HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT: A DISCRIMINANT MODEL
OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING WOMEN

DISSERTATION

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By

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This study examines the problem of operationally defining "hostile environment" sexual harassment, ruled a type of disparate treatment actionable under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act by the United States Supreme Court on June 19, 1986. Although the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines a hostile environment as an "intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment," there is no consensus as to what is "offensive" behavior. An extensive review of the literature yielded various attempts to define and ascertain the magnitude of sexual harassment, but the fact that the actual percentages varied indicates that this is a difficult issue to measure.

As perception by the victim is the key, this study surveyed 125 working women from all over the United States to determine their perceptions of behaviors that constitute sexual harassment. Discriminant analysis was then used to correctly classify 95% of the women according to their perceptions of having experienced sexual harassment.

Using tests for proportions, three hypotheses were found significant. Women who have been sexually harassed
are more likely to view sexual harassment as a major problem. Older men are more likely to have their behavior perceived as sexual harassment. In addition, women who have experienced acts such as staring, flirting, or touching in the workplace are more likely to perceive those acts as sexual harassment.

The hypotheses deemed not statistically significant yielded interesting results. Younger women are not more likely to be harassed than older women. Neither are single or divorced women more likely to experience sexual harassment. All women, regardless of age, marital status, or geographic location, are vulnerable to sexual harassment.

Of importance are which variables contributed the most to the women's perceptions of sexual harassment. None of the demographic variables was found significant, but the women perceived that they had been sexually harassed if sexual remarks, touching, sexual propositions, or staring were directed toward them in the workplace. Thus, these acts were perceived as constituting a hostile environment.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is an issue that is receiving increased attention from employers, employees, legislators, the courts, and the media. One of the most pressing problems of sexual harassment is operational definition. In the past, the courts recognized only quid pro quo harassment in which economic consequences were suffered—loss of a promotion, raise, or the job itself—if sexual advances were refused. However, on June 19, 1986, the Supreme Court reached a landmark decision that greatly expands the legal protection that working women have against sexual harassment in the workplace.\(^1\) The case, *Meritor Savings Bank, FSB v. Vinson*,\(^2\) was the first time that the Supreme Court has ruled on "hostile environment" sexual harassment. In addition, the High Court upheld the belief that sexual harassment was a type of disparate treatment actionable under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The *Meritor* case represented

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a strict interpretation of the EEOC Guidelines (1980) which defined sexual harassment as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.³

Thus, "hostile environment" is defined as an "intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment." The problem is in defining an offensive environment—what is offensive to one person might not be to someone else. As stated by Monat and Gomez, "... inherent in the EEOC's definition is that sexual harassment is based upon the perceptions of the victim."⁴ This makes it very difficult for employers to implement a sexual harassment policy across the board to cover all situations.

Statement of the Problem

Can women be placed in differing strata based on their perceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment? It was


hypothesized that there are differences in perceptions of sexual harassment and that these differences are due to demographics such as age, educational level, and marital status. In addition, perceptions of sexual harassment may be affected by family background (i.e., by whether the respondent's family engaged in open displays of affection such as hugging). Also, this perception may be further affected by the age of the "harasser." Dirty jokes from a peer might be acceptable; the same dirty jokes from an older boss might not be.

Purpose of the Research

As noted by Popovich and Licata, previous research on sexual harassment has been a limited attempt to define and detect this organizational problem. However, "defining sexual harassment as sexual advances that create an intimidating or offensive work environment places a great deal of importance on the recipient's evaluations of sexual overtures that occur at work." This study thus examined working women's perceptions of acts and behavior that constitute sexual harassment. Quid pro quo sexual harassment involves economic consequences and therefore is


fairly easy to establish. However, hostile environment
depends on how an offensive working environment is defined.
Making the issue more difficult for employers and the
courts, the EEOC states that sexual harassment is based upon
the perceptions of the victim. Thus, this study will
identify associations between demographic variables and
perceptions of sexual harassment by working women.

Significance of the Study

A number of research studies have established that
sexual harassment is a problem for working women.\(^7\) However, most of these studies used either hypothetical situations or
given definitions of sexual harassment and then asked the
subjects about their experiences. As Powell states, "the
use of different definitions of sexual harassment makes it
difficult to determine the relative extent of harassment for
each of the samples."\(^8\) In some studies it is doubtful from

\(^7\)Merit Systems Protection Board, "Sexual Harassment in
the Federal workplace: Is It A Problem" (March 1981);
Claire Safran, "What Men do to Women on the Job," Redbook
Magazine, November 1976, 149, 217, 223; David E. Terpstra
and Susan E. Cook, "Complaint Characteristics and Reported
Behaviors and Consequences Associated with Formal Sexual
Harassment Charges," Personnel Psychology (Fall 1985): 559-
573; Barbara A. Gutek and Bruce Morasch, "Sex-Ratios, Sex-
Role Spillover and Sexual Harassment of Women at Work,"
Journal of Social Issues (1982): 55-74; Delaney J. Kirk,
Robert K. Robinson, and James D. Powell, "Sexual Harassment:
New Approaches for a Changed Environment," SAM Advanced

\(^8\)Gary N. Powell, "Definition of Sexual Harassment and
Sexual Attention Experienced," Journal of Psychology 113
the subjects' responses that the subjects would have defined sexual harassment the same way as the various researchers. Powell attempted to circumvent this limitation by listing potential acts which the subjects were asked to rate as to whether they constitute sexual harassment. However, this too was limiting as only seven choices were given. This study is the first to explicitly require the subjects to define sexual harassment according to their own perceptions and then ask whether they have experienced the harassment in the workplace.

This study is also significant in the scope of the study. The Merit Systems Protection Board involved the largest sample of workers (over 20,000) but these were all federal employees. Several states, including Illinois and Florida, have conducted their own studies but these were limited to those geographic regions. Other studies usually involved only students or if working women were used, the samples were small. Powell used a sample of 101

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9Ibid., 115.


women in one city and Pearce and Flasch\textsuperscript{12} based their results on a sample of 65. Thus, this study of working women all over the United States involves a larger scope than previous studies.

\textbf{Research Methodology}

A questionnaire was designed and mailed to a sample of 800 women. Subjects for the study were obtained from 9to5, National Association of Working Women which represents primarily office workers—from clerical workers, bookkeepers, secretaries, and word processors to airline reservation clerks and insurance processors.

Two-stage cluster sampling was used for this study. This allowed the researcher to put the population elements into nonoverlapping groups or strata according to geographic region and then randomly select samples within each cluster.\textsuperscript{13}

After the data was gathered, descriptive statistics were calculated to determine frequency of responses. In addition, Chi-square tests of independence were used to look for differences in the subjects' responses based on demographic information.


Discriminant analysis was then used to classify members of the sample into one of two strata based on their perceptions of sexual harassment. Thus, a discriminant model was developed to identify those variables that determine whether or not a woman believes she has been sexually harassed. Finally, tests for proportions were used to test the hypotheses presented in this chapter.

The model and sample are discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this research study was the availability of funds. This restricted the size of the sample to whom the questionnaire was mailed. Thus, it was deemed appropriate to do a pilot study on one organization that was best representative of working women likely to have experienced sexual harassment.

Another limitation involved the actual selection of subjects for the sample. 9to5, like many organizations, has a policy forbidding selling or renting their membership list. However, the organization agreed to enclose the questionnaire in their newsletter following the selection design chosen by the researcher. Thus, the researcher was able to use their mailing list to separate the 9to5 members by state into the eight geographic regions specified and then choose every kth individual. An advantage to this
method was in 9to5's implied support of the research project.

Another limitation is that the sensitive nature of the issue of sexual harassment restricted the type of research questions that subjects might be willing to answer. To negate this, the questionnaire insured confidentiality and tried to minimize any sensitive questions.

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested in this research study.

1. Women who have experienced a specific act such as staring, flirting, or touching in the workplace are more likely to perceive that same act as sexual harassment.

2. Women who perceive they have been sexually harassed are more likely to view sexual harassment as a problem of major importance than women who have not been harassed.

3. Men who are described as "older" or "much older" than the women they are working with are more likely to have their behavior perceived as sexual harassment than men the same age or younger than the women.

4. Women who receive a great deal of physical affection as a child from their father or mother are less likely to view acts such as staring, flirting, and touching as
sexual harassment than those women who come from a reserved family background.

5. Younger women (40 and under) are more likely to be sexually harassed than older women.

6. Single or divorced women are more likely to be sexually harassed than married women or women involved in a serious relationship.

7. There is a significant difference regarding whether or not women perceive they have been sexually harassed and the geographic region in which they work.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

A review of the literature was necessary in order to trace the history of the issue of sexual harassment in the legal system. In addition, an in-depth study of all previous research done on sexual harassment was conducted. The results of this extensive literature review yielded several conclusions.

First, a number of studies have concluded that sexual harassment is a problem for working women. The Working Women United Institute conducted a study in May of 1975 and found that 70 percent of the 155 women surveyed reported that they had been sexually harassed.¹ In 1976 Redbook magazine polled its readers to discover that 88 percent of the 9,000 respondents had experienced some type of sexual harassment.² However, since the subjects were self-selected


it is expected that those who had been sexually harassed would be more likely to have answered the questionnaire.

In 1981 the Merit Systems Protection Board did an extensive study of over 20,000 federal employees and found that 42 percent of the women and 15 percent of the men claimed having been sexually harassed. Gutek in 1985 reported a 53 percent rate of sexual harassment claimed by women and 37 percent noted by men.

The fact that the actual percentages vary indicates that this is a difficult issue to measure. Most of the research done involved giving the subjects a definition of sexual harassment and then asking them if they had ever experienced it. However, as sexual harassment is dependent on perception by the victim, this might not be the most appropriate method.

Not only is sexual harassment a real problem in the workplace, it is an expensive problem. One cleaning company that required its female employees to wear risque outfits and fired one who refused to had to pay a total of $124,040.75 in back-pay and attorney's fees when the courts ruled she had been a victim of sexual harassment by her

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4 Barbara A. Gutek, Sex and the Workplace (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1985), 46.
employer. American Broadcasting Company settled out of court with Cecily Coleman, a former employee who claimed she was fired for refusing sexual demands from her boss. The cash settlement cost ABC $500,000. Another settlement in 1985 cost a CBS-owned radio station $250,000 when Elisa Dorfman accused a CBS executive of sexual harassment which the network knew about and yet had not taken any remedial action. Other court-ordered payments are costing companies anywhere from $2,000 to close to a million dollars in back-pay and court costs, not counting the poor public image that results. In addition, some states are also allowing punitive damages for sexual harassment which will drive the costs up considerably higher. Companies can no longer afford to ignore this problem.

