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## Once, Twice, or Three Times as Harmful? Ethnic Harassment, Gender Harassment, and Generalized Workplace Harassment


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## Abstract

Despite scholars' and practitioners' recognition that different forms of workplace harassment often co-occur in organizations, there is a paucity of theory and research on how these different forms of harassment combine to influence employees' outcomes. We investigated the ways in which ethnic harassment (EH), gender harassment (GH), and generalized workplace harassment (GWH) combined to predict target individuals' job-related, psychological, and health outcomes. Competing theories regarding additive, exacerbating, and inuring (i.e., habituating to hardships) combinations were tested. We also examined race and gender differences in employees' reports of EH, GH, and GWH. The results of two studies revealed that EH, GH, and GWH were each independently associated with targets' strain outcomes and, collectively, the preponderance of evidence supported the inurement effect, although slight additive effects were observed for psychological and physical health outcomes. Racial group differences in EH emerged, but gender and race differences in GH and GWH did not. Implications are provided for how multiple aversive experiences at work may harm employees' well-being.

## Keywords

harassment, gender, race, discrimination, stress

## Disciplines

Civil Rights and Discrimination | Gender and Sexuality | Human Resources Management | Labor and Employment Law | Labor Relations | Race and Ethnicity

## Comments

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Once, Twice, or Three Times as Harmful? Ethnic Harassment, Gender Harassment, and Generalized  
Workplace Harassment

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### Abstract

Despite scholars' and practitioners' recognition that different forms of workplace harassment often co-occur in organizations, there is a paucity of theory and research on how these different forms of harassment combine to influence employees' outcomes. We investigated the ways in which ethnic harassment (EH), gender harassment (GH), and generalized workplace harassment (GWH) combined to predict target individuals' job-related, psychological, and health outcomes. Competing theories regarding additive, exacerbating, and inuring (i.e., habituating to hardships) combinations were tested. We also examined race and gender differences in employees' reports of EH, GH, and GWH. The results of two studies revealed that EH, GH, and GWH were each independently associated with targets' strain outcomes and, collectively, the preponderance of evidence supported the inurement effect, although slight additive effects were observed for psychological and physical health outcomes. Racial group differences in EH emerged, but gender and race differences in GH and GWH did not. Implications are provided for how multiple aversive experiences at work may harm employees' well-being.

*Keywords:* harassment, gender, race, discrimination, stress

Despite several decades of research and organizational interventions aimed at promoting inclusive workplaces, the evidence suggests that discrimination and hostile behavior may actually be on the rise. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2009) received 95,402 discrimination charge filings during the 2008 fiscal year, an all-time high and a 15% increase from 2007; this came after a 9% increase between 2006 and 2007. Although most research has focused on access discrimination (i.e., invalid differential access to jobs) or treatment discrimination as it relates to the fairness of organizational procedures (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990; Terborg & Ilgen, 1975), there is growing evidence that treatment discrimination is often interpersonal in nature. It takes the form of verbal harassment (e.g., Schneider, Hitlan, & Radhakrishnan, 2000), exclusion (e.g., Ibarra, 1992), micro-aggressions (e.g., Sue et al., 2007), bullying (e.g., Fox & Stallworth, 2005), and incivility (e.g., Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001), all of which hamper the full integration of targets.

Harassment can be based on various identity group characteristics (e.g., race, gender, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation) but can also come in the form of vexatious behavior that is not overtly linked to one's membership in a particular identity group (e.g., bullying, incivility, aggression). Evidence has increasingly demonstrated that targets of harassment often experience multiple forms of mistreatment. For example, gender harassment co-occurs with reports of ethnic harassment (Berdahl & Moore, 2006), incivility (Lim & Cortina, 2005), and harassment against sexual minorities (Konik & Cortina, 2008). To date, however, research has primarily examined targets' outcomes for each type of harassment in isolation (see Buchanan & Fitzgerald, 2008; Lim & Cortina, 2005, for exceptions), perhaps because theoretical models of the stress process within which research on harassment outcomes has been grounded (e.g., Kahn & Byosiene, 1992) provided little guidance about how two or more forms of harassment collectively harm targets. Studying different forms of harassment in isolation does not fit with the complexity of many employees' experiences, and it risks

leading to erroneous conclusions about the combined impact of harassment. Thus, as others have argued (e.g., Rospenda & Richman, 2004a), there is a real need for theory and research that increases our understanding of targets' overall experiences of workplace harassment.

In the current research, we drew from three competing theories regarding how people respond to aversive conditions and investigated whether three forms of harassment collectively have additive, exacerbating, or inuring (i.e., habituating to hardships) effects on targets' strain outcomes. Specifically, we studied ethnic harassment, threatening verbal or exclusionary behavior that has an ethnic component and is directed at a target individual because of the individual's ethnicity (Schneider et al., 2000); gender harassment, crude verbal and physical behaviors that convey hostile, offensive, and sexist attitudes (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997); and generalized workplace harassment, behaviors that create a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment but which are not overtly based on legally protected characteristics (Rospenda, Richman, Ehmke, & Zlatoper, 2005; cf. Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003; Keashly & Jagatic, 2003; Neuman & Baron, 1998). Prior work has focused on understanding how one's demographics predict whether one experiences harassment (e.g., Berdahl & Moore, 2006); our primary focus was on understanding the outcomes experienced by targets of multiple forms of harassment. A secondary purpose of this research was to investigate race and gender differences in employees' reports of all three forms of harassment, thereby contributing to the literature on "double jeopardy" (e.g., Beale, 1970) and also testing propositions regarding the subtle nature of contemporary discrimination through general mistreatment (e.g., Berdahl, 2007; Cortina, 2008). We first review the relevant literature on workplace harassment, followed by our theoretical rationale and hypotheses, and then present the results of two studies.

## Workplace Harassment

Harassment refers to vexatious behavior experienced as a result of one or more personal attributes, many of which are covered by Title VII of the 1964 U.S. Civil Rights Act. More formally, this is defined in the following way:

Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability, or that of his/her relatives, friends, or associates, and that (i) has the purpose or the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or (iii) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities. (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1993, pp. 51268–51269)

Consistent with this, we use the term social identity harassment to refer to harassing behaviors that reference one's membership in a group that comprises a component of one's social identity (cf. Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1985), and we focused on gender and ethnic harassment in our study. Gender harassment (GH) has been treated as one aspect of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1988), but unlike sexual coercion or unwanted sexual attention, it "conveys hostility devoid of any explicit sexual motive" (Lim & Cortina, 2005, p. 484). Evidence has consistently shown that GH occurs more frequently than attempts to garner sexual cooperation, and when sexualized forms of harassment do occur, they are nearly always coupled with gender harassment (Schneider, Swan, & Fitzgerald, 1997). Ethnic harassment (EH) encompasses both hostile comments about a target individual's ethnic group

and exclusion of the target from work-related or social interactions because of the individual's ethnicity (Schneider et al., 2000).

Although research historically focused only on the GH experiences of women and the EH experiences of racial/ethnic minorities, there is mounting evidence that this may be overly narrow. Research that has examined women's versus men's reports of sexual harassment experiences indicates (a) nonsignificant gender differences in frequency rates in some settings (Richman, Rospenda, Flaherty, & Freels, 2001; Rospenda, Richman, & Shannon, 2006), (b) parallel factor structures for GH measures for both genders (Fendrich, Woodward, & Richman, 2002; Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999), and (c) gender similarities in the fit of models examining the antecedents and consequences of harassment (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999). Similarly, with regard to EH, Schneider et al. (2000) found across four studies with ethnically diverse samples that racial minority and Caucasian individuals reported similarly high rates of EH (i.e., 40–60% of samples) and that the measure of EH functioned equally well across races (for similar results, see Bergman, Palmieri, Drasgow, & Ormerod, 2007; Ruggiero & Major, 1998). Thus, in the present studies, we assessed all employees' experiences of GH and EH.

There has also been much recent attention to generalized workplace harassment (GWH; Rospenda & Richman, 2004b). A variety of labels have been used to refer to this broader category of mistreatment, including generalized workplace harassment (Rospenda et al., 2005), workplace aggression (Neuman & Baron, 1996), workplace bullying (Rayner & Hoel, 1997), incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), emotional abuse (Keashly, Harvey, & Hunter, 1997), and social undermining (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002). Regardless of the label, these constructs encompass behaviors that create a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment, although the motivation for the mistreatment is often ambiguous. GWH may be instigated by a number of different factors, including prejudicial



attitudes or a willingness to get ahead by harming those with lower social power (cf. Berdahl, 2007). This means that GWH may not appear discriminatory, but if certain identity groups report significantly higher levels of GWH than others, this would suggest that GWH is used as a subtle form of treatment discrimination (cf. Cortina, 2008; Rowe, 1990). To date, the evidence suggests that gender differences in GWH are small (i.e., a meta-analysis found an  $r = .05$  relationship between gender and GWH; Bowling & Beehr, 2006), and little research has examined racial differences in GWH. Evidence on the relationships between experiencing GWH and other forms of harassment is sparse, and thus there is a need for current research on relationships among GWH, EH, GH, gender, and race.

### **The Current Studies: Rationale and Hypotheses**

All forms of workplace harassment are detrimental to employees' well-being. Indeed, one of the most consistent findings from the literature is that harassment represents a potent interpersonal stressor (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Keashly, 1998), and as such it produces strain outcomes such as poor job attitudes (e.g., dissatisfaction) and negative job-related behaviors (e.g., withdrawal), as well as poor psychological and physical health (e.g., anxiety, depression, dissatisfaction, headaches, neck strain). There are competing theories regarding the exact processes through which occupational stressors result in strain outcomes (see Kahn & Byosiene, 1992, for a review), but common to these theories is the understanding that stressors produce immediate physiological responses (e.g., increased heart rate and blood pressure), which may result in longer term strain (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Jex & Beehr, 1991; Katz & Kahn, 1978). This theoretical foundation has been useful for describing the underlying processes and diverse range of outcomes experienced by targets of harassment (cf. Fitzgerald et al., 1997).

