

EXAMINING ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON A  
UNIVERSITY CAMPUS:  
WHAT ROLE DO MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES PLAY?

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## Abstract

The attitudes reflecting the apathy our society feels toward sexual harassment is indicated throughout our culture. Many studies focusing on attitudes toward sexual harassment and attitudes toward women have shown the need for continued research. The current study examined attitudes toward sexual harassment and compared them to other attitudes toward women and rape myth acceptance because of increasing evidence that these attitudes are complex and require further study. Three research questions were sought to be answered through this research: 1) Does sexual harassment education/training have an affect on respondent's acceptance of sexual harassment; 2) Do male and female respondents hold similar myth acceptance attitudes and/or does support for sexist beliefs in general vary by gender; 3) How closely are acceptance of sexual harassment mythologies related to acceptance of other negative attitudes toward women, if these attitudes are related at all? Findings showed that the several different attitudes towards women examined were all related to one another and gender differences were found in regards to sexual harassment tolerance.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Review of the Literature

#### History of Sexual Harassment

During the 1960s and 1970s, women (especially white middle class women) began to enter the workplace in unprecedented numbers (Zippel, 2006). A major focus of the Women's Movement at that time was equal rights and equality (Zippel, 2006), including access to and working conditions in the workplace. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 played a major role in this effort when Congress made discrimination based on sex illegal (Baker, 2007; EEOC, 1999; Zippel, 2006). While Title VII did not specifically address sexual harassment, it became the vehicle for allowing victims to pursue legal action when they experienced harassment. Prior to this time, sexual harassment had merely been considered a way of life for many, if not most, women in the workforce (Baker, 2007; MacKinnon, 1979). In the 1970s, women's grassroots movements and feminist authors who coined the term "sexual harassment" (Baker, 2007; Zippel, 2006) contributed to a legal doctrine that recognized sexual harassment as a violation of law because it was a form of sex discrimination.

One of the legal scholars and advocates to define sexual harassment was Catherine MacKinnon. In her groundbreaking work on the subject, she conceptualized sexual harassment as the "unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power" (1979, p.1). MacKinnon (1979) reasoned sexual harassment is considered a form of sex discrimination because its occurrence is due to the gender of the victim and the acts of sexual harassment occur and recur through the regulation of inferiority based on sex. Such regulation of inferiority of individuals based



on their sex or gender is the basis of sex discrimination, and sexual harassment is a tool of sex discrimination to enforce gender superiority (MacKinnon, 1979). Due to the efforts of feminists such as MacKinnon and victims willing to pursue claims of sexual harassment as a violation of Title VII, harassment began to take shape as both a legal and social construct.

As the lower federal courts began, through their rulings, to accept the notion of harassment as a form of sexual discrimination, enforcement efforts expanded at the federal level through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). EEOC is the federal agency charged with enforcement and implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the agency has played a major role in the development of sexual harassment policies. By creating definitions and policies dealing with sexual harassment, the agency legitimized the issue and, over the years, Chairs of the agency set the tone for enforcing sexual harassment. For example, Zippel (2006) notes that when Eleanor Norton was the chair from 1977 to 1981, she and, consequently, the EEOC took an active role in sexual harassment as a legal and policy issue as opposed to her successor, Clarence Thomas. Thomas did not regard sexual harassment as an important priority for the agency and he was later accused of sexual harassment by an employee at the EEOC. Nonetheless, the EEOC's pursuit of sexual harassment policy development has led to guidelines specifically defining sexual harassment, and also played a role in the outcomes of important appellate and Supreme Court cases. In fact, EEOC guidelines which first established definitions of sexual harassment were passed in 1980, at the same time that lower courts were debating whether or not sexual harassment was a form of sexual discrimination and therefore actionable under Title VII. For example, Zippel (2006) cited

a 1976 case, *Tomkins v. Public Service Electric and Gas Co.*, in which Circuit Judge Stern expressed this concern:

Title VII was enacted in order to remove those artificial barriers to full employment which are based upon unjust and long-encrusted prejudice. Its aim is to make careers open to males irrespective of race or sex. It is not intended to provide a federal tort remedy for what amounts to physical attack motivated by sexual desire on the part of a supervisor and which happened to occur in a corporate corridor rather than a back alley.

In 1986, in *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, the United States Supreme Court heard the first case specifically addressing this issue (Baker, 2007; Zippel, 2006). The Court ruled both quid pro quo and hostile environment forms of sexual harassment constituted sex discrimination and were actionable under Title VII (*Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, 1986) when these acts were considered unwelcome by the person targeted for harassment. The Court also held sexual harassment does not have to entail an economic effect on the employee, and that the mere existence of a grievance procedure against discrimination in an institution does not automatically insulate the institution from liability (*Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, 1986). However, the Court also indirectly endorsed some victim blaming attitudes when they noted that it was allowable to examine evidence relevant to the victims' sexually provocative speech, actions, and dress as a way to determine whether or not advances were unwelcome (*Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, 1986). As such, the Court implicitly supported age old rape myths that victims sometimes "ask for" or "provoke" their victimization.

While *Meritor* was a landmark victory for advocates of sexual harassment policies and solidified sexual harassment as a violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it did not automatically make sexual harassment claims easy to prove. It did, however, call the sexual harassment victim's actions into question and validate myths of victim precipitation. The U.S. Supreme Court was not the only court, though, to both advance sexual harassment awareness and reproduce sexual harassment myths. State and federal courts alike considered arguments such as: the victims lie, the victims were "asking for it," it was a simple misunderstanding, and/or sexual harassment was not harming victims (Zippel, 2006).

Other legal advances, however, have been made in the area. For example, the 1991 case of *Ellison v. Brady* applied the "reasonable woman's standard" to cases of sexual harassment, which was a major break-through for these cases. This ruling validated feminist arguments that sexual harassment was chiefly a concern for women, and that it should be viewed from the woman's point of view. It also highlighted one of the primary focuses of sexual harassment: the unwelcome nature of the sexual act. More recent cases have expanded on previous rulings or reinforced earlier decisions about the focus and application of sexual harassment (e.g. *Burlington Industries Inc. v. Ellerth*, 1998; *Burlington v. White*, 2006; *Fragher v. City of Boca Raton*, 1998; *Onscale v. Sundowner*, 1998).

Despite these legal advances, however, sexual harassment remains a civil action and is only punishable monetarily. Ironically, if an offender threatens to physically harm a victim to secure sexual acts, this offense is considered a criminal act of sexual assault and/or rape, but if an offender threatens a victim with her job in order to secure sexual

acts, this is considered harassment and as such is a civil matter. The fact that sexual harassment is not pursued in criminal courts and that legislation has never been written to specifically address sexual harassment shows that it has yet to be considered a major offense against both women and our society.

The attitudes reflecting the apathy our society feels toward sexual harassment is indicated throughout our culture. There have been many studies focusing on attitudes not only toward sexual harassment but also toward women (Cowan, 2000; Cowan & Ullman, 2006; Dekker & Barling, 1998; Ellis et al., 1991; Gibbs et al., 1995; Herzog, 2007; Kenig & Ryan, 1986; Lonsway et al., 2008; Lott et al., 1982; Reilly et al., 1986). These studies have shown the need for continual research on attitudes in our society that affect both women and the tolerance of sexual harassment. The current study will explore attitudes toward sexual harassment through the acceptance of sexual harassment myths and examine the relationship between attitudes toward women and the acceptance of sexual harassment myths.

#### Definition of Sexual Harassment

As stated previously, EEOC has been a leader in creating definitions of sexual harassment and created guidelines to that effect in 1980. According to EEOC and case law, sexual conduct in the workplace is not prohibited per se; however, when it is unwelcome or when it becomes a condition of employment, it rises to the level of sexual harassment ([www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)). EEOC also constructs two different types of sexual harassment: quid pro quo and hostile environment. While both types of harassment may include or contain similar aspects, there are important differences. Quid pro quo harassment occurs when an individual experiences unwelcome sexual advances,

requests for sexual favors, and/or sexual verbal or physical conduct when the submission to such conduct is made a condition of a person's employment, either implicitly or explicitly, or the submission to the conduct is used as a basis of advancement or demotion decisions for the person toward which the conduct is directed (EEOC, 1980). Quid pro quo is the most commonly acknowledged and recognized form of sexual harassment (Menard, Hall, Phung, Ghebrial, & Martin, 2003; Mohipp & Senn, 2008; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003). This type of harassment is typically considered to be initiated by an individual in a superior position of power and directed toward an inferior individual with less power in the organization and could include actions ranging from unwanted sexual attention to coercion or even sexual assault (Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003).

Unwanted sexual attention includes verbal and nonverbal behaviors that are unreciprocated and considered offensive to the person who is receiving the attention (Kelley & Parson, 2000). Kissing or attempts to kiss, groping, fondling, sexual intercourse or attempts of sexual intercourse, and conversations discussing sex are behaviors which could be considered unwanted sexual attention. In order for the harassment to be considered quid pro quo, the person toward whom the unwanted sexual attention is directed must believe or have been made aware that submission is a condition of their employment, whether through decisions being made about advancement, demotion, or termination.

Quid pro quo is the most commonly recognized form of sexual harassment, in part, because it is intuitive to hold someone responsible if he/she forces someone to engage in sexual activities in exchange for a job or promotion. It also is most commonly assumed to be male perpetrators who target female victims. For example, research

demonstrates that male professors harassing female students continually has been found to be the most acknowledged form of sexual harassment on college campuses (Bauer & Green, 1996; Benson & Thomson, 1982; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003). Nonetheless, more and more studies have emerged which indicate that the second type of sexual harassment, hostile work environment, is more common in both educational and workplace environments than quid pro quo harassment (Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003; Terrence, Logan, & Peters, 2004; Uggen & Blackstone, 2004). For many people, however, hostile work environment sexual harassment is more difficult to conceptualize.

Hostile work environment sexual harassment has been defined by the EEOC (1980) as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favors, and other sexual, verbal, or physical conduct which unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating or offensive (hostile) working environment. Hostile environment harassment captures behaviors such as offensive or unwelcome sexual jokes, comments, touching, unwanted repeated sexual invitations and a wide range of other verbal and/or physical sexual conduct that interferes with a person's ability to do his or her job (O'Connor et al., 2004; Uggen & Blackstone, 2004; Welsh, 1999). Such comments or behaviors also may work to create a working environment that is hostile for both the person(s) who is the target of the behavior as well as others who witness the behavior, if it interferes with their ability to perform their job. Hostile environment harassment, because of its nature, is hard to prove because the behaviors which create the hostile environment are hard to identify, and it is difficult to classify the occurrence or severity of behaviors which would constitute the creation of a hostile environment (Terrance et al., 2004). Hostile environment harassment also sometimes is considered less serious

because it is often committed by peers or coworkers (Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003); therefore, it may not involve the typical supervisor to subordinate abuse of power. Surveys of adolescents, college students and individuals in the workplace have shown that respondents can typically identify quid quo pro harassment, but have a hard time recognizing hostile environment harassment (Quinn, 2002; Robertson et. al., 1988; Terrance et al., 2004, Uggen & Blackstone, 2004). Studies also have found that sexually harassing actions such as “girl watching” continue to occur in the workplace with men blatantly “checking out” women at their job. These actions are often seen as a form of play or “typical” male behavior rather than unwelcome or uninvited sexual attention (Quinn, 2002).

Hostile work environment harassment, however, is prevalent. Studies conducted on adolescents have shown that around one-third of both male and female students have experienced at least some type of sexual harassment, most frequently hostile environment harassment (Uggen & Blackstone, 2004). Examining adolescent perceptions of and experiences with hostile environment sexual harassment also has shown that most adolescents ignore what they consider to be “trivial” incidents of sexual behavior, and yet label them sexual harassment based on the nature of the behavior (Terrance et al., 2004). Therefore, many times sexual harassment goes unreported and even unnoticed by secondary students even though a large proportion of these students are victimized by sexual harassment.

Adolescents are not the only ones who have trouble identifying hostile environment sexual harassment; males and females of all ages have difficulty identifying behaviors that constitute hostile environment sexual harassment and who is most likely to

be victimized by sexually harassing behaviors (Reilly et al., 1986; Terrance et al., 2004; Xenos & Smith, 2001). Still, adolescents are more likely than other older respondents to be tolerant of sexual harassment and to hold more conservative sex role attitudes and views (Xenos & Smith, 2001). There are several studies which not only investigate which characteristics may make a person more likely to be sexual harassed, but also the prevalence of sexual harassment in both the workplace and educational settings. Some of these studies have tested circumstances or situation factors such as facial expression and victim actions to see how they relate to people's perceptions of sexual harassment (Menard et al., 2003; Quinn, 2002; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003). All of these studies have shown that harassment is hard to label, especially when there are variations to the stereotypical male to female quid pro quo harassment situations.

#### Sexual Harassment Prevalence

It is commonly believed that women are more likely to experience sexual harassment than men (Bauer & Green, 1996; Fischer & Good, 1994; Katz et al., 1996; Mohipp & Senn, 2008; Robertson et al., 1988; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003; Welsh, 1999). As such, many studies specifically focus only on female samples to determine prevalence of both quid pro quo and hostile environment sexual harassment. These figures vary greatly. For example one study reported that as many as 75 percent of college women surveyed experienced a sexually harassing episode in the two years prior to the study (Berdahl, 2007). Another study found that 62 percent of female employees and 19 percent of female graduate students experienced some form of sexual harassment at one university (Kelley & Parsons, 2000).



There are many reasons for the diversity of these estimates. One reason lies in the type of sample used by the researchers. Studies using large, national, random samples are rare. Much research uses smaller samples, generally consisting of undergraduate students (Benson & Thomson, 1982; Kalof et al., 2001; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003). Other studies had two different samples consisting of employees and students to study harassment in workplace and educational settings (Berdahl, 2007; Kelley, 2006).

Another reason for the diversity of prevalence estimates comes from the differences in measures used to determine sexually harassing experiences. Some studies develop their own measures of sexual harassment (Benson & Thomson, 1982; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003), while other research relies upon the commonly used Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ) or modifications of it (Berdahl, 2007; Kalof et al., 2001; Uggen & Blackstone, 2004). While many of these studies rely upon cross sectional data (Benson & Thomson, 1982; Berdahl, 2007; Kalof et al., 2001; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003), some studies use longitudinal analyses (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2004; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995; Uggen & Blackstone, 2004) to estimate sexual harassment prevalence.

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board data is often considered the most reliable data and is cited frequently, in part, because it is one of the (perhaps the only) large, random data set. It contains information about sexual harassment in a variety of governmental occupations, and gathers information from employees and employers about prevalence, policies, and effects of sexual harassment in the workplace (U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995). In their analysis of the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, Antecol & Cobb-Clark (2004) found that the rate of sexual harassing experiences

for female government employees has risen slightly since 1978, from 41 percent to 45 percent in 1994. They attribute this change to the increase in hostile environment sexual harassment. The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board also reports that males are more apt to harass females (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2004; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995).

Sexual harassment by coworkers as opposed to supervisors appears to be increasing for women (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2004; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995). For example, behaviors by supervisors has been decreasing; 37 percent of women harassed in 1980 experienced harassment by a supervisor but only 28 percent in 1994 reported this behavior (U.S. Merit System Protection Board, 1995). In 1980, 65 percent of women victimized by sexual harassment had experienced harassment from a coworker; by 1994 this percentage had risen to 77 percent (U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995). These increases show that more women are experiencing harassment from coworkers, and that most of this behavior is hostile environment harassment.

Several studies have revealed specific victim characteristics that are associated with risk for experiencing sexual harassment (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2004, Berdahl, 2007; Bravo & Cassedy, 1992; O'Connor et al., 2004; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995; Uggen & Blackstone, 2004). Sex is a major demographic characterizing sexual harassment: women are much more likely than men to be sexually harassed (Bauer & Green, 1996; Fischer & Good, 1994; Katz et al., 1996; Mohipp & Senn, 2008; O'Connor et al., 2004; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995; Uggen & Blackstone, 2004). Research also indicates that the likelihood of a woman experiencing sexual harassing behaviors increases with age (Uggen &

Blackstone, 2004), although, around age 55 the risk begins to decline (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2004). Therefore, women are likely to be victims of sexual harassment when they are younger adults, but as a woman ages she is more likely to have experienced sexual harassment in her lifetime.

Another demographic characteristic that has been studied for its effect on sexual harassment tendencies is economic factors (e.g. occupation type or socioeconomic status). Women who work in blue collar occupations are more likely to report experiences of sexual harassment than women in white collar fields (Kelley & Parsons, 2000; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995). Likewise, lower or working class women are more likely to have experienced sexual harassment than middle class women (Kelley & Parsons, 2000). Therefore, poverty may increase the risk of experiencing sexual harassment.