**Review of Court Cases**

Up until the 1970's very few sexual harassment cases were filed. In those cases decided in the mid-1970's the courts first decided that sexual harassment was not a violation of Title VII because "sexual harassment is a

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matter of personal proclivity, peculiarity, or mannerism and not a company policy to deprive women of employment opportunities." For example, in Corne v. Bausch & Lomb, Inc., two women alleged that they had to quit their jobs because of their supervisor's physical and verbal sexual advances. Because the supervisor's overtures were directed at the plaintiffs as well as other female employees, they stated his actions discriminated on a condition of employment based on sex. This would be in direct violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) which states:

It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer--(1) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or (2) to limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.10

However, the court ruled that since "there was no employer policy served by the supervisor's alleged conduct; no

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benefit to the employer was involved; and the supervisor's alleged conduct had no relationship to the nature of employment" then the employer could not be held liable.\textsuperscript{11}

Another case, Williams v. Saxbe,\textsuperscript{12} however, did result in the decision by the courts that sexual harassment was a violation of Title VII. In this case, Diane Williams suffered retaliatory action because she refused the sexual advances of her supervisor. At the hearing the examiner inferred that Williams was "discriminated against because of sex in the acts of her immediate supervisor in intimidating, harassing, threatening, and eventually terminating her."\textsuperscript{13}

In the case, Barnes v. Costle,\textsuperscript{14} the U.S. Court of Appeals overruled the decision of the lower court which stated that the employee was not a victim of sex discrimination. The appeals court determined that the supervisor made sexual advances to the employee "because of her womanhood." In fact, the court specifically noted that the supervisor had not made advances toward the male employees in the company. Thus, it was found that the discrimination was based on sex and that it resulted in the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11}Ibid., 241.
  \item \textsuperscript{12}Williams v. Saxbe, 413 F. Supp. 654 (D.D.C. 1976).
  \item \textsuperscript{14}Barnes v. Costle, 561 F. 2d 983 (CA-DC, 1977).
\end{itemize}
denial of the female employee's promotion.

That same year (1977), the Tomkins v. Public Service Electric & Gas Co.\textsuperscript{15} case was also appealed, resulting in a decision that "sexual harassment is sex discrimination on the quid pro quo theory."\textsuperscript{16} In addition, the court also ruled that the employer was liable in cases where actual or constructive knowledge of sexual harassment was known and the employer did not take prompt, appropriate action to remedy the situation.\textsuperscript{17}

This issue of employer liability would be one of interest for the court system for some time to come. In Munford v. James T. Barnes & Co.,\textsuperscript{18} it was decided that an employer was liable only if the employer failed to follow through on an investigation of a sexual harassment claim. However, in Miller v. Bank of America,\textsuperscript{19} the court found that the employer could be held liable under the common law

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doctrine of respondeat superior. Essentially, this vicarious liability means that employers are ultimately responsible for the actions of their supervisors or agents. The Bank of America alleged that since it had a policy explicitly forbidding sexual harassment, it should not be held accountable. However, the court decided that the existence of a formal company policy did not "exonerate the employer when a supervisor harasses an employee in violation of that policy."\(^{20}\)

The court also found the employer liable in Heelan v. Johns-Manville Corporation\(^{21}\) in which Mary Heelan claimed she was fired because she refused to have sexual relations with her supervisor. This court decision was made despite the fact that the supervisor denied he made the advances and despite the fact that she was having an affair with a co-worker during the same period of time.

Thus, prior to 1980 when the EEOC passed its Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Sex,\(^{22}\) the courts were finding sexual harassment to be a violation of Title VII but generally they required actual or constructive knowledge in


order to hold the employer liable. In 1981 in Bundy v. Jackson the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a prior decision and established that "neither resistance to sexual harassment, advances, nor proof of deprivation of economic or employment benefits was necessary for a woman to sue her employer for sexual harassment under Title VII." Thus, an employer that created an offensive working environment, regardless of economic consequences, could be sued under the concept of offensive working conditions outlined by the EEOC Guidelines. Another case, Henson v. City of Dundee, in 1982 agreed with this concept but stated that the offensive environment required some notice by the plaintiff to the employer before the employer could be held responsible.

In 1984 in Katz v. Dole, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with the Bundy and Henson cases that a hostile, offensive working environment was sexual harassment. In addition, the court stated that the employer must have some knowledge of the situation but did not take any action in order for the plaintiff to have a case.


25Henson v. City of Dundee, 682 F. 2d 897 (CA-11, 1982).

However, in Horn v. Duke Homes\textsuperscript{27} in 1985, the court tried to establish that an employer was liable regardless of prior knowledge by stating that an employer by delegating authority to a supervisor was ultimately responsible for the supervisor's actions. The issue of strict liability was still being debated when the Supreme Court announced its landmark decision in 1986.

**Landmark Case**

On June 19, 1986, the Supreme Court ruled for the first time on sexual harassment in Meritor Savings Bank, FSB v. Vinson et al.\textsuperscript{28} By so doing, the High Court gave credence to the claim that hostile environment as well as quid pro quo sexual harassment were both forms of sex discrimination actionable under Title VII. In addition, the Supreme Court looked at the question of employer liability. Previously, the U.S. District Court had held that an employer could not be held liable for sexual harassment conducted by its supervisors unless it was aware of the situation. However, the employer could be held liable if the sexual harassment was so blatant or pervasive that the employer should have known of its existence (a condition known as constructive knowledge).

\textsuperscript{27}Horn v. Duke Homes, 755 F. 2d 599 (CA-7, 1985).

The facts of the case leading up to this landmark decision are as follows. Mechelle Vinson, the plaintiff, alleged that her supervisor demanded sexual favors from her between 1975 and 1977. She stated that she agreed to those demands through fear of losing her job although she was not required to acquiesce as a condition for promotion. In fact, Ms. Vinson received promotions during this period from teller-trainee to assistant branch manager, all of which she stated were based on merit. Although her employer had a policy against sexual harassment, Ms. Vinson never reported her supervisor's harassment. In November of 1978, the plaintiff was fired for excessive use of sick leave.

The U.S. District Court, District of Columbia, ruled that since Ms. Vinson had not suffered any negative economic consequences and since the sexual relationship was "voluntary," there was no grounds for a claim of quid pro quo sexual harassment. In addition, this court stated that the employer could not be liable as it did not have knowledge of the supervisor's actions.

However, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled differently using a strict interpretation of the EEOC guidelines which state "[an employer] is responsible for its acts and those of its agents and supervisory agents with respect to sexual harassment regardless of whether the specific acts

complained of were authorized or even forbidden by the employer and regardless of whether the employer knew or should have known of the occurrence. In addition, the Court of Appeals remanded to the District Court because it had only considered quid pro quo sexual harassment and had not determined whether a violation of hostile environment type of sexual harassment had occurred. The Court of Appeals further discussed the issue of voluntariness stating that if the supervisor "made Vinson's toleration of sexual harassment a condition of her employment, her voluntariness had no materiality whatsoever." 

The Supreme Court agreed with the U.S. Court of Appeals that sexual harassment was not limited to those involving economic consequences. In fact, the Supreme Court strongly concurred with the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals statement in Henson v. Dundee that "sexual harassment which creates a hostile or offensive environment for members of one sex is every bit the arbitrary barrier to sexual equality at the workplace that racial harassment is to racial equality. Surely, a requirement that a man or woman run a gauntlet of sexual abuse in return for the privilege

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of being allowed to work and make a living can be as demeaning and disconcerting as the harshest of racial epithets." In addition, the High Court stated that whether or not the employee voluntarily participates in the sexual advances of a supervisor does not preclude that employee from filing a claim of sexual harassment. What is at issue is not that the employee gave in to the sexual demands of her or his supervisor, but whether or not those demands were "unwelcome."

The issue of employer liability is still unsettled. The Supreme Court has stated that the mere existence of a formal policy and procedures for reporting sexual harassment does not automatically protect that employer from liability. However, at the same time it held that the Court of Appeals "erred in concluding that employers are always automatically liable for sexual harassment by their supervisors." The Supreme Court did suggest that the EEOC should be consulted for guidance in this area. In addition, four of the judges, Marshall, Brennan, Stevens, and Blackmun, disagreed with the majority stating that just as the employer is responsible for any discriminatory acts of its supervisors, so should it be liable for all acts of sexual harassment.

32 Henson v. City of Dundee, 682 F. 2d 897, (CA-11, 1982) at 902.

To summarize, the Supreme Court has ruled that hostile environment is a type of sexual harassment actionable under Title VII and that it is whether or not the actions are "welcomed" as opposed to voluntariness of participation that is of concern in deciding a claim of sexual harassment. In addition, it is the perception of sexual harassment by the victim that determines an offensive, hostile working environment.

**Previous Research**

Only recently has the issue of sexual harassment been given serious attention by researchers. One of the first studies was conducted in 1975 by the Working Women United Institute. In their survey of 155 women, 70 percent claimed to have been sexually harassed. Acts such as constant ogling and leering, pinching, and outright sexual propositions were all viewed as sexual harassment. In 1976 Safran wrote about the results of the *Redbook* magazine survey. Although biased by the fact that the sample was limited to those women who read *Redbook*, nevertheless some 9,000 women responded to the questionnaire printed in the magazine's January 1976 issue. The majority of the women

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who answered (88 percent) reported that they had experienced some form of sexual harassment. Most of the women were married, in their twenties and thirties, and working in white-collar jobs.

In 1981 the Merit Systems Protection Board conducted an extensive survey of over 20,000 federal employees. Forty-two percent of the women reported having experienced sexual harassment. This study found that the typical woman most likely to be harassed was young (under 34), single or divorced, well educated (college degree or higher), and very dependent on her job. Most of the respondents found the harassing behavior to be embarrassing, demeaning, or intimidating.

Terpstra and Cook in 1985 examined 81 formal sexual harassment charges in an attempt to determine who files formal charges. They found that 76 of the 81 individuals were women. Most of the women (44 percent) were between 20 and 35 years old, and 69 percent were either single or divorced. As far as educational level, 41 percent had a high school degree, 13 percent had some college, and 38 percent had a college degree. Twenty-five percent were

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classified as secretarial or clerical workers and 26 percent were listed as semi-skilled/unskilled workers. Sixty-four percent made less than $15,000 annually.

There is also some disagreement as to who is doing the harassing. In a study of reported cases in Michigan, Harel and Cottledge found that 75 percent of the incidents of sexual harassment were perpetrated by supervisors.\(^\text{38}\) Coles in 1985 researched 88 cases filed with the California Fair Employment and Housing Department. Sixty-two of the harassers were supervisors, nineteen were owners, and nine were co-workers.\(^\text{39}\) However, the Merit Systems Protection Board reported in their study that most of the harassers (65 percent) were co-workers rather than supervisors and that these co-workers were typically older than their victims.\(^\text{40}\)

Research on sexual harassment has been affected by the "sensitive nature of the topic and lack of agreement among employees as to what constitutes sexual harassment"


behavior."\textsuperscript{41} Coles reported incidents claimed by victims that ranged from obscene gestures and personal comments about the victim's body to "seven alleged assaults and two attempted rapes."\textsuperscript{42} The Merit Systems Protection Board looked at acts they rated from less severe to most severe.\textsuperscript{43} Less severe acts included sexual remarks, suggestive looks, and deliberate touching and these were experienced most often. Most severe acts included actual or attempted rape or assault and were reported by one percent of the women.