Consistent with these more general theories about stressor– strain relationships, research has shown that each type of workplace harassment predicts target strain outcomes as expected, including poor job attitudes, high levels of work withdrawal, turnover intentions, mental health symptoms, and high levels of physical symptoms or somatic complaints (e.g., Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Schneider et al., 2000; Willness, Steel, & Lee, 2007). These relationships have been supported for GH in both meta-analytic (Willness et al., 2007) and descriptive (e.g., Cortina & Berdahl, 2009; Berdahl & Raver, in press) reviews. Reviews of the strain outcomes associated with GWH have also appeared (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Einarsen et al., 2003; Keashly & Jagatic, 2003; Raver & Barling, 2008). There is comparatively less research on EH at work, yet the existing results are similar (e.g., Goldman, Gutek, Stein, & Lewis, 2006; Mays, Coleman, & Jackson, 1996). Our first set of hypotheses replicate these independent main effects for each type of harassment on the most frequently examined outcomes in the harassment literature, including organizational commitment, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, poor psychological well-being (i.e., anxiety and depression, life satisfaction), and physical health problems.

*Hypothesis 1:* EH is negatively related to (a) organizational commitment, (b) job satisfaction, and (c) life satisfaction and is positively related to (d) turnover intentions, (e) anxiety and depression, and (f) physical health symptoms.

*Hypothesis 2:* GH is negatively related to (a) organizational commitment, (b) job satisfaction, and (c) life satisfaction and is positively related to (d) turnover intentions, (e) anxiety and depression, and (f) physical health symptoms.

*Hypothesis 3:* GWH is negatively related to (a) organizational commitment, (b) job satisfaction, and (c) life satisfaction and is positively related to (d) turnover intentions, (e) anxiety and depression, and (f) physical health symptoms.

### **Outcomes of Workplace Harassment Types in Combination**

As we indicated earlier, our primary goal was to move beyond tests of the outcomes associated with each type of harassment in isolation, as such an approach does not reflect the multifaceted nature of many employees' harassment experiences. Take, for example, the case of a woman of minority ethnicity who is subjected to ethnic jokes and then also experiences gendered insults. How would the additional experience of GH influence her job attitudes and well-being? Would the hostile experiences add together such that experiencing two forms of harassment is twice as harmful as experiencing one form? Or might her experience with EH trigger coping responses that steel her against the damage that might otherwise be caused by GH, such that the combined effects are no worse than experiencing just EH? Alternatively, could the strain she experiences as a result of EH weaken her psychological reserves and render her hypersensitive to further abuse, such that experiencing both forms of harassment makes her strain outcomes exponentially worse? To complicate matters further, social identity harassment is typically coupled with GWH (Lim & Cortina, 2005), so this employee may also be subjected to personal insults, rumors, social exclusion, and/or other forms of mistreatment that are not clearly linked to the woman's ethnic or gender identity. Does this generalized form of harassment affect the strain that she experiences above and beyond EH and GH, given that it is not explicitly sexist or racist and thus may be interpreted as personally motivated? Unfortunately, there is currently very little in the literature that can help us to answer these important questions.

To provide theoretical guidance, we drew from theories in clinical, cognitive, and health psychology regarding how people respond to multiple aversive conditions. Drawing from this broader set of theoretical foundations was essential because the stressor-strain theoretical frameworks that dominate the harassment literature are unable to predict or explain how two or more types of mistreatment will combine to influence targets. They specify the stress process for a single stressor, with

little attention to the processes involved when experiencing combinations of stressors (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992; Love & Beehr, 1981). What emerged from our literature review were competing theories that offered three very different, yet equally plausible, predictions regarding how two or more forms of harassment would predict targets' outcomes. Rather than simply choosing a favorite theory, we followed Chamberlin's (1890/1965) recommendations to propose multiple working hypotheses as a way to combat bias and gain insights into complex phenomena. Details on each competing hypothesis follow.

The first explanation for the ways in which forms of harassment combine to influence targets emerges from the clinical literature on major life stressors. Holmes and Rahe (1967) theorized that the negative impact of life stressors is additive. Some events may be more detrimental than others (e.g., death of a friend vs. financial troubles), but it is possible to determine the level of expected psychological strain by assessing how many life stressors an individual has experienced in the recent past (Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Rahe & Arthur, 1978). The greater the number of severe life stressors that one has recently experienced, the greater is the negative impact on one's psychological and physical health. A number of organizational studies have supported this additive conceptualization of aversive events (e.g., Barnett & Brennan, 1995; Buchanan & Fitzgerald, 2008; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Russell, Altmaier, & van Velzen, 1987; Zohar, 1995).

This theory and evidence provide a solid foundation for proposing that forms of harassment may combine in an additive fashion to predict targets' outcomes. This additive effect suggests that when targets experience different forms of harassment, each new type of harassment (i.e., EH, GH, GWH) adds to the target individual's level of negative strain outcomes. It suggests that each type of harassment will have separate negative effects and that there are no interactive combinations. Support for this hypothesis would be seen if, for example, the increase in negative outcomes experienced as a

function of undergoing GH is the same for individuals who have experienced low levels of EH as it is for individuals who have experienced high levels of EH. More formally, we state the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 4a:* Different types of harassment combine additively to predict target outcomes. The addition of a second and/or third type of harassment predicts significant variance in outcomes beyond that predicted by one type alone

The second hypothesis, which we derived from psychological adaptation theory (Helson, 1964) within cognitive psychology, is that although GH, EH, and GWH are independently damaging to individuals, their combination is not significantly worse for target individuals' outcomes than the effects of one type of harassment alone. According to Helson's (1964) theory, when people are exposed to a set of stimuli, they develop an adaptation level to those stimuli such that any future exposure to similar stimuli produces an indifferent (or minimal) response. Furthermore, as new experiences become integrated into one's adaptation level, one's tolerance may increase over time. Adaptation-level theory has been widely applied to and supported in a number of domains ranging from sensory perception to affective reactions, learning, personality, and group dynamics (see Appley, 1971; Helson, 1964, for reviews), as well as organizational research (Bowling, Beehr, Wagner, & Libkuman, 2005; Thau, Aquino, & Bommer, 2008).

With regard to workplace harassment, adaptation-level theory would suggest that targets of harassment may develop an adaptation level to the first form of harassment that they experience. Then, when a second form of harassment is encountered, such individuals may experience only a minimal change in strain outcomes because they have already inured themselves against mistreatment. This is not to say that each form of harassment is not independently damaging. Target individuals will experience strain outcomes from a single form of harassment (regardless of its form), but second or third forms of harassment may not add to these negative effects because they represent stimuli that are

similar to those involved in one's adaptation level. We refer to this adaptation to aversive harassment stimuli as the inurement effect, as the term inure means "to accustom to accept something undesirable" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008) or "to toughen or harden by exercise; accustom; habituate" (Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, 1989). Thus, the term inurement appropriately characterizes harassment as being undesirable and not neutral, even if an apparent lack of worsening outcomes suggests that people habituate to multiple experiences of it. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*Hypothesis 4b:* Different types of harassment combine to predict targets' outcomes in an inuring fashion such that two or more types of harassment in conjunction do not predict significant incremental variance in target outcomes compared with one type alone.

Our third and final possibility for how combinations of harassment influence target outcomes is that experiencing one type of harassment heightens people's state of arousal, making it more likely that they appraise new situations as threatening. We label this the exacerbation effect, as it suggests that instead of adding together in a linear fashion, the effects of additional types of harassment will magnify each other. This proposition emerges from energetical theories (Hockey, 1997) according to which stressful conditions such as harassment require people to tap into their energy reserves in order to maintain work performance. When they do, they constrain the energy resources available to respond to future stressors. If additional stressors are encountered in such a state, attempts to adapt to those stressors will be particularly taxing, resulting in exponentially greater costs to their well-being (Hockey, 1997). When applied to the study of multiple forms of harassment, threshold theories (e.g., Frese & Okonek, 1984) similarly lead us to expect an exacerbation effect. When individuals experience just one form of harassment, they exhibit short-term reactions that subside as long the individuals do not experience prolonged exposure to the stressor. However, when individuals are exposed to multiple

forms of harassment, they reach their biological or psychological breaking point or threshold, at which point they will show signs of a “sleeper effect” and exhibit more severe strain outcomes.

Given that our three competing explanations exhaust the combinatorial possibilities for the outcomes associated with experiencing multiple forms of harassment, support for the exacerbation effect would exist if both alternatives—Hypotheses 4a (additive effect) and 4b (inurement effect)—are falsified. We now turn to the demographic predictors of harassment.

### **Gender and Race Differences in Ethnic Harassment, Gender Harassment, and Generalized Workplace Harassment**

Our focus on gender, race, EH, GH, and GWH in this research provides us with an opportunity to contribute to ongoing debates about whether both race and gender predict an individual’s overall level of discrimination. Proponents of the “double jeopardy” hypothesis (Beale, 1970; King, 1975) have long argued that multiple-minority group members such as women of minority ethnicity are at increased risk of being disadvantaged. However, Sidanius and Veniegas (2000) reviewed the discrimination literature and concluded that despite the intuitive appeal of the “double jeopardy” hypothesis, there is little evidence to suggest that minority women experience discrimination at rates higher than Caucasian women or minority men. Others have noted that minority women may even be doubly advantaged compared with minority men because they count twice on affirmative action reports (Nkomo & Cox, 1989; Weathers, 1981) and receive higher job ratings in some contexts (Hosoda, Stone, & Stone-Romero, 2003).

With regard to workplace harassment specifically (as opposed to more general discriminatory outcomes), Berdahl and Moore (2006) provided the only test of whether racial minority women are at increased risk of experiencing harassment compared with Caucasian women or minority men. They

found that women reported higher levels of overall sexual harassment than did men, and individuals of minority race reported higher levels of EH than did Whites. Taken together, these two main effects meant that racial minority women reported higher overall levels of harassment than did other groups, supporting the double jeopardy hypothesis. There was no evidence that women experienced higher EH or that racial minorities experienced higher GH. Given that this is the only study on double jeopardy for harassment amidst a long history of inconsistent evidence in the larger discrimination literature, we believe it is important to provide further evidence.

