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# The Application of Role Theory to the Sexual Harassment Paradigm: A Policy Capturing Approach

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THE APPLICATION OF ROLE THEORY  
TO THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT PARADIGM:  
A POLICY CAPTURING APPROACH

by

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## ABSTRACT

### THE APPLICATION OF ROLE THEORY TO THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT PARADIGM: A POLICY CAPTURING APPROACH

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Old Dominion University, 1999  
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This research utilized policy capturing techniques to analyze the different factors individuals use when determining sexual harassment. The importance of level of power, verbal behavior, and invasiveness of touch were examined. Additionally, role theory was applied to the sexual harassment paradigm in order to understand how context factors within an organization affect the perception of sexual harassment. Profile analysis was used to determine how the perception of what constitutes harassing behavior is mitigated by one's role in the organization.

Participants were one hundred and five males and one hundred and fifteen females who were either currently employed or employed within the last six months. Participants were asked to complete take-home packets that contained a series of questionnaires that were designed to measure the perception of and response to sexual harassment. Thirty-two sexual harassment scenarios that were a full manipulation of three levels of power, verbal behavior, and touch were also included in the packet. Participants were asked to read each scenario and indicate how appropriate they felt the described behavior was in the workplace, how likely they were to respond to the situation, and to choose

the response type that best described how they would react to the situation. In order to establish the level of realism of these scenarios, participants were asked to indicate how easy it was for them to imagine the situation and to assess how likely the behavior was to occur in the workplace. Additionally, in order to assess the context within which the participants worked, a series of questionnaires that contained measures of organizational factors, attributes of the person, and interpersonal factors were included.

The findings revealed that the perception of and response to sexual harassment were affected by the level of invasiveness of touch, the level of verbal behavior, and the relative power of the perpetrator. Different organizational factors, personal attributes, and interpersonal factors were found to affect the perception of sexually harassing role expectations and anticipated role behaviors. Role perceptions and behaviors were influenced by the gender-ratio of one's occupation; the organization's policies and culture regarding its tolerance for sexual harassment; the rater's gender, age, race, and relationship status; one's tolerance for sexual harassment; and one's previous experience with certain types of interpersonal harassment. Although all a priori hypotheses regarding the context factors were not confirmed, it is still believed that role theory provides a viable model for understanding the perception of sexual harassment.

This dissertation is dedicated to  
my precious children Briana and Andrew  
and to my loving husband Michael.

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 1990s, organizational executives have become increasingly aware of the importance of understanding and preventing sexual harassment. It is estimated that between 42 and 88 percent of working women have been harassed at some point in the course of their careers (Gutek, 1985). Sexual harassment can cost organizations millions of dollars from its effects on turnover (Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Koss, 1993; Terpstra & Baker, 1987), absenteeism (Gutek & Koss, 1993; Terpstra & Baker, 1987), decreased work performance (Martin, 1980), decreased job satisfaction (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Morrow, McElroy, & Phillips, 1994; Ragins & Scadura, 1995), decreased job motivation (Gutek & Koss, 1993), strained relations between coworkers and supervisors (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982), and litigation costs (Husbands, 1992; Terpstra & Baker, 1988). Additionally, victims of sexual harassment experience increased psychological distress (Gosselin, 1984; Terpstra & Baker, 1987; Thacker & Gohmann, 1993), lower self-esteem, and decreased life satisfaction (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982).

It has been suggested by Paul (1991) that women need to develop a thick skin to survive and prosper in the workplace. However, it is truly in the best interest of organizations and society at large to prevent sexual

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harassment, punish harassers, and educate employees about harassment and the effects that it has on the workplace. In order to prevent sexual harassment, it is essential to understand precisely what types of behaviors constitute sexual harassment. However, individuals differ as to what they believe is harassing behavior. One goal of this research is to utilize policy capturing techniques to analyze the different policies individuals use when interpreting potentially harassing situations. Of particular interest to this research endeavor is the application of role theory to the sexual harassment paradigm. The prevalence and cost of sexual harassment makes it essential for us to determine, among other things, how our perception of what constitutes harassing behavior is mitigated by our role in the organization.

The present study will begin with a review of the sexual harassment literature and presentation of the different sexual harassment models. This will be followed by a summary of the literature on role theory and a discussion of how role theory can be applied to the understanding of differences in the perception of and response to sexual harassment. Additionally, role theory will be examined in terms of how different context factors affect decisions about the appropriateness of sexual behaviors in the workplace and the choice of response to it. How policy capturing and profile analysis can be utilized to identify decision making differences will then be examined.

Finally, a hypotheses section will outline all relevant hypotheses.

### Sexual Harassment

It is difficult to fully define sexual harassment on the basis of any one incident, because the incident is frequently ambiguous and allows preexisting attitudes to influence the perception of the event (Cohen & Gutek, 1985). Despite this difficulty, it is essential to understand what elements lead to the perception of sexual harassment. Many researchers have attempted to uncover various contextual conditions that lead to the labeling and accusation of sexual harassment. Many factors may influence the labeling of an event as sexual harassment, such as an individual's attitudes towards women, sexuality, gender and interpersonal relationships, as well as an organization's commitment to preventing and addressing sexual harassment (Kremer & Marks, 1992). Victims of offensive behavior have been found to respond more strongly when they perceive the offending behavior as sexual harassment and when they perceive the work environment as encouraging the problem (Bingham & Scherer, 1993).

### Classification Systems

In 1980, a classification system was developed by Till that divided harassment into five categories: gender harassment, seductive harassment, sexual bribery, threat, and sexual imposition. According to Till, gender harassment includes generalized sexist remarks and behavior, not

necessarily designed to elicit sexual cooperation. Seductive behavior is considered inappropriate and/or offensive advances that do not result in negative consequences if refused. With sexual bribery, sexual behavior or activity is solicited by the promise of reward. The fourth category designated by Till is threat, where threats of punishment are made to coerce sexual activity. Finally, sexual imposition is a direct sexual violation and assault.

The system designed by Till (1980) was an extension of the two types of harassment previously recognized by MacKinnon (1979). MacKinnon distinguished between *quid pro quo* harassment (sexual cooperation coerced as a means to obtain rewards or avoid punishment) and *conditions of work* (where sexist or sexually offensive behavior is present but there is no required sexual exchange). The multidimensional structure of harassment was further examined by Fitzgerald and Hesson-McInnis in 1989. They found that *type* and *severity* of harassment are two dimensions relevant to the concept of sexual harassment. In testing Till's classification, Fitzgerald and Hesson-McInnis (1989) found that gender harassment is a distinct construct from sexual harassment.

A tripartite model of the sexual harassment construct was proposed and tested by Gelfand, Fitzgerald and Dragow (1995). This model proposes that sexual harassment is a behavioral construct composed of three distinct dimensions:

gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. This is based upon the previous work of Fitzgerald and Shullman (1985) who broke sexual harassment into the dimensions of gender harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual coercion. However, Gelfand et al. (1995) prefer the substitution of the words *unwanted sexual attention* for *sexual harassment*. Gelfand et al. found support for their model among employed women and students within two cultures (i.e., the United States and Brazil).

A typology for classifying harassment was developed by Gruber in 1992. He made the distinction between *interpersonal* and *environmental* harassment. Environmental harassment occurs when the sexualized behaviors occur in the workplace and yet the behaviors are directed at no person in particular. An example of this is when women working in a predominately male, blue-collar job (i.e., a shipyard) are exposed to pornographic pictures and calendars that are displayed despite their offensiveness to others. Conversely, interpersonal sexual harassment is directed at a specific target. This occurs when a perpetrator engages in unsolicited and unwelcome sexualized behaviors that are targeted at a particular person. When comparing the effects of environmental and interpersonal harassment, interpersonal harassment has been found to result in significantly more dysphoria, other-person blame, and anticipated assertiveness (Samoluk & Pretty, 1994).

Another way in which psychologists have tried to

understand the various types of sexual harassment is through an analysis of court documents and decisions. Legally, the prevalence of two types of sexual harassment have been identified: *quid pro quo* and *hostile work environment*. With *quid pro quo* harassment there is generally a clear-cut case of being forced to do a sexual favor in order to avoid negative consequences at work or receive employment benefits (e.g., be fired, to get a promotion; Thacker & Gohmann, 1993).

#### Defining Sexual Harassment

Determining what exactly constitutes a hostile work environment (e.g., sexual comments and jokes, sexually-oriented pictures, touching) is difficult, as this has not been clearly delineated (Thacker & Gohmann, 1993). The reason for this is that individual definitions of a hostile work environment differ within and between the sexes (Terpstra & Baker, 1987). Sexual joking, touching, or patting may be seen as unwelcome to some, but not others. Certain verbal remarks or requests may be perceived as positive to some and not others (e.g., "You have a cute ass." Gutek, Nakamura, Gahart, Handschumacker, & Russell, 1980). A sexually solicitous remark may be perceived as positive or negative depending on who makes the request. It is therefore essential to not only focus on the behavior by the initiator, but also on how the recipient perceives the experience (Gutek et al., 1980).

There is a general lack of agreement upon what



constitutes harassment. Across genders, high levels of disagreement were found when examining the presence or absence of harassment in 68 scenarios (Baird et al., 1995). Personal experience with sexual harassment has been found to affect the perception and labeling of sexual harassment (Loy & Stewart, 1984). Men have been found to label fewer sexual behaviors at work as "sexual harassment" than women (Konrad & Gutek, 1986). This difference can be explained by a number of different factors. First, men and women have different personal orientations toward sexual overtures at work. Men and women also have different experiences with sexual overtures at work. Gender composition was also found to affect the labeling of sexual harassment behaviors (Konrad & Gutek, 1986).

When attempting to replicate the above research, Murrell and Dietz-Uhler (1993) found only limited support for the generalizability of the Konrad and Gutek (1986) findings. Murrell and Dietz-Uhler (1993) found that for male college students direct experience with sexual harassment and adversarial sexual beliefs significantly predicted attitudes toward sexual harassment. Those males who had direct experience with sexual harassment expressed more tolerant attitudes about sexual harassment. It is believed that experience with sexual harassment may have desensitized them to the issue of sexual harassment (Murrell & Dietz-Uhler, 1993).

In 1981, a survey of 20,000 federal employees was

conducted by the Merit System Protection Board to determine what different behaviors were perceived to constitute sexual harassment. Of the women surveyed, the following figures indicate the percentage of the women who felt the harassing behavior was an act of sexual harassment: harassing letters and calls (87%), deliberate touching (84%), pressure for sexual favors (81%), pressure for dates (65%), suggestive looks (64%), and sexual remarks (54%).

It appears that for certain types of behavior there are high levels of agreement about whether or not the behavior is sexually harassing. These behaviors are generally more clear-cut forms of sexual coercion on the part of the initiator. Disagreement as to what constitutes harassment occurs when the behavior represents an aspect of hostile work environment rather than quid pro quo harassment. For example, Terpstra and Baker (1987) found that of all the individuals they surveyed, 99% felt that harassment occurs when job threats are used to secure sexual favors and 98% felt that harassment occurs when offers of job enhancements are used to obtain sexual favors. There was high agreement that both situations represented genuine sexual harassment. One reason for this consensus is that these behaviors are examples of quid pro quo harassment.

Opinions about sexual harassment are not as unanimous when the behaviors are examples of a hostile environment. Terpstra and Baker (1987) found that 47% of working women, 31% of female students, and 33% of male students felt that a

shoulder squeeze was harassment. Similarly, Gutek et al. (1980) found considerable variation across genders as to what constitutes sexual harassment. Although the majority of men and women surveyed felt that sexual activity as a condition of employment was harassment, there was considerable disagreement for other behaviors. When asked whether dating as a condition of employment was harassment, 25% of men and 14% of women felt it was not sexual harassment. The largest gender difference occurred for nonverbal behaviors of a sexual nature (i.e., looking, leering, making gestures, touching, brushing against). Whereas 65.5% of women felt that the above nonverbal behaviors were sexually harassing, only 35% of men agreed.

#### Reasonableness

Determining the presence of a hostile work environment has previously relied upon the notion of how a "reasonable person" would view the situation (Thacker & Gohmann, 1993). However, the perception of "reasonableness" has been found to differ between men and women. It has been consistently found in the literature (e.g., Gutek, 1985) that males are less likely than females to attribute sexual harassment to the alleged harasser and are more likely to blame the female victim.

Thacker and Gohmann (1993) examined two recent court cases to understand the differences in "reasonableness" between genders. In the 1991 case of Ellison v. Brady, instead of relying on the "reasonable person" standard the

court looked to the "reasonable woman" standard. This "reasonable woman" standard was also applied in the 1988 court case of Robinson v. Jacksonville Shipyards. In this case it was ruled that allowing employers to require a mental examination of harassment targets was a dangerous precedent and instead relied upon whether a "reasonable woman" would find the pornographic material and language used by the initiators offensive (Thacker & Gohmann, 1993).

The perception of a hostile work environment is a function of the gender of the perpetrator and recipient (Baird, Bensko, Bell, Viney, & Woody, 1995; Weiner, Watts, Goldkamp, & Gasper, 1995). Baird et al. (1995) had undergraduate students read 34 scenarios of men and women interacting at work and rate them on a seven-point Likert-type scale as to whether the scenario represented sexual harassment. Consistent with previous research was the finding that women rated "hostile work environment" scenarios as more harassing than do men. Male perpetrators were also seen as being more harassing than female perpetrators. These findings would seem to support the notion of distinguishing between "reasonable woman" and "reasonable person" as two different perspectives. In fact, Weiner et al. (1995) found that gender accounts for 10% of the variance in final judgments of hostile work environment harassment. However, Wiener (1995; Weiner et al., 1995) argues that since there is lack of consensus among "reasonable" women as to what constitutes sexual harassment,

it is a questionable practice for legal cases to use this perspective.

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's *Guidelines on Sexual Harassment*, the key to understanding whether a behavior constitutes hostile environment harassment is to determine whether the target of the behavior finds it to be "unwelcome" or offensive (Fitzgerald, 1993; Thacker & Gohmann, 1993). In virtually every country that has sexual harassment statutes, the essential element in any harassment complaint is whether the conduct is unwelcome (Husbands, 1992). According to the EEOC, when quid pro quo harassment occurs attempts at sexual cooperation is extorted through subtle or explicit threats of job-related consequences. The unwelcome nature of these threats is very clear. More disagreement surrounds the criterion of "unwelcome" in hostile environment cases. It is therefore crucial to fully examine how different individuals view different hostile environments to fully understand "reasonableness." In a survey of federal workers, Thacker and Gohmann (1993) found that indeed females are more likely to define hostile environment behaviors as sexual harassment. In that study, females were also more likely to indicate the need for emotional and medical counseling as a result of experiencing hostile environment harassment.

Many other factors can affect the perception of a hostile work environment as sexual harassment. Gutek and

Morasch (1983) used short ambiguous scenarios to determine the effects of sex of respondent, gender of target and perpetrator, relative status of target and perpetrator, and depicted perpetrator behavior on the perception of sexual harassment by a third party. Using a varimax rotation, a number of factors emerged: the relationship between the perpetrator and the target, the evaluation of the incident, the appropriateness of the behavior, the probability of reverse behavior, and the likelihood the incident happening and occurring again in the future.

In an extension of the above research, Cohen and Gutek (1985) used ambiguous vignettes to determine the effect of sex of initiator, initiator status, and behavior on the perception of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment was assessed using 19 five-point Likert-type items. It was found that when interpreting sexual harassment situations, third party observers place relatively little emphasis on variables that directly assess the sexual and harassing nature of the incident, and place more weight on the personal aspects of the incident and on the interpersonal relationship between those involved. Cohen and Gutek (1985) attribute these findings to the general public's unwillingness to admit the existence and preponderance of sexual harassment.

#### Gender and the Experience of Sexual Harassment

The gender of the victim and perpetrator are relevant to sexual harassment research. It has consistently been

found in the literature that women experience higher rates of sexual harassment than men (e.g., Komaromy, Bindman, Haber, & Sande, 1993; Roscoe, Goodwin, Repp, & Rose, 1987), particularly unmarried women (Glass, 1988). Schneider (1982) found that a minimum of two-thirds of the women in her study experienced unwanted sexual approaches in the workplace within one year. Women are four times as likely to be victims of sexual harassment than men, view sexual harassment more negatively, and are more likely to believe that sexual behavior and work do not mix (Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982). Gruber and Bjorn (1982) found that harassment occurred more frequently in Blacks, unmarried or young (under 25) women, those with low job status, and women who were the sizable minority. Similar data were found by Fain and Anderton (1987). These researchers found that young, unmarried women of minority status are most likely to report being harassed.

Men and women differ in their assignment of blame regarding sexual harassment in the workplace. Men are more likely than women to blame women for being sexually harassed (Jensen & Gutek, 1982) as well as trivialize the event (Pryor, 1985). When surveying women, previous victims of sexual harassment are less likely than those who have not been victims to blame women for being sexually harassed (Jensen & Gutek, 1982). However, the victims themselves engage in self-blame. Jensen and Gutek (1982) found that one year following an incident of sexual harassment between

20 and 30 percent of women victims endorsed each of three self-blame statements that related to the appropriateness of one's behavior (i.e., "Perhaps something in my behavior brought it about...") and character (i.e., "I am the sort of person these kinds of incidents are likely to happen to..."). The most common form of self-blame was behavioral self-blame. When a victim experiences behavioral self-blame, she is less likely to report the incident or talk to someone about it (Jensen & Gutek, 1982).

Across-gender harassment is the most common form of harassment, however same-gender harassment does occur. Based upon the results of a cross-sectional survey of 50 percent of the members of the Iowa chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, Maypole (1986) reported that women were more likely to be harassed than men and that the gender composition of their harassers was exclusively male. In contrast, Maypole (1986) reported that male victims of harassment had both male and female perpetrators. Maahs (1995) found that gender of the supervisor predicted the occurrence of sexual harassment, where individuals with opposite sex supervisors were more likely to be harassed.

Gender ratios in the workplace have been found to affect the occurrence of sexual harassment (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982). Women in traditionally male occupations (tradeswomen and transit workers) encounter significantly more adverse working conditions than their traditional counterparts (Mansfield, Koch, Henderson, Vicary, Cohn, & Young, 1991).



Additionally, these women report significantly less satisfaction and more stress at work. Mansfield and her associates (1991) found that tradeswomen were the most likely to experience sexual harassment when compared with transit workers and school secretaries. Similarly, Gutek (1985; Gutek & Morasch, 1982) found that women in skewed-sex organizations are more likely to be harassed. The above findings on gender ratios and harassment differ from those of Fain and Anderton (1987). These researchers found that harassment was reported more frequently in female-predominant groups rather than male-predominant groups. The findings of Fain and Anderton (1987) may be an artifact of harassment report rate, since women in male predominant groups may be less likely to identify or report sexual harassment due to pressure from the group. It appears that women in sex-segregated, nontraditional jobs need not only demonstrate their competence and abilities, but also somehow "overcome" their gender as well (Mansfield, Vicary, Cohn, Koch, & Young, 1988; Walshok, 1981).

#### Collar-type and the Experience of Sexual Harassment

Occupations can fall into three collar-types: "white-collar," "blue-collar," and "pink collar" (Fiske & Glick, 1995). White-collar jobs (e.g., management) are traditionally male dominated and highly prestigious. Blue-collar jobs (e.g., construction workers) are the most "masculine" jobs and have relatively low prestige. Pink-collar jobs are those that are dominated by women and are

perceived to be feminine and of low to moderate prestige (e.g., nurse, librarian, teacher, flight attendant). Pink-collar jobs generally require "feminine" personality traits and are considered traditional jobs for women.

Ragins and Scandura (1995) found that the distinction between white- and blue-collar occupations is relevant to sexual harassment research. In their study, white- and blue-collar women reported significant differences in the incidence of and response to sexual harassment. Women in blue-collar occupations reported greater harassment than did white-collar women. However, white-collar women were more likely to report active behavioral responses to harassment (i.e., getting angry, reporting the harasser). Their blue-collar counterparts were more likely to report passive responses to harassment, such as ignoring the incident or laughing it off. Disturbingly, blue-collar women actually reported that the more frequent the harassment, the more likely they were to ignore the incident and shrug it off. This may be the result of pressure on these women to "tough it out" in order to prove themselves to be "one of the boys" (Ragins & Scandura, 1995). This is contrary to the findings of Gruber and Bjorn (1982), where it was reported that overall women who were severely harassed tended to respond in a more assertive manner.

One job collar-type Ragins and Scandura (1995) failed to examine was harassment of women in pink-collar jobs. These types of jobs are non-threatening to masculine

dominance and so may inhibit hostility-motivated harassment (Fiske & Glick, 1995). Sexual harassment of pink-collar women is more likely motivated by intimacy-seeking and ambivalence that is paternalistic in nature (Fiske & Glick, 1995). Sexual harassment toward these women is fostered by cultural images of nurses, stewardesses, waitresses, and receptionists (Gutek, 1985), as well as their relative lack of power (Fiske & Glick, 1995).

#### Power and Sexual Harassment

The relative power of the perpetrator can also influence the perception of and response to sexual harassment. In a review of the harassment literature, Maypole and Skaine (1983) found that almost all definitions of harassment include the word "unwanted" and included the concept of power. Although supervisor harassment is generally associated with more severe offenses (*quid pro quo*; Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; Loy & Steward, 1984), coworker and subordinate harassment also occur. Samoluk and Pretty (1994) compared harassment across organizational status (i.e., supervisor versus coworker harassment). These researchers found that when the same behavioral examples of interpersonal harassment are displayed by both a supervisor and coworker, women experienced increased dysphoria and anticipated assertiveness and relatively less self-blame when the offender was the supervisor.

Coworker harassment is actually the most common form of sexual harassment, despite coworkers' relatively lower job

status than supervisors within the organization (Gutek, 1985). This is because coworker harassers may be using different bases of power (Cleveland & Kerst, 1993). For example, power differences may occur across coworkers through informal networks, differential support, and latitude of decision-making provided by the supervisor (Kanter, 1977). When examining the effects of power on coworker or subordinate harassment, researchers must consider the level of power, sources of power, context of the harassing situation, and victim reactions (Cleveland & Kerst, 1993).

Based upon her research, Schneider (1982) defined sexual harassment according to working women as follows: "sexual harassment is an assertion of power, manifested in sexual approaches that are disliked and unwanted, toward blameless women victims." Although power does appear to provide a robust explanation of sexual harassment, by itself it is an insufficient explanation for the behavior (Cleveland & Kerst, 1993).

#### Responses to Sexual Harassment

Just as there are many different types of behaviors that can constitute sexual harassment, there are similarly many different response strategies. Women who are severely harassed tend to respond in a more assertive manner (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982). However, many victims do not tell their harasser to stop (Gutek & Koss, 1993). Victims of sexual harassment may respond actively or passively. Failure of

the victim to respond to harassment may be due to the belief that nothing would be done, that the victim would be ridiculed or that the incident would be treated lightly, that the victim would be blamed, or the victim would suffer repercussions (Maypole & Skaine, 1983).

Gruber and Smith (1995) asked women to describe the harassment incident that upset them the most and indicate how they dealt with the situation. Content analysis of the responses yielded 11 categories: ignore it, responded directly to the person, reported the person, quit the position, retaliated, spoke to someone, avoided the issue, changed ways of acting, did not deal with it, physically removed self, and took it as a joke. Gruber and Smith (1995) combined these response strategies to develop seven categories of response: ignore, avoid the harasser/harassment, change ways of acting, speak to someone, respond directly to the person, report the person, and quit. These categories range from least assertive (ignoring and avoiding), intermediate (changing one's behavior and seeking social support), to most assertive (direct response and reporting). Gruber and Smith (1995) found that harassment severity, source of harassment, and being in an occupation in which women were a threatening minority were the strongest predictors of response assertiveness.

Passive and active responses to sexual harassment were similarly found by Loy and Steward (1984). These researchers found that more passive responses (ignoring the

harassment) were taken by women who experienced commentary harassment. Commentary harassment was considered sexual jokes and comments that make women feel uncomfortable at work. Women who reported harassment that involved physical manhandling were most likely to deal more directly with the incident by saying something to the harasser. Ignoring the incident (31.6%) and saying something to the harasser (38.9%) represent the most common types of responses to verbal and physical harassment. These response types are private ways of dealing with the incident. Other response categories reported by Loy and Steward (1984) deal with the harassment in a public way. The remaining response categories reported were: going to the boss (7.8%), reporting to a committee (3.1%), asking for a transfer (2.6%), quitting (14.5%), and seeking legal help (1.5%).

The prevalence of nonpublic responses to harassment was similarly found by Gruber and Bjorn (1982). The two most common methods reported by Gruber and Bjorn (1982) for dealing with harassment of blue-collar women were ignoring the harassment (23%) and responding mildly to it (e.g., "I've heard all that before" or "I'm not your type"; 21.8%). Other nonpublic response types reported were laughing at the harasser and making light of the situation (10.3%) and delaying the harasser's request (10.3%). More assertive responses were taken by over one-quarter of the women: verbally (14.9%), physically attacking the harasser (6.9%), and taking the matter to someone in a position of authority

(6.9%). Contrary to their initial hypotheses, Gruber and Bjorn (1982) found that attitudinal variables (self-esteem, personal control, feminist orientation), the characteristics of the harassers (e.g., age, race, coworker/supervisor status) and frequency of harassment were not related to harassment response. Severity of the harassment was a significant predictor of response strategy.

Differences in responses to social-sexual behavior toward a Japanese woman at work and coping responses expected from the target were examined by Matsui et al. (1995). These researchers found that the expected response to different vignettes was more assertive in women having liberal sex-role attitudes than in women with more conservative sex-role attitudes. When asked how they would respond to having their buttock touched, a surprising 33% of women reported that they would "do nothing" or "ignore the behavior." Although this research was conducted in a Japan, it is believed that this "silent reaction" to sexual harassment prevails in the United States (Matsui et al., 1995).

The type of response taken by a victim of sexual harassment is related to the source of the harassment (supervisor, coworker, or client; Maypole, 1986). Avoidance is the most common response when the harasser is a supervisor or administrator. When harassment is initiated by a coworker, joking or minimizing is the most likely result. Victims attempt to reason with harassing clients

that the behavior is unwanted.

### Sexual Harassment Models

A number of hypotheses/models exist that attempt to uncover the antecedents of sexual harassment. These include the sex role spillover model, the contact hypothesis, the natural-biological model, the organizational model, and the socio-cultural model.

#### Sex Role Spillover Model

According to the sex role spillover model, harassment is due to the transfer of gender roles to the workplace (Nieva & Gutek, 1981; Ragins & Scandura, 1995). When Benoist and Butcher (1977) used adjectives as a means to discriminate between the different sex roles, they found that judges more often described women as warm, affable, oversocialized, emotional, and unstable; and men were viewed as forceful, dominant, and detached. In addition to the above "female" traits, highly feminine women were seen as submissive, and low-feminine women were described as dominant. Attitudes toward femininity in men were also examined. Highly feminine men were viewed as impulsive, dominant, and socially uneasy, where low-feminine men were described as oversocialized and unconventional.

Sex roles impact the expression of nonverbal behaviors. LaFrance and Carmen (1980) distinguished between sex-typed and androgynous individuals according to nonverbal behavior. They found that according to the situation, individuals with an androgynous sex role combine a blend of "masculine" and



"feminine" behaviors rather than exclusively using either. Conversely, sex-typed individuals were found to avoid cross-gender behaviors and exhibit extreme forms of sex-consistent behaviors.