One view of sexual harassment is that it is "an exercise of power by one person over another at the workplace."\textsuperscript{44} According to Gutek and Morasch, this is an analogy which comes from the literature on rape. According to research, rape is a form of power behavior rather than sexual behavior. The difference between rape and sexual harassment lies in the degree of severity. As noted by Jensen and Gutek, the difference between "pressure


(exploitation) and force (intimidation) is that in the pressured situation, the victim is sexually harassed or exploited, while in the forced assault, the victim is raped."45 This would lead to the conclusion that most sexual harassment is perpetrated by superiors, where the superior can use their organizational position to gain sexual favors from subordinates.

Another perspective lies in sex-role spillover. A "sex-role is a set of shared expectations about the behavior of men and women."46 Thus, women are expected to be more sympathetic, accommodating, and loyal than men are. In the workplace women are expected to act in those "feminine" roles expected of them—as either a mother figure or a sex object. Thus, according to Gutek and Morasch,47 women in the workplace are "likely to be regarded as sex objects when . . . the occupation and the job are numerically dominated by women, thereby facilitating sex-role spillover."

As pointed out by Gutek,48 sexual harassment can also be viewed in the context of social-sexual behaviors.


47 Ibid.

"Specific social-sexual behaviors are viewed by some people in circumstances as sexual harassment and by other people in other circumstances as not sexual harassment." 49 Pryor advances the idea that attribution theory would provide a useful conceptual framework in understanding this process of interpreting the behavior of others. Thus, "people who hold profeminist attitudes may be more likely to have 'sexual harassment' available as a cognitive label for social-sexual behaviors. This enhanced availability could result in interpreting more behavior as sexual harassment." 50 Jensen and Gutek 51 also focused on attribution theory in focusing their research on sexual harassment. They discovered that there were differences between men and women as to the perception of which acts constitute sexual harassment. This lack of agreement of the definition of sexual harassment lead Popovich and Licata 52 to attempt to circumvent this difficulty by using a role model approach in their research by assessing role conflict and role ambiguity as causes of sexual harassment.

50 Ibid., 278.
As to how women feel about sexual harassment, Coles\(^{53}\) reported on the results of one study done in 1976 that shows that female victims tend to feel responsible and to blame themselves. However, findings by this researcher in 1986\(^{54}\) and 1987\(^{55}\) showed that this was no longer the case. Women were more likely to feel angry, embarrassed, and intimidated rather than ashamed or guilty.

The subject of previous research on sexual harassment has varied widely from using students to small samples of working women to a federal study of 20,000 federal employees. Most of the studies involved either the use of cases or potential incidents or they gave the subjects a definition of sexual harassment and asked if they had ever experienced it. Reilly, Carpenter, Dull, and Bartlett in a study in 1982 using students at the University of California, Santa Barbara used a series of brief stories of interactions between a female student and a male professor. The subjects were instructed to decide on a nine-point scale


\(^{55}\)Delaney J. Kirk and James D. Powell, "Gender Differences in the Perception of Sexual Harassment," to be presented at the National Academy of Management meeting in Anaheim, California, August 7-10, 1988.
which incidents were sexual harassment. They found that there was "discrepancy in people's perceptions as to what types of interactions constitute sexual harassment."  

Popovich et al., used a nine-item scale of sexual harassment behaviors given to students to find out the frequency of these behaviors from supervisors and co-workers. McCormack gave students a definition of sexual harassment and asked if they had ever been sexually harassed by their professors. Results showed that two percent of the men and seventeen percent of the women had been.

However, none of these studies have allowed the subjects to define what they think constitutes sexual harassment. Powell attempted to do so by listing potential sexual harassment acts and asking for confirmation as to which ones were actually perceived to be sexual harassment. However, Powell's study listed only seven acts.

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and was administered to a small group (101 women) in one city.

To summarize, this exhaustive literature review included fifteen databases including Dissertation Abstracts, Management Contents, Labor Law, Social SciSearch, PsycInfo, and the Legal Resource Index. None of the previous research was aimed specifically at asking working women how they would define sexual harassment. Also, most of the research was conducted either on students, small samples regionally located, or was not scientifically designed to allow one to extrapolate to the population of working women as a whole.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction
This chapter covers in detail the research methodology used in this study. Information about the sample is presented along with demographic variables that illustrate the representativeness of the population groups chosen. In addition, the questionnaire to be used is discussed along with details as to how the questionnaire was developed and tested for validity. Finally, the specific methods of analyzing the data are examined.

Research Design
A normative or descriptive survey method\(^1\) was determined to be opportune for this study. Because of the nature of sexual harassment, an experimental design was deemed inappropriate as well as unethical. Objectives of normative surveys include describing the characteristics of a population, estimating the proportion of that population

that has those characteristics, and determining any associations among the different variables.\textsuperscript{2}

The data was collected through the use of a questionnaire mailed enclosed in the January 1988 newsletter of 9to5, National Association of Working Women. The questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter explaining the purpose of the research and soliciting the subject's help.\textsuperscript{3} In addition, the questionnaire was designed so that it could be folded, either stapled or taped shut, and mailed. A stamp was included on the outside along with the researcher's name and address.\textsuperscript{4}

The major problem with conducting a mail survey is nonresponse. However, as Emory has stated, "many studies have shown that the better educated and those more interested in the topic tend to answer mail surveys."\textsuperscript{5} It was anticipated that response rates would be uncharacteristically high because of the interest of sexual harassment to the population subjects. In addition, a study by Kanuk and Berenson indicated that including a stamped, pre-addressed envelope does increase the response rate of mailed

\textsuperscript{2}C. William Emory, \textit{Business Research Methods} 3d ed. (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, 1985), 68.

\textsuperscript{3}Letter to members, Appendix A.

\textsuperscript{4}Questionnaire, Appendix B.

\textsuperscript{5}C. William Emory, \textit{Business Research Methods} 3d ed. (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, 1985), 68.
questionnaires. Thus, nonresponse errors were not deemed a threat to the validity of the study.

Sampling Design

Two-stage cluster sampling was deemed appropriate as the population could be divided into strata or groups and then random sampling used to select the subjects from within the clusters. As the population could be divided by geographic region, area sampling, deemed the most important form of cluster sampling, was used. As Emory states, cluster sampling is useful in increasing the statistical efficiency of a sample and in providing enough data to analyze the subgroups of a population. Thus, if the population can be subdivided, this sampling method can increase the precision of the estimate over using simple random sampling.

The population subjects were stratified by geographic area using a modified form of the classification system developed by the Merit Systems Protection Board in a federal

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8Ibid., 307.

The study of public employees in 1981. The combinations of states used are listed below.

1. New York
2. New Jersey
3. Ohio
5. Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama
6. Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota
7. Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah

This enabled the researcher to test the hypothesis that differences exist between perceptions of sexual harassment by the subjects and the geographic region in which the subject works. This sampling design also ensured that working women from all over the United States were included in the sample and thus contributed to the external validity of the study.

The size of the total sample was largely dependent upon the expected rate of return. Although the Merit Systems Protection Board received an 85 percent response rate in

their study in 1981,\textsuperscript{11} it was conservatively estimated that this study would be answered by 60 percent of the subjects. Thus in order to allow for sufficient numbers within each strata, 800 questionnaires were mailed. Then, as necessary, the strata could be collapsed in order to insure a sufficient sample size.

**Sample**

9to5, National Association of Working Women was chosen as the sample for this pilot study. This organization represents 11,960 office workers in various positions such as clerical, secretarial, bookkeepers, word processors, airline reservation clerks, insurance processors, and university workers. Its national office is in Cleveland, Ohio. Vice President Deborah Meyer states that members of this organization represent every age, race, and religion.\textsuperscript{12} Members tend to be of a lower socio-economic background and have been in the work force for a number of years. Approximately 50 percent of the women are 45 years old or older. In addition, a large percentage are either single or divorced. Roughly a third are minority members.


\textsuperscript{12}Deborah Meyer, Vice President of 9to5, National Association of Working Women, Cleveland, Ohio, telephone interview by Delaney J. Kirk on October 8, 1987.
Sample Selection

Although the 9to5 organization had a formal policy against renting, lending, or selling their mailing list, their vice-president, Deborah Meyer, did consent to the use of the organization for the study. However, the stipulation was made that the researcher would choose the sample at the national headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio, as the mailing list could not be removed from the premises. After the sample was selected, Deborah Meyer agreed to mail the questionnaires enclosed within their January 1988 newsletters for a nominal fee.

In order to make the January deadline, this researcher traveled to Cleveland on January 21-22, 1988. The mailing labels had already been printed and were stored in boxes. Thus, the first day was spent in determining the number of members 9to5 had in each geographic region as specified earlier in this chapter. A manual count revealed the following information as presented in Table 1.

Thus, the majority (48%) of their members were located in Region 1 (New York), with Region 3 (Ohio) containing the second largest segment (28%). Because of this, cluster sampling using equal-size samples from within each cluster rather than proportionate sampling was deemed most appropriate. This allowed the researcher to include members from all over the United States in sufficient size quantities to test Hypothesis 7, that there will be a
significant difference regarding perception of having experienced sexual harassment and the geographic region in which the subjects work. Therefore, each region was allocated 100 questionnaires, except for Region 7 which contained only 50 population members. All of the members located in Region 7 were selected, with the remaining 50 questionnaires allocated to the largest cluster, Region 1.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF 9TO5 ORGANIZATION BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th># OF MEMBERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>11,960</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the size of the sample to be obtained from each region was decided, the mailing lists were divided up into the eight clusters. The samples were then randomly chosen by picking every kth individual, which was determined by the size of the cluster. For example, for Region 5 there were 100 questionnaires to be sent to a sample chosen from a cluster of 411 members. Thus, every fourth name was picked
to be included in the sample. These names were starred in red by the researcher and then given to the 9to5 organization. They then placed the starred mailing labels on the newsletters, inserted the questionnaires, and mailed them to the sample subjects.

**Questionnaire Testing**

After the preliminary questionnaire was designed, it was tested on the Business and Professional Women's Club local chapter in Denton, Texas, in October 1986. Results from this survey were published in *S.A.M. Advanced Management Journal* in the Autumn of 1987.¹³ Several questions were determined to be leading or difficult to read thus necessitating redesigning parts of the questionnaire. Also, it was decided to allow the subject to give her own definition of sexual harassment instead of using the EEOC formal definition. The EEOC definition proved to be too long and difficult to comprehend easily. In addition, since perception is the key to sexual harassment, it was decided that allowing the subject to relate her own definition would be more appropriate.

The questionnaire was then tested in August, 1987, on 147 senior and graduate students at the University of North

Texas. This was done in order to establish face validity and to collect data to be used in selection of appropriate statistical methods. Results of this study will be presented in August, 1988, at the National Academy of Management meeting in Anaheim. A final revision of the questionnaire was then performed and copies distributed to 139 upper division students and faculty members at Northwest Missouri State University to test for readability and face validity.  