Similarly, there is debate about whether women and racial minorities are at increased risk of experiencing GWH. According to Cortina (2008), public expression of sexist and racist beliefs has lessened in recent decades, yet they still exist and have merely become more subtle (i.e., modern discrimination). Cortina theorized that GWH is used selectively against women and racial minorities as a subtle form of modern discrimination that has the effect of psychologically and physically wearing down individuals. However, prior research on gender differences (see Bowling & Beehr's, 2006, meta-analysis) and race differences (e.g., Fox & Stallworth, 2005) in GWH has not shown much evidence for gender or race differences. Nevertheless, we find the arguments provided by Berdahl and Moore (2006) and Cortina to be compelling; thus, we hypothesized relationships consistent with these authors' conclusions:

*Hypothesis 5:* Racial minority group members report experiencing significantly higher levels of EH than Caucasians. Gender is unrelated to reports of EH.

*Hypothesis 6:* Women report experiencing significantly higher levels of GH than men. Racial group membership is unrelated to reports of GH.

*Hypothesis 7:* (a) Racial minority group members report experiencing significantly higher levels of GWH than do Caucasians. (b) Women report experiencing significantly higher levels of GWH than do men.



These hypotheses were tested across two studies detailed below. In the first organizational field study, we focused on how EH and GH combined to predict target individuals' work-related outcomes, in addition to exploring demographic predictors (Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6). In the second study, we added GWH and were thus able to investigate all of our hypotheses regarding how all three forms of harassment combined to predict outcomes, including the addition of psychological and health outcomes. Study 2 was conducted with two samples, where the employees were drawn from a range of different organizations, occupations, and industries.

### **Study 1**

#### Method

**Participants, procedure, and setting.** The organizational site for this research was the library system of a public university in the mid-Atlantic United States. We conducted an organization-wide survey as part of the library system's organizational culture audit. Participants were invited to complete an organizational culture survey. Participants chose from among several offered time slots during normal working hours to complete the survey.

Of the library's 294 employees, 241 (82%) completed the survey and 226 provided sufficient demographic and survey information to include in our final sample. The final sample was 72% female, and the average age was 45 years. The racial representation was 64% Caucasian, 11% African American, 9% Asian, 3% Hispanic, and 13% biracial or other. There were insufficient numbers of racial minority members to conduct tests of hypotheses for each group separately; thus, after determining that there were no significant differences among the minority groups in their rates of EH or GH, we created a dichotomous racial minority/Caucasian variable for hypothesis testing. The final combined racial/gender

group representation was the following: 105 Caucasian women, 57 minority women, 41 Caucasian men, and 23 minority men.

**Measures.** The survey contained a variety of questions regarding the organization, work environment, employee relations, and job attitudes; only scales related to this research are described here. The survey was ordered such that the strain outcomes were assessed prior to harassment so that participants' harassment experiences were not made salient prior to asking them to report on job attitudes. Details on the measures are provided below.

**Ethnic harassment and gender harassment.** To assess ethnic harassment, we administered six items from Schneider et al.'s (2000) Ethnic Harassment Experiences (EHE) scale, which asks participants to indicate how frequently they have experienced verbally harassing and exclusionary forms of EH over the past 24 months on a scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (almost always). Responses were averaged to index overall levels of EH. The participating organization preferred that we use comparable measures of EH and GH and sought to avoid questions about sexuality; thus, we used the same items from Schneider et al.'s (2000) EHE scale but edited it to refer to gender rather than race/ethnicity. This is not a commonly used measure of GH; however, it met our criteria of allowing us to compare EH and GH, to focus on sexist forms of harassment, and to do so using a measure of GH that would apply to both genders. Furthermore, several of the items are virtually identical to those found on another measure of GH (i.e., the SEQ; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995; Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999). The six GH items were averaged ( $\alpha = .86$ ). The EH and GH items can be seen in Table 1.

**Organizational commitment.** The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982) assessed commitment. Participants responded to the 15 items on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

**Job satisfaction.** We administered the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969) to assess job satisfaction. This instrument consists of affective adjectives that describe several domains of one's job. Participants indicate whether the adjective describes their job (i.e., "yes"; coded as 3), does not describe their job (i.e., "no"; coded as 0), or whether they are not sure (i.e., "?"; coded as 1). Scoring involved summing all responses after appropriately reverse coding ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

**Turnover intentions.** The two-item measure of turnover intentions was derived from Hanisch and Hulin (1990). Employees indicated how often they did the following on a scale ranging from 0 (never) to 7 (more than once a week): "Thinking about quitting your job" and "Explore other job opportunities by checking job listings or want ads." Coefficient alpha was .66, which is slightly below the recommended .70 reliability, largely due to the scale having only two items.

## **Analyses and Results**

We first conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to determine whether EH and GH are empirically separate factors. A CFA on the six EH and the six GH items revealed that a two-factor solution showed excellent fit,  $\chi^2(43) = 62.44$ , comparative fit index (CFI) = .99, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .04, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .04, and fit better,  $\Delta\chi^2(8) = 24.91$ , than a single-factor model,  $\chi^2(35) = 87.35$ , CFI = .96, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .07. Factor loadings are presented in Table 1. Correlations and descriptive statistics are provided in Table 2.

We then tested Hypotheses 1 and 2 regarding the relationships between EH, GH, and target individuals' job attitudes and turnover intentions, the results of which can be seen in Table 3. For these regressions, gender and racial minority status were treated as covariates; gender did not account for significant variance in any of the dependent variables; and racial minority status only significantly

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INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

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predicted job satisfaction such that Caucasians were less satisfied than racial minority group members. Regression analyses for Hypothesis 1 appear under Model 1. As expected, *EH* was negatively related to commitment ( $\beta = -.19, p < .01$ ) and job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.28, p < .01$ ) and positively related to turnover intentions ( $\beta = .16, p < .05$ ). Consistent with Hypothesis 2 (Model 2), *GH* was also negatively related to commitment ( $\beta = -.17, p < .01$ ) and job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.23, p < .01$ ) and positively related to turnover intentions ( $\beta = .28, p < .01$ ). Thus, the results revealed separate main effects for *EH* and *GH* on targets' attitudinal and behavioral outcomes.

Hypothesis 4 proposed competing hypotheses for how *EH* and *GH* would collectively predict targets' strain outcomes, that is, additive effects (Hypothesis 4a), inurement effects (Hypothesis 4b), or exacerbating effects in the absence of either of these two possibilities. For organizational commitment, a significant interaction between *EH* and *GH* emerged. This interaction was plotted on the basis of the recommendations of Aiken and West (1991), as shown in Figure 1. A simple slope analysis revealed that the relationship between *GH* and organizational commitment was not significant when *EH* was high ( $b = -.13; p < .05$ ) but was significant when *EH* was low ( $b = -.49; p < .01$ ). This interaction is most consistent with the inurement effect (Hypothesis 4b) because when *EH* experiences were high, whether one experiences *GH* did not significantly change the observed relationship between *EH* and organizational commitment. That is, the negative relationship of *GH* with commitment (Model 2) became nonsignificant when *EH* was high.

When *EH* and *GH* were entered simultaneously (Model 3), only *EH* was significantly related to job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.24, p < .01$ ). The two forms of harassment collectively accounted for 9% of the variance in job satisfaction compared with 8% for *EH* alone (Model 1), which evidenced a very small additive effect (Hypothesis 4a). For turnover intentions, only *GH* maintained a significant relationship with turnover intentions ( $\beta = .26, p < .01$ ) when both *GH* and *EH* were entered simultaneously (Model 3).

This combined model accounted for 8% of the variance, which was the same as GH alone (Model 2), thus providing support for an inurement effect (Hypothesis 4b).

Post hoc analyses were conducted to determine whether race interacted with EH to predict outcomes, whether gender interacted with GH to predict outcomes, and whether any EH X GH inter-

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INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

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INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

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actions were qualified by gender or race to produce three-way interactions. None of these interactions with the demographic variables were significant. There was no evidence to suggest that the relationships between EH, GH, and outcomes were qualified by race or gender.

Poisson regression analysis was used to test Hypotheses 5 and 6. This analytic technique is appropriate when the dependent variable assesses occurrences of an event that occurs relatively rarely despite having many opportunities to happen, as is the case with incidents of harassment (Cameron & Trivedi, 1998; Lix, Keselman, & Keselman, 1996). To facilitate interpretation, we plotted the mean values of EH and GH by race and gender in Figures 2a and 2b. For readers who are interested in the average level of social identity harassment, we averaged the EH and GH scales and provided the mean social identity harassment scores by race and gender in Figure 2c.<sup>1</sup>

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INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

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In support of Hypothesis 5, Caucasian participants were significantly less likely to report incidents of EH than were those of minority race ( $\beta = -.17, p < .05$ ). Caucasian respondents were .84 times less likely to experience EH than were individuals of minority race. Although men were .87 times

less likely to report EH than were women, this effect was nonsignificant ( $\beta = -.14$ , averaged to compute a total score for social identity harassment (cf. Berdahl & Moore, 2006), there were neither significant minority group nor gender group differences, and there was no significant interaction.

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INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

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## **Discussion**

In this study, we first established that EH and GH independently predicted organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions before investigating our focal question regarding how EH and GH combined to predict these same outcomes. Our results evidenced the strongest support for the inurement effect, which emerged for two of the three outcomes. High levels of EH led to consistently low commitment, regardless of one's levels of GH. For turnover intentions, high levels of GH predicted turnover intentions regardless of the extent to which one also experienced EH. Thus, both EH and GH substituted for each other's effects on target strain. In addition to these inuring effects, we also found a slight additive effect for job satisfaction; EH and GH together accounted for 1% incremental variance in job satisfaction beyond EH. There was no support for the exacerbation effect across any of the variables.