Sex role spillover occurs when sexualized aspects of the female sex-role identity are brought into the workplace (Gutek & Morasch, 1982). Sex role spillover is hypothesized to occur more likely in skewed gender-ratio environments than equal gender-ratio environments. Women in traditionally male jobs are seen as deviates for doing "a man's job" and gender becomes salient because they are seen as "women" and not "workers" (Glass, 1988; Ragins & Scandura, 1995). The model predicts that the more masculine the occupation, the more likely sexual harassment will occur because masculine role stereotypes will spillover into the workplace. The spillover of these gender roles of men may include swearing, sexual overtures, and inappropriate touching (Deaux, 1995). Women in traditionally female-type occupations may experience more sexual behaviors on the job, but may view them as expected and "part of the job" (Gutek & Morasch, 1982). Partial support for the sex role spillover hypothesis has been found (Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Morasch, 1982; Mansfield et al., 1991; Ragins & Scandura, 1995).

#### Contact Hypothesis

The contact hypothesis explains harassment as the result of contact with the opposite gender (Ragins & Scandura, 1995). According to this hypothesis, women in

male-type jobs experience more harassment than their female-type job or gender-neutral job counterpart due to their increased contact with men. Therefore, as contact increases between genders at work, so will the incidents of perceived sexual harassment. Ragins and Scandura (1995) found no support for this hypothesis.

#### Nature-Biological Model

According to the nature-biological model on sexual harassment, sexual harassment is not harmful and is a natural expression of sexual attraction (Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982). This model states that the intention of sexual harassment is not to discriminate against women, rather that the target should be flattered by the attention. The nature-biological model has not received empirical support (Tangri et al., 1982).

#### Organizational Model

The organizational model states that the occurrence of sexual harassment can be attributed to the facilitating factors within the organization (Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Morasch, 1982; Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982). This means that individuals with higher status in the organization can exert their power to obtain sexual favors. The larger the relative power difference, the more vulnerable one becomes to sexual harassment. The model predicts that women who are harassed by their bosses will experience more distress than those harassed by a co-worker. Partial support for this model has been found (Tangri et al., 1982; Samoluk & Pretty,

1994).

### Sociocultural Model

Another model that proposes to explain sexual harassment is the sociocultural model. This focuses more on the socialized power differentials between genders (Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1992). Unlike the organizational model, the sociocultural model is not based upon organizational characteristics or structure (Samoluk & Pretty, 1994). According to this model, factors within an organization that facilitate sexual harassment actually reflect society's economic and political discrimination against women (Samoluk & Pretty, 1994). This would mean that all women should be equally distressed by the sexual exploitation of women by men, regardless of their position in the organization. Moreover, women who have been exploited should respond with powerlessness (Samoluk & Pretty, 1994). Unequivocal support has not been found for any of the above three models of sexual harassment (natural-biological, organizational, or sociocultural; Tangri et al., 1992).

### Role Theory

None of the above models can adequately explain differences in the perception of and response to sexual harassment. Role theory explains differences in the perception of expectations and behavioral responses at work. This theory can be applied to the sexual harassment paradigm. The current research will examine role theory and its application in the understanding of sexual harassment.

## Roles

Human organizations are role systems. These role systems are contrived structures consisting of patterned and motivated acts or events (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Roles can be considered not only from the perspective of the patterns of behavior expected, but the way these patterns develop, change, and interact (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Since roles are based on expectations and beliefs, they exist in the minds of the individuals involved (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991).

Multiple roles may be held by a single person (Katz & Kahn, 1966). These roles may be comprised of a number of task elements. Task elements are considered the smaller job tasks or components that make up a job (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Some of these task elements are clearly defined and formally described. However, not all task elements are well established and objective. Emergent task elements are considered those that subjective, personal, dynamic, and communicated to the job incumbent through the social system (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Roles can be considered to be composed of these emergent task elements.

## Role Set

Each member of the organization is directly associated with a relatively small number of others that constitutes one's role set. Members of one's role set are linked in various ways to the focal person (role holder) and each member has expectations about the patterns of behavior

expected from the focal person (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). A role set usually consists of supervisor(s), coworkers, and subordinates (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Each person can also be a self-sender, which means he/she can send role expectations to him/herself (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

Members of the role set help the focal person define his/her role and what behaviors are expected of him/her. Role expectations, or emergent task elements, are not restricted to the job description and exist in the minds of members of the role set. Role expectations are "sent" to the target person by the members of the role set either directly or indirectly. When the focal person deviates from his/her role and organizational acceptability, he/she is corrected by members of his/her role set (Katz & Kahn, 1966). There may be a lack of agreement between members of the role set about role expectations/emergent task elements. When there are conflicting expectations, the focal person may conform to the emergent task elements from the member of the role set who is perceived to possess greater power (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991).

#### The Role Episode

To explain the process of sending and receiving roles, Katz and Kahn (1966) developed a classic model based on the role episode (see Figure 1). The role episode model has four components: role expectations, sent role, received role, and role behavior. The model relies on the perception, cognition, motivation, and behavior of the role

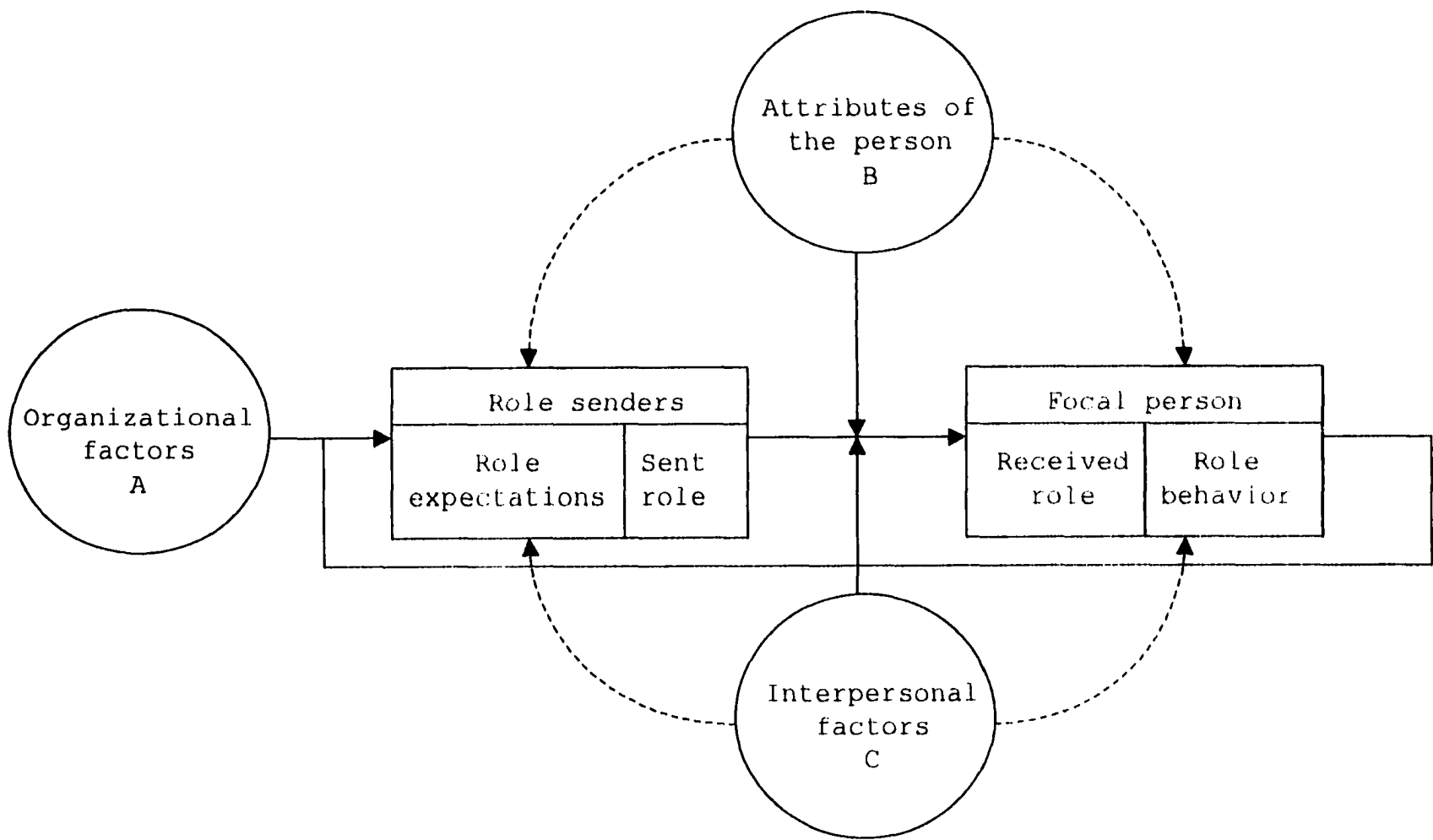


Figure 1. Role theory and the role episode.

senders (members of the role set) and role receiver (focal person). Role expectations are considered evaluative standards that are applied to the behaviors of a person in an organizational role. Members of the role set communicate their expectations and attempt to influence the focal person during the sent-role process. The received-role process is the focal person's perception of the role sending. Role behavior is the response of the focal person to the information and influence he/she has received. The role sender evaluates the degree of compliance of the focal person. The role episode is a continuous cyclical process of sending, receiving, responding, evaluating, and sending again (Kahn & Katz, 1966).

Role expectations are conveyed to the focal person in a process called role-sending. Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1958) proposed that role sending consists of a number of different dimensions: sign (prescriptive or proscriptive); magnitude (strength of influence attempted); specificity (extent expected behaviors are made concrete); intensity (extent focal person is allowed freedom of choice in complying or refusing compliance); and range of conditions which compliance is intended.

An individual's response to role-sending is directly related to his/her perceptions and cognitions of what was sent (Katz & Kahn, 1966). The perception of the role sent depends upon the properties of the sender, focal person, content of sent expectations, and clarity of communication.

Sent role expectations are seen by the focal person as being either legitimate or illegitimate. Expectations that are perceived to be illegitimate may lead to resistance and outcomes opposite to expected. Other sources that influence behavior are objective properties of the situation itself, the nature of the task, previous experience with similar tasks, and internal sources of motivation (e.g., intrinsic satisfaction; Katz & Kahn, 1966).

### Role Making

The role episode model assumes that the role taker (focal person) is passive in the role process (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). This passivity was address by Graen (1976) and his associates (Cashman, Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1976) who proposed a role-making process. The role episode model proposed by Katz and Kahn (1966) fails to recognize that the focal person may negotiate with the members of the role set, attempt to modify expectations, and/or resist the sent roles. Graen (1976) views the focal person as an active, highly motivated problem solver who attempts to possess roles that he/she can perform successfully.

Role making is an active process where the focal person attempts to influence role senders and build a role that is mutually satisfactory. During this process the focal person acquires knowledge about role constraints and demands, receives and sends persuasive communications about his/her role behavior, accepts a particular pattern of behavior, and modifies this pattern over time (Graen, 1976). During the



role-making process complex networks of relationships develop which facilitate the activities of some persons and restrain those of others (Cashman et al., 1976).

#### Context Factors

When considering the role taking/making process, the context of the situation should be considered. Katz and Kahn (1966) proposed three classes of context variables that affect role sending and receiving: organizational, personality, and interpersonal. These context factors include properties of the organization itself, traits of persons involved in the process of role sending and receiving, and properties of the interpersonal relationships which already exist between actors in the role episode (Katz & Kahn, 1966). The context of the situation is similarly considered by Graen (1976) and identified as complicating factors.

Organizational factors. Role expectations of members of a role set are determined by the broader organizational context which may include the size of the organization, technology of the organization, structure of the subsystems, formal policies, and rewards and penalties. Expectations are also affected by the role sender's and role receiver's position in the organization (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

Kahn and his associates (1964) identified dimensions of normative expectations that are characteristics of the organization. One normative expectation is the extent one is expected to obey rules and follow orders. Organizations

also differ in the closeness of supervision and the extent supervisors are expected to show personal interest in and nurture subordinates. Finally, organizations differ in the extent all relationships are conducted according to general (universalistic) standards and the extent organizational members are expected to strive for achievement and advancement.

Attributes of the person. The attributes of the focal person determine their propensity to behave in certain ways and can affect the perception the role sent. Role behavior has effects on personality (we become what we do). Personality factors act as mediators between role expectations and response (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) similarly found that the characteristics of the person affect dyadic exchange relationships between "leaders" and "followers."

Interpersonal factors. The interpersonal relationships between the focal person and the members of the role set also affect the role episode. The focal person interprets role sending depending upon the interpersonal relationship with the sender. The behavior of the focal person then feeds back to effect interpersonal relationships with members of the role set and will help determine role expectations (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Characteristics of the relationship between leaders and followers were also examined by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). These researchers focused on the reciprocal influence between leaders and

followers and the characteristics of that relationship (e.g., trust, respect, and mutual obligation).

Complicating factors. Graen (1976) outlined a number of complicating factors that affect the role-making process. Four discrepancy factors are believed to influence the role process: expectation discrepancy, role discrepancy, feedback discrepancy, and performance discrepancy. Expectation discrepancy is considered the difference between the actual role expectations sent by a member of the role set and that received by the focal person. This discrepancy is an index of noise in the role-sending system (Graen, 1976).

Role discrepancy is the difference between the focal person's current role behavior and the expectations of the member of the role set (Graen, 1976). This discrepancy is a function of the interpersonal characteristics between the focal person and role set member and the personality attributes of the focal person. These interpersonal characteristics and personality attributes correspond to the interpersonal factors and attributes of the person that Katz and Kahn (1966) outlined as context factors.

Graen (1976) considered feedback discrepancy to be the difference between the focal person's role behavior and the perception of that behavior by the member of the role set. Feedback discrepancy is an index of noise in the feedback system. The difference between the expectations of a member of the role set and his/her perception of the focal person's current behavior is called performance discrepancy (Graen,

1976). This is a measure of the perceived conflict between the expectations of the member of the role set and the focal person's role behavior.

In addition to the above discrepancy factors that affect the role process, Graen (1976) identified psychological risks associated with performing different role behaviors. Both external and internal forces affect the experience of psychological risk. Role behavior is a function of these external and internal pressures. External forces are the influences that members of the role set attempt to exert on the focal person's behavior. This may come in the form of promised or threatened consequences of compliance or noncompliance (e.g., gratification, deprivation, punishment). These external forces may be competing for alternate behaviors on behalf of the focal person, thus creating conflict within the focal person (Graen, 1976). This conflict is one form of role conflict that will be discussed in the next section.

Internal forces also contribute to psychological risk. Within each focal person is internal forces which represent the hopes and fears of that person regarding the consequences of his/her role behavior (Graen, 1976). These consequences may be favorable (e.g., personal satisfaction of completing task) or unfavorable (e.g., fatigue, frustration, physical and psychological threats, cognitive inconsistencies). Role behavior is a function of these internal and external forces as well as the other context

factors.

### Role Conflict and Ambiguity

As mentioned above, context factors affect the process of role sending and receiving. Opposing external forces can create conflict within the focal person. Internal and external forces may also contradict each other (Graen, 1976). These forces may lead to the experience of role conflict. Additionally, expectation discrepancy occurs when the expectations of members of the role set differ from those received by the focal person and can be the result of noise in the role-sending system (Graen, 1976). At times the expectations of the role sender may not be clear to the role receiver and lead to the experience of role ambiguity. Both role conflict and role ambiguity have been the focus of a great deal of research that will be summarized below.

Role conflict. According to role theory, role sending and receiving is a complex ongoing process that assumes consistent expectations and consensus among role senders (Katz & Kahn, 1966). However, role conflict exists when there is the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sent roles when compliance with one makes it difficult to comply with the other. With role conflict the demands on the person may be clear but contradictory. The focal person must rely on his/her decision-making skills, and honor some demands and not others or try to reach a compromise (McGrath, 1976).

There are several types of role conflict: intrasender,

intersender, interrole, and person-role (Katz & Kahn, 1966). With intrasender conflict, expectations from a single member of a role set are incompatible. With intersender conflict, expectations from one sender are in conflict with those of another sender. Interrole conflict occurs when the expectations for one role are in conflict with those for another role played by the same person (i.e., role of worker and role of husband/wife). Role overload is a type of intersender conflict in which sent expectations of role set members are legitimate and not logically incompatible. However, the focal person cannot complete all tasks in stipulated time limit and requirements of quality (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Person-role conflict arises when role requirements violate the needs, values, or capacities of the focal person (Katz & Kahn, 1966). With this type of conflict, the focal person is asked to do things against his/her better judgement (McGrath, 1976).

Extremely high levels of perceived role conflict were found by Kahn and his associates (1964) as reflected in a national sample of men in the labor force. These researchers found that person-role conflicts occurred for 45 percent of men in their sample. Similarly high levels were reported for the other types of perceived role conflict. Although the different types of role conflict have been found to have differential impacts on individual outcomes (Batlis, 1980), most of the literature on role conflict treats it as a unitary concept.

The experience of role conflict may be related to the individual characteristics of the person and the organizational context. Jackson and Schuler (1985) in a meta-analysis of the role conflict literature found that locus of control was significantly related to reported role conflict. These researchers also found that the experience of role conflict was also significantly correlated with aspects of the task environment, interpersonal relationships, and organizational level.

The experience of role conflict can have many effects on the focal person. Role conflict can affect the focal person's internal state as well as his/her relationship with the role sender. High levels of role conflict increase the degree of experienced stress within the focal person (McGrath, 1976). Those who experience high role conflict have more internal conflicts, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased confidence in the supervisor and the organization (Kahn et al., 1964). Jackson and Schuler (1985) found a number of affective reactions to the experience of role conflict including: decreases in job satisfaction, commitment, and involvement; and increases in tension and anxiety, and propensity to leave the organization.

High levels of role conflict are also found to reduce trust, liking, and respect for the role sender who creates the feelings of role conflict in the focal person (Kahn et al., 1964). The focal person also attributes less power to this person and withdraws from or restricts communication

with them (Kahn et al., 1964). Role conflict can also have behavioral consequences. Those who experience role conflict are more likely to be rated lower on performance measures by others, however objective measures of performance are not effected (Jackson & Schuler, 1985).

Role ambiguity. Role ambiguity can occur when the focal person lacks information on the supervisor's evaluation of one's work, about opportunities for advancement, scope of responsibility, or expectations of role senders (Katz & Kahn, 1966). The experience of role ambiguity can also result from questions about rules, sanctions, and their applications; and from questions about which authorities are legitimate (McGrath, 1976).

Role ambiguity is a form of role-based stress. According to McGrath (1976) this type of role-based stress is a problem of hypothesis-formation and test. Since role expectations are not clear, the focal person must develop hypotheses about them, select a response to fit their hypotheses, and execute that response. If the response leads to a positively rewarding outcome (that is if it "works"), then the focal person will be more likely to respond similarly in the future using the same hypothesis thereby reducing ambiguity. A problem arises if positive feedback is received and the focal person is unaware that the feedback is unrelated to the role behavior; an association will still be formed between the ambiguous expectations and role behavior.



Similar to the findings on role conflict, the frequency of role ambiguity among job incumbents is high (Kahn et al., 1964). The effects of role ambiguity also parallel those of role conflict, where some effects are more pronounced for role ambiguity (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Extensive research has been done on the antecedents and consequences of role ambiguity.

When examining the antecedents to role ambiguity, both individual and organizational characteristics can be considered. Jackson and Schuler (1985) in a meta-analysis of the role ambiguity research found that tenure, age, and self-esteem were all negatively related to role ambiguity. Significant results were also found for education level, where a low positive correlation was found (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). These researchers also found that role ambiguity was significantly related to aspects of the task environment (autonomy, task identity, and feedback from task); organizational level; and aspects of the interpersonal relationships (feedback from others, leadership style, and participation).

Role ambiguity can have many affective and behavioral effects on the focal person. The experience of role ambiguity causes stress in the focal person (McGrath, 1976). High levels of role ambiguity are found to result in intrapersonal tension, lowered job satisfaction, lowered self-esteem, and reductions in positive affect for members of the role set (Kahn et al., 1964; McGrath, 1976).

Similarly, Jackson and Schuler (1985) found that across the research literature higher levels of role ambiguity were significantly correlated with lower levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and involvement; and higher levels of role conflict, tension/anxiety, and propensity to leave the organization.

The behavioral effects of role ambiguity have also been examined. A low positive correlation was found between role ambiguity and absenteeism (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). These researchers also found that those who experience role ambiguity are more likely to rate themselves lower and were more likely to be rated lower by others on performance evaluations.

Although role conflict and ambiguity has been studied extensively, there still remain many unanswered questions. Bedeian and Armenakis (1981) emphasize the need for further research into the impact of additional factors on role perceptions. The effects of individual characteristics, interpersonal factors, and context factors on role-based stress needs further investigation and would help increase our understanding of role theory and knowledge of human behavior in organizations.

#### Role Theory and Sexual Harassment

Role theory can be applied to the sexual harassment paradigm. The interactions between the sexual harasser and harassee can be explained using the concepts of role theory. In this section the principles of role theory will be

examined as they apply to the occurrence of sexual harassment. Role theory will be utilized to explain differences in the perception of and response to sexual harassment.

### Roles and Sexual Harassment

According to role theory, individuals in organizations occupy roles that dictate the patterns of behavior expected and how these patterns develop, change, and interact (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Expectations are dictated through the social system, but at times these expectations are not clearly defined. Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1991) refer to these ill-defined expectations as emergent task elements. Sexual expectations in the workplace directed at a role occupant may be a case of these subjective, personal, and dynamic emergent task elements. Sexual harassment occurs when the role expectations differ from the defined job tasks and encompass inappropriate sexual behaviors.

### The Role Set and Sexual Harassment

Members of the focal person's role set help him/her define what behaviors are expected. A role set generally consists of one's supervisor(s), coworkers, and subordinates (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Role expectations can be sent either directly or indirectly to the role occupant (focal person) by members of his/her role set (Katz & Kahn, 1966). This means that expectations may differ in their level of explicitness and clarity. In the context of sexual harassment, when role expectations are direct and involve

sexually harassing behavior, this may be an example of quid pro quo harassment. Hostile environment harassment is most likely the result of unclear role expectations that may involve sexual touch, sexist remarks, and unwelcome sexual advances. Sexual harassment can be initiated by any member of the role set. Although the most common form of harassment is coworker harassment, supervisors and subordinates also initiate sexual harassment (Gutek, 1985).

Members of the role set may differ in their expectations of the focal person. The focal person is most likely to conform to the expectations from the member of the role set who is perceived to possess the greater power (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). The relative power of the perpetrator influences the perception of and response to sexual harassment. When women evaluate the same behavioral examples of interpersonal harassment displayed by both a supervisor and coworker, women experience higher levels of dysphoria and anticipated assertiveness when the offender is a supervisor (Samoluk & Pretty, 1994).

#### Role Sending and Receiving

According to role theory, members of the role set communicate their expectations and attempt to influence the focal person during the sent-role process. Based on the focal person's perception of these expectations, role behaviors are enacted (Katz & Kahn, 1966). In a process that Graen (1976) referred to as role making, the focal person may negotiate with members of the role set, attempt

to modify expectations, and/or resist the sent role. The nature of the expectations will affect this process. Expectations that are communicated can differ in magnitude, specificity, and intensity (Gross, Mason, & McEachern, 1958).

Sexually harassing expectations that are higher in magnitude, specificity, and intensity may make the focal person more active in their attempts to modify or resist the sent role. Magnitude represents the strength of influence attempted. Sexual harassment is more likely to be perceived and resisted when the sent role is higher in magnitude (i.e., quid pro quo versus hostile environment harassment; e.g., Terpstra & Baker, 1987). Similarly, when the request is specific there is less room for interpretation of the intent. When the role sent is sexually harassing and is of higher intensity, the focal person will most likely label such behaviors as sexual harassment and inappropriate in the work setting. The labeling of sexual harassment is more likely when the nature of the task is sexual coercion or cooperation (quid pro quo) rather than sexist remarks or seductive behavior (hostile environment; Terpstra & Baker, 1987).

Role behaviors are directly related to the focal person's perceptions and cognitions of the role expectations that were sent. Role expectations can be perceived as either legitimate or illegitimate. When sexual advances occur on the job, they will most likely be viewed as

illegitimate. According to role theory, expectations perceived to be illegitimate could lead to resistance and outcomes opposite to expected (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

Therefore, sexual expectations or requests that are viewed as illegitimate may lead to resistance and noncompliance with the request. Since quid pro quo harassment is a clear-cut violation of legitimate role expectations, this form of harassment is associated with higher levels of resistance.

There are many different possible role behaviors or response strategies. Severity of harassment has been found to affect the response strategy of the victim of harassment. In general, sexual harassment that is perceived as more severe and offensive leads to more assertive response strategies (e.g., Gruber & Smith, 1995). How the focal person responds will also depend upon the situational factors, such as the source of the harassment and the gender ratio in the workplace (Gruber & Smith, 1995). The effects of context factors on the perception of sexually harassing role expectations and behaviors will be discussed below.

#### Context Variables

According to role theory, the context in which role sending and receiving occurs will affect the outcome (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Graen, 1976). When applying role theory to the sexual harassment paradigm, one must similarly consider the effects of context factors. Katz and Kahn (1966) identified context factors that affect role sending and receiving. These context factors include: properties of the

organization (organizational factors); traits of the persons involved (attributes of the person); and properties of the interpersonal relationships between focal persons and members of the role set (interpersonal factors). Context factors play a large part in the perception of sexual harassment. Below each context factor will be considered as it applies to the investigation of sexual harassment.

Organizational factors. The characteristics of the organization affect the role sending and receiving process. Many organizational factors have been found to influence role behaviors (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Some of these factors include the size of the organization, technology of the organization, structure of the subsystems, formal policies, and rewards and penalties.

When considering the size and structure of the social subsystems, one may consider the gender ratios of the different work groups throughout the organization. When sent roles are sexually harassing, gender ratios of the workplace may affect the perception of the role sent and the response to it (e.g., Gruber & Bjorn, 1982). For example, women in male-dominated occupations encounter significantly more adverse working conditions and report significantly less satisfaction and more stress at work (Mansfield et al., 1991). However job incumbents in a skewed-sex environment may expect to be harassed or experience a hostile work environment. They may also be less likely to report the role sent as sexual harassment because they may think its

part of the job or feel pressure not to from the group (Fain & Anderton, 1987).

As stated above, the formal policies and reward/penalty structures in an organization will affect role behaviors (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Organizational policies and culture may outline certain types of behaviors that will not be tolerated and possible consequences of such behavior (e.g., be fired). Sexual harassment can be considered a behavior that is unacceptable in an organization. Organizations differ in the policies and culture that they have concerning sexual harassment: how seriously it is taken, how risky it is to report the behavior, and the likely consequences of such behavior. These factors affect the perception of sexual harassment (Kremer & Marks, 1992), occurrence of harassment (Maahs, 1995), and likewise role behaviors.

Attributes of the person. The attributes of the focal person have been found to affect the perception of the sent role and subsequent role behavior (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Jackson and Schuler (1985), in a meta-analysis, examined the effects of individual characteristics on the experience of role-based stress (i.e., role conflict and role ambiguity). These researchers found that a number of characteristics have been found to affect the perception of role-based stress, including locus of control, tenure, age, education level, and self-esteem. These characteristics do not represent an exhaustive list of possible individual characteristics that may affect role perceptions and



behavior.

A number of individual characteristics may affect the perception of sexual harassing role expectations. Some of these characteristics may include the gender, age, race, and marital status of the focal person. When examining gender differences in the perception of sexual harassment, men and women are found to differ. Women are more likely than men to label behavior as sexual harassment (e.g., Konrad & Gutek, 1986) and therefore would be more likely to perceive the role sent accordingly. Harassment is found to occur more frequently in Blacks and unmarried or young (under 25) women (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Fain & Anderton, 1987).