A woman's likelihood of experiencing sexual harassment also increases when she possesses more stereotypical masculine personalities and traits (i.e. aggressive, authoritative, strong-willed) or when she fails to meet the gendered ideal of being a female (i.e. humble, meek, gentle, caring). Studies have shown that women with more "masculine" personalities and traits are more likely than both more feminine women and men to be victimized by sexual harassment (Berdahl, 2007; O'Connor et al., 2004). Researchers hypothesize that sexually harassing behaviors may be an outlet through which men (and society) can return 'uppity females' to their correct stations in work, educational, and social settings (Berdahl, 2007; Bravo & Cassedy, 1992; Fischer & Good, 1994; O'Connor et al., 2004). Women who blur the distinction between what it means to be male or female, especially those working in male dominated occupations, experience

more sexual harassment than women who work in neutral or female dominated occupations (Berdahl, 2007). Women in general who work in male dominated occupations are more likely to experience sexual harassment than women who do not, and when women who work in these fields do not meet the ideal gender stereotype for women, they, especially, are at higher risk levels for experiencing sexual harassment (Berdahl, 2007).

While sexual harassment rates appear to be pervasive in the workforce, there also is evidence they are high on college campuses. Studies researching quid pro quo sexual harassment found between 19 and 40 percent of women on college campuses have experienced a sexually harassing incident by a professor or instructor (Kalof, Eby, Matheson, Kroska, 2001; Kelley & Parsons, 2000; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003). Even the lowest sexual harassment rate in these findings encompasses one in five women on college campuses that have been victimized by professors through quid pro quo sexual harassment (Kelly & Parsons, 2000). While quid pro quo harassment has been commonly found, hostile environment harassment has not been as well measured, probably because quid pro quo harassment is one of the most recognized forms of sexual harassment, and victims are more likely to view the actions as sexual harassment (Kalof et al., 2001; Kelley & Parsons, 2000; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003). These findings lend support to the notion that the prevalence of sexual harassment is very high in both educational and workplace settings and many researchers stipulate that one of the reasons sexual harassment is so pervasive is due to the acceptance of myths surrounding not only sexual harassment, but violence against women in general.

Rape Mythologies

Mythologies surround all types of crimes, especially criminal acts of violence against women. These myths are typically generalized, widely held beliefs that serve several purposes in constructing our views about violence against women (Franiuk et al., 2008). They minimize the criminal act, the harm caused by the act, and the risk of victimization. When successfully employed, myths work to lessen the likelihood of victims being believed, increase the likelihood of offenders being acquitted in the criminal justice system or decrease the degree of punishment if found guilty, and deny or minimalize victim injury (Carmody & Washington, 2001; Franiuk et al., 2008; Xenos & Smith, 2001).

Some of the earliest research on mythology and violence against women was conducted on rape myths. Burt (1980), a leading researcher on rape defined rape myths as “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists” in her landmark study on this issue (p. 217). Rape myths have been identified as important to the study of rape because of the damage they do to both victims and society as a whole. These stereotypical beliefs negate victimization and silence victims of rapes through fear of victim blaming (Carmody & Washington, 2001; Xenos & Smith, 2001; Franiuk et al., 2008). Victims rightfully believe that they will be blamed for their victimizations because these pervasive myths focus attention on the victims’ actions rather on establishing offender accountability. Rape myths also create “hidden” victims (Schwartz & Leggett, 1999) who are afraid of victim blaming, may not believe their experience was rape, or may not think that others will believe them (Schwartz & Leggett, 1999). For example, research indicates that many women fail to acknowledge they have been raped. In other words, when they relate experiences that meet the legal definition of rape, a large

proportion of them (especially in acquaintance rapes) fail to label the experiences as rape (Hamby & Koss, 2003; Schwartz & Leggett, 1999) even though these situations are very common (Mohler-Kuo, Dowdall, Koss, & Wechsler, 2004). Researchers contend that victims fail to acknowledge their rape experiences, in large part, due to the effect myths have upon our definitions of rape.

There have been many classification schemes used to describe rape myths, but there is no singular accepted list or typology that classifies these beliefs. Some studies use the umbrella term of rape mythology (Carmody & Washington, 2001), while others differentiate one or two types of myths (Begany & Milburn, 2002). Others identify several categories of rape mythology including myths about the victim, perpetrator, and nature of sexual assault (Franiuk et al., 2008). This review focuses on four broad categories of rape myths that blame and silence victims while minimizing accountability for the offenders. These myths include the idea that 1) victims lie, 2) victims are responsible or to blame for their victimization, 3) rape is a rare occurrence, and 4) rape causes minimal harm to victims.

Beliefs that victims are lying (Burt, 1980) include the idea that victims file false reports (Carmody & Washington, 2001) or exaggerate what actually happened for a variety of reasons. These ideas are dangerous because they cast doubt on the fact that rape occurred at all. The notion that the victim really wanted sex at the time, but later changed her mind (Schwartz & Leggett; 1999) is one example of the myth that women lie about rape by exaggerating the facts surrounding the event. Other similar beliefs include the idea that victims are trying to cover up embarrassment about having consensual sexual acts. Indicating that a victim is trying to cover up what really happened implies

she is embarrassed about her own actions, and what these actions will do to her reputation if people find out that she has engaged in consensual sex. This idea implies that all women must be chaste in our society, and when they are not they will try desperately to cover up their actions to disguise their sexual nature. Ironically, then, it is society's continuing double standard about the acceptability of expressing sexuality outside of marriage and/or having sex with multiple sexual partners that continues to fuel the false belief that women will callously lie about rape to avoid the consequences of violating this Victorian ideal.

Another example of a myth used to say the victim was lying is to imply she accused a man of rape out of spite (Burt, 1980) because the man had "done her wrong." This example gives the idea that, generally, a woman will do anything when she has been scorned by her lover. This myth also embraces antiquated views of women as vengeful creatures who will do anything to get and keep a man. Lying about victimization is associated with the idea that women will do anything to get or keep a man, even if that "lie" that has the potential to ruin a man's life. Other research indicates that some people believe that women will lie to call attention to themselves (Carmody and Washington, 2001). This belief indicates that women desperately seek attention through almost any avenue.

There are many myths that work to blame victims for their victimization (Burt, 1980; Carmody & Washington, 2001; Franiuk et al., 2008; Schwartz & Leggett, 1999; Xenos & Smith, 2001). These myths indicate that there was something the victim could have done to prevent her rape, or that the victim wanted to be raped. These ideas are dangerous because they convey that victims did not try hard enough to stop their

victimization and/or that they somehow deserved the rape because of their actions. While the idea that women lie about rape denies the event occurred, the notion that victims are to blame acknowledges the act, but explains it as the fault of the victim rather than the perpetrator.

One way victims are blamed for their rape is by saying that by either their dress or behavior, they led men on and consequently “asked for” their rape (Burt, 1980; Franiuk et al., 2008). These statements indicate women secretly desire and want to be victims of rape – or at least sex – but do not want to be held responsible for their decisions. Another example of indicating the victim “asked for it” is the idea that women “say no but mean yes” (Burt, 1980), implying women want the event to occur and “lead” men on, but do not want to face the consequences of their acts. Implying that women say “no” when they really mean “yes” indicates that women, again, feel ashamed about their sexual nature. This idea could also imply that women are too infantile to be able to fully express themselves and their wants and needs.

Common ways used to indicate that the victim “asked for” it include calling into question the way she dressed or how much alcohol she consumed. If a woman has consumed alcohol, the logic employed is that men are not to blame for sexual acts when women are too intoxicated to say no; women are responsible for their consumption of alcohol (Schwartz & Leggett, 1999) and if “bad things” happen, then they deserved it because they engaged in “risky” behavior. This type of flawed thinking often leads to the acceptance of the “just world” hypothesis (Burt, 1980) which states that bad things happen to bad people and good things happen to good people.



The preservation of the “just world” hypothesis, however, ignores the behavior of offenders and leads to the destruction of victims (Burt, 1980; Franiuk et al., 2008).

Victims blame themselves for their assault, and the culture influences these beliefs by utilizing rape myths that imply women can stop their victimization if they really want to or if they were really “good” women. This idea also implies that “bad” women (e.g. those with multiple sexual partners or those who otherwise violate social prescriptions for ideal womanhood [such as prostitutes or sex workers]) are, by definition, to blame for their victimization. Similarly, the notion that a woman can stop a rape from occurring if she really desires to do so also is a form of blaming the victim (Burt, 1980). Women who do not engage in forceful resistance (or cannot evidence the same) are assumed to be willing accomplices.

There are many myths used to emphasize the idea that rape is rare. They are used to minimize the rate of occurrence and offender responsibility for rapes; they also overlap previously mentioned myths. One rape myth used to minimize occurrence rates is that only certain types of women are raped (Burt, 1980; Franiuk et al., 2008) such as promiscuous, teasing, or bad women. For example, Xenos and Smith (2001) found that when the reputation of the victim is in question, individuals were more likely to hold relatively unfavorable attitudes towards the victim, less likely to believe the victim’s claims, and more likely to attribute a greater degree of both responsibility and blame to the victim. In other words, if the victim deserved it, it was not rape and, therefore, by extension most rape is not really rape at all.

Another way to minimize the amount of rape is to suggest that these acts are biological in nature (Franiuk et al., 2008; Schwartz & Leggett, 1999). Statements

suggesting that it is in a man's nature to obtain sex by force shifts focus from the offender by suggesting that rape is a sexual act, and that men must engage in it. Therefore, the rapist did not mean to hurt any woman in particular, he just had a need to fulfill and the victim was an instrument of fulfillment. This rationale also works to minimize the occurrence of rape by indicating that these sexual acts are natural and, therefore, cannot be considered rape. Statements like this also imply that women should just accept or understand this behavior.

A related version of this logic is the belief that rapists are a small group of sex crazed males; they are insane or sex starved psychopaths (Burt, 1980; Franiuk et al., 2008). Ironically, while this idea works to diminish the amount of rape, it is at odds with myths that regard it as natural for men to obtain sex by force. Presumably, the two different types of myths would not be used to explain away the same incident, but they are used selectively on a case by case basis when needed. Both ideas, however, reinforce the idea that rape is sex, not rape. It is at some level normal and when it occurs, it is rare and perpetrated by sex crazed, deranged men.

The final group of myths are used to minimize the perceived harm or injury caused by rape. These myths imply that the rape was a misunderstanding, the offender did not mean to harm the victim, that certain types of rape are not as serious as others, or that the sexual assault was just "bad sex" (Burt, 1980; Carmody & Washington, 2001; Schwartz & Leggit, 2004). These myths generally indicate that the victim was mistaken in calling the sexual act rape, or that the offender simply misunderstood consent. In either case, like earlier myths, these ideas serve to minimize the perceived harm. Myths may lead to explanations for how the rape was really a simple misunderstanding.

Miscommunication by the woman also may be a result because feminists have encouraged women to feel violated in situations where they normally would not (Burt, 1980). These statements are very harmful to victims because they imply that victims are overreacting, or that these women are not victims at all. Implying the man did not mean to harm the woman is another example of minimization. He simply did not realize she did not want to have sex. He is just as much a victim as the woman, because due to a misunderstanding, he could be charged with a felony and face a prison sentence.

Another example of a rape myth that minimizes the perceived harm of rape is that rape is a trivial event or is “just sex gone bad” (Carmody & Washington, 2001; Schwartz & Leggett, 1999). There are many explanations for “bad sex,” but most of them revolve around either one or both of the parties being intoxicated. The idea is that the victim should not blame the male for the sexual act because the victim should have controlled her drinking (Schwartz & Leggett, 1999). This myth places the role of gatekeeper for sex on the female, but it also implies that while she may have engaged in “bad sex”, it is not really significant or traumatic. It is simply regrettable. In other words, there is no serious harm done and, therefore, no need exists to blame the male for what occurred (Schwartz & Leggett, 1999).

The nature of the relationship between the victim and the offender also is used to minimize the harm done by rape. Victims of acquaintance rape are told by society, through rape myths, that they are not actually victims. Theoretically, since victims of acquaintance rape know their attacker, they are not seriously affected by the encounter (Franiuk et al., 2008; Schwartz & Leggett, 1999). The logic again is that it may have been “bad sex” but not rape if it was not a stranger jumping out of a bush with a weapon.

These myths, indicating that harm by acquaintance rape is minimal, join the larger context of rape mythology utilized to shift responsibility for the incident to the victim and minimize harm caused by rape. Myths are not only used to explain sexual assault or rape. Myths can also be used in all acts of violence against women such as domestic violence and sexual harassment (Lonsway et al., 2008). Both rape and sexual harassment myths have been found to be related to sexual harassment prevalence and perceptions (Burt, 1980; Cowen, 2000; Franiuk et al., 2008; Lonsway et al., 2008), and many sexual harassment myths have either evolved from or have parallels is rape myth literature.

### Sexual Harassment Mythologies

Rape mythology and sexual harassment mythology are very similar and have many parallels within the literature (Burt, 1980; Lonsway et al., 2008, Cowan, 2000); however, sexual harassment mythology has a weaker empirical basis (Lonsway et al. 2008). Like rape, sexual harassment mythologies function to trivialize the event, justify victimization, and minimize the effect sexual harassment has on victims (Benson & Thomson, 1982; Cowan, 2000; Lonsway et al., 2008; MacKinnon, 1979; Webb, 1997). Sexual harassment mythology also can be categorized into the four broad categorizations that were used to rape mythology: 1) victims lie; 2) victims are responsible or to blame; 3) sexual harassment is a rare occurrence; and 4) sexual harassment causes minimal harm to victims.

Beliefs that victims are lying about their victimization may include ideas that victims file false reports or exaggerate their claims of sexual harassment for a variety of reasons (Carmody & Washington, 2001). Examples of these myths would include the idea that women file false claims in order to exact revenge on a superior for either

employment or relationship decisions (Lonsway et al., 2008). Some examples of this false claim myth would include ideas that women can easily file claims, and may do so in order to get revenge on a supervisor who ended a relationship with the “victim.” Another example would say that a woman might file a false claim against her boss simply because she did not like him. Like rape myths, these ideas indicate that women will do anything to exact revenge on men who “did them wrong” or “scorned” them, and enforce the notion that women are vengeful creatures.

Some myths are used to blame the victim of sexual harassment or imply victim precipitation. One specific myth is that the victims of sexual harassment somehow “had it coming” because of their dress, actions, or behaviors (Harris & Firestone, 1997; Webb 1997). Ideas that women who wear tight clothing, short skirts, or blouses which reveal cleavage are doing so to attract a man, and should not be offended when they are targeted by unwanted sexual attention in the workplace. The U.S. Supreme Court validated this myth, to some extent, by stating that the victim’s actions, including their clothing and decisions, may be relevant to determining claims of unwelcomeness (106 S.Ct. 2399, 1986).

In order to cast doubt on the unwelcome nature of the act, blame can also be accomplished by asserting the victim did not try hard enough to resist or stop the harassment (Lott et al., 1982; McKinney, 1990). This rationale implies the victim is responsible because she did not put forth enough effort to stop the acts, and, therefore, deserves the sexual harassment; however, it has been shown in literature that many women react to incidents of sexual harassment by ignoring the behavior and hoping it will go away for several reasons (Lott, Reilly, & Howard, 1982; Reilly, Lott, & Gallogly,

1986). Many women do not think the harassment is serious enough. They fear that making a complaint might make work situations more uncomfortable. They are afraid nothing would be done to remedy the situation and/or think it will be adverse to their career (U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995). The fact that many women ignore sexual harassment in hopes that it will go away, is at odds with the myth that women who do not want to be sexually harassed will stop it. Still, the mythology that women can stop sexual harassment if they want to parallels rape mythology that indicates only “bad women” or women who did not try hard enough to stop the action are raped (Schwartz & Leggett, 1999).

Likewise, the idea that women enjoy and are flattered by the sexual attention associated with sexual harassment denies that harassment is occurring but, like rape, also suggests that the victim is to blame (Cowan, 2000; Lott et al., 1982; MacKinnon, 1979; Quinn, 2002). The idea that some women “say no but mean yes” is classic blame the victim language. The notion that women send mixed signals has been discussed using the concept of token resistance (MacKinnon, 1979). Osman (2004) studied the perceptions of token resistance, and found that women’s verbal resistance may not be taken seriously, especially if the woman is smiling when the resistance is made. This finding indicates support for the myth that women say no but mean yes, and ignores that there are many different reactions to unwanted behaviors like rape and sexual harassment (Osman, 2004).