With regard to the demographic predictors of EH and GH, participants of minority race were more likely than Caucasian participants to experience EH, consistent with most prior work (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Bergman et al., 2007; Fox & Stallworth, 2005). However, gender differences in GH did not emerge as significant nor was the interaction between gender and race significant in predicting GH. An examination of the pattern of means in Figure 2b suggests that gender differences in GH may be more complex than previously discovered, but this interaction did not attain significance and should be

interpreted with caution. Moreover, in this organization, women constituted the numeric majority; thus, men of minority race comprised the group of double minorities, which may have influenced the results. In planning a second investigation, therefore, we were interested in studying people from a large range of different organizations, industries, and occupations, which would enable us to draw better conclusions about typical patterns of demographic differences.

As with all research, there were limitations associated with Study 1. The data were cross-sectional, and all data came from a single source, which raises concerns about common method variance (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). When conducting research on harassment experiences and strain outcomes, data must come from target individuals, but it is possible to separate the independent variables and dependent variables in time to increase confidence in the results (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), which is what we set out to do in Study 2. In addition, we adapted Schneider et al.'s (2000) EH measure to assess GH to accommodate the preferences of the participating organization but were interested in replicating the results using an existing measure of GH (Fitzgerald, Magley, et al., 1999). Finally, we tested only a subset of our hypotheses, as we were unable to collect data on employees' psychological and physiological health or GWH; thus, we sought to strengthen our findings by addressing these limitations in Study 2.

## Study 2

### Method

**Participants and procedures.** In our second study, our hypotheses were tested with data derived from two samples, each of which contained employees from a diverse range of organizations and occupations.

**Sample 1.** Our first sample of employees were surveyed online through the Study Response Project, which facilitates research by connecting researchers with participants who have agreed to participate in online survey research. This allowed us to collect data across time while also guaranteeing participants' anonymity, which is beneficial for studying sensitive topics. Adults in the United States who were employed full-time and worked with at least three colleagues were recruited to participate in a study called "Job Attitudes and Experiences at Work." Equal numbers of male and female participants were recruited. We oversampled racial/ethnic minorities to the maximum extent possible, which was approximately 7% each for African American, Asian, and Hispanic participants (21% total). Of the 1,483 working adults who were invited to participate in our two-part study, 786 (53%) completed a first online survey that contained the harassment questions and demographics. Participants were recruited for a second online survey with the dependent variables four weeks later, which was completed by 605 people (77% return response rate). Of these, 586 participants provided sufficient data to retain in the final sample. This sample was 61% female, and the average age was 39 years old. The racial/ethnic representation was 83% Caucasian, 7% African American, 5% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 1% other races. All industry categories were represented, with approximately half of the sample collectively being from health care (12%), education (12%), sales (9%), government (7%), business/ financial (5%), and production/manufacturing (4%).

**Sample 2.** A second sample was recruited to enhance the sample size and increase the numbers of racial minorities and men. Employed business students at an eastern U.S. university were recruited to participate in a two-part study called "Job Attitudes and Experiences at Work" in exchange for extra credit. Only individuals who were currently employed in an environment with at least three colleagues were eligible to participate in this study. The first survey, answered by 207 participants, contained the harassment questions and demographics, and the second survey, which was administered four weeks



later and completed by 156 individuals (75%), contained the dependent variables. After removing seven surveys on account of incomplete data, our final sample consisted of 149 participants. This sample was 55% male, with an average age of 20 years. The racial distribution was 66% Caucasian, 14% Asian, 8% African American, 8% Hispanic, and 4% other races. All industry sectors were represented, with over half of the sample being from the sales (11%), legal (11%), food services (11%), business and financial (9%), and education (9%) sectors.

These two samples were examined for differences prior to combining them. Consistent with our goal of diversifying the sample, the second sample contained a significantly higher proportion of men,  $\phi = -.13$ ;  $p < .01$ , and racial minorities,  $\phi = .17$ ;  $p < .01$ , but did not differ in terms of organizational tenure,  $F(732) = .53$ , ns. Given the 23 industry codes, respondents could choose from and the nature of the samples, it was not surprising to find that they differed in terms of industries represented ( $\phi = .38$ ;  $p < .01$ ). In addition, as expected, the student sample worked fewer hours each week,  $F(731) = 82.34$ ,  $p < .01$ . We conducted all analyses, with hours worked as a covariate, and also conducted all analyses for the samples separately. Both sets of analyses produced the same pattern of results, so we combined the samples for additional power and diversification. After determining that there were no significant differences among the racial minority groups in their rates of EH or GH, we created a dichotomous racial minority/Caucasian variable for hypothesis testing. The final combined racial/gender group representation consisted of the following: 324 Caucasian women, 265 Caucasian men, 102 minority women, and 44 minority men.

**Measures.** Details on the measures are provided below. Participants completed the measures of harassment and demographics in the first survey, and then completed the measures of job attitudes, turnover intentions, psychological well-being, and health in the second survey four weeks later.

**Workplace harassment.** The EH measure (Schneider et al., 2000) was the same as that used in Study 1 ( $\alpha = .92$ ). To assess GH, participants completed an eight-item Gender Harassment subscale from the SEQ (Fitzgerald, Magley, et al., 1999; Stark, Chernyshenko, Lancaster, Drasgow & Fitzgerald, 2002), which contains questions about sexist hostility and hostility enacted through offensive sexual remarks ( $\alpha = .90$ ).<sup>2</sup> We assessed GWH with 20 items from Glomb's (1998, 2002; Glomb & Liao, 2003) Aggressive Experiences Scale (AES). As seen in Table 4, these behavioral items reflect a range of hostile acts at work but do not reference one's membership in a particular identity group ( $\alpha = .93$ ). For all harassment measures, participants responded on the basis of behaviors they had experienced from supervisors or coworkers at work during the past 24 months on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (once a week or more).

**Job attitudes and turnover intentions.** Organizational commitment was assessed with four items from Meyer, Allen, and Smith's (1993) Affective Commitment scale ( $\alpha = .88$ ). To assess job satisfaction, we administered the three-item overall satisfaction subscale from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979;  $\alpha = .90$ ). Both of these measures used a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Turnover intentions were measured with two items (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990): "How often do you think of quitting your job?" and "All things considered, how desirable is it for you to quit your job?" answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never/very undesirable) to 5 (constantly/very desirable) ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

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INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

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**Psychological well-being and health.** We administered Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin's (1985) five-item Satisfaction With Life Scale on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) ( $\alpha = .93$ ). The Anxiety and Depression scales from Dupuy's (1984) Psychological General Well-Being Index were administered on a scale ranging from 0 (never) to 5 (very often or always) ( $\alpha =$

.92). Finally, we assessed physiological strain with Spector and Jex's (1998) Physical Symptoms Inventory. Participants indicated whether they had experienced each of 18 physical symptoms over the past 30 days and, if so, whether they had visited a doctor. Scoring involves summing each symptom's "have symptoms" and "saw doctor" subscales for a total score ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

### Analyses and Results

A CFA on the EH, GH, and GWH items revealed good fit for the three-factor model,  $X^2(445) = 1,236.09$ ; CFI = .94; RMSEA = 0.05; SRMR = .05, where items loaded onto their respective EH, GH, and GWH factors. This model fit significantly better,  $\Delta X^2(3) = -1,411.62$ , than a one-factor model,  $X^2(448) = 2,647.71$ ; CFI = .83; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .09. Two GWH items had low loadings (see Table 4, Items 23 and 31); however, we retained them because they have been used in prior research with the AES (e.g., Glomb, 2002). Their inclusion did not influence the results. The correlations and descriptive statistics for all variables are provided in Table 5.

Table 6 shows the regression results for Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. As seen under Model 1, EH was negatively related to organizational commitment ( $\beta = -.10, p < .01$ ) and job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.13, p < .01$ ) and positively related to turnover intentions ( $\beta = .16, p < .01$ ), anxiety and depression ( $\beta = .07, p < .05$ ), and physical symptoms ( $\beta = .18, p < .01$ ), but unrelated to life satisfaction ( $\beta = -.02, ns$ ). This was also the case for Hypothesis 2 (Model 2); GH significantly predicted commitment ( $\beta = -.12, p < .01$ ), job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.18, p < .01$ ), turnover intentions ( $\beta = .13, p < .01$ ), anxiety and depression ( $\beta = .13, p < .01$ ),

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INSERT TABLE 5 HERE

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and physical symptoms ( $\beta = -.20, p < .01$ ). For Hypothesis 3 (Model 3), GWH was related to the same set of outcomes—commitment ( $\beta = -.20, p < .01$ ), job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.29, p < .01$ ), turnover intentions ( $\beta = .27, p < .01$ ), anxiety and depression ( $\beta = .28, p < .01$ ), and physical symptoms ( $\beta = .26, p < .01$ )—and the

relationship with life satisfaction was also significant ( $\beta = -.18, p < .01$ ). Therefore, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported for five of the six dependent variables, and Hypothesis 3 was fully supported.

The regressions for how EH, GH, and GWH combine to predict these target outcomes (Hypotheses 4a and 4b) are presented in Table 6 under Model 4. When EH, GH, and GWH were entered simultaneously, GWH remained significant, whereas GH and EH did not, except in one case. None of the two-way interactions were significant, but three-way interactions emerged for organizational commitment ( $\beta = -.43, p < .05$ ) and job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.58, p < .01$ ).

Figure 3a reveals that the lowest levels of organizational commitment were observed when GWH was high. There was no support for additive effects of EH and/or GH predicting commitment beyond GWH, yet GWH was related to lower levels of commitment than was EH or GH alone. Simple slope comparison tests revealed that Lines 2 (high GH, low GWH) and 4 (high GH, high GWH) were significantly different, which means that GH and EH interacted to predict commitment levels when GWH was low. High GH predicted low commitment regardless of EH levels (Line 2); EH was only negatively related to commitment when GH was low (Line 4). These results are similar to those evident in Figure 1, which showed that a second form of social identity harassment (GH in this case) does not further impair commitment, consistent with inurement.

