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The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Turnover Intentions, Absenteeism, and Job Satisfaction: Findings from Argentina, Brazil and Chile

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By Rebecca S. Merkin[1]

Abstract

This study, which tested the effects of sexual harassment on consequences previously indicated in US studies, (i.e., overall turnover intentions, overall absenteeism and job dissatisfaction), was conducted with 8108 employees chosen by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in three Latin American countries--Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Multivariate and logistic regression were employed while controlling for age, education, gender, marital status, and race to analyze ILO's database. Significant results revealed that Latin American employees who were sexually harassed were likely to have more turnover intentions and to engage in more absenteeism; yet they did not experience a significant decrease in job satisfaction. These results differ from US findings indicating that there are cross cultural differences in the consequences of sexual harassment. However, the more costly outcomes of sexual harassment (i.e., turnover intentions and absenteeism) are consistent with US findings, indicating the need for multinational companies to establish sexual harassment policies in Latin America as well despite their different legal systems.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, logistic regression, Latin America, absenteeism, turnover, job satisfaction

Introduction

There is an enormous body of research discussing sexual harassment in the US workplace; primarily because sexual harassment negatively impacts employees on the personal level. For example, workplace sexual harassment has been shown to be responsible for undermining job satisfaction and affective commitment (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand & Magley, 1997; Shaffer, Joplin, Bell, Lau, & Oguz, 2000; Shupe, Cortina, Ramos, Fitzgerald, & Salisbury, 2002); as well as increasing psychological distress, increasing physical illness (Huerta, Cortina, Pang, Torges, Magley, 2006), increasing odds of illness and injury (Rospenda, Richman, Ehmke, & Zlatoper, 2005), and even increasing disordered eating (Cleary, Schmieler, Parascenzo, & Ambrosio, 1994; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Cortina, Swan, Fitzgerald, & Waldo, 1998; Fitzgerald, et al.,1997; Gutek, 1985; Huerta, et al., 2006).

Findings also show that sexual harassment is responsible for negative workplace psychological conditions such as stress, depression, and anxiety which, in turn, result in declines in organizational performance and productivity (Adams, 1988; Baba, Jamal, &

Tourigny, 1998; Williams, Giuffre, & Dellinger 1999). Sexual harassment has also been shown to be responsible for excessive absenteeism (Coles, 1986; USMPB, 1087). Finally, sexual harassment has been found to be associated with increased turnover (Brough & Frame, 2004; Fitzgerald, Hulin, & Drasgow, 1994; Willness, Piers, & Kibeom, 2007).

These consequences are sufficiently grave to create concern among multinational organizations. Furthermore, although sexual harassment incidences have steadily climbed throughout the global marketplace, partly due to different cultural values and perceptions (DeSouza & Hutz, 1996; DeSouza, Pryor, & Hutz, 1998; Pryor, Desouza, Fitness, Hutz, Kumpf, Lubbert, Pesonen & Wang, 1997; Sigal, Gibbs, Goodrich, Rashid, Anjum, Hsu, Perrino, Boratav, Carson, Baarsen, van der Pligt, & Pan 2005), the number of cross-cultural studies on sexual harassment is fairly limited (Matsui, Kakuyama, Onglatco, & Ogutu, 1995; DeSouza, Solberg, & Elder, 2007). Therefore, the purpose of this study is analyze whether US workplace sexual harassment behavioral patterns apply to a cross cultural contest, by testing previously established consequences (i.e, sexual harassment and turnover, absenteeism, and job satisfaction) in three Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, and Chile). The assumption behind testing conclusions found in US studies is that the experience of sexual harassment is compelling enough to transcend cultural differences by similarly influencing Latin American responses.

Despite all of the consequences listed above, the main impetus for US multinationals to create policies against sexual harassment has been expensive lawsuits. For example, legal fees for defending a civil case in court average about $250,000. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that American businesses lose about $1 billion annually as a result of sexual harassment suits. Thus, many multinational organizations define sexual harassment by the EEOC definition which defines sexual harassment as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment." (E.E.O.C., 1980). Bergman, et al., (2002) point out that sexual-harassment consequences are consistent, regardless of the type of sexual harassment. Although many US multinationals are motivated to create sexual harassment policies because of sexual harassment suit legal costs, other costs of sexual harassment also exist; namely the costs of absenteeism and turnover.