The effects of gender, age, race, and marital status on harassment may be due to two possible reasons: (1) differences in the actual experience of sexual harassment; or (2) differences in the perception of sexual harassment. Both possibilities are likely. Men and women are found to differ in their perception of sexual harassment (e.g., Baird et al., 1995; Weiner et al., 1995). This difference is reflected in the distinction between a "reasonable person" and a "reasonable woman" which have both been utilized as standards to judge the presence or absence of harassment in a number of court cases (Thacker & Gohmann, 1993). Therefore, the individual characteristics of gender, age, race, and marital status are believed to affect perceived role expectations and subsequent role behaviors.

Personality factors also act as mediators between role

expectations and role behaviors (Katz & Kahn, 1966). As mentioned previously, locus of control and level of self-esteem are two personality factors that have been examined extensively in role theory research (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Many other factors have been examined, such as how need for independence and need for achievement moderate relationships between different role variables and satisfaction (Johnson & Stinson, 1975). In the context of sexual harassment, personality factors are believed to affect role expectations and behaviors. Individuals are found to differ in their attitudes toward and acceptance of sexual harassment (e.g., Cohen & Gutek, 1985; Kremer & Marks, 1992). Differences in these attitudes are believed to affect how sexually harassing role expectations are perceived and responded to.

Interpersonal factors. According to role theory, the interpersonal relationships between the focal person and members of the role set affect how the focal person interprets role-sending (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Both leaders and followers are found to have a reciprocal influence on each other (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Similarly, Jackson and Schuler (1985) found that interpersonal aspects of the role relationship affect the experience of role-based stress.

The interpersonal relationship between the focal person and the role sender will also affect the perception of sexual harassment (Kremer & Marks, 1992). Gender differences between the role sender and focal person can

influence the perception of sexual harassment (Baird et al., 1995). The position of the role sender relative to the focal person can also influence the perception of sexual harassment (i.e., more likely to be perceived when initiated by the supervisor rather than a coworker or subordinate; e.g., Samoluk & Pretty, 1994).

The behavior of the focal person affects the interpersonal relationships with members of the role set during the feedback loop of role behavior and subsequently affects future role expectations (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Graen (1976) refers to differences in the current role behavior and role expectations as role discrepancy. This discrepancy is a function of the interpersonal characteristics between the focal person and role set member. Interpersonal characteristics and experience with previous role expectations will affect the perception of current role expectations. The frequency of previous harassing behavior by supervisors, coworkers, and others outside the organization will affect the perception of future interpersonal interactions (Konrad & Gutek, 1986). Requests or innuendoes of a sexual nature will more likely to be labeled as sexual harassment when they are repeated (e.g., Loy & Steward, 1984). Therefore, focal persons who have had previous role expectations that were sexually inappropriate will likely perceive similar future role expectations as forms of sexual harassment.

### Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity

At times role expectations may be unclear or conflicting, and thus lead to feelings of role-based stress (McGrath, 1976). Two forms of role-based stress that have received a great deal of attention are role conflict and role ambiguity. Both role conflict and ambiguity have been discussed in detail in the previous section on role theory and so will only be mentioned as it applied to sexual harassment.

Role conflict and quid pro quo harassment. According to role theory, role conflict exists when there is a simultaneous occurrence of two or more set roles and compliance with one makes it difficult to comply with the other (Katz & Kahn, 1966). The demands on the focal person may be clear but contradictory. The focal person must then rely on his/her decision-making skills and honor some demands and not others or try to reach a compromise (McGrath, 1976).

The demands of quid pro quo harassment on the focal person are often clear yet contradictory. Quid pro quo harassment is generally a clear-cut case of an individual being forced to do a sexual favor in order to avoid negative consequences at work or receive employment benefits (Thacker & Gohmann, 1993). However, the victim of quid pro quo harassment may experience role conflict because explicit sexual role expectations are generally in conflict with one's needs and values and with the expectations of

performing other legitimate aspects of the job.

Several types of role conflicts were previously discussed. When both legitimate role expectations and illegitimate, sexually-harassing role expectations are sent by the same member of the role set, intrasender conflict exists. For example, a supervisor may expect an employee to perform well on the job, and yet make that difficult by providing a sexually-harassing environment. Intersender conflict occurs when contradictory expectations are initiated by different members of the role set (Katz & Kahn, 1966). For example, the focal person's supervisor may send legitimate role expectations while a coworker sends sexually harassing expectations.

Another form of role conflict that may occur when one is sexually harassed is person-role conflict. Person-role conflict occurs when role requirements violate the needs, values, or capacities of the focal person (Katz & Kahn, 1966). The nature of quid pro quo harassment is a violation of the needs and values of the victim. Finally, interrole conflict can occur when the expectations for the organizational role are in conflict with one's role as a sexual being. This type of role conflict may occur in the sexual harasser. A person who sexually harasses may have difficulty separating their sexual role from their organizational role.

Role ambiguity and hostile environment harassment.

Role ambiguity occurs when the expectations of the role

sender are unclear to the focal person (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Role ambiguity can also result when the focal person has questions about rules, sanctions, and their applications (McGrath, 1976). At times, the focal person is also unclear as to which authorities are legitimate (McGrath, 1976). In the sexual harassment literature there is a great deal of ambiguity surrounding what exactly constitutes a hostile work environment (e.g., Thacker & Gohmann, 1993).

Role ambiguity may be most pronounced in cases of hostile environment harassment because the expectations of the harasser are less direct than with quid pro quo harassment. With hostile environment harassment, certain verbal remarks or requests of a sexual nature are perceived as positive to some and not to others (Gutek et al., 1980). Such behaviors may be perceived as positive or negative depending upon who makes the request and in what context. Differences in the interpretation of a hostile work environment and the experience of role ambiguity can be explained by a number of factors, including the organizational, personal, and interpersonal context factors outlined previously.

#### Policy Capturing and Profile Analysis

Role theory involves the perception of role expectations and the decision about appropriate role behaviors (Katz & Kahn, 1966). The focal person must rely on his/her decision-making skills when faced with role conflict or role ambiguity (McGrath, 1976). One way to

describe how a focal person makes decisions is by utilizing a statistical technique called policy capturing. Decisions about role behaviors may differ across focal persons. It is therefore necessary not only to understand the decision-making process, but also to examine the effects of context factors on the perceptions and behaviors of focal persons. Differences in decision-making policies and the effects of situational factors can be examined using a technique called profile analysis. Both policy capturing and profile analysis will be described below.

#### Policy Capturing

The term policy capturing is used to describe the process of "capturing" a decision-maker's policy using statistical analysis (Stumpf & London, 1981). Decision-making involves unobservable mental processes. These mental processes can be inferred from the reported subjective experiences of the decision-maker. However, when decision-makers are asked to describe the policy that they used when making decisions, their stated policy often differs greatly from their actual policies (Taylor & Wilsted, 1974).

Mathematical models can also be used to "describe" these mental activities (Hoffman, 1980). A model is said to adequately describe mental processes when it can effectively predict judgements for a given set of information (Hoffman, 1980). Both linear and configural models have been used to represent the decision making process (Hoffman, 1980).

Linear models of decision making are additive and

assume that variables are given different weights by the rater to arrive at a final judgment (Hoffman, 1980). Multiple regression analysis is often used to determine the relative weights given to each variable in the decision making equation, however a combination of analysis of variance and multiple regression analysis can also be utilized (Bartels, 1991).

Configural models are also referred to as interaction models (Hoffman, 1980). These models take into account not only the weights given to each variable but the interactions between the variables. The interpretation of one variable may be contingent upon a second (Hoffman, 1980). Analysis of variance techniques are often employed in analyzing configural models (Slovic & Lichtenstein, 1971), however multiple regression may also be utilized (Bartels, 1991).

When comparing linear and configural models, Hoffman (1980) found that utilizing a configural model offered no demonstrable gain in the proportion of predicted variance of judgments. Linear models have been found to adequately predict judgments in artificial and real-world tasks (Slovic & Lichtenstein, 1971). Although linear models do capture most of the variance in decision making when many criteria are used; a configural model may be more appropriate when a smaller number of salient criteria are employed (Stump & London, 1981). Examining fewer criteria may afford decision-makers more information processing capabilities and allow for configural judgments (Stump & London, 1981).



Stump and London (1981) found that simple linear models did not efficiently describe all rater policies for making management decisions. When examining clusters of rater policies, these researchers found that configurai models were applied by some of the individuals. For a more detailed description of the different policy capturing techniques refer to Bartels (1991).

### Profile Analysis

Individuals can differ in their decision-making policies. Often several distinct policies are found to exist when examining the individual weights that are applied in decision making (Stump & London, 1981). A number of techniques have been developed that allow for the grouping or clustering of judges in terms of the homogeneity of their equations (Slovic & Lichtenstein, 1971). Profile analysis entails the clustering of similar rating policies by some criteria (e.g., the policies of males versus females) and the examination of the differences between the clusters.

### Policy Capturing and Profile Analysis Applied to Role Theory and Sexual Harassment

According to role theory, during the process of role sending and receiving members of the role set communicate expectations to the focal person who perceives these expectations and enacts a role behavior (Katz & Kahn, 1966). In this research, policy capturing will be utilized to determine how focal persons weight information when deciding whether different role expectations are examples of sexual

harassment. Variables related to hostile environment harassment will be manipulated to determine their effects on the received role, the experience of role ambiguity and the anticipated role behaviors. Additionally, the effects of context factors (i.e., organizational, personal, and interpersonal) on decision making and the perception of hostile environment harassment will be examined using profile analysis.

#### Manipulating Role Expectations and the Sent Role

According to role theory, members of the role set communicate their expectations and attempt to influence the focal person during the sent-role process (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Role expectations can differ in magnitude, specificity, and intensity (Gross, Mason, & McEachern, 1958). Consequently, decision-makers will consider the magnitude, specificity, and intensity of the role expectations that are present when weighting information and deciding whether a situation is sexual harassment. Different scenarios were developed that systematically manipulate harassment variables to reflect differences in role expectations. The selection of the variables and development of scenarios is discussed below.

Developing hostile environment scenarios. This research will manipulate the sent role by varying role expectations related to sexual harassment. The variables to be manipulated were selected based on the notion that they were factors related to a hostile work environment and would

produce feelings of role ambiguity. Previous sexual harassment research has examined a number of different variables. Some research has employed the use of different scenarios that were believed to be examples of different types of sexual harassment (e.g., Bursik, 1992; Sheffey & Tindale, 1992; Hunter & McClelland, 1991), however the variables investigated were not systematically manipulated throughout the different scenarios. In this research, different scenarios were written to reflect the systematic manipulation of the selected variables.

In order to present all possible combinations of all levels of each variable examined, the number of needed scenarios increases geometrically. For example, when examining two variables with three levels each ( $3 \times 3$ ), nine scenarios must be developed. The addition of a third variable with three levels would increase the number of needed scenarios to 27 ( $3 \times 3 \times 3$ ). Include an additional variable with three levels and the number of required scenarios escalates to 81 ( $3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3$ ). As the number of variables included in the research increases, the number of scenarios can become unwieldy. This may cause fatigue and resistance in participants. Therefore, when developing sexual harassment scenarios this researcher manipulated three variables with three levels each as will be outlined below.

Selecting hostile environment variables. A number of different variables are believed to affect the perception of

sexual harassment. Gender of the initiator affects the interpretation of potentially harassing scenarios (Baird et al., 1995; Weiner et al., 1995). However, since across-gender harassment is the most prevalent type of harassment, it will be the only form of harassment considered in this research. The relative power of the perpetrator (i.e., supervisor, coworker, subordinate) can influence the perception of and response to sexual harassment (Samoluk & Pretty, 1994; Cleveland & Kerst, 1993). According to role theory, the relative power of the role sender influences the perceptions of role expectations and the role behaviors of the focal person (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Therefore, the perpetrator of the harassment (role set member) will be varied to be either the supervisor, coworker, or subordinate.

The magnitude, specificity, and intensity of the sent role will also be considered. How the nonverbal and verbal behaviors of the role set member affect perceived role expectations will be examined. Nonverbal and verbal behaviors were selected based on the belief that they were not clear-cut forms of quid pro quo harassment, but that they contribute to a hostile work environment and feelings of role ambiguity. The invasiveness of touch of the member of the role set was varied from least invasive (e.g., shake hands; not likely harassment), to moderately invasive (e.g., put arm around; possibly harassment), to most invasive (e.g., pat on the butt; most likely harassment). Role

expectations in the form of verbal comments made by the role set member to the focal person were also manipulated. Comments were varied from not likely harassment (e.g., "The report you wrote was top notch."), possibly harassment (e.g., "You must be doing a lot of running these days; your body looks terrific."), to most likely harassment (e.g., "You've got a nice butt.").

#### Measuring the Received Role and Anticipated Role Behavior

According to role theory, the received-role process is the focal person's perception of the sent role. Role behavior is the response of the focal person to the information and influence that he/she has received. In this research, scenarios were developed to manipulate the role expectations and sent role as outlined above. Measurement scales were also developed to determine the level of role ambiguity in the received role and the anticipated role behavior. The development of these measures and how they reflect the received role and role behavior will be explained below.

Measuring the Received Role and Role Ambiguity. The level of role ambiguity in the received role is inversely related to the clarity of the role sent. Therefore, more subtle and less explicit forms of sexual harassment (or role expectations) will lead to higher levels of role ambiguity. Role conflict and ambiguity have been studied extensively in the context of the organization. When compiling the literature for their meta-analysis, Jackson and Schuler

(1985) found over 200 relevant articles. A great deal of this research relied on the measurement instrument developed by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970). Rizzo et al. (1970) developed a questionnaire to measure role ambiguity and role conflict and found the constructs to be independent and correlated with measures of organizational and managerial practices, leader behavior, member satisfaction, anxiety, and propensity to leave the organization.

Over the years numerous studies have examined the psychometric qualities of the scales developed by Rizzo et al. (1970). Many of these studies have suggested that the continued use of these scales is warranted (e.g., Schuler, Aldag, & Brief, 1977). However, Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1991) argue that the discriminant validity of the measures has not been demonstrated, and made suggestions for future measures of role conflict and ambiguity. These researchers contend that these forms of role-based stress are subjective constructs and so a subjective measure is appropriate. The remainder of this paper will examine only measures of role ambiguity as this is the form of role-based stress that will be examined in this study.

In general, role ambiguity occurs when the focal person is unclear about role expectations (Kahn et al., 1964). As stated previously, roles are composed of emergent task elements where emergent task elements are considered those aspects of the job that are subjective, personal, dynamic, and communicated to the job incumbent through the social

system (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). The focal person may be unaware of what task elements are part of his/her role due to the nature of these emergent task elements (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). This uncertainty corresponds to the state of role ambiguity.

When measuring the role ambiguity, the role holder (focal person) could be asked whether or not their perceived role expectations are truly part of their job/role. Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1991) suggest that ratings could be made on a scale anchored by "certain it is" and "certain it is not." Ratings near the midpoint of the scale would be an indication of experienced role ambiguity. With more clear-cut forms of harassment raters would indicate with higher levels of certainty that the role expectations are not part of one's job/role. A modification of the rating scale suggested by Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1991) will be utilized in this research.

Measuring Anticipated Role Behavior. As previously mentioned, role behavior is the response of the focal person to the information and influence that he/she has received (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Role expectations perceived to be illegitimate lead to more resistance and noncompliance. Therefore, the level of assertiveness of the role behaviors will be directly related to the severity of the sexually harassing role expectations. A number of different response strategies are found throughout the sexual harassment literature (e.g., Gruber & Smith, 1995; Loy & Steward,

1984). These responses reflect the role behaviors of focal persons reacting to sexually harassing role expectations.

Role behaviors associated with sexually harassing expectations range from passive to active responses (least assertive to most assertive; Gruber & Smith, 1995; Loy & Steward, 1984). Gruber and Smith (1995) developed seven possible response categories based on how women indicated that they dealt with sexual harassment. The response categories range from least assertive (ignore or avoid the issue/person), to moderately assertive (change one's way of acting or speak to someone), to most assertive (respond directly to the person or report the person). Quitting was also included as a response option. For the purposes of this research, the above response categories will be utilized to reflect the possible role behaviors of the focal person.

#### Analyzing Role Sending and Receiving Using Policy Capturing

Policy capturing will be utilized to determine how focal persons' weight the variables related to the sent role when deciding whether their received roles are appropriate to the work setting. Since a small number of criteria will be utilized (i.e., relative power of the role sender, verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the role sender), a configural model of policy capturing will be employed. A detailed explanation of the hypotheses will be discussed in the following hypotheses section.



### Measuring the Effects of Context Factors on the Received Role and Anticipated Role Behavior Using Profile Analysis

In order to examine the effects of context factors on decision-making policies, profile analysis will be used. According to role theory, three classes of context factors affect role sending and receiving: organizational, personality (attributes of the focal person), and interpersonal (Katz & Kahn, 1966). The influence of each context factor on decision making regarding the perception of hostile environment harassment (received role), likelihood of response, and anticipated role behavior will be examined. A detailed explanation of the hypothesized effect of each variable will be discussed in the following hypotheses section.

Two organizational factors will be measured: gender ratios in the workplace and the tolerance for sexual harassment within the organization. The attributes of the focal person are also believed to affect the perception of sexual harassment. The different attributes that will be examined include gender, age, race, marital status, and the focal person's attitudes toward and acceptance of sexually harassing behaviors. The interpersonal relationships between the focal person and other individuals in the organization will be considered. The effects of the focal person's previous experience with sexual harassment and gender of their supervisor will be analyzed.

## Hypotheses

A number of different hypotheses are proposed for this study. For each variable selected, hypotheses were developed. Each of these hypotheses will be outlined in this section.

### Hypotheses Regarding Manipulated Variables

Relative power of the role sender. According to role theory, the relative power of the role sender influences the perception of role expectations and the role behaviors of the focal person (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Similarly, the relative power of the role sender (i.e., supervisor, coworker, subordinate) can influence the perception of and response to sexual harassment (Samoluk & Pretty, 1994; Cleveland & Kerst, 1993). Supervisor harassment is generally associated with more severe offenses (e.g., Cleveland & Kerst; Loy & Steward, 1984). Therefore, it is expected that when examining harassment scenarios, supervisor harassment will be seen as more offensive than coworker harassment. The least offensive form of harassment will most likely be subordinate harassment. Higher levels of offensiveness will be reflected in higher scores on the inappropriateness of behavior in the work setting and more assertive behavioral responses (**Hypothesis 1**).

Nonverbal behavior of the role sender. As articulated previously, the magnitude, specificity, and intensity of the sent role will affect the perception of role expectations (Gross, Mason, & McEachern, 1958). How the nonverbal

behavior of the role set member affects perceived role expectations will be examined. Nonverbal behaviors were selected based on the belief that they were not clear-cut forms of quid pro quo harassment, but that they contribute to a hostile work environment and feelings of role ambiguity. The invasiveness of touch of the member of the role set was varied from least invasive, moderately invasive, to most invasive. It is hypothesized that the more invasive the touch, the more likely it will be viewed as sexual harassment as reflected in higher scores on inappropriateness of behavior and more active role behavior (**Hypothesis 2**).

Verbal behavior of the role sender. Role expectations in the form of verbal comments made by the role set member to the focal person were also manipulated. Similar standards to those used for selecting nonverbal behaviors were applied to the selection of verbal behaviors. The verbal behavior of the role sender was varied from not likely harassment (e.g., "The report you wrote was top notch), possibly harassment (e.g., "You must be doing a lot of running these days; your body looks terrific."), to most likely harassment (e.g., "You've got a nice butt."). It is hypothesized that the more explicit and personal the verbal behavior, the more likely it will be viewed as inappropriate and lead to more active role behavior (**Hypothesis 3**).

Role Ambiguity. The level of role ambiguity in the received role is inversely related to the clarity of the

role sent (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Therefore, more subtle and less explicit forms of sexual harassment (or role expectations) are likely to lead to higher levels of perceived role ambiguity. It is hypothesized that higher levels of role ambiguity will be indicated when the role sender is a coworker or subordinate and the verbal and nonverbal role expectations are more moderate in their level of harassment. Higher levels of role ambiguity are also expected to be accompanied by less assertive responses (**Hypothesis 4**).

#### Hypotheses Regarding Context Factors

Organizational factors. As stated previously, the characteristics of the organization, such as the size and structure of social subsystems, affect role sending and receiving (Katz & Kahn, 1966). When sent roles are sexually harassing, gender ratios of the workplace affect the perception of the role sent and the response to it (e.g., Gruber & Bjorn, 1982). Although women in skewed-sex work environments encounter significantly more adverse working conditions and report significantly less satisfaction and more stress at work (Mansfield et al., 1991), job incumbents in skewed-sex environments may expect to be harassed or experience a hostile work environment. They may be less likely to report the role sent as sexual harassment because they may think its part of the job or feel pressure not to from the group (Fain & Anderton, 1987). Therefore, it is expected that when making decisions about perceived role

expectations, individuals in skewed-sex work settings are less likely to label harassing behavior as inappropriate and less likely to respond assertively (**Hypothesis 5**).

The formal policies and reward/penalty structures in an organization affect role behaviors (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Organizational policies often outline certain types of behaviors that will not be tolerated and possible consequences of such behavior. Organizations differ in their culture and policies that they have concerning sexual harassment in terms of how seriously it is taken, how risky it is to report the behavior, and the likely consequences of such behavior. These policies and culture affect the perception of sexual harassment (Kremer & Marks, 1992), occurrence of harassment (Maahs, 1995), and likewise role behaviors. Individuals working in organizations that have stricter policies and culture against sexually harassing behavior are hypothesized to also hold stricter decision-making policies and be more willing to label behaviors as inappropriate. These individuals are also expected to choose more assertive response strategies (**Hypothesis 6**).

Attributes of the person. According to role theory, the attributes of the focal person affect the perception of the sent role and subsequent role behavior (Katz & Kahn, 1966). A number of characteristics of the focal person that are believed to affect the perception of sexual harassing role expectations were examined, including gender, age, race, and marital status. Harassment is found to occur more

frequently in Blacks and unmarried or young (under 25) women (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Fain & Anderton, 1987). Although differences in reported harassment frequency may be due to actual differences in the experience of sexual harassment, it may also be due to differences in perception. Men and women are found to differ in their perception of sexual harassment. Women are more likely than men to label behavior as sexual harassment (e.g., Konrad & Gutek, 1986) and therefore would be more likely to perceive the role sent accordingly. Therefore, the individual characteristics of gender, age, race, and marital status are believed to affect perceived role expectations and subsequent role behaviors. It is hypothesized that younger persons, minorities, women, and single individuals will hold stricter policies and will more likely label behavior as sexual harassment and indicate more assertive response strategies (**Hypotheses 7, 8, 9, and 10**).

According to role theory, personality factors act as mediators between role expectations and role behaviors (Katz & Kahn, 1966). In the context of sexual harassment, personality factors are similarly believed to affect the perception of role expectations and choice of role behaviors. Individuals are found to differ in their attitudes toward and acceptance of sexual harassment (e.g., Cohen & Gutek, 1985; Kremer & Marks, 1992). Differences in these attitudes are believed to affect how sexually harassing role expectations are perceived and responded to.

Therefore, those with less accepting attitudes towards sexual harassment are hypothesized to be more likely to label harassing behavior as inappropriate in the work setting and more likely to respond assertively (**Hypothesis 11**).

Interpersonal factors. The interpersonal relationships between the focal person and members of the role set affect how the focal person interprets role-sending (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Interpersonal characteristics and experience with previous role expectations affect the perception of current role expectations (Graen, 1976). The literature reveals that the frequency of previous harassing behavior by supervisors, coworkers, and others outside the organization affects the perception of future interpersonal interactions (e.g., Konrad & Gutek, 1986). Loy and Steward (1984) found that requests or innuendoes of a sexual nature are more likely to be labeled as sexual harassment when they are repeated. Therefore, focal persons who have experienced previous role expectations that were sexually inappropriate will likely perceive similar, future role expectations as forms of sexual harassment. These individuals will likely indicate more assertive response types (**Hypothesis 12**).

The interpersonal relationship between the focal person and the role sender has been found to affect the perception of sexual harassment (Kremer & Marks, 1992). Gender differences between the role sender and focal person can influence the perception of sexual harassment (Baird et al.,

1995). Individuals with opposite sex supervisors are more likely to be harassed (Maahs, 1995). Consequently, those with other sex supervisors may also be more sensitive to sexual harassment. Individuals with other sex supervisors are hypothesized to hold stricter policies when interpreting sexually harassing role expectations and be more likely to indicate that such behaviors are inappropriate in the work setting. These individuals are expected to indicate more active response strategies (**Hypothesis 13**).



## METHOD

### Participants

One hundred and five male and one hundred and fifteen female participants were recruited from Old Dominion University through an announcement sheet (see Appendix A). The mean age of participants was 21.94 (SD = 4.94). The racial composition of the participant population was as follows: 60.9% White, 26.4% Black, 6.8% Asian, 2.3% Hispanic, 2.7% selected "other" as their race, and .9% did not indicate their race. The average level of education of participants was 13.76 years (SD = 1.33). Most participants indicated that they were single (71.8%), however 12.7% were cohabiting, 11.4% were married, 1.8% were separated, and .9% were divorced. Three individuals did not indicate their relationship status.

Participants were either currently employed or employed within the last six months. Students were given two class credits for participation.

### Procedure

A series of questionnaires was designed to test the application of role theory to a sexual harassment paradigm. Participants completed take-home packets that ensured anonymity and confidentiality of responses. A notification sheet was attached to each packet describing the research study (see Appendix B). Participants were asked to complete the take-home packet in a quiet setting without interruptions as explained on a cover sheet (see Appendix

C). At the end of the survey a debriefing statement was attached (see Appendix D). Two hundred and twenty packets were collected from the two hundred and sixty-five take-home packets that were distributed indicating a return rate of 83 percent.

#### Pilot Study

Twenty-five participants were recruited for a pilot study. All were given a take-home packet and one credit for participation. Twenty-four packets were returned with a return rate of 96 percent.

The twenty-seven different sexual harassment scenarios for the policy-capturing aspect of this research project contain a systematic manipulation of three variables. These three variables are the relative power of the role sender, nonverbal behavior of the role sender, and verbal behavior of the role sender. A pilot study was conducted in order to determine low, moderate, and high levels of harassing verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Eighteen verbal statements were developed (see Appendix E) as well as thirty-four variations of nonverbal behaviors (see Appendix F). Participants were asked to rate each statement and behavior on a scale of one (definitely not sexual harassment) to seven (definitely sexual harassment).

Low, moderate, and high levels of each variable were selected based on the means and low standard deviations of each statement and behavior (see Appendices E and F for means and standard deviation values following each

question). The verbal statements selected were: "The report you wrote was top notch." (low;  $\underline{M}$  = 1.42; SD = .88); "You must be doing a lot of running these days; your body looks terrific." (moderate;  $\underline{M}$  = 4.75; SD = 1.34); and "You've got a nice butt." (high;  $\underline{M}$  = 6.50; SD = .72). The nonverbal behaviors selected were: John shakes Ann's hand (low;  $\underline{M}$  = 1.33; SD = .56); John puts his arm around Ann (moderate;  $\underline{M}$  = 3.75; SD = 1.11); and John pats Ann's butt (high;  $\underline{M}$  = 6.87; SD = .34).

### Measures

Several scales were used to test the application of role theory to the sexual harassment paradigm. Variables were selected to encompass all aspects of the model. Refer to Table 1 for a list of the measurement instruments selected for each variable and the corresponding theoretical factor. Validated measures were used where possible.

Twenty-seven different sexual harassment scenarios were developed by this researcher for the policy-capturing aspect of this study. These 27 scenarios represent the systematic manipulation of three variables with three levels each (3 x 3 x 3). Subjects were asked to make judgments on each scenario in order to determine the policies used by different individuals when deciding what behaviors are appropriate in the work setting. Also examined were how individuals indicate they would respond to the different scenarios and the likelihood that they would respond actively to the described incident.