One final example of victim precipitation is not only utilized to blame the victim of sexual harassment, but also minimizes the harm of sexual harassment. The idea that only certain types of women experience sexual harassment is another example of victim

precipitation mythology (Bravo & Cassedy, 1992; Cowan, 2000; Harris & Firestone, 1997). This mythology is closely related to rape mythologies which imply that only promiscuous, teasing, or bad women are victimized (Burt, 1980; Franiuk et al., 2008). These notions lend support to the just world hypothesis which is widely cited in rape mythology literature and can be applied to similar sexual harassment mythology (Burt, 1980), because when women are not “good” women, they deserve to be victimized. Studies finding that women who challenge conventional ideas about what it means to be a “woman” are “put in their place” by men in the workplace through sexual harassment (Berdahl, 2007). Women who defy social stereotypes of gender may be considered “uppity” because they blur the distinction between what it means to be a man or a woman, and so they are sexually harassed in order to restore them to the role of “women” (Berdahl, 2007).

Sexual harassment mythologies are also used to minimize the occurrence of sexual harassment. These myths claim that harassment is natural phenomenon that occurs when men and women work together (Cowan, 2000). The idea that sexual harassment is rare, like rape, is also reflected in the notion that harassment is normal male behavior. One study indicated that males, more than females, feel that flirtations make the work day more interesting, and attractive women should just learn to deal with sexual harassment because men are naturally going to be attracted to them (Lott et al., 1982). Statements implying that “boys will be boys” (Quinn, 2002), or that men are naturally sexual, cannot control their sex drives, and mean no harm (MacKinnon, 1979) are examples of minimizing the impact on victims and the responsibility of offenders. When it is suggested that perpetrators are driven by a natural sexual drive or that perpetrators

did not mean any harm to the victim, it only serves to lessen the responsibility of perpetrators, and, therefore, trivializes sexual harassment. These arguments are almost identical to concepts in rape mythologies indicating an innate prerogative of men to aggressively pursue sex and sexual occurrences.

Again, as with rape mythologies, the reverse of this myth, that sexual harassment is only committed by a small subset of deviant men is also used to minimize the occurrence of sexual harassment (Lonsway et al., 2008; Webb, 1997). The idea that only a small subset of sex-crazed males are the only ones who sexually harass women, minimizes the occurrence and overall effect of sexual harassment in our society. This idea indicates that only certain men harass women, so harassment is not a major problem for women or our society (Kenig & Ryan, 1986).

The final set of sexual harassment myths are ones which work to minimize the perceived harm of sexual harassment. Myths from this set include it was a simple misunderstanding, sexual harassment claims are easily made and may cause great harm to the accused, and sexual harassment is a trivial event (Bravo & Cassedy, 1992; Kenig & Ryan, 1986). Examples of sexual harassment being a misunderstanding includes the offender did not mean to offend the victim or the victim misunderstood the offender's intention. Another example of myths minimizing harm implies women would not classify this behavior as sexual harassment if they had not been made aware to do so by the feminist movement (Burt, 1980). This implies that if women had not been told by feminists that these actions were offensive, they would not find them objectionable, again implying that women are too infantile to be able to make decisions about their experiences.



Other ways in which the perceived harm is minimized is by saying some women are too easily offended (Benson & Thomson, 1982). This implies that some claims of sexual harassment are not actually harassment at all. Research consistently finds that women, as a group, are less tolerant of sexual harassment than men, with little variation in actual levels of condemnation (Ellis, Barak, & Pinto, 1991; Kenig & Ryan, 1986; Lott et al., 1982; Maypole & Skaine, 1982; Mazer & Percival, 1989). Therefore, claims that only certain women are easily offended has been empirically contradicted, because most women show similar tolerance levels for sexual harassment, however, these levels of tolerance are consistently much lower than those of men.

Victims also may be blamed for the harm they supposedly cause to a perpetrator's career by insinuating that claims are easy to file but difficult to defend. Beliefs that sexual harassment claims can mean the end of the alleged harasser's career while having no impact on the alleged victim (Benson & Thomson, 1982; Lonsway et al., 2008; Mohipp & Senn, 2008) are harmful because they indicate that sexual harassment is potentially more traumatic for the offender than the victim and greatly minimize the harm to the victim. These ideas are harmful because they negate the difficulty and resistance most women face when filing claims of sexual harassment.

In sum, then, the literature suggests that there is significant overlap between attitudes toward rape and sexual harassment. In both areas, there is the suggestion of widespread acceptance of mythologies that serve to diminish the amount of the problems, blame victims, and excuse perpetrators; however, while there has been quite a bit of research on rape mythology acceptance (Begany & Milburn, 2002; Burt, 1980; Carmody & Washington, 2001; Franiuk et al., 2008; Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004; Schwartz & Leggett,

1999; Xenos & Smith, 2001), empirical studies of sexual harassment mythology are less common than those assessing rape mythology. There also is less consensus about specific measures.

#### Previous Studies on Sexual Harassment Attitudes

Despite discussions of sexual harassment mythology in previous research, there has been a limited amount of empirical research testing specific sexual harassment mythology scales and the ways these beliefs correlate with other related ideological constructs (Lonsway et al., 2008). Some previous studies, however, have studied normative beliefs about sexual harassment (Beauvais, 1986; Dekker & Barling, 1998; Ellis et al., 1991; Kenig & Ryan, 1986; Lott et al., 1982; Maurizio & Rogers, 1992; Maypole & Skaine, 1982; Mazer & Percival, 1989; McKinney, 1990; Reilly et al., 1986; Tang et al., 1995) and have created some scales designed to assess myth acceptance (e.g. Attitudes Toward Sexual Harassment; Sexual Harassment Attitude Scale; Sexual Harassment Attitude Survey; Sexual Harassment Beliefs Scale; Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory). A review of these studies provides context for the current study.

Unfortunately, many of the studies in this area suffer from methodological deficiencies including using small convenience samples, often relying upon university samples and frequently with poor response rates. Perhaps most problematic, however, is that several studies in this area fail to sufficiently describe scale items (or omit them altogether) and often omit data on reliability of the scale as a whole (e.g., Beauvais, 1986; Kenig & Ryan, 1986; Lott et al., 1982; Maypole & Skaine, 1982; Sigler & Johnson, 1986). Similarly, these scales have rarely been subjected to factor analysis, making it difficult to determine whether or not attitudes toward sexual harassment represent a one-

dimensional belief system or whether these attitudes are reflected by a more complex set of attitudes that actually represent many dimensions of a more complex belief system.

Beauvais (1986) conducted one of the first studies of this nature and surveyed 53 university staff members in a pre/post test experiment to assess the effect of the “Tell Someone” sexual harassment training program in 1982. She developed a twenty-one item Sexual Harassment Attitude survey. This survey assessed attitudes on sexual harassment such as victims lie, natural sexuality, minimization of occurrence and harm caused, and victim precipitation. Beauvais reported, however, that training had the desired effect (i.e. lower harassment tolerance) on respondents. Beauvais (1986) reported no specified alpha reliability coefficient; however, did indicate that, as a result of participating in the training, respondents were significantly more apt to report that sexual harassment is a frequent and serious problem related to power dynamics which is a violation of state law.

Kenig and Ryan (1986) also surveyed an unspecified number of individuals on a university campus, but they did report surveying: faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students. All of the respondents in this study had been randomly selected except female faculty members; because they represented such a small population, all of them were surveyed. The authors used thirteen item statements to assess attitudes toward sexual harassment which included attitudes of victim overreaction, victim precipitation, minimization of harm, natural sexuality, and minimization of occurrence. The authors found the most pronounced differences for sex among three items: 1) Women must expect sexual advances; 2) Men are only acting naturally; and 3) Complaints are overreactions (Kenig & Ryan, 1986, p.547). They did not report specific reliability

measures, but found that males were more likely to endorse victim precipitation and had higher tolerance for sexual harassment than females.

Maypole and Skaine (1982) randomly surveyed 77 male and 82 female blue collar members of one union encompassing ten manufacturing companies in 1980 to assess general opinions about sexual harassment in the work place. Sixteen items were used to assess these general attitudes about sexual harassment and they included attitudes of victim precipitation, rate of occurrence, reactions to sexual harassment, and attitudes about laws dealing with sexual harassment. This study did not specify internal reliability for scale used but claimed two statements demonstrated internal reliability: “often when a person sexually harasses another, exerting power is more important than gratification” and “the major function of sexual harassment is to preserve the dominance of males over females” (p. 686). Maypole and Skaine (1982) also reported that men were generally more tolerant of sexual harassment and less likely to see power and/or dominance as a factor in sexually harassing than women.

A couple of other studies also examined attitudes toward sexual harassment, but publications have no information about the specific items used. For example, Sigler and Johnson (1986) conducted a study sampling 144 residents of Tuscaloosa, Alabama in the early 1980s, using a 29 item scale to assess the attitudes toward sexual harassment but there are no specific details about scale items. Similarly, Cowan (2000) studied 155 college women in order to assess the tendency to blame victims of sexual harassment, she developed the Sexual Harassment Myth Scale, however, the scale was not included in the article describing the study and only one example of the statements included was given: "When women talk and act sexy at work, they are inviting SH" (p.242). Cowan noted the

scale had high reliability ( $\alpha = .88$ ) and that the Sexual Harassment Myth Scale and beliefs about the causes of rape were significantly correlated with one another (Cowan, 2000), indicating that the more one adheres to sexual harassment myths, the more likely they are to adhere to rape myths. However, there is no way to utilize and/or evaluate this scale without more information about specific scale items.

Another comprehensive scale to measure sexual harassment attitudes was completed by Lott et al. (1982). In 1980, they used a random sample of 524 women and 377 men faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students at one university. They developed the 11 item Attitudes Toward Sexually Harassing Behavior Scale to assess victim precipitation, the belief that sexuality is natural for males, minimization of harm in sexual harassment cases, attitudes about token resistance, and the extent of sexual harassment as a social problem. This study found that men and younger persons were more likely to agree with statements of victim precipitation, natural sexuality, and to overall, be more tolerant of sexual harassment than women and older persons respectively. While this study did not give a measure of reliability for their scale, a follow up study by Reilly, Lott and Gallogly (1986) did provide this information.

Reilly, Lott, and Gallogly (1986) measured attitudes of sexual harassment using ten of the eleven items in the Attitudes toward Sexually Harassing Behaviors scale developed by Lott et al. (1982). Reilly et al. (1986) randomly selected and surveyed 219 female and 173 male students in 1984. They reported the modified scale was reliable ( $\alpha = .78$ .) They also conducted factor analysis. Using varimax rotation, they identified three groups of factors that encompassed many attitudes and perceptions of sexual harassment: 1) flirtations are natural; 2) provocative behaviors; and 3) feminist

beliefs (Reilly et al., 1986). This study, like most studies, also found that younger male and female students were more accepting of sexual harassment than older male and female students, respectively (Reilly et al., 1986).

While Reilly et al. (1986) determined the Attitudes Toward Sexual Harassing Behaviors scale had relatively good internal reliability, other scales have not fared as well (Ellis, Barak, & Pinto, 1991; Maurizio & Rogers, 1992). For example, Ellis et al. (1991) investigated a person's actual and perceived experiences of sexual harassment as it related to several factors, one of which was normative beliefs about sexual harassment, by randomly surveying 138 women from four Israeli public offices (both male and female dominated organizations were used). Three statements were used: "(a) SH [sexual harassment] is a behavior one has to live with at the workplace; (b) it is natural for men in power positions to harass women; (c) every sexual harasser at a workplace should be punished" (Ellis et al., 1991, p.1325). The inter-correlations of these three items were all low and ranged from .30 to .63 (Ellis et al., 1991), suggesting that a more complex scale is needed to measure normative beliefs about sexual harassment.

Maurizio and Rogers (1992) developed a twelve item test to assess attitudes toward sexual harassment relying heavily on the previous work of Beauvais (1986). This scale was administered to a convenience sample of 735 providers of home-based assistance for the elderly, most of whom were female (95%), who participated in two and one-half hour mandatory sexual harassment training program (Maurizio & Rogers, 1992). The Cronbach's alpha test for the reliability of the scale was low at .24. However, results indicated, similarly to Beauvais (1986), that employees were less

tolerant of sexual harassment after participating in the training program (Maurizio & Rogers, 1992).

Other previous studies on perceptions and attitudes of sexual harassment have produced scales with somewhat higher levels of reliability (McKinney, 1990; Schneider, 1982; Tang et al., 1995). The Attitudes about Unwanted Sexual Approaches scale was developed by Schneider (1982) to assess attitudes about unwanted sexual approaches and the ways in which a female's sexual identity affects her experiences with and beliefs about sexual harassment. Data were collected in 1980; 144 heterosexual and 237 lesbian women were systematically and conveniently sampled and surveyed about their experiences with sexual harassment (Schneider, 1982). This study found that lesbians, feminists, younger women, and sexual harassment victims were less tolerant of sexual harassment than their counterparts. The Attitudes for Unwanted Sexual Approaches scale consisted of five items and had an inter-item correlation for heterosexual women with an alpha of .65 and .70 for lesbian women. The five items included in this scale were:

- 1)Unwanted sexual approaches at work are a problem for most working women;
- 2)Unwanted sexual approaches at work are not a woman's fault;
- 3)Unwanted sexual approaches at work are not just a problem for single or divorced women;
- 4)There are many more cases of unwanted sexual approaches at work than most people think; and
- 5)Unwanted sexual approaches at work are not just a problem for women in low-paying jobs (Schneider, 1982, p. 90).

McKinney (1990) developed the 16 item Attitude Toward Sexual Harassment scale in order to assess beliefs about and tolerance of sexual harassment in academia. To do this, McKinney (1990) surveyed 188 faculty members from one large and one small

public university; the large university was sampled through systematic probability sampling and the entire population of the small university was sent surveys. The return was relatively low: 46 and 31% respectively. The items assessed views about victim precipitation, the seriousness of sexual harassment on campus, the minimization of harm, rates of sexual harassment, beliefs about natural sexuality for males, and responses to sexual harassment. There was a moderate reliability for the scale ( $\alpha=.67$ ). This study indicated, like most studies, that males are more tolerant of sexual harassment, more likely to agree with statements indicating sexual harassment is natural in a workplace setting, and that attractive people should learn how to handle unwanted sexual attention than are women (McKinney, 1990).

Tang et al. (1995) studied beliefs about and tolerance of sexual harassment in academia in 1992, by surveying a convenience sample of 3,000 students in China with a return rate of 30% yielding approximately 900 completed questionnaires. To measure the student beliefs, a 10 item scale was developed: the Attitude Toward Sexual Harassment (ATSH) Scale. Only three of the statements for this scale were included: “occurrence of sexual harassment cannot be blamed on women's sexy apparel or looks;” “much of what is called sexual harassment is only courtship behavior between two sexes;” and “sexual harassment is a problem invented by feminists.” A moderate internal reliability of .51 was found, and it was determined, although factor analysis indicated the scale was unidimensional. The results also indicated that women were less tolerant of sexual harassment than men, similar to many other studies previously mentioned.

Some studies on attitudes toward sexual harassment, however, indicated good reliability (Bartling & Eisenman, 1993; Dekker & Barling, 1998; Mazer & Percival,



1989). Mazer and Percival (1989), for example, created the Sexual Harassment Attitudes Scale (SHAS) consisting of 19 items to assess how these attitudes relate to other general attitudes toward men and women and to what extent previous experiences of sexual harassment affected these perceptions (Mazer & Percival, 1989). They used a random sample of 215 students from a small university and found the scale to be reliable ( $\alpha = .84$ ). They reported that higher scores on SHAS indicated more acceptance and tolerance of sexual harassment along with less agreement for contemporary feminist understandings of its causes (Mazer & Percival, 1989). Mazer and Percival (1989) also found that SHAS and the “Macho Scale” used to assess differences in sex role stereotypes and discrimination were both positively and strongly correlated to one another, indicating that the more one accepts sexism and discrimination, the more one is tolerant of sexual harassment.

Bartling and Eisenman (1993) developed the Sexual Harassment Proclivities Scale to determine the tendency of men and women to sexually harass by studying previously determined correlates (i.e., sex role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs, rape myth acceptance, and acceptance of feminism) and administering it the scale to both men and women. In the pilot study, 29 women and 13 men were surveyed, the type of sampling used, however, was not reported. They administered thirty original items which were ultimately reduced to ten items which comprised the scale. The only examples of the scales that were included are: “women are flattered by sexual advances from men even if they fail to respond positively to these sexual advances,” and “women often mean 'maybe' or even 'yes' when they say 'no' to sexual advances by men” (Bartling & Eisenman, 1993, p.189-190). The scale was deemed reliable ( $\alpha = .86$  for men and  $.74$

for women). This study also found that males had a higher tendency to sexually harass than females, and positive correlates between sexual harassment proclivity and adversarial sexual beliefs and sex-role stereotyping (Bartling and Eisenman, 1993). Thus indicating, individuals who hold more adversarial sexual beliefs and/or are more accepting of sex-role stereotypes are more likely to engage in sexual harassment than individuals who do not hold these beliefs.