Sexual Harassment and Turnover Intentions

In reality, Faley, Knapp, Kustis, & DuBois (1994) found the cost of turnover to be the largest single component of the overall cost of sexual harassment in the US. For example, sexual harassment costs a typical Fortune 500 company $6.7 million per year in absenteeism, low productivity and employee turnover (Equal Rights Advocates, 2000). Moreover, costs associated with turnover include efforts invested in employing (e.g., recruiting, interviewing, orienting) and developing employees and hours invested in hiring and developing each new employee. Co-workers may be asked to take on additional work responsibility left unfinished by the harassed person or the harasser. If

more than one staff member was normally involved in a step, then the turnover cost estimates are multiplied. (Ghere, G. & York-Barr, J., 2007).

Evidence suggests that sexual harassment is positively associated with turnover intentions or employees considering leaving their job (De Coster, & Estes, 2001; Frone 2000; O'Connell & Korabik, 2000; Shupe, et al., 2002; Sims, Drasgow, & Fitzgerald, 2005; Tziner & Birati, 1996). According to meta-analyses by Steel & Ovalle (1984), and other studies, turnover intentions are the strongest predictor of turnover (Mobley, Horner, & Hollingsworth, 1978; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Moreover, turnover is one of the most indicative behavioral variables in depicting organizational deterioration because turnover is an indicator of dysfunctions in the total organizational system rather than the specific issues (Knowles, 1976).

The negative consequences of sexual harassment on turnover intentions are also manifest in different types of work contexts such as the U.S. army, (Rosen & Martin, 1998), the US Navy (Newell, Rosenfeld, & Culbertson, 1995), the military (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 1986; 2006), among temporary employees (Slattery and Selvarajan, 2005), and in the legal profession (Laband & Lentz, 1998). Additionally, findings show that when women managers in particular, encounter sex discrimination they prepare to leave their jobs (Ng & Chakrabarty, 2005). In Hong Kong, for example, women managers who are sexually harassed first try to avoid the harasser, then apply for a transfer or quit rather than confront the harasser or report the case to superiors (Chan, Tang, & Chan, 1999; Ng & Pine, 2003).

On the other hand, sexually harassed employees in the casino employee context were not more likely to quit their jobs (Stedham & Mitchell, 1998) and women experiencing sexual harassment had fewer turnover intentions when they perceived that they had managerial support for their concerns (Brough & Frame, 2004; Jawahar & Hemmasi, 2006). Unfortunately, however, sexual harassment negatively predicts social and supervisory support (Brough & Frame, 2004), meaning that this mitigating factor of support is unlikely to exist. Thus, given the harsh reality of unsupportive managers while coping with sexual harassment, in order to test if the turnover consequences of sexual harassment apply to Latin Americans, the following hypothesis is posed:

> H1: Employees experiencing workplace sexual harassment will have greater turnover intentions than employees who are not experiencing sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment and Absenteeism Due to Stress

Sexual harassment in the workplace has been established as a form of emotional stress (Baba et al., 1998; Bond, Punnett, Pyle, Cazeca & Cooperman, 2004; Fitzgerald, et al., 1997; Mueller, et al., 2001; O'Connell & Korabik, 2000; Richman, Flaherty, & Rospenda, 1996; Vardi & Weitz, 2004) and can even lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (Fitzgerald, 1993; Welsh, 1999).

Besides for the damage that stress has on individuals personally, the damage from the increased stress resulting from sexual harassment in the workplace takes a toll on organizations through lost workforce members. Work stress has been shown to cause employees to increase their intentions to change jobs (Cortina, et al., 2001; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Gupta & Beehr, 1979; Vagg & Spielberger,1998) and to increase absenteeism (Gupta & Beehr, 1979). Thus, absenteeism due to stress should be higher for

employees experiencing sexual harassment than for employees not experiencing sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment and Absenteeism Due to Illness

Besides for the effects sexual harassment could have on an individual's stress level, harassed women have been found to have worse overall health than nonharassed women (Crull, 1982; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Glomb, Munson, Hulin, Bergman, & Drasgow, 1999; Huerta, et al., 2006; Munson, Hulin, & Drasgow, 2000). Rospenda et al., (2005) found sexual harassment to also increase the odds of illness, injury, or assault in the US and to increase disordered eating (Cleary, et al.,, 1994; Cortina, et al., 2001; Cortina, Swan, Fitzgerald, & Waldo, 1998; Fitzgerald, et al.,1997; Gutek, 1985; Huerta, et al, 2006). Given these US findings, it is worthwhile to examine whether absenteeism due to illness will be higher for Latin America employees experiencing sexual harassment as well.