Table 1

Theoretical Factors, Variables, and Measurement Instruments

Theoretical factor	Variable	Instrument
Organizational factors	gender ratio	3 items (Maahs, 1995)
	organizational tolerance for sexual harassment	Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory (OTSHI; Hulin, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1992)
Attributes of the person	age, race, gender, marital status	demographics sheet
	attitudes toward and acceptance of sexual harassment	Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory (TSHI; Reilly, Lott, & Gallogy, 1986)
Interpersonal factors	previous experience with sexual harassment	Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ-W; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995)
	gender of supervisor	1 item (Maahs, 1995)
Role expectations/sent role	power of initiator, invasiveness of touch, verbal comments	27 sexual harassment scenarios
Received role/role behavior	appropriateness of behavior in the work setting, likelihood of responding, response type	3 items per scenario

### Organizational Factors Measures

The Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory (OTSHI; Hulin, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1992) was utilized to measure the organizational climate for sexual harassment. The inventory consists of a total of 18 items (see Appendix G). Participants rate six vignettes in terms of 1) how risky it would be for the victim to report the incident, 2) the likelihood that a complainant would be taken seriously, and 3) the consequences for the accused harasser. Three types of coworker and supervisor harassment are addressed: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. The corresponding coefficient alphas for the three subscales are .92, .92, and .91, respectively.

Gender ratios of the workplace were measured using a modified scale (Maahs, 1995) taken from Konrad and Gutek (1986). The modified scale is a three-item measure with a 5-point scale (see Appendix H). These items ask respondents to estimate the proportions of men and women in the respondent's job classification, in the entire organization, and in their department. These items have a Cronbach's alpha of .80.

### Interpersonal Factors Measures

Gender of the supervisor was assessed by a single item (Maahs, 1995). Fitzgerald et al. (1988) developed the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ), a self-report inventory to assess the frequency of harassing behavior by supervisors, coworkers, or others outside the organization

(i.e., patients, clients). The SEQ was designed using a content validity strategy based upon the classification system developed by Till (1980) which proposed five behavioral categories of harassment: gender harassment, seductive behavior, sexual bribery, sexual coercion, and sexual imposition or assault. The SEQ was revised by Fitzgerald, Gelfand, and Drasgow (1995) to develop an instrument short enough for practical use, to balance item coverage for each dimension, and to develop more sensitive items and scaling procedures. The revised instrument (SEQ-W; see Appendix I) contains 20 items with three subscales (gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion), a criterion item (asking whether the person has ever been sexually harassed), and an unwanted sexual attention item (which meets the legal definition of attempted rape).

Reliability analysis for the SEQ-W yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .89. Reliability coefficient alphas for the subscales of gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion were .78, .81, and .93, respectively (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Gelfand, 1995). For 19 of 20 items, respondents indicate the frequency of harassing behavior by supervisors, coworkers, or others outside the organization (i.e., patients, clients). Responses are scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never to 5 = most of the time). Items include "suggestive stories or offensive jokes," "unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal

or sexual matters," and "being subtly bribed." The criterion item asks respondents to indicate "Have you ever been sexually harassed?" using a dichotomous yes/no response set. This item is not included in the scoring of the three subscales.

The SEQ-W has been examined in extensive validation studies. Fitzgerald, Gelfand, and Drasgow (1998) found clear and compelling support for a three-factor solution. The subscales of the SEQ have also been found to predict organizationally relevant variables (job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and mental health) demonstrating predictive validity (Schneider & Swan, 1994). Schneider and Swan (1994) found that women with high scores on the SEQ predicted lower levels of work satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, and worse mental health than women who were not harassed.

#### Attributes of the Person Measures

A demographics sheet was utilized to assess age, race, gender, and marital status of participants (see Appendix J).

Attitudes toward and acceptance of sexually harassing behaviors was measured using the Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory (TSHI; Reilly, Lott, & Gallogly, 1986). The TSHI is a ten-item instrument where respondents indicate extent of agreement with each statement on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree; see Appendix K). The TSHI was found to have an alpha reliability coefficient of .78 (Reilly, Lott, & Gallogly,

1986). A principle components analysis with varimax rotation yielded a three factor solution. When the content of the factors were considered, the three factors were designated - flirtations are natural, provocative behavior, and feminist beliefs.

Role Episode (Role Expectations, Sent Role, Received Role, and Role Behavior) Measures

A measure of the perception of sexual harassment was developed by this researcher (see Appendix E). A series of vignettes were written to express a variety of interactions that might be viewed as examples of sexual harassment by modifying previously developed measures (Bursik, 1992; Sheffey & Tindale, 1992). The twenty-seven different sexual harassment scenarios contain a systematic manipulation of three variables: relative power of the role sender, nonverbal behavior of the role sender, and verbal behavior of the role sender. The relative power of the role sender was varied (i.e., supervisor, coworker, subordinate). The nonverbal and verbal behavior variables were also manipulated. The invasiveness of touch was varied from least invasive (John shakes Ann's hand), to moderately invasive (John puts his arm around Ann), to most invasive (John pats Ann's butt). The verbal comments made by the role sender of the potentially harassing role expectations were manipulated. Comments were varied from not harassing ("The report you wrote was top notch."), to moderately harassing ("You must be doing a lot of running these days;



your body looks terrific."), and most harassing ("You've got a nice butt.").

Participants were asked to read each vignette and then respond on a seven-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they view the behaviors to be appropriate in a work setting ranging from 1 (definitely not appropriate) to 7 (definitely appropriate). This is a measure of the received role that is a modification of the role ambiguity scale suggested by Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1991). Scores near the midpoint of the scale indicate role ambiguity. High ratings of inappropriateness of behavior indicate the perception of sexual harassment.

Additionally, measures of the anticipated role behaviors were developed. Participants were asked to rate the likelihood that they would actively respond to the incident (i.e., reporting it to another member of the organization). Responses were rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale from 1 (definitely would not respond) to 7 (definitely would respond). Respondents were also asked to indicate the response strategy that they would most likely utilize using response types developed by Gruber and Smith (1995). Seven categories of response were included: ignore, avoid the issue, change ways of acting, speak to someone, respond directly to the person, report the person, and quit. These categories range from least assertive (ignoring or avoiding), to moderately assertive (changing one's behavior and seeking social support), to most assertive (direct

response and reporting; Gruber & Smith, 1995). Because quitting does not fit this rationale, Gruber and Smith (1995) recommend that the analysis of this response variable be conducted separately.

The twenty-seven scenarios were presented in a random order to each participant in order to avoid any possible order effects. Random numbers were generated for each participant so that no two individuals were given the same sequence of scenarios.

For practical as well as ethical reasons, the actual behavior variables relating to sexual harassment can not be manipulated directly. The manipulation of these variables must occur in a contrived setting. Therefore, sexual harassment researchers have relied on the use of vignettes. Sheffey and Tindale (1992) used scenarios to measure the perception of sexual harassment among college students. These researchers found results that were consistent with a number of studies using actual workers. The scenarios utilized in this research were written as realistically as possible in order to increase their validity. In order to address the issue of realism, following each scenario participants were asked to identify how easy it was to imagine each scenario and to indicate whether they believed the situation could happen in the workplace. Responses were measured on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These questions were obtained from the research of Hayes (1996).

## RESULTS

### Overview

The results are presented in three major sections. The first section will address the issue of realism of the developed scenarios. The second section addresses the policy capturing aspect of the project to determine how individuals weight information when deciding whether different situations are sexual harassment. The third section uses profile analysis to determine the effects of context variables on the decision making policies regarding sexual harassment.

Each of the thirteen hypotheses that were outlined in the introduction of this paper will be examined throughout these sections. At the beginning of each section, the hypotheses will be reiterated and general findings regarding the support of each will be summarized. First, the different dependent measures will be outlined below.

### Dependent Variables

Five dependent variable measures were measured.

#### Dependent Variable One (DV1)

Participants read each of the 27 different vignettes and then responded on a seven-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they view the behaviors to be appropriate in a work setting ranging from 1 (definitely not appropriate) to 7 (definitely appropriate). Scores near the midpoint of the scale connote role ambiguity. Low scores (scores near 1) indicated that there was a high level inappropriateness

of the behavior thus indicating the perception of sexual harassment.

Dependent Variable Two (DV2)

Additionally, participants were asked to rate the likelihood that they would actively respond to the incident (i.e., reporting it to another member of the organization). Responses were rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale from 1 (definitely would not respond) to 7 (definitely would respond). High scores would indicate a greater likelihood of response to the described behavior.

Dependent Variable Three (DV3)

Respondents were also be asked to indicate the response strategy that they would most likely utilize using seven categories of response: ignore the incident, avoid the issue/person, change your ways of acting, speak to someone, respond directly to the person, report the person, and quit. These categories range from least assertive (ignoring or avoiding), to moderately assertive (changing one's behavior and seeking social support), to most assertive (direct response and reporting; Gruber & Smith, 1995). These scores were coded from 1 (ignore the person/incident) to seven (quit). Therefore, higher scores indicate a more assertive response strategy.

Dependent Variable Four (DV4)

In order to address the issue of realism, following each scenario participants were asked to identify how easy it was to imagine each scenario. Responses were measured on

a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree), 3 (no opinion) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate that the described scenario was easy to imagine thus reflecting a higher degree of realism.

#### Dependent Variable Five (DV5)

An additional measure of realism was included. Participants were also asked to indicate whether they believed the situation could happen in the workplace. Responses were measured on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree), 3 (no opinion) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate that the participants perceived that the scenario could indeed occur in the workplace.

#### Experimental Design

A number of independent variables were examined. Three within-subject variables were manipulated: level of power, touch and verbal behavior. All participants were exposed to all combinations of these three variables (3 x 3 x 3) in 27 different scenarios. The results of these variables are addressed in the policy capturing aspect of this research.

To determine the effects of context factors on the perception of sexual harassment, a number of between-subject factors were examined using profile analysis. These factors include organizational factors (gender ratios of the workplace and organizational tolerance for sexual harassment); attributes of the person (gender, age, race, relationship status, and one's tolerance for sexual harassment); and interpersonal factors (previous

interpersonal experiences with harassment and the gender of one's supervisor).

#### Realism Check

In order to address the issue of realism of the developed scenarios, following each scenario participants were asked to identify how easy it was to imagine each scenario (dependent variable four) and to indicate whether they believed the situation could happen in the workplace (dependent variable five). Responses were measured on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

#### Findings on the Ease of Imagining the Situation (DV4)

A summary of the analysis of variance conducted on the effects of the manipulated variables and attributes of the person on the ease of imagining the situation (dependent variable four) are presented in Table 2. There was a significant main effect for Power [ $F(1,212)=3.50, p<.05$ ], Touch [ $F(1,212)=43.18, p<.05$ ], and Verbal [ $F(1,212)=42.25, p<.05$ ].

Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses revealed that there were significant differences ( $p<.05$ ) in the ability of the participants to imagine scenarios that depicted coworkers ( $M=4.23$ ) versus subordinates ( $M=4.18$ ), where it was easier to imagine the coworker scenarios. There were no differences between the scenarios that described behaviors initiated by a supervisor ( $M=4.21$ ) and those of the coworker and subordinate. There were significant differences between

Table 2  
Summary of the Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects  
of the Manipulated Variables on the Ease of Imagining the  
Situation (Dependent Variable Four)

Source	df	MS	F-ratio	Eta-Square
Power (P)	2	1.1920	3.50*	.0004
Touch (T)	2	32.0571	43.18*	.0107
Verbal (V)	2	38.4183	42.25*	.0128
P*T	4	0.4211	1.61	
P*V	4	0.0431	0.18	
T*V	4	12.5284	26.23*	.0083
P*T*V	8	0.3234	1.31	
Subj	212	15.6645	n.t.	
P*Subj	424	0.3406	n.t.	
T*Subj	424	0.7423	n.t.	
P*T*Subj	848	0.2618	n.t.	
V*Subj	424	0.9093	n.t.	
P*V*Subj	848	0.2375	n.t.	
T*V*Subj	848	0.4776	n.t.	
P*T*V*Subj	1691	0.2474	n.t.	

\*  $p < .05$ .

n.t. = no test

low ( $\underline{M}$ =4.33), moderate ( $\underline{M}$ =4.20), and high ( $\underline{M}$ =4.08) levels of touch. Significant differences also existed between all levels of verbal behavior: low ( $\underline{M}$ =4.36), moderate ( $\underline{M}$ =4.17), and high ( $\underline{M}$ =4.09). Based on these findings it appears that participants found it easier to imagine scenarios that have low levels of sexually harassing touch and verbal behavior. However, it should be noted that despite these differences, even high levels of harassing behavior had means that ranged between 4 (slightly agree) and 5 (strongly agree).

There was a significant two-way interactions for Verbal x Touch [ $F(1,212)=26.23, p<.05$ ]. Refer to Figure 2 for further examination of this interaction. At low and moderately invasive levels of touch, participants indicated significant differences in their ability to imagine the situation across all levels of verbal behavior, where it was progressively easier to imagine less harassing verbal behaviors. At high levels of touch invasiveness, all the levels of verbal behavior were equally easy to imagine. Similarly, at high levels of verbal harassment no differences were found in the ability to imagine the situation across the different levels of touch. At low levels of verbal harassment, significant differences were found between all levels of touch. At moderate levels of verbal harassment, high levels of touch differed significantly from low and moderate levels of touch.



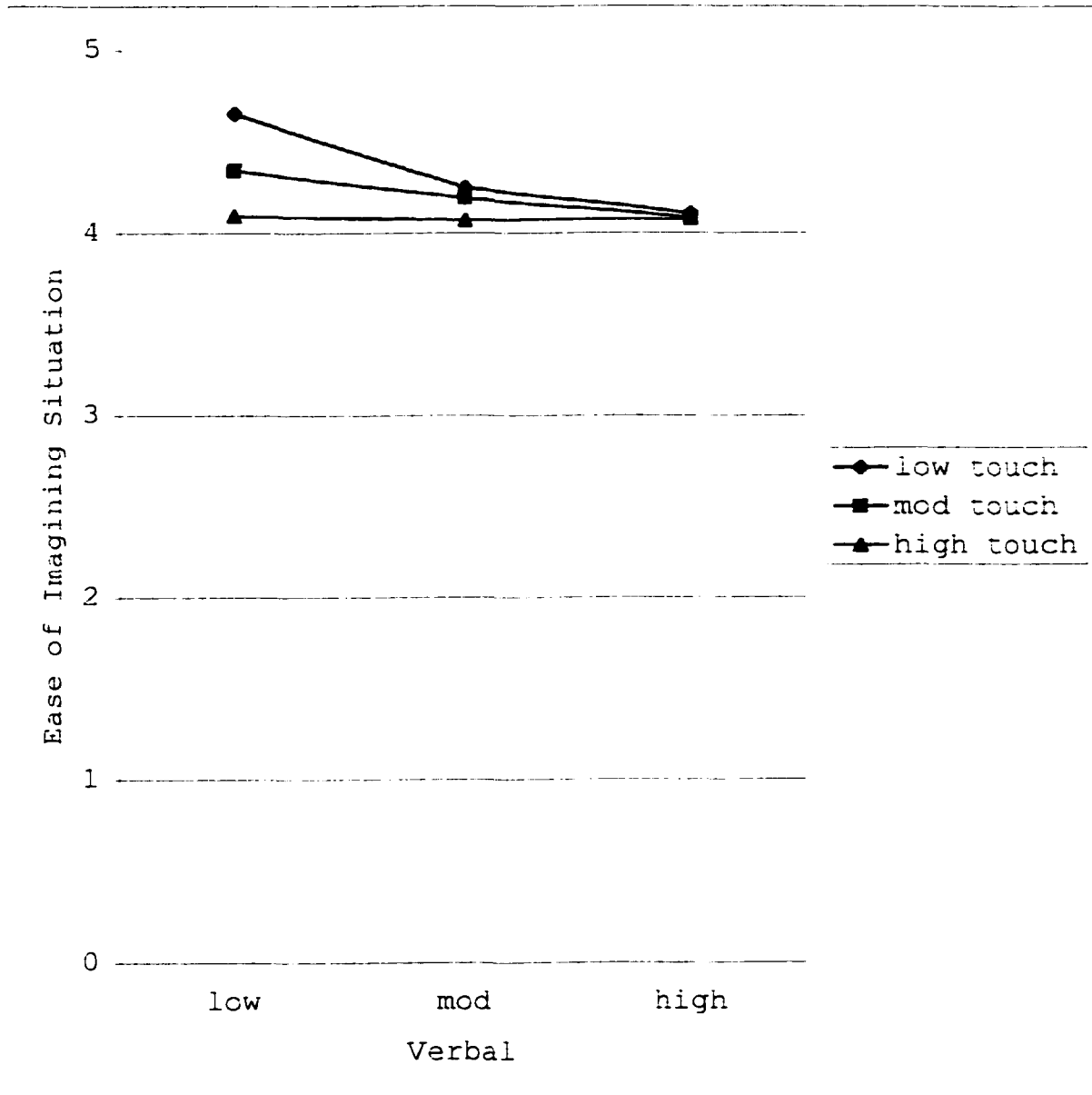


Figure 2. The interaction of touch and verbal behavior on the ability to imagine the scenario described (dependent variable four).

Findings on the Likelihood of Occurrence of the Situation  
(DV5)

A summary of the analysis of variance conducted on the effects of the manipulated variables and attributes of the person on the likelihood that the situation could occur in the workplace (dependent variable five) are presented in Table 3. There was a significant main effect for Power [ $F(1,212)=7.36, p<.05$ ], Touch [ $F(1,212)=40.72, p<.05$ ], and Verbal [ $F(1,212)=44.58, p<.05$ ]. Again, it should be noted that despite any differences that were found, even high levels of harassing behavior had means for the likelihood that the situation could occur that ranged between 4 (slightly agree) and 5 (strongly agree).

Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses revealed that there were significant differences ( $p<.05$ ) in the perception that the situations that depicted coworkers ( $M=4.42$ ) and supervisors ( $M=4.40$ ) were more likely to occur than those that depicted subordinates ( $M=4.34$ ). This may be a reflection of the fact that coworker harassment is the most common form of sexual harassment (Gutek, 1985) and that supervisor harassment is generally associated with more severe offenses (Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; Loy & Steward, 1984).

Significant differences were revealed across all levels of touch: low ( $M=4.51$ ), moderate ( $M=4.39$ ), and high ( $M=4.26$ ). Participants indicated that lower levels of invasive touch were more likely to occur in the workplace. Similar differences were found across all levels of verbal

Table 3

Summary of the Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of the Manipulated Variables on the Likelihood of Occurrence of the Situation (Dependent Variable Five)

Source	df	MS	F-ratio	Eta-Square
Power (P)	2	3.0983	7.36*	.0012
Touch (T)	2	30.7528	40.72*	.0117
Verbal (V)	2	34.41	44.58*	.0131
P*T	4	0.2417	0.89	
P*V	4	0.1050	0.48	
T*V	4	8.8989	22.57*	.0068
P*T*V	8	0.2259	1.01	
Subj	212	13.1212	n.t.	
P*Subj	424	0.4211	n.t.	
T*Subj	424	0.7551	n.t.	
P*T*Subj	848	0.2728	n.t.	
V*Subj	424	0.7719	n.t.	
P*V*Subj	848	0.2208	n.t.	
T*V*Subj	848	0.3943	n.t.	
P*T*V*Subj	1691	0.2243	n.t.	

\*  $p < .05$ .

n.t. = no test

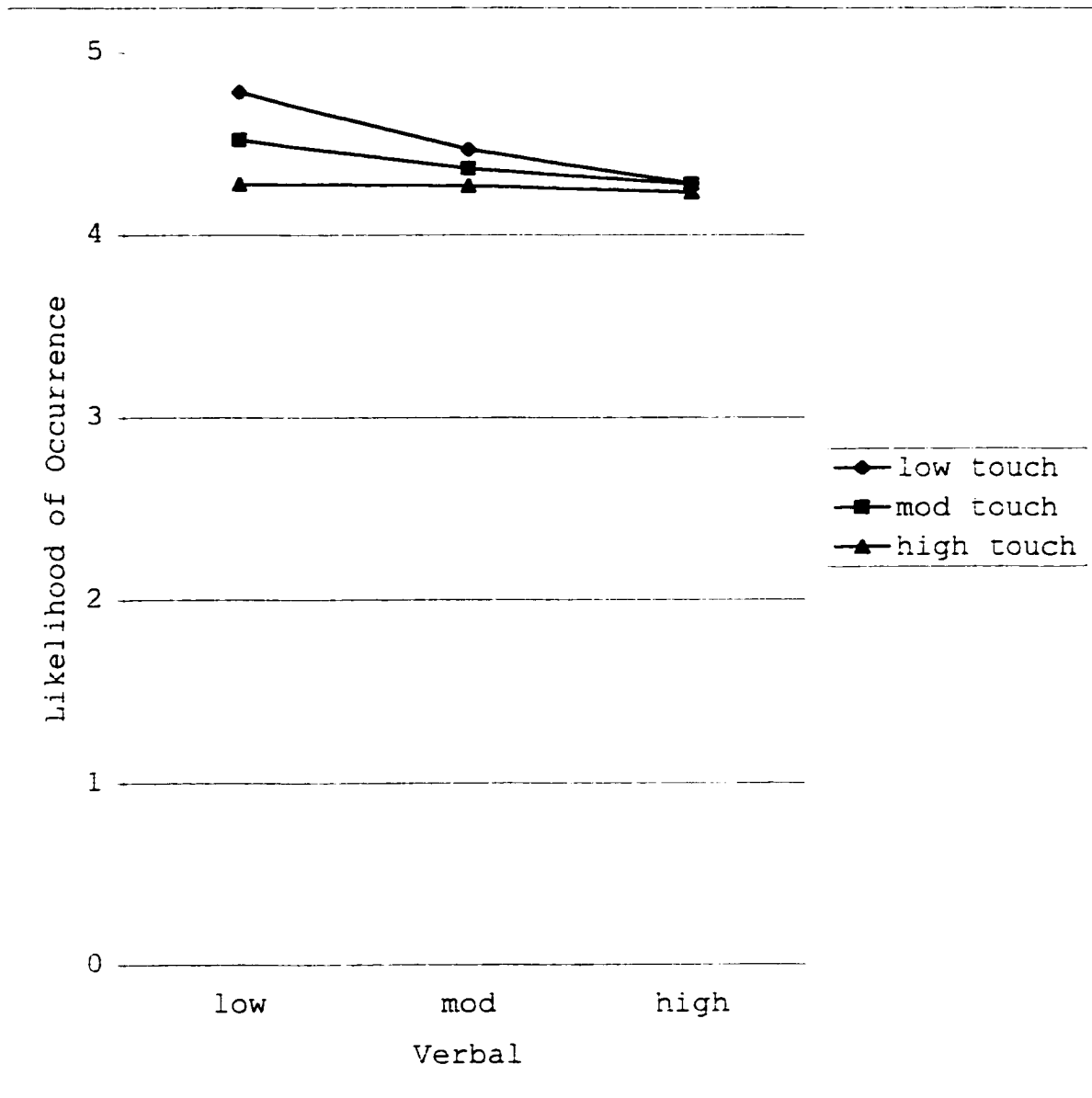


Figure 3. The interaction of touch and verbal behavior on the indicated likelihood that the situation could occur in the workplace (dependent variable five).

behavior: low ( $\underline{M}=4.53$ ), moderate ( $\underline{M}=4.37$ ), and high ( $\underline{M}=4.27$ ). This most likely reflects the higher incidence of less severe forms of harassment.

A significant two-way interaction occurred for Touch x Verbal [ $\underline{F}(1,212)=22.57, p<.05$ ; refer to Figure 3]. Significant differences were found in the likelihood of occurrence of the behavior between all levels of touch at both low and moderate levels of verbal behavior, where the less invasive the touch the more likely it was to occur. Similarly, significant differences were found between all levels of verbal behavior at both low and moderate levels of touch. At high levels of verbal harassment, no differences were found in the likelihood of occurrence of the behavior across the different levels of touch. At high levels of touch invasiveness, no differences were found across the levels of verbal behavior.

#### Policy Capturing

The use of fewer criteria will most likely allow for configural judgments (Stumpf & London, 1981). The use of configural models of decision making will account for the interactions between variables that are hypothesized to occur. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized to determine if the intended manipulation of the variables did in fact occur. Main effects and interaction effects for the three manipulated, within-subject sexual harassment variables (power of the role sender, nonverbal behavior of the role sender, and the verbal behavior of the role sender)

were examined to determine rater policies. Eta-square values were used to determine the amount of total variance accounted for by each variable and the interaction of the variables. To obviate the assumptions of homogeneity and circularity of the covariance matrices of the within-subject variables, the degrees of freedom (df) of the F-ratios involving these variables were adjusted according to the Geisser-Greenhouse conservation test (Winer, Brown, & Michels, 1991) for evaluating the F-ratios for significance.

As previously outlined in the methods section, three role expectations/sent role variables were manipulated: relative power of the role sender, nonverbal behavior/touch of the role sender, and verbal behavior of the role sender. The relative power of the role sender was varied (i.e., subordinate, coworker, supervisor). The invasiveness of touch was varied from least invasive (John shakes Ann's hand), to moderately invasive (John puts his arm around Ann), to most invasive (John pats Ann's butt). The verbal comments were varied from not harassing ("The report you wrote was top notch."), to moderately harassing ("You must be doing a lot of running these days; your body looks terrific."), and most harassing ("You've got a nice butt."). For the purpose of the analyses, the levels of verbal behavior and touch will be referred to as low, moderate, and high corresponding to the levels outlined above.

#### Hypotheses Regarding Power, Touch, and Verbal Behavior

Relative power of the role sender. It was hypothesized

that supervisor harassment would be seen as more offensive than coworker harassment, and that subordinate harassment would be the least offensive form of harassment. Higher levels of offensiveness would be reflected in lower scores on the appropriateness of behavior in the work setting and more assertive behavioral responses (**Hypothesis 1**). As will be discussed, this hypothesis was partially confirmed, however some of the findings were not expected.

Level of touch of the role sender. It was hypothesized that the more invasive the level of touch, the more likely it would be viewed as sexual harassment as reflected in higher scores on inappropriateness of behavior and more active responses (**Hypothesis 2**). This hypothesis was confirmed.

Level of verbal behavior of the role sender. It was hypothesized that the more explicit and personal the verbal behavior, the more likely it would be viewed as inappropriate and lead to more active responses (**Hypothesis 3**). This hypothesis was confirmed.

#### Hypothesis Regarding Role Ambiguity

It was hypothesized that higher levels of role ambiguity would be indicated when the harassing behavior was initiated by a coworker or subordinate rather than a supervisor. Higher levels of role ambiguity were also expected when the verbal and nonverbal role expectations were more moderate. Higher levels of role ambiguity were also expected to be accompanied by less assertive responses

**(Hypothesis 4)**. Although it appears that this hypothesis was supported, there are some scaling issues mentioned that need to be addressed in future studies.

Findings on the Level of Appropriateness of Behavior (DV1)

A summary of the analysis of variance conducted on the effects of the manipulated variables on the level of appropriateness of the behavior (dependent variable one) are presented in Table 4. There were significant main effects for Power [ $F(1,212)=5.77, p<.05$ ], Touch [ $F(1,212)=746.45, p<.05$ ], and Verbal [ $F(1,212)=812.29, p<.05$ ].

Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses revealed that there were significant differences ( $p<.05$ ) between scenarios that described coworkers ( $M=2.88$ ) and those that described supervisors ( $M=2.77$ ) and subordinates ( $M=2.81$ ). Those involving coworkers were viewed as more appropriate in the workplace, perhaps due to the lack of power differential. This is contrary to what was expected (Hypothesis 1).

