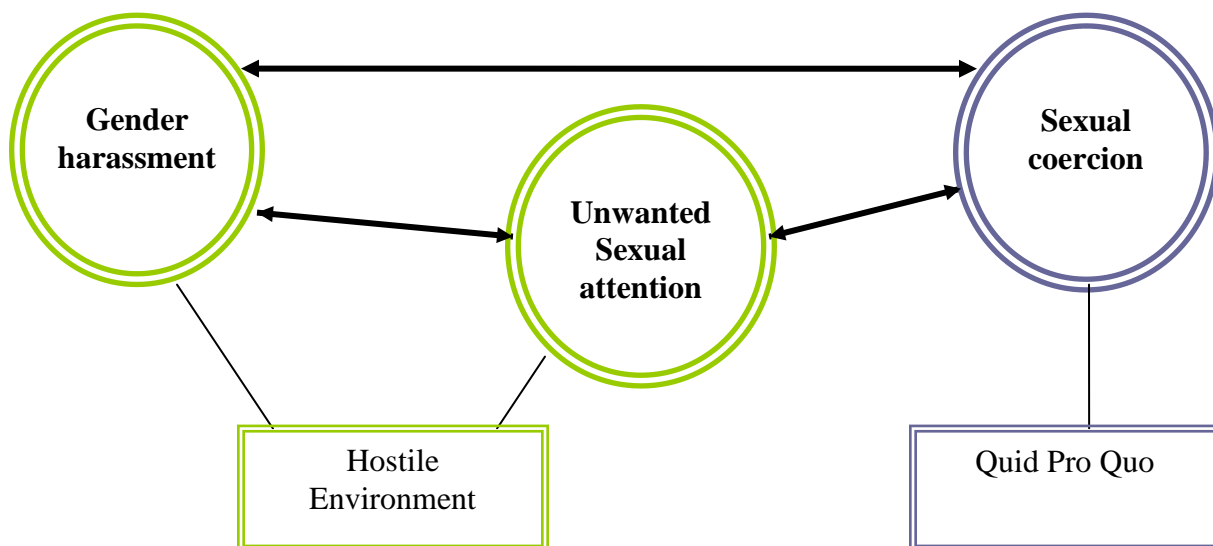
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Appendix A
The Three-Factor Structural Model of Sexual Harassment



Note: The conceptual model integrated psychology behaviors with the legal concept of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

Appendix B
Form of Consent

CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: LONG FORM

Project Title: Sexual harassment experiences and coping responses among Puerto Rican female student-athletes

Project Director: Enid A. Rodriguez, doctoral graduate student and Diane L. Gill, PhD., Department of Kinesiology

What is the study about?

The purpose of this research project is to identify female student-athletes' experiences and coping responses toward certain offensive behaviors that sometimes occurred in sport settings.

Why are you asking me?

In order to investigate the experiences of student-athletes, participants must be female athletes with a minimum age of 18 years old, and enrolled in Fall 2009-2010 at the University of Puerto Rico.

What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?

Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. This study involves an easy access into an electronic survey. This study expects to obtain an approximate 160 voluntary people. If you decide to participate, we will request you to access to this direct internet link and fill the survey. It should take an approximately 15-20 minutes to answer.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=8M8Sf98eoVCLBV4p1Q6p1Q_3d_3d

What are the dangers to me?

Participation in this study poses no physical risk, but for this sensitive topic you may experience minimal psychological discomfort such as stress, uncomfortable thoughts or emotions. Therefore, if you experience any emotional discomfort you have the choice to avoid answering those uncomfortable questions. Remember, your participation is anonymous.

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated or if you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact Eric Allen in the Office of Research Compliance at UNCG at (336) 256-1482, or the Office of Research Compliance from the University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras Campus (787) 764-0000 extension 2515 or Mayaguez Campus at (787)832-4040 extension 3846. Questions, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study can be answered by Enid A. Rodriguez who may be contacted at (787) 469-5784, earodri2@uncg.edu or Diane Gill at (336) 334-4683, dlgill@uncg.edu.

Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?

This research is the first study targeting Puerto Rican student-athletes experiences and coping responses toward certain offensive behaviors. Your participation may help to expand the sport literature in relation to the experiences of collegiate female athletes. You will not have a direct benefit from the study.

Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?

Participation in this study may benefit society establishing better understanding of female athletes experiences within the Puerto Rican sport context.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?

There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

How will you keep my information confidential?

All the information participants submit in the survey (electronic format) is confidential and anonymous. The format of this survey assures participants' confidentiality by not requesting name, student identification, password or other personal information that might identify participants. Your participation is anonymous. Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing. However, the internet website accessing this survey provides anti-spam and security system.

What if I want to leave the study?

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw (from the survey) at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way.

What about new information/changes in the study?

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

BY MARKING **YES**, YOU ARE AGREEING THAT YOU ARE 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER. YOU ALSO AGREE PARTICIPATING VOLUNTARALY IN THIS STUDY DESCRIBED TO YOU ABOVE.

- YES**, I agree to participate in the project.
- NO**, I do not agree to participate in this study. You can exit this page without penalties.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This consent form is an important part of you rights as a participant. Please, print this page (or maintain the document sent to you by email) for your personal record.

Appendix C
SEQ-Sport (English version)

Section 1.

BACKGROUND

We will like to know about you. Please, mark your answer.

1. In which University Campus are you studying?

- UPR, Rio Piedras Campus
 UPR, Mayaguez Campus

2. What is your current academic year in this university?

- 1 2 3 4 5

3. Where are you living while you study in college?

I AM STAYING:

- With my parents
 With other family members
 In athletic housing
 In College apartment with roommates
 In College apartment without roommates

4. Mark any financial aid that you are receiving while you are studying. Mark all that apply.

- a. Athletic scholarship: yes no
b. Pell grant: yes no
c. Government grant: yes no
d. Other financial assistantship: yes no (specify :____)

5. What is your sport?

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| track and field <input type="checkbox"/> | swimming <input type="checkbox"/> | basketball <input type="checkbox"/> | softball <input type="checkbox"/> |
| table tennis <input type="checkbox"/> | judo <input type="checkbox"/> | chess <input type="checkbox"/> | taekwondo <input type="checkbox"/> |
| tennis <input type="checkbox"/> | volleyball <input type="checkbox"/> | cheerleading <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| soccer <input type="checkbox"/> | wrestling <input type="checkbox"/> | bowling <input type="checkbox"/> | |

6. In your sport do you have: Male coach Female coach

7. What are your athletic accomplishments? Mark all that apply.

I PARTICIPATED IN:

- Collegiate Sport National team
 Centroamerican Games Panamerican Games Olympic Games

Section 2.

EXPERIENCES IN YOUR SPORT

Now, please tell us about your experiences in your collegiate sport as you complete this survey. Some of these questions may seem very personal, and some questions ask about very offensive behaviors. We ask them because people are not always treated with respect in the sport arena. To understand this disrespect, we have to ask some very serious questions. Remember that you can skip any questions that you do not want to answer and that YOUR ANSWERS ARE COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONIMOUS.

Part A-1.

While you have been participating in collegiate sport, has anyone (coaches, athletic department staff, medical staff, spectators, other athletes, or anyone else)...

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once or twice</i>	<i>Some-times</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>
1. told you dirty or sexually offensive stories or jokes?	1	2	3	4	5
2. said crude or gross sexual things, either in front of others or to you alone?	1	2	3	4	5
3. called you a lesbian or a "dyke"?	1	2	3	4	5
4. said things to insult women IN GENERAL (for example, saying that women don't make good athletes)?	1	2	3	4	5
5. said they expected you to behave certain ways because you are a women (for example, expecting you as a women to wear sexy and provocative athletic uniform?)	1	2	3	4	5

** Computer will skip to part B-1 if all the responses above are never. Otherwise, the survey will continue to part A-2, coping responses.*