In their study of sexual harassment at the workplace, Dekker and Barling (1998) surveyed 278 male faculty and staff from a Canadian university; however, their response rate was quite low (18%). They created an 11 item Sexual Harassment Beliefs Acceptance Scale, whose example statements given by Dekker and Barling included: "Many women falsely report SH because they have a need to call attention to themselves;" and "In a majority of cases, the victim brings it on herself with her own actions" (p. 11). The scale proved to be reliable ( $\alpha = .87$ ), however the entire scale was not included in the article, only the example statements previously indicated were included. The study also found that the scale was positively related to predicting gender and sexual harassment, indicating that an individual who is more accepting of sexual harassment beliefs is also more likely to engage in gender or sexual harassment. Acceptance of sexual harassment beliefs correlated negatively with perception of company sanctions significantly, indicating that if one believed that the company did not harshly punish sexual harassers, the respondent was more likely to accept sexual harassing behaviors.

The most comprehensive empirical research on sexual harassment mythology acceptance to date comes from Lonsway et al. (2008). This study sought to conceptualize

sexual harassment mythology, construct a valid instrument to assess mythology adherence, and compare results of instrument to other related ideological constructs. Their research conceptualized sexual harassment mythology as “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and serve to deny and justify male sexual harassment of women” (Lonsway et al., 2008, p.600). Utilizing this conceptualization, Lonsway et al. (2008) examined literature on rape myths and showed strong parallels between rape mythology and sexual harassment mythology.

The process led to the construction of the Illinois Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance (ISHMA) scale. Three convenience samples from three different universities were used to test the scale construction using 112 students enrolled in an introductory psychology course, 118 in an introductory law enforcement course, and 107 in an introductory social problems class. All three samples were pulled from different institutions. The authors initially used 54 statements to reflect a variety of concepts associated with sexual harassment mythology. The researchers began with eleven preliminary categories. These categories included mythologies of sexual harassment such as: the incident was not really sexual harassment; the perpetrator did not mean to; she wanted or enjoyed it; sexual harassment is a very deviant event; it is no big deal; it is really about sex; she asked for it; she lied about it; charges/awards are easily made; sexual harassment hysteria has consequences; women can/should stop it (Lonsway et al., 2008). The scale was eventually reduced to twenty items by inspecting inter-item correlation and through factor analysis.

Four broad classifications were identified accounting for 60 percent of the variance. These included: fabrication/exaggeration; ulterior motives; natural

heterosexuality; and women's responsibility (Lonsway et al., 2008). The scale as a whole was reliable ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and each of the subscales also were reliable (fabrication/exaggeration  $\alpha = .86$ , ulterior motives  $= .83$ , natural heterosexuality  $= .81$ , and women's responsibility  $= .71$ .) Fabrication/exaggeration statements included ideas such as: women usually exaggerate claims of sexual harassment; women often file frivolous sexual harassment charges; or women who do not report their harassment immediately are probably making up the charges. Ulterior motive statements suggest that women have concealed motives for claiming sexual harassment and include: women sometimes file claims to extort money; women caught in embarrassing sexual situations with their employers may claim sexual harassment; or women sometimes file sexual harassment claims for no apparent reason. Natural heterosexuality statements represent the idea that romantic or sexual behavior is natural for men, and women generally enjoy it. This idea was represented by statements such as: women are flattered by male sexual attention; women secretly enjoy male flirtation; or women are too easily offended. Statements suggesting victim blame fall under women's responsibility, and include: women can stop sexual harassment if they want to; they can stop unwanted behavior by reporting it; or men would stop if women told them to (Lonsway et al., 2008).

While examining previous literature, Lonsway et al. (2008) had noted research which investigated links between sexual harassment mythologies and ideological constructs which have been theorized to be related (i.e. acceptance of interpersonal violence, rape myth acceptance, hostility toward women, traditional attitudes toward gender roles). After its development, the ISHMA scale was used to examine relationships between acceptance of sexual harassment mythology and the ideological

constructs of sexism, hostility toward women, attitudes toward women, rape myth acceptance and support for the feminist movement. Findings showed that greater sexual harassment myth acceptance positively correlated with other sexist beliefs and rape myth acceptance, while negatively correlating with feminist movement support (Lonsway et al., 2008). Lonsway et al. (2008) also found that men are more accepting of myths than are women, especially ones indicating women fabricate accounts and are responsible for sexually harassing incidents. These findings complimented earlier findings that indicate females are more likely than males to perceive an incident as sexual harassment and those who hold more negative stereotypes of women are less likely to perceive sexual harassment (Berdahl, 2007; Cowan, 2007 Katz et al., 1996).

## CHAPTER 2

### Methods and Findings

The current study employed a survey instrument to answer the three main research questions of this study: 1) Does sexual harassment education/training have an effect on respondent's acceptance of sexual harassment; 2) Do male and female respondents hold similar myth acceptance attitudes and/or does support for sexist beliefs in general vary by gender; and 3) How closely are acceptance of sexual harassment mythologies related to acceptance of other negative attitudes toward women, if these attitudes are related at all?

#### Sample

A convenience sample of 311 respondents was utilized in this study. The respondents were undergraduate students from a medium-sized southeastern university. Respondents surveyed were enrolled in large classes (30 or more students enrolled) at the university, and were surveyed through the use of a 95-item questionnaire. In order to survey participants, an email was sent to professors instructing classes that had 30 or more students enrolled asking permission to survey their class. Three surveys had to be eliminated because they were incomplete resulting in a total sample size of 308.

Each respondent received a letter of informed consent before commencing the survey indicating that participation was completely voluntary, and that the raw data obtained from the survey was anonymous and would remain strictly confidential. The survey instrument was a 95-item questionnaire completed by the respondents which included the control variables, demographic characteristics, and six different attitudinal scales: the Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs Scale, Benevolent Sexism Scale, Illinois

Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance (ISHMA) Scale, Modern Sexism Scale, Old Fashioned Sexism Scale, and Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. Respondents also completed responses to vignettes related to sexual harassment. These items are discussed in more detail in the following section.

### Description of Variables

Demographic variables such as gender, age, race, and education level were included in the survey instrument because previous research has found ties between these variables and tolerance of sexual harassment (Lonsway et al., 2007; Lott et al., 1982; Reilly et al., 1986; Russell & Trigg, 2004; Tang et al., 1995; Terrance et al., 2004). Studies have found that older respondents are typically less tolerant of sexual harassment than younger respondents (Reilly et al. 1986; Terrance et al., 2004). Level of education was included to see if the amount of exposure to higher education lead to a different level of tolerance of sexual harassment and less acceptance of sexual harassment and rape myths along with other stereotypical beliefs. Gender was included because previous literature indicates that males are consistently more tolerant of sexual harassment than females (Lott et al., 1982; McCabe & Hardman, 2005; Reilly et al., 1986; Russell & Trigg, 2004; Terrance et al., 2004). Additionally, males are less likely than females to view sexual harassment of women as a problem (Maypole & Skaine, 1982) and reject rape and sexual harassment myths (Lonsway et al., 2007; Xenos & Smith, 2001). Gender differences also have been found to be related to other attitudes pertaining to violence against women and gender stereotyping (Russell & Trigg, 2004; Xenos & Smith, 2001).

Other control variables for this survey were whether or not the respondent had ever participated in a sexual harassment training program or class concerning sexual

harassment that lasted at least one hour. Some studies focusing on whether sexual harassment training works to increase individuals' understanding of it and the effects and harms it causes in the workplace have found a positive correlation (Beauvais, 1986; Maurizio & Rogers, 1992). These studies indicate training might be an effective way of alerting people to the harms and dangers of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Beauvais (1986) found that training had a desired affect on sexual harassment attitudes, and that individuals who went through training were less likely to blame the victim and more likely to see sexual harassment as an important issue.

Sexual harassment awareness and experience also were measured. Individuals were asked to indicate whether or not they were aware if their university had a policy specifically dealing with sexual harassment on their campus and whether or not they were aware of services on campus for victims of sexual harassment. They also were asked whether or not they had had a class or any training on the subject. There also were two questions dealing with experiencing sexual harassment which assessed both quid pro quo and hostile work environment harassment. Specifically respondents were asked whether or not they had personally ever experienced unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or sexual verbal or physical conduct in their work environment when the submission to such conduct was made a condition of their employment. Similarly, hostile work environment harassment was assessed by asking whether or not they had personally ever experienced unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favors, and other sexual verbal or physical conduct which unreasonably interfered with their work performance or created an intimidating or offensive (hostile) working environment.



Several different scales were utilized to measure attitudes towards women because research has indicated that these attitudes are complicated and generally linked together (Herzog, 2007). Too often attitudes toward women have been measured using only one scale in a particular study and thereby may miss the complexity of the various types of sex stereotyping and their impact upon dependent variables. Attitudes toward women are not simple or straight forward; there is not one type of sexism, but rather sexist views of women may not be hostile or negative as well as benevolent or protective (Glick & Fiske, 1997, Herzog, 2007). Stereotypes based on gender, traditional attitudes toward women's roles, and sexism also have strong connections with rape myth acceptance and attitudes toward sexual harassment. Gender stereotyping was studied by Burt (1980) and was determined to have a strong tie with rape myth acceptance. Xenos and Smith (2001) found that the more an individual accepted conservative and/or traditional attitudes about the roles of women, the more likely they were to attribute blame rape victims. Begany and Milburn (2002) found support for the proposition that males cast women into two types, the Madonna or the Whore, and when women were cast into the group of whore and did not fit conservative or sex role stereotypes, men were more likely to attribute blame to the victims for their rape and accept myths indicating women secretly desire being raped.

In order to measure the complexity and variation of sexist attitudes toward women and conservative attitudes toward sexual relationships between males and females, several scales were employed including: the Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs Scale, Benevolent Sexism Scale, Modern Sexism Scale, and Old Fashioned Sexism Scale. These scales will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent section.

Since rape mythology and sexual harassment mythology have been closely tied in previous literature, two additional scales were utilized to measure each: the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1995) and Illinois Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance Scale (Lonsway et al., 2007). Sexual harassment vignettes were also written and utilized in this research. Previous research studies have used vignettes to determine whether examine the relationship between attitudes and responses to hypothetical situations (Herzog, 2007; Terrance et al., 2004). The vignettes in this research portrayed seven different scenarios between supervisor Jim Smith and his employee Sara Jones which ranged from sexist comments to coercion.

#### Operationalization of Variables and Descriptive Findings

Demographic variables for this study included sex, race, age, and education. The sample consisted of 42.2 percent male and 57.8 percent female respondents. Race was originally measured through five categories: White (71.1 percent); Black/African American (19.0 percent); Hispanic (non-white) (2.9 percent); Mixed/bi/multi-racial (3.2 percent); and Other (3.9 percent). Due to an overwhelming majority of white respondents, race was condensed and recoded into White and Other. Age was measured through five age ranges: 18-20; 21-25; 26-35; 36-45; and over 45. A majority of the respondents for this study were between the ages of 18 and 20 (70.8 percent). Given the lack of variance in age, it was, however, eliminated from the subsequent analyses. Age was significantly related to education level and education level was deemed to be more relevant. Education level was determined through the classifications of Freshmen (37.3 percent), Sophomores (30.5 percent), Juniors (21.1 percent), and Seniors (11.0 percent).

Table 1: Description of Variables

Variable	Description
Age	Age ranges: 0=18-20 (70.8%); 1=21-25 (26.3%); 2=26-35 (2.35); 3=36-45 (0.3%); 4= over 45 (0.3%).
Sex	Male=0; Female=1; 42.2% Male; 57.8% Female
Race	White=0; Other=1; 71.4% White; 28.6% Other
Education	Freshman=1(37.3%); Sophomore=2 (30.5%); Junior=3 (21.1%); Senior=4 (11.0%)
Sexual Harassment Class	No=1; Yes=2; 75.2% No; 24.8 % Yes
Sexual Harassment Training	No=1; Yes=2; 81.4% No; 18.6% Yes
Sexual Harassment Policy	Unaware=0; Aware=1; 48.6% Unaware; 53.2% Aware
Sexual Harassment Services	No=1; Yes=2; 37.9% No; 62.1% Yes
Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment	No=1; Yes=2; 88.4% No; 11.6 % Yes
Hostile Work Environment Sexual Harassment	No=1; Yes=2; 85.2% No; 14.8 % Yes
Old Fashioned Sexism	High score=Less acceptance of beliefs; Range=8 to 20; M=15.73; SD=2.324
Modern Sexism	High score=Less acceptance of beliefs; Range=13 to 32; M=23; SD=3.374
Benevolent Sexism	High score=Less acceptance of beliefs; Range=13 to 44; M=27.98; SD=4.941
Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs	High score=Less acceptance of beliefs; Range=33 to 60; M=44.92; SD=4.877
Rape Myths	High score=Less adherence to myths; Range=39 to 76; M=61.06; SD=8.255
ISHMA	High score=Less adherence to myths; Range=39 to 80; M=57.74; SD=7.636
Sexual Harassment Vignettes	High score=Less likely to identify behavior as sexual harassment; Range=7 to 28; M=15.21; SD=4.395

Crosstabulations were run on the demographic variables to determine any significant relationships or differences in the sample. These crosstabulations showed very few significant relationships among the demographic variables. There were no significant differences in sex by race or education. Education was recoded into upper (Juniors and Seniors) and lower (Freshmen and Sophomores) division for the purpose of the analyses. Non-white had higher educational level than white students in this study ( $X^2= 4.34$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Education level had no significant relationship by race or sex.

The sample used in this study was a convenience sample, although the demographics of the sample are generally consistent with the demographics of the population. The population sampled in this study was students attending a mid-sized Southeastern university. Similar to the sample, a majority of the population were female (57.8% for the sample and 56.2 % for the population). A majority of both the sample (71.1%) and the population (77.7%) were White. The sample was a little younger than the average age of students at the university which was 22.1 years of age. Most of the respondents in this study were between the ages of 18-20. The education level of the population and the sample were also similar: 32.3% of the population were classified as Freshmen, and 37.3% of the sample were Freshmen. The major difference in education level between the population and sample involved Seniors. Only 11 percent of the sampled respondents were Seniors, while 25.3% of the population are classified as Seniors. Generally speaking, however, the sample was very similar to the university population.

Control Variables

As previously stated the other control variables for this study assessed respondents familiarity with issues surrounding sexual harassment. Respondents were asked whether or not (e.g. yes or no): 1) they had participated in a sexual harassment training program or class, 2) they knew whether or not there was a campus policy specifically covering sexual harassment, 3) they knew about resources on campus for victims of sexual harassment, and 4) they had experienced either quid pro quo or hostile work environment sexual harassment.

A majority of respondents indicated they had not participated in either a sexual harassment training program or class. Only about one-fourth (24.8%) of sample had participated in a class discussing sexual harassment, while even fewer (18.6%) had participated in a sexual harassment training program. Even though a majority of the individuals surveyed were aware that the campus had a specific policy on sexual harassment, almost half (48.6%) of the individuals surveyed were unaware of the existence of such a policy. Still, 62.1% of those surveyed believed there were services available on campus for victims of sexual harassment. In order to facilitate multivariate analyses a new variable was computed using these four items: Sexual Harassment Awareness (SHA). This variable was compiled by scaling sexual harassment policy awareness, sexual harassment resource awareness, participating in a class on sexual harassment, and participating in a sexual harassment training program. It was a simple additive scale.

Respondents to this survey indicated experiencing very little sexual harassment. Only 11.6% of those surveyed (N=35) affirmed that they had experienced quid pro quo sexual harassment. Slightly more individuals, 14.8%, indicated they had experienced

hostile work environment sexual harassment. Crosstabulations were run that included all of the demographic and control variables against one another. Many of the correlations between these variables were not significant.

The chi squares were significant for only a few of the demographic and control variables. Whether or not an individual had attended a sexual harassment training program did not vary by sex, race, age, education, or attending a class on sexual harassment; however, individuals who had attended a class on sexual harassment significantly differed by education. Upper level students were more likely than lower level students to have attended a class on sexual harassment, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Respondent's Participation in a Sexual Harassment Class by Education

	No		Yes	
	N	%	N	%
Lower Level	166	79.8	42	20.2
Upper Level	65	65.7	34	34.3

$X^2 = 7.21, p < .05$

While only slightly more than half of the individuals surveyed were aware of a specific campus policy on sexual harassment, this awareness did not significantly differ by sex, race, age, education, or having attended either a sexual harassment training program or class. Individuals' awareness of resources for victims of sexual harassment on campus also did not significantly vary by sex, age, education, or attendance in sexual harassment training programs or classes. Resource awareness did significantly differ, though, by race as shown in Table 3. White respondents were more likely than other respondents to believe that resources were available for victims of sexual harassment.

