Sexual harassment on the job

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Sexual harassment on the job

by

Edna Jean Young Clinton

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Interdepartmental Program: Industrial Relations
Major: Industrial Relations

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1990
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INTRODUCTION

One of today's more highly sensitive and controversial areas of human relations in the work environment is sexual harassment. The number of women in the workforce has been increasing rapidly since the mid 1970s. Women are entering occupations previously dominated by men, providing more opportunities for sexual harassment to occur. Changing attitudes about sexual freedom for both women and men are impacting their relations in the workplace. The women's movement seeks to raise the awareness level of women concerning problems of unwanted sexual attention at work, and to change men's behavior.

The issue of men as victims of sexual harassment has not been ignored. However, the larger number of incidents involving women as victims overshadows the issue of men as victims. The major portion of the literature focuses on the problem of sexual harassment from the woman's view.

This study reviewed research information on sexual harassment in the workplace and investigated sexual harassment in Iowa companies by means of a questionnaire administered to employees. Unquestionably, sexual harassment is a problem in the working environment. The available research on sexual harassment has been increasing consistently. The researched data concludes sexual
Harassment on the job is an important societal problem that has significant impact on both the employer and the employee. Most of the literature is usually a short narrative of an interesting, often amusing, or biographical incident and much is based on dubious research. One significant public sector scientific investigation with an in-depth analysis of sexual harassment has been reported thus far by the United States Merit Protection Board (USMSPB, 1981).

"The incidence rate of sexual harassment in the Federal work force is widespread" (USMSPB, 1981, p. 31). To find out whether Federal employees who had worked for other employers viewed the problem to be greater in Federal Government, they were asked to make comparisons. "The majority of respondents stated that they felt sexual harassment was no worse in the Federal work place than in state and local government or in the private sector" (USMSPB, 1981, p. 6).

The problem is that much is being written about a highly sensitive and controversial phenomenon human relations in the work place: sexual harassment. Very little is known about the problem; and in addition, questionable research is being used, in part, as a basis for government policy development. The lack of scientific,
objective information also is a handicap to employers in developing their employment policy on sexual harassment. The best data available suggest that sexual harassment is a widespread problem in the workforce and should not be ignored. Thus, there is an important need to discover the facts, evaluate policy, and determine the needs of employers for appropriate action.

Why has this issue come to the forefront? The decade of the 1970s saw the growth of meaningful affirmative action and equal employment opportunity for minorities as well as women. Minorities and women have been entering or reentering the job market in increasing numbers. Now, over 53% of working age women are in the labor market. Also, since 1984, women are moving into types of careers previously closed to them. The women's liberation movement has led to the questioning of numerous behaviors which were accepted or at least not openly resisted in the past. One of these is sexual harassment.

Under the new Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines, sexual advances or harassment need not be a "term or condition of employment" or the basis for employment decisions to constitute a violation of Title VII. Behavior that creates an intimating, hostile, offensive work environment is prohibited (BNA, 1981a). The guidelines
state that the employer is liable for the actions of workers, supervisors, and agents of the organization. Employers' actions to promulgate policies prohibiting sexual harassment apparently will not alone eliminate this liability. The potential cost of sexual harassment to organizations was illustrated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission when its definition and guidelines were published (BNA, 1981a).

The EEOC guidelines provide criteria for determining whether a given behavior constitutes sexual harassment. They also specify the conditions under which employers may be held liable for such:

- Submission to the conduct is either an explicit term or condition of employment.

- Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the person who did the submitting or rejecting.

- The conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

- With respect to conduct between fellow employees, an employer is responsible for acts of sexual harassment in the workplace where the employer, its agents or supervisory employees, knows or should have known of the conduct unless it can show that it took immediate and appropriate corrective action.

- An employer may also be responsible for the acts of non-employees with respect to sexual harassment of employees in the workplace where the employer, its agent or supervisory employees, knows or should have known of the conduct and fails to take immediate and appropriate corrective action. In
reviewing these cases the Commission will consider
the extent of the employer's control and any other
legal responsibility which the employer may have
with respect to the conduct of such non-employees.

The combining of subject responses, research
information, and litigated court cases has revealed that
sexual harassing behavior include:

- Sexist comments (jokes or remarks that are
  stereotypical or derogatory to members of one sex).
- Undue attention (flirting, being too friendly, or
  too personal, but short of sexual inquiries).
- Verbal sexual advances (general verbal expressions
  of sexual interest; inquiries of sexual values or
  behaviors, but short of proposition).
- Body language (leering at one's body; standing to
  close).
- Invitations (personal invitations for dates, but
  where sexual expectations are not stated).
- Physical advances (kissing, hugging, pinching,
  fondling).
- Explicit sexual propositions (clear invitations for
  sexual encounter).
- Sexual bribery (explicit sexual propositions which
  include or strongly imply promises of rewards for
  complying, e.g., time off, more praise, promotions).
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Literature Reveals

For years women have been writing about the interrelationship between sex and work. Louisa May Alcott, over a hundred years ago, is reported to have written about her experiences as a victim of sexual harassment. She was said to have quit her job as a result (Goodman, 1978).

Some women have supported the use of their sex as a means to advance themselves in employment. Helen Gurley Brown's 1965 book, Sex and the Office, was a lighthearted discussion on sex in the work place and how to make the most of it. Supporters of the women's movement undoubtedly were expected to cringe as a result of such a publication.

Some researchers have seen sexual relationships growing out of work situations as common and normal. Roy's (1974) investigation of informal heterosexual relations between supervisors and work groups reported such situations.

Nivens' (1978) article reported that office romances can sometimes be useful, but advised women to be cautious.