Part A-2. Now, think about the people who created these situations described in the previous section. Please indicate how much each of the following people bothered you in collegiate sport:

	None	Not a lot	Some	A lot
a. Coaches	1	2	3	4
b. Athletic department staff	1	2	3	4
c. Spectators	1	2	3	4
d. Other athletes	1	2	3	4

RESPONSES

Think about how you responded when you experienced those situations. Did you try to do anything about these situations? You may have tried several things, and you may have responded differently to different people. We would like to know all the different things you did. For each statement, mark your response. Try to answer all the questions even if you did say anything to anyone.

WHEN I FACED THESE BEHAVIORS...	Yes, and made thing better	Yes, but it made no difference	Yes, and it made things worse	No, I did not do this
1. I tried to stay away from this person	1	2	3	4
2. I told myself it was not really important.	1	2	3	4
3. I talked about it with someone I trusted	1	2	3	4
4. I let this person know I didn't like what he/she was doing	1	2	3	4
5. I assumed this person meant well.	1	2	3	4
6. I made an excuse so he/she would leave me alone.	1	2	3	4
7. I blamed myself for what happened	1	2	3	4
8. I talked to a staff from university services or athletic department	1	2	3	4
9. I tried to forget it.	1	2	3	4
10. I just put up with it.	1	2	3	4

Part B-1.

While you have been participating in collegiate sport, has anyone (coaches, athletic department staff, medical staff, spectators, other athletes, or anyone else)...

	Never	Once or twice	Some- times	Often	Most of the time
1. tried to get you to talk about sexual things?	1	2	3	4	5
2. said offensive things about your body or physical appearance?	1	2	3	4	5
3. gave you a sexual "look" that made you feel uncomfortable?	1	2	3	4	5
4. tried to have a romantic or sexual relationship even though you tried to tell him/her you didn't want to?	1	2	3	4	5
5. kept on asking you out even after you refuse?	1	2	3	4	5
6. made dirty remarks about you to others?	1	2	3	4	5
7. touched you (for example, put an arm around your shoulders) in a way that made you feel uncomfortable?	1	2	3	4	5
8. tried to stroke your leg or other body part?	1	2	3	4	5
9. gave you any sexual attention that you did not want?	1	2	3	4	5

* Computer will skip to part C-1 if all the responses are never. Otherwise, the survey will continue to part B-2, coping responses..

Part B-2.

Think about the people who created these situations described in the previous section. Please indicate how much each of the following people bothered you in collegiate sport:

	None	Not a lot	Some	A lot
a. Coaches	1	2	3	4
b. Athletic department staff	1	2	3	4
c. Spectators	1	2	3	4
d. Other athletes	1	2	3	4

RESPONSES

Think about how you responded when you experienced those situations. Did you try to do anything about these situations? You may have tried several things, and you may have responded differently to different people. We would like to know all the different things you did. For each statement, mark your response. Try to answer all the questions even if you did say anything to anyone.

WHEN I FACED THESE BEHAVIORS...	Yes, and made thing better	Yes, but it made no difference	Yes, and it made things worse	No, I did not do this
1. I tried to stay away from this person	1	2	3	4
2. I told myself it was not really important.	1	2	3	4
3. I talked about it with someone I trusted	1	2	3	4
4. I let this person know I didn't like what he/she was doing	1	2	3	4
5. I assumed this person meant well.	1	2	3	4
6. I made an excuse so he/she would leave me alone.	1	2	3	4
7. I blamed myself for what happened	1	2	3	4
8. I talked to a staff from university services or athletic department	1	2	3	4
9. I tried to forget it.	1	2	3	4
10. I just put up with it.	1	2	3	4

Part C-1.

While you have been participating in collegiate sport, has anyone (coaches, athletic department staff, medical staff, spectators, other athletes, or anyone else)...