Significant differences between all levels of touch were found: low ( $M=3.98$ ), moderate ( $M=2.92$ ), and high ( $M=1.56$ ). This indicates that more invasive touch was viewed as inappropriate in the workplace and therefore more sexually harassing. Significant differences in all levels of verbal behavior were also found, with low levels ( $M=4.20$ ) viewed as more appropriate than moderate levels ( $M=2.60$ ) followed by high levels ( $M=1.65$ ) as least appropriate. These findings for touch and verbal behavior were expected (Hypotheses 2 and 3).



Table 4  
Summary of the Analysis of Variance Results for the  
Manipulated Variables and the Effects of the Attributes of  
the Person on Behavior Appropriateness (Dependent Variable  
One)

Source	df	MS	F-ratio	Eta-Square
Power (P)	2	6.9207	5.77*	.0005
Touch (T)	2	2914.5547	746.45*	.2099
Verbal (V)	2	3294.1703	812.29*	.2372
Gender (G)	1	106.5695	7.16*	.0038
Race (R)	1	101.3357	6.81*	.0036
Relationship (L)	1	72.1324	4.85*	.0026
P*T	4	2.2220	3.16	
P*V	4	0.4355	0.57	
T*V	4	811.9706	389.62*	.1169
P*G	2	1.7382	1.45	
T*G	2	6.5383	1.67	
V*G	2	28.3407	6.99*	.0020
P*R	2	1.1549	0.96	
T*R	2	9.4622	2.42	
V*R	2	33.5603	8.28*	.0024
G*R	1	0.0000	0.00	
P*L	2	2.1310	1.78	
T*L	2	7.7110	1.97	
V*L	2	2.5981	0.64	
G*L	1	23.8748	1.60	
R*L	1	54.3008	3.65	
P*T*V	8	0.8983	1.30	
P*T*G	4	0.5350	0.76	
P*V*G	4	0.0170	0.02	
T*V*G	4	4.7337	2.27	
P*T*R	4	2.4824	3.55	
P*V*R	4	0.9732	1.28	
T*V*R	4	12.4307	5.96*	.0018
P*G*R	2	0.6155	0.51	
T*G*R	2	10.2155	2.62	
V*G*R	2	0.0000	0.00	
P*T*L	4	2.6172	3.74	
P*V*L	4	0.4039	0.53	
T*V*L	4	3.3786	1.62	
P*G*L	2	3.3254	2.77	
T*G*L	2	4.2918	1.10	
V*G*L	2	0.3525	0.09	
P*R*L	2	2.2749	1.90	
T*R*L	2	3.3013	0.85	
V*R*L	2	3.3647	0.83	
G*R*L	1	20.2803	1.36	
P*T*V*G	8	0.7669	1.11	

Table 4 continued

Source	df	MS	F-ratio	Eta-Square
P*T*V*R	8	0.8796	1.28	
P*T*G*R	4	0.3349	0.48	
P*V*G*R	4	2.0566	2.71	
T*V*G*R	4	0.0000	0.00	
P*T*V*L	8	0.4616	0.67	
P*T*G*L	4	0.8710	1.25	
P*V*G*L	4	0.4406	0.58	
T*V*G*L	4	3.0424	1.46	
P*T*R*L	4	1.5917	2.28	
P*V*R*L	4	0.4017	0.53	
T*V*R*L	4	3.3914	1.63	
P*G*R*L	2	1.7491	1.46	
T*G*R*L	2	6.9474	1.78	
V*G*R*L	2	5.7517	1.42	
P*T*V*G*R	8	1.0227	1.48	
P*T*V*G*L	8	1.2248	1.78	
P*T*V*R*L	8	0.7646	1.11	
P*T*G*R*L	4	2.1068	3.01	
P*V*G*R*L	4	1.1924	1.57	
T*V*G*R*L	4	5.8657	2.81	
P*T*V*G*R*L	8	1.4937	2.17	
Subj (G*R*L)	212	14.8853	n.t.	
P*Subj (G*R*L)	424	1.2003	n.t.	
T*Subj (G*R*L)	424	3.9045	n.t.	
P*T*Subj (G*R*L)	848	0.6994	n.t.	
V*Subj (G*R*L)	424	4.0554	n.t.	
P*V*Subj (G*R*L)	848	0.7577	n.t.	
T*V*Subj (G*R*L)	848	2.0840	n.t.	
P*T*V*Subj (G*R*L)	1691	0.6891	n.t.	

\*  $p < .05$ .

n.t. = no test

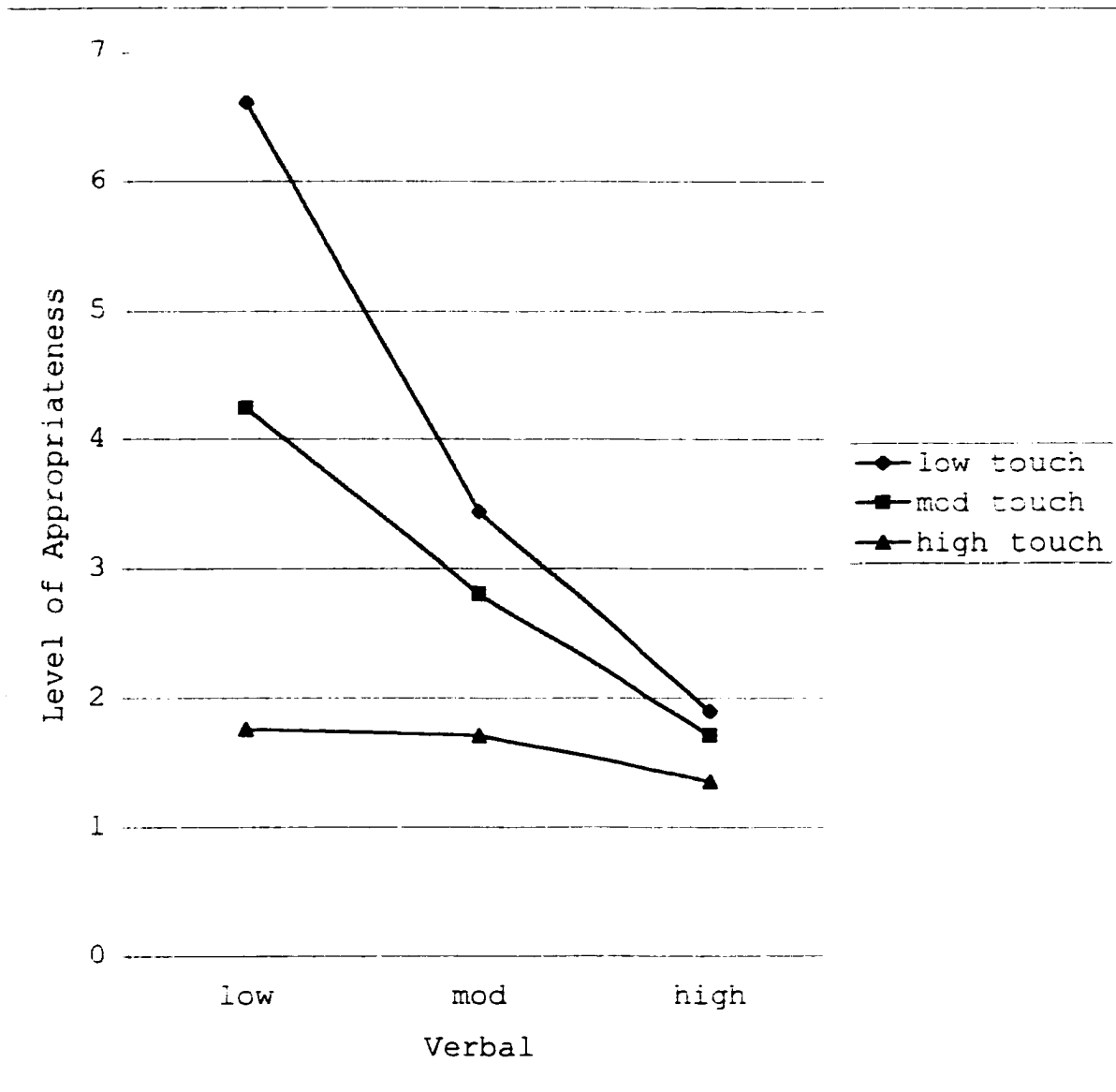


Figure 4. The interaction of touch and verbal behavior on perceived level of appropriateness of the behavior (dependent variable one).

Post hoc analyses ( $p < .05$ ) also revealed significant differences among the interaction means for Touch x Verbal [ $F(1,212) = 389.62, p < .05$ ]. This interaction is further examined in Figure 4. Low, moderate, and high invasiveness of touch differed significantly across all levels of verbal behavior, where more invasive touch was seen as less appropriate than less invasive touch. In the low and moderately invasive touch conditions, all levels of verbal behavior differed significantly from each other. Higher levels of verbal harassment were seen as more harassing. In the highly invasive touch condition, highly harassing verbal statements were perceived to be significantly less appropriate than both low and moderately harassing verbal statements. Similarly when the verbal statement is highly harassing, low and moderately harassing levels of touch were not significantly different from one another. Thus when people experience highly explicit and personal verbal harassment, they perceive the verbal behavior to be sufficiently inappropriate that lower and moderately invasive touch are not distinguished from one another. Similarly, when people experience harassment that involves highly invasive touch, they perceive the nonverbal behavior to be sufficiently inappropriate that the lower and moderate levels of verbal harassment are not distinguished from one another.

#### Findings on the Likelihood of Response to the Behavior (DV2)

A summary of the analysis of variance conducted on the

Table 5  
Summary of the Analysis of Variance Results for the  
Manipulated Variables and the Effects of the Attributes of  
the Person on the Likelihood of an Active Response  
(Dependent Variable Two)

Source	df	MS	F-ratio	Eta-Square
Power (P)	2	18.2583	14.53*	.0012
Touch (T)	2	1709.1347	330.57*	.1148
Verbal (V)	2	1295.5699	206.31*	.0870
Gender (G)	1	1.1544	0.03	
Race (R)	1	6.2397	0.14	
Relationship (L)	1	212.0474	4.61*	.0071
P*T	4	3.0522	2.62	
P*V	4	1.0831	0.87	
T*V	4	221.8100	82.51*	.0298
P*G	2	0.3975	0.32	
T*G	2	2.4828	0.48	
V*G	2	16.0907	2.56	
P*R	2	1.3012	1.04	
T*R	2	11.9649	2.31	
V*R	2	34.3381	5.47*	.0023
G*R	1	0.8391	0.02	
P*L	2	2.2458	1.79	
T*L	2	0.4455	0.09	
V*L	2	13.4568	2.14	
G*L	1	50.0734	1.09	
R*L	1	128.9590	2.30	
P*T*V	8	0.8205	0.75	
P*T*G	4	1.6531	1.42	
P*V*G	5	0.5055	0.40	
T*V*G	4	8.1320	3.03	
P*T*R	4	0.5949	0.51	
P*V*R	4	0.4879	0.39	
T*V*R	4	6.8087	2.53	
P*G*R	2	0.4067	0.32	
T*G*R	2	2.3143	0.45	
V*G*R	2	0.0000	0.00	
P*T*L	4	1.3203	1.13	
P*V*L	4	0.1521	0.12	
T*V*L	4	9.5370	3.55	
P*G*L	2	1.3072	1.04	
T*G*L	2	7.5317	1.46	
V*G*L	2	4.8549	0.77	
P*R*L	2	1.4126	1.12	
T*R*L	2	8.4438	1.63	
V*R*L	2	2.1396	0.34	
G*R*L	1	565.0256	12.28*	.0190
P*T*V*G	8	0.8805	0.80	

Table 5 continued

Source	df	MS	F-ratio	Eta-Square
P*T*V*R	8	0.9618	0.38	
P*T*G*R	4	0.4645	0.40	
P*V*G*R	4	2.9754	2.38	
T*V*G*R	4	2.7928	1.04	
P*T*V*L	8	0.6382	0.58	
P*T*G*L	4	0.9963	0.85	
P*V*G*L	4	0.6623	0.53	
T*V*G*L	4	1.9705	0.73	
P*T*R*L	4	0.4960	0.43	
P*V*R*L	4	1.7223	1.38	
T*V*R*L	4	5.6225	2.09	
P*G*R*L	2	2.8281	2.25	
T*G*R*L	2	5.6404	1.09	
V*G*R*L	2	8.8063	1.40	
P*T*V*G*R	8	1.8378	1.68	
P*T*V*G*L	8	1.5256	1.39	
P*T*V*R*L	8	1.7423	1.59	
P*T*G*R*L	4	2.5806	2.21	
P*V*G*R*L	4	1.3282	1.06	
T*V*G*R*L	4	3.7540	1.40	
P*T*V*G*R*L	8	1.8236	1.66	
Subj (G*R*L)	212	46.0178	n.t.	
P*Subj (G*R*L)	424	1.2568	n.t.	
T*Subj (G*R*L)	424	5.1703	n.t.	
P*T*Subj (G*R*L)	848	1.1666	n.t.	
V*Subj (G*R*L)	424	6.2797	n.t.	
P*V*Subj (G*R*L)	848	1.2516	n.t.	
T*V*Subj (G*R*L)	848	2.6882	n.t.	
P*T*V*Subj (G*R*L)	1691	1.0957	n.t.	

\*  $p < .05$ .

n.t. = no test

effects of the manipulated variables on the likelihood of response to the behavior (dependent variable two) are presented in Table 5. There were significant main effects for Power [ $F(1,212)=14.53, p<.05$ ], Touch [ $F(1,212)=330.57, p<.05$ ], and Verbal [ $F(1,212)=14.53, p<.05$ ].

Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses revealed that there were significant differences ( $p<.05$ ) between scenarios that described coworkers ( $M=4.17$ ) and those that described supervisors ( $M=4.33$ ) and subordinates ( $M=4.33$ ). Contrary to expectations (Hypothesis 1) participants indicated that they were less likely to respond to the behavior when the behavior was initiated by a coworker rather than a supervisor or subordinate.

Significant differences between all levels of touch were found: low ( $M=3.47$ ), moderate ( $M=4.07$ ), and high ( $M=5.29$ ). This indicates that the more invasive the touch the more likely participants indicated that they would actively respond to the behavior. Significant differences in all levels of verbal behavior were also found. Participants indicated they would most likely respond to high levels of verbal harassment ( $M=5.06$ ), followed by moderate levels ( $M=4.33$ ), and were least likely to respond to low levels ( $M=3.44$ ). These findings for touch and verbal behavior were expected (Hypotheses 2 and 3).

A significant two-way interaction effect was found for Touch x Verbal [ $F(1,212)=2.62, p<.05$ ; refer to Figure 5]. Post hoc analysis of this interaction effect revealed that

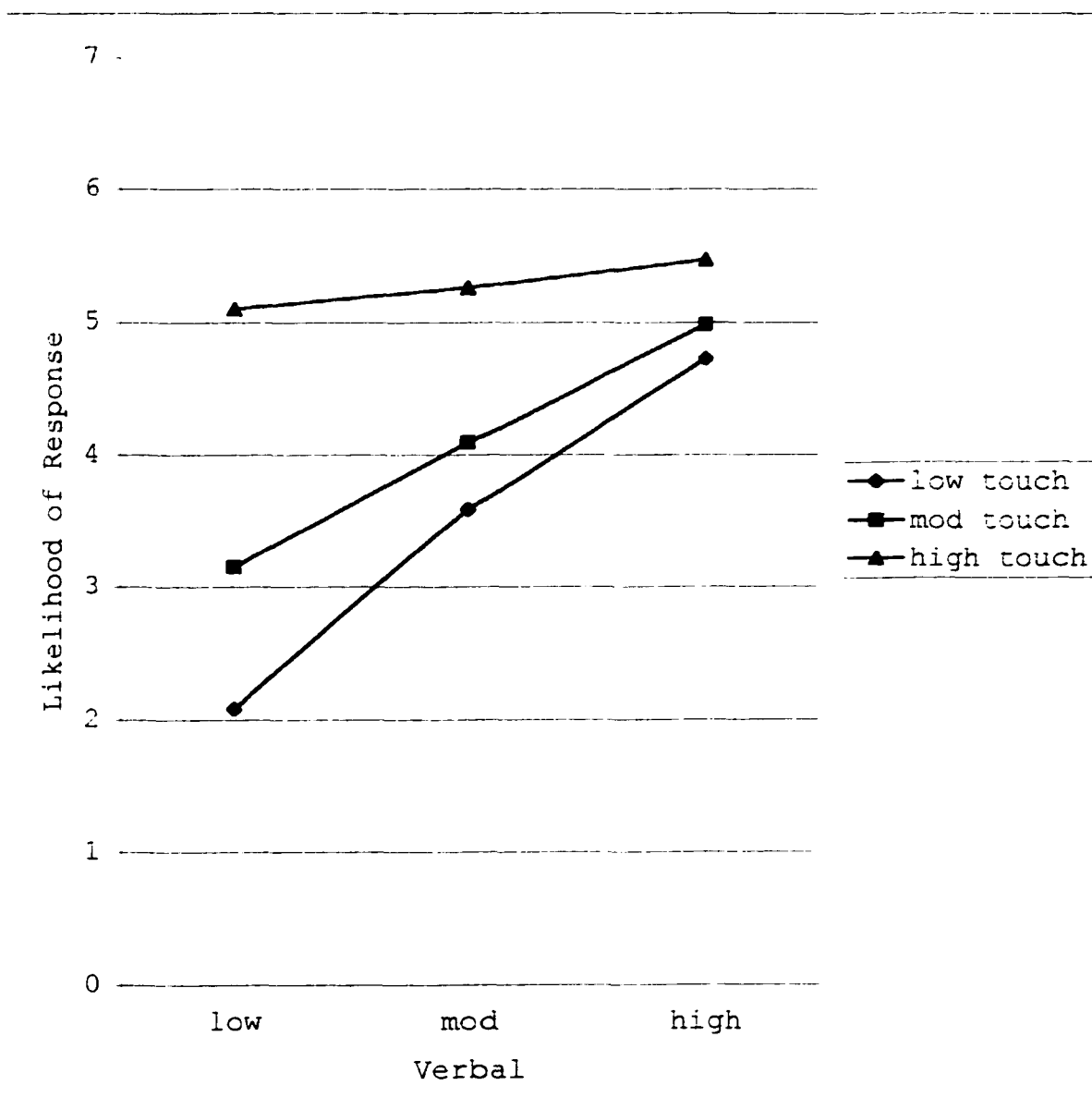


Figure 5. The interaction of touch and verbal behavior on the likelihood of response to the behavior (dependent variable two).



across all levels of verbal behavior, the likelihood of response differed between the levels of touch, where more invasive touching lead to more active predicted responses. For low and moderately invasive touch, the likelihood of an active response differed significantly depending on the level of harassment of the verbal statement with more harassing verbal statements leading to more active responses. For highly invasive touch, the likelihood of response was significantly greater for high levels of verbally harassing behavior than low levels. At high levels of touch, the likelihood of response to moderately harassing statements did not differ from the low or high verbal conditions. Thus when a person experiences highly invasive touch, they are highly likely to respond to the harassment and so what the harasser actually says to them is not as salient a factor.

Findings on the Assertiveness of Response/Response Type to the Behavior (DV3)

A summary of the analysis of variance conducted on the effects of the manipulated variables on the assertiveness of the response/response type (dependent variable three) are presented in Table 6. There were significant main effects for Touch [ $F(1,212)=256.29, p<.05$ ] and Verbal behavior [ $F(1,212)=168.57, p<.05$ ].

Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses revealed that there were significant differences ( $p<.05$ ) between low ( $M=3.06$ ), moderate ( $M=3.53$ ), and high ( $M=4.55$ ) levels of touch. These

Table 6  
Summary of the Analysis of Variance Results for the  
Manipulated Variables and the Effects of the Attributes of  
the Person on the Response Type (Dependent Variable Three)

Source	df	MS	F-ratio	Eta-Square
Power (P)	2	2.1948	1.64	
Touch (T)	2	1149.5036	256.29*	.1088
Verbal (V)	2	844.9915	168.57*	.0800
Gender (G)	1	1.5471	0.05	
Race (R)	1	26.3885	0.91	
Relationship (L)	1	177.8999	6.15*	.0084
P*T	4	0.6499	0.73	
P*V	4	1.9060	2.06	
T*V	4	138.6950	57.70*	.0262
P*G	2	0.0207	0.02	
T*G	2	2.7720	0.62	
V*G	2	8.5513	1.71	
P*R	2	0.6612	0.49	
T*R	2	9.4976	2.12	
V*R	2	17.5910	3.51	
G*R	1	0.0000	0.00	
P*L	2	0.3720	0.28	
T*L	2	5.4463	1.21	
V*L	2	5.5069	1.10	
G*L	1	101.7797	3.52	
R*L	1	53.6072	1.85	
P*T*V	8	1.2526	1.41	
P*T*G	4	1.4872	1.66	
P*V*G	4	0.6068	0.66	
T*V*G	4	4.0770	1.70	
P*T*R	4	1.4531	1.62	
P*V*R	4	1.3059	1.41	
T*V*R	4	0.8107	0.34	
P*G*R	2	0.6000	0.45	
T*G*R	2	3.7460	0.84	
V*G*R	2	8.2772	1.65	
P*T*L	4	0.7110	0.79	
P*V*L	4	2.5332	2.74	
T*V*L	4	4.3890	1.83	
P*G*L	2	0.5043	0.38	
T*G*L	2	1.3689	0.31	
V*G*L	2	0.0981	0.02	
P*R*L	2	0.0839	0.06	
T*R*L	2	8.0388	1.79	
V*R*L	2	0.0000	0.00	
G*R*L	1	32.9511	1.14	
P*T*V*G	8	0.7426	0.84	
P*T*V*R	8	1.5389	1.74	
P*T*G*R	4	1.2244	1.37	

Table 6 continued

Source	df	MS	F-ratio	Eta-Square
P*V*G*R	4	1.2728	1.36	
T*V*G*R	4	1.8552	0.77	
P*T*V*L	8	0.3446	0.39	
P*T*G*L	4	1.1285	1.26	
P*V*G*L	4	0.8554	0.93	
T*V*G*L	4	1.8588	0.77	
P*T*R*L	4	0.1743	0.19	
P*V*R*L	4	0.7185	0.78	
T*V*R*L	4	4.3542	1.81	
P*G*R*L	2	0.1512	0.11	
T*G*R*L	2	8.2844	1.85	
V*G*R*L	2	4.1730	0.33	
P*T*V*G*R	8	0.5857	0.66	
P*T*V*G*L	8	0.3966	0.45	
P*T*V*R*L	8	0.8004	1.97	
P*T*G*R*L	4	1.4146	1.58	
P*V*G*R*L	4	0.4405	0.48	
T*V*G*R*L	4	4.1585	1.73	
P*T*V*G*R*L	8	1.7473	1.97	
Subj (G*R*L)	212	28.9425	n.t.	
P*Subj (G*R*L)	424	1.3416	n.t.	
T*Subj (G*R*L)	424	4.4852	n.t.	
P*T*Subj (G*R*L)	848	0.8947	n.t.	
V*Subj (G*R*L)	424	5.0126	n.t.	
P*V*Subj (G*R*L)	848	0.9240	n.t.	
T*V*Subj (G*R*L)	848	2.4038	n.t.	
P*T*V*Subj (G*R*L)	1691	0.8856	n.t.	

\*  $p < .05$ .

n.t. = no test

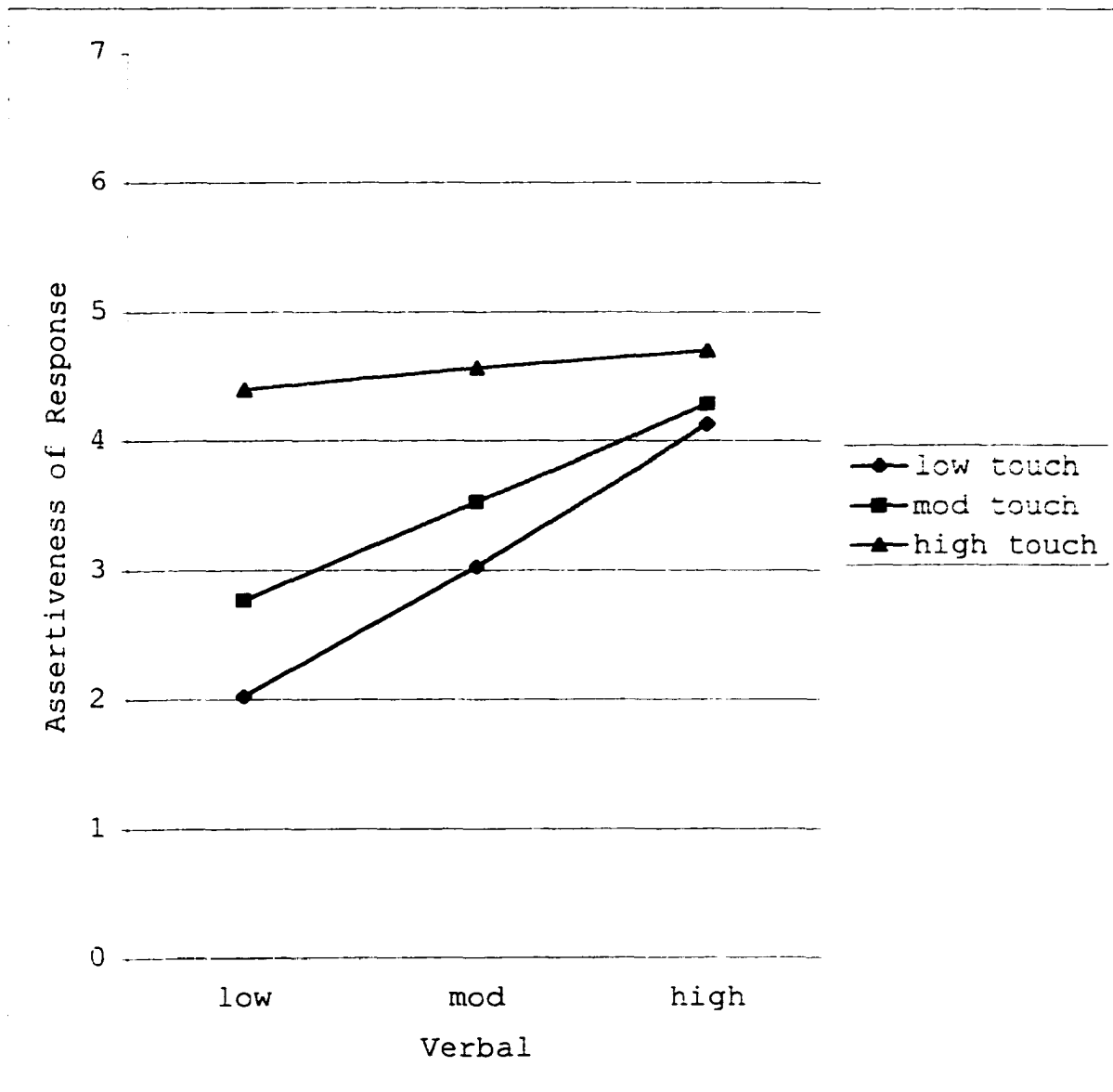


Figure 6. The interaction of touch and verbal behavior on the type of response chosen (dependent variable three).

findings revealed that higher levels of invasiveness of touch led to more assertive response strategies. Significant differences in all levels of verbal behavior were also found. Participants indicated they would respond more assertively to high levels ( $\underline{M}=4.37$ ), followed by moderate levels ( $\underline{M}=3.71$ ), and would respond least assertively to low levels ( $\underline{M}=3.06$ ). These findings for touch and verbal behavior were expected (Hypotheses 2 and 3).