While most respondents did not indicate that they had been victims of quid pro quo sexual harassment, individuals who attended a class on sexual harassment were significantly more likely than other respondents to have experienced quid pro quo

Table 3: Respondent's knowledge of resources available for victims by Race

	No		Yes	
	N	%	N	%
White	74	33.8	145	66.2
Other	42	48.3	45	51.7

$X^2 = 5.55, p < .05$

sexual harassment as shown in Table 4 below. Individuals who had experienced quid pro quo sexual harassment did not significantly differ by any other demographic or control variable.

Table 4: Respondent's Participation in a Sexual Harassment Class by Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment Experience

	No (Quid Pro Quo)		Yes	
	N	%	N	%
No (Class)	208	91.6	19	8.4
Yes	59	78.7	16	21.3

$X^2 = 9.246, p < .05$

Even though more individuals reported experiencing hostile work environment sexual harassment than quid pro quo sexual harassment, most individuals experienced neither types of harassment. Individuals who reported experiencing hostile work environment sexual harassment did not significantly vary by race, age, education, or attending sexual harassment training programs or classes. Experiencing hostile work environment sexual harassment did significantly differ by sex (see Table 5) with females being more likely to experience hostile work environment sexual harassment than males. Individuals who had experienced quid pro quo harassment were also significantly more likely than those who had not experienced that harassment to indicate they had experienced hostile work environment sexual harassment ( $X^2 = 82.905; p < .05$ ).

Table 5: Respondent's Experience with Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment by Sex

	No		Yes	
	N	%	N	%
Male	119	91.5	11	8.5
Female	140	80.5	24	19.5

$\chi^2=7.242; p<.05$

#### Independent Variables

Several scales were utilized in this study to get a more comprehensive view on how various attitudes toward women affect attitudes toward sexual harassment. Three scales were employed to assess sexist attitudes: Old Fashioned Sexism, Modern Sexism, and Benevolent Sexism. Additionally, the Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs and Rape Myth Acceptance Scale were employed to include various attitudes on relationships, proper roles of women, and rape.

The Old Fashioned Sexism Scale is a five-item scale designed by Swim and Cohen (1997) to measure beliefs about gender stereotypes and unequal treatment due to gender. The attitudes assessed in this scale measured adherence to gender role stereotypes in sports, the home, and at the office. A four-point Likert scale with 1=Strongly Agree and 4=Strongly Disagree was used to measure adherence to each statement. The scale included statements such as "I would be more comfortable having a man as a boss than a woman" and "Women are less capable than men of thinking logically." The scale has acceptable reliability (alpha = .66) and is shown in its entirety on Table 6 below.

Overall, respondents showed very little acceptance of the beliefs expressed through the Old Fashioned Sexism Scale. The most accepted statement in the scale had less than one third (32.9 %) of respondent's acceptance: "I would be more comfortable



having a man as a boss than a woman.” A little more than one-fourth (26.9%) of respondents agreed with the statement, “When both parents are employed and their child gets sick at school, the school should call the mother rather than the father.” The least agreement was found to be with the statement, “Women are generally not as smart as men.” Only 5.8 percent of respondents surveyed agreed with this statement. Again, the majority of respondents showed little support for the sexist beliefs measured by this scale.

The Modern Sexism Scale is an eight item scale which was developed by Swim and Cohen (1997) shown below in Table 7. This scale was designed to measure subtle sexism which may try to deny or diminish the existence of discrimination against women. Items in this scale include subtle signs of sexism in society, the workforce, and at home. Examples of the attitudes measured in this scale are: “Women rarely miss out on good jobs due to sex discrimination”; “It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television”; and “On average, people in our society treat husbands and wives equally.”

Table 6: Descriptive table for Old Fashioned Sexism Scale

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	N	%	n	%	n	%
I would be more comfortable having a man as a boss than a woman.	28	9.1	73	23.8	177	57.7	29	9.4
It is more important to encourage boys than to encourage girls to participate in athletics.	5	1.6	28	9.1	147	47.7	128	41.6
Women are generally not as smart as men.	5	1.6	13	4.2	92	30.1	196	64.1
When both parents are employed and their child gets sick at school, the school should call the mother rather than the father.	10	3.2	73	23.7	166	53.9	59	19.2
Women are less capable than men of thinking logically.	5	1.6	33	10.7	133	44.5	137	44.4

The current study found this scale to have a sufficient reliability ( $\alpha = .707$ ), when a reliability analysis was run on the scale.

Overall, there was some divergence in the attitudes as measured by the Modern Sexism Scale. While there was more agreement with these subtle attitudes of sexism than for the more overt sexist attitudes displayed in the Old Fashioned Sexism Scale, generally, respondents disagreed with the statements in this measure. There was only one statement that the majority of the respondents expressed agreement: “Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.” Over half, (59.2%) of respondents agreed with this statement. Slightly less than half (43.5%) of respondents also agreed with the following: “Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women’s actual experiences.” In contrast, only 9.2 percent agreed that “Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in America.” Respondents were least likely to agree with the following statement (8.8 percent): “It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television.”

Table 7: Descriptive table of Modern Sexism

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women’s actual experiences.	14	4.5	120	39	150	48.7	24	7.8
Women rarely miss out on good jobs due to sex discrimination.	18	5.8	75	24.4	168	54.5	47	15.3
It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television.	3	1.0	24	7.8	151	49.2	129	42
Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.	43	14.1	138	45.1	99	32.4	26	8.5
It is difficult to understand the anger of women’s groups in America.	15	4.9	69	22.5	163	53.3	59	19.3

Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in America.	6	1.9	24	7.8	160	52.1	117	38.1
It is difficult to understand why women's groups are still concerned about societal limitations of women's opportunities.	10	3.3	54	17.6	171	55.7	72	23.5
On average, people in our society treat husbands and wives equally.	13	4.3	80	26.2	164	53.8	48	15.7

The Benevolent Sexism scale is an 11 item scale developed by Glick and Fiske (1997) to measure attitudes of men as benefactors and/or protectors of women in stereotypical sex roles. The items in this scale mainly gauge attitudes about men's relationship with women and stereotypical roles for each sex (i.e. men as breadwinners and protectors, women as virtuous and pure). Examples of attitudes measured by the scale are: 1) "Women should be cherished and protected by men;" 2) "In a disaster, women ought to be rescued before men;" 3) "Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being to provide financially for the women in their lives;" and 4) "Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess." A reliability analysis of this scale found an alpha of .766 and the entire scale is shown below in Table 8.

The attitudes portrayed in the Benevolent Sexism scale were the most accepted by respondents of all the sexism scales. The majority of respondents agreed with these three statements: 1) "Women should be cherished and protected by men" (80.8%); 2) "Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores" (72.6%); and 3) In a disaster, women ought to be rescued before men" (52.8%). In contrast, only about one-third of the respondents agreed that: "Men are incomplete without women" (32.6 %), and "People are not truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex" (30.3%).

Table 8: Benevolent Sexism Scale

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Women should be cherished and protected by men.	117	38.1	145	47.2	40	13.0	5	1.6
In a disaster, women ought to be rescued before men.	39	12.8	122	40.0	119	39.0	25	8.2
People are not truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.	18	5.9	75	24.4	146	47.6	68	22.1
No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.	26	8.5	85	27.7	139	45.3	57	18.6
Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.	67	21.8	156	50.8	68	22.1	16	5.2
Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being to provide financially for the women in their lives.	24	7.8	86	28.0	151	49.2	46	15.0
Men are incomplete without women.	24	7.8	76	24.8	134	43.8	72	23.5
Women tend to have a moral sensibility superior to that of men.	27	8.8	117	38.2	129	42.2	33	10.8
A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.	33	10.8	115	37.6	112	36.6	46	15.0
Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.	21	6.9	84	27.5	143	46.7	58	19.0
Women tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste than men.	21	6.8	104	33.8	149	48.4	34	11.0

Burt (1988) developed the Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs scale to measure the expectations of relationships and whether or not these relationships are exploitative. This 15-item scale measures various attitudes about men and women’s relationships with one another, and how individuals perceive these relationships and is shown in its entirety on Table 9. Examples of some of the statements on this scale are: “It is possible for a man and a woman to be ‘just friends’”; “It is natural for one spouse to be in control of the other”; and “When it comes to sex, most people are just trying to use the other person.” The current study found the Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs scale to have sufficient reliability ( $\alpha = .70$ ).

A majority of respondents rejected the negative opinions contained in this scale. The two “positive” statements about relationships, “It is possible for sexes to be equal in society” and “Men and women share more similarities than differences,” had the most agreement with 73.0% and 61.9% of respondents agreeing, respectively. About one half (52.3%) of respondents also agreed with the statement, “In all societies it is inevitable that one sex is dominant.” Very few individuals, however, agreed with the statements: “Men and women cannot really be friends” (7.9%) and “Sex is like a game where one person ‘wins’ and the other ‘loses’” (5.6%).

The Rape Myth Acceptance Scale is a 19-item scale that was developed by Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1995) and is shown below in Table 10. This scale measures acceptance of attitudes and beliefs about rape. Many of the myths presented in this scale minimize the harm of rape, blame victims of rape, and/or excuse rape as a natural pathology of males. The following statements are examples of the myths utilized in the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale: “Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them”; “If a woman is raped, often it’s because she didn’t say no clearly enough”; and “It is just part of human nature for men to take sex from women who let their guard down.” A reliability analysis of this scale showed it to have an acceptable reliability (alpha = .90).

Table 9: Descriptive table for Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs Scale

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
In dating relationships people are mostly out to take advantage of each other.	1	.3	26	8.5	165	53.7	115	37.5
Most people are pretty devious and manipulative when they are trying to attract someone of the opposite sex.	27	8.8	113	36.8	134	43.6	33	10.7
In all societies it is inevitable that one sex is dominant.	28	9.1	133	43.2	119	38.6	28	9.1

It is possible for a man and a woman to be "just friends."	15	4.9	31	10.1	109	35.4	153	49.7
In the work force, gain by one sex necessitates a loss for the other.	8	2.6	58	19.1	180	59.2	58	18.8
Men and women cannot really be friends.	6	2.0	18	5.9	129	42.2	153	50.0
It is natural for one spouse to be in control of the other.	11	3.6	80	26.0	148	48.1	69	22.4
If you don't show who's boss in the beginning of a relationship, you will be taken advantage of later.	18	5.8	72	23.4	156	50.6	62	20.1
It is possible for the sexes to be equal in society.	11	3.6	72	23.5	162	52.8	62	20.2
Men and women are generally out to use each other.	7	2.3	50	16.2	156	50.6	95	30.8
When it comes to sex, most people are just trying to use the other person.	4	1.3	48	15.6	182	59.1	74	24.0
Sex is like a game where one person "wins" and the other "loses"	6	2.0	11	3.6	111	36.2	179	58.3
It's impossible for men and women to truly understand each other.	23	7.5	68	22.1	163	53.1	53	17.3
Men and women share more similarities than differences.	18	5.9	99	32.2	159	51.8	31	10.1
When women enter the work force they are taking jobs away from men.	6	1.9	35	11.4	168	54.5	99	32.1

Overall, there was very little agreement with the attitudes examined in this scale.

The most agreement came with statements that tended to indicate that either the victim was to blame or that it is natural for men to force sex. For example, 43.4% of respondents agreed that "Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away." A little over one-third of respondents (37.6%) agreed with, "In any rape case, one would have to question whether the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation." Likewise about one-third (35.5%) of respondents agreed with the statement, "When men rape it is because of their strong desire for sex." "Many so-called rape victims are actually women who had sex and 'changed their minds' afterwards," had 26.2 % of respondents' agreement, and almost one-fourth (23.7%) agreed that "Many rapes happen because women lead men on." Close to one-fifth

Table 10: Descriptive table for Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
When a woman is raped, she usually did something careless to put herself in that situation.	0	0.0	18	5.8	138	44.8	152	49.4
Many so-called rape victims are actually women who had sex and “changed their minds” afterwards.	4	1.3	46	14.9	166	53.9	92	29.9
Any woman who teases a man sexually and doesn’t finish what she started realistically deserves anything she gets.	2	0.7	27	8.8	141	45.9	137	44.6
When a woman allows petting to get to a certain point, she is implicitly agreeing to have sex.	4	1.3	54	17.6	141	45.9	108	35.2
In any rape case, one would have to question whether the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation.	9	2.9	107	34.7	113	36.7	79	25.6
Many rapes happen because women lead men on.	8	2.6	65	21.1	140	45.5	95	30.8
Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them.	4	1.3	19	6.2	122	39.6	163	52.9
When women talk and act sexy, they are inviting rape.	6	1.9	31	10.1	127	41.2	144	46.8
Rape mainly occurs on the “bad” side of town.	1	0.3	44	14.3	130	42.2	133	43.2
Men don’t usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.	9	2.9	124	40.4	112	36.5	62	20.2
A rapist is more likely to be Black or Hispanic than White.	5	1.6	45	14.7	139	45.4	117	38.2
It is just part of human nature for men to take sex from women who let their guard down.	2	0.7	57	18.6	147	47.9	101	32.9
When men rape, it is because of their strong desire for sex.	16	5.2	93	30.3	116	37.8	82	26.7
A rape probably didn’t happen if the woman has no bruises or marks.	2	0.7	15	4.9	131	42.7	159	51.8
Even though the woman may call it rape, she probably enjoyed it.	3	1.0	14	4.6	116	37.7	174	56.7
If a husband pays all the bills, he has the right to sex with his wife whenever he wants.	6	2.0	16	5.2	137	44.6	148	48.2
If a woman is raped, often it’s because she didn’t say “no” clearly enough.	3	1.0	27	8.8	128	41.7	149	48.5
If a woman doesn’t physically fight back, you can’t really say it was a rape.	3	1.0	20	6.5	127	41.4	157	51.1
In some rape cases, the woman actually wanted it to happen.	8	2.6	62	20.3	129	42.2	107	35.0

(18.9%) of individuals agreed that “When a woman allows petting to get to a certain point, she is implicitly agreeing to have sex”; however, only 5.6 percent of respondents

agreed with each of the following statements: “Even though the woman may call it rape, she probably enjoyed it,” and “A rape probably didn’t happen if the woman has no bruises or marks.”

### Dependent Variables

The Illinois Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance (ISHMA) Scale is a 20-item scale developed by Lonsway et al. (2007). This scale measures the acceptance of attitudes and beliefs about sexual harassment including a willingness to blame victims, the extent to which respondents believe victims exaggeration, acceptance of harassment as the result of “natural” sexuality of men, and the belief that victims have ulterior motives. All of the items measured in this scale are discussed below and shown on Table 11. This scale has an acceptable reliability ( $\alpha = .868$ ).

While there was more support for sexual harassment myths than there was for rape myths, respondents showed relatively low overall acceptance of the myths. There were, though, five myths that a majority of the respondent agreed with including: 1) “A woman can easily ruin her supervisor’s career by claiming that he ‘came on’ to her” (68.3%); 2) “Women who are caught having an affair with their supervisor sometimes claim it was sexual harassment” (62.9%); 3) “Women can usually stop unwanted sexual attention from a coworker by telling their supervisor about it” (62.3%); 4) “It’s inevitable that men will ‘hit on’ women at work” (52.6%); and 5) “Sometimes women make up allegations of sexual harassment to extort money from their employer” (52.0%). These statements generally highlight an acceptance of “ulterior motives” by women as an explanation of sexual harassment. It also seems to indicate that sexual harassment is not really that harmful for the victim and that it is natural.



While a minority of respondents accepted some of the other sexual harassment myths, in some instances it represented a sizeable minority. For example, 43.3% of respondents agreed that, “Most women are flattered when they get sexual attention from men with whom they work.” Between one-third and one-fourth of respondents agreed with the following statements: 1) “Sometimes a woman has a ‘fantasy’ relationship with her boss and then claims that he sexually harassed her” (38.5%); 2) “Women sometimes file charges of sexual harassment for no apparent reason” (36.6%); 3) “It is difficult to believe sexual harassment charges that were not reported at the time; (32.9%); 4) “Women shouldn’t be so quick to take offense when a man at work expresses sexual interest” (30.8%); 5) “Most women secretly enjoy it when men ‘come on’ to them at work” (29.8%); and 6) “Women often file frivolous charges of sexual harassment” (25.2%). One-fifth (20.1 %) of respondents also agreed that “Nearly all instances of sexual harassment would end if the woman simply told the man to stop.” The least agreed upon statements had 10% or less of respondents who supported the attitudes. Only 2.9 percent of respondents agreed that: 1) “As long as a woman doesn’t lose her job, her claim of sexual harassment shouldn’t be taken too seriously”; 2) “If a woman is sexually harassed, she must have done something to invite it” (4.2%); 3) “Women who claim sexual harassment have usually done something to cause it” (6.5%); 4) “Women who claim that they have been sexually harassed are usually exaggerating” (8.8%); 5) “If a woman doesn’t make a complaint, it probably wasn’t serious enough to be sexual harassment” (8.7%); and 6) “Women who wait weeks or months to report sexual harassment are probably just making it up” (10.1%).