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once or twice</i>	<i>Some-times</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>
1. tried to subtly bribed you with reward for sexual cooperation?	1	2	3	4	5
2. gave you a reward prior he/she ask you for sexual cooperation as an exchange of benefits? (for example, gave you a starter position if you acceded for sexual interaction)	1	2	3	4	5
3. tried to subtly threatened you for your lack of sexual cooperation?	1	2	3	4	5
4. made you experienced negative consequences for refusing a sexual cooperation?	1	2	3	4	5
5. sexually harassed you?	1	2	3	4	5

**Computer will skip to section 3 if all the responses are never. Otherwise, the survey will continue to part C-2, coping responses.*

Part C-2.

Think about the people who created these situations described in the previous section. Please indicate how much each of the following people bothered you in collegiate sport:

	None	Not a lot	Some	A lot
a. Coaches	1	2	3	4
b. Athletic department staff	1	2	3	4
c. Spectators	1	2	3	4
d. Other athletes	1	2	3	4

** Skip to section personal experience if all the responses are never. Otherwise, the survey will continue to coping responses.*

RESPONSES

Think about how you responded when you experienced those situations. Did you try to do anything about these situations? You may have tried several things, and you may have responded differently to different people. We would like to know all the different things you did. For each statement, mark your response. Try to answer all the questions even if you did say anything to anyone.

WHEN I FACED THESE BEHAVIORS...	Yes, and made thing better	Yes, but it made no difference	Yes, and it made things worse	No, I did not do this
1. I tried to stay away from this person	1	2	3	4
2. I told myself it was not really important.	1	2	3	4
3. I talked about it with someone I trusted	1	2	3	4
4. I let this person know I didn't like what he/she was doing	1	2	3	4
5. I assumed this person meant well.	1	2	3	4
6. I made an excuse so he/she would leave me alone.	1	2	3	4
7. I blamed myself for what happened	1	2	3	4
8. I talked to a staff from university services or athletic department	1	2	3	4
9. I tried to forget it.	1	2	3	4
10. I just put up with it.	1	2	3	4

Section 3.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Finally, we want to know about your personal experiences in your collegiate sport. Your experiences are unique and will help us to understand how some people in sport might treat some female athletes with disrespect. We appreciate any detail about your past experiences in your collegiate sport. If you have more than one experience, try to remember the MOST UNCOMFORTABLE situation that you ever experienced.

1. Have you ever felt devalued or degraded as a female athlete in your collegiate sport? For example, someone told you insulting comments about women or diminished your work as a female athlete.

YES

NO

If Yes,

a. Briefly describe; what were the comments or behaviors that made you feel uncomfortable?

b. How did you respond to this situation?

c. How did you feel in that moment? (e.g., angry, embarrassed, confident, flattered, etc.)

2. Have you ever experienced unwanted sexual attention in your collegiate sport? For example, someone slowly looked at your body, touch you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable, or repeatedly request for date despite your rejection?

YES

NO

If Yes,

a. Briefly describe; what comments or behaviors made you uncomfortable?

b. How did you respond (or reacted) to this situation?

c. How did you feel in that moment? (e.g., angry, embarrassed, confident, flattered, etc.)

3. Has anyone in your collegiate sport requested sexual favor (e.g., sexual interaction, physical touch) in exchange for any academic, athletic, or economic privilege?

YES

NO

If Yes,

a. Briefly describe; what behavior or situation occurred?

b. How did you respond and confront this situation?

c. How did you feel in that situation? (e.g. angry, embarrassed, confident, flattered, etc.)

4. If you have any thoughts about inappropriate sexual conduct that sometimes occurs in sport, please provide your comments.

*Thank you for your participation!
For more information on what to do:*

UPR, Rio Piedras Campus

Departamento de Consejería
Sala de recursos de orientación oficina 215,
Decanato de estudiantes
Edificio Carlota Matienzo
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Lunes-Viernes: 8:00am-12:00m/1:00pm – 4:30pm

UPR, Recinto de Mayaguez

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Lunes-Viernes: 7:30am- 4:30pm