Data Analysis

After the data was gathered, descriptive statistics were used to determine the percentage of women who perceive they have experienced sexual harassment. In addition, percentages were calculated on the majority of the questions and contingency tables were constructed to illustrate findings deemed to be of interest.

Next, the Chi-square test of independence was used to determine if there are significant differences between groups of variables. In particular, differences in the subjects' responses based on perceptions and demographic variables were tested.

14 Questionnaire, Appendix B.

Next, discriminant analysis was used as it is a statistical method "which allows the researcher to study the differences between two or more groups of objects with respect to several variables simultaneously." The two groups were women who perceive certain acts to be sexual harassment and women who do not. Thus, this technique allows the researcher to "discriminate" between the two groups based on a set of characteristics or variables.\textsuperscript{17}

Finally, tests for proportions using the standard normal (Z) statistic and Chi-square tests of independence were used to test the hypotheses presented in Chapter I.

The variables were tested using SAS\textsuperscript{18} available on the VAX785 system at Northwest Missouri State University.

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 9.
CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter looks at the methods used in analyzing the data and testing the hypotheses. First, the return rate of the study is examined with specific attention given to the geographic region, type of jobs held by the respondents, and the various industries represented in the study. Demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented to determine the overall makeup and representativeness of the sample. Next, the results of the survey are examined, using the Chi-square test of independence to determine statistical significance in the subjects' responses based on perceptions and demographic variables. Discriminant analysis is, then, used to examine whether the two groups (women who perceive they have been sexually harassed in the workplace and those women who state that they have not been harassed) can be distinguished based on a set of characteristics or variables. Finally, tests of proportions are used to test the hypotheses presented in Chapter I.
Data Collection

Of the 800 questionnaires mailed out enclosed in the January newsletter of 9to5, National Association of Working Women, 125 were returned. One questionnaire had been torn during mailing and could not be used. Thus, 124 questionnaires were deemed usable, a return rate of 16 percent. The return rate per geographic region is depicted in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percent by Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to data on the respondents' geographic locations, information was also obtained on job titles and
the type of industries in which the subjects worked. Tables 3 and 4 present this information. As can be observed, the subjects represent numerous job categories and industries.

**TABLE 3**

**JOB TITLES GIVEN BY RESPONDENTS OF SURVEY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor/Manager</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeper/Accountant</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesperson</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyst</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor/Writer</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor/Social Worker</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Processor/Word Processor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Worker</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Technician/Nurse</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Vice President</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Director</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account Executive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonresponse</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 4

**INDUSTRIES REPRESENTED BY RESPONDENTS OF SURVEY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY</th>
<th>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil and Gas</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock Brokerage</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Service</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airline</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Organization</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Design</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Cross</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel/Hotel</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonresponse</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>124</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding marital status, 34 (27%) of the subjects stated they were single, 10 (8%) indicated they were single but involved in a serious relationship, 63 (51%) said they
were married, and 17 (14%) were either divorced or separated.

The subjects were also asked the highest educational level they had obtained. Six women (5%) had high school degrees, 45 (36%) had taken at least some college courses, 40 (32%) had bachelor's degrees, and 33 (27%) had obtained master's degrees.

The women were fairly equally divided regarding the question of children. Fifty-six women (45%) did not have children while 68 (55%) stated they had at least one child. In addition, the women represented all age groups. Nineteen (15%) were in the 21-30 age range, 43 (35%) were 31-40, 34 (27%) were 41-50, 19 (15%) were 51-60, and 9 (7%) were in the 61-70 age range.

Although the 9to5 organization claims one-third of their members are from minorities, 110 (89%) of the respondents were white, non-hispanics. Three respondents were either American Indians or Alaskan Natives, six were Asian or Pacific Islanders, three were black, and two were Hispanic.

Results

The subjects were first asked, "How do you define sexual harassment?" Since perception by the victim is the key to sexual harassment, this allowed the subject to relate her own definition. This definition was then coded as
either "quid pro quo," "hostile environment," or a combination of both. If the subject mentioned economic consequences—defining sexual harassment as a loss of a promotion, raise, or the job itself if sexual advances were refused—the definition was coded as quid pro quo. If the subject discussed verbal or physical acts but did not specifically mention economic consequences, then it was coded as hostile environment. In some instances, the subjects mentioned both types of sexual harassment and thus received a coding of "both." In a very few cases, a true discrimination of definition was difficult to ascertain so a panel of two outside professionals was used to help determine the specific coding.

Results showed that 65 percent of the women defined sexual harassment as hostile environment, 15 percent as quid pro quo, and 20 percent as a combination of both. The women were then asked if they had ever experienced sexual harassment before (according to the definition they had given). Sixty-one percent stated that they had been sexually harassed in the workplace. There appeared to be a difference, although not statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 in whether the women perceived they had been sexually harassed and how they defined sexual harassment \( (X^2 = 5.694, p = .058) \).

When the women's definitions of sexual harassment were compared to whether or not they perceived they had been
sexually harassed in the workplace, interesting differences were revealed. Of those women who stated that they had not been harassed, 56 percent defined sexual harassment as hostile environment, 25 percent as quid pro quo, and 19 percent as both. The women who perceived that they had been sexually harassed in the workplace defined sexual harassment primarily as hostile environment (70%) with only nine percent stating it was quid pro quo, and 21 percent believing it was a combination of the two types.

Viewed another way, two-thirds (66%) of the women who defined sexual harassment as hostile environment stated that they had been sexually harassed in the workplace. Of those women who gave a definition of quid pro quo harassment, only 37 percent said they had been a victim of sexual harassment. If both hostile environment and quid pro quo were mentioned in their definition of sexual harassment, then two-thirds (64%) stated that they had been sexually harassed. Thus, if the subjects gave a definition of hostile environment or a combination of hostile environment and quid pro quo as constituting sexual harassment, they were much more likely to perceive having been sexually harassed (63%). Obviously, how a woman defines sexual harassment will affect whether or not she perceives she has experienced it.

When the subjects were asked about the magnitude of sexual harassment in the workplace, significant differences were found related to whether or not the woman had
experienced sexual harassment herself. Of those women who stated that they had been sexually harassed, 86 percent thought it was a serious problem. If, however, they had not been sexually harassed in the past, then only 50 percent thought it was a serious problem while the other 50 percent believed it to be a minor problem or not really a problem at all. There was, therefore, a significant difference ($X^2 = 18.328, p < .0001$) in whether the women had been sexually harassed and their feelings as to the magnitude of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Next, the subjects were asked whether or not the company for which they worked had a policy prohibiting sexual harassment. Of the 124 respondents, 44 percent stated "yes," 19 percent said "no," and 37 percent did not know if their employer had an explicit sexual harassment policy. The existence or absence of a policy prohibiting sexual harassment had no effect on whether or not the women perceived they had been victims of sexual harassment ($X^2 = .718, p = .698$).

The subjects were asked, "Have any of the following ever been directed toward you in the workplace?" and instructed to check all that applied. Table 5 gives the choices provided and the percentages denoted by the women as having happened to them. There was a statistically significant difference with all the behaviors (at an alpha level of .01) except for "Dirty jokes" between the two groups
### TABLE 5

**RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF QUESTION 12: "HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING EVER BEEN DIRECTED TOWARD YOU IN THE WORKPLACE?"**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors Denoted as Having Been Directed Toward Respondent</th>
<th>Perception of Having Been Sexually Harassed</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Yes&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;No&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staring</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>25.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flirting</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>7.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestive Gestures</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>23.502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirty Jokes</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>1.689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Remarks</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>64.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>33.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Propositions</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>37.293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Relations</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Subjects were instructed to check all that applied.

**** Significant at .01 level
of women (in terms of whether or not they perceived having been sexually harassed) and whether or not the various behaviors had happened to them in the workplace. Thus, dirty jokes appear not to be perceived as constituting sexual harassment. However, the other behaviors appear to influence whether or not a woman believes she has been sexually harassed. In addition, the women listed other behaviors such as "obscene telephone calls at my desk," "lewd pictures put up in the workplace," and "personal comments on my appearance intended to embarrass me" as having been directed toward them in the workplace.

Then the subjects were given the same list of behaviors and asked to check which of the behaviors, if any, they would define as constituting sexual harassment. Table 6 shows the percentages indicated by both groups of women (those who stated that they had been sexually harassed and those who had not been harassed in the workplace). Only two of the specified behaviors ("Staring and "Flirting") showed a statistical significance between the two groups of women. Thus, all of the women tended to agree as to which of the behaviors constituted sexual harassment except for "Staring" and "Flirting." The women who stated they had been sexually harassed were much more likely to denote "Staring" and "Flirting" as sexual harassment.
TABLE 6

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF QUESTION 13: "WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING, IF ANY, DO YOU FEEL IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors Denoted as Having Been Directed Toward Respondent</th>
<th>Perception of Having Been Sexually Harassed: &quot;Yes&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;No&quot;</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staring</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>7.320</td>
<td>.007**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flirting</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5.947</td>
<td>.015*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestive Gestures</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirty Jokes</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>1.689</td>
<td>.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Remarks</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>2.260</td>
<td>.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>2.382</td>
<td>.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Propositions</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Relations</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.897</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Subjects were instructed to check all that applied.

* Significant at .05 level
**Significant at .01 level
Next, an attempt was made to see if the two groups of women (those who had been sexually harassed in the workplace and those who stated they had not been) differed in regards to various demographic variables such as marital status, educational level, age, race, and whether or not they had children. Tables 7-11 present this information. As can be observed, none of the demographic variables indicate significant differences between the two groups of women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Having Experienced Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Single; in Serious Relationship</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Divorced/Separated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes&quot;</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No&quot;</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (of all Respondents)</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 3.934; p = .269 \]
TABLE 8
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Having Experienced Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>High School/ Some College</th>
<th>Bachelor's Degree</th>
<th>Master's Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes&quot;</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No&quot;</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (of all Respondents)</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2 = 3.134; p = .209 \)

TABLE 9
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Having Experienced Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>51-60</th>
<th>61-70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes&quot;</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No&quot;</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (of all respondents)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2 = 4.446; p = .349 \)
### TABLE 10

**CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY RACE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Having Experienced Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Non-White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes&quot;</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No&quot;</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (of all respondents)</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = .740; p = .390 \]

### TABLE 11

**CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY WHETHER OR NOT RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Having Experienced Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>Does Not Have Children</th>
<th>Has Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes&quot;</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No&quot;</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (of all respondents)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = .740; p = .390 \]
Another question on the questionnaire dealt with physical displays of affection by the parents when the respondents were children. It was hypothesized that those women whose fathers and/or mothers displayed a great deal of physical affection such as touching and hugging would be less likely to perceive those acts as constituting sexual harassment. Table 12 shows the results of analyzing the women's perception of having been sexually harassed and whether or not their mother and/or father engaged in physical displays of affection.