However, Michael Korda (1973) may have foretold the future when he wrote:

Good or bad, one of the casualties of women's liberation is likely to be sex in the office. As one woman told me, "Sure I get propositioned, and I didn't use to know what to do about it, but these days, I look the man in the eyes and say,
'Sure I'll have dinner with you, I want to know why I'm not making a decent salary for work I've been doing?' And do you know what? They mostly back off. But if men aren't embarrassed about asking the people who work with them to go to bed, then it's time for women to stop being embarrassed about asking just why we make less money than men and don't get a crack at the good jobs. I just explain to them that I don't sleep with people who don't think I'm equal to them' (p. 117).

Sexual Harassment as an Issue

During the early 1970s, feminist groups like the National Organization for Women, Women Organized Against Sexual Harassment, and Working Women's Institute began zealously to raise awareness of the problems of unwanted sexual attention on the job. Women's magazines began publishing articles designed to accomplish this around the middle of the decade, three to four years before magazines which include men in their readership began to run such articles. In 1976 *Harper's Bazaar* and *Redbook* ran articles on sexual harassment, and in 1977 *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Ms.* published harassment stories. A *Harper's Bazaar* article (Bernstein, 1976) indicated that appearance might be part of the problem of sexual harassment. It suggested that wearing businesslike apparel and acting businesslike might reduce problems of unwanted sexual attention indicating women's style of dress caused the behavior (victim blaming). Other writers denied that women caused harassment. They claimed
that women suffered psychological and physical health problems because men wanted to subjugate them through sexual harassment.

Farley (1978) wrote:

Job segregation by sex is to a large degree sustained by male sexual harassment. This abuse is already rolling back the momentum of affirmative action and it will continue to coerce women by the means of severe economic and emotional abuse into overcrowded, sexually segregated job categories. These occupations are tantamount to a female job ghetto and this is a primary cause of women's low wages...abuse also impacts destructively...disrupting female job attachment, promoting female unemployment and inhibiting female solidarity. Until we understand sexual harassment, its historical function, the way it has been used to keep women "in line" and the way this coercion interacts with women's employment conditions, women will remain an exploited underclass, the female work horses in a male-managed economy (p. xviii).

According to Farley, jokes, satire, and "human a la ridicule" were used by men to keep women "down." The caricature of the dumb, big-busted secretary was designed solely to reinforce the right of men to harass, control and abuse working women sexually. It undermines women's role as a worker and reinforces their use as sex objects. It implied women invited sexual games and men had a license, even an obligation hunt them. The deception provided a cover for men to assert their sexual claims with impunity, while the human suffering it caused was smothered in laughter.
Farley saw a status explanation rather than a sexual cause in touching, feeling, and pinching. This behavior was said to be directed toward clerical and service workers and not toward women in higher status positions. It was an expression of dominance and should be condemned and eliminated according to Farley. Sexual harassment behavior was aggressive and perpetuated the ultimate goal of keeping women subordinate at work.

When a women expected her working role to be respected she objected to unwanted sexual attention--behavior based on her sex role. If she dismissed this respect in favor of her sex role, harassment might be perceived as a sign of success, according to Farley.

The American labor movement was motivated by a desire to continue the male domination of female labor; the very nucleus of unions is male rights (Farley, 1978). Farley saw unions as the enemy of the working women because of their discriminatory practices.

Backhouse and Cohen (1981) discussed the use of vigilante tactics in sexual harassment. Among the tactics listed would be use of pickets at a harasser's workplace carrying signs describing his behavior and handling out pamphlets providing specific information and a list of demands. Also, activities could be carried out at a harasser's home, church, and clubs. In addition, notices and pictures with descriptions could be posted in the women's washrooms at the workplace. Undercover replacements could be used to gather viable evidence necessary to prove harassment. The authors emphasized the potential of reprisals and libel suits, but suggested that the situation would be the reverse and it would be the harasser's career and reputation that suffered.

In a Harper's Bazaar article, Falier (1979) listed sexual harassment as number one among "The Working Woman's 7 Biggest Problems." Business Week reported that feminist groups had targeted sexual harassment as a major new area for litigation in an article entitled, "Sexual harassment lands companies in court" (1979). It reported that New York City's Working Women's Institute sponsored television announcements urging victims of harassment to contact the Metropolitan Information and Referral Project for counseling. Thousands of women responded and were said to
have received counseling on coping with harassment. Lawyers were suggested for those wishing to take further legal action.

Investigating Sexual Harassment

Quinn's (1977) empirical research indicated that a major factor in the development of organizational romantic relationships was proximity. In addition, the research revealed that in 74% of the cases of romantic relationships in organizations that the male was in a higher-level position. Forty-eight percent of the females were subordinate secretaries and 26% were in some other type of direct subordinate job. Motives were categorized into three types: job advancement, ego gratification, and love. When prioritized, ego gratification ranked first, followed by true love, with the utilitarian motive primarily ascribed to women. Ninety-four percent of the women were rated at or above average in physical attractiveness.

Quinn (1977) stated that the impact of organizational romance could be positive, negative, or nonexistent. Ten percent of the cases produced positive results. About one-third produced serious negative results (complaints, hostility, and distorted communication). He suggested that organizational romance represented a deviation from the Weberian (p.44) model of organization.
Backhouse and Cohen (1978) described what they termed the widespread view of society that women exploit their sexuality for gain in the workplace. They "admitted" that some women tried to exploit their sexuality, and attributed this to three reasons: anger at discrimination which resulted in an "I'll get even" attitude, financial need, and acceptance of the submissive role "forced" upon them by societal socialization. Physical attributes were enhanced to catch a man as women have been taught since early childhood.

They reported that 80% of the conversation in all-male groups concerned sex and emphasized office affairs. This supported the male status position and lowered that of the women involved. Backhouse and Cohen believed when women were involved with workplace sex, the impact on the woman was generally negative. They lost self-esteem, job security, and the cooperation of fellow workers. Backhouse and Cohen concluded that women did not receive adequate rewards whether they sold sex or refused to do so.