Table 11: Descriptive table for ISHMA

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Women who are caught having an affair with their supervisor sometimes claim that it was sexual harassment.	19	6.3	172	56.6	95	31.3	18	5.9
If a woman doesn't make a complaint, it probably wasn't serious enough to be sexual harassment.	2	0.6	25	8.1	134	43.5	147	47.7
Most women are flattered when they get sexual attention from men with whom they work.	13	4.3	119	39.0	142	46.6	31	10.2
Women often file frivolous charges of sexual harassment.	6	2.0	71	23.2	186	60.8	43	14.1
It's inevitable that men will "hit on" women at work.	18	5.9	143	46.7	110	35.9	35	11.4
Women shouldn't be so quick to take offense when a man at work expresses sexual interest.	13	4.2	82	26.6	153	49.7	60	19.5
Women sometimes file charges of sexual harassment for no apparent reason.	10	3.3	102	33.3	151	49.3	43	14.1
Women can usually stop unwanted sexual attention from a co-worker by telling their supervisor about it.	29	9.4	163	52.9	96	31.2	20	6.5
A woman can easily ruin her supervisor's career by claiming that he "came on" to her.	52	17.0	157	51.3	78	25.5	19	6.2
Women who claim sexual harassment have usually done something to cause it.	1	0.3	19	6.2	136	44.2	152	49.4
Women who claim that they have been sexually harassed are usually exaggerating.	5	1.6	22	7.2	167	54.4	113	36.8
If a woman is sexually harassed, she must have done something to invite it.	4	1.3	9	2.9	100	32.6	194	63.2
As long as a woman doesn't lose her job, her claim of sexual harassment shouldn't be taken too seriously.	0	0.0	9	2.9	120	39.0	179	58.1
Women who wait weeks or months to report sexual harassment are probably just making it up.	5	1.6	26	8.5	170	55.4	106	34.5
Women can usually stop unwanted attention by simply telling the man that his behavior is not appreciated.	19	6.2	117	38.0	117	38.0	55	17.9
Nearly all instances of sexual harassment would end if the woman simply told the man to stop.	8	2.6	54	17.5	148	48.1	98	31.8
It is difficult to believe sexual harassment charges that were not reported at the time.	9	2.9	92	30.0	141	45.9	65	21.2
Sometimes women make up allegations of sexual harassment to extort money from their employer.	11	3.6	148	48.4	116	37.9	31	10.1
Most women secretly enjoy it when men "come on" to them at work.	10	3.2	82	26.6	154	50.0	62	20.1
Sometimes a woman has a "fantasy" relationship with her boss and then claims that he sexually harassed her.	7	2.3	110	36.2	149	49.0	38	12.5

Seven sexual harassment vignettes were written as a part of this research. These vignettes contained different scenarios between employer Jim Smith and his employee, Sara Jones. The vignettes ranged from scenarios involving sexist comments to excessive and uninvited calls to physical contact and job dependency situations. The vignettes were measured using a Likert scale of 1 to 4 with 1= strongly agree that the situation was sexual harassment and 4=strongly disagree that the situation was sexual harassment. A reliability analysis of the seven vignettes found Cronbach's alpha to be .876 and are shown in Table 12.

Overall, respondents tended to agree that most of the situations should be considered sexual harassment. The less obvious forms of harassment involved sexist comments, subtle physical actions, and incessant calling, all of which were typically less likely to be considered sexual harassment. These situations are described in the following statements: 1) "Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones is trying to fix her computer which is acting up. She is on-line with the help desk when she overhears Smith say, 'I don't know why she is even trying. Everyone knows women can't deal with computers, most of them can barely turn one on.'" (39.6% agreed); 2) "Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones and Smith were selected to travel to store headquarters for training on a new on-line inventory computer system. On the airplane, Smith turned to Jones and said, 'I don't know why they chose you. Women aren't nearly as good at computers as men are. You should be in a beauty competition, not worrying your pretty little head over complicated computers.'" (51.5% agreed); 3) "Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones was standing in line at the local coffee shop around the corner from

work. While she was waiting, Smith walked up and joined the line behind her. When Jones turned around, Smith looked her up and down checking her out, and whistled.” (61.3% agreed); and 4) “Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. He has repeatedly asked his employee Sara Jones for a date. Recently Smith has started calling Jones’ house to ask her out at least once a week even though she did not give him her number or agree to date him” (74.1% agreed).

Respondents were especially likely to label the vignettes as being sexual harassment if the vignettes contained physical contact or “stereotypical” scenes of harassment (i.e. quid pro quo sexual harassment). The following vignettes were most often defined by respondents as sexual harassment. Almost three-fourths, or more, respondents labeled the situations as sexual harassment: 1) “Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones was leaning up against the wall waiting for an elevator. Supervisor Smith put his arm on each side of Sara Jones so that she was trapped against the wall and asked her what her plans for the weekend were and if she had a lot of men who ask her out for dates.” (70.8 %); 2) “Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones has been trying to get a promotion for a couple of years. She asks Smith for a letter of recommendation. He tells her he is good friends with the person making the hire. He also tells her that he ‘could really help her out if she would just be a little more friendly toward him’ and asks her out for drinks after work at the hotel bar next door.” (78.1%); and 3) “Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones was making copies at the copy machine when supervisor Smith came up behind her, leaned his body into hers so they were touching, and said, we should go out sometime” (83.7%).

Table 12: Descriptive table for Sexual Harassment Vignettes

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones was leaning up against the wall waiting for elevator. Supervisor Smith put his arm on each side of Sara Jones so that she was trapped against the wall and asked her what her plans for the weekend were and if she had a lot of men who ask her out for dates.	65	21.3	151	49.5	75	24.6	14	4.6
Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. He employee, Sara Jones was standing in line at the local coffee shop around the corner from work. While she was waiting, Smith walked up and joined the line behind her. When Jones turned around, Smith looked her up and down checking her out, and whistled.	44	14.8	138	46.5	103	37.4	12	4.0
Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones and Smith were selected to travel to store headquarters for training on a new online inventory computer system. On the airplane, Smith turned to Jones and said, "I don't know why they chose you. Women aren't nearly as good at computers as men are. You should be in a beauty competition, not worrying your pretty little head over complicated computers."	52	17.6	100	33.9	115	39.0	28	9.5
Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones has been trying to get a promotion for a couple years. She asks Smith for a letter of recommendation. He tells her that he is good friends with the person making the hire. He also tells her that he "could really help her out if she would just be a little more friendly toward him" and asks her out for drinks after work at the hotel bar next door.	100	33.8	131	44.3	48	16.6	16	5.4
Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. He has repeatedly asked his employee Sara Jones out for a date. Recently, Smith has started calling Jones' house to ask her out at least once a week even though she did not give him her number or agree to date him.	97	32.7	123	41.4	63	21.2	14	4.7
Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones is trying to fix her computer which is acting up. She is on-line with the help desk when she overhears Smith say, "I don't know why she is even trying. Everyone knows women can't deal with computers, most of them can barely turn one on."	37	12.5	80	27.1	136	46.1	42	14.2
Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Hones was making copies at the copy machine when supervisor Smith came up behind her, leaned his body into hers so they were touching, and said, we should go out some time.	112	36.5	145	47.2	38	12.4	12	3.9

## Bivariate Analysis

Table 13 shows the results of the correlation matrix. Bivariate correlations were run for the following variables: sex, race, education, sexual harassment awareness (SHA), quid pro quo sexual harassment, hostile work environment sexual harassment, Old Fashioned Sexism Scale, Modern Sexism Scale, Benevolent Sexism Scale, Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs Scale, Rape Myths Acceptance Scale, Illinois Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance Scale (ISHMA), and the sexual harassment vignettes. The correlation analysis showed many significant relationships among the variables.

Sex was significantly correlated with hostile work environment sexual harassment, old fashioned sexism, modern sexism, adversarial heterosexual beliefs, rape myths, and ISHMA. The correlations indicated that women were more likely to experience hostile work environment sexual harassment than men. It also indicated that women were less likely to accept the attitudes presented in the Old Fashioned Sexism Scale, Modern Sexism Scale, Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs Scale, Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, and ISHMA. Women were less likely than men to accept sexual harassment myths but they were not significantly more likely to label situations as sexually harassing. Sex also was not significantly correlated with quid pro quo sexual harassment, SHA, or benevolent sexism.

Race was significantly correlated with education, SHA, quid pro quo sexual harassment, hostile work environment sexual harassment, and benevolent sexism. It was not, however, significantly correlated with old fashioned or modern sexism, adversarial heterosexual beliefs, rape myths, ISHMA, or Vignettes. The correlation analysis indicated that Whites were more likely than other races to have higher scores of sexual harassment awareness and were less likely to endorse benevolent sexism. Non-Whites were more likely than Whites,

though, to be upper classmen, and to have experienced quid pro quo sexual harassment and hostile work environment sexual harassment. There was no difference between races on sexual harassment myth acceptance or likeliness to label situations as sexual harassment.

Education was significantly correlated to SHA, benevolent sexism, rape myths, and ISHMA. Upper classmen were more likely to be more aware of sexual harassment, were less tolerant of benevolent sexism, and less accepting of rape myths and sexual harassment myths than lower classmen. There were no significant relationships between education and labeling behavior as sexual harassment, tolerance of modern sexism, old fashioned sexism, or adversarial heterosexual beliefs. There were also no significant relationships between education and experiencing either quid pro quo sexual harassment or hostile work environment sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment awareness was significantly related with modern sexism, adversarial heterosexual beliefs, rape myths, ISHMA, and Vignettes. The more aware respondents were of sexual harassment, the less tolerant they were of modern sexism, adversarial heterosexual beliefs, and the less accepting they were of rape myths and sexual harassment myths. Respondents who were more aware of sexual harassment were also more likely to identify situations as being sexual harassment. This sexual harassment awareness was not significantly related to experiencing sexual harassment, or tolerance of old fashioned or benevolent sexism.

Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment experiences were significantly related to hostile work environment sexual harassment and ISHMA. Respondents who had experienced quid pro quo harassment were more likely to also experience hostile work environment sexual harassment than those who had not. Victims of quid pro quo sexual harassment were also

less accepting of sexual harassment myths than respondents who had not experienced quid pro quo sexual harassment. Quid pro quo sexual harassment was not found to be significant with tolerance for sexism, acceptance of rape myths, or the labeling of situations as sexual harassment. Hostile Work Environment Sexual Harassment was found to be significantly related with modern sexism, rape myths, ISHMA, and Vignettes. Respondents who had experienced sexual harassment were less tolerant of modern sexism, less accepting of rape and sexual harassment myths, and more likely to identify behavior as sexual harassment. Experiencing HWESH did not, however, have a significant correlation to tolerance of old fashioned sexism, benevolent sexism, or adversarial heterosexual beliefs.

Old Fashioned Sexism was significantly correlated with modern sexism, benevolent sexism, adversarial heterosexual beliefs, ISHMA, and Vignettes. There were strong correlations between Old fashioned sexism and adversarial heterosexual beliefs ( $r = .579$ ), rape myths ( $r = .617$ ), and ISHMA ( $r = .543$ ) indicating that the less accepting respondents were of old fashioned sexism, the less likely they were to accept adversarial heterosexual beliefs, rape myths, or sexual harassment myths. There was moderate correlation between Old fashioned and modern sexism ( $r = .449$ ) which indicated that respondents who were less tolerant of old fashioned sexism were also less tolerant of modern sexism. Old fashioned sexism had weaker but still significant correlations with benevolent sexism ( $r = .266$ ) and a negative correlation with Vignettes ( $r = -.142$ ). These correlations indicate that respondents who were less tolerant of old fashioned sexism were less tolerant of benevolent sexism and more likely to label situations as sexual harassment.

Modern Sexism was significantly correlated with benevolent sexism, adversarial heterosexual beliefs, rape myths, ISHMA, and Vignettes. Modern sexism had strong



correlations with rape myths ( $r = .608$ ) and ISHMA ( $r = .638$ ) indicating that respondents who are less tolerant of modern sexism are also less accepting of rape and sexual harassment myths. A moderate correlation was found between modern sexism and adversarial heterosexual beliefs ( $r = .374$ ) and benevolent sexism ( $r = .272$ ) which indicated that the less tolerant an individual was of modern sexism, the less tolerant the individual was of adversarial heterosexual beliefs and benevolent sexism. There was a negative relationship between modern sexism and Vignettes, indicating the less tolerant a respondent is of modern sexism, the more likely that person is to label the scenarios as sexual harassment.

Benevolent Sexism was found to have significant correlations with adversarial heterosexual beliefs, rape myths, and ISHMA, however, it was not significantly correlated to Vignettes. The significant relationships between benevolent sexism and adversarial heterosexual beliefs ( $r = .235$ ), rape myths ( $r = .254$ ), and ISHMA ( $r = .299$ ) were all positive correlations. This finding indicates that the less tolerant a respondent was of benevolent sexism, the less accepting the person was of adversarial heterosexual beliefs, rape myths, and sexual harassment myths. Again, benevolent sexism was not significantly related to Vignettes, thus a respondent's tolerance of benevolent sexism did not affect his/her labeling of situations as sexual harassment.

Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs displayed significant correlations with rape myths, ISHMA, and Vignettes. The correlations between adversarial heterosexual beliefs and rape myths ( $r = .626$ ) and ISHMA ( $r = .546$ ) were strong and indicated that the less tolerant a person was of adversarial heterosexual beliefs, the less accepting that respondent was of rape and sexual harassment myths. There was a weak, negative correlation between adversarial heterosexual and Vignettes ( $r = .196$ ) that indicated the less accepting respondents were of

adversarial heterosexual beliefs, the more likely they were to label the vignettes as sexual harassment.

Rape Myth Acceptance was significantly correlated with both ISHMA and Vignettes. There was a very strong correlation between rape myths and ISHMA ( $r = .835$ ) which indicated that the less accepting respondents were of rape myths, the less accepting they were of sexual harassment myths. Rape myths were negatively correlated with Vignettes ( $r = -.243$ ) indicating the less accepting respondents were of rape myths the more likely they were to label situations as sexual harassment. A negative correlation between ISHMA and Vignettes ( $r = -.266$ ) was also displayed in the correlation analysis again indicating that the less accepting respondents were of sexual harassment myths, the more likely they were to label situations as sexual harassment. Vignettes strongest correlation found through the analysis was with ISHMA.

### Multivariate Analysis

Standard multiple regression is a multivariate analysis used to measure the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable while controlling for all other variables. This analysis was performed on the independent and dependent variables through this research to further examine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The results of this regression were then compared to the bivariate analysis run to check for similarities and differences. The regression model for the dependent variable ISHMA found  $R^2 = .736$  which was significant ( $p < .05$ ) as shown in Table 14.

The regression for ISHMA found three independent variables to be significant: modern sexism, benevolent sexism, and rape myth acceptance. Rape myth acceptance accounted for the strongest amount of variance with a Beta of .671 indicating that

Table 13: Correlation Analysis

	Sex	Race	Ed	SHA	Quid SH	Hostile SH	OFS	MS	BS	AHBS	Rape	ISHMA
Sex												
Race	.046											
Ed	-.003	.119*										
SHA	-.033	-.107*	.138**									
Quid SH	.074	.096*	.059	.086								
Hostile SH	.154**	.108*	.033	-.015	.517**							
OFS	.377**	-.037	.058	.047	.010	.038						
MS	.308**	-.035	.079	.161**	.063	.167**	.449**					
BS	-.032	-.198**	.102*	.028	-.016	-.010	.266**	.272**				
AHBS	.234**	-.088	.113*	.185**	.065	.052	.579**	.374**	.235**			
Rape	.404**	-.013	.136**	.173**	.038	.107*	.617**	.608**	.254**	.626**		
ISHMA	.369**	-.038	.112*	.180**	.106*	.147**	.543**	.638**	.299**	.546**	.835**	
Vignettes	-.010	.024	-.020	-.157**	-.013	-.209**	-.142**	-.184**	-.032	-.196**	-.243**	-.266**

\*\* p < 0.01 (1-tailed); \* p < 0.05 (1-tailed)

Legend:

Ed-Education; SHA-Sexual Harassment Awareness; Quid SH- Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment; Hostile SH- Hostile Work Environment Sexual Harassment; OFS- Old Fashioned Sexism; MS-Modern Sexism; BS-Benevolent Sexism; AHBS-Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs Scale; Rape-Rape Myth Acceptance; ISHMA-Illinois Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance Scale; Vignettes-Sexual Harassment Vignettes

respondents who were more accepting of rape myths were more accepting of sexual harassment myths than those who were not. Both modern and benevolent sexism had much lower beta values with  $\beta = .182$  and  $\beta = .073$  respectively, still, these values indicate that individuals who adhered to sexist beliefs were more likely to accept sexual harassment myths than those who did not. Sex, education, sexual harassment awareness, quid pro quo sexual harassment, hostile work environment sexual harassment, old fashioned sexism, and adversarial heterosexual beliefs which were found to be significant during bivariate analysis, were not significant in the regression model when controlling for all other variables.