A similar pattern emerged for job satisfaction. The lowest levels of satisfaction occurred under conditions of high GWH (Lines 1 and 3). A simple slope comparison revealed that the slope for Line 4 (low GH, low GWH) was significantly different from all other lines. When GWH was low, high GH predicted low levels of satisfaction regardless of EH (Line 2); EH was negatively related to satisfaction only when GH and GWH were both low (Line 4). These results again provide evidence for targets inuring themselves against social identity harassment when GWH is high, with a second inurement effect between EH and GH evident when GWH is low.

The results for the other four dependent variables can also be seen in Table 6 under Model 4. For turnover intentions, only GWH retained significance when all three types of harassment were entered simultaneously ( $\beta = .27, p < .01$ ); this model accounted for 7% of the variance in turnover intentions, which was the same as for GWH alone (Model 3). For life satisfaction, only GWH retained significance ( $\beta = -.23, p < .01$ ), but EH and GH accounted for 1% additional variance compared with GWH alone. For physical symptoms, GWH was again the only significant predictor ( $\beta = .21, p < .01$ ), and EH and GH accounted for 1% additional variance compared with GWH alone. Finally, for anxiety and depression, both GWH ( $\beta = .32, p < .01$ ) and EH ( $\beta = .09, p < .05$ ) were significant, and all three forms of harassment accounted for 1% additional variance compared with GWH alone. In sum, whereas results involving commitment, satisfaction, and turnover intentions provide support for an inurement effect (Hypothesis 4b), the psychological and physical health variables demonstrated slight additive effects (Hypothesis 4a).

Additional analyses were conducted to determine whether race interacted with EH to predict outcomes, whether gender interacted with GH to predict outcomes, and whether the EH GH two-way interactions were further qualified by gender or race in three-way interactions. All of the two-way and three-way interactions with these demographic variables were nonsignificant. Thus, the relationships between EH, GH, and outcomes were not qualified by race or gender.

Similar to Study 1, we tested Hypotheses 5 and 6 with Poisson regressions, and also plotted the means in Figure 4 to facilitate interpretation.<sup>3</sup> Hypothesis 5 was supported, as Caucasian respondents were only .90 times as likely to report EH than were racial minorities ( $\beta = -.10, p < .01$ ). EH did not differ as a function of gender ( $\beta = .03, ns$ ), nor as a function of the interaction between gender and race ( $\beta = .05, ns$ ). For Hypothesis 6, we found no significant differences between men's and women's reports of

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INSERT TABLE 6 HERE

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INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE

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GH ( $\beta = -.03$ , ns); there was also no evidence for differences in GH by race ( $\beta = .03$ , ns), and no interaction between race and gender in predicting GH ( $\beta = .02$ , ns). Hypothesis 7a proposed race differences in GWH such that racial minorities would report higher levels of GWH than Caucasians. Surprisingly, we found that Caucasian respondents were 1.07 times more likely to report GWH than racial minorities ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Hypothesis 7b proposed gender differences in GWH rates, but this effect did not emerge ( $\beta = .01$ , ns). The interaction between race and gender predicting GWH did not reach significance ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $p < .08$ ).

## Discussion

This study provided a more complete test of our hypotheses and revealed several findings consistent with Study 1. First, the results showed that EH, GH, and GWH each had significant main effects on the target strain outcomes, with the exception of life satisfaction, which was only related to GWH. The three-way interactions for organizational commitment and job satisfaction showed that the two forms of social identity harassment (EH and GH) combined in a manner consistent with the inurement effect and that neither had negative effects beyond high GWH. The inurement effect was also supported for turnover intentions. However, for psychological and physiological well-being, the three types of harassment showed slight (1%) additive effects over GWH alone. We interpret these results in light of Study 1 in more detail below.

The evidence on racial and gender predictors of workplace harassment was also largely consistent with the results of Study 1. Participants of racial minority reported significantly higher levels of EH than did Caucasian participants, yet women were no more likely than men to experience GH. With regard to demographic differences in GWH, the results showed a surprising reversal such that

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INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE

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Caucasians reported higher levels of GWH than did participants of minority race. No gender differences in GWH emerged.

Strengths of this study included the time-lagged methodology, where the independent and dependent variables were collected a month apart to reduce common-method variance (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986) and the use of validated scales for all constructs. Our sample was also organizationally and occupationally diverse, so our conclusions are less likely to be driven by context-specific roles, norms, policies, or cultural effects that may skew results from a single setting. This study is not without its limitations, however. Although we drew from broad samples of employees in variety of organizations, our sample does not represent any known population, and we cannot draw conclusions regarding representativeness to the larger U.S. population. We also cannot draw any causal conclusions from this study, but the time-lagged design does help to provide some additional confidence in the results. Finally, our sample included sufficient numbers of ethnic minorities to test our hypotheses, yet we could not compare racial minority groups. We encourage replications with samples of ethnic minorities from a range of organizational settings.

### **General Discussion**

Despite the recognition that targets often experience multiple forms of workplace harassment (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Lim & Cortina, 2005; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2009)

and calls for research on employees' overall experiences of harassment (Rospenda & Richman, 2004a), prior scholarship has provided little guidance on how two or more forms of harassment collectively harm targets. Therefore, we developed and tested competing hypotheses about whether EH, GH, and GWH combine in additive, exacerbating, or inuring ways to predict target individuals' job-related, psychological, and health outcomes. A secondary goal was to contribute to the ongoing debates about whether both race and gender influence employees' likelihood of experiencing EH, GH, and GWH. We conducted a field study of 226 employees in a single organization and a time-lagged study of 735 employees from a range of organizations, occupations, and industries.

Overall, the evidence from these studies shows that EH, GH, and GWH predominantly combine in inuring ways to predict target strain outcomes. The inurement effect was supported for job-related outcomes in both studies. For target individuals' psychological and physical health outcomes in Study 2, there was slight support for additive effects, yet these accounted for only 1% additional variance in all cases. There was no support for the exacerbation effect in either study.

These results suggest several conclusions and insights for future research. It is first important to keep in mind that each type of harassment is independently associated with a host of negative strain outcomes. With that said, it only takes a single type of harassment to predict low organizational commitment, poor job satisfaction, and/or turnover intentions; secondary or tertiary types of harassment did not further reduce job-related attitudes and turnover intent. These results fit with adaptation-level theory (Helson, 1964) in that people subconsciously adjust to workplace harassment by establishing an adaptation level, which may prevent them from experiencing additive harm when faced with a second type of harassment. Experience with one form of social identity harassment may trigger coping strategies where people buffer themselves against further harm by discounting harassment as being due to prejudicial attitudes. Experiences with one form of social identity harassment may signal



that the environment tolerates bias. Once targets perceive the environment tolerates biased treatment, they become prepared for (or at least not surprised by) additional incidents of bias, even if they involve a different social identity group. Indeed, when individuals attribute negative experiences to prejudice, it lessens the negative impact of those experiences on their psychological well-being (Crocker & Major, 1989). However, future research is needed to better understand the psychological mechanisms that allow target individuals to steel themselves against damage from multiple types of harassment.

Our results suggest that inuring oneself against the harmful effects of additional harassment experiences may be more difficult when GWH is involved. Adaptation-level theory suggests that adaptation to aversive stimuli will only occur when the new stimulus is judged to be similar; if it is substantially different from one's existing adaptation level, it will trigger a stronger response (Helson, 1964). This may explain why EH and GH had similar effects, whereas GWH predicted outcomes beyond social identity harassment. Because EH and GH can both be attributed to prejudice, they are similar phenomena from an attributional perspective, whereas GWH may represent a substantially different stimulus. Because GWH is a subtle form of mistreatment that masks underlying motives, it is not as easily attributed to bias. Its ambiguous nature may be damaging as a result of the cognitive load of rumination about why one is being targeted (cf. Porath & Erez, 2007). In addition, GWH is not currently illegal in the United States, whereas GH and EH are; therefore, anxiety about the lack of recourse for addressing GWH may make it especially detrimental.

Inurement effects may be most prominent for job-related outcomes because any form of harassment violates employees' expectations for dignified treatment, leading employees to disengage from the organization for tolerating the egregious acts (Hulin, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1996). Employees may cope by inuring themselves against future harassment while looking for another job. By comparison, because of the negative emotions and frustration that accompany each instance of

harassment, employees may not be able to fully inure themselves against psychological and physiological harm from each instance, thereby leading to small additive effects on health (cf. Banyard, Williams, & Siegel, 2001; Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974).

The three forms of harassment were moderately correlated in both studies. Prior work has also shown co-occurrence between forms of harassment; one recent literature review cited several studies that found correlations ranging from .32 to .61 between GH, EH, and GWH (Berdahl & Raver, in press). These moderate correlations may be occurring for a few reasons. First, an environment that tolerates one form of harassment may also tolerate other forms of harassment, consistent with Hulin et al.'s (1996) argument that harassment is "a manifestation of an organizational culture that permits dominance of certain groups of employee over other groups" (p. 133). Thus, if power struggles and status imbalances are permitted within the organizational environment, mistreatment of all types may occur. A second possible reason is that targets of harassment may be experiencing events that have to do with more than one identity group membership at a time, leading to "double counting." Although the EH and GH measures ask questions that specifically refer to one's social identity group, it is possible that some forms of mistreatment are ambiguous and attributed to more than one cause. For example, some experiences of GWH (e.g., "withheld information from you") might also be interpreted as being due to one's race or gender, leading to greater overlap between these constructs. A third possibility is that something about the targets makes them more susceptible to harassment or more likely to perceive (and report) harassment. For example, it is possible that a personality variable such as targets' negative affectivity may explain a portion of the covariation among harassment types. Negative affectivity has rarely been included as a covariate in EH or GH research, so we did not include this construct in our studies, but future work on individual differences would be useful. Overall, we call for research on these issues, particularly through the use of qualitative methodologies (e.g., diaries, critical incidents) that

would uncover the experiential and/or attributional reasons for the overlap between forms of harassment.

Another key finding is that the relationships between each type of harassment and target participants' outcomes were not qualified by race or gender. This fits with conclusions from prior research, which has shown that GH (Bergman & Drasgow, 2003; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999; Piotrkowski, 1998) and EH (Schneider et al., 2000) have negative outcomes on targets when experienced, regardless of whether the target is of a minority or Caucasian race, a woman or a man.

