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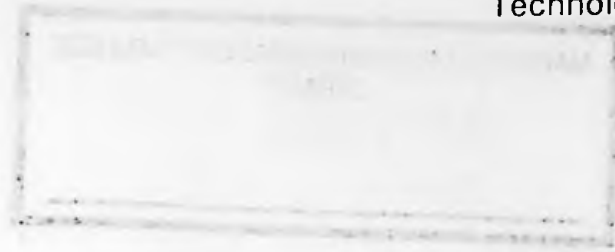
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BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY:  
NEW AVENUES FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Thesis submitted to  
The Graduate College of  
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In partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts  
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By

Terri Stone Meadows

Marshall University

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as meeting the research requirements required for the master's degree.

Thesis Advisor *Christopher W. Latham*  
Department of Psychology

Committee *Christopher W. Latham*  
Department of Psychology

*Helen E. Leiby, PhD*  
Department of Psychology

*Stuart Thomas*  
Department of Psychology

Dean *Leonard Deutch*  
Graduate School

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*ABSTRACT*

*Evaluations of scenarios describing workplace sexual harassment rendered through interpersonal versus technological means and rendered by a supervisor versus a co-worker were made by 178 college students (95 females and 83 males; M age = 23). The participants rated the seventeen sexual harassment scenarios using a three-point scale (1=yes; 2=no; 3=unsure). For each scenario, participants rated whether the behavior in the scenario (1) was sexual harassment, (2) was inappropriate, but not necessarily sexual harassment, (3) would be a comfortable experience if the participant was a target of the behavior, and (4) was serious enough to report the activity to the organization. In addition, participants answered eight questions measuring experiences with sexual harassment and business technology. Results indicated that females held less accepting attitudes toward sexual harassment than males, that sexual harassment was more serious when rendered by a supervisor as opposed to a co-worker, that females perceived supervisor rendered harassment as most severe, and that females compared to males were less comfortable with sexual harassment when rendered through technological as opposed to interpersonal means.*

## BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY:

### NEW AVENUES FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Sexual harassment in the workplace has become one of the most widely discussed, researched, and controversial topics in the 1990's. This is largely due to the extensive media attention focused on the recent sexual harassment allegations against Judge Clarence Thomas by former employee, Anita Hill; against Senator Robert Packwood by former employees and political aides; and against President Bill Clinton by Paula Jones and others. The uncovering of widespread sexual harassment at Toyota and in the United States Military has further generated interest in the topic of sexual harassment. This media and national attention has made sexual harassment a contemporary topic in psychological research.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) designates two types of sexual harassment under federal law: "quid pro quo" harassment (sexual compliance is made mandatory for promotion, resource acquisition, favors, or retaining one's job) and "hostile work environment" harassment (uncomfortable, stressful work environment interfering with an employee's ability to do his or her work). Over 12,500 sexual harassment complaints were filed with the EEOC in 1993 (Muchinsky, 1997). Research has found that sexual harassment is not as much a sexual issue as it is about power differences between managers and the employees they supervise (Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; as cited in Muchinsky, 1997). Women are more likely than men to identify behaviors as sexual harassment (Gutek, 1985; as cited in

Muchinsky, 1997). However, in a New York Times/CBS News poll, half of the men polled admitted they had either said or behaved in a way at work which could be viewed by a female employee as sexual harassment (Greenberg & Baron, 1995). The EEOC (1980) defines sexual harassment as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment (p. 25024-25025).

Three theoretical models have been developed and examined (Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982; as cited in Muchinsky, 1997) in an attempt to explain the occurrence and frequency of sexual harassment. The "natural/biological" model assumes that sexual harassment results from the normal biological sexual attraction between two people; the "organizational" model states that sexual harassment results from characteristics of the organizational climate, the organizational power hierarchy, and specific authority relationships within an organization; and the "socio-cultural" model asserts that the occurrence of sexual harassment is simply a reflection of society's unequal distribution of power and status between the sexes. Research has given support to all three of these models leading researchers to the conclusion that there is no one explanation for the occurrence of sexual harassment.

Businesses are now actively taking preventive measures against sexual harassment (Muchinsky, 1997). Employee training focuses primarily on

sensitivity to others' values and behavioral preferences. Some companies have gone as far as to develop highly defensive measures, such as requiring a third party to be present when conversing with anyone of the opposite sex, interacting with others only in open, highly visible areas, and forbidding comments regarding physical appearance within their organizations. Tactics which have proven to be successful to organizations for preventing sexual harassment include: developing clear and widely distributed policies against sexual harassment; training employees to understand what sexual harassment is and how to avoid it; keeping the workplace free of sexually offensive materials (i.e., cartoons, pornographic pictures, or written materials); making it clear how to respond and report to the organization when sexual harassment occurs; and specifying in advance how the company intends to treat those guilty of sexual harassment and strictly enforcing organizational policy (Greenberg & Baron, 1995).

While corporations have taken steps to train employees on techniques to prevent sexual harassment, it has been a monumental task to train employees how to identify what behavior constitutes sexual harassment and how to determine when sexual harassment has actually taken place. To assist in overcoming this problem, Gruber (1992) developed a categorical system to classify various forms of sexual harassment, including precise definitions for each category based on EEOC guidelines. We now turn to Gruber's



classification system for a better understanding of what types of behavior constitute sexual harassment.