The regression model for the dependent variable Vignettes found  $R^2 = .376$  which was also significant ( $p < .05$ ) as shown in Table 15. The linear regression for Vignettes found five independent variables to be significant: sex, sexual harassment awareness, quid pro quo sexual harassment, hostile work environment sexual harassment, and rape myth acceptance. For this model, hostile work environment sexual harassment had the highest Beta value with  $\beta = -.276$ . The negative Beta value for hostile work environment sexual harassment and sexual harassment vignettes indicates that respondents who had experienced hostile work environment sexual harassment were more likely to label the vignettes as sexual harassment than those who had not experienced it. Rape myth acceptance ( $\beta = -.196$ ), quid pro quo sexual harassment ( $\beta = .142$ ), sex ( $\beta = .131$ ), and sexual harassment awareness ( $\beta = -.119$ ) all had lower but significant Beta values.

The Beta value for rape myth acceptance indicates that respondents who were less tolerant of rape myths were more likely to label the vignettes as sexual harassment than those who had a higher tolerance. Women were less likely than men to label the

Table 14: Regression Model for ISHMA

Independent Variables	B <sup>a</sup>	SE B	β
Sex	.519	.546	.230
Race	-.183	.544	-.011
Education	-.165	.519	-.010
SHA	.173	.231	.024
Quid Pro Quo SH	1.452	.866	.061
Hostile SH	.211	.790	.010
Old Fashioned Sexism	-.004	.141	-.027
Modern Sexism	.412	.091	.182*
Benevolent Sexism	.113	.052	.073*
Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs	.039	.066	.025
Rape Myth Acceptance	.621	.046	.671*

F=70.923, R<sup>2</sup> = .736\*

<sup>a</sup> Unstandardized coefficient  
\* p<.05 (two-tailed)

vignettes as sexual harassment. Individuals who had experienced quid pro quo sexual harassment and those who had lower scores of sexual harassment awareness were less likely to label the vignettes as sexual harassment than respondents who had not experienced it or had higher scores of sexual harassment awareness. Bivariate analysis had shown old fashioned sexism, modern sexism, and adversarial heterosexual beliefs to have a significant relationship with the vignettes; however, the regression did not show significance for these independent variables. Two independent variables that were not shown to be significant in bivariate analysis of the vignettes where, however, found significant through the regression model: sex and quid pro quo sexual harassment.

Table 15: Regression Model for Sexual Harassment Vignettes

Independent Variables	B <sup>a</sup>	SE B	β
Sex	1.163	.574	.131*
Race	.184	.572	.019
Education	.262	.545	.028
SHA	-.488	.242	-.119*
Quid Pro Quo SH	1.946	.910	.142*
Hostile SH	-3.416	.830	-.276*
Old Fashioned Sexism	-.033	.148	-.017
Modern Sexism	-.042	.096	-.033
Benevolent Sexism	.049	.055	.055
Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs	-.062	.070	-.069
Rape Myth Acceptance	-.104	.048	-.196*

F=4.078, R<sup>2</sup>=.376\*

<sup>a</sup> Unstandardized coefficient  
\* p<.05 (two-tailed)

#### Limitations of Current Study

There were some limitations of this study that became apparent through the data collection and analysis. The sample used for this study was a convenience sample, and due to this, the data collected in this study is not generalizable, although the sample was very similar to the population being studied demographically. The population sampled also had very little variation with respect to age.

The current study also had a somewhat weak method of measuring both whether or not a respondent had participated in a sexual harassment class or training program, and the extent of the training program. Only two questions were used to measure this participation and both of these questions were simple yes or no questions that the respondent had participated in some sexual harassment class or training program. Sexual harassment experiences also had weak measurements. Again, only two questions were

utilized to measure if a respondent had experienced either quid pro quo or hostile work environment sexual harassment which were simple yes or no questions.

### Summary of Findings

The current research sought to answer three research questions: 1) Does sexual harassment education/training have an affect on respondent's acceptance of sexual harassment; 2) Do male and female respondents hold similar myth acceptance attitudes and/or does support for sexist beliefs in general vary by gender; and 3) How closely are acceptance of sexual harassment mythologies related to the acceptance of other negative attitudes toward women, if these attitudes are related at all? The study findings as they relate to the research questions will be discussed below.

The current research found that sexual harassment education and training were not found to affect sexual harassment tolerance individually. However, the additive scale Sexual Harassment Awareness (SHA) which consisted of participation in a sexual harassment class or training program, knowledge of a sexual harassment policy, and knowledge of sexual harassment resources did significantly affect sexual harassment acceptance. At the bivariate level, SHA was found to have a significant relationship with both dependent variables: ISHMA and Vignettes. This relationship showed that the more awareness respondents had on sexual harassment (i.e. policies, resources, training), the less tolerance they had for sexual harassment myths and the more likely they were to label situations as sexually harassing. SHA was also found to be a significant factor in the regression model for vignettes in explaining variance, again indicating that the more aware respondents were of sexual harassment, the more likely they were to label situations as sexually harassing. So, while training and education may not have had a

significant affect on sexual harassment acceptance individually, an overall awareness of sexual harassment does affect this acceptance.

While neither males nor females held high measures of acceptance for sexual harassment myths, the current study did find significant differences due to gender. Bivariate analysis found that sex was significantly related to ISHMA; females were less tolerant of sexual harassment myths than males. Sex was also found to be significant for the regression model of the sexual harassment vignettes utilized in this survey with males being more likely than females to label the vignettes as sexual harassment. Sex also was significantly related to all of the scales measuring sexist beliefs (old fashioned sexism, modern sexism, and adversarial heterosexual beliefs) except for benevolent sexism. However, each of these significant relationships indicated that females were less accepting of the sexist beliefs than males even though there was not a high level of acceptance for either sex. Rape myth acceptance was also significantly related to sex with females less likely to endorse these myths than males.

Finally, this study found that acceptance of sexual harassment mythologies was related to all other types of attitudes toward women. Sexual harassment myths were found to be significantly correlated with old fashion sexism, modern sexism, benevolent sexism, adversarial heterosexual beliefs, and rape myths. Respondents who were more likely to accept sexual harassment myths were more likely to endorse other negative (stereotypical) attitudes toward women than those who were not as accepting of these myths. The current study also found through both the correlation analysis and regression analysis that modern sexism, benevolent sexism, and rape myth acceptance were



significantly related to sexual harassment myth acceptance. Rape myth acceptance was the most closely related independent variable to sexual harassment myth acceptance.

## CHAPTER 3

### Discussion

#### Research Questions

An analysis of the data answered the three purposed research questions: 1) Does sexual harassment education/training have an affect on respondent's acceptance of sexual harassment; 2) Do male and female respondents hold similar myth acceptance attitudes and/or does support for sexist beliefs in general vary by gender; and 3) How closely are acceptance of sexual harassment mythologies related to acceptance of other negative attitudes toward women, if these attitudes are related at all? Although the analysis of the data had already been reported, there are several results of this research that are notable and warrant further discussion.

The first research question on whether training had a significant effect on sexual harassment found that training did not have an effect on participants in this study unlike other studies who measured training affectivity (Beauvais, 1986; Maurizio & Rogers, 1992). The current data showed that neither participation in a sexual harassment training program nor class was significant in respondents' acceptance of sexual harassment mythologies: neither crosstabulation nor correlational analyses displayed any evidence that there was a significant relationship between sexual harassment mythologies acceptance and sexual harassment training programs/class. However, when the additive scale Sexual Harassment Awareness (SHA) was computed by incorporating sexual harassment training participation, class participation, awareness of sexual harassment policy on campus, and awareness of resources for sexual harassment victims on campus, a significant relationship was shown. Respondents who scored higher levels of sexual

harassment awareness were less likely to accept sexual harassment mythologies than respondents with lower scores.

Additionally, it is interesting to note the individual variables included in SHA. Most of the individuals surveyed responded that they had neither participated in a sexual harassment training program or class. Only 24.8% had participated in a class on sexual harassment that lasted for at least one hour, and even less (18.6%) had participated in a sexual harassment training program, and generally upper level students were more likely than lower level students to have participated in either program or class. When asked if they were aware of a university policy that specifically addressed sexual harassment, only 53.2% of students indicated that they were aware of the existence of a policy. Nevertheless, 62.1% of individuals were aware of services that were available on campus for victims of sexual harassment, however, this did vary significantly by race with White students being more likely to know about resources than other respondents. It is interesting to note that more respondents were aware of victim services than a university policy addressing sexual harassment.

The heightened awareness of victim services may be due to a successful program on campus, the Transformation Project, advocating for and educating students on victims of violence against women which originated through a grant from the Department of Justice. Through this program, a social norms campaign was launched to heighten awareness of violence against women. Seminar classes have also been taught to incoming students dealing with issues of violence against women and giving information to students about resources available to victims on campus. Thus, the knowledge of this program may have heightened awareness to victim resources without necessarily

heightening awareness to university policy. Still, the more aware a respondent was of sexual harassment whether through classes, programs, knowledge of policy or services, the less accepting the respondent was of sexual harassment myths.

The fact that individually, the four items included in SHA (class, training program, policy and resources) were not significant may lend support to the notion that issues such as sexual harassment should have a multifaceted approach to drawing awareness to and realistically reducing the problem in our society. The research suggests that simply training and/or participation in a class will not reduce one's tolerance for sexual harassment. However, when repetition occurs acknowledging the problem of sexual harassment and that sexual harassment is taken seriously by the institution, attitudes are affected. Previous research has shown intense training (Beauvais, 1986; Maurizio & Rogers, 1992) and how seriously the institution is perceived to take sexual harassment (Dekker & Barling, 1998) affect acceptance of sexual harassment. Thus, the combination of approaches may prove to have the most affectivity when trying to lower tolerance for sexual harassment.

The research also sought to explore differences in myth acceptance and sexist beliefs by gender. Consistent with previous research (e.g. Bartling & Eisenman, 1993; Kenig & Ryan, 1986; Lott et al., 1982; Maypole & Skaine, 1982; McCabe & Hardman, 2005; McKinney, 1990; Reilly et al., 1986; Russell & Trigg, 2004; Tang et al., 1995; Terrance et al., 2004), this study found that males were more accepting of sexual harassment than females. Males were also more likely to support sexist beliefs, although both males and females showed very low levels of support for old fashioned and modern sexism. Benevolent sexism was more widely supported by respondents; however,

support for benevolent sexism was not significant by gender. Nonetheless, old fashioned, modern, and benevolent sexism were found to be significantly related. Respondents who were less accepting of one type of sexism were more likely to be less accepting of the other types of sexism.

This research also found that sexual harassment myth acceptance was significantly related to all other attitudes toward women measured. Respondents who were less accepting of sexual harassment myths were more likely to have positive attitudes toward women than those who were more accepting of myths. Respondents who were less accepting of sexual harassment myths were also more likely to label the vignettes as sexual harassment. However, the most closely tied relationship displayed in the data was between rape and sexual harassment myths. The standard multiple regression showed that rape myth acceptance explained 67% of the variance in acceptance of sexual harassment myths. These findings are similar to other studies who have examined the relationship between rape and sexual harassment myths (Cowan, 2000; Lonsway et al., 2007).

One reason for the strong significant relationship between rape and sexual harassment myths might be because they share many similar themes. Both rape and sexual harassment myths minimize the harm caused by the act, the criminal act itself, and the risk of victimization. Rape and sexual harassment myths also work to diminish the act of the offender while placing blame on the victim; thereby creating “hidden” victims who are afraid to come forward for fear that they will be blamed. With so many common underlying themes shared by rape and sexual harassment myths, their high correlation and significant regression relationship is not surprising.

Acceptance of sexual harassment myths was also significantly correlated with old-fashioned, modern, and benevolent sexism, adversarial heterosexual beliefs, and the sexual harassment vignettes, thus reinforcing the notion that these attitudes towards women are complex and interweaved with one another. Respondents who were less accepting of sexual harassment myths were less accepting of sexist beliefs, more likely to label the vignettes as displaying sexual harassment, and generally had more positive views on relationships between males and females. Most of the attitudes studied were related to one another; however, one correlational finding showed no significant relationship between certain attitudes which should be noted.

Benevolent sexism had no bearing on respondents labeling the vignettes as sexual harassment, even though both old-fashioned and modern sexism did. One possible explanation for this may be the differences between benevolent sexism and the other sexism measured. Overall, benevolent sexism tends to see women in a more positive light than either old-fashioned or modern sexism. The notions of chivalry and paternalism are highlighted in benevolent sexism, and men are seen as benefactors to women whom they need to cherish and protect; whereas old-fashioned and modern sexism tend to view women in a more hostile manner by blaming women for problems in the work force, and accepting ideas that men are smarter and more competent than women. The ideas displayed in both the old-fashioned and modern sexism scales were much less accepted than the ideas endorsed through benevolent sexism, and while adherence to both old-fashioned and modern sexism differed by sex, benevolent sexism did not. Men and women were both likely to accept the ideas of benevolent sexism.

## Differences by Demographic Variables

The bivariate analysis of the dependent and independent variables showed that sexual harassment awareness, experiencing quid pro quo sexual harassment, acceptance of benevolent sexism, and labeling vignettes as sexual harassment did not differ by sex. However, multivariate analysis did later indicate that labeling the situations described in the vignettes did significantly relate to sex when controlling for all other factors, and males were more likely than females to label the vignettes as sexual harassment. While it would generally be expected that women would be more likely to label situations as being sexual harassment, one previous study found no labeling differences by sex (Terrance et al., 2004) and suggested that future research should employ open-ended questions for explanations as to why a respondent did or did not view the situation as sexual harassment.

A possible explanation for men being more likely to label the vignettes as sexual harassment might be that the women of this study were more tolerant of the behavior exhibited in the vignettes because they have come to expect it. Many of the vignettes utilized in this study contained aspects of hostile work environment sexual harassment as opposed to quid pro quo sexual harassment and hostile work environment sexual harassment is generally more common and less definable than quid pro quo sexual harassment in everyday experiences. Also, previous literature has shown that age is a factor for sexual harassment tolerance (Reilly et al., 1986; Terrance et al., 2004) and that younger respondents are more likely to be tolerant of sexual harassment than older respondents. For many college students, sex is a part of everyday life, therefore

situations involving sexual innuendos or “come-on’s” may be more tolerated by college students than older adults in the work force.

Still, women were less accepting of rape and sexual harassment myths than men. Women were also less likely to adhere to beliefs of old-fashioned and modern sexism. Experiencing hostile work environment sexual harassment also differed by sex with more women having experienced it than men, while quid pro quo sexual harassment experiences did not. Again, sexual harassment awareness did not differ significantly by sex, but rather by education and race, with upper level students and Whites being more likely than lower level students or other races to have higher scores of sexual harassment awareness.

Upper level students were also more likely than lower level students to be less tolerant of benevolent sexism and less accepting of rape and sexual harassment myths. These findings coincide with previous research indicating that higher levels of education generally reduce tolerance for sexual harassment (Reilly et al., 1986). Upper level students were also more likely than lower level students to have participated in a sexual harassment class or training program and had higher scores of sexual harassment awareness. Upper level students had generally been more exposed to awareness efforts directed at sexual harassment, and it may have been this exposure that lowered their tolerance for sexual harassment. Therefore, it seems that education and exposure to problems of rape and sexual harassment affect attitudes towards myth acceptance and tolerance of the acts, rather than participation in a training program. Future research should focus on a more complex approach to address sexual harassment, especially in college campuses that continually expose students to the problems sexual harassment and



all violence against women cause in the workforce and our society. Sexual harassment awareness significantly differed by race as well as education. Whites were more likely than non-whites to have higher scores of sexual harassment awareness. Also, non-whites were more likely to have experienced sexual harassment than white respondents.