A significant two-way interaction effect occurred for Touch x Verbal [ $\underline{F}(1,212)=57.70, p<.05$ ]. Refer to Figure 6 to view this interaction. At low and moderate levels of verbal harassment, each level of touch differed significantly from the other levels, where more invasive touch corresponded with more assertive response types. When the verbal behavior was highly harassing, the response to highly invasive touch was significantly more assertive than to low and moderately invasive touch. Thus when an individual experienced highly explicit verbal harassment, they would respond assertively to the situation regardless of whether the perpetrator shook their hand (low touch) or the perpetrator put his arm around them (moderate touch). At low and moderate levels of touch, the assertiveness of the response chosen was significantly different across all levels of verbal. When comparing the different levels of verbal harassment at the high level of touch condition, the response type chosen was significantly more assertive for

verbal behavior that was high in harassment than verbal behavior low in harassment; consequently at the condition of highly harassing touch the assertiveness of the response chosen for moderately harassing statements did not differ from the low or high verbal conditions. This means that when a person experiences highly invasive touch, they will likely choose an assertive response type so that what the harasser actually says to them is not as salient a factor.

#### Findings on Role Ambiguity

When measuring role ambiguity, participants were asked indicate on a seven-point scale whether the described behavior was definitely not appropriate (1) or definitely appropriate (7) in the workplace (DV1). Ratings near the midpoint of the scale (4) would be an indication of experienced role ambiguity. As discussed previously the findings of the analysis of variance conducted on DV1 can be found in Table 4. Scenarios that described coworkers ( $\underline{M}=2.88$ ) were found to be closer to the midpoint of the scale and significantly different ( $p<.05$ ) from those that described supervisors ( $\underline{M}=2.77$ ) and subordinates ( $\underline{M}=2.81$ ). All levels of touch and verbal behavior were found to differ significantly from each other. It was also determined that highly invasive touch ( $\underline{M}=1.56$ ) was viewed as significantly less appropriate than moderate levels ( $\underline{M}=2.92$ ) followed by low levels ( $\underline{M}=3.98$ ). In this case, low levels of touch were closer to the midpoint of the scale than moderate levels. Similar results were found for verbal behavior where low

Table 7  
The Intercorrelations Between Dependent Variables One, Two,  
 and Three (DV1, DV2, DV3)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	DV1	DV2	DV3
DV1 (Behavior Appropriateness)	2.81	0.77	1.00		
DV2 (Likelihood of Response)	4.27	1.35	-0.37*	1.00	
DV3 (Assertiveness of Response)	3.71	1.05	-0.48*	0.59*	1.00

p<.05

levels ( $\underline{M}=4.20$ ) were nearer to the midpoint of the scale than moderate ( $\underline{M}=2.60$ ) and high ( $\underline{M}=1.65$ ) levels.

According to Hypothesis 4, higher levels of role ambiguity were expected to accompany less assertive responses. Intercorrelations between dependent variables one, two, and three (DV1, DV2, DV3) are presented in Table 7. Significant correlation ( $\underline{p}<.05$ ) were found between DV1 and DV2 ( $\underline{r}= -0.37$ ); DV1 and DV3 ( $\underline{r}= -0.48$ ); and DV2 and DV3 ( $\underline{r}= 0.59$ ). This means that higher levels of inappropriate the behavior is associated with a greater likelihood of responding and more assertive response strategies. Therefore, behaviors that are more ambiguous were associated with a lower likelihood of response and less assertive response strategies. Not surprisingly, when individuals indicated that they were not likely to respond, they also chose less assertive response types.

#### Profile Analysis

The effects of the above variables on the perception of role expectations and role behaviors were analyzed using profile analysis. The relationship between the dependent variables and most of the context variables related to organizational factors, attributes of the person, and interpersonal factors were examined using Pearson correlation coefficients. Main effects for each remaining between-subjects variable related to attributes of the person were examined using an analysis of variance (ANOVA). Interactions between the attributes of the person and the



three manipulated sexual harassment variables were calculated. Eta-square values were used to determine the amount of total variance accounted for by each variable and the interaction of the variables. Finally, three multiple regression analyses were performed where each dependent variable was regressed onto the context factors.

#### Hypotheses Regarding Organizational Factors

The characteristics of the organization were believed to affect the perception of sexual harassment. It was expected that when making decisions about perceived role expectations, individuals in skewed-sex work settings would be less likely to label harassing behavior as inappropriate and less likely to respond assertively (**Hypothesis 5**). This hypothesis was partially confirmed.

Individuals working in organizations that have stricter policies and culture against sexually harassing behavior were hypothesized to hold stricter decision-making policies and be more willing to label behaviors as inappropriate. These individuals were also expected to choose more assertive response strategies (**Hypothesis 6**). This hypothesis was supported.

#### Hypotheses Regarding Attributes of the Person

The individual characteristics of gender, race, and marital status were believed to affect perceived role expectations and subsequent role behaviors. It was hypothesized that younger individuals, minorities, women, and single individuals would be more likely to label

behavior as sexual harassment and would be likely to respond in an assertive manner (**Hypotheses 7, 8, 9, and 10**).

Findings contrary to that expected were determined for Hypothesis 7, 8, and 10. Hypothesis 9 was confirmed for the differences in perception, but not for differences in response.

The attitudes individuals have regarding sexual harassment were also believed to affect the perception of sexual harassment. It was hypothesized that individuals with less accepting attitudes towards sexual harassment would more likely label harassing behaviors as inappropriate and would more likely respond actively and assertively (**Hypothesis 11**). This hypothesis was confirmed.

#### Hypotheses Regarding Interpersonal Factors

Interpersonal relationships between individuals and members of the organization were believed to affect the perception of sexual harassment. It was hypothesized that individuals who had previously experienced harassing interpersonal behaviors would be more likely to label different levels of harassing behavior as inappropriate and would be more likely to respond to these behaviors (**Hypothesis 12**). This hypothesis was confirmed for perceptual differences and the likelihood of response.

It was also believed that individuals with other sex supervisors would be more sensitive to sexual harassment, and therefore would be more likely to label behaviors as such. The response strategies of these individuals would

Table 8  
The Correlations Between Context Factors and Behavior  
Appropriateness, Likelihood of Response, and the  
Assertiveness of the Response (DV1, DV2, DV3)

Organizational Factors	DV1	DV2	DV3
Gender Ratio 1	-0.16*	0.08	0.13
Gender Ratio 2	-0.05	0.09	0.05
Gender Ratio 3	0.11	0.09	0.13
OTSHI Risk Subscale	-0.17*	0.13*	0.14*
OTSHI Serious Subscale	-0.26*	0.13	0.20*
OTSHI Would-be-Done Subscale	-0.21*	0.20*	0.27*
Attributes of the Person	DV1	DV2	DV3
Age	-0.22*	0.09	0.21*
TSHI	-0.30*	0.29*	0.19*
Interpersonal Factors	DV1	DV2	DV3
SEQ Gender Harassment	0.08	-0.02	0.01
SEQ Unwanted Sexual Attention	0.09	-0.08	-0.02
SEQ Sexual Coercion	0.13*	-0.03	-0.00
SEQ Sexually Harassed	0.06	0.08	0.00
Supervisor's Gender	0.04	0.04	0.02

\* $p < .05$

also likely be more active and assertive (**Hypothesis 13**).

No support was found for this hypothesis.

#### Findings on the Organizational Factors

Level of Appropriateness of Behavior (DV1). Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between each of the organizational factors and the average of each individual's ratings of the perceived level of appropriateness of the behavior. These correlations are presented in Table 8. The gender ratio in the workplace was examined using three measures that questioned the proportion of men and women in one's general job classification (gender ratio 1), throughout one's place of employment (gender ratio 2), and in one's department or work group (gender ratio 3). For the analyses, the gender ratio responses were modified to a three-point scale as follows: 1 (almost all one gender); 2 (approximately 25% one gender, 75% other gender); and 3 (approximately 50% of both). The gender ratio of the general job classification (gender ratio 1) was found to significantly correlate with DV1 ( $r = -.16, p < .05$ ). As was hypothesized (Hypothesis 5), those in skewed-gender occupations were less likely to rate different behaviors as inappropriate in the workplace. No significant correlations were found between the gender ratio subscales two and three and the rating of the level of appropriateness of behavior (DV1).

It was expected that the organization's tolerance for sexual harassment would affect the perception of

inappropriate behavior. Measures of organizational tolerance for sexual harassment were examined using the three subscales of the Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory (OTSHI): Risk, Serious, and Would-be-Done. Six different sexually harassing situations were presented in this measurement instrument. The subscale measures are an average across these six harassing situations. The Risk subscale is an indication of how risky it would be for a woman to make a formal complaint about a man's sexually harassing behavior. The Serious subscale indicates how likely it would be that the women would be taken seriously if a formal complaint was made. Finally, the Would-be-Done subscale indicates what would be done if a formal complaint were made about the man in the described situation. Significant correlations were found between the three subscales of organizational tolerance and the ratings of level of appropriateness of the different behaviors of the 27 scenarios (DV1): Risk ( $r = -.17, p < .05$ ), Serious ( $r = -.26, p < .05$ ), and Would-be-Done ( $r = -.21, p < .05$ ). It was determined that individuals who were members of organizations where it was not risky to report sexual harassment were more likely to rate different harassing scenarios as inappropriate in the workplace. Membership in an organization where complaints are taken seriously and where serious consequences face those who sexually harass were significantly correlated with the perception of higher levels of inappropriateness of behavior in the 27 scenarios

developed by this researcher (DV1). These findings were expected (Hypothesis 6)

Likelihood of Response to the Behavior (DV2). No significant correlations were found between the three gender ratio subscales and the rating of the likelihood of response to the behavior. This is contrary to what was expected (Hypothesis 5).

Significant correlations were found between the likelihood of response/response type and the Risk ( $r = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and Would-be-Done subscales ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .05$ ) of the Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory (OTSHI). The results are presented in Table 8. As was anticipated (Hypothesis 6), individuals who were members of organizations where it was not risky to report sexual harassment indicated that they were more likely to actively respond to different sexually harassing situations. Membership in an organization where serious consequences face those who sexually harass was also significantly correlated with the likelihood of an active response to sexually harassing situations. No significant correlation was found between the Serious subscale of the OTSHI and DV2.

Assertiveness of Response/Response Type to the Behavior (DV3). No significant correlations were found between the three gender ratio subscales and response type chosen (refer to Table 8). This is contrary to what was expected (Hypothesis 5).

Significant correlations were found between the

likelihood of response/response type and all three subscales of the OTSHI. Membership in an organization with low risk for filing a formal complaint about harassment was significantly correlated with choosing an active response to harassing incidents ( $r = .14, p < .05$ ). Membership in an organization where complaints are taken seriously ( $r = .20, p < .05$ ) and where serious consequences face those who sexually harass ( $r = .27, p < .05$ ) were positively correlated with the anticipated level of assertiveness of the response to sexual harassment scenarios. These findings confirm what was expected (Hypothesis 6).

#### Findings on the Attributes of the Person

Level of Appropriateness of Behavior (DV1). A summary of the analysis of variance conducted on the effects of the attributes of the person on the level of appropriateness of the behavior (dependent variable one) are presented in Table 4. There were significant main effects for Gender [ $F(1,212) = 7.16, p < .05$ ], Race [ $F(1,212) = 6.81, p < .05$ ], and Relationship status [ $F(1,212) = 4.85, p < .05$ ].

It was determined that females ( $M = 2.69$ ) were more likely to label the different behaviors described in the scenarios as inappropriate than males ( $M = 2.96$ ). This was expected (Hypothesis 9). Due to small cell sizes the races were grouped as Whites and non-Whites. For the purpose of the analyses, non-Whites consisted of the Asian, Black, Hispanic, and "Other" categories. Contrary to what was expected (Hypothesis 8), it was revealed that Whites

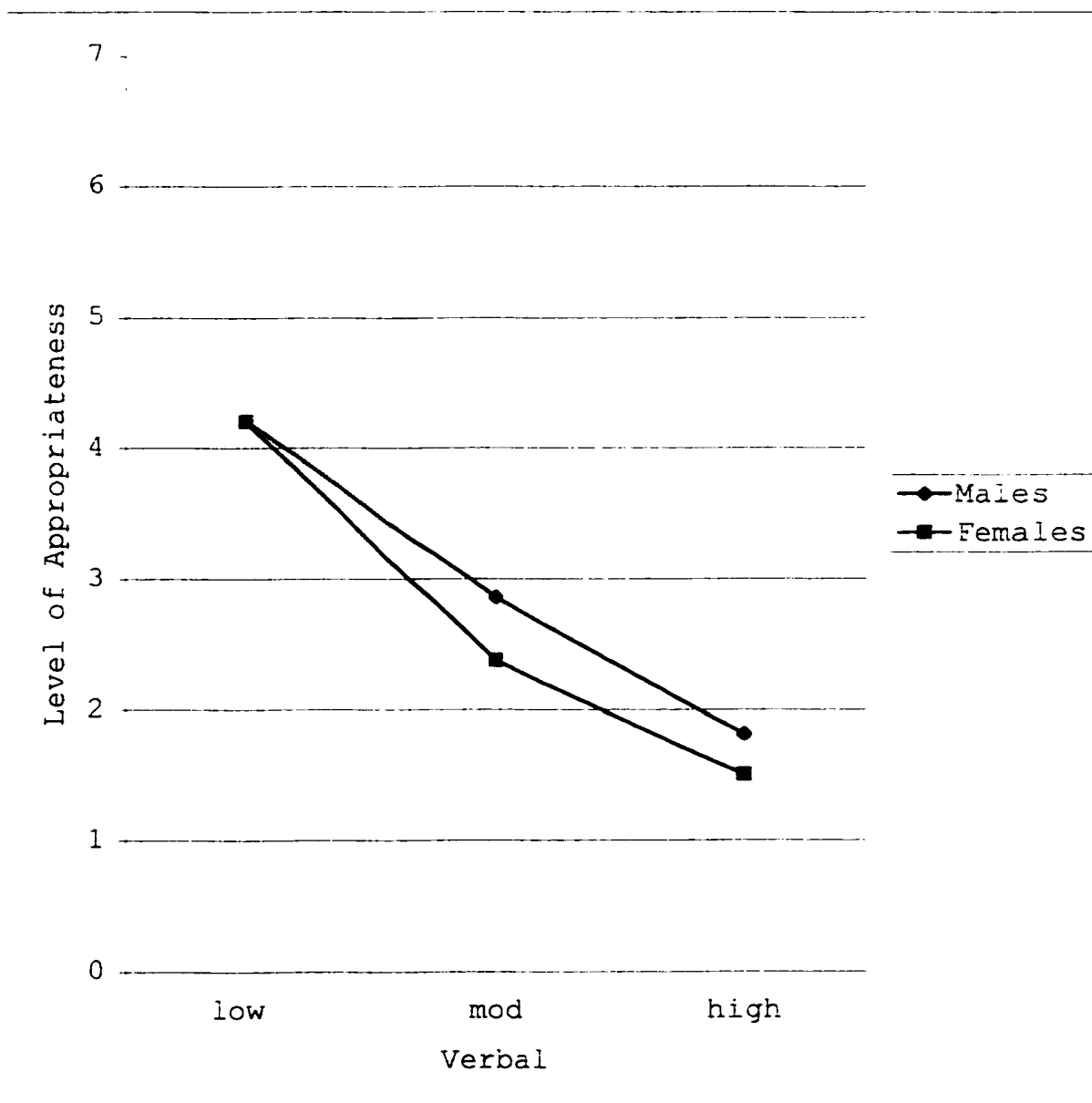


Figure 7. The interaction of verbal behavior and gender on the perceived level of appropriateness of the behavior (dependent variable one).



( $\underline{M}$ =2.71) were more likely to label behavior as inappropriate than non-Whites ( $\underline{M}$ =2.98). Relationship status also affected the perception of sexual harassment. Due to small cell sizes, relationship status was collapsed into two groups: single and not single (all other categories). Contrary to what was hypothesized (Hypothesis 10), single individuals ( $\underline{M}$ =2.89) were less likely to label behaviors as inappropriate than those that were not single ( $\underline{M}$ =2.64).

A couple of significant two-way interactions occurred for the attributes of the person and verbal behavior. A significant two-way interaction occurred for Verbal x Gender [ $\underline{F}(1,212)=6.99, p<.05$ ]. Post hoc analyses revealed significant differences between the interaction means as shown in Figure 7. Males and females did not differ when the verbal statement was not likely to be harassment (i.e., low verbal condition). Males and females rated the level of appropriateness similarly when the verbal behavior was low in harassment. However, they did differ in their ratings at moderate and high levels of verbal harassment, where females were more likely to label the statements as inappropriate in the workplace. For both sexes, the different verbal statements differed from each other as expected (definitely appropriate to definitely not appropriate).

A significant two-way interaction also occurred for Verbal x Race [ $\underline{F}(1,212)=8.28, p<.05$ ]. Refer to Figure 8. Whites and non-Whites did not differ significantly in whether they thought the behavior was appropriate in the

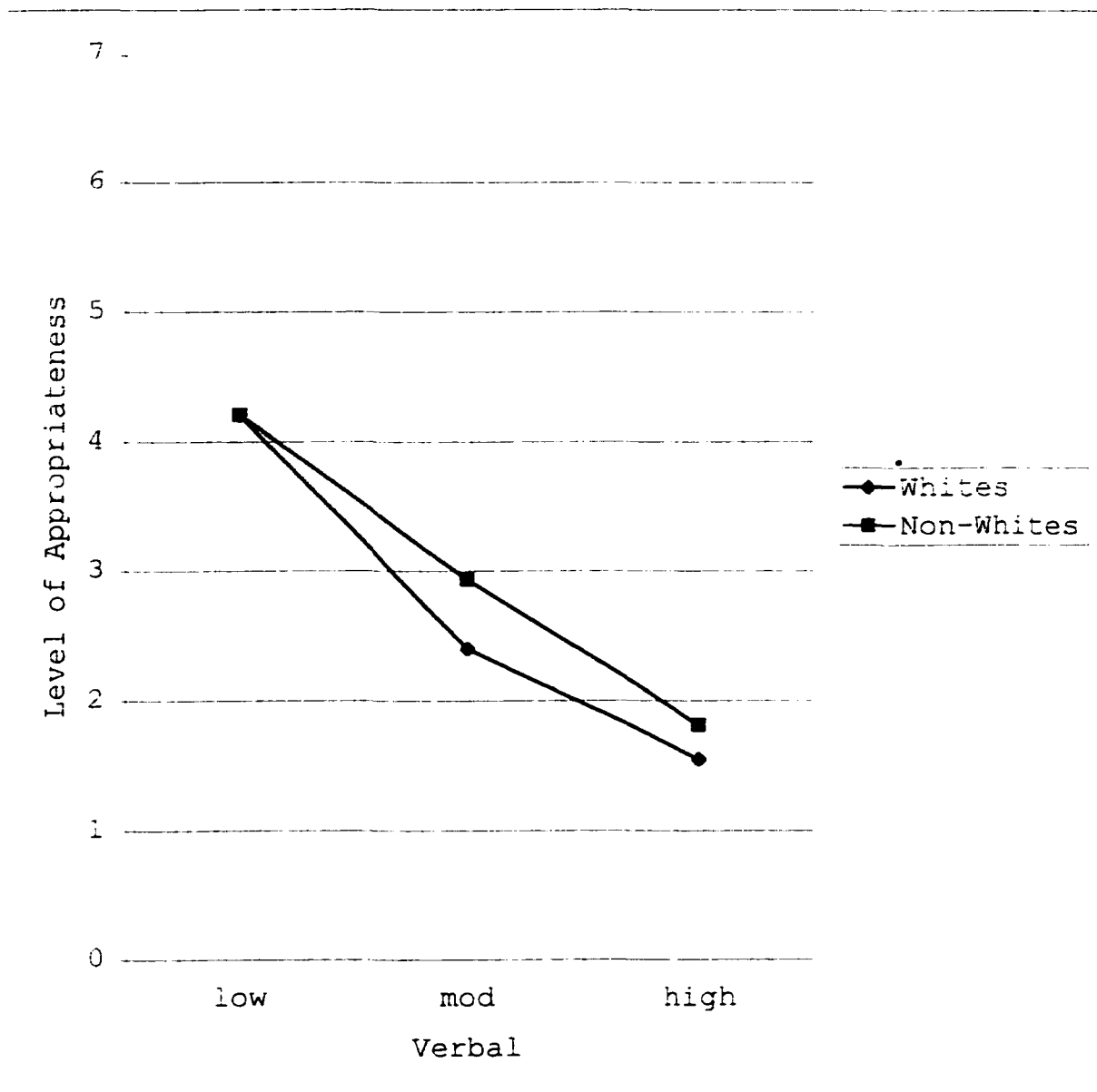


Figure 8. The interaction of verbal behavior and race on the perceived level of appropriateness of the behavior (dependent variable one).

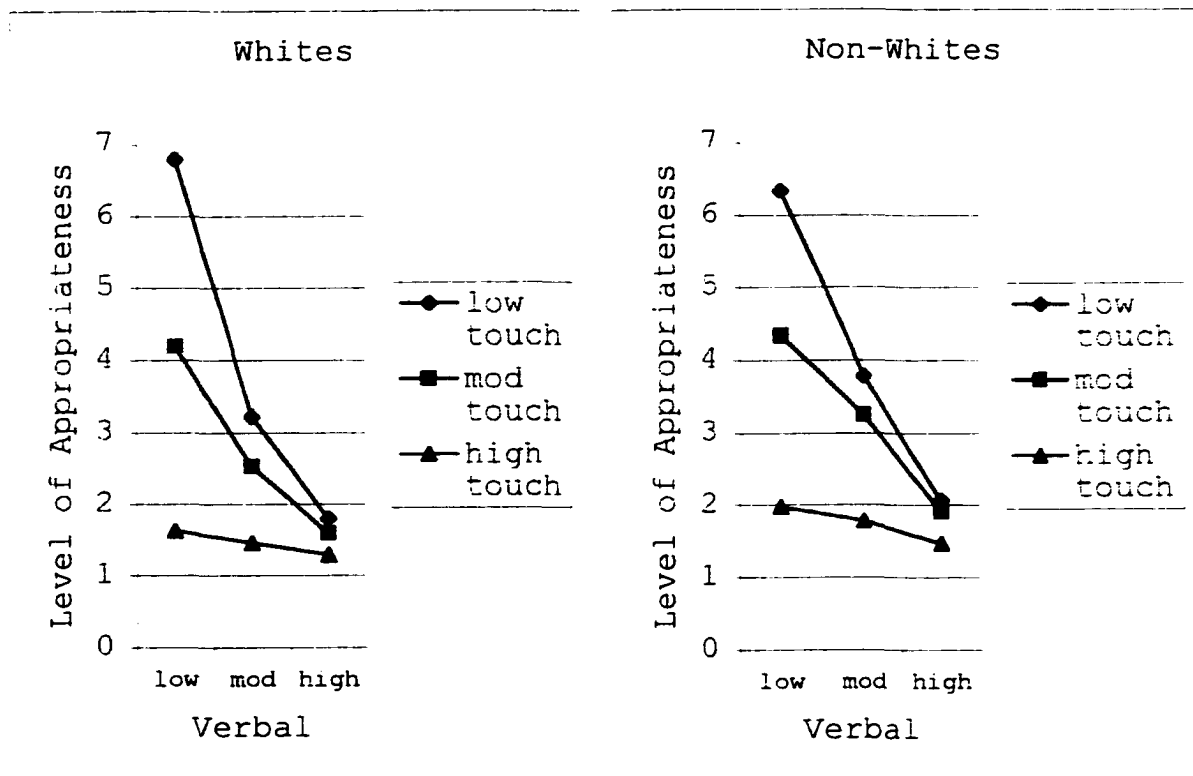


Figure 9. The interaction of touch, verbal behavior, and race on the perceived level of appropriateness of the behavior (dependent variable one).

workplace when the verbal statement was not likely to be harassment (low). However there were significant racial differences in the rating of verbal statements that were designed to be moderately and highly harassing, where Whites rated the behaviors as less appropriate in the workplace than non-Whites.

A significant three-way interactions also occurred for Touch x Verbal x Race [ $F(1,212)=5.96, p<.05$ ]. This interaction is further examined in Figure 9. Across almost all levels of touch and verbal behavior, Whites indicated that the behavior was significantly less appropriate than non-Whites (i.e., more likely to be harassment). There were three exceptions. Non-Whites actually rated the condition of low touch and low verbal as less appropriate than Whites. The races did not differ in their ratings of the appropriateness of the behavior when low levels of verbal harassment were coupled with moderate levels of touch. Finally, Whites and non-Whites were also equally likely to rate the behavior as inappropriate when the level of touch and verbal behavior were both high. When examining differences within the races it was determined that across low and moderately harassing verbal statements, both Whites and non-Whites indicated significant differences in the level of appropriateness of the different levels of touch. At the condition of high verbal harassment, Whites and non-Whites perceived highly invasive touch to be significantly less appropriate than the other levels of touch. Thus no

differences were found within the races for low and moderate touch conditions when experiencing high levels of verbal harassment. Across low and moderately invasive touch, both Whites and non-Whites indicated significant differences in the level of appropriateness of the different levels of verbal harassment. For highly invasive touch, Whites perceived highly harassing verbal statements to be significantly less appropriate than low levels of verbal harassment. However, at highly invasive touch non-Whites found highly harassing verbal statements to be less appropriate than both low and moderately harassing statements.

Age was found to predict the perception of inappropriate behaviors (refer to Table 8). It was found that younger individuals were less likely to rate behavior as inappropriate than older individuals ( $r = -.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This was contrary to what was expected (Hypothesis 7).

Attitudes toward and acceptance of sexually harassing behaviors were measured using the Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory (TSHI). It was expected that those with less accepting attitudes toward sexual harassment would be more likely to rate different levels of harassing behavior as inappropriate (Hypothesis 11). This is indeed what occurred ( $r = -.30$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Likelihood of Response to the Behavior (DV2). A summary of the analysis of variance conducted on the effects of the attributes of the person on the likelihood of

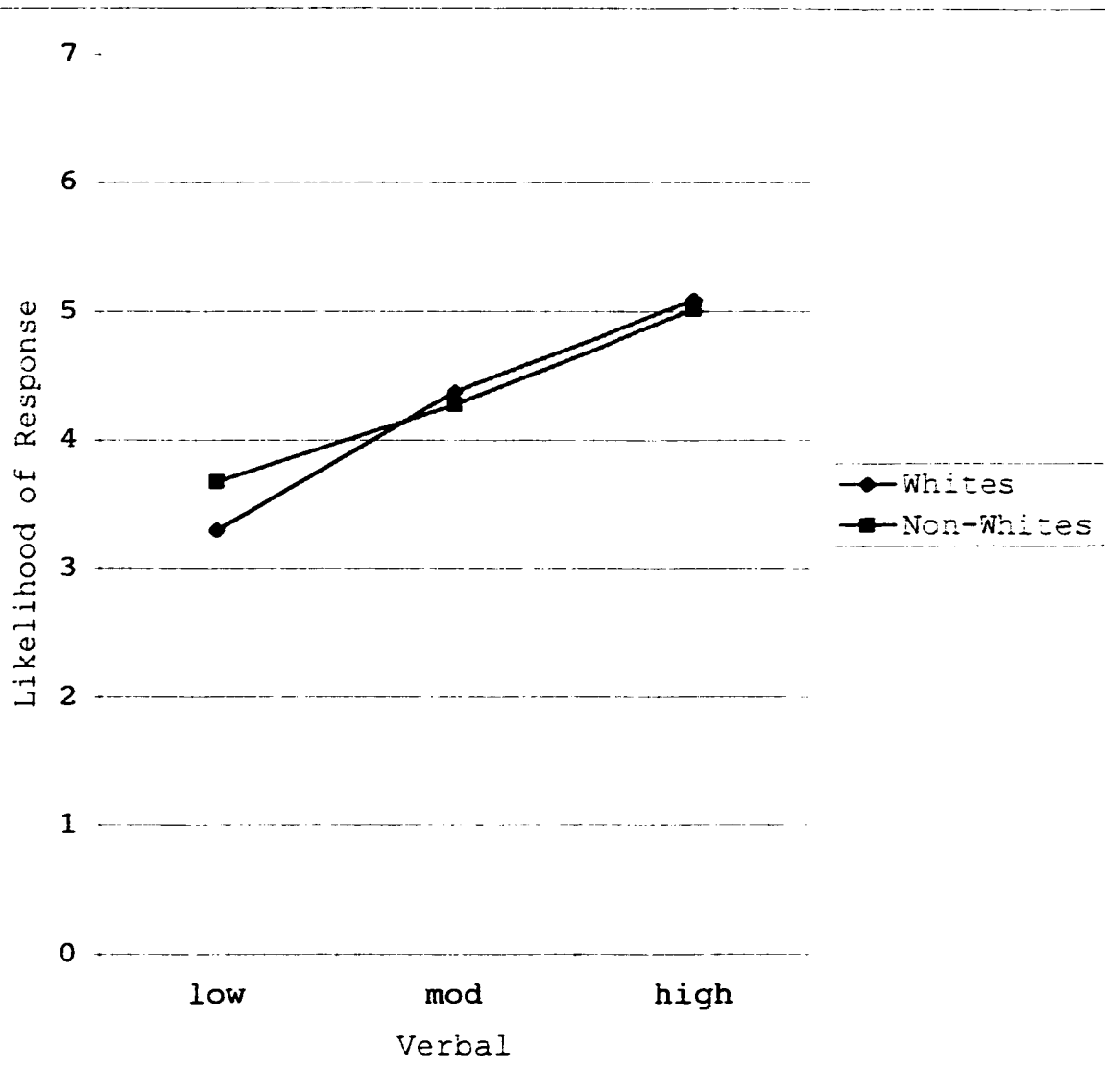


Figure 10. The interaction of verbal behavior and race on the likelihood of response to the behavior (dependent variable two).

response to the behavior (dependent variable two) are presented in Table 5. There was a significant main effect for Relationship [ $F(1,212)=4.61, p<.05$ ].