Besides turnover, behaviors such as lateness, absenteeism, neglectfulness, and escapist drinking have been found to be consequences of sexual harassment (Hanisch, Hulin, & Roznowski, 1998; Magley, Hulin, Fitzgerald, & DeNardo, 1999). Job withdrawal is indicative of a desire or intent to leave one's job, and often precedes quitting, retirement, or choosing to be laid off (Hanisch et al., 1998). Experiencing sexual harassment in the US has been found to be significantly related to job withdrawal (Gruber, 2003; Magley & Hulin, 1999; Sims, Drasgow, Fitzgerald, 2005; Willness, C. R., Piers, S., & Kibeom, 2007) and general absenteeism (Baba et al., 1998; Jacobsen, Aldana, Goetzel, & Vardell, 1996; Gebhardt & Crump, 1990; Hanisch & Hulin, 1990; Tucker, Aldana, & Friedman, 1990; US Merit Protection Board, 1987). In the US, industry studies have shown that costs of absenteeism can amount to 15% of payroll; the costs to Latin American multinational cannot be far behind this figure. Finally, employers might consider the lack of productivity (e.g., picking up work that has been neglected, abandoning projects, and lack of motivation) that results from the psychological anguish associated with sexual harassment demonstrated by employee absenteeism (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2006; Fister-Gale, 2003; Kronos Incorporated, 2005; Wolfe, 2003).

In order to test this finding in Latin America, the following hypothesis is posed:

H2: Overall absenteeism will be higher for employees experiencing sexual harassment than for employees not experiencing sexual harassment in Latin America.

Sexual Harassment and Absenteeism Due to Low Job Satisfaction

Sexual harassment negatively impacts employee job satisfaction (Bond et al., 2004; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999; Glomb et al., 1999; Morrow, McElroy, & Phillips,1994; Munson, et al., 2000; Gruber, 1992; Gutek & Koss, 1993; Quick, Murphy, & Hurrell, 1992) and has been found to be negatively correlated with all facets of job satisfaction (Frone, 2000; Mueller, et al., 2001; Shaffer, et al., 2000; Shupe, et al., 2002; Willness, et al., 2007). In addition, general US findings show high levels of psychological strain to be connected with low job satisfaction (Adams, 1988; Baba, et al.,1998; George & Jones, 1996; O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994).

One study found that men who are sexually harassed are less likely to be satisfied with their job than women (Mueller, et al., 2001). However, a study with female lawyers who had experienced or observed sexual harassment showed that females experienced lower overall job satisfaction than did those who had not experienced sexual harassment (Laband & Lentz, 1998). Finally, other studies show that women who report sexual harassment have lower job satisfaction than women who are not sexually harassed (Ragins & Scandura, 1995; Sims, et al., 2005). Thus, both women and men targets of sexual harassment experience lower job satisfaction.

Sexual harassment was also associated with lower job satisfaction for Latinas (Cortina, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 2002), female blue-collar workers (Kissman, 1990; Ragins & Scandura, 1995), female utility company employees (Glomb, Richman, Hulin, Drasgow, Schneider, & Fitzgerald, 1997), casino workers (Stedham & Mitchell, 1998), military staff (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2006; Fitzgerald et al.,1999; Magley, Waldo, Drasgow, & Fitzgerald, 1999; Newell, et al., 1995) and clerical staff (O'Connell & Korabik, 2000).