### Victims of Sexual Harassment

Respondents in the current study reported very low experiences with either quid pro quo or hostile work environment sexual harassment (11.6% and 14.8% respectively), especially when compared to other studies on college campuses which have found between 19 and 40 percent of women to have experienced sexual harassment (Kalof et al., 2001; Kelley & Parsons, 2000; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003). However, the current study only utilized two questions to indicate victimization. A more intricate measure of sexual harassment may have yielded higher rates of victimization.

Congruent with results from the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (1995) study of sexual harassment in the workplace, hostile work environment sexual harassment was more prevalent than quid pro quo sexual harassment. Victims of quid pro quo sexual harassment were also more likely than non-victims to be victims of hostile work environment sexual harassment. Thus, once an individual has been victimized, they are more likely to continue being victimized. Also, individuals who had attended a class on sexual harassment were more likely to indicate that they had been victims of quid pro quo sexual harassment. It may be that participation in classes on sexual harassment help individuals understand what sexual harassment is and therefore those individuals are more likely to label it as such.

Individuals who experienced quid pro quo sexual harassment did not differ by sex, unlike hostile work environment sexual harassment. Women were significantly more likely to experience hostile work environment sexual harassment than men, which is consistent with many studies measuring sexual harassment prevalence (Bauer & Green, 1996; Fischer & Good, 1994; Katz et al., 1996; Mohipp & Senn, 2008; Robertson et al., 1988; Runtz & O'Donnell, 2003; Welsh, 1999). Victims of sexual harassment were significantly less accepting of sexual harassment myths than non-victims which was also consistent with previous research (Schneider, 1982). However, the multivariate regression analysis indicated that victims of quid pro quo sexual harassment were less likely to identify the situations in the vignettes as sexual harassment than non-victims.

Quid pro quo sexual harassment victims may have been less likely to label the situations as sexual harassment because many of the vignettes displayed situations of hostile work environment sexual harassment rather than quid pro quo sexual harassment. The victims of quid pro quo sexual harassment may not have found these situations to be sexual harassment because they were not the type of sexual harassment that they had experienced. Another indication that quid pro quo sexual harassment victims may not have labeled situations different from their experiences as sexual harassment was that victims of hostile work environment sexual harassment were significantly more likely than non-victims to label the vignettes as sexual harassment. Again, these vignettes were mainly comprised of situations of hostile work environment sexual harassment and so victims who had experienced it were more likely to label the situations as sexual harassment. In the future, research may want to focus on how a person is victimized affects their opinions on sexual harassment.

## Directions for Future Research

Sexual harassment, like many issues for women, is very complex and cannot be easily eradicated from our society. Many attitudes are associated with sexual harassment tolerance. The current study examined how sexual harassment tolerance was related to other attitudes toward women: sexism, adversarial heterosexual beliefs, and rape myth acceptance. All of the attitudes studies significantly affected respondents' acceptance of sexual harassment myths, but rape myth and sexual harassment myth acceptance were especially close. The multiple regression performed for sexual harassment myth acceptance showed that rape myth acceptance was a major predictor. This might be because of the corresponding attitudes displayed in both types of acceptance. Future research should examine other attitudes that might explain tolerance for sexual harassment as well.

More research should also be completed on why individuals view or do not view certain situations as being sexual harassment. The current study found mixed opinions on what actions constituted as sexual harassment. Clear examples of quid pro quo sexual harassment were the most commonly agreed on, however, most of the vignettes utilized in this study displayed examples of hostile work environment sexual harassment, and these examples were not as highly identified. Future research may want to examine why individuals are more accepting of certain types of sexual harassment than others. What actions push inappropriate behavior into being considered sexual harassment? What sexual behaviors in the workforce are not considered inappropriate? A common consensus of what people think sexual harassment is will help in developing an approach to reducing sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment training alone may have an impact on individual's tolerance of sexual harassment, but alone, it will not solve the problem. A more diversified and multifaceted approach to ending sexual harassment is needed. Future research should work to developing a plan to reduce sexual harassment. This plan must be used in many aspects of life including both educational settings and the workplace. The more often people are exposed to the problems sexual harassment causes in our society, they will begin to see how important it is and will view the issue as serious rather than a punchline. In the future research should focus on finding ways to raise awareness to the problem of sexual harassment and developing ways to combat it.

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## APPENDIX

**MEMORANDUM**

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TO: Courtney Crittenden  
Dr. Helen Eigenberg **IRB # 09-028**

FROM: Lindsay Pardue, Director of Research Integrity  
M. D. Rohyer, IRB Committee Chair

DATE: February 10, 2009

SUBJECT: IRB Application #09-028: Examining Attitudes and Perceptions of Sexual Harassment on a University Campus: What Role Do Myths and Stereotypes Play?

The IRB Committee Chair has reviewed and approved your application and assigned you the IRB number listed above. You must include the following approval statement on research materials seen by participants and used in research reports:

***The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (FWA00004149) has approved this research project # 09-028.***

Since your project has been deemed exempt, there is no further action needed on this proposal unless there is a significant change in the project that would require a new review. Charges that affect risk to human subjects would necessitate a new application to the IRB committee immediately.

Please remember to contact the IRB Committee immediately and submit a new project proposal for review if significant changes occur in your research design or in any instruments used in conducting the study. You should also contact the IRB Committee immediately if you encounter any adverse effects during your project that pose a risk to your subjects.

For any additional information, please consult our web page <http://www.uto.edu/irb> or email us at: [instrb@uto.edu](mailto:instrb@uto.edu).

Best wishes for a successful research project.

Dear Student:

We are conducting a study on several attitudes including attitudes toward sexual harassment and rape. The research is being conducted in conjunction with the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and has been approved by the relevant Institutional Review Board. We would appreciate your participation and are asking you to complete a survey.

While this survey deals with fictional and hypothetical events, sometimes thinking about these topics can be disturbing or uncomfortable. If the survey makes you uncomfortable, please do not participate. In addition, if you feel that you need to talk to anyone about any issues raised by this survey please contact any of the resources listed at the bottom of this letter.

A survey will be passed out to the entire class in a minute. It should take about 20 minutes to administer this survey. If you choose to participate, please complete the survey according to the directions provided. Participation is completely voluntary. All responses are anonymous and confidential. Please do not put your name or any other identifying information on the survey. It will be impossible to link any individual to their responses. If you elect to take the survey and become uncomfortable, you are free to stop taking the survey at any time during the process. There is no extra credit or other incentive for participating; therefore, you will not be adversely affected if you choose not to participate.

The person administering the survey will collect all responses in about 20 minutes. Please do not hand in your survey until you are asked for it. If you do not wish to take the survey, please sit quietly at your desk. You may do other work if you wish. When called for, please turn in your survey whether or not you chose to participate.

You may get a copy of the finalized results and any reports once the data are analyzed. If you wish this information, please contact Courtney Crittenden (423-425-5650) or Dr. Helen Eigenberg (423-425-4270) at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ms. Courtney Crittenden

For assistance in dealing with any issues that may arise due to this survey of sexual harassment and attitudes toward women you may contact the following resources.

Women's Center/Transformation Project: 423-425-5605  
University Counseling Services: 423-425-4438  
IRB Chair, Dr. Roblyer: 423-425-5567

**CHOOSE THE RESPONSE THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ANSWER TO EACH ITEM BY MARKING THE CORRESPONDING LETTER FOR YOUR ANSWER ONTO THE SCAN-TRON PROVIDED. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS. PLEASE ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE TO EACH QUESTION. ALL RESPONSES ARE ANONYMOUS AND CONFIDENTIAL. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME OR PUT ANY OTHER IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ON THE SURVEY. BE SURE TO COMPLETE BOTH SIDES OF THE PAPER.**

1. Please indicate your sex:
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  
2. Please indicate your age:
  - a. 18-20
  - b. 21-25
  - c. 26-35
  - d. 36-45
  - e. Over 45
  
3. Do you identify yourself as:
  - a. White
  - b. Black/African American
  - c. Hispanic (non-white)
  - d. Mixed/bi/multi-racial
  - e. Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Please indicate your current level of education:
  - a. Freshman
  - b. Sophomore
  - c. Junior
  - d. Senior
  - e. Graduate
  
5. Have you ever attended a class on sexual harassment that lasted more than one (1) hour? [a] no [b] yes
  
6. Have you ever attended a sexual harassment training program or educational program that lasted for more than one (1) hour? [a] no [b] yes
  
7. Is there a campus policy at UTC that specifically deals with sexual harassment? [a] no [b] yes [c]not sure/unaware
  
8. Are you aware of any resources available at UTC should you become a victim of sexual harassment? [a] no [b] yes



9. With respect to a work environment, have you personally ever experienced unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or sexual verbal or physical conduct when the submission to such conduct was made a condition of a your employment?  
 [a] no                      [b] yes
10. With respect to a work environment, have you personally ever experienced unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favors, and other sexual, verbal, or physical conduct which unreasonably interferes with your work performance or created an intimidating or offensive (hostile) working environment?    [a] no                      [b] yes

***INDICATE WHETHER YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE STATEMENTS THAT FOLLOW BY MARKING THE CORRESPONDING LETTER FOR YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCAN-TRON PROVIDED. PLEASE ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE TO EACH QUESTION. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS.***

<b>[a] Strongly Agree</b>	<b>[b] Agree</b>	<b>[c] Disagree</b>	<b>[d] Strongly Disagree</b>
11. I would be more comfortable having a man as a boss than a woman.			
12. Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women's actual experiences.			
13. If you don't show who's boss in the beginning of a relationship you will be taken advantage of later.			
14. If a woman is sexually harassed, she must have done something to invite it.			
15. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.			
16. Men and women are generally out to use each other.			
17. Women who claim sexual harassment have usually done something to cause it.			
18. When a woman is raped, she usually did something careless to put herself in that situation.			
19. Many so-called rape victims are actually women who had sex and "changed their minds" afterwards.			
20. It is more important to encourage boys than to encourage girls to participate in athletics.			
21. Most people are pretty devious and manipulative when they are trying to attract someone of the opposite sex.			
22. Women are generally not as smart as men.			
23. If a woman doesn't make a complaint, it probably wasn't serious enough to be sexual harassment.			

<b>[a] Strongly Agree</b>	<b>[b] Agree</b>	<b>[c] Disagree</b>	<b>[d] Strongly Disagree</b>
24. When it comes to sex, most people are just trying to use the other person.			
25. Women can usually stop unwanted sexual attention by simply tell the man that his behavior is not appreciated.			
26. Any woman who teases a man sexually and doesn't finish what she started realistically deserves anything she gets.			
27. When a woman allows petting to get to a certain point, she is implicitly agreeing to have sex.			
28. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.			
29. In dating relationships people are mostly out to take advantage of each other.			
30. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being to provide financially for the women in their lives.			
31. When both parents are employed and their child gets sick at school, the school should call the mother rather than the father.			
32. In any rape case, one would have to question whether the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation.			
33. Nearly all instances of sexual harassment would end if the woman simply told the man to stop.			
34. When women talk and act sexy, they are inviting rape.			
35. Women can usually stop unwanted sexual attention from a co-worker by telling their supervisor about it.			
36. Men and women share more similarities than differences.			
37. In all societies it is inevitable that one sex is dominant.			
38. Women rarely miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination.			
39. Women tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste than men.			
40. It's impossible for men and women to truly understand each other.			
41. Women are less capable than men of thinking logically.			
42. As long as a woman doesn't lose her job, her claim of sexual harassment shouldn't be taken too seriously.			
43. In the work force, gain by one sex necessitates a loss for the other.			
44. Many rapes happen because women lead men on.			
45. Most women secretly enjoy it when men "come on" to them at work.			
46. Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them.			
47. It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television.			
48. Rape mainly occurs on the "bad" side of town.			

<b>[a] Strongly Agree</b>	<b>[b] Agree</b>	<b>[c] Disagree</b>	<b>[d] Strongly Disagree</b>
49. Women shouldn't be so quick to take offense when a man at work expresses sexual interest.			
50. Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.			
51. Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.			
52. Women who wait weeks or months to report sexual harassment are probably just making it up.			
53. It's inevitable that men will "hit on" women at work.			
54. A rapist is more likely to be Black or Hispanic than White.			
55. It is difficult to understand the anger of women's groups in America.			
56. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.			
57. In a disaster, women ought to be rescued before men.			
58. Women often file frivolous charges of sexual harassment.			
59. Sex is like a game where one person "wins" and the other "loses."			
60. Women who claim that they have been sexually harassed are usually exaggerating.			
61. Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in America.			
62. It is difficult to believe sexual harassment charges that were not reported at the time.			
63. Sometimes a woman has a "fantasy" relationship with her boss and then claims he sexually harassed her.			
64. It is just part of human nature for men to take sex from women who let their guard down.			
65. When men rape, it is because of their strong desire for sex.			
66. It is difficult to understand why women's groups are still concerned about societal limitations of women's opportunities.			
67. People are not truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.			
68. Sometimes women make up allegations of sexual harassment to extort money from their employer.			
69. Most women are flattered when they get sexual attention from men with whom they work.			
70. A rape probably didn't happen if the woman has no bruises or marks.			
71. Even though the woman may call it rape, she probably enjoyed it.			
72. Women should be cherished and protected by men.			
73. Women tend to have a moral sensibility superior to that of men.			

[a] Strongly Agree	[b] Agree	[c] Disagree	[d] Strongly Disagree
74. A woman can easily ruin her supervisor's career by claiming that he "came on" to her.			
75. It is possible for a man and a woman to be "just friends."			
76. Women sometimes file charges of sexual harassment for no apparent reason.			
77. It is possible for the sexes to be equal in society.			
78. When women enter the work force they are taking jobs away from men.			
79. It is natural for one spouse to be in control of the other.			
80. Women who are caught having an affair with their supervisor sometimes claim that it was sexual harassment.			
81. Men and women cannot really be friends.			
82. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.			
83. If a husband pays all the bills, he has the right to sex with his wife whenever he wants.			
84. If a woman is raped, often it's because she didn't say "no" clearly enough.			
85. If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was a rape.			
86. In some rape cases, the woman actually wanted it to happen.			
87. Men are incomplete without women.			
88. On average, people in our society treat husbands and wives equally.			

***VIGNETTES: THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS ARE COMPLETELY HYPOTHETICAL AND FICTIONAL. PLEASE READ EACH SENARIO CAREFULLY AND INDICATE WHETHER YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE THAT THE BEHAVIOR DESCRIBED IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AND MARK THE CORRESPONDING LETTER FOR YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCAN-TRON PROVIDED. PLEASE ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE TO EACH QUESTION. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS.***

[a] Strongly Agree	[b] Agree	[c] Disagree	[d] Strongly Disagree
89. Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones was leaning up against the wall waiting for an elevator. Supervisor Smith put his arm on each			

side of Sara Jones so that she was trapped against the wall and asked her what her plans for the weekend were and if she had a lot of men who ask her out for dates.
90. Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones was making copies at the copy machine when supervisor Smith came up behind her, leaned his body into hers so they were touching, and said, we should go out sometime.
91. Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. He has repeatedly asked his employee Sara Jones for a date. Recently Smith has started calling Jones' house to ask her out at least once a week even though she did not give him her number or agree to date him.
92. Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones was standing in line at the local coffee shop around the corner from work. While she was waiting, Smith walked up and joined the line behind her. When Jones turned around, Smith looked her up and down, checking her out and whistled.
93. Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones is trying to fix her computer which is acting up. She is on-line with the help desk when she overhears Smith say, "I don't know why she is even trying. Everyone knows women can't deal with computers, most of them can barely turn one on".
94. Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones and Smith were selected to travel to store headquarters for training on a new on-line inventory computer system. On the airplane, Smith turned to Jones and said, "I don't know why they chose you. Women aren't nearly as good at computers as men are. You should be in a beauty competition, not worrying your pretty little head over complicated computers."
95. Jim Smith is a supervisor at a local retail store. His employee, Sara Jones has been trying to get a promotion for a couple of years. She asks Smith for a letter of recommendation. He tells her he is good friends with the person making the hire. He also tells her that he "could really help her out if she would just be a little more friendly toward him and asks her out for drinks after work at the hotel bar next door.

## VITA

Courtney Amanda Crittenden was born in Athens, Tennessee on January 21, 1985. She attended elementary and middle school in McMinn County, and graduated from McMinn County High School in 2003. She attended Tennessee Wesleyan College and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a major in Behavioral Science in 2007. Upon graduation, she entered the Master of Science degree program at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in Criminal Justice where she is a candidate for graduation in 2009. Courtney plans to attend the University of South Carolina in the fall of 2009, and pursue her doctorate in Criminology.