Contrary to what was hypothesized (Hypotheses 8 and 9) there were no significant differences between the races or genders on the likelihood that they would respond to the situation. Non-single individuals ( $M=4.58$ ) were more likely to actively respond to the different situations than single individuals ( $M=4.16$ ). This was contrary to what was expected (Hypothesis 10).

A significant two-way interaction occurred for Verbal\*Race [ $F(1,212)=5.47, p<.05$ ]. Post hoc analyses revealed significant differences between the interaction means as shown in Figure 10. Whites and non-Whites differed only in their likelihood of response to verbal behaviors that were low in harassment, where non-Whites were more likely to respond. Thus no differences were found between the races when verbal harassment was moderate or high. Within the races there were significant differences in the likelihood of response, where each race indicated a higher likelihood of respond to more harassing verbal statements.

A significant three-way interaction also occurred for Gender x Race x Relationship [ $F(1,212)=12.28, p<.05$ ]. For further explanation of this interaction refer to Figure 11. Within genders, significant differences in the likelihood of response were only found for males. When examining single males, non-white males were more likely to respond to the

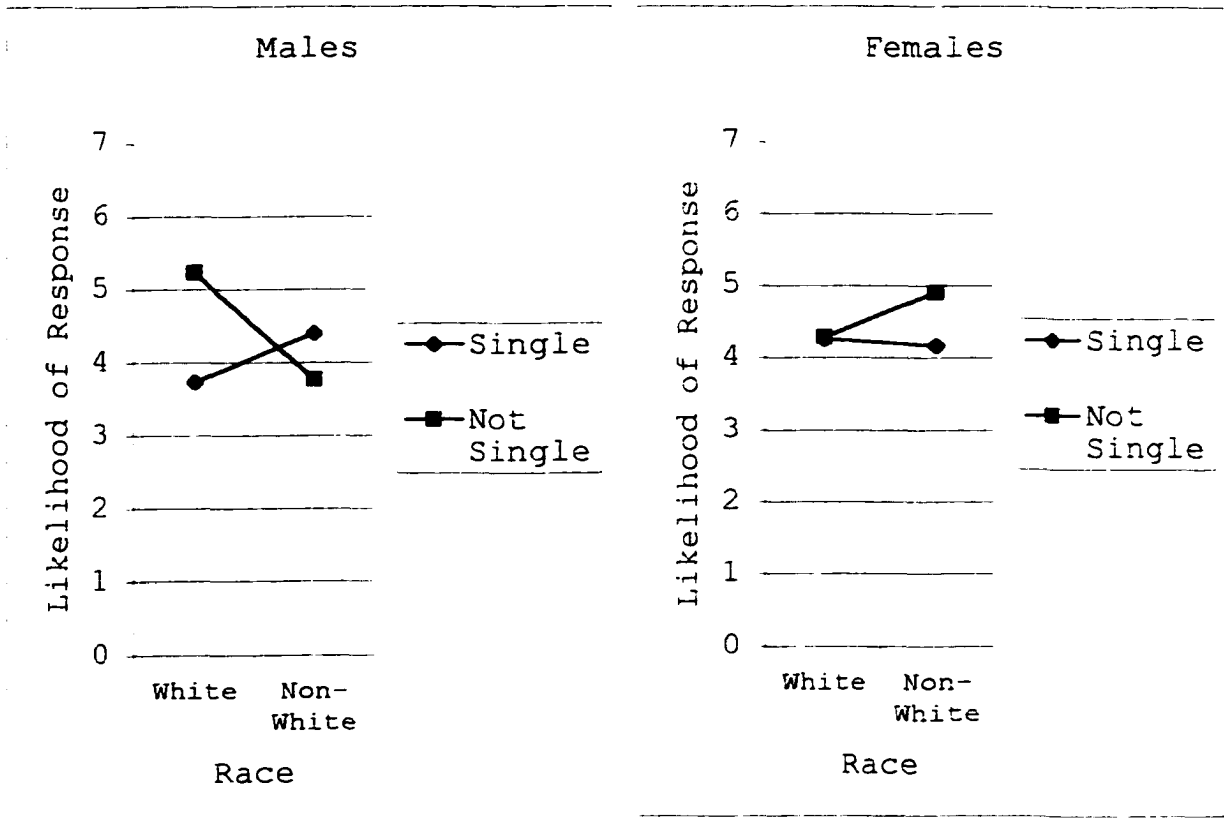


Figure 11. The interaction of gender, race, and relationship status on the likelihood of response to the behavior (dependent variable two).



different harassing situations than white males. However, when examining non-single males, white males were more likely to respond than non-white males. White males who are not single are more likely to respond to the situation than white males who are single. No differences were found in the likelihood of response across the different types of relationships for non-white males. Again, no significant differences were found across race and relationship status for women. However, one significant difference was found between the genders. When examining non-single individuals, white men were more likely to respond than white women.

Although age was predicted to affect the likelihood of response to inappropriate behavior (Hypothesis 7), no relationship was found (refer to Table 8).

Those with less accepting attitudes towards sexually harassing behaviors (TSHI) were found to indicate a higher likelihood of response to inappropriate behavior (Hypothesis 11;  $r = .29$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Assertiveness of Response/Response Type to the Behavior (DV3). A summary of the analysis of variance conducted on the effects of the attributes of the person on the assertiveness of the response/response type (dependent variable three) are presented in Table 6. No significant main effects were found for Race or Gender. This is contrary to what was hypothesized (Hypothesis 8, 9). There was a significant main effect for Relationship [ $F(1,212) = 6.15$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. Single individuals ( $M = 3.60$ ) chose less assertive

response types than non-single individuals ( $\underline{M}=3.99$ ). This is contrary to what was expected (Hypothesis 10).

Age was found to correlate significantly with the level of assertiveness of the response type ( $\underline{r}= .21$ ,  $\underline{p}<.05$ ). Older individuals were found to indicate more assertive response strategies. Again, this is contrary to the expected findings (Hypothesis 7).

Those who indicated lower levels of tolerance for sexual harassment (TSHI) were found to also select more assertive response strategies ( $\underline{r}= .19$ ,  $\underline{p}<.05$ ).

#### Findings on Interpersonal Factors

Level of Appropriateness of Behavior (DV1). Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between each of the interpersonal factors and the average of each individuals' ratings of the level of appropriateness of the behavior. These correlations are presented in Table 8.

A person's previous experience with harassing interpersonal behaviors was expected to affect the perception of whether different behaviors were appropriate in the workplace (Hypothesis 12). The Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ) was utilized in order to measure one's previous experience with sexual harassment. The SEQ is divided into three subscales that address different types with harassing behavior: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. An additional item that uses a dichotomous yes/no response set asks individuals if they have ever been harassed. The findings indicate that

the sexual coercion subscale significantly correlated with the average ratings of level of appropriateness of the behaviors ( $r = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This means that individuals who had previously experienced sexual coercion were more likely to rate the differing degrees of harassing behavior as inappropriate. No significant correlations were found between DV1 and the gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention subscales. Responses to the item that asks participants to indicate whether they had previously been harassed also did not correlate with DV1.

The gender of one's supervisor was believed to affect the perception of sexual harassment (Hypothesis 13). However, a significant correlation was not found between the supervisor's gender and the average perceived level of appropriateness of the behaviors in the 27 scenarios (DV1).

Likelihood of Response to the Behavior (DV2). No significant correlations were found between the subscales of the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire and DV2 (refer to Table 8). The gender of one's supervisor was also not related to DV2.

Assertiveness of Response/Response Type to the Behavior (DV3). No significant correlations were found between DV3 and a measure of the previous interpersonal experiences with sexual harassment (SEQ). The gender of one's supervisor was also not related to the average response type chosen (DV3).

#### Findings on the Multiple Regression Analyses

Level of Appropriateness of Behavior (DV1). Dependent

Table 9  
Beta Weights of the Context Factors for Dependent Variables  
One, Two, and Three (DV1, DV2, DV3)

Organizational Factors	DV1	DV2	DV3
Gender Ratio 1	-0.113	0.022	0.082
Gender Ratio 2	0.036	0.108	-0.049
Gender Ratio 3	-0.062	-0.012	0.118
OTSHI Risk Subscale	-0.049	0.113	0.032
OTSHI Serious Subscale	-0.141	-0.087	-0.004
OTSHI Would-be-Done Subscale	0.008	0.200	0.250*
Attributes of the Person	DV1	DV2	DV3
Age	-0.165*	0.011	0.113
TSHI	-0.270*	0.293*	0.161*
Interpersonal Factors	DV1	DV2	DV3
SEQ Gender Harassment	-0.374	0.359	0.289
SEQ Unwanted Sexual Attention	0.223	-0.528*	-0.281
SEQ Sexual Coercion	0.302	0.151	0.011
SEQ Sexually Harassed	0.165*	-0.011	-0.048
Supervisor's Gender	0.005	0.043	0.059

\* $p < .05$

variable one (DV1) was regressed onto various context factors (refer to Table 9). Due to the nature of the hypotheses of this study, the standardized beta weights were based only on the main effect context variables and interactions were not taken into account. The overall adjusted R-squared for this regression analysis was .1692. The results indicate that when perceiving inappropriate behavior in the workplace, one's tolerance for sexual harassment was given the most weight (TSHI; Beta =  $-.270$ ), followed by the age of the rater (Beta =  $-.165$ ) and one's personal experience with having been sexually harassed (Beta =  $.165$ ). These were the only statistically significant beta weights found.

Likelihood of Response to the Behavior (DV2).

Dependent variable two (DV2) was regressed onto the context factors (refer to Table 9). It was determined that the overall adjusted R-squared was .1182. It was determined that one's interpersonal experiences with receiving unwanted sexual attention (Beta =  $-.528$ ) was given the most weight when deciding the likelihood of respond to different levels of inappropriate behavior. One's tolerance for sexual harassment was also given significant weight (TSHI; Beta =  $.293$ ) when making decisions regarding DV2.

Assertiveness of Response/Response Type to the Behavior (DV3). A third regression analysis was performed on the assertiveness of the response/response type chosen. The overall adjusted R-squared was .1026. The results indicate

that when choosing a response type the individuals gave the most weight to their organizations' tolerance for sexual harassment in terms of what would be done if a woman made a complaint against a man in your department (Beta = .250). Individuals also considered their own tolerance for sexual harassment (TSHI; Beta = .161) when making decisions.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to utilize policy capturing techniques to analyze the different policies individuals use when determining sexual harassment. The importance of level of power, verbal behavior, and invasiveness of touch were examined. Additionally, role theory was applied to the sexual harassment paradigm in order to understand how context factors within an organization affect the perception of sexual harassment. Profile analysis was used to determine how the perception of what constitutes harassing behavior is mitigated by one's role in the organization.

A number of hypotheses concerning the perception of harassment were developed. In the following sections, each hypothesis will be addressed in terms of the findings and implications of this research. Most hypotheses regarding the manipulated variables and the context factors were confirmed. However, not all hypotheses regarding the application of role theory to understanding sexual harassment were confirmed. As will be discussed, it is believed that various methodological shortcomings may have weakened the impact of some of these variables. In addition, implications for organizations in terms of sexual harassment policies will be examined. Methodological

issues and future directions for sexual harassment research will also be considered. Finally, a brief summary of the major findings will be presented.

Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4

According to role theory, members of the role set communicate their expectations and attempt to influence the behavior of the focal person (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Expectations that are communicated can differ in magnitude, specificity, and intensity (Gross, Mason, & McEachern, 1958). Sometimes the expectations of members of the role set (supervisors, coworkers, and subordinates) may be sexual in nature and hence be labeled as sexual harassment. However, determining what exactly constitutes sexual harassment can be difficult because the perception of harassment differs between individuals (Terpstra & Baker, 1987). Certain types of touching or verbal remarks may be welcome to some individuals but not others. It also depends upon who touches the individual and who it is that makes the verbal remark. It was hypothesized that more invasive touching and more explicit and personal verbal remarks would more likely be viewed as harassment and lead to more assertive responses. It was also predicted that the relative power of the initiator would affect the perception of harassment, with supervisor harassment more



offensive than coworker harassment, followed by subordinate harassment.

The results of the analyses provide support for Hypotheses 2 and 3. When the level of touch was more invasive and when the verbal remarks were more explicit and personal, individuals indicated that the behaviors were less appropriate and that they would be more likely to respond in an assertive manner. What was not expected were some of the findings for Hypothesis 1, which addressed the relative power of the initiator. Participants indicated that when the described behavior was initiated by a coworker, they were less likely to view the behavior as inappropriate and were also less likely to respond to the behavior than if the behavior was initiated by either a supervisor or subordinate. No differences between the levels of power were found in the type of response chosen. It was expected that supervisor harassment would be viewed as less appropriate and more likely to lead to assertive responses based on previous research findings (Samoluk & Pretty, 1994). However, it was not expected that subordinate harassment would be less tolerated than coworker harassment. A possible explanation for this finding is that coworker harassment is actually the most common form of harassment (Gutek, 1985), therefore

individuals may be more desensitized to this form of harassment. Additionally, since there are no relative power differences between coworkers, this form of harassment may seem less threatening. Subordinate harassment is also less common than coworker harassment, thus it may be viewed as more salient and therefore more inappropriate. Most of the previous research on level of power and harassment has failed to address subordinate harassment.

The perception of role ambiguity is related to the clarity of the sent role (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Therefore, Hypothesis 4 predicted that more subtle and less explicit forms of sexual harassment would lead to higher levels of role ambiguity. It was predicted that behaviors initiated by a coworker or subordinate and more moderate forms of touch and verbal behavior would be associated with higher levels of role ambiguity. The results of the analyses revealed that behaviors initiated by a coworker and low levels of touch and verbal behavior lead to higher levels of role ambiguity. However, role ambiguity was measured indirectly based on the modification of the scale suggested by Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1991). Experienced role ambiguity was assessed as the midpoint of the scale for DV1. This scale measured the level of appropriateness of the

behavior. Whether the exact midpoint of the scale is indeed an indication of experienced role ambiguity is not known and should be addressed in future research.

Role ambiguity has been found to have many affective and behavioral effects on the individual (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). In this research it was also expected that higher levels of role ambiguity would be associated with a lower likelihood of response and less assertive response types. Based upon the analyses this was confirmed. The level of appropriateness of the behavior was significantly related to both the likelihood of response and the assertiveness of the response; where less appropriate behaviors corresponded with a higher likelihood of response and more assertive response types. Therefore, higher levels of role ambiguity were associated with a lower likelihood of response and less assertive response types. Again, this is an indirect assertion.

#### Hypotheses 5 and 6

According to role theory, characteristics of the organization affect the role sending and receiving process (Kahn et al., 1964). Many organizational factors have been found to influence role behaviors (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Two organizational factors that were addressed in this research were the gender ratios of the workplace and the

organizational tolerance for sexual harassment.

Although individuals in skewed-sex environments have been found to experience higher levels of harassment (Mansfield et al., 1991), these individuals are less likely to identify or report harassing behavior due to being desensitized to harassing behavior or from group pressures (Fain & Anderton, 1987). It was expected that individuals in skewed-sex working environments would be less likely to label different levels of harassing behaviors as inappropriate, be less likely to respond to the behavior, and be less likely to choose an assertive response type. However, based on the analyses Hypothesis 5 was only partially confirmed.

Individuals in skewed-gender occupations were less likely to rate different behaviors as inappropriate in the workplace, but no differences were found in the likelihood of response or the assertiveness of the response. Gender ratios throughout one's place of employment and in one's work group were not found to be associated with the ratings of appropriateness of the behavior, the likelihood of response, or type of response chosen. One possible explanation for some of the above findings is that individuals may have separated their own experiences within their workplace and workgroup from the situations described

in the scenarios. The scenarios described different behaviors experienced by a fictitious Ann and John, and each individual was asked to imagine that he/she was Ann in the situation. Although individuals indicated that in general it was easy for them to imagine the situations described in the scenarios, individuals were not asked to indicate how easy it was to imagine themselves as Ann in the situation. Individuals may not have associated the situation that the scenarios described with their own work environment. This may be due to the way in which individuals were instructed to consider the scenarios or the scenarios may not have reflected the type of tasks (i.e., joint projects) that the individuals' specific job encompasses.

The formal policies and culture of an organization affect role behaviors (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Organizational policies and culture outline the different types of behavior that are tolerated and possible consequences of the behavior. It was predicted from Hypothesis 6 that the organization's policies and culture regarding its tolerance for sexual harassment would affect the perception of inappropriate behavior and the response to it. Based on the analyses, individuals who were members of organizations with stricter policies and culture regarding sexual

harassment were more likely to label behaviors as inappropriate and were more likely to respond assertively. Using multiple regression analysis it was revealed that the organization's tolerance for sexual harassment in terms of the consequences to the harasser was found to be given the most weight when determining the level of assertiveness of the response chosen.

#### Hypotheses 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11

According to role theory, during the process of role sending and receiving the attributes of the person affect the perception of the sent role and subsequent role behavior (Katz & Kahn, 1966). A number of individual characteristics were hypothesized to affect the perception of sexually harassing role expectations. These variables included gender, age, race, marital status, and an individual's attitude toward and acceptance of sexual harassment.

It was hypothesized that younger persons, minorities, women, and single persons would be more likely to label behavior as sexual harassment and would be more likely to respond in an assertive manner (Hypotheses 7, 8, 9, and 10). Age was found to predict the perception the appropriateness of different role behaviors and the type of response strategy chosen. However, the findings were

contrary to what was expected in Hypothesis 7. Older individuals were found to hold stricter policies regarding the labeling of appropriateness of behavior and were also more likely to respond assertively. Using multiple regression analyses, it became apparent that age was a significant factor when determining level of appropriateness of behaviors. Although harassment has been found to occur more frequently in younger individuals (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Fain & Anderton, 1987), these individuals may expect to be harassed more and therefore be somewhat desensitized to harassment. Another possible explanation is that younger individuals hold more lenient standards as to what actually constitutes harassment and view less clear-cut forms of harassment as joking in nature or see it as just in fun.

Race was found to affect the perception of sexual harassment. Contrary to what was expected in Hypothesis 8, Whites were more likely to label behavior as inappropriate than non-Whites. However, no differences were found between the races in the likelihood of response or the type of response chosen. These findings were surprising based on previous research which found that minorities were more likely to report being harassed (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Fain & Anderton, 1987). However, non-Whites may expect to be

harassed more and therefore be more desensitized to the type of harassment examined in this research (hostile environment harassment). Future research should address possible differences in other forms of harassment (i.e., quid pro quo).

Throughout the sexual harassment literature, women have been found to experience higher rates of sexual harassment than men (e.g., Komaromy et al., 1993; Roscoe et al., 1987) and to differ in their perception of sexual harassment (e.g., Baird et al., 1995; Weiner, 1995). Gender was expected to affect the perception of harassment in this research, with women being more likely to label behaviors as inappropriate and more likely to respond assertively to it (Hypothesis 9). Based on the analyses, women were more likely to label behavior as inappropriate. However, no differences were found between the genders on the likelihood of response or the response type chosen. This may be in part due to the prevalence of nonpublic responses to harassment. Gruber and Bjorn (1982) found that the two most common methods of dealing with harassment used by women were ignoring the harassment and responding mildly to it. Also, the type of harassment examined in this research was not as direct or severe as quid pro quo harassment. In fact, Loy and Steward (1984) found passive



responses (ignoring the incident) from women who experienced what they called commentary harassment (sexual jokes or comments). In order to find differences in the response to harassment, future studies may need to address a wider gamut of behaviors that encompass sexual harassment.

It was predicted in Hypothesis 10 that individuals who were single would be more likely to label behaviors as inappropriate and be more likely to respond more assertively to the situation. Contrary to what was expected, when compared to non-single individuals, single individuals were actually less likely to label behaviors as inappropriate and were also less likely to respond to the behaviors in an assertive manner. Based on previous research, single individuals have been found to be the target of greater harassment than non-single individuals (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Fain & Anderton, 1987). However, similarly with the findings of younger individuals and minorities, single individuals may expect to be harassed more and therefore be more desensitized to harassment. Another possible explanation is that single individuals hold more lenient standards as to what actually constitutes harassment and view less clear-cut forms of harassment as joking in nature or see it as just in fun.

Individuals have been found to differ in their attitudes toward and acceptance of sexual harassment (e.g., Cohen & Gutek, 1985; Kremer & Marks, 1992), and differences in these attitudes are believed to affect how sexually harassing role expectations are perceived and responded to. It was anticipated in Hypothesis 11 that individuals with less accepting attitudes towards sexual harassment would be more likely to label behavior as inappropriate and be more likely to respond actively and assertively. Based on the analyses, this hypothesis was confirmed. Multiple regression analysis revealed that one's previous experience with sexual harassment was given significant weight when one determined the level of appropriateness of the behavior, the likelihood of response to the behavior, and the level of assertiveness of the response. Therefore, when considering how individuals perceive and react to harassment, it is essential to consider their existing attitudes about sexual harassment.

#### Hypotheses 12 and 13

According to role theory, interpersonal relationships between focal persons and members of their role set affect how sent-roles are perceived and responded to (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Interpersonal relationships have similarly been found to affect the perception of sexual harassment (Kremer

& Marks, 1992). It was asserted in Hypothesis 12 that individuals who had previously experienced harassing interpersonal relationships would be more likely to label different behaviors as inappropriate and be more likely to respond to these behaviors. Previous experiences with gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion were examined as well as the identification that one had previously experienced sexual harassment.

Those individuals who had previously experienced sexual coercion showed significant differences in their labeling of inappropriate behavior, where they were more likely to label behaviors as inappropriate. Multiple regression analysis revealed that whether an individual had been previously harassed was given significant weight when determining the level of appropriateness of the behavior. The findings also revealed that one's previous experience with unwanted sexual attention was given significant weight when determining the likelihood that one would actively respond to the situation. However, no differences were found in the actual response type chosen. These results coincide with previous sexual harassment research findings that indicate the frequency of previous harassing behavior affects the perception of future interpersonal interactions (Konrad & Gutek, 1986; Loy & Steward, 1984). However,

there was a general lack of significant findings for some types of sexual harassing experiences and for the type of response chosen. This may be due to the fact that this research did not address all types of sexual harassment and the type of harassment affects the response type chosen (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Loy & Steward, 1984). It is also possible that individuals have separated their own past experiences with sexual harassment from the situations described in the scenarios. The scenarios described different behaviors of fictitious persons. Individuals may not have associated the situation that the scenarios described with their own interpersonal experiences with harassment.

Previous research has found that individuals with other sex supervisors are more likely to be harassed (Maahs, 1995). Therefore the gender of one's supervisor was believed to affect the perception of sexual harassment, where those who had other sex supervisors would be more sensitive to harassment and more likely to label behaviors as such. Based on the analyses, Hypothesis 13 was not confirmed. The gender of one's supervisor did not affect the perception of or reaction to the behaviors described in the scenarios. It is suspected that individuals may have separated their own experiences with their supervisor from

the situations described in the scenarios. This may be due to the fact that the scenarios depicted harassment by not only supervisors, but by coworkers and subordinates as well. The gender of one's supervisor may only affect the reaction to supervisor harassment. Future research should address this concern.

#### Implications for Organizations

The issue of sexual harassment is of great interest to many organizations due to the profound effects it can have on such factors as turnover, absenteeism, work performance, job satisfaction, and motivation (e.g., Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Gutek & Koss, 1993). Additionally sexual harassment can affect the psychological well being of its victims (e.g., Thacker & Gohmann, 1993). Due to the prevalence and cost of sexual harassment, it has become essential to understand what exactly constitutes sexual harassment and how one's perception of harassment is mitigated by one's role in the organization. This research attempted to address some of these questions.

Based on results of this study it is apparent that individuals vary widely in what they perceive to be sexual harassment. Context factors do appear to affect the perception of sexual harassment. Organizational factors, such as the policies and culture of the organization

regarding harassment, have been found to play a role in the labeling of sexual harassment. Individual differences in the perception of harassment have been found to exist across gender, race, age, relationship status, and the level of tolerance one has for sexual harassment. Aspects of one's previous interpersonal experiences with harassment can also affect the perception of harassment.

It is therefore essential for organizations to define strict policies against harassment that lead to severe consequences for the perpetrator and no negative consequences for those who report harassment. Organizations must also recognize that differences do exist in the perception of harassment and thus develop training programs emphasizing that sexual remarks and behaviors of any nature are not appropriate and unacceptable in the organization. Employees should be taught that even though they may not perceive certain types of behavior to be inappropriate that others may. Additionally, it should be emphasized that harassment can occur across all levels of power, and that all types are not tolerated. It may also be useful to identify specific types of behaviors that the organization defines as inappropriate particularly those behaviors that are less clear-cut and lead to feelings of a hostile work environment.

### Methodological Issues and Future Studies

In order to measure the perception of sexual harassment this researcher developed 27 different scenarios that were believed to depict different levels of harassment, from low or no harassment, moderate harassment, to high levels of harassment. Three variables were manipulated: power, touch, and verbal behavior. The issue of realism of the developed scenarios was addressed using two dependent measures; one variable inquired as to the ease with which each situation was imagined and the other dealt with whether the situation could actually occur in the workplace. Although differences were found in the ability of participants to imagine the different levels of the manipulated variables and the likelihood of occurrence of the different levels of behaviors, mean responses for the level of realism of each level of the manipulated variables were still sufficiently high enough to ensure adequate realism.

Lower levels of verbal and nonverbal harassment were easier to imagine and were perceived to be more likely to occur, however this most likely reflects the prevalence of less severe forms of harassment (e.g., Merit System Protection Board, 1981). It was also easier to imagine situations that depicted coworkers, and those that depicted

subordinates seemed least likely to occur. Again, this is most likely reflects the fact that coworker harassment is most prevalent form of harassment and subordinate harassment is the least prevalent form of harassment (Gutek, 1985).