**TABLE 12**

**CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY DISPLAYS OF PHYSICAL AFFECTION BY PARENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Having Experienced Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>&quot;Yes&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;No&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father's Display of Physical Affection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely/Never</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$X^2 = 2.442; p = .295$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Mother's Display of Physical Affection             |       |      |
| Frequently                                        | 37%   | 35%  |
| Occasionally                                      | 26%   | 42%  |
| Rarely/Never                                      | 37%   | 23%  |
| $X^2 = 3.979; p = .137$                           |       |      |
Neither the influence of the father ($X^2 = 2.442, p = .295$) or that of the mother ($X^2 = 3.979, p = .137$) affected the adult women's perceptions of sexual harassment.

Next, Table 13 was constructed to look at those specific acts denoted by the women as constituting sexual harassment and the absence or presence of physical acts of affection toward the women by their parents. Interestingly enough, although statistical significance was not present, there was an apparent relationship which may warrant further study. If the specific acts were denoted as sexual harassment, the women were much more likely to state their fathers rarely or never engaged in physical displays of affection. For example, if staring was perceived as constituting sexual harassment, 18 percent of the women stated their fathers frequently engaged in physical displays of affection, 36 percent said the displays were occasional, and 46 percent (almost half) stated their fathers rarely or never showed physical affection. The same ranges of perceptions were true for all the specific behaviors given.

However, the opposite trend was evident when the women were asked about their mother's behavior during the respondents' childhoods. As shown in Table 13, the responses were much more equally distributed concerning the mothers' behaviors. Thus, the mothers' display of affection toward their daughters seems to have less effect on the daughters' perception of sexual harassment. For example,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors Denoted As Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>Father Displayed Physical Affection</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staring</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flirting</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestive Gestures</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirty Jokes</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Remarks</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Propositions</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Relations</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors Denoted As Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>Mother Displayed Physical Affection</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staring</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flirting</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestive Gestures</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirty Jokes</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Remarks</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Propositions</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Relations</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
if the respondents stated a specific behavior was sexual harassment, they were fairly equally divided as to whether their mother frequently, occasionally, or rarely/never engaged in physical displays of affection. The behavior of the father appears to have more influence than that of the mother as to which behaviors are perceived to be sexual harassment.

Next, the group of women who stated that they had been sexually harassed in the workplace was examined more closely. Of those women, 43 (57%) did not report the sexual harassment and 33 made a report. Of those women who stated they reported the harassment, 12 told their boss, 12 told a friend, nine told a co-worker, five reported it to another manager other than their boss, four made a report to the EEOC, two told their union steward, two told their husband, and one reported it to her personnel department.

If the subject stated that she had not reported the sexual harassment, it was mainly because she either thought the company would not take her complaint seriously or because she believed she could handle the situation herself. Table 14 presents the percentages associated with various responses as to why the respondents did not report the harassment. Note none of the respondents stated they did not report the harassment because they were afraid their companies would fire the harasser.
There was a significant statistical difference ($X^2 = 5.727, p = .017$) regarding whether or not the women reported the harassment and whether or not they had children. However, the women did not say they used this as a reason not to report the harassment. Of those women who did not report the sexual harassment, 70 percent had at least one child.

**TABLE 14**

REASONS WHY WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY HARASSED DID NOT REPORT THE HARASSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>% Agreeing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afraid company would fire me</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid company would fire harasser</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid of retaliation from harasser</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company (management) would not consider me a team player</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company wouldn't take my complaint seriously</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believed I could handle the situation myself</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of generating hostility from co-workers</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Subjects were instructed to check all that applied.

If they did report the harassment, then they were less likely to have children (42%). Thus, the existence of children affected whether or not the women felt able to tell someone about being harassed.

In addition, the marital status of the women affected whether or not they were likely to report the sexual
harassment. This difference was also statistically significant, although not in the direction logically assumed by this researcher. The assumption made was that women who were single or divorced, and thus had only one income to depend on, would be less likely to report being sexually harassed as they would fear losing their jobs. However, analysis showed that if the harassment was not reported, 21 percent were single and 58 percent were married. If the women did report the harassment, 49 percent were single compared to only 27 percent who were married. Thus, marital status greatly affects whether or not a woman would feel able to report being sexually harassed ($X^2 = 11.254, p < .01$).

Eleven women marked "other" on the questionnaire and wrote in additional reasons other than those presented. These reasons centered around either "the boss was the owner and the harasser. Who do I report him to?" or "didn't recognize it as sexual harassment." One woman even wrote that "sexual harassment hadn't been invented" and another said, "It was some years ago. I didn't know my rights."

The women who have been sexually harassed were then asked how they felt about the harassment. Table 15 shows the various emotions and the percentages answered by those women. The majority of the women reported feelings of anger (92%), with "embarrassed" and "intimidated" tying for second place (both answered by 45% of the women). Only three
percent stated they felt "flattered" by the harassment and only one percent said they felt "indifferent" or "interested." Several women wrote in their own responses and these included "annoyed," "degraded," and "disgusted." One woman even wrote that she was "terrified of what might happen if alone with him" and that she was "afraid (or hoping) that she might kill him." Obviously, these women had strong feelings regarding their experiences with sexual harassment.

TABLE 15
HOW WOMEN FELT ABOUT THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>No. of Women Agreeing</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flattered</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassed</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashamed</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidated</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Subjects were instructed to check all that applied.

Seventy percent of the women stated they believed the sexual harassment had altered their work habits and
behavior. When asked how their behavior was changed, they stated they would "try to avoid the harasser," and had become much more "careful" and "cynical." Others stated they had changed the way they dressed and now dressed more conservatively. One said that she "deliberately wore ugly, baggy clothes" to work. Several women reported extreme reactions such as having "lost respect for men in so-called power positions" and "I hate men." Many mentioned that they would never allow themselves to be put in a position to be sexually harassed again or that if it did occur, they would be much more likely to report the harassment.

An interesting question to ask the women was how long it had been since they had experienced the harassment. Twenty (26%) of the women reported it had happened within the last year. In fact, the majority (63%) of the women reported having been sexually harassed within the last five years. Some, however, reported incidents of sexual harassment that occurred over 20 years ago. Table 16 gives the breakdown by years since the sexual harassment.

Another question asked was, "At the time of the (sexual harassment) incident, how much did you need your job?" Results of this question are presented in Table 17. Sixty-eight percent reported that they needed their job "a great deal." Another 16 percent stated they needed their job "quite a bit." Only one percent said they needed their job "not at all."
TABLE 16
LENGTH OF TIME SINCE THE INCIDENT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Since Incident</th>
<th>No. of Women Replying</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 20 years ago</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 17
RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF QUESTION 8: "AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT, HOW MUCH DID YOU NEED YOUR JOB?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Needed:</th>
<th>No. of Women Agreeing</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Not at all&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A little&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Some&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Quite a bit&quot;</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A great deal&quot;</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about the age of the harasser, most of the women stated the harasser was "older than me" (39%) or "much
older than me" (28%). As can be noted in Table 18, only nine percent reported that the harasser was younger than the woman in question.

### TABLE 18

**RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF QUESTION 9: "ABOUT HOW OLD WAS THE PERSON DOING THE HARASSING?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>No. of Women Agreeing</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Much younger than me&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Younger than me&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;About my age&quot;</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Older than me&quot;</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Much older than me&quot;</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discriminant Analysis**

After using Chi-square analyses to look for significant differences between the two groups of women, discriminant analysis was performed using "perception of having experienced sexual harassment" as the dependent variable. Discriminant analysis allows the researcher to separate a sample into two or more groups using several variables to "discriminate." Variables used to discriminate were how the respondents defined sexual harassment; whether the companies the respondents worked for had formal policies prohibiting sexual harassment; the respondents' perception of the
magnitude of sexual harassment; whether specific behaviors (staring, flirting, suggestive gestures, dirty jokes, sexual remarks, touching, sexual propositions, and sexual relations) had ever happened to the respondents in the workplace; whether the respondents defined these same specific behaviors as constituting sexual harassment; the marital status, educational level, age and race of the respondents; whether the respondents had children; the amount of physical affection shown the respondents by their parents; and the geographic region in which they work.

First, all of the independent variables were considered concurrently using the simultaneous method.\(^1\) Using prior probabilities of .50 for each specified group (those who had indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment and those who stated that they had not been harassed in the workplace), the SAS\(^2\) program for discriminant analysis was used after the raw data was first standardized using a mean \(= 0\) and a standard deviation \(= 1\). Note that the two groups of women differ greatly as evidenced by the confusion (or classification) matrix shown in Table 19. Ninety-six percent (46 out of 48) of the women who had not experienced sexual harassment and 95 percent (72 out of 76) of those


women who stated that they had been sexually harassed were classified correctly using the above variables.

**TABLE 19**

CONFUSION MATRIX DERIVED FROM DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Member of Group</th>
<th>Classified into Group:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Perception of Having Been Sexually Harassed</td>
<td>46 (96%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Experiencing Sexual Harassment</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although equal prior probabilities (.50) were chosen so that each subject would have an equal probability of belonging to either group, the data was also examined using proportional probabilities to see if the difference in sample size of the two groups affected the model. Using the SAS command, PRIORS PROPORTIONAL, the program assigns probabilities based on sample size. Thus, prior probabilities of .39 to the group not sexually harassed (\( n = 48 \)) and .61 to the group who perceived that they had been harassed (\( n = 76 \)) were assigned. However, this did not change the confusion matrix at all.
Next, stepwise discriminant analysis was used to determine which of the variables contributed the most to the model. The stepwise method enters the independent variables one at a time based on their discriminating power. Thus, the first variable chosen is the one that does the best job of discriminating between the two groups. The second variable chosen is that one which improves the model the best when combined with the first variable. All other variables are included in the same manner as long as a significant contribution is made, although it is possible to remove previous variables if later combinations render them redundant. Table 20 presents the variables in their order of significance using a P-value default of 15%. The most important variable was whether or not sexual remarks had been directed toward the respondents in the workplace, followed by whether or not sexual propositions and touching had happened to the respondents. Next, the respondents' attitudes as to the magnitude or seriousness of sexual harassment, followed by whether or not flirting and staring had happened to the respondents, were added to the model. The mother's display of physical affection toward the respondents when the respondents were children, the marital status, and then the age of the respondents were all added. All together nine variables were denoted as important using stepwise discriminant analysis.
TABLE 20

SIGNIFICANT VARIABLES DERIVED FROM STEPWISE DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Variable Entered*</th>
<th>Partial R²</th>
<th>F Statistic</th>
<th>Prob. &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>HREMARKS</td>
<td>.5170</td>
<td>130.581</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>HPROPOSI</td>
<td>.1513</td>
<td>21.569</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>HTOUCHIN</td>
<td>.0929</td>
<td>12.188</td>
<td>.0006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MAGNITUB</td>
<td>.0321</td>
<td>3.949</td>
<td>.0492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>HFLIRTIN</td>
<td>.0387</td>
<td>4.757</td>
<td>.0312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>HSTARING</td>
<td>.0304</td>
<td>3.664</td>
<td>.0580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>MOTHERB</td>
<td>.0205</td>
<td>2.430</td>
<td>.1217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>MARITALA</td>
<td>.0221</td>
<td>2.604</td>
<td>.1093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>AGECE</td>
<td>.0238</td>
<td>2.779</td>
<td>.0983</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Variables are defined in Appendix C.