Meyer, Berchtold, Oestreich, and Collins (1981) stated that sexual harassment encompassed more than the subjugation of women. Two main points were considered: biosexual theory and psychosocial theory.
Biosexual theory is based on the assumption that men possess a stronger sex drive than do women. Consequently, men have little control of their actions. In addition, they noted this theory did not explain female harassment of men.

The psychosocial theory claims that behavior conditioning is the impetus for sexual harassment. The advent of industrialism and technological change widened the distinction of male and female roles from that previously held in an agricultural society. This lead to different values and beliefs for both males and females. Of course, this increased the conflict between the sexes as women began to move into the labor market. As a result, uncertainty and adjustment problems surfaced.

It is important that sexual harassment not become an anti-male cause of a few women who see this issue as another example of the oppression of women. And it is also important that men consider sexual harassment as a bona fide issue of human dignity and not a feminist attempt "to get them again" (p. 69).

What is the distinction between appropriate sexual behavior and sexual harassment?

Some Significant Sexual Harassment Surveys

The oldest survey reported was conducted by Working Women United (1975, cited in USMSPB 1981). The participants consisted of 155 women: 55 food service workers and 100
other working women attending a meeting on sexual harassment. Incidentally, the 55 food service workers were members of a union. Of these 155 women, 70% reported experiencing "repeated and unwanted sexual comments, looks, suggestions, or physical contact" which were "objectionable or offensive" and caused "discomfort" on the job. However, the samples used may have produced biased results in that members of the sample were participants in a meeting about sexual harassment (USMSPB, 1981).

Crull (1979) surveyed 325 women who had experienced sexual harassment on the job. The ages ranged from 16 to 65 years with an average age of 30 at the time of harassment. The average income reported was $150 a week or less (51% of the respondents). Clerical workers comprised 53% of the sample, and 15% were service workers. Seventy-five percent were single or unmarried. More than 50% of the women had been physically touched; 39% reported unwanted contact with sexual parts of the body.

The men who sexually harassed had power over personnel actions in 79% of the cases. The average age of the man involved was 14 years older than the average age of the women.

Crull (1979) reported that 75% of the women stated to the harasser or a person in authority that she wanted the
action to stop. About one-third of the women reported the situation to the union, a lawyer, or human rights division. In 49% of the instances nothing changed, and in 25% the behavior worsened. Further, in only 9% of the situations did the behavior stop; in 17% the behavior was reduced. Twenty-four percent of the women were fired. Eighty-three percent of the women reported the experience had interfered with their job performance; 93% suffered emotional stress; 63% physical reaction, and 12% sought therapeutic help.

Powell (1983) found that working women used personal experience as a determining factor in identifying sexually harassing behavior. Even so, those women having had personal experience with a particular behavior varied in their opinions of whether or not it was sexual harassment. Some considered the behavior to be flattering while others dismissed or ignored the behavior. Further, some women perceived the behavior to be offensive. In all cases, the reaction of the women greatly depended on the necessity of their employment and their marketability.

The behaviors identified as sexual harassment included touching/grabbing/brushing (physical contact) and excluded staring (visual contact) and flirting (verbal contact). The opinions were divided on whether sexual remarks, suggestive gestures, and sexual relationships should be included in the sexual harassment definition.
Powell's (1983) research supports the notion that women's views of sexual harassment vary and are not congruent with the definitions used in previous studies. Consequently, Powell reported that sexual harassment was viewed as serious for only 38% of the harassed and nonharassed women, considerably less than that reported by Gutek et al., 1983; Safran, 1976; and the U. S. Merit Systems, 1981. This difference may be a consequence of sexual harassment being defined differently by different individuals.

In 1978, a sample of Los Angeles' listed telephone numbers were randomly selected and called with those answering being interviewed by telephone. Forty-seven percent of the women, and forty-six percent of the sample reported men having experienced remarks of a sexual nature on their current jobs. Of these, 11% of the women and 6% of the men reported they had received a request for sexual activity on their job (Gutek & Nakamura, 1980).

Gutek and Nakamura reported different attitudes held by the 178 men and 221 women toward whether social/sexual behavior at work was harassment. They found a higher percentage of women believed each of five categories of behavior was harassment as shown in the following data (Their Table 9, p. 26).
17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Verbal Sexual</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments are Harassment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Verbal Sexual</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments are Harassment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal Looks or</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestures are Harassment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socializing as a Condition of Work is Harassment</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Activity as a Condition of Work is Harassment</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the most relevant information available on sexual harassment in private employment is "Sexual harassment...some see it...some won't," by Eliza Collins and Timothy Blodgett, published in the March-April 1981 issue of Harvard Business Review. Using subscribers as the sample population, 7,408 questionnaires were mailed. The survey solicited a large response from the women who represented nearly every female subscriber. The response rate for the females, 32%, representing 42% of the questionnaires mailed, as opposed to an overall response rate of 24.9 percent. Obviously, the responses came from those most interested, women. Safran (1981) did a separate report for Redbook.
The Review article reported that most people agreed on what sexual harassment was, but men and women seemed to disagree strongly on how frequently it occurred. Half of the women felt the amount of sexual harassment at work was greatly exaggerated, whereas two-thirds of the men felt the same. Two-thirds of the high-level executives also felt harassment at work was exaggerated. The Review reported top management appeared to be isolated from harassment situations, and that middle management was less aware of problems than lower levels of management. One could speculate that the result showed a high degree of correlation with the proportion of management jobs at each level occupied by women.