In light of the significant effects observed in the measures of realism, the question arises as to the extent to which the realism perception was reflected in the primary dependent variables. Therefore, in order to assess the extent to which the judged realism of the scenarios (DV4 and DV5) was reflected in the ratings of appropriateness (DV1), likelihood of response (DV2), and response strategy (DV3), and the extent to which further analyses of the primary dependent variables would need to be qualified because of these relationships, an analysis of covariance of these variables (DV1, DV2 and DV3) was computed using DV4 and DV4 as covariates. The results of the analysis of covariance revealed that the likelihood of occurrence in the workplace (DV5) was a significant covariate for level of appropriateness (DV1;  $F(1,212)=14.58, p<.05$ ), for likelihood of response (DV2;  $F(1,212)=4.67, p<.05$ ), and the assertiveness of the response strategy selected (DV3;  $F(1,212)=11.30, p<.05$ ). For the likelihood of response (DV2), the ease of imagining the situation



(DV4) was a significant covariate [ $F(1,212)=13.80, p<.05$ ]. In spite of the significance of these covariates, the effect that this had on the independent variables of Power, Touch, Verbal behavior, and their significant interactions was negligible in all cases.

It has been noted that use of analysis of covariance in those situations in which the covariates are actually affected by the treatments leads to difficulties in the interpretation of results (Winer, Brown, & Michels, 1991). For this reason, use of the analysis of covariance as the primary analysis for these data was not desirable. Consequently, in light of the minimal effects of the covariates on the factors of interest in this study, it was decided to proceed with analyses without adjustments for the covariates.

This research addressed aspects of hostile environment harassment and the effect of context factors on the perception of harassment and the response to it. It is suggested that future research examine the effect that context factors may have on the perception of other forms of harassment, such as quid pro quo harassment. The scenarios in the present study also addressed only certain types of harassment and only certain verbal and physical behaviors. Although the scope of this research was

intentionally restricted so as not to become unwieldy, future research should address a wider array of behaviors. It would also be useful to address other aspects of non-verbal behaviors besides touch, such as proxemics or eye gaze. More sophisticated research might also utilize actual videotaped scenarios to better address subtle differences in behavior.

The scenarios used in this research were written in the third person; they describe the interactions of a fictitious Ann and John. Individuals were asked to imagine themselves as Ann and to answer the questions accordingly. Although it seems that the scenarios had high levels of realism, individuals may not have associated their own work environment with that depicted. That is if an individual is employed by Company X, they may not have imagined the scenarios to be occurring within Company X. Therefore, the impact of the context variables on the perception of harassment would not be as great. Additionally, the scenarios described a joint project between Ann and John, however this may not reflect the type of tasks an individual encounters in their workplace. Also, male participants may have had difficulty imagining themselves in the role of a female. It is therefore suggested that future studies address the issue of task relevance and

utilize a first person perspective.

Another issue of concern to this researcher is the measurement of role ambiguity. Role ambiguity was assessed indirectly based on a measurement scale suggested by Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1991). The midpoint of the scale addressing the level of appropriateness of the behavior may not be a precise measure of role ambiguity; role ambiguity is more likely reflected in a range of values near the midpoint of the scale. Future research should further address the issue of role ambiguity and refine its measurement.

#### Summary

This research examined differences in the perception of and response to sexual harassment. Role theory was utilized to understand how the manipulation of role expectations affect role perceptions and anticipated role behaviors. The influence of context factors on these perceptions and behaviors was also examined. The perception of and response to sexual harassment were affected by the level of invasiveness of touch, the level of verbal behavior, and the relative power of the perpetrator. Different organizational factors, personal attributes, and interpersonal factors were found to affect the perception of sexually harassing role expectations and

anticipated role behaviors. Role perceptions and behaviors were influenced by the gender-ratio of one's occupation; the organization's policies and culture regarding its tolerance for sexual harassment; the rater's gender, age, race, and relationship status; one's tolerance for sexual harassment; and one's previous experience with certain types of interpersonal harassment.

Although all a priori hypotheses regarding the context factors were not confirmed, it is still believed that role theory provides a viable model for understanding the perception of sexual harassment. It is believed that any lack of significant findings is due to the various methodological shortcomings described above. Nonetheless, differences in the perception of and response to sexual harassment were found across the levels of behaviors depicted and were affected by various context factors.

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Appendix A  
ANNOUNCEMENT SHEET



## Project Questionnaires 2

**Experimenter:** Lora L. Jacobi

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Glynn Coates

**Time:** Approximately 2 hours

**Credit:** 2 credits

**Subjects Needed:** Men and women (18 years old or older) who are currently employed or who have been employed within the last six months and have **not** participated in Project Questionnaires 1

**Description:** **Take-home Packets** that include questionnaires about different workplacescenarios and past workplace experiences

Appendix B  
NOTIFICATION SHEET

**NOTIFICATION SHEET**  
**Old Dominion University**  
**Department of Psychology**

**Title of Research:** Project Questionnaires 2

**Investigators:** Lora L. Jacobi, Dr. Glynn Coates

**Description of Research:** This research examines the appropriateness of different behaviors at work, the composition of one's work group, and the experience of sexual behaviors in the workplace. You will be participating in a study involving the completion of a number of different questionnaires. You will be asked to read a number of different scenarios and indicate whether the behaviors described are appropriate in the workplace and how you would respond to the situation. You will be asked about the gender composition and the organizational "climate" at your place of employment (either your current workplace or your last place of employment). You will be asked your opinions about different sexual issues and your experiences with different sexual behaviors at any of your current or previous jobs. Demographic information will also be collected (i.e., gender, age, race, etc.). You are asked to complete the take-home packet in a quiet setting without interruptions.

**Exclusionary Criteria:** In order to participate in this study you must be 18 years of age or older, be currently employed or employed within the last six months, and have not participated in Project Questionnaires 1.

**Risks and Benefits:** Some of the questions posed in this packet might cause you to self-reflect about things that may have happened to you in the workplace that may cause you some distress. The testing procedures that you undergo may result in negative feelings as a result of imagining behaviors that vary in their appropriateness for the workplace. There is a potential risk involved when asking individuals to imagine different scenarios that may or may not be appropriate in the workplace. There also exists the possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been defined. These risks are minimal and all precautions will be taken to ensure your safety. The main benefit to accrue from this study is the attainment of information related to the study of the appropriateness of different behaviors in the workplace.

**Costs and Payments:** Your efforts in this study are voluntary, and you will receive two (2) class credits for participation.

**New Information:** Any new information obtained during the course of this research that is directly related to your

willingness to continue to participate in this study will be provided to you.

**Confidentiality:** Any information obtained from this research will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will never be associated with your responses. You will not put your name on any of the research materials. Your responses will be completely anonymous. All materials will be coded with a number to keep them together. Your name will never be associated with this number. Data derived from this study could be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but you will not be individually identified.

**Withdrawal Privilege:** You are free to refuse to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time and your decision to withdraw will not adversely affect your care at this institution or cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. The investigators reserve the right to withdraw your participation at any time throughout this investigation if they observe any contradiction to your continued participation.

**Compensation for Illness and Injury:** It is unlikely that any illness or injury will result from participation in this research. If any injury should result from your participation in this research project, Old Dominion University does not provide insurance coverage, free medical care or any other compensation for such injury. In the event that you suffer injury as a result of participation in any research project, you may contact Lora Jacobi at 683-4439 or Dr. Val Derlega, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, at 683-3118 who will be glad to review the matter with you.

Appendix C  
COVER SHEET

## Project Questionnaires 2

On the questionnaires that follow, you will be asked a number of questions about different experiences at work. In questions asking about your current place of employment consider your current job. If you are not currently employed consider the last job that you've held within the past six months. However, some questions require you to consider any current or previous jobs. **Please read the instructions on each questionnaire.**

Before you begin this survey, be sure that you are in a quiet place where there will be no interruptions. When you have completed this packet, please bring it back **as soon as possible** to the peer advisors office.

Appendix D

DEBRIEFING

### Project Questionnaires Debriefing

The questionnaires that you have filled out are attempting to uncover differences in the perception of sexual harassment. We are interested in differences in the perception of sexual harassment both within and between the sexes.

The questionnaires require you to imagine different workplace situations that may or may not be appropriate in the work setting. These scenarios are fictitious, however imagining different potentially harassing scenarios may result in negative feelings. The scenarios may have reminded you of a previous experience of harassment or you may currently be experiencing sexual harassment at work. If you need to talk further about any of these experiences, you are encouraged to contact Julie Dodd, a member of the University's Sexual Harassment Committee, at the Women's Center at 683-4109. Free counseling services are also available on campus. The counseling center can be reached at 683-4401.



Appendix E  
PILOT NONVERBAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please use the given scale to indicate how harassing each of the following behaviors are if they occurred in the work place. Please consider each behavior individually.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
definitely not sexual harassment						definitely sexual harassment

1. John puts his arm around Ann. ( $\bar{X} = 3.75$ ;  $SD = 1.11$ )
2. John shakes Ann's hand. ( $\bar{X} = 1.33$ ;  $SD = .56$ )
3. John brushes against Ann's butt. ( $\bar{X} = 5.46$ ;  $SD = 1.14$ )
4. John caresses Ann's shoulder. ( $\bar{X} = 5.12$ ;  $SD = 1.19$ )
5. John touches Ann's shoulder. ( $\bar{X} = 3.00$ ;  $SD = 1.56$ )
6. John fondles Ann's breast. ( $\bar{X} = 7.00$ ;  $SD = .00$ )
7. John squeezes Ann's hand. ( $\bar{X} = 3.46$ ;  $SD = 1.56$ )
8. John brushes against Ann's breast. ( $\bar{X} = 5.87$ ;  $SD = 1.19$ )
9. John brushes against Ann's hand. ( $\bar{X} = 2.58$ ;  $SD = 1.35$ )
10. John fondles Ann's butt. ( $\bar{X} = 7.00$ ;  $SD = .00$ )
11. John pat's Ann's back. ( $\bar{X} = 2.54$ ;  $SD = 1.10$ )
12. John caresses Ann's breast. ( $\bar{X} = 7.00$ ;  $SD = .00$ )
13. John squeezes Ann's shoulder. ( $\bar{X} = 3.87$ ;  $SD = 1.45$ )
14. John touches Ann's butt. ( $\bar{X} = 6.62$ ;  $SD = .65$ )
15. John touches Ann's breast. ( $\bar{X} = 6.70$ ;  $SD = .63$ )
16. John strokes Ann's shoulder. ( $\bar{X} = 4.83$ ;  $SD = 1.34$ )
17. John slaps Ann's butt. ( $\bar{X} = 6.83$ ;  $SD = .39$ )
18. John pinches Ann's breast. ( $\bar{X} = 6.96$ ;  $SD = .21$ )
19. John grabs Ann's butt. ( $\bar{X} = 6.96$ ;  $SD = .21$ )
20. John pats Ann's shoulder. ( $\bar{X} = 3.13$ ;  $SD = 1.46$ )
21. John squeezes Ann's breast. ( $\bar{X} = 6.96$ ;  $SD = .21$ )
22. John strokes Ann's breast. ( $\bar{X} = 7.00$ ;  $SD = .00$ )
23. John pats Ann's hand. ( $\bar{X} = 2.50$ ;  $SD = 1.22$ )
24. John pinches Ann's butt. ( $\bar{X} = 6.92$ ;  $SD = .41$ )
25. John brushes against Ann's shoulder. ( $\bar{X} = 2.54$ ;  $SD = 1.25$ )
26. John pats Ann's breast. ( $\bar{X} = 6.83$ ;  $SD = .64$ )
27. John strokes Ann's hand. ( $\bar{X} = 3.62$ ;  $SD = 1.56$ )
28. John squeezes Ann's butt. ( $\bar{X} = 6.87$ ;  $SD = .61$ )
29. John strokes Ann's butt. ( $\bar{X} = 6.92$ ;  $SD = .28$ )
30. John caresses Ann's hand. ( $\bar{X} = 4.33$ ;  $SD = 1.81$ )
31. John grabs Ann's breast. ( $\bar{X} = 6.92$ ;  $SD = .41$ )
32. John pats Ann's butt. ( $\bar{X} = 6.87$ ;  $SD = .34$ )
33. John caresses Ann's butt. ( $\bar{X} = 7.00$ ;  $SD = .00$ )
34. John fondles Ann's breast. ( $\bar{X} = 7.00$ ;  $SD = .00$ )

Appendix F  
PILOT VERBAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please use the given scale to indicate how harassing each of the following statements are if they occurred in the work place. Please consider each statement individually.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
definitely <u>not</u> sexual harassment						definitely sexual harassment

**John says to Ann...**

1. "You look great in that outfit." ( $\bar{X} = 2.62$ ;  $SD = 1.24$ )
2. "You're doing a great job." ( $\bar{X} = 1.42$ ;  $SD = .93$ )
3. "You've got a nice butt." ( $\bar{X} = 6.50$ ;  $SD = .72$ )
4. "You must be doing a lot of running these days; your body looks terrific." ( $\bar{X} = 4.75$ ;  $SD = 1.36$ )
5. "Your new haircut looks great." ( $\bar{X} = 1.75$ ;  $SD = 1.07$ )
6. "I can't help but notice how nice you look in those short skirts that you wear." ( $\bar{X} = 6.08$ ;  $SD = .72$ )
7. "The way you look in that outfit really turns me on." ( $\bar{X} = 6.79$ ;  $SD = .41$ )
8. "I know this nice hotel nearby where we can get to know each other better." ( $\bar{X} = 6.92$ ;  $SD = .41$ )
9. "I really enjoy working with you." ( $\bar{X} = 1.92$ ;  $SD = 1.01$ )
10. "Your sweater is very flattering." ( $\bar{X} = 3.87$ ;  $SD = 1.78$ )
11. "I'm really horny today." ( $\bar{X} = 6.83$ ;  $SD = .48$ )
12. "Would you ever date a married man?" ( $\bar{X} = 4.83$ ;  $SD = 1.81$ )
13. "I'd love to have sex with you." ( $\bar{X} = 7.00$ ;  $SD = .00$ )
14. "That perfume you're wearing smells really good." ( $\bar{X} = 2.54$ ;  $SD = 1.28$ )
15. "I can always count on you to do a good job." ( $\bar{X} = 1.71$ ;  $SD = 1.08$ )
16. "I'm so glad that we are working together." ( $\bar{X} = 1.96$ ;  $SD = 1.08$ )
17. "The report you wrote was top notch." ( $\bar{X} = 1.42$ ;  $SD = .88$ )
18. "I'd love to see you naked." ( $\bar{X} = 7.00$ ;  $SD = .00$ )

Appendix G

ORGANIZATIONAL TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT INVENTORY  
(OTSHI)

In this part of the survey, we would like you to give us your opinion concerning the organizational "climate" at your place of employment. The following vignettes describe situations involving SUPERVISORS and EMPLOYEES; however, you should consider SUPERVISOR to include MANAGER and ADMINISTRATOR. EMPLOYEE should also include COWORKER or COLLEAGUE. Please answer as thoughtfully and frankly as possible by checking the item that most closely describes your opinion; as always, **your answers are completely confidential.**

Risky subscale:

How RISKY would it be for a woman in your department to make a formal complaint about this man?

- Extremely risky, she would almost certainly create serious problems for herself.
- Very risky, she might create serious problems for herself.
- Somewhat risky, she would create problems for herself.
- Slightly risky, she would probably not create problems for herself.
- No risk, she would not create any problems for herself.

Taken seriously subscale:

How LIKELY is it that a woman in your department would be TAKEN SERIOUSLY if she made a formal complaint about this man?

- There's almost no chance she would be taken seriously.
- There's little chance that she would be taken seriously.
- There's some chance that she would be taken seriously.
- There's a good chance that she would be taken seriously.
- There's a very good chance that she would be taken seriously.

Would be done subscale:

What do you think WOULD BE DONE if a woman in your department made a formal complaint about this man?

- Nothing would be done.
- Very little would be done; maybe someone would talk to him.
- He would be told to stop.
- He would be given a formal warning.
- There would be very serious consequences for him; he would be disciplined.

1. One of the EMPLOYEES in your department makes very frequent remarks about incompetent women doing jobs they are not capable of doing and refers to them as "affirmative action hires" and "bitches with attitudes" in your presence.

2. An EMPLOYEE in your department has implied that he can make life on the job very difficult for a female employee by withholding information and interfering with her work unless she has sex with him.

3. A SUPERVISOR in your department makes frequent references to "incompetent women trying to do jobs they were never intended to do and taking jobs away from better qualified male workers. He generally makes all women working in the department feel incompetent and unwanted.

4. A SUPERVISOR in your department has said several times that the way for women in the department to get along and get good job assignments is for them to be "more friendly and nice" to him.

5. An EMPLOYEE in your department continues to pressure women in the department to go out with him after they have made it clear that they are not interested.

6. A SUPERVISOR in your department talks a great deal about his sex life and tries to get his female subordinates to tell him about their personal lives also.

Appendix H  
GENDER RATIO IN THE WORKPLACE



Gender Ratio Scale:

The next few questions concern the proportions of women and men in your occupation and at your workplace. Please use the following choices to answer these questions. Please circle the number that represents your response.

1	2	3	4	5
Almost all men and no women	About 75% men and 25% women	About 50% men and 50% women	About 25% men and 75% women	Almost no men and all women

1. What do you think are the proportions of women and men working in your general job classification (e.g., secretary, doctor, gardener)?

2. What are the proportion of women and men working throughout your place of employment?

3. What are the proportions of women and men working in your department or work group at your place of employment?

Gender of the supervisor:

4. In the organization where you work (or last worked) is your immediate supervisor the same or opposite sex as you?

1 = Same                      2 = Opposite

Appendix I

SEXUAL EXPERIENCES QUESTIONNAIRE (SEQ-W)

Please use the given scale to indicate how often each of the following scenarios may have occurred in your work place. During the time that you are working at any of your current or previous jobs, have you ever been in a situation where any of your coworkers, supervisors, or others outside the organization (such as patients, clients, etc.)...

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once or twice	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time

#### Gender harassment

1. habitually told suggestive stories or offensive jokes?
3. made crude and offensive sexual remarks, either publicly (for example, in the office), or to you privately?
4. treated you "differently" because of your sex (e.g., mistreated, slighted, or ignored you)?
6. displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials (e.g., pictures, stories, or pornography)?
7. frequently made sexist remarks (e.g., suggesting that women are too emotional to be scientists or to assume leadership roles)?
9. "put you down" or was condescending to you because of your sex?

#### Unwanted Sexual Attention

2. made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal or sexual matters (e.g., attempted to discuss or comment on your sex life)?
5. gave you unwanted sexual attention?
8. attempted to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage him or her?
10. has continued to ask you for dates, drinks, dinner, etc., even though you have said "no"?
13. touched you (e.g., laid a hand on your bare arm, put an arm around your shoulders) in a way that made you feel uncomfortable?
14. made unwanted attempts to stroke or fondle you (e.g., stroking your leg or neck, touching your breast, etc.)?

#### Sexual Coercion

11. made you feel like you were being subtly bribed with some sort of reward or special treatment to engage in sexual behavior?
12. made you feel subtly threatened with some sort of retaliation for not being sexually cooperative (e.g., the mention of an upcoming evaluation, review, etc.)?
16. implied faster promotions or better treatment if you were sexually cooperative?
17. made it necessary for you to respond positively to sexual or social invitations in order to be well-treated on the job?
18. made you afraid you would be treated poorly if you didn't cooperate sexually?
19. treated you badly for refusing to have sex?

Perception/Labeling/Criterion item

20. Have you ever been sexually harassed? (circle one)

Yes                      No

Attempted Sexual Assault item

15. made unwanted attempts to have sex with you that resulted in you pleading, crying, or physically struggling?

Appendix J  
DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS: This survey asks you a series of questions about different experiences at work. We wish your answers to be completely anonymous, so please do not put your name on the questionnaire. Your total honesty and completeness in answering the questions are essential to the value of this research. Please answer the questions as indicated. Read each item carefully. Some questions require that you use specific rating scales, and some items ask that you check or fill in blanks with specific information.

Demographic Information

Your Gender (circle one):        Male            Female

Your Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years

Your Race/Ethnicity (circle one):

Asian      Black      Hispanic      White      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Relationship Status (circle one):

single    cohabiting    married    separated    divorced    widowed

Your Education (highest grade completed): \_\_\_\_\_

Sexual Orientation: (circle the appropriate number)

- 0 Exclusively heterosexual
- 1 Predominately heterosexual: only incidentally homosexual
- 2 Predominately heterosexual: more than incidentally homosexual
- 3 Equally heterosexual and homosexual
- 4 Predominately homosexual: more than incidentally heterosexual
- 5 Predominately homosexual: only incidentally heterosexual
- 6 Exclusively homosexual

Appendix K

TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT INVENTORY (TSHI)

Please use the given scale to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly agree		neither agree nor disagree		strongly disagree

1. Most women who are sexually insulted by a man provoke his behavior by the way they talk, act, or dress.
2. An attractive women has to expect sexual advances and should learn how to handle them.
3. Most men are sexually teased by many of the women with whom they interact on the job or at school.
4. A man must learn to understand that a woman's "no" to his sexual advances really means "no."
5. It is only natural for a woman to use her sexuality as a way of getting ahead in school or at work.
6. An attractive man has to expect sexual advances and should learn how to handle them.
7. I believe that sexual intimidation is a serious social problem.
8. It is only natural for a man to make sexual advances to a woman he finds attractive.
9. Innocent flirtations make the workday or school day interesting.
10. Encouraging a professor's or a supervisor's sexual interest is frequently used by women to get better grades or to improve their work situation.



Appendix L  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT SCENARIOS

**Carefully read the following scenario:**

Ann and her [supervisor, subordinate, coworker] John are working on a joint project. This involves meeting together once a week. John enters Ann's office for the weekly meeting to exchange information and discuss specific matters about the project. During the conversation, John [shakes Ann's hand, puts her arm around Ann, pats Ann's butt] and says, ["The report you wrote was top notch"; "You must be doing a lot of funning these days; your body looks terrific."; "You've got a nice butt."]

**Imagine that you are Ann and answer the following questions.**

1. Based on the information provided, circle the number corresponding to the level with which you think the above behavior is appropriate in the work setting.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
definitely						definitely
<u>not</u>						appropriate
appropriate						

2. What is the likelihood that you would actively respond to the above incident (i.e., reporting it to another member of the organization)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
definitely						definitely
<u>not</u>						respond
respond						

3. Place an "X" next to the ONE response type that would most likely indicate how you would react to the above incident.

ignore the incident  
 avoid the issue/person  
 change your ways of acting  
 speak to someone  
 respond directly to the person  
 report the person  
 quit

4. It was easy for me to imagine the situation described above.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly	slightly	no opinion	slightly	strongly
disagree	disagree		agree	agree

5. The situation described above could happen in the work place.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly	slightly	no opinion	slightly	strongly
disagree	disagree		agree	agree

## VITA

Lora L. Jacobi received her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Old Dominion University in May of 1999. Her dissertation is titled The application of role theory to the sexual harassment paradigm: A policy capturing approach. The chairperson of her dissertation committee is Dr. Glynn D. Coates.

Dr. Jacobi earned her Masters of Science degree in General Psychology from Old Dominion University in August of 1992. Her undergraduate training was at Duke University where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology in May of 1990.

The chairperson of Dr. Jacobi's thesis committee was Dr. Thomas Cash. The title of the thesis was The description and prediction of self-percepts and ideal-percepts of body image for multiple physical attributes.

While at Old Dominion University, Dr. Jacobi published the following three articles:

Cash, T. F. & Jacobi, L. L. (1992). Looks aren't everything (to everybody). Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, 7, 621-630.

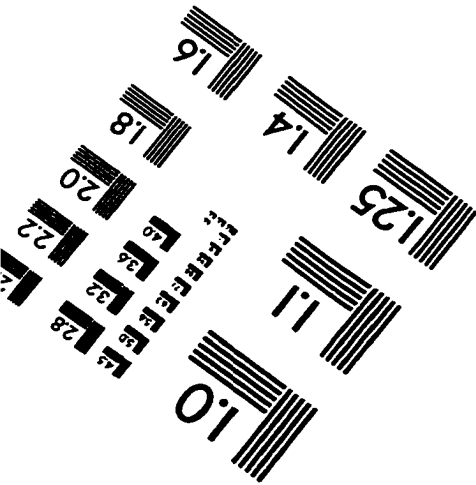
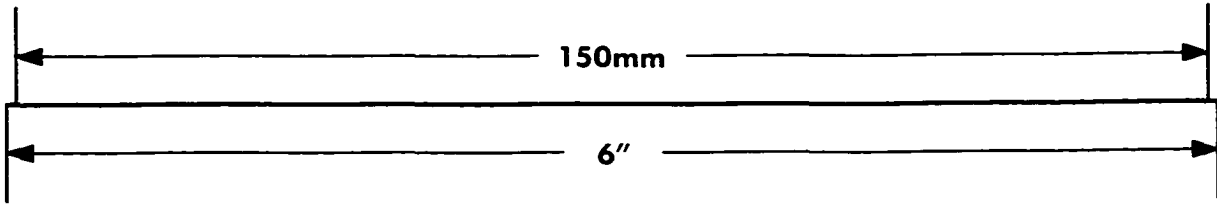
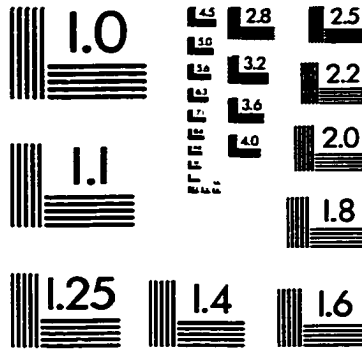
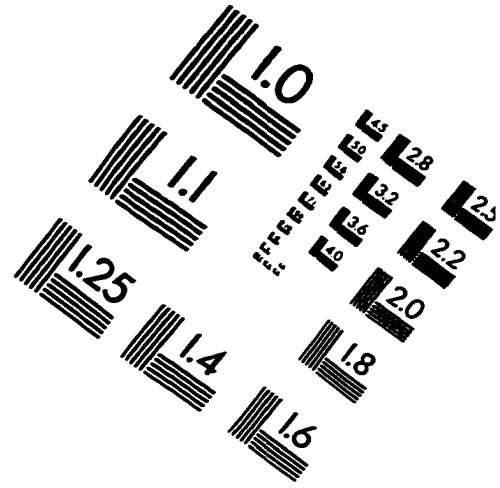
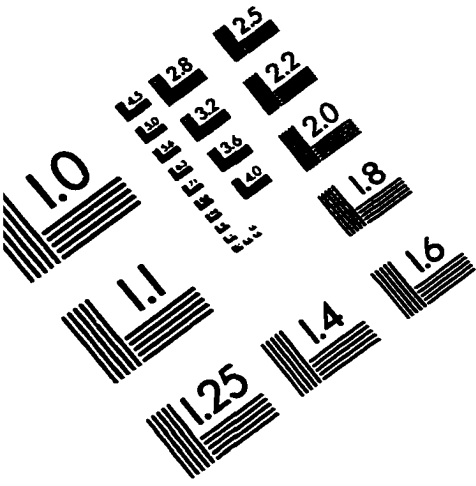
Jacobi, L. L. & Cash, T. F. (1994). In pursuit of the perfect appearance: Self-percepts and ideals of multiple physical attributes. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 24, 379-396.

Lewis, R. J., Cash, T. F., Jacobi, L., & Bubb-Lewis, C. (1997). Prejudice toward fat people: The development and validation of the Anti-Fat Attitudes Test. Obesity Research.

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# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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