After the stepwise procedure indicated those variables deemed significant in the model, canonical discriminant analysis was performed to find the value and slope of the coefficients. Table 21 presents the canonical coefficients of the nine significant variables. Of importance here is the absolute value and sign of the coefficients. As can be observed, whether or not sexual remarks have been directed toward the respondents has a major impact on whether the respondents perceive that they have been sexually harassed. In addition, whether touching, propositions, and staring have happened to the respondents all affect their perception of harassment in that order of influence. Last, the mother's behavior toward her daughter (i.e., if she rarely showed physical displays of affection) affected whether the
respondents would be placed in the group that perceived sexual harassment had been directed toward them in the workplace.

TABLE 21
STANDARDIZED CANONICAL COEFFICIENTS DERIVED FROM DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable*</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HREMARKS</td>
<td>1.1520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPROPOSI</td>
<td>0.4020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTOUCHIN</td>
<td>0.5070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAGNITUB</td>
<td>-0.2454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFLIRTIN</td>
<td>-0.3160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSTARING</td>
<td>0.2904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTHERB</td>
<td>0.2359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARITALA</td>
<td>-0.2142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGEC</td>
<td>-0.1967</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Variables are defined in Appendix C.

Membership in the other group (those who state that they have not been sexually harassed in the workplace) was determined by four variables. The most significant variable here was having experienced flirting directed toward them. Next, the subjects' response as to the magnitude of sexual harassment affected their membership in this group. If the respondents replied that sexual harassment was a problem of minor importance, they were more likely to be placed in the group that stated that they had not been sexually harassed. The other two variables were whether the respondents were divorced or separated and between the ages of 41-50.
In summary, an excellent model was developed with a discriminant function (the canonical coefficients) that correctly classified 95 percent of the respondents. The most important discriminating variable was the presence of sexual remarks directed toward the respondents in the workplace.

**Testing of Hypotheses**

Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, were tested using a test for proportions between two large independent samples. Hypothesis 3 was tested using a population proportion test and Hypothesis 7 involved the use of the Chi-square test for independence.

The analysis of the first hypothesis, that women who have experienced a specific act or behavior in the workplace would be more likely to perceive that act as sexual harassment, is provided in Table 22. A test for proportions between two large independent samples using the standard normal (Z) statistic was performed using the following equation:

\[
Z = \frac{\hat{p}_1 - \hat{p}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n_1} + \frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n_2}}}
\]

---

where  
\[ \hat{P}_1 = \frac{x_1}{n_1} \]
\[ \hat{P}_2 = \frac{x_2}{n_2} \]

and  
\[ \bar{p} = \frac{x_1 + x_2}{n_1 + n_2} \]

and testing the following hypothesis:

Ho:  \( P_1 \leq P_2 \)
Ha:  \( P_1 > P_2 \)

where \( p_1 \) is the proportion of women who have experienced a specific act or behavior in the workplace and also perceive that same act to be sexual harassment

and \( p_2 \) is the proportion of women who defined a specific act or behavior as sexual harassment but have not experienced that same act in the workplace.

Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected if the derived \( Z \) value is greater than the test statistic with an alpha level of .05. Of the eight specific acts or behaviors tested, three ("Staring," "Flirting," and "Touching") allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis and thus to state that there was a greater proportion of women who defined those specific acts as sexual harassment if they had experienced those acts in the workplace than women who defined those acts as sexual harassment but had not experienced them. Thus, the acts of staring, flirting, and touching are perceived as acts of sexual harassment primarily by those women who had experienced those acts in the workplace.
TABLE 22
RESULTS OF TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act/Behavior</th>
<th>Z Value</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staring</td>
<td>3.220</td>
<td>Reject Ho; ( p &lt; .001 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flirting</td>
<td>1.870</td>
<td>Reject Ho; ( p = .030 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestive Gestures</td>
<td>.649</td>
<td>Fail to reject Ho.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirty Jokes</td>
<td>.930</td>
<td>Fail to reject Ho.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual remarks</td>
<td>1.240</td>
<td>Fail to reject Ho.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>1.760</td>
<td>Reject Ho; ( p = .039 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Propositions</td>
<td>.796</td>
<td>Fail to reject Ho.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Relations</td>
<td>1.340</td>
<td>Fail to reject Ho.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 2, that women who perceive that they have been sexually harassed are more likely to view sexual harassment as a problem of major importance than women who have not been sexually harassed, also involved a test for proportions between two large independent samples and tested the following.

\[ \text{Ho: } \pi_1 \leq \pi_2 \]
\[ \text{Ha: } \pi_1 > \pi_2 \]

where \( \pi_1 \) = the proportion of women who perceive they have been sexually harassed and view sexual harassment as a problem of major importance

and \( \pi_2 \) = the proportion of women who state that they have not been sexually harassed but still view sexual harassment as a problem of major importance.
As Table 23 indicates, the test yielded a Z score of 4.33, thus resulting in rejecting the null hypothesis with a p-value < .001. Women who have been sexually harassed are significantly more likely to view sexual harassment as a major problem than women who have not experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Having Experienced Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>Magnitude of Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>Believe it to be A Serious Problem</th>
<th>Minor or Not Really a Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No&quot;</td>
<td>24 (50%)</td>
<td>24 (50%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes&quot;</td>
<td>65 (86%)</td>
<td>11 (14%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Z Value = 4.33; p < .0001

Regarding Hypothesis 3, that men who are described as "older" or "much older" than the women they are working with are more likely to have their behavior perceived as sexual harassment than men the same age or younger than the women, a test for population proportion was used.\(^4\) Since \(np_0 = (76)(.50) = 38\) and \(n(1-p_0) = (76)(.50) = 38\) and both are > 5, a large-sample test statistic can be used as follows.

\(^4\)Ibid., 343.
\[
Z = \frac{\hat{p} - p_0}{\sqrt{\frac{p_0(1-p_0)}{n}}}
\]

Using an alpha level of .05, the following was tested.

\[
\begin{align*}
H_0: \ p &\leq .50 \\
H_a: \ p &> .50
\end{align*}
\]

where \(\hat{p}\) = the proportion of men who are described as "older" or "much older" than the women they are working with.

As indicated in Table 24, a Z value of 2.96 (\(p = .002\)) was obtained and thus the null hypothesis was rejected. Men described as "older" or "much older" than the women they work with are more likely to have their behavior perceived as sexual harassment.

**TABLE 24**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range of &quot;Harasser&quot;</th>
<th>No. of Women Agreeing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same age or younger than the women</td>
<td>25 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older or much older than the women</td>
<td>51 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(Z\) Value = 2.96; \(p = .002\)

In testing Hypothesis 4, that women who receive a great deal of physical affection as a child from their mothers or
their fathers are less likely to view acts such as staring, flirting, and touching as sexual harassment than those women who come from a reserved family background, two separate tests were necessary. A test for proportions between two large independent samples was performed first using the women's perceptions of the acts of staring, flirting, and touching, and how they were treated as children by their fathers to test the following.

\[ H_0: \pi_1 \leq \pi_2 \]
\[ H_a: \pi_1 > \pi_2 \]

where \( \pi_1 \) = the proportion of women who rarely or never received physical displays of affection as a child from their fathers and who perceive acts such as staring, flirting, and touching as sexual harassment

and \( \pi_2 \) = the proportion of women who received a great deal of physical affection as a child from their fathers and who perceive acts such as staring, flirting, and touching as sexual harassment.

Then the same tests were run using their mother's behavior to test the following.

\[ H_0: \pi_1 \leq \pi_2 \]
\[ H_a: \pi_1 > \pi_2 \]

where \( \pi_1 \) = the proportion of women who rarely or never received physical displays of affection as a child from their mothers and who perceive acts such as staring, flirting, and touching as sexual harassment

and \( \pi_2 \) = the proportion of women who received a great deal of physical affection as a child from their mothers and who perceive acts such as staring, flirting, and touching as sexual harassment.
As shown in Table 25, overall there was no significant difference between women who received a great deal of physical affection as a child and those women who did not in regard to defining staring, flirting, or touching as sexual harassment. However, one statistically significant difference did exist. Women who rarely or never received physical affection from their fathers were much more likely to define touching as sexual harassment ($Z = 2.21$, $p = .014$).

Table 26 presents the information used to test Hypothesis 5, that younger women (40 and under) are more likely to be sexually harassed than older women. Again, a test for proportions was used to test the following:

$$
\begin{align*}
\text{Ho: } & \ p_1 \leq p_2 \\
\text{Ha: } & \ p_1 > p_2
\end{align*}
$$

where $p_1 = \text{the proportion of women, 40 and younger, who perceived that they had been sexually harassed in the workplace}$

and $p_2 = \text{the proportion of women, 41 and older, who stated that they have been sexually harassed in the workplace}$.

A $Z$ value of .344 was obtained, thus leading to the conclusion of a failure to reject $\text{Ho}$ using a alpha level of .05. Therefore, the age of the women is not a factor as far as sexual harassment or at least the perception of having experienced sexual harassment is concerned.
### TABLE 25
RESULTS OF TESTING HYPOTHESIS 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defined as Sexual Harassment by Respondents</th>
<th>Father Displayed Physical Affection</th>
<th>Z-Value</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Rarely/Never</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staring</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flirting</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2.210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defined as Sexual Harassment by Respondents</th>
<th>Mother Displayed Physical Affection</th>
<th>Z-Value</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Rarely/Never</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staring</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flirting</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.640</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 26

RESULTS OF TESTING HYPOTHESIS 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Having Experienced Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>Women 40 and Younger</th>
<th>Women 41 and Older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No&quot;</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes&quot;</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Z Value = .344, p = .365

Hypothesis 6, that single or divorced/separated women are more likely to perceive that they have been sexually harassed than married women or women involved in a serious relationship, also involved a test of proportions using the standard normal (Z) test statistic. The following null hypothesis was tested.

\[ \text{Ho: } \pi_1 \leq \pi_2 \]
\[ \text{Ha: } \pi_1 > \pi_2 \]

where \( \pi_1 \) = the proportion of single, divorced, or separated women who perceive that they have been sexually harassed

and \( \pi_2 \) = the proportion of married women or women involved in a serious relationship who perceive that they have been sexually harassed.

Table 27 presents the data used to yield a Z value of 1.45. As the derived Z value was less than the test
statistic with an alpha value of .05, the researcher failed to reject $H_0$. Thus, single or divorced/separated women are **not** more likely to perceive that they have been sexually harassed than married women or women involved in a serious relationship.

**TABLE 27**

RESULTS OF TESTING HYPOTHESIS 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Having Experienced Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single/Divorced/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married/in Separated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No&quot;</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes&quot;</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$Z$ Value $= 1.45; \ p = .074$

In Hypothesis 7, that there will be a significant difference regarding perception of having experienced sexual harassment and the geographic region in which the respondents work, the Chi-square test of independence was used to test the following.