With regard to our second goal of contributing to the literatures on double jeopardy (e.g., Beale, 1970) and contemporary discrimination (e.g., Berdahl, 2007), with an investigation of demographic predictors of EH, GH, and GWH, the results showed that participants of minority race reported significantly higher levels of EH than did Caucasian participants. This finding confirms the assertion that racial minorities are at increased risk for being targeted with EH (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Bergman et al., 2007; Fox & Stallworth, 2005). However, we did not find that racial minorities experienced higher levels of GWH. Indeed, Caucasians actually reported higher levels of GWH than did individuals of minority race. In addition, there were no gender differences in GH or GWH. Taken together, this set of results does not support the double jeopardy hypothesis, nor does it support Cortina's (2008) arguments about the selective use of GWH for racial and gender discrimination. Future research is necessary to further investigate this issue and to better understand the specific nature of GWH experiences reported by members of different racial and gender groups.

The nonsignificant gender differences in GH deserve further comment. Our results, which are consistent with some past research (e.g., Richman et al., 2001; Rospenda et al., 2006), beg the question of why men reported similar levels of GH as women. It is possible that frequency levels appear similar because women underreport harassment events because they have habituated to them. Another

possibility is that because men might not expect to experience GH, these experiences are more salient and reported because expectancy-incongruent information is recalled more readily (cf. Bargh & Thein, 1985; Stangor & McMillan, 1992). Yet another possibility is that men experience GH from men and women, whereas women primarily experience GH from men only (cf. Berdahl, Magley, & Waldo, 1996). Gender differences in GH may be more likely to emerge if we examine only man-on-woman harassment and woman-on-man harassment. Gender differences in GH may also be at least in part a function of how one measures GH. Berdahl and Moore (2006) found gender differences in GH, and this may be because rather than using a typical behavioral frequency measure (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1995), they used a measure in which frequency rates were multiplied by subjective ratings of the extent to which each harassing act was perceived as bothersome. Doing so creates stronger gender differences because women generally perceive harassing acts to be more bothersome than do men (see Rotundo, Nguyen, and Sackett's, 2001, meta-analysis). However, frequency alone is a robust predictor of target strain, even if participants deny that harassing experiences were bothersome (Berdahl & Aquino, 2009) or fail to label the experiences as harassment (Magley, Hulin, Fitzgerald, & DeNardo, 1999); moreover, stressful experiences are often inaccurately appraised because people engage in psychological defense and rationalization mechanisms that keep them from admitting that the experiences were harmful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Future research is necessary to examine whether gender differences in GH are influenced by habituation, disconfirmation of expectations, nature of the perpetrator, and/or measurement.<sup>4</sup>

From a practical standpoint, our results indicate that both social identity harassment and GWH continue to take place in organizations, with significant implications for target individuals. Although the mean levels of harassment were relatively low overall, all types of harassment predicted outcomes with important organizational consequences. For example, as seen in Figure 3a, the organizational

commitment scores reported by individuals who experienced low levels of EH, GH, and GWH (one standard deviation below the mean on each) were 36% higher than those reported by individuals who experienced high levels of EH, GH, and GWH (5.42 and 3.96, respectively). For job satisfaction, the difference was 30%. Given meta-analytic evidence regarding the relationships of job satisfaction with performance ( $r = .30$ ; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001), and both commitment ( $r = -.23$ ) and satisfaction ( $r = -.19$ ) with turnover (Griffith, Hom & Gaertner, 2000), these differences can translate into significant financial losses for organizations. Furthermore, targets of harassment report productivity decrements and may retaliate with deviant behaviors (Willness et al., 2007). Thus, even moderately low levels of harassment should concern managers because of the personal and organizational harm that harassment creates.

Given our evidence that even a single type of harassment is sufficient to predict poor job attitudes and turnover intentions, organizations need to adopt both proactive and reactive measures to reduce it to the greatest extent possible. Harassment of all types is likely to occur in organizations that perpetuate arbitrary (i.e., not job-related) status hierarchies, that are characterized by competition and self-interest, and that fail to intervene effectively when such harassment does occur (Berdahl, 2007; Berdahl & Raver, in press; Pearson & Porath, 2005). Thus, harassment can be reduced by organizational efforts to create inclusive climates (Nishii & Langevin, 2009) wherein status imbalances are delegitimized, employees adopt a relational identity orientation (i.e., others are seen as trustworthy and act in the best interest of others; Brickson, 2000), and leaders make people feel safe to speak up. Indeed, GH is lower in cooperative work environments (Raver, 2007), and incivility is greatly reduced in climates characterized by inclusion (Nishii & Langevin, 2009) and respect (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Anti-harassment policies are important, yet will not effectively reduce harassment unless accompanied by genuine efforts to change behavior (Gruber, 1998). Moreover, most U.S. organizations' policies will not

cover GWH because it is not currently illegal, which makes it especially critical to prevent harassment by building inclusive and respectful climates rather than relying solely on policies or legal mandates.

Even with the best preventative measures in place, harassment may still occur. If it does, leaders should clearly communicate to employees that they are taking the situation seriously and that all forms of mistreatment are unacceptable (cf. Berdahl & Raver, in press). Managing employees' perceptions of organizational tolerance for harassment is especially important in light of our evidence on the impairment of job attitudes after experiencing a single type of harassment. If organizational leaders fail to enforce their anti-harassment policies, employees may conclude that the climate supports harassment, leading to more harassment (Hulin et al., 1996) and organizational backlash. Although it may be impossible to eradicate all instances of workplace harassment, building inclusive environments and squelching harassment when it does occur will go a long way toward building an environment for healthy and productive employees.

### Notes

2. Some readers may be interested in whether the results from Study 2 differed depending upon whether we examined gender harassment, subscales within gender harassment (i.e., sexist hostility; sexual hostility; Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999), or even the total SEQ score. To explore these issues, we administered the full SEQ scale and also examined the sexist versus sexual hostility gender harassment subscales separately, consistent with recent recommendations (Raver & Gelfand, 2005; Willness et al., 2007). The results were virtually identical and our conclusions across all hypotheses would be the same regardless of which SEQ gender harassment scale or total score was examined. We maintain our focus on GH throughout the results and discussion, which fits with our emphasis on better understanding this form of gender discrimination that has been under-studied despite its importance.
3. For readers who are interested in average levels of social identity harassment and/or the average levels of workplace harassment across all three scales, we provided Figures 4d and 4e, respectively. There were no significant race differences, gender differences, or interactions that emerged for these summary indices. See also footnote #1 on scoring.
4. The numeric representation of men and women, and likewise the numeric representation of Caucasians and racial minorities, may also influence rates of GH and EH. For example, men may be most likely to report high levels of GH when they are numerically underrepresented in the organizational context, and women's GH rates may be highest when they are underrepresented (cf. Gruber, 1998). See Berdahl and Raver (in press) for a more detailed discussion of how the organizational context may influence rates of harassment.

Table 1  
Study 1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Ethnic Harassment and Gender Harassment Items

Item	Factor loading	
	Ethnic harassment	Gender harassment
1. Someone at work makes derogatory comments about your ethnicity.	.86	
2. Someone at work uses ethnic slurs to describe you.	.74	
3. Someone at work makes racist comments (for example, says people of your ethnicity aren't very smart or can't do the job).	.84	
4. Someone at work fails to give you information you need to do your job because of your ethnicity.	.45	
5. Someone at work tells jokes about your ethnic group.	.62	
6. Someone at work excludes you from social interactions during or after work because of your ethnicity.	.73	
7. Someone at work makes derogatory comments about your gender.		.84
8. Someone at work tells jokes about your gender.		.65
9. Someone at work uses sexist slurs to describe you.		.72
10. Someone at work makes sexist comments (for example, says people of your gender aren't very smart or can't do the job).		.67
11. Someone at work excludes you from social interactions during or after work because of your gender.		.64
12. Someone at work fails to give you information you need to do your job because of your gender.		.75

Note. The instructions asked participants to indicate how frequently they had experienced each of these behaviors from anyone at work over the past 24 months. The response scale ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*almost always*).  $\chi^2(43) = 62.44$ ; comparative fit index = .99; root mean square error of approximation = .04; standardized root mean square residual = .04.

Table 2  
Study 1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Scale	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Ethnic harassment	1.21	0.46	(.85)						
2. Gender harassment	1.26	0.49	.42	(.86)					
3. Organizational commitment	4.62	1.06	-.18	-.16	(.89)				
4. Job satisfaction	123.89	34.25	-.32	-.20	.58	(.93)			
5. Turnover intentions	2.00	1.83	.14	.30	-.46	-.38	(.66)		
6. Gender	1.72	0.45	.11	.07	-.01	-.10	-.01	—	
7. Racial minority	1.36	0.48	.19	-.08	-.09	-.20	-.03	-.01	—

Note.  $N = 226$ . Correlations greater than |.13| are statistically significant at  $p < .05$ , and those over |.17| are significant at  $p < .01$ . Values on the diagonal in parentheses are alpha coefficients. Gender was coded such that 1 = male, 2 = female. Racial minority status was coded such that 1 = Caucasian, 2 = racial minority.