#### GRUBER'S CATEGORIES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment for Gruber (1992) can be broken down into three broad categories -- verbal requests, verbal comments, and nonverbal displays. The category of verbal requests includes, (1) sexual bribery (explicit quid pro quo requests expressing the threat of punishment or promise of a reward in exchange for sex), (2) sexual advances (a goal of sexual intimacy not including threats or promises), (3) relational advances (repeated requests for a social relationship), and (4) subtle pressure advances (the goal of behavioral actions is ambiguous or implied).

Unlike the actions within the verbal requests category (Gruber, 1992), the actions within the verbal comments category do not have relationship-oriented goals. The verbal comments category include such actions as, (1) personal remarks (including sexual jokes, teasing, or questions intended to embarrass or offend women), (2) subjective objectification (where women are the topic of sexual conversations of male co-workers), and (3) sexual categorical remarks (a hostile environment is created by sexually based sexist remarks). While most early claims of sexual harassment filed in the courts were of the quid pro quo (i.e., give something to get something) type, the more recent wave of claims has centered around this much grayer area of what constitutes a hostile work environment (Rapoport & Zevnik, 1990).

Nonverbal displays, the third and final category of Gruber's sexual harassment classification system, involves unspoken harassment varying in severity from rape to the display or presentation of pornographic pictures (Gruber, 1992). The nonverbal displays category includes such actions as (1) sexual assaults (coercive actions involving physical force where the subject may or may not have been raped), (2) sexual touching of a sexual part of a woman's body or sexualized contact, (3) sexual posturing (non-contact sexual gestures or behaviors), and (4) the display of sexual materials, such as pornographic pictures and posters, which are common in many work environments.

In recent years, much research and litigation, although not directly testing Gruber's classification system, has examined many of the forms of harassment behavior contained in Gruber's categories of sexual harassment. The following section documents many of these research studies and findings.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT RESEARCH

Research has suggested that the perpetration of sexual harassment by males is a result of their having a more sexualized view of the world. Kowalski (1993) found that college men were more likely than females to attach sexual meaning to a friendly behavior, when no sexual meaning was intended. Some men may see a woman's (i.e., female co-worker) acceptance of a date, before the date even occurs, as indicating sexual interest on the woman's part.

Research on male behavior has also indicated that males are more tolerant of coercion when compared to females. A questionnaire of college students (Poppen & Segal, 1988) indicated that males were significantly more likely to use coercive strategies when interacting with females in sexual relationships. Males reported such tactics as persistent sexual requests, lying, threatening to terminate the relationship, and use of physical force to initiate sexual activity. However, more recent research of college students (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1991) suggested that while males typically use low-coercive tactics, such as arguing and stimulation to initiate sexual interaction, they typically refrain from using more severe types of coercion, such as intoxication and physical force.

While males appear to be more likely to participate in coercive sexual strategies, they also seem less likely to acknowledge when they have become the victims of such coercive strategies. Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson (1993) conducted a questionnaire study of college students regarding coercive sexual touch. Males on average stated that they were "pleased" by both gentle and forceful touch by a basically unknown female acquaintance. However, they were very displeased by the same acts committed toward them by another male.

Women, who appear to be less tolerant of coercive sexual strategies, also appear to be less tolerant of ambiguous behaviors. Garlick (1994) surveyed college students regarding ambiguous behaviors by instructors, such

as a "playful" shoulder massage or calling a female student by a pet name. The results of the study showed that women, compared to men, were "significantly less comfortable" with 14 of the 19 ambiguous instructor behaviors investigated.

Reilly, Lott, and Gallogly (1986) discovered overwhelming evidence of the presence of such ambiguous sexual harassment behaviors on college campuses through a student questionnaire study. One-half of the women respondents reported having heard derogatory comments of women as a group, nearly one-third had heard sexually explicit jokes, and one-fifth had heard obscene language in classroom settings. Suggestive looks or gestures by male professors outside of class were reported by nearly one-fourth of the women, while nearly one-fifth had experienced sexual teasing, joking, questioning, or comments from their male professors. Over eight percent of the women had been deliberately touched in a sexual manner by a male professor.

Unfortunately, with evidence of such rampant sexual harassment in university and workplace settings, women do not appear to have the proper coping skills to effectively handle such sexual harassment. A survey of 250 working women who had been victims of employment harassment (Crull, 1982: as cited in Popovich & Licata, 1987) found that most of the respondents had experienced debilitating stress reactions, including physical and psychological difficulties as a result of their harassment. In addition, many of

these women went on to experience problems with their job performance due to the harassment. Furthermore, women college students reported having dealt with their harassment by merely avoiding their harasser and even blaming themselves. Such coping strategies may lead to diminished self-esteem among working women and college females (Reilly, et al., 1986).

While most women appear to internalize their harassment problems, others appear to respond far less passively. Nicks (1993) surveyed Caucasian and African-American working women on how they would respond to personally experiencing sexually harassing behaviors. While Caucasian women were significantly more likely to quit their jobs as a result of harassment, assertive African-American women were more likely to report the behavior to outside agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for investigation and relief.