What's more, low job satisfaction has been shown to act as an antecedent to turnover intentions (Griffeth, Horn & Gaertner, 2000, Morrow, et al., 1994; O'Connell & Korabik, 2000; Vandenberg & Nelson, 1999) and be inversely related to actual turnover (Carsten & Spector, 1987. Gender discrimination was negatively associated with job satisfaction and positively associated with turnover intentions in the US, Hong Kong, and the Chinese mainland (Baba et al., 1998; Shaffer, et al., 2000). Because lowered job satisfaction often results in higher turnover in US studies (Aburdene, & Naisbitt, 1992; Ragins & Scandura, 1995) this relationship will be hypothesized in Latin American countries to see if low job satisfaction significantly results from sexual harassment. Thus:

H3: Employees experiencing sexual harassment will have lower job satisfaction than employees not experiencing sexual harassment.
The Cross-Cultural Nature of Sexual Harassment

Gruber (2003) suggests that the experience of sexual harassment is universal. Furthermore, a number of researchers believe that the negative consequences of sexual harassment extend beyond individual nations to include multicultural organizations (Barak, 1997; DeSouza & Solberg, 2003; Luthar & Luthar, 2002; Sigal & Jacobsen, 1999; Timmerman & Bajema, 1999). Globalization has magnified this issue because there is an increasingly multicultural workplace engaging in more complex exchanges. As a result, there is a need to understand differing belief systems that guide professional intercultural workplace conduct.

Narodowski (1999) and Stoga (2002), among others, advocate the importance of conducting research particularly in Latin America. Latin America has experienced growing economic, financial, political and social unrest following its transition from military rule to democracy (Stoga, 2002; Smith & Korzeniewicz, 1997; Stark, 2001). These political and subsequent financial changes have also changed the role of women in the Latin American workplace in that they have become more independent and assertive (Diekman, Eagly, Mlandinic, & Ferreira, 2005). Hence, it is important to come to an updated description of workplace sexual harassment reported in Latin America, to

identify how individuals are being affected by this security and quality-of-life issue (Cortina, et al., 2002).

Recent research also calls for studies on sexual harassment as culturally rooted (Cortina & Wasti, 2005; DeSouza, et al., 2007; Luthar & Luthar, 2002).Wasti and Cortina (2002) suggest that there is a lack of empirical research examining sexual harassment coping through cultural perceptions. Luthar and Luthar (2002) suggest using Hofstede's (2001) four cultural dimensions to help identify differing cultural dimensions and their relationships to sexual harassment. Therefore, using Hofstede's (2001) four cultural dimensions: (a) individualism-collectivism (IC), (b) Power distance (PD) (c) Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) and (d) masculinity-femininity (MF) it will be possible to understand further, Latin American data on sexual harassment. Hofstede (2001) explained that individualistic cultures stress individual goals, whereas collectivistic cultures stress group goals. *PD* is "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (p. 98). UA refers to the extent to which people are made nervous by situations they consider to be unstructured, unclear, or unpredictable, and the extent to which they try to avoid such situations by adopting strict codes of behavior and beliefs in absolute truths (Stohl, 1993). Hofstede (2001) described cultural masculinity on a continuum ranging from masculine competitiveness to feminine leveling behaviors in the workplace. According to Hofstede, dimensions consist of points along a continuum with two poles upon which cultures fall (e.g., IC).

The US, where most studies of sexual harassment take place, is individualistic, low in PD and UA, and masculine. Argentina, Brazil, and Chile are all collective and high in UA. Argentina differs from Brazil and Chile in that it is more masculine and lower in PD while the others are feminine and high in PD. DeSouza et al., (2007) found Brazilians to be less collective than Hofstede (2001) previously suggested. In particular, DeSouza (2007) found Brazilians to accuse others of sexual harassment more strongly than those in the individualistic US, indicating a greater degree of individualism than Hofstede (2001) originally indicated. This finding, however, could actually be reflecting the changes in Latin American countries indicating that these countries have become more masculine (Diekman, et al., 2005) in their move from agrarian societies to more urban, industrial, and capitalistic societies (Smith & Korzeniewicz, 1997; Stark, 2001).

Furthermore, being that individuals from Latin American countries are also high in UA they are also likely to be made nervous when people deviate from the status quo as in the case of reporting sexual harassment (as is also the case with deviations from collective values). The status quo in Latin America (DeSouza & Hutz, 1996; Shupe et al., 2002) includes some behaviors that are considered normal and acceptable that would be considered sexually offensive in other countries such as the US. In fact, findings show that internal changes that have taken place in Latin America, Latin American men are viewed as more masculine by Latin Americans than US men are by US populations, perhaps reflecting the Latin American values of *machismo* which emphasizes male power over women, masculine strength, and sexuality, and male aggression (Felix-Ortiz, Abreu, Briano, & Bowen, 2001). The acceptance of male power over woman may color Latin American perceptions of just how offensive sexual harassment is viewed. Given the dearth of literature on Latin America and US effects of sexual harassment, the following research question is asked:

R1: Are there differences in the consequences of sexual-harassment between the US and Latin America?