$H_0$: perception of sexual harassment is independent of geographic region

$H_1$: perception is dependent on geographic region.
As can be seen in Table 28, the original eight geographic regions were collapsed into six regions to allow for large enough sample sizes to test. However, no significant difference existed between the area of the country in which the respondents worked and whether or not the women believed that they had been sexually harassed in the workplace ($X^2 = 1.275, p = .937$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Perception of Having Been Sexually Harassed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Yes&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2 = 1.275; p = .937$

As discussed previously in this chapter, the two groups of women (those who perceive that they have been sexually harassed in the workplace and those who state that they have not been harassed) did not differ as far as age, race, marital status, educational level, geographic location, and whether or not they had children. In addition, the two
groups did not differ in regards to family history of physical displays of affection. However, there were significant differences in defining sexual harassment, determining the magnitude of sexual harassment, and in whether or not specific acts or behaviors had been directed toward the women in the workplace. Also, men described as "older" or "much older" were much more likely to have their behavior perceived as sexual harassment than men the same age or younger than the women.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will summarize the results of this study and present conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data. In particular, the results of testing the hypotheses will be examined in light of the value of this research study and recommendations for future research will be presented.

Introduction

The Supreme Court ruled on the issue of sexual harassment for the first time on June 19, 1986. Before this landmark decision, the courts had recognized only quid pro quo sexual harassment in which economic consequences were suffered—loss of a promotion, raise, or the job itself—if sexual advances were refused. However, with the High Court's decision in the Meritor Savings Bank, FSB v. Vinson¹ case, "hostile environment" is now also considered sexual harassment and is thus a type of disparate treatment actionable under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A problem exists, though, in defining "hostile environment." Although the EEOC has stated that a hostile environment is an

"intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment," there is no consensus as to what is "offensive" behavior. Complicating the issue is the EEOC's, and thus the courts, emphasis on perception by the victim in determining what constitutes a hostile environment.

The question posed by this researcher was, can women be placed in differing strata based on their perceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment? In other words, are there demographic variables that affect whether or not women will perceive various acts or behaviors as sexual harassment? It was hypothesized that variables such as age (both of the women and the men with whom they work), marital status, and geographic region would affect the women's perceptions of sexual harassment. In addition, their perceptions might be affected by their family background (i.e., by whether their parents engaged in open displays of physical affection).

Another purpose of this dissertation was to ascertain the magnitude of sexual harassment. How many women claim to have been sexually harassed in the workplace? If they perceive that they have been harassed, how serious do they think the problem of sexual harassment is? Also, are they more likely to perceive behaviors such as staring, flirting,

---

touching, and dirty jokes as sexual harassment if they have been exposed to these behaviors in the workplace?

**Results of Hypothesis Testing**

As discussed in Chapter IV and summarized in Table 29, interesting revelations were disclosed in testing the hypotheses. In fact, the hypotheses (5, 6, and 7) that were deemed not statistically significant produced some of the more interesting results. Younger women are not more likely to be sexually harassed than older women. Neither are single or divorced women more likely to experience sexual harassment than married women or women involved in serious relationships. All women, regardless of age or marital status, are vulnerable to sexual harassment. Geographic location also has no bearing on whether or not women will perceive they have experienced sexual harassment.

One significant finding was that men who are described as "older" or "much older" than the women they work with are more likely to have their behavior perceived as sexual harassment. This has important implications for "older" bosses in terms of their management style and behavior with "younger" subordinates, co-workers, and peers.

As to the magnitude of sexual harassment, women who perceived that they had been harassed are significantly more likely to view sexual harassment as a major problem in the workplace. In addition, if the women state that they have
TABLE 29

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF HYPOTHESES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1: Women who have experienced a specific act in the workplace are more likely to perceive that same act as sexual harassment.</td>
<td>Significant for &quot;Staring,&quot; ( p &lt; .001 ); &quot;Flirting,&quot; ( p = .031 ); &quot;Touching,&quot; ( p = .039 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2: Women who perceive they have been sexually harassed are more likely to view sexual harassment as a problem of major importance than women who have not been harassed.</td>
<td>Significant ( p &lt; .0001 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3: Men who are described as &quot;older&quot; or &quot;much older&quot; than the women they are working with are more likely to have their behavior perceived as sexual harassment than men the same age or younger than the women.</td>
<td>Significant ( p = .014 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4: Women who receive a great deal of physical affection as a child from their father or their mother are less likely to view acts such as staring, flirting, and touching as sexual harassment than those women who come from a reserved family background.</td>
<td>Not statistically significant except for High v. Low touching by Father ( p = .026 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5: Younger women (40 and under) are more likely to be sexually harassed than older women.</td>
<td>Not statistically significant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6: Single or divorced women are more likely to be sexually harassed than married women or women involved in a serious relationship.</td>
<td>Not statistically significant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7: There is a significant difference regarding whether or not women perceive they have been sexually harassed and the geographic region in which they work.</td>
<td>Not statistically significant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
experienced staring, flirting, and touching directed toward them in the workplace, they are much more likely to view these acts as constituting sexual harassment. Women who had not experienced these acts tended not to consider them to be sexual harassment. Whether or not the women had been exposed to these acts in the workplace had more influence on their perceptions than their family background (i.e., whether their family engaged in or refrained from open displays of affection). One exception to this was if the women rarely or never received physical displays of affection from their father. These women were then much more likely to view touching as sexual harassment than women who had received a great deal of physical affection from their father. However, there was a consensus that more overt behaviors such as suggestive gestures, sexual remarks, and sexual propositions could be sexual harassment regardless of whether or not the women perceived they had been sexually harassed themselves.

Additional Findings

Other interesting findings were disclosed in the course of this study, although not explicitly presented as hypotheses. An important discovery was in how women define sexual harassment. Of the 61 percent who stated that they had been sexually harassed in the workplace, the majority of the women interpreted sexual harassment to mean "hostile environment." If they did not perceive that they had been
harassed, they were significantly more likely to define sexual harassment as "quid pro quo." Thus, the women's definition of sexual harassment affected whether or not they perceived that they had experienced harassment in the workplace. In addition, the occurrence of behaviors such as staring, flirting, suggestive gestures, touching, sexual remarks, sexual propositions, and sexual relations all appear to affect whether or not women believe they have been sexually harassed. However, the telling of dirty jokes did not appear to be perceived as constituting sexual harassment even though both groups of women (those who perceived that they had been sexually harassed and those who stated they had not been harassed) said they had experienced dirty jokes in the workplace. One woman did think that dirty jokes were a form of sexual harassment but commented that she "agreed to hear them by not exiting the area."

As far as educational level, age, race, marital status, or existence of children, none of these variables affected whether or not the women perceived being victims of sexual harassment. In addition, whether or not the companies the women worked for had formal policies prohibiting sexual harassment did not affect the women's perceptions. This could have important implications for employers as obviously the mere existence of formal policies on sexual harassment is not enough.
Since 70 percent of the women who stated that they had been sexually harassed said that their work habits and behavior had been altered by the harassment, employers should be concerned with eliminating this problem. Numerous women mentioned lowered morale and productivity as a result of the harassment, and one woman went on to say she "felt helpless and frustrated--it affected my whole life." Almost all of the women stated that they were angry about the harassment, in addition to being embarrassed and intimidated. The consensus of many was that in the future, they would be much more likely to take action and report the harassment.

However, in this study, over half of the women who stated that they had been sexually harassed in the workplace did not report the harassment. The ones who did report it tended to tell their bosses, friends, or co-workers. It is not known, though, who perpetrated the harassment. It would be interesting to know whether in these cases where the women told their bosses or their co-workers, were these the people who had committed the harassment? Also, interesting was the fact that only two (6%) of the women stated that they had told their spouses. In fact, if married, the women were much more likely not to report the harassment. This could be because they were afraid either that their husbands would blame them for encouraging the behavior or the reason could be because they were afraid of their husbands' reactions. The men might be likely to either cause problems for the
harassers (and thus for the women at work) or demand that their wives quit their jobs. Sixty-three percent stated that they believed they could handle the situation themselves so perhaps this was why they did not tell their husbands. Another 63 percent stated that they were afraid that the employers would not take their complaint seriously and thus did not report the harassment. One woman even emphasized that she was "so mad about all of this but no one seems to take it seriously--my husband included." This ties back to the issue of the magnitude of sexual harassment. As noted in this study and in a previous study\(^3\) by this researcher, people who have not been exposed to sexual harassment tend to state that it is not really a problem or a minor problem at the most.

How do the women say they prevent (or cope with) sexual harassment? Several women stated that they conducted themselves very professionally and were not overly friendly to the people with whom they worked. Others stated that they had learned very early to say, "thanks but no thanks." One apparently successful ploy used by several of the women was to either turn the harassing behavior back on the harasser or to at least threaten to do so. A consensus among a number of women was to "never let them see you sweat." As one woman

\(^3\)Delaney J. Kirk and James D. Powell, "Gender Differences in the Perception of Sexual Harassment," to be presented at the National Academy of Management meeting August 7-10, 1988, in Anaheim, California.
stated, "it (the sexual harassment) should not be taken so seriously. I have learned over the years to crack back and make a joke about it. Then you become 'one of the guys,' and no more is said and you are treated more as an equal."
Another woman emphasized this point by saying, "if they find you can be upset by the remarks, they do it on purpose to get a rise out of you."

**Topics for Future Research**

An interesting area for exploration is, why do harassers continue their "offensive" behavior? Part of the problem may be due to preconceived notions as to how their behaviors are viewed. Previous research revealed that 46 percent of the men surveyed believed that women would be flattered by sexual harassment. However, as noted in Chapter IV, only three percent of the women in this study stated that they were actually flattered by the attention. One woman reported her boss's behavior to his boss who thought, "it all a big joke (sic) and wondered why the man persisted." Perhaps further research on sexual harassment as an expression of power would yield insight into this question. The women themselves may be able to articulate why they think the harassers persist in their behavior.

Another question of interest is to determine who is doing the harassing—supervisors, co-workers, or others. If

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4Ibid.
the majority of the harassers are the bosses of the persons being harassed, this might indicated that sexual harassment is an issue of power, rather than miscommunication. Also, why do women refrain from telling their husbands about the incidents of sexual harassment?

A significant contribution of this study is the questionnaire itself which has been refined and tested three times. As this study was limited by money and time to a sample size of 800, future research could be done using a larger sample drawn from a more heterogeneous population such as the mailing list of Time, Newsweek, or TV Guide magazine. Another possibility might be the mailing list of a periodical aimed at women in the workplace such as Working Women. In fact, the editors of Working Women might be persuaded to print the questionnaire within their magazine in exchange for a summary of the results which could be shared with their readers.