Bingham and Scherer (1993) researched the effects filing formal complaints within one's company would have on victims of sexual harassment. Unfortunately, the results revealed that filing formal complaints did not appear to effectively help resolve sexual harassment situations to the satisfaction of the victims. Although filing complaints may not satisfy harassed employees, it does appear to be a necessary step in the eyes of our legal system. Terpstra and Baker (1983) reviewed sexual harassment court cases filed with the Illinois Department of Human Rights. While only 31 percent of the cases reviewed resulted in favorable outcomes for the complainants, the chances of a

favorable outcome were significantly greater if the victim of the sexual harassment had previously notified management, such as through a formal documented complaint, had witnesses to support his or her charges, and was victimized by either sexual assault, unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature, or sexual propositions linked to threats or promises of a change in an individual's conditions of employment.

While research studies offer valuable evidence of the prevalence and types of sexual harassment and proof of the impact of sexual harassment on its victims, we must turn to the documentation of court cases for insight into how our society responds to charges of sexual harassment in the workplace.

#### COURT CASES INVOLVING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Civil Right Act of 1991 gave victims of sexual harassment the right to sue for both punitive and compensatory damages (Dipboye, Smith, & Howell, 1994). Sexual harassment cases are typically the result of allegations of harassment made by an employee accusing either a supervisor or a co-worker of inappropriate or offensive behavior. Harassment by one's immediate supervisor is the most common form of sexual harassment seen in the court system.

Sexual harassment of employees by supervisors is often the result of power differences between the two parties. Most often the perpetrator is a male over the age of 35, while the victim is most often a female subordinate under the age of 34 (Sandroff, 1992). Employee harassment typically results

when supervisors use their position to demand favors of a sexual nature from their subordinates (Spector, 1996). The following court cases involve sexual harassment perpetrated by individuals in a supervisory position.

Voluntary sexual participation is an issue that has not skewed the courts' rulings of sexual harassment. In one harassment case, *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson* (1986), an assistant branch manager at a bank fearing for her job had intercourse forty to fifty times with her bank manager. She also tolerated his sexually embarrassing her in front of co-workers and was forcibly raped by him in the bank's vault. She was eventually terminated following an indefinite sick leave and filed a lawsuit. A federal appeal's court ruled against the bank concluding that despite the voluntary sexual participation, the assistant branch manager had suffered sexual harassment through the creation of a hostile environment by the bank manager (Rapoport & Zevnik, 1990).

In *Mays v. Williamson & Sons, Inc.* (1985), the victim of sexual harassment was not a willing participant. An immediate supervisor of a female janitor made sexual remarks, touched and grabbed her, made co-workers leave to be alone with her, peeked over a bathroom stall door at her, and threatened her marriage. The female janitor filed a complaint with the EEOC causing the male supervisor to write memos to himself alleging poor work performance on the part of the female janitor and then firing her based on these fabricated memos. A circuit court ruled in her favor asserting that she had been

terminated as a direct result of pursuing EEOC action (Rapoport & Zevnik, 1990).

Similar results were achieved in *Yates v. Avco Corp.* (1987). A male supervisor repeatedly asked his secretary out for drinks and dinner and invited himself to her home. The supervisor was married and the secretary made it clear she was not interested in a relationship. With a second secretary, the supervisor made obscene remarks about the secretary's body and made suggestions that she become his mistress. When she also showed no interest, he loaded her down with excessive work. Both secretaries suffered physically and emotionally, often trembling and crying. When they filed a complaint, the company was slow to react and did not immediately remove him as their immediate supervisor. In court, the company lost the case because although it did have a sexual harassment policy in effect, it was ruled "ineffectual and deficient" by the court (Rapoport & Zevnik, 1990).

Court decisions may be more likely to be won by the victim if the duration of the sexual harassment is long-term. However, this long-term harassment may not be ideal for the victim's health. A female senior buyer, who had risen through the ranks from a secretary position, refused to spend the night with a male purchasing manager. Later at the company picnic, the male purchasing manager made indecent suggestions, fondled her, and made obscene remarks toward the female buyer. Over the next one and one-half years, she repeatedly reported the behavior of the male purchasing manager



to the organization while he continued to harass her. She exhibited medical problems as a result of the harassment, including high blood pressure and chest pains, and eventually attempted suicide. By this time, the male purchasing manager was terminated, but it was too late. Due to the company inaction and the female employee's emotional distress, the Court ruled in favor of the female buyer (*Ford v. Revlon, Inc.*, 1987: as cited in Rapoport & Zevnik, 1990).

The Supreme Court has ruled that a plaintiff can seek damages based on a hostile environment, although she is not the direct recipient of any sexual advances (*Broderick v. Ruder*, 1988 and *Hall v. Gus Construction*, 1988: as cited in Duncan, Smeltzer, & Leap, 1990). A California court awarded \$62,000.00 to a female sales representative who was the victim of repeated uses of profanity, sexual comments, and jokes by a company manager (*Department of Fair Employment and Housing v. Sigma Circuits*, 1988: as cited in Duncan, et al., 1990). A survey of 13,000 federal employees conducted by the Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., 1988, supports the California court's ruling. The results indicated that the most common form of sexual harassment by those participating in the survey was "unwanted sexual teasing" (Duncan, et al., 1990).