Seymour (1979) reviewed Title VII cases and suggested guidelines for employers to avoid liability for sexual harassment: (1) There should be an unequivocal statement, which has reached every employee, that the employer does not condone sexual harassment. Otherwise an employee can be said not to know whether a supervisor's actions are outside his actual scope of authority. (2) The employer should conduct adequate reviews of supervisor's misconduct. If there was no review the employer may be liable for actions of supervisory employees under a range of legal theories. (3) If the injured employee notified a member of management,
appropriate action must be taken to promptly investigate and resolve the issue. It was pointed out, thought, that under the respondeat superior approach, supervisory abuse of delegated power created liability against the employer regardless of whether the employer had knowledge of supervisor's actions. Concluded from interview data, Backhouse and Cohen (1978) stated that men were indifferent toward sexual harassment; and women expressed sympathy mingled with justifiable fear. They believed management had a vested interest in the problem of sexual harassment. It would result in female turnover, lower morale, and reduced productivity. They thought the public and media had a role in correcting harassment practices of employers. Adverse publicity would make it difficult to attract female employees.

Backhouse and Cohen provided a management plan consisting of ten points. Those being (1) issue a corporate policy statement supported by the chief officers condemning the practice of sexual harassment; (2) provide training to management; (3) discuss it at meetings of branch directors; (4) conduct an employee survey; (5) explain the policy in orientation sessions for new employees; (6) establish an investigative procedure; (7) protect the victim from reprisal and offer counseling; (8) provide a schedule of
discipline; (9) use outside consultants for investigation; (10) take firm action with the harasser. Seven progressively harsh disciplinary actions were suggested:

1. Issue a warning.
2. Insist on counseling for the harasser.
3. Transfer the harasser.
4. Withhold a reward(s) (promotion/work assignment).
5. Lower performance rating.
6. Put on probation.
7. Fire.

Thus, many commentators believe it is in management's self-interest to have and enforce policies which prohibit sexual harassment. Some of the larger, more powerful unions in government and industry appear prepared to make sexual harassment an issue if employers do not take action.

Layton and his research colleagues have been studying faculty-student social/sexual relationships at Iowa State University (Lee & Layton, 1989; Schaefers & Layton, 1989). A questionnaire of 200 social/sexual relationships was factor analyzed for students and faculty members. A shortened version, 115 items was factor analyzed for 895 graduate students. The research concluded with the identification of eight factors that continued across all male and female subjects. The factors were:

- Factor 1: Identifying Sexual Harassment Behavior
• Factor 2: Sex Play, Power, and Grades
• Factor 3: Acceptable Faculty/Student Social Relationships
• Factor 4: Unacceptable Faculty/Student Sexual Relationships
• Factor 5: Blaming the Victim
• Factor 6: Helplessness of Victim
• Factor 7: Emotional Reaction to Sexual Harassment
• Factor 8: Class Size

This study reviews research information on sexual harassment in the workplace and analyzes data from a sample of employees of business in Iowa, to determine whether sexual harassment is a serious problem on the job. Decisions are made on how widespread is sexual harassment of employees, what forms of attention employees report are problems, the frequency of occurrence of behavior resulting in sexual harassment, and what personal and work-related attributes result in increased reports of unwanted sexual attention. Hypotheses are empirically tested on employees' feelings about their experiences, the types they have experienced, and the relationships between job-related and personal attributes and reports of sexual harassment.

The goal of this study was to conceptualize the dimensions of sexual harassment in the workplace from the employees' perspective. The project was conducted in two
phases. The first phase involved the development of an item pool to reflect perspectives of supervisor/subordinate sexual or social relationships. The second phase focused on determining the factorial composition of the item pool, the correlation between variables, and subsequently defining the dimensions of the construct of sexual harassment as viewed in the workplace.
METHODOLOGY

The factors defined by Layton and his colleagues were used as guidelines to determine the extent of employees' understanding, perception, and knowledge of sexual harassment behaviors and contributing factors. Those items from possible relevant factors that had the highest factor loading (>.45 or above) for the campus groups were included in the management-employee questionnaire. Class size was considered an irrelevant factor. Items were edited slightly to make them appropriate for industry. Demographic information was also requested. A copy of the questionnaire and cover letter to participants are given in Appendix A.

The Iowa Industrial Directory of 1989 was used to identify organizations employing 100 or more workers. This process produced over 2,000 companies. The scope was narrowed by selecting those organizations with 200 or more employees to contact. Letters inviting participation in the research were sent to these companies (293). A sample letter is given in Appendix B. Follow-up telephone calls were made to those companies agreeing to participate. Agreements to participate were obtained from these companies:

Champion International Corporation, Clinton, Iowa
Chesapeake Display & Packaging, West Des Moines, Iowa
E. I. DuPont, Clinton, Iowa
John Deere Waterloo Works, Waterloo, Iowa
JPI Transportation Products, Inc., Atlantic, Iowa
Moore Business Forms, Inc., Iowa City, Iowa
Quantum Chemicals, Clinton, Iowa

Questionnaires were sent to these companies to survey the number of employees specified by management.

Five companies returned 732 questionnaires and two companies failed to return 425 questionnaires. After careful analysis, one company was dropped from the study due to the types of responses and low return rate (.18 percent).

The return ratio for the companies is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Sent</th>
<th>Returned</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Champion International Corp.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesapeake Display &amp; Packaging</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. I. DuPont</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Deere Waterloo Works</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPI Transportation Products</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore Business Forms</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantum Chemicals</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,357</strong></td>
<td><strong>661</strong></td>
<td><strong>.49</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures above show the return percentages were better than 50% for those companies returning questionnaires with the exception of Chesapeake. Chesapeake was subsequently dropped from the data pool due to missing
information and/or polarized responses. The surveys from Champion, DuPont, JPI, and Moore resulted in an N=642 questionnaires of which 519 (Female = 158; Male = 361) were usable.