An assumption made by this researcher was that by enclosing the questionnaires within the 9to5's newsletter, the return rate would be much higher. However, this proved not to be true. Thus, the return rate of 16 percent is a concern to the validity of this study and perhaps more research needs to be done to substantiate these findings. Another potential bias is that only those women who have been sexually harassed would answer the questionnaire. However, as Chapter IV revealed, 39 percent of the women who returned
their questionnaires stated that they had not been sexually harassed. In addition, the percentage of women who perceived that they had been harassed (61%) was in line with previous studies on sexual harassment. Working Women United Institute reported 70 percent, Redbook magazine found 88 percent, the Merit Systems Protection Board Study revealed 42 percent, Gutek reported 53 percent, and this researcher found 70 percent of the women in a previous study had been sexually harassed. Thus, even though the return rate was small, the findings were in line with previous research on sexual harassment.

Summary

A significant contribution of this dissertation is the questionnaire itself which was designed to measure the impact and magnitude of sexual harassment. This instrument was used to collect perceptions of working women from all over the United States. Of particular interest was how women operationally define sexual harassment. It was discovered that the majority of the women defined sexual harassment as

an "intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment," thus interpreting a "hostile environment" form of sexual harassment. As hostile environment is more difficult to ascertain than quid pro quo sexual harassment, this has important implications for employers.

In using discriminant analysis to separate the two groups of women (those who perceived that they had been sexually harassed in the workplace and those who stated that they had not been harassed), a model was developed to correctly classify 95 percent of the women. After using stepwise analysis to indicate those variables most important in deriving the model, the discriminant function made up of the canonical coefficients was produced. From this function could be ascertained which variables influenced membership in the two groups. Of importance to employers are which variables contribute the most to women's perceptions that they have been sexually harassed. None of the demographic variables were found to influence this perception. However, the women would perceive they had been sexually harassed if sexual remarks, touching, sexual propositions, and staring were directed toward them in the workplace. Thus, these acts must be perceived as constituting a hostile environment. Fortunately for employers in regard to these acts is that all these behaviors could be influenced (and thus prevented) by training programs and policies directed toward making employees aware of the impact of their behavior. In
addition, employers might conduct their own studies as to what they could do to prevent the harassment and also what steps could be taken to establish a reporting procedure that women would feel comfortable using. As the EEOC has stated, "(an employer) is responsible for its acts and those of its agent and supervisory agents with respect to sexual harassment regardless of whether the specific acts complained of were authorized or even forbidden by the employer and regardless of whether the employer knew or should have known of the occurrence."

Determining how women define sexual harassment should be of value in establishing policies and procedures to eliminate this problem in the workplace.

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APPENDIX A
Dear Member:

As a member of 9to5, National Association of Working Women, you have indicated your interest and concern for issues affecting working women. I, too, am interested in doing anything I can to help women in the workplace.

As a doctoral student at North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, I am currently gathering data for my Ph.D. dissertation on sexual harassment in the workplace. Your help in filling out the enclosed questionnaire will enable me to find some answers to this issue. To insure confidentiality, please do not put your name on the questionnaire.

In return for your assistance, I will provide 9to5 with a summary of my findings, which they have indicated will be included in a later newsletter. After completing the questionnaire, please fold so that my address is on the outside and either staple or tape the pages closed. As you can see, I have included a stamp for your convenience. The questionnaire will only take about five minutes of your time. Won't you please take a few minutes now to help with an issue important to all of us? Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

(Ms.) Delaney J. Kirk
QUESTIONNAIRE

The following is a questionnaire for a pilot study to determine the perceptions of working women on the issue of sexual harassment. Do not use your name and please answer the questions in as much detail as possible. Thank you for your help.

1. How do you define sexual harassment?

2. Have you ever experienced this type of sexual harassment? (according to your definition).

   _____ Yes
   _____ No
   (If you answered no, please skip questions 3 through 9 and answer the rest of the questionnaire).

3. If "yes", did you report the sexual harassment?

   _____ Yes (to whom?)
   _____ No (Boss, Friend, Co-worker)

4. If you did not report the sexual harassment, why not? (Check all that apply)

   _____ Afraid company would fire me.
   _____ Afraid company would fire the harasser.
   _____ Afraid of retaliation from harasser.
   _____ Company (management) would not consider me a "team player."
   _____ Company wouldn't take my complaint seriously.
   _____ Believed I could handle the situation myself.
   _____ Fear of generating hostility from co-workers.
   _____ Other (please explain)
5. If you have been sexually harassed, how did you feel? (Check all that apply to the work setting).

- ______ Angry
- ______ Confused
- ______ Flattered
- ______ Embarrassed
- ______ Ashamed
- ______ Indifferent
- ______ Intimidated
- ______ Guilty
- ______ Other (please explain)

6. Do you feel the sexual harassment has altered your work habits or behavior?

- ______ Yes  How? (Please explain.) __________________________
- ______ No  __________________________

7. How long ago did you experience the sexual harassment?

8. At the time of the incident, how much did you need your job?

- ______ Not at all
- ______ A little
- ______ Some
- ______ Quite a bit
- ______ A great deal

9. About what age was the person doing the harassing?

- ______ Much younger than me.
- ______ Younger than me.
- ______ About my age.
- ______ Older than me.
- ______ Much older than me.
10. Do you think sexual harassment in the work place is:

______ A serious problem.
______ A minor problem.
______ Not really a problem.

11. Does the company you work for have a written policy regarding sexual harassment?

______ Yes
______ No
______ Don't know
______ Currently not working

12. Have any of the following ever been directed toward you in the workplace? (Check all that apply.)

______ Staring
______ Flirting
______ Suggestive gestures
______ Dirty jokes
______ Sexual remarks
______ Touching
______ Sexual propositions
______ Sexual relations
______ Other (Please explain) ____________________________

13. Which of the following, if any, do you feel is "sexual harassment?" (Check all that apply.)

______ Staring
______ Flirting
______ Suggestive gestures
______ Dirty jokes
______ Sexual remarks
______ Touching (grabbing)
______ Sexual propositions
______ Sexual relations
______ Other (Please explain.) ____________________________

14. Your marital status?

______ Single
______ Single; in serious relationship
______ Married
______ Divorced or separated
15. ____________________________ Job Title

16. ________________________ Type of Industry

17. Highest educational level obtained:
   ______ Less than high school degree
   ______ High school diploma
   ______ Some college
   ______ Bachelor's degree
   ______ Master's degree

18. Do you have children?
   ______ Yes  ______ No

19. Your age?
   ______ Under 21
   ______ 21-30 years old
   ______ 31-40 years old
   ______ 41-50 years old
   ______ 51-60 years old
   ______ 61-70 years old
   ______ over 70

20. What is your race?
   ______ American Indian or Alaskan Native
   ______ Asian or Pacific Islander
   ______ Black; not of Hispanic origin
   ______ Hispanic
   ______ White, not of Hispanic origin
   ______ Other; please specify

21. Where is your present job located? (indicate by state)
22. When you were a child, did your father engage in open displays of physical affection (hugging, kissing, etc.)?

_____ Frequently
_____ Occasionally
_____ Rarely
_____ Never

23. When you were a child, did your mother engage in open displays of physical affection?

_____ Frequently
_____ Occasionally
_____ Rarely
_____ Never

Thank you for your help.
APPENDIX C
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERCEPT</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject perceived she has been sexually harassed in the workplace based on her definition of sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFINE</td>
<td>Definition of sexual harassment given by subject and coded as either hostile environment, quid pro quo, or both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPORTED</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject reported the sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHYNOTA</td>
<td>Whether or not reason given by subject as to why she did not report the harassment was &quot;afraid company would fire me.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHYNOTB</td>
<td>Whether or not reason given by subject as to why she did not report the harassment was &quot;afraid company would fire the harasser.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHYNOTC</td>
<td>Whether or not reason given by subject as to why she did not report the harassment was &quot;afraid of retaliation from harasser.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHYNOTD</td>
<td>Whether or not reason given by subject as to why she did not report the harassment was &quot;afraid company would not consider me a 'team player'.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHYNOTE</td>
<td>Whether or not reason given by subject as to why she did not report the harassment was &quot;afraid company would not take my complaint seriously.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHYNOTF</td>
<td>Whether or not reason given by subject as to why she did not report the harassment was &quot;believed I could handle the situation myself.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHYNOTG</td>
<td>Whether or not reason given by subject as to why she did not report the harassment was a &quot;fear of generating hostility from co-workers.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHYOTHER</td>
<td>&quot;Other&quot; reason given as to why subject did not report the harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGRY</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject indicated angry as a reaction to being sexually harassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFUSED</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject indicated confused as a reaction to being sexually harassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLATTER</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject indicated flattered as a reaction to being sexually harassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMBARRAS</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject indicated embarrassed as a reaction to being sexually harassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASHAMED</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject indicated ashamed as a reaction to being sexually harassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIFFER</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject indicated indifferent as a reaction to being sexually harassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTIMIDA</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject indicated intimidated as a reaction to being sexually harassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUILTY</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject indicated guilty as a reaction to being sexually harassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTEREST</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject indicated interested as a reaction to being sexually harassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject indicated another reason other than those given as a reaction to being sexually harassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFFECTS</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject indicated that the sexual harassment had altered her work behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LENGTH</td>
<td>The length of time since the incident of sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEED</td>
<td>How badly the subject needed her job at the time of the incident of sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGEOF</td>
<td>The age of the harasser.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAGNITUDE</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject believes sexual harassment in the workplace to be a serious problem, minor problem, or not really a problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICY</td>
<td>Whether or not the company the subject works for has a written policy regarding sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSTARING</td>
<td>Whether or not staring has been directed toward the subject in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFLIRTIN</td>
<td>Whether or not flirting has been directed toward the subject in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HGESTURE</td>
<td>Whether or not suggestive gestures have been directed toward the subject in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HJOKES</td>
<td>Whether or not dirty jokes have been directed toward the subject in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HREMARKS</td>
<td>Whether or not sexual remarks have been directed toward the subject in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTOUCHIN</td>
<td>Whether or not touching had happened to the subject in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPROPOSI</td>
<td>Whether or not sexual propositions have been directed toward the subject in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRELATIO</td>
<td>Whether or not sexual relations have happened to the subject in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOTHER</td>
<td>Whether or not other behaviors have happened to the subject in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSTARING</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject believes suggestive gesture to be sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFLIRTIN</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject believes flirting to be sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGESTURE</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject believes suggestive gestures to be sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJOKES</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject believes dirty jokes to be sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DREMARKS</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject believes sexual remarks to be sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTOUCHIN</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject believes touching to be sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRPOPOSI</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject believes sexual propositions to be sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRELATIO</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject believes sexual relations to be sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOTHER</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject mentioned other behaviors as constituting sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARITAL</td>
<td>The marital status of the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUC</td>
<td>The highest educational level the subject has completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILD</td>
<td>Whether or not the subject has at least one child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>The age of the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACE</td>
<td>The race of the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATHER</td>
<td>Whether or not the father of the subject engaged in open displays of affection toward the subject when the subject was a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTHER</td>
<td>Whether or not the mother of the subject engaged in open displays of affection toward the subject when the subject was a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>The geographic location in which the subject works.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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