Table 3  
Study 1 Regression Coefficients (Hypotheses 1, 2, and 4)

Variable	Organizational commitment			Job satisfaction			Turnover intentions		
	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$
Model 1									
Step 1									
Demographics		0.98	.01		6.17**	.05		0.06	.00
Gender	.00			-.10			-.01		
Racial minority	-.09			-.21**			-.02		
Step 2									
Ethnic harassment	-.19**	6.71**	.03	-.28**	19.02**	.08	.16*	5.62*	.03
Total model $R^2$			.04			.13			.03
Model 2									
Step 1									
Demographics		0.98	.01		6.17**	.05		0.06	.00
Gender harassment	-.17**	6.98**	.03	-.23**	12.83**	.05	.28**	18.29**	.08
Total model $R^2$			.04			.10			.08
Model 3									
Step 1									
Demographics		0.98	.01		6.17**	.05		0.06	.00
Step 2									
Ethnic harassment	-.13	5.04**	.04	-.24**	11.25**	.09	.04	-.23**	.08**
Gender harassment	-.11			-.12			.26**		
Step 3									
Ethnic Harassment $\times$ Gender Harassment	.22*	4.36*	.02	.03	0.02	.00	-.10	1.31	.01
Total model $R^2$			.07			.14			.08

Note. Gender was coded such that 1 = male, 2 = female. Racial minority status was coded such that 1 = Caucasian, 2 = racial minority.  
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

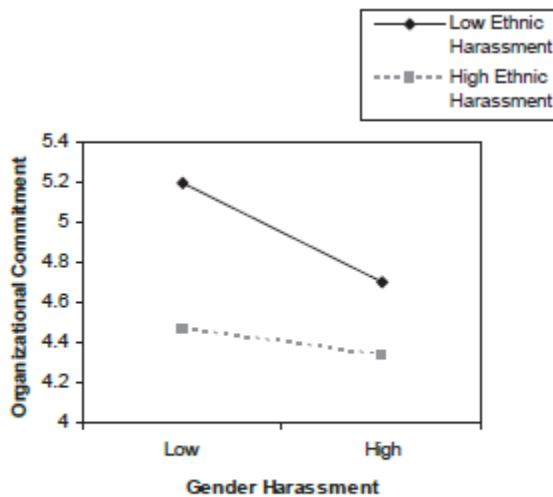


Figure 1. Interaction of gender harassment and ethnic harassment predicting organizational commitment (Study 1).

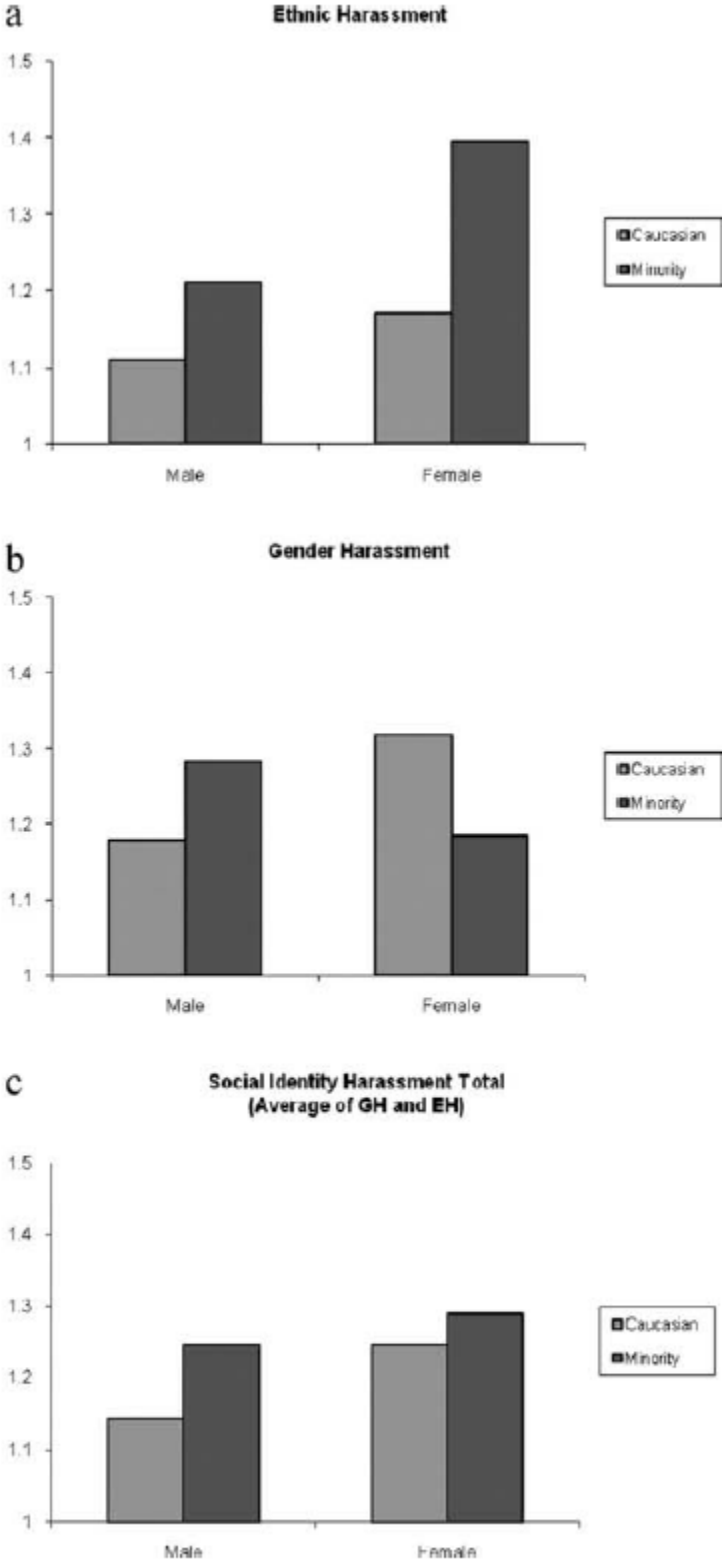


Figure 2. Study 1 mean amount of workplace harassment by gender-racial group membership. GH = gender harassment; EH = ethnic harassment.

Table 4  
Study 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Ethnic, Gender, and Generalized Workplace Harassment Items

Item	Factor loading		
	Ethnic harassment	Gender harassment	Generalized workplace harassment
1. Made derogatory comments about your ethnicity?	.77		
2. Told jokes about your ethnic group?	.68		
3. Used ethnic slurs to describe you?	.87		
4. Excluded you from social interactions during or after work because of your ethnicity?	.70		
5. Failed to give you information you need to do your job because of your ethnicity?	.80		
6. Made racist comments (for example, said people of your ethnicity aren't very smart or can't do the job)?	.72		
7. Made offensive sexist remarks?		.51	
8. Put you down or was condescending to you because of your sex?		.69	
9. Displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials?		.69	
10. Treated you "differently" because of your sex?		.67	
11. Repeatedly told sexual stories or jokes that were offensive to you?		.75	
12. Made offensive remarks about your appearance, body, or sexual activities?		.78	
13. Made unwelcome attempts to draw you into a discussion of sexual matters?		.73	
14. Made gestures or used body language of a sexual nature which embarrassed or offended you?		.88	
15. Belittled your opinions in front of others			.67
16. Withheld information from you			.62
17. Spread rumors			.66
18. Got "in your face"			.68
19. Made you look bad			.64
20. Sabotaged your work			.68
21. Made angry gestures (e.g., pounding fist, rolling eyes)			.54
22. Withheld resources (e.g., supplies, equipment) needed to do your job			.54
23. Used hostile body language			.38
24. Physically assaulted you			.66
25. Made threats			.69
26. Swore at you			.61
27. Avoided you			.58
28. Insulted or criticized you (including sarcasm)			.67
29. Failed to correct false information about you			.68
30. Interrupted or "cut you off" while speaking			.70
31. Damaged your property			.33
32. Blew the whistle or told others about your negative behavior			.62
33. Yelled or raised their voice			.76
34. Gave you the "silent treatment"			.63

Note. The question stem for the ethnic harassment and gender harassment items read, "During the past 24 months in your current company, have you been in a situation where any of your supervisors or coworkers . . ." For the generalized workplace harassment items, the question read, "How often have your supervisors or coworkers engaged in this behavior and you were the target?" The response scale ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*once a week or more*).  $\chi^2(445) = 1,236.09$ ; comparative fit index = .94; root mean square error of approximation = .05; standardized root mean square residual = .05.

Table 5  
Study 2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Scale	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Ethnic harassment	1.10	0.39	(.92)										
2. Gender harassment	1.21	0.54	.55	(.90)									
3. Generalized workplace harassment	1.45	0.32	.47	.53	(.93)								
4. Organizational commitment	4.45	1.61	-.12	-.11	-.21	(.88)							
5. Job satisfaction	4.82	1.52	-.15	-.17	-.28	.68	(.90)						
6. Turnover intentions	2.55	1.07	.15	.13	.26	-.52	-.63	(.75)					
7. Life satisfaction	4.63	1.58	-.02	-.04	-.18	.17	.27	-.16	(.93)				
8. Anxiety and depression	3.17	1.08	.05	.14	.28	-.09	-.15	.19	-.43	(.92)			
9. Physical symptoms	5.66	3.94	.17	.20	.26	-.09	-.15	.11	-.22	.48	(.85)		
10. Gender	1.58	0.49	-.05	.03	-.12	.10	.10	.02	-.02	.20	.15	—	
11. Racial minority	1.2	0.40	.14	-.02	-.06	-.08	-.10	.10	-.02	-.06	.06	.12	—

Note.  $N = 735$ . Correlations over  $|.07|$  are statistically significant at  $p < .05$ , and over  $|.10|$  are significant at  $p < .01$ . Values on the diagonal in parentheses are alpha coefficients. Gender was coded such that 1 = male, 2 = female. Racial minority status coded such that 1 = Caucasian, 2 = racial minority.