Analysis of the questionnaire data began with obtaining frequency distributions for the demographic questions and the behavior occurrence questions for the sample (519 subjects). These data were then reviewed for missing data, response tendencies, and correct responses.

The supervisor/employee relationship items for all subjects were intercorrelated and a principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation was done. Biodata and factor scores were included in the correlation matrices.
STATISTICAL RESULTS

Factor Analysis

Five factors were defined and retained for interpretation. The results of the factor analysis are reported in the following.

Factor 1: Supervisory Power -- refers to situations where individuals use their positions of authority to sexually harass, to justify rewards, and/or to retaliate in some manner.

17. Supervisors give attractive employees rewards. .66
35. Supervisors force employees to re-do work. .64
40. Employees encourage supervisors for rewards. .59
42. Supervisors frequently harass employees .49
25. Supervisors abuse their power. .49
19. Supervisors flaunt their power .47
21. Workers seek favorable treatment. .43

Factor 2: Fear of Retaliation -- concerns the emotional reaction of employees after having experienced sexual harassment by a supervisor.

20. Employees are reluctant to report to management. .79
23. Employees are afraid to complain. .63
15. Employees are too embarrassed to report harassment. .60
34. Employees do NOT report harassment.  .58
29. Harassed employees feel trapped.  .49
16. An employee feels nervous around a harasser.  .40

Factor 3: Harassing Behaviors -- indicates the types of behavior perceived to be sexual harassment by employees and supervisors.

12. Derogatory jokes are harassing.  .63
13. Lustful looks are harassing.  .60
27. Body language is harassing.  .59
30. Teasing without advances is NOT harassing.  -.50
14. Flirting is NOT harassing.  -.40

Factor 4: Supervisor/Subordinate Affairs -- involves the reactions of coworkers in situations where a supervisor and a subordinate are having an affair.

24. Employees become hostile over affairs.  .78
18. Employees resent affairs.  .64
26. Employees lose respect for co-workers.  .50

Factor 5: Blaming the Victim -- reports who and what is responsible for sexually harassing behavior and/or resulting actions.

38. Employees should do something about harassment.  .48
33. Employees encourage harassment. .47
31. Style of dress invites harassment. .43

The fact that these meaningful factors occurred suggests that the subjects were cohesive in their responses.

General Linear Analysis

Sex and Company differences were explored by means of analysis of variance. This was done for the factor scores and for the individual questions using the model:

$$Y = \text{Sex} + \text{Company} + \text{Sex} \times \text{Company} + \text{Error}.$$ 

Out of 31 items only eight resulted in the overall $F$-ratio being significant (See Appendix C). Only two items differed either by Sex or Company: Questions 14 and 30. For instance, question 30 had an overall significance level of .0001 ($F = 4.54$, dfs = 7) with Company at .004 ($F = 4.68$, dfs = 3) and no association with Sex. Item 14 had an overall significance level of .001 ($F = 4.52$, dfs = 7) and for Company, .002 ($F = 5.47$, dfs = 3). For Sex the significance level was .006 ($F = 7.86$, dfs = 1). The lack of many significant differences for items suggested that separate factor analyses by Sex or Company are not necessary. Since the number of females, particularly in supervisory positions, was relatively small, the factor analysis by Sex was not a viable alternative.
There were Company differences for Questions 14 and 30 (F = 5.47, P = .001; F = 4.68, P = .003, respectively). There were Sex differences for Question 14 (F = 7.86, P = .005). There was a Company by Sex interaction significant for Item 30 (F = 3.77, P = .011). The significant differences for the other six questions may have been due to statistical artifacts (unequal N's) and therefore will not be presented.

The significant results from the analyses of variance of factors by sex and status are presented below. A figure is presented for the first result. Subsequent results are presented verbally. The figure below depicts the relationship between dependent variable Factor 1 (Supervisory Power) and two independent variables (sex and status).
As can be seen, female and male supervisors (Mean factor scores = 19.0; 19.3) do not perceive their power as a strong influence in sexual harassment. However, the opposite is true with female/male subordinates (Mean factor scores = 23.1; 23.8).

For Factor 2: Fear of Retaliation, female supervisors (Mean = 17.8) perceive their power as a minor influence on the reporting of sexual harassment whereas male supervisors (Mean = 22.6), female subordinates (Mean = 23.3), and male subordinates (Mean = 22.0) all perceive power as a strong influence. That is, only female supervisors believe supervisory status of the harasser creates fear within the victim resulting in no reporting of the behavior. On the
other hand, female/male subordinates as well as male supervisors do not view this concept as strongly.

Harassing Behaviors as identified in Factor 3 is harassing from the male supervisors' viewpoint (Mean = 7.2), but not from the female supervisors' viewpoint (Mean = 3.3). This would suggest that male supervisors have more experience in managing sexually harassing behavior, possibly have received training, or have a more accurate knowledge of sexual harassment. Subordinate personnel, both male (Mean = 3.5) and female (Mean = 3.3), view flirting as harassing on a very low level.

For Factor 4 and Factor 5 there were no significant differences by Sex or by Status.

Further analysis of variance was used to explore supervisory versus subordinate differences by Company. The model used was as follows for each factor:

\[ Y = \text{Status} + \text{Company} + \text{Status} \times \text{Company} + \text{Error}. \]

Factor 1 results are presented visually below.
The variance can be seen in the above figure. The supervisory personnel at E.I. DuPont (2), JPI (3), and Moore (4) agree that job status is not a strong variable in relationship to sexual harassment. However, nonsupervisory personnel at the three companies disagree; that is, nonsupervisory personnel perceive job status as being influential in sexual harassment situations.

For Factor 2: Fear of Retaliation, there are differences for company or supervisor versus nonsupervisory personnel.