While the common form of sexual harassment in the workplace is that of a supervisor to a subordinate, it may also occur between co-workers where

there is no power differential. The following cases examine how courts have ruled on cases of co-worker harassment.

The timing of the sexual harassment complaint has typically affected court decisions regarding harassment in co-worker disputes. The plaintiff may stand a poor chance of winning a harassment case if she has reacted too quickly to the harassment. In *Dornhecker v. Malibu Grand Prix Corp.* (1987), a female employee claimed harassment by an outside consultant during a company trip a couple of days after she was hired. The company president advised her to be patient and she would never have to deal with him again. She resigned and filed suit. The Court ruled against her deciding that her decision to leave the company was too abrupt (Rapoport & Zevnik, 1990).

Court rulings have not been lenient when hearing the cases of employees who are over sensitive or prudish in regard to sexual behavior or materials. In *Goluszek v. H. P. Smith* (1988), a male employee filed sexual harassment charges against his male co-workers. Although the co-workers made no sexual advances toward the male employee, they made him the target of their sexual jokes and pranks. He was portrayed in court as unmarried, still living with his mother, and "abnormally sensitive" to sexual comments and materials. Although the harassment had lasted for eight years, the court ruled against the plaintiff noting that trivial jokes and pranks are insufficient to prove the occurrence of sexual harassment (Duncan, et al., 1990).

Finally, the courts have ruled that individual liability can be declared in sexual harassment cases between co-workers. In *Kyriazi v. Western Electric Company* (1978), a female employee was shot with rubber bands, sketched in obscene cartoons by fellow male employees, and subjected to speculation about her virginity by her male co-workers. The Court ruled in her favor charging the offending employees with individual punitive damages (Rapoport & Zevnik, 1990).

### TECHNOLOGICAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT

While the topic of sexual harassment has become greatly researched in recent years and has been the focus of numerous legal proceedings and organizational grievance activities, there is potentially a new type of sexual harassment on the horizon that deserves research attention. The past decade has been one of vast technological development in the workplace. The typewriter has been replaced with the desk-top computer. Computer developments include (1) electronic mail service (E-mail), which enables immediate interoffice communication, (2) screen savers, which allow the users to personalize their computer screens when their computers are not in use, and (3) the Internet, which facilitates worldwide communication and provides access to business, educational, and recreational materials from around the world. Other technological developments in the workplace have included pagers, telephone voice mail, and facsimile machines (fax machines). Pagers enable their carriers to be contacted at any time; voice mail ensures immediate

communication of information through the telephone; while facsimile machines allow documents to be automatically transferred within or among organizations. While these new technological developments have improved office productivity, they have also given rise to a potential new form of sexual harassment -- technological sexual harassment.

Previously, sexual harassment has been viewed as an interpersonal intrusion. However, this technological explosion has given sexual harassment a potential new form. Sexual requests and comments can be sent to employees by supervisors, clients, or fellow employees through voice mail, E-mail, pagers, and facsimile machines. Sexual harassment in the form of cartoons and pornography can also be transmitted to employees through facsimile machines, screen savers, and the Internet. The purpose of the present research is to compare perceptions of technological sexual harassment against the more traditional forms of interpersonal sexual harassment.

## METHOD

### PARTICIPANTS

One hundred seventy-eight participants (83 males and 95 females) were included in the study. The research sample was made up of sixty-one freshmen, thirty-two sophomores, twenty-six juniors, forty seniors, and nineteen graduate students. Students received extra credit in exchange for their participation in the study. The participants were students at a mid-sized,

southeastern university recruited from introductory, upper division, and graduate psychology classes.

### DESIGN

The present study utilized a 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design. The three independent variables were (1) gender of the subject (male or female), (2) the position of the harasser (either a supervisor or co-worker), and (3) the source of the harassment (through means of business technology -- pagers, phone mail, facsimile machines, screen savers, E-mail, and the Internet -- or through more commonly researched interpersonal means, such as person to person interactions).

### MATERIALS

Four versions of the survey were created for the present study (see Appendix A). Each survey contains seventeen scenario-type questions pertaining to sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as eight questions regarding attitudes and experiences with sexual harassment and business technology. The four versions of the survey were identical, except for manipulating the position of the harasser (either a superior or co-worker) and the source of the harassment (through business technology or interpersonal means) in each of the seventeen scenario-type items. The survey items were designed by the author with the assistance of research articles, documented court cases, and items included on previous sexual harassment research surveys.

After reading the seventeen scenario-type items describing a behavior between two members of an organization, the participants were asked to provide ratings for four dependent measures for each of the seventeen items using a three-point scale. The four dependent measures evaluated for each scenario were (1) whether the behavior in the scenario was an example of sexual harassment, (2) whether the behavior in the scenario was inappropriate, but not necessarily sexual harassment, (3) subjects' perception of comfort level if they were to be the target of the scenario behavior, and (4) whether the scenario behavior was serious enough to report the activity to the organization. A rating of "Y" indicated a positive response to each category; a rating of "N" indicated a negative response to each category; and a rating of "U" indicated the participant was unsure of a response to the category. The total number of positive responses to the four dependent measures across the seventeen scenarios were used to evaluate the results of the experiment.