Method
Participants

This study conducted a secondary analysis on a sample data set from a larger collection conducted by the International Labour Office's InFocus Programme on Socio-Economic Security which originally sponsored thirteen People's Security Surveys (PSS) which gathered data directly from samples of individuals throughout the world (Anker, 2002). Each survey was carried out by a national collaborating team under the responsibility of ILO's staff. Anker (2002) coordinated the PSS for cross-cultural comparability. The three surveys analyzed for this study, which were in Spanish (for Argentina and Chile) and Portuguese (in Brazil) were conducted between January and April 2001 in the three largest metropolitan areas of each of these countries. The urban households sampled had respondents between ages 15 and 64 years. In Argentina, the number of cases was 2800; in Brazil, 4000, and in Chile, 1180 (see Anker, 2002).

These samples are not representative of the national populations. Anker (2002) points out that previous empirical analyses carried out in Chile and Brazil indicate that the efficiency of the sampling procedure tends to be quite similar to that based on pure probabilistic sampling. This fact, together with the binding budget constraints, was the main reason the ILO used a stratified sampling design.

Instrumentation

This paper analyzes data from the ILO PSS addressing consequences of sexual harassment in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. The operationalization of the independent variable sexual harassment as well as the dependent variables: turnover intentions, overall absenteeism (consisting of combined absenteeism due to stress, absenteeism due to injury and absenteeism due to illness items), and job dissatisfaction (combined indicators of job satisfaction included job satisfaction due to wages, benefits, nature of work, autonomy, improving skills, opportunity for promotion, and work environment); in addition to control variables (age, education, gender, marital status, and race) items can be seen in Table 1.

Design

A regression analysis was used to test multiple indicators of absenteeism and job satisfaction while logistic regression with the independent variable of sexual harassment and dependent variable of overall turnover intentions.

Results
Sexual Harassment and Turnover Intentions

Logistic regression results (see Table 2) supported H1 (that employees experiencing workplace sexual harassment will have greater turnover intentions than employees not experiencing sexual harassment). Specifically, results showed that the odds of sexually harassed employees having turnover intentions are 1.63 times greater than for employees not experiencing sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment and Overall Absenteeism

A number of demographic variables -- country (2), age, education, gender, and race (black, Asian and mixed) -- were tested to see if their competing effects might confound the effects of sexual harassment on turnover intentions, overall absenteeism, and job satisfaction. In the case of absenteeism, significantly competing effects included country and education which were controlled for by assigning these variables as covariates in the multiple regression model. Thus, data from Latin American countries were tested to see whether, when controlling for country, and education, absenteeism generally would be higher for employees experiencing sexual harassment than for employees not experiencing sexual harassment (see Table 3 for results).

H2 , that overall absenteeism would be higher for employees experiencing sexual harassment than for employees not experiencing sexual harassment, was supported. The overall regression model had a modest fit ($r^2 = 50\%$) but the overall relationship was highly significant ($F_{1,9} = 20.92$, $p < .0001$). Holding other variables constant, sexual harassment scores influenced overall absenteeism ($F_{1,9} = 25.00$, $p < .0001$).

Sexual Harassment and Absenteeism Due to Low Job Satisfaction

H3 that employees experiencing sexual harassment will have lower job satisfaction than employees not experiencing sexual harassment was not supported. Multiple regression results were not significant.

Latin American Sexual Harassment

R1 asked if US sexual-harassment findings apply to Latin American sexual harassment. Results of this investigation were mixed. While the effects of sexual harassment on turnover and absenteeism were consistent with US results, job satisfaction was not affected by sexual harassment in the Latin American samples.

Discussion

Findings in Relation to Hypotheses and Implications

Sexual Harassment and Overall Turnover Intentions and Absenteeism

This study, which tested the effects of sexual harassment on consequences previously indicated in US studies, (i.e., overall turnover intentions, overall absenteeism, and job dissatisfaction) showed similarities and differences between US and Latin American findings. Overall findings similar to US findings showed that sexually harassed workers in Latin American cities were more likely to have turnover intentions, and to behaviorally express their reactions to sexual harassment by absenteeism. However, the job satisfaction of Latin American sexual harassment targets was not affected. Thus, while support was found for H1 and H2, H3 was not supported.