Overall, there are company and supervisory versus nonsupervisory differences (< .01 level) for Factor 3: Harassing Behaviors. There was no company by supervisor interaction. Company means rank Company 4, 3, and 2.
Supervisory rank higher than nonsupervisory, Mean 7.5 versus 3.4. However, when comparing individual company by supervisory versus nonsupervisory (Means = 9.4; 4.11), the biggest difference (Mean difference = 5.4) is between supervisory and nonsupervisory for Company 4. Smallest for Company 2.

There were no differences for Factor 4: Supervisor/Subordinate Affairs overall or by individual companies.

Factor 5: Blaming the Victim resulted in a significant difference at the .02 level for Company and Company by Supervisor versus Nonsupervisory interaction. However, from an individual Company by Supervisor versus Nonsupervisory, the hierarchial differences were .4 to -2.3 with Company 4 being the largest.

Correlation Analysis

When the biodata were correlated with the five factors some interesting statistics resulted (See Appendix C).

Factor 1: Supervisory Power, correlated positively with three biodata variables with significance levels ranging from .0001 to .0019. The biodata variables with significant levels were: Supervisory Status, Travel Responsibility, and Training.
Supervisory Status had a significance level of .0001 with a correlation of .249 indicating that only 6.18% of the variance in supervisory power could be accounted for by Supervisory Status. That leaves 93.8% of the variance accounted for by other variables. Travel Responsibility also had a significance level of .0001 with a correlation of .186. This accounts for 3.46% of the variance in supervisory power. Similarly, Training had a significance level of .0019 with .145 correlation coefficient. Again, a low amount of variance (2.10%) in supervisory power could be attributed to Training.

Factor 3: Harassing Behaviors, was significantly correlated with Supervisory Status, Age, Education, Travel Responsibility, and Training. All correlation coefficients had significance levels of .0001. The correlation coefficients were: Supervisory Status: -.240; Age: .133; Education: .293; Travel Responsibility: -.276; Training: -.227.

Age correlated significantly (p = .002) with .146 with Factor 5: Blaming the Victim.

Factor 2 and Factor 4 correlations with the biodata were nonsignificant. This would indicate that something other than the biodata is responsible for the variance for these factors.
DISCUSSION

One purpose of this research was to determine whether or not the factors defined in sexual harassment research with campus groups could also be defined in the work setting.

Factor 1, Supervisor Power in the workplace seems to be the same as Factor 2, Sex Play, Power, and Grades in the educational setting.

Factor 2, Fear of Retaliation, in this study seems to reflect Factor 6, Helplessness of Victim and Factor 7, Emotional Reaction to Sexual Harassment in the campus research.

Factor 3, Harassing Behaviors is similar to Factor 1, Identifying Sexual Harassment Behavior in the campus study.

Factor 4, Supervisor/Subordinate Affairs, in the employment situation seems to coincide with Factors 3 and 4, Acceptable and Unacceptable Social/Sexual Relationships in the educational setting.

Factor 5, Blaming the Victim, is clearly defined in both the work and educational settings.

Thus, it appears that students and faculty and employees and supervisors conceptualize the dimensions of sexual harassment in a similar fashion.
When the 31 items referring to social/sexual behaviors were analyzed by Company and Sex, only two items, 14, If a supervisor (co-worker) just flirts with employees, it is not sexual harassment, and 30, If a supervisor (co-worker) "teases" but never makes advances, this behavior is not sexual harassment, were significantly different by Company or Sex. The implications of these differences for company policies and employee training are unclear. Discussion of these items with supervisors and employees might be productive.

However, the comparisons of factor scores by company and biodata did reveal significant findings.

Male and female subordinates view supervisory power (Factor 1) as a potent element in sexual harassing. Male and female supervisors do to a lesser extent. These differences are worthy of further research to explicate their meaning.

Male and female supervisors also differ in their perception of the influence of status on reporting of sexual harassment with females viewing power as a minor influence. But, female and male subordinates and male supervisors view supervisory status of the harasser as generating fear of retaliation.
Harassing Behaviors as defined by Factor 3 are viewed as harassing by male supervisors but not by the other three groups, female supervisors and subordinates and male subordinates. Perhaps through training and experience male supervisors may have sensitized to these behaviors. It is puzzling that the female subjects did not score higher on this factor. This finding also is suggestive of further research.

There were no significant differences on Factors 4 and 5 for supervisory status and sex.

Supervisors and subordinates disagreed on whether or not power (status) was related to sexual harassment. Supervisors said, "no relationship" whereas subordinates said, "a relationship." There were no company differences for this factor. There were no supervisor versus subordinate differences nor company differences for Factor 2, Fear of Retaliation. However, there were company and supervisors versus subordinate differences for Factor 3, Harassing Behaviors, with supervisors identifying the factor more than did subordinates. As mentioned earlier, this difference may be due to training and experience of supervisors. The data give no information as to why there are company differences.
There were no supervisor/subordinate nor company differences for Factor 4, Supervisor/Subordinate Affairs. However, for Factor 5, Blaming the Victim, there were company differences and a significant company by supervisor/subordinate interaction. One can only speculate as to why these differences. Perhaps they have something to do with the type of industry and the attitudes of management.

The correlations between the five factors and biodata variables were small. There were no statistically significant correlations between biodata variables and Factors 2, Fear of Retaliation, and 4, Supervisor/Subordinate Affairs.

Supervisory Status, Training, and Travel Responsibility correlated significantly with Factors 1, Supervisor Power, and 3, Harassing Behaviors. These three biodata variables are moderately correlated so may represent shared covariance. Age correlated significantly with Factors 3, Harassing Behaviors, and 5, Blaming the Victim.