COMBINED EFFECTS OF HARASSMENT

Table 6  
Study 2 Regression Coefficients

Variable	Organizational commitment			Job satisfaction			Turnover intentions			Life satisfaction			Anxiety and depression			Physical symptoms		
	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$
Model 1																		
Step 1																		
Demographics		6.71**	.02		8.05**	.02		3.96*	.01		0.16	.00		17.67**	.05		9.14**	.02
Gender	.11**			-.11**			.01			-.01			.21**			.15**		
Racial minority	-.09*			-.11**			.10**			-.01			-.09*			.04		
Step 2																		
Ethnic harassment	-.10**	6.87**	.01	-.13**	13.12**	.02	.16*	14.14**	.02	-.02	0.10	.00	.07*	4.02*	.01	.18**	23.06***	.03
Total model $R^2$			.03			.04			.03			.00			.06			.06
Model 2																		
Step 1																		
Demographics		6.71**	.02		8.05**	.02		3.96*	.01*		0.16	.00		17.67**	.05		9.14**	.02
Step 2																		
Gender harassment	-.12**	10.64***	.01	-.18**	24.39**	.03	.13**	6.98**	.02**	-.04	1.34	.00	.13**	16.46**	.02	.20**	16.70**	.04
Total model $R^2$			.03			.05			.03			.00			.07			.07
Model 3																		
Step 1																		
Demographics		6.71**	.02		8.05**	.02		3.96*	.01		0.16	.00		17.67**	.05		9.14**	.02
Step 2																		
Generalized workplace harassment	-.20**	15.56**	.04	-.29**	27.61**	.08	.27**	21.62**	.07	-.18**	8.00**	.03	.28**	34.91**	.08	.26**	24.96**	.07
Total model $R^2$			.06			.10			.08			.03			.13			.09
Model 4																		
Step 1																		
Demographics		6.71**	.02		8.05**	.02		3.96*	.01		0.16	.00		17.67**	.05		9.14**	.02
Step 2																		
Ethnic harassment	.10	10.91**	.04	.03	22.13**	.08	.02	18.85**	.07	.06	9.49**	.04	.09**	23.63**	.09	.04	20.06**	.08
Gender harassment	-.02			-.05			-.02			.05			-.01			.07		
Generalized workplace harassment	-.20**			-.27**			.27**			-.23**			.32**			.21**		
Step 3																		
Ethnic Harassment × Gender Harassment	-.10	0.73	.00	-.15	0.71	.00	.15	2.02	.01	-.10	0.32	.00	.05	0.20	.00	.13	0.87	.00
Ethnic Harassment × Generalized Workplace Harassment	-.04			.04			-.07			.02			-.02			-.05		
Step 4																		
Ethnic Harassment × Gender Harassment × Generalized Workplace Harassment	-.43*	5.32*	.01	-.58**	10.33**	.01	.28	2.40	.00	-.29	2.37	.00	.02	0.01	.01	.13	0.47	.01
Total model $R^2$			.07			.12			.09			.04			.13			.10

Note: Gender was coded such that 1 = male, 2 = female. Racial minority status was coded such that 1 = Caucasian, 2 = racial minority.  
\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

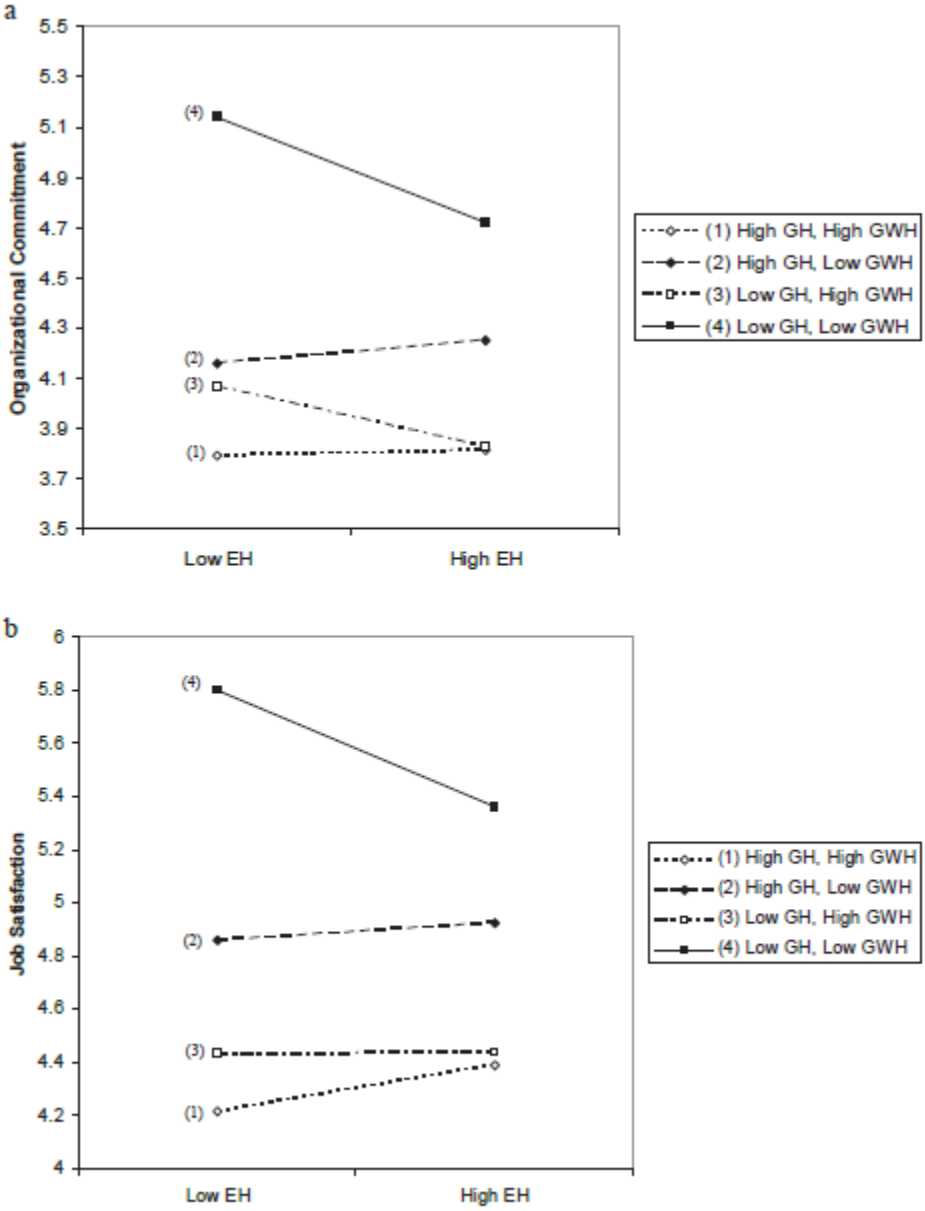


Figure 3. Study 2 three-way interactions between gender harassment (GH), ethnic harassment (EH), and generalized workplace harassment (GWH).

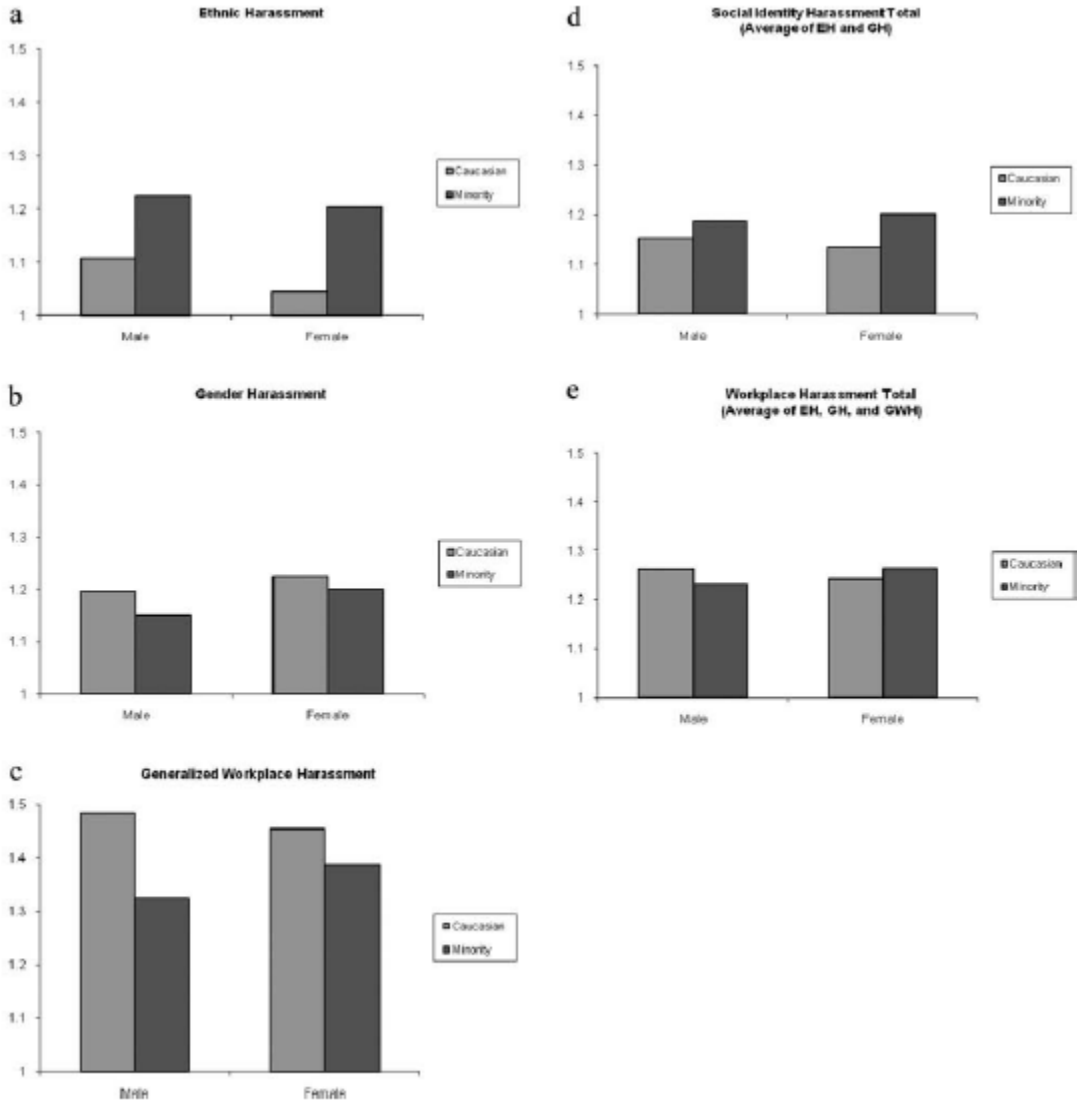


Figure 4. Study 2 mean amount of workplace harassment by gender-racial group membership. GH – gender harassment; EH – ethnic harassment; GWH – generalized workplace harassment.

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