In keeping with Gonzaga's (2003) finding that Brazil has one of the highest turnover rates in the world, this study's results indicated that sexual harassment explains part of the reason for turnover in Brazil and other Latin American countries. Furthermore, similar to what Gonzaga reports, that most regressions studying turnover in Brazil (as cited by Gonzaga: Chahad, Orellano, and Picchetti, 2001) do not find gender to be a significant predictor, this study also did not find gender to be a significant predictor. Perhaps this is the case because culturally, the Latin American's view sexual harassment as a less urgent matter than women in the US (Merkin, 2007). However, this study's

results do show that sexual harassment in the workplace results in greater absenteeism and causes Latin American employees to reconsider whether or not they should remain in their jobs.

Fister-Gale (2003), Kronos Incorporated (2005), and Wolfe (2003) show that there are approximately 2.8 million lost work days each year for injuries and illness which are expenses associated with employee absence. Similarly, in Latin American cities, absenteeism due to illness, injury and stress, which made up the overall absenteeism measure, were higher for employees experiencing sexual harassment than for employees not experiencing sexual harassment. These findings have important implications for the costs involved when sexual harassment is accepted in the workplace in that stress-related diseases and illnesses, and injury claims are likely to increase employers' medical costs. In turn, job withdrawal produces its own set of costs. Thus, it is incumbent on employers to take note that absenteeism and turnover intentions are a warning sign threatening workplace productivity and employer maintenance of a stable workforce.

While organizational cultures that provide challenging jobs diminish employees' absenteeism, and intentions to withdraw from the occupation, job, and the organization (Carmeli, 2005), the converse has also been found to be the case. For example, when the overall work environment is perceived as hostile towards women, the well-being of *all* employees is negatively impacted (Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004). Consequently, how work environments respond to sexually-harassing incidents influence employees' decisions to stay at their place of work (Bergman, Langhout, Palmieri, Cortina, & Fitzgerald, 2002).

On the other hand, Castro (1999) pointed out that the many Latin American workers feel a combination of a socialized sense of responsibility, and their desperation for employment seems to have bonded them to their employers. These perceptions appear to be militating against Latin American workers having or stating dissatisfaction with their job. Thus H3, that employees experiencing sexual harassment will have lower job satisfaction than employees not experiencing sexual harassment, was not supported in data from Latin American test cities.

There are a number of possible explanations. Perhaps job satisfaction is not contemplated by workers who are trying to keep their job and are just striving to get by. In addition, Furnham (1993) points out that there is a cultural connection between a high PD, which these Latin American countries possess, and the acceptance of authority and unjust world beliefs. Given that the Latin American countries tested are also high in UA, employees in this sample may also have been nervous about reporting sexual harassment and therefore, more likely to simply take off and/or contemplate leaving their organization rather than confronting their aggressor. This could explain why Latin American sexual harassment targets might accept and put up with such mistreatment. Sometimes when people do not expect sexual harassment to be dealt with, they tolerate conditions which others (e.g., in the US) might find unbearable. In large-PD cultures, where inequality and injustice are taken for granted, anger does not tend to result from injustice (Merkin, 2006). Finally, it simply could be the case that while sexually harassed employees do not like that harasser and try to avoid the harasser by taking time off and contemplating leaving their jobs that they actually like the job itself, just not dealing with the perpetrator of sexual harassment.

Lastly, this study's findings are mixed regarding the cross-cultural applicability of sexual harassment consequences referred to in R1. Specifically, job satisfaction was not substantiated as a consequence of sexual harassment in Latin American cities. On the other hand, absenteeism and turnover appear to be more universal behaviors likely to result from sexual harassment in Latin American cities. Absenteeism as a form of avoidance and turnover intentions, however, have greater employer implications in terms of costs to the workplace. Thus, it would behoove multinational organizations to provide sexual-harassment training to their Latin American managers.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

DeSouza et al., (2007) point out that there is a dearth of cross-cultural studies on sexual harassment. The current study addresses this gap in the literature by analyzing populations in Latin America and their workplace responses to sexual harassment. The findings from this study may be useful to human-resources policy makers and managers of businesses who are able to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace.