Participants were also asked eight additional questions regarding their attitudes and experiences with sexual harassment and business technology. Additionally, participants were asked if they had ever been a victim of sexual harassment, if they would report sexual harassment if victimized, if they felt sexual joking and dating should be tolerated in the workplace, and about their personal attitudes and experiences with business technology.

## PROCEDURE

The participants were gathered by experimental sign-up sheets. Each participant was allotted thirty minutes to complete the survey and was required to sign a consent form prior to participating. Each student was told he or she would receive extra credit for their participation in the study. Each group was read identical directions (see Appendix B). The participants were randomly assigned to one of the four survey conditions. The testing rooms were located in the same building and were similar in size and environment. After completion of testing, the participants were debriefed by the experimenter (see Appendix B).

## HYPOTHESES

The first hypothesis of this 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design dealt with gender. Females were expected to interpret the scenarios as sexual harassment more frequently than males. The second hypothesis asserted that participants would find the scenarios more sexually harassing when the harassment was received from a supervisor as opposed to a co-worker. The third hypothesis stated that participants would find these scenarios as more harassing through interpersonal means versus technological means. In addition, an interaction was predicted that females would perceive supervisor-oriented harassment as most severe.

## RESULTS

Four separate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tests were used to evaluate responses to the seventeen scenarios pertaining to sexual harass-

ment in the workplace. The three independent variables examined in the 2 x 2 x 2 ANOVA tests were gender of the participants, the position of the harasser (supervisor or co-worker), and the source of the harassment (interpersonal or technological). The four dependent measures examined were (1) the total number of scenarios rated as definite examples of sexual harassment, (2) the total number of scenarios rated as being examples of inappropriate behavior, (3) the total number of scenarios that subjects rated as comfortable situations had they personally been the target of the behavior, and (4) the total number of scenarios rated as serious enough to report the behavior to the organization.

#### DEPENDENT VARIABLE NO. 1: SEXUAL HARASSMENT

An ANOVA test performed on the sexual harassment measure identified a significant main effect for gender ( $F(1,170) = 4.75, p = .03$ ). An examination of the marginal means revealed that females ( $M = 9.25$ ) were more likely than males ( $M = 8.30$ ) to identify the scenarios as examples of sexual harassment. These results support the first hypothesis that females would view the scenarios as sexual harassment more frequently than males.

#### DEPENDENT VARIABLE NO. 2: INAPPROPRIATENESS

An ANOVA test performed on the inappropriateness measure identified a significant main effect for the position (supervisor or co-worker) of the person who was doing the harassing ( $F(1,170) = 4.80, p = .03$ ). An examination of the marginal means revealed that the scenarios were labeled more



inappropriate when a supervisor ( $M=14.62$ ) rendered the harassment in contrast to a co-worker ( $M=13.78$ ). This supports the second hypothesis that participants would find the behavior in the scenarios more inappropriate when the behaviors were performed by a supervisor as opposed to a co-worker.

In addition to the position main effect, a two-way interaction between the position of the person doing the harassment and the gender of the participant ( $F(1,170)=3.96, p=.05$ ) was revealed. An examination of the cell means revealed that while males considered the scenario behaviors equally inappropriate when performed by a supervisor ( $M=14.02$ ) or a co-worker ( $M=14.00$ ), females considered the scenario behaviors more inappropriate when performed by a supervisor ( $M=15.13$ ) than when performed by a co-worker ( $M=13.57$ ). This interaction was predicted in the hypothesis which stated that females would perceive supervisor-oriented harassment as the most severe form of inappropriate behavior.

### DEPENDENT VARIABLE NO. 3: COMFORT

An ANOVA test performed on the comfort measure identified a significant main effect for gender ( $F(1,170)=6.85, p=.01$ ). An examination of marginal means revealed that males ( $M=3.70$ ) rated that they would be more comfortable being the target of the scenario behaviors than females ( $M=2.42$ ). The first hypothesis is supported in that females are less comfortable with sexual harassment/inappropriate behavior than males.

In addition to the gender main effect, a second significant main effect was revealed for the position (supervisor or co-worker) of the person performing the scenario behaviors ( $F(1,170) = 6.09, p = .02$ ). An examination of the marginal means revealed that subjects expressed higher comfort levels with co-workers ( $M = 3.62$ ) performing the scenario behaviors as compared to supervisors ( $M = 2.42$ ) performing the scenario behaviors. The second hypothesis is again supported in that the scenarios were viewed as more negative when the harassment/inappropriate behavior was received from a supervisor as opposed to a co-worker.

Finally, a two-way interaction between the delivery source of the harassment (interpersonal or technological) and the gender of the participant ( $F(1,170) = 7.69, p = .01$ ) emerged. An examination of the cell means revealed that while males ( $M = 2.98$ ) and females ( $M = 2.98$ ) reported equal comfort levels with interpersonally delivered sexual harassment, males ( $M = 4.44$ ) were significantly more comfortable than females ( $M = 1.83$ ) with technologically delivered sexual harassment. While the third hypothesis predicted that all participants would evaluate the scenarios more negatively when the harassment/inappropriate behavior was delivered through interpersonal versus technological means, the interaction showed that while males were indeed less comfortable with interpersonal harassment/inappropriate behavior, females were in fact more comfortable with interpersonal harassment/inappropriate behavior when compared to technological harassment/inappropriate behavior.