It is difficult to draw strong conclusions about causality from these small relationships. However, it is apparent that Supervisor Status is related to three of the five sexual harassment factors. The supervisor seems to be a key player in the concern with sexual harassment.
Suggestions and Recommendations

Another purpose of this research was to formulate some concrete suggestions for the benefit of managing sexual harassment in the workplace.

The various research approaches and subjects' perceptions support diverse definitions for sexual harassment, and definitions generally not include the conditions or terms under which the harassment should occur to be congruent with legal understandings. Therefore, this author suggest that from a practical view, management use the definition established by the EEOC Guidelines. These guidelines identify specifically what behaviors are legally considered sexual harassment. This, of course, means that employers who allow such behaviors to exist within their organizations creating undesirable working conditions are liable to the full extent of the law.

Sexual harassment liability is both costly in terms of dollars and productivity. Further, production cost also include indirect costs associated with re-hires, absenteeism, and tardiness.

As many organizations have used the guidelines to establish selection procedures, so should they use the guidelines to establish policy(ies) governing sexual harassment. To further strengthen the policy(ies) it should
be supported and enforced from top management downward throughout the organization. Ideally, the policy will also have a formalized progressive discipline procedure as one of its components.

Once a policy identifying sexual harassment behavior, resulting consequences for such behavior, reporting procedures, and management’s position have been developed, implemented, and clearly communicated to all personnel; then a comprehensive training program with mandatory requirements should be developed and implemented.

Management can not afford to wait until they are faced with litigation so much approach sexual harassment with preventive measures.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Faier, J. (1979, August). The working woman's 7 biggest problems and how to solve them--1. Sexual harassment on the the job. Harper's Bazaar, 3205, 90-95; 164.


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the completion of this thesis I would like to give special recognition to those responsible for my dream becoming a reality.

First, I dedicate this thesis to my father, William Nathenial Young, whose love and support I have always been able to depend on.

Second, I would thank my family (Wayne, Antwan, Danielle, and Aaron) for enduring the good times and the bad times. Thanks with love.

Next, my sister and brother, Juanita and Delbert, I owe you a special thank you for your continued encouragement and belief in abilities.

Now, I would like to recognize my graduate committee consisting of Dr. Wilbur L. Layton, Dr. Charles D. Mulford, and Dr. Clifford E. Smith, for their input, expertise, time, and encouragement.

Without these individuals this research would not have been started nor completed.
Dear Participant:

The purpose of this letter is to solicit your assistance and cooperation in research currently being conducted at Iowa State University. Over a three year period we have been studying faculty-student relationships. Now we'd like to investigate manager-employee relationships. Our research instrument is designed to reveal individual and/or group perception(s) of social/sexual relationships in the work environment. Wilbur L. Layton, the project leader, is being assisted by Edna Young Clinton and Cynthia Wolfe.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. At any time before or during the completion of this questionnaire, you may discontinue your involvement without fear of penalty. By completing and returning this questionnaire, as instructed, you are giving your consent for the information to be used in our research.

The questionnaire should take approximately 15-30 minutes to complete. All questionnaires will be treated confidentially and anonymously. After completing the questionnaire, please fold and seal in the envelope provided. Now return the sealed envelope to the designated person in your department or division.

We appreciate your cooperation and assistance in this project.

Wilbur L. Layton, Ph.D. Edna Young Clinton Cynthia Wolfe
Project Leader Research Associate Research Associate
PART ONE: Please answer each question in the space provided, or circle the appropriate response. For this section, all your answers and responses should be marked directly on this sheet.

1. Division: ___________ Department: ___________

2. Position: (Title) __________________________________________
   a. Supervisory
   Number of employees under your direct supervision: ______
   b. Nonsupervisory


4. Age:  a. Under 21   d. 31-35   g. 46-50   j. 61-65
        b. 21-25   e. 36-40   h. 51-55   k. Over 65
        c. 26-30   f. 41-45   l. 56-60

5. Education:  a. Less than high school
               b. High school
               c. High school plus some college
               d. Bachelor's degree
               e. Master's degree
               f. Ph.D.
               g. Other (specify): ____________
                 (e.g., trade or vocational school)

5. Length of time with organization: ______

6. Length of time in present position: ______

   If yes, how often? Per Week: ______  Per Month: ______

   If yes, how often? Per Week: ______  Per Month: ______

9. Do you have access to formal or informal grievance procedures?
   a. Formal    b. Informal    c. None

      b. Native American   e. White
      c. Hispanic   f. Other (specify):
                       ____________________________

11. Have you had training concerning sexual harassment? a. Yes  b. No
    If yes, when? (Month/Year) ___________________________
PART TWO: This section should be answered using the scale provided and by writing the appropriate letter in the blank before each question. Read each question carefully and respond openly, honestly, and rapidly.

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12. Derogatory jokes or remarks about females or males are examples of sexual harassment.

13. Even when there is no physical contact or verbal statement, a lustful look can be degrading enough to be sexual harassment.

14. If a supervisor (or co-worker) just flirts with employees, it is not sexual harassment.

15. Employees are too embarrassed to report sexual harassment.

16. An employee who is harassed feels nervous around the person who did the harassing.

17. Many supervisors give a preference to attractive employees in giving rewards.

18. When a supervisor and an employee have an affair, other employees resent it.

19. Some supervisors flaunt their power over employees.

20. Employees are reluctant to report a case of sexual harassment to management.

21. Employees often encourage advances from supervisors to receive favorable treatment.

22. It is the employee's responsibility to avoid sexual relationships.

23. Employees who are sexually harassed by supervisors are afraid to complain about it.

24. When a supervisor and an employee become sexually involved, other employees become hostile towards them.

25. Supervisors abuse their power by making sexual advances to employees.

26. An employee who dates a supervisor loses the respect of other employees.
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27. Body language (such as standing too close or leering) is an example of sexual harassment.