One limitation of this study is that the analysis was carried out on data collected by others. However, the sample used for this study was a diverse household survey collection from a realistic cross-section of Latin America. This study also analyzed work-related questions from individuals who were actually working, adding to this study's external validity.

Future researchers should analyze other cultures to identify if differences in relation to the issues of turnover, absenteeism, and job satisfaction exist. Because job satisfaction turned out to be nonsignificant when tested with sexual harassment, future researchers should qualitatively investigate why Latin American participants who are sexually harassed do not report a decrease in job satisfaction to understand these results more fully.

This study's results indicate that cultural factors do, in fact, influence organizational behavioral consequential reactions to sexual harassment in Latin America versus studies conducted in the US and Latin American findings differed. These conclusions should be kept in mind when trying to develop appropriate theoretical tools integrating global issues of sexual harassment in cross-cultural organizational training and education.

One way to do this would be to conduct further studies using Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions as a framework for analyzing cultural differences; then, testing whether culture is moderating hypothesized conclusions. Hofstede's theory could also help guide researchers' in identifying the elements of culture that might moderate workplace outcomes. Once the role of culture as a moderator is specifically identified, further studies could test the effects of sexual harassment while controlling for culture as a moderating influence, to more clearly see the influence of sexual harassment in affecting workplace outcomes worldwide and thus, move research forward towards greater understanding of cultural similarities and differences in sexual harassment and work outcomes.

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Table 1.1 – Independent Variable Questions

Variable	Name	Variable Description
X1	Age	What is your age? _____
X2	Education	What is your highest degree of schooling? (1 = none, 2 = elementary incomplete, 3 = elementary completed, 4 = high school incomplete, 5 = high school completed, 6 = college incomplete, 7 = college completed, 8 = Master or Doctoral degree completed.
X3	Sexual Harassment	Employees were asked during the past two years, have you experienced sexual harassment at work? 1.Yes, 2.No.
X4	Marital Status	Marital status? 1 = single, 2 = Married, 3 = separated, 4 = divorced, 5 = widowed
X5	Race	To what ethnic or racial category do you belong? 1 = White, 2 = Black, 3 = Parda (mixed), 4 = Asian, 5 = Indian, 6 = Other, 7 = No Answer

Table 1.2 – Dependent Variable Questions

Variable	Name	Variable Description
Y1	Turnover Intentions	Have you been trying to change your main occupation for the past 12 months?
Y2	Overall - Absenteeism	In the past two years, have you taken off from work for more than a week due to work-related stress, injury, or illness?
Y3	Illness – Absenteeism	In the past two years, have you taken off from work for more than a week due to work-related illness?
Y2	Stress - Absenteeism	In the past two years, have you taken off from work for more than a week due to work-related stress?
Y4	Job Satisfaction	In general, how would you classify your degree of satisfaction with your present job? (From 1 = Very Satisfied to 5 = Very Dissatisfied.)

	1. Wage level	_____
	2. Non-wage Benefits	_____
	3. Nature of work	_____
	4. Extent of Autonomy	_____
	5. Opportunity for improving skills	_____
	6. Opportunity for promotion	_____
	7. Work environment	_____

Note. Absenteeism items together composed absenteeism and the seven job satisfaction items were pooled to measure job satisfaction.

Table 2

Intercorrelations and Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting Turnover Intentions

Measure	1	2	3	*B*	*SE*	Odds Ratio	Wald Statistic
1. Sexual Harassment	--	-.05*	-.004	.544	.140	1.72	15.18**
2. Argentina	-.05*	.04*	-.74*	.431	.113	1.54	14.66**
3. Brazil	-.004	-.74*	--	.389	.108	1.48	13.07**

Note. Sexual harassment predictor coded as 1 for yes and 0 for no. Chile is the reference category for country comparisons. *p < .05. *p < .01. **p < .0001

Table 3

Intercorrelations and Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Absenteeism

Measure	1	2	3	4	B	*SE*	B
1. Sexual Harassment	--	-.05*	-.004	.45*	.196	.039	.08
2. Argentina	-.05*	--	-.74*	.18*	- .257	.026	-.24
3. Brazil	-.004	-.74*	--	-.31*	-.297	.027	-.28
4. Education	.45*	.18*	-.31*	--	-.018	.006	-.06

Note. $R^2 = .06$. N = 4410. * = $p < .01$.