#### DEPENDENT VARIABLE NO. 4: REPORTING OF BEHAVIOR

An ANOVA test performed on the reporting measure identified one significant main effect for the position (supervisor or co-worker) of the person performing the scenario behaviors ( $F(1,170) = 4.92, p = .03$ ). An examination of the marginal means revealed that participants were more likely to report sexual harassment/inappropriate behavior committed by a supervisor ( $M = 8.20$ ) than by a co-worker ( $M = 7.12$ ). This supports the second hypothesis that all participants would find the scenarios as more sexually harassing/inappropriate when the scenario behavior was performed by a supervisor as compared to a co-worker.

#### DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis that females would interpret the scenarios as sexual harassment more frequently than males was clearly supported for both the harassment and comfort level dependent variables. Females viewed the scenarios as harassment more often than males, and females rated themselves as being significantly less comfortable being the target of harassment/inappropriate behaviors than males. In addition, a predicted interaction was shown for the inappropriate dependent variable in that females considered the scenarios as most severe when the harassment was received from a supervisor, while males noted no significant difference between harassment received by a supervisor and harassment received by a co-worker.

While gender appears on the surface to be the central predictor to determine if an activity will be considered sexual harassment, further investigation revealed that personal experience may be the true predictor of harassment judgments. While only eighteen of the eighty-three male participants (22 percent) reported ever being a victim of sexual harassment, forty-four of the ninety-five female participants (46 percent) reported at some time being a victim of sexual harassment. Therefore, females may be identifying the activities as sexual harassment not because they are females, but because they have experienced being a victim of sexual harassment. Further investigation is warranted to separate the higher sensitivity levels to sexual harassment experienced by females due to gender from sensitivity levels due to the victimization experience of sexual harassment.

The second hypothesis that participants would find the scenarios as more sexually harassing when the harassment was received from a supervisor as opposed to a co-worker was also clearly supported for the inappropriate dependent variable, the victim comfort level dependent variable, and the reporting of behavior dependent variable. Participants viewed the scenario behaviors more inappropriate when rendered by a supervisor, as creating greater discomfort when rendered by a supervisor, and as more serious and reportable when rendered by a supervisor.

While the position of the harasser appears to identify whether the activity will be labeled sexual harassment, gender again seems to play a role.

Both sexes recorded supervisor rendered harassment as more severe than co-worker rendered harassment; however, males noted a much smaller difference between the two. Females in the study, who reported much more experience than males with sexual harassment, may have experienced this harassment from a supervisor. Further investigation is warranted to evaluate how many females who identify supervisor rendered sexual harassment as more severe than co-worker rendered sexual harassment claim to be victims of supervisor rendered sexual harassment.

An unexpected two-way interaction emerged for the comfort dependent variable. Males and females noted equal comfort levels with interpersonally delivered sexual harassment; however, males were much more comfortable than females with technologically delivered sexual harassment. While it appears on the surface that females were just less comfortable with sexual harassment rendered through a technological means, further investigation uncovers that experience with technology may be the true cause of this discomfort. Forty-five of the eighty-three males (54 percent) reported over two hours per day interaction with the modern technology (E-mail, the Internet, screen savers, facsimile machines, voice mail or pagers) referred to in the study; however, only thirty-five of the ninety-five females (37 percent) reported over two hours per day interaction with the same technology. Further investigation is warranted to identify if males are truly more comfortable with technologically delivered sexual harassment, or just more comfortable with technology.

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APPENDIX A  
QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire asks your feelings about sexual harassment in the workplace. There are no right or wrong answers. Read each scenario and evaluate: (1) If the behavior is sexual harassment, (2) if the behavior is inappropriate, (3) how comfortable you would be in that situation, and (4) if you would report the situation if you were involved. Each scenario will require three answers. In addition, there are eight questions regarding your own experiences with sexual harassment and the workplace.

HARASSMENT:

- Write Y in the blank if you feel the activity is sexual harassment.
- Write N in the blank if you do not feel the activity is sexual harassment.
- Write U in the blank if you are unsure about the activity.

INAPPROPRIATE:

- Write Y in the blank if you feel the activity is inappropriate, but not necessarily sexual harassment.
- Write N in the blank if you do not feel the activity is inappropriate.
- Write U in the blank if you are unsure about the activity.

COMFORT LEVEL:

- Write Y in the blank if you would be comfortable in that situation.
- Write N in the blank if you would not be comfortable in that situation.
- Write U in the blank if you are unsure about the activity.

REPORTING:

- Write Y in the blank if you would report the activity.
- Write N in the blank if you would not report the activity.
- Write U in the blank if you are unsure about the activity.



## QUESTIONNAIRE

## DEMOGRAPHICS:

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Male/Female Caucasian, African American, Etc.

School Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate Student

1. Mr. X, a business manager, e-mailed Ms. Y, his employee, requesting a dinner date for the first time.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
2. Mr. X, a business manager, voice mailed Ms. Y, his employee, requesting her to join him for dinner at a trendy restaurant the evening before he would announce who would get the promotion she was up for.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
3. Mr. X, a business manager, pages Ms. Y, his employee, and leaves the message, "I am so horny today."  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
4. Ms. Y, an employee, hears the fax machine signal an incoming message. She looks at the message and realizes it is for her from her business manager, Mr. X, depicting a sexually explicit cartoon.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
5. Ms. Y, an employee, walks in an office to overhear Mr. X and Mr. Z, her male business managers, comparing her features to that of a pornographic model on the Internet.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
6. Ms. Y, an employee, returns to her desk to find an image of a penis on her computer screen saver. A co-worker said it had been left for her by her male business manager, Mr. X.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
7. Mr. X, a business manager, e-mails Ms. Y, his employee, a few sexually explicit jokes.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
8. Ms. Y, an employee, receives a voice mail from Mr. X, her business manager, threatening her future with the company if she did not have sex with him.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
9. Mr. X, a business manager, repeatedly pages Ms. Y, his employee, to meet him for a drink after work.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
10. Ms. Y, an employee, mistakenly intercepts an e-mail by her male manager, Mr. X, stating, "women don't belong here."  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
11. Ms. Y, an employee, receives a request through a fax from her business manager, Mr. X, where she is repeatedly referred to as "honey" and "babe."  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_

12. Mr. X, a business manager, massages his employee, Ms. Y's shoulders while she types on the computer.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
13. Ms. Y, a large-breasted employee, receives a cartoon degrading large-breasted women on her fax machine. It was sent to her by her business manager, Mr. X.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
14. Ms. Y, a newly promoted employee, was voice mailed to be at the Marriott after work by her business manager, Mr. X, if she hoped to keep her promotion.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
15. Ms. Y, an employee, is paged to report her bra size by her business manager, Mr. X, in order to settle a bet with another male manager.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
16. Ms. Y, an employee, returns to her desk to find her screen saver was changed. It read, "for a good time, call me at 555-SLUT." She later learns that the message was changed by her male business manager, Mr. X.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
17. Ms. Y, an employee, delivers a memo to Mr. X, her business manager, and realizes he is staring at sexual acts on the Internet on his office computer.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
18. Do you feel you have ever been a victim of sexual harassment?  
 Yes  No  Unsure
19. If you were a victim of sexual harassment, would you report the incident?  
 Yes  No  Unsure
20. Do you feel it is okay for employees to search for a mate at work if it does not affect productivity?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral
21. Do you feel a certain amount of sexual joking should be tolerated in the workplace?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral
22. Do you feel too much attention is being focused on sexual harassment?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral
23. How many hours per week do you interact with e-mail, the Internet, screen savers, facsimile machines, voice mail, or pagers?  
 0-2 Hours  2-5 Hours  5 Or More Hours
24. Do you feel intimidated by computers?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral
25. Do you feel Internet surfing is just a fashionable passing trend?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral



12. Mr. X, a business manager, massages his employee, Ms. Y's shoulders while she files business reports.  
Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
13. Ms. Y, a large-breasted employee, receives a cartoon degrading large-breasted women on her desk. It was placed on her desk by her business manager, Mr. X.  
Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
14. Ms. Y, a newly promoted employee, was instructed to be at the Marriott after work by the her business manager, Mr. X, if she hoped to keep her promotion.  
Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
15. Ms. Y, an employee, is asked her bra size by her business manager, Mr. X, in order to settle a bet with another male manager.  
Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
16. Ms. Y, an employee, returns to her desk to find a sign hanging from her desk lamp. It read, "for a good time, call me at 555-SLUT." She later learns that the message was left by her male business manager, Mr. X.  
Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
17. Ms. Y, an employee, delivers a memo to Mr. X, her business manager, and realizes he is staring at sexual acts in Hustler Magazine.  
Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
18. Do you feel you have ever been a victim of sexual harassment?  
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure
19. If you were a victim of sexual harassment, would you report the incident?  
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure
20. Do you feel it is okay for employees to search for a mate at work if it does not affect productivity?  
[ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Neutral
21. Do you feel a certain amount of sexual joking should be tolerated in the workplace?  
[ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Neutral
22. Do you feel too much attention is being focused on sexual harassment?  
[ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Neutral
23. How many hours per week do you interact with e-mail, the Internet, screen savers, facsimile machines, voice mail, or pagers?  
[ ] 0-2 Hour [ ] 2-5 Hours [ ] 5 or more hours.
24. Do you feel intimidated by computers?  
[ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Neutral
25. Do you feel Internet surfing is just a fashionable passing trend?  
[ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Neutral



12. Mr. X, an employee, massages a fellow employee, Ms. Y's shoulders while she types on the computer.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
13. Ms. Y, a large-breasted employee, receives a cartoon degrading large-breasted women on her fax machine. It was sent to her by a fellow employee, Mr. X.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
14. Ms. Y, a newly promoted employee, was voice mailed to be at the Marriott after work by a fellow co-worker, Mr. X, if she hoped to keep her promotion.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
15. Ms. Y, an employee, is paged to report her bra size by a male co-worker, Mr. X, in order to settle a bet with another male employee.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
16. Ms. Y, an employee, returns to her desk to find her screen saver was changed. It read, "for a good time, call me at 555-SLUT." She later learns that the message was changed by her male co-worker, Mr. X.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
17. Ms. Y, an employee, delivers a memo to Mr. X, a co-worker, and realizes he is staring at sexual acts on the Internet on his office computer.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
18. Do you feel you have ever been a victim of sexual harassment?  
 Yes  No  Unsure
19. If you were a victim of sexual harassment, would you report the incident?  
 Yes  No  Unsure
20. Do you feel it is okay for employees to search for a mate at work if it does not affect productivity?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral
21. Do you feel a certain amount of sexual joking should be tolerated in the workplace?  
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23. How many hours per week do you interact with e-mail, the Internet, screen savers, facsimile machines, voice mail, or pagers?  
 0-2 Hours  2-5 Hours  5 or more hours.
24. Do you feel intimidated by computers?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral
25. Do you feel Internet surfing is just a fashionable passing trend?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral

## QUESTIONNAIRE

## DEMOGRAPHICS:

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Male/Female Caucasian, African American, Etc.

School Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate Student

1. Mr. X, an employee, asked Ms. Y, a fellow employee, for a dinner date for the first time.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
2. Mr. X, an employee, spoke with Ms. Y, a fellow employee, requesting her to join him for dinner at a trendy restaurant the evening before the promotion she was up for, and which he had input in the decision, would be announced.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
3. Mr. X, an employee, comments to Ms. Y, a fellow employee, "I am so horny today."  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
4. Ms. Y, an employee, walks up to her desk to find a message. She looks at the message and realizes it is for her from a male co-worker, Mr. X, depicting a sexually explicit cartoon.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
5. Ms. Y, an employee, walks in an office to overhear Mr. X and Mr. Z, her male co-workers, comparing her features to that of a pornographic model in Playboy Magazine.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
6. Ms. Y, an employee, returns to her desk to find an image of a penis lying on her desk. A co-worker said it had been left for her by her male co-worker, Mr. X.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
7. Mr. X, an employee, tells Ms. Y, a fellow employee, a few sexually explicit jokes.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
8. Ms. Y, an employee, receives a visit from Mr. X, her co-worker, threatening her future with the company if she did not have sex with him.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
9. Mr. X, an employee, repeatedly asks Ms. Y, a fellow employee, to meet him for a drink after work.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
10. Ms. Y, an employee, mistakenly walks in on her male co-worker, Mr. X, stating, "women don't belong here."  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
11. Ms. Y, an employee, while talking to her male co-worker, Mr. X, is repeatedly referred to as "honey" and "babe."  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_

12. Mr. X, an employee, massages a fellow employee, Ms. Y's shoulders while she files business reports.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
13. Ms. Y, a large-breasted employee, receives a cartoon degrading large-breasted women on her desk. It was placed on her desk by a male co-worker, Mr. X.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
14. Ms. Y, a newly promoted employee, was instructed to be at the Marriott after work by a fellow co-worker, Mr. X, if she hoped to keep her promotion.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
15. Ms. Y, an employee, is asked her bra size by a male co-worker, Mr. X, in order to settle a bet with another male employee.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
16. Ms. Y, an employee, returns to her desk to find a sign hanging from her desk lamp. It read, "for a good time, call me at 555-SLUT." She later learns that the message was left by her male co-worker, Mr. X.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
17. Ms. Y, an employee, delivers a memo to Mr. X, a co-worker, and realizes he is staring at sexual acts in Hustler Magazine.  
 Harassment \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate \_\_\_\_\_ Comfort Level \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting \_\_\_\_\_
18. Do you feel you have ever been a victim of sexual harassment?  
 Yes  No  Unsure
19. If you were a victim of sexual harassment, would you report the incident?  
 Yes  No  Unsure
20. Do you feel it is okay for employees to search for a mate at work if it does not affect productivity?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral
21. Do you feel a certain amount of sexual joking should be tolerated in the workplace?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral
22. Do you feel too much attention is being focused on sexual harassment?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral
23. How many hours per week do you interact with e-mail, the Internet, screen savers, facsimile machines, voice mail, or pagers?  
 0-2 Hours  2-5 Hours  5 or more hours.
24. Do you feel intimidated by computers?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral
25. Do you feel Internet surfing is just a fashionable passing trend?  
 Agree  Disagree  Neutral



## APPENDIX B

### DIRECTIONS

The study you are asked to participate in deals with sexual harassment. If you do not feel comfortable completing the study, you may drop out at any time. You will be allotted thirty minutes to complete the survey. There are no right or wrong answers. Your name will not be asked on the survey, therefore, all answers will remain confidential. You will receive extra credit in exchange for your participation. If at this time you agree to participate in the study, please sign the consent form and begin the study.

### DEBRIEFING

The survey you just completed dealt with sexual harassment. You randomly received one of four forms of the survey. One form looked at supervisor harassment by means of business technology; the second form looked at supervisor harassment by interpersonal means; the third form looked at co-worker harassment by means of business technology; and the fourth form looked at co-worker harassment by interpersonal means. All surveys were identical except for those manipulated variables.

The results of the survey are expected to show that females view the scenarios as sexual harassment more frequently than males; that all participants in the survey will find the scenarios as more sexually harassing when the harassment is received from a supervisor as opposed to a co-worker; and that the scenarios will be viewed as more harassing through an interpersonal versus technological means. Further, it is expected that females will view supervisor-oriented harassment as most severe.

If you would like any further information about the study or would like to know the results of the study, please contact Terri Stone-Meadows or Dr. Christopher LeGrow at (304) 696-2780.