28. As long as the supervisor and employee behave professionally, their sexual relationship does not affect their co-workers.

29. Employees who are harassed feel trapped.

30. If a supervisor (co-worker) "teases" but never makes advances, this behavior is not sexual harassment.

31. An employee’s style of dress can invite sexual harassment.

32. An employee who dates a supervisor has an unfair advantage.

33. If an employee is asked by a supervisor to engage in sexual relations, it is probably because the employee did something to encourage it.

34. Employees do not report harassment because they fear retaliation.

35. Some employees are forced to re-do work assignments to satisfy the supervisor’s need for power.

36. Employees who are harassed are afraid that their report will not be taken seriously.

37. If an employee is harassed, then the employee should request a transfer.

38. Employees who experience sexual advances from supervisors should have done something to prevent it.

39. Supervisors who make personal invitations for dates are harassing the employees involved.

40. Encouraging a supervisor’s sexual interest is often used by employees to get better rewards (time off, more praise, better assignments, promotions).

41. A supervisor who promises rewards for sex is not harassing that employee.

42. Supervisors frequently harass employees.
PART THREE: These questions are about YOUR experiences in this organization. How frequently has such behavior by a supervisor or co-worker been directed toward YOU PERSONALLY? Respond to each question using the following letters to indicate frequency of occurrence. Indicate frequency of harassment by either supervisor or co-worker or both. Place the letter indicating frequency in the appropriate (supervisor/co-worker) blank.

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43. **Sexist comments:** jokes or remarks that are stereotypical or derogatory to members of one sex

   Supervisor: ____  Co-Worker: ____

44. **Undue attention:** flirting, being too friendly, or too personal, but short of sexual inquiries

   Supervisor: ____  Co-Worker: ____

45. **Verbal sexual advances:** general verbal expressions of sexual interest; inquiries of sexual values or behaviors, but short of a proposition

   Supervisor: ____  Co-Worker: ____

46. **Body language:** leering at one’s body; standing too close

   Supervisor: ____  Co-Worker: ____

47. **Invitations:** personal invitations for dates, but where sexual expectations are not stated

   Supervisor: ____  Co-Worker: ____

48. **Physical advances:** kissing, hugging, pinching, fondling

   Supervisor: ____  Co-Worker: ____

49. **Explicit sexual propositions:** clear invitations for sexual encounter.

   Supervisor: ____  Co-Worker: ____

50. **Sexual bribery:** explicit sexual propositions which include or strongly imply promises of rewards for complying (e.g., time off, more praise, promotions).

   Supervisor: ____  Co-Worker: ____
APPENDIX B: COMPANY PARTICIPATION LETTER
Dear CEO/Manager:

The purpose of this letter is to solicit your assistance and cooperation in research currently being conducted at Iowa State University. Over a three year period we have been studying faculty-student relationships. Now we'd like to investigate manager-employee relationships. Our research instrument is designed to reveal individual and/or group perception(s) of social/sexual relationships in the work environment. Wilbur L. Layton, the project leader, is being assisted by Edna Young Clinton and Cynthia Wolfe.

We would like your employees, or a sample thereof, to complete a questionnaire regarding social/sexual relationships in the work environment. The questionnaire should take approximately 15-30 minutes to complete. In order to collect reliable and valid data, we would appreciate being able to canvas both management and employees. All questionnaires will be treated confidentially and anonymously.

This type of research has enabled human resource managers to develop solutions and/or alternatives to some sensitive issues in personnel management. It is believed by many professionals that the area of social/sexual relationships in the workplace will become the 1990's major issue in human resource management and must be dealt with in a proactive, sensitive but aggressive manner. Our research should help us develop effective approaches. Should you have further interest in the research results, we would welcome the opportunity for discussing the findings with your organization.

We very much appreciate your help. It is essential to the success of our research and we look forward to working with you and your employees. Please complete the enclosed form within the week. We have enclosed a stamped return envelope.

Sincerely,

Wilbur L. Layton, Ph.D.      Edna Young Clinton      Cynthia Wolfe
Professor                   Research Assoc.          Research Assoc.
RESEARCH PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

Date: ________________

___ Yes. we will participate in your research project.
___ No. not at this time.

Company: ____________________________

Authorized by: ________________________

Number of employees _________ as of ________________ (Date)

Number to participate in research: ALL ___ or ______ (randomly selected by management)

Contact Person: ____________________________

Phone Number: ____________________________
February 5, 1990

Dear Mr. St. James:

Enclosed are 290 social/sexual questionnaires to be distributed to your staff and employees.

As indicated in our phone conversations, the completion of the questionnaire should not take more than 15-30 minutes. Once the questionnaire has been completed, for confidentiality, the participant is asked to seal it in the envelope provided, and return it to a designated individual who is responsible for returning the 290 questionnaires to Iowa State.

Mr. St. James, those individuals participating in the research should not take the questionnaire home for answering, but do so during working hours. In addition, we need all copies of the questionnaire returned during the week of February 19, 1990. Enclosed for your convenience in returning the questionnaires is a "merchandise return label."

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance with this research. We look forward to working with you and your employees. Should you have any questions or concerns, please call us at the above number.

Sincerely,

Edna Young Clinton
Research Associate

Enclosure: 290 Questionnaires
APPENDIX C: STATISTICAL CORRELATIONS
## ITEM/FACTOR CORRELATIONS

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*Loaded on two factors, so was dropped creating specific factors.
SIGNIFICANT LEVELS BY ITEMS 
BY COMPANY, SEX, AND OVERALL

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NOTE: The 23 items NOT SHOWN did have significant levels either by Company, Sex, or Overall
## BIODATA/FACTOR CORRELATIONS

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1 Row = Correlations  
2 Row = Significance Level  
3 Row = Number in sample