Sexual Harassment at Work:
A Decade (Plus) of Progress[†]

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This review examines research addressing workplace sexual harassment (SH) since the last major review in a management journal in 1995. The authors examine several aspects of recent research: current definitions, labeling of SH, antecedents to SH, responses to SH, and consequences resulting from SH. They then make suggestions for future research, using research on workplace aggression as a framework.

In a 1995 review of the sexual harassment (SH) literature, Lengnick-Hall identified limitations in research to date and suggested "what we don't know about sexual harassment far exceeds what we do know" (p. 841). Although it may always be true that existing knowledge is more limited than potential knowledge, it is worth exploring the degree to which

researchers have closed this knowledge gap since the 1995 review. To what degree has there been progress in building knowledge around this consequential workplace phenomenon?

We review advances in research on SH since the Lengnick-Hall (1995) review; however, our focus differs from this previous review in two ways. First, the 1995 review emphasized methodological problems that prevented knowledge advancement; our review, in contrast, summarizes theoretical advances and empirical findings.[1] Second, we make comparisons between research on SH and research on a related topic, workplace aggression (WPA). We use this comparison as a tool for identifying additional avenues for SH research.

We used several approaches to identifying published studies for our review. First, we conducted searches in relevant databases (e.g., ABI/INFORM, EBSCO, ProQuest, PsycINFO, Business Source Elite, LexusNexus Academic), using terms such as *sexual harassment, hostile work environment,* and *gender discrimination* to identify research published from 1995 to the present date. Next, we reviewed studies listed in the reference sections of recent SH articles published in management journals. Finally, as we read articles, we followed leads uncovered in each article that identified previously undiscovered research. Our goal was to uncover original published research that made theoretical or empirical contributions to the SH knowledge base. To keep the number of articles reviewed to a reasonable number, we did not include more general sex discrimination research, nor did we include articles that had a focus primarily on legal theory, principles, or remedies (e.g., Kovera, McAuliff, & Hebert, 1999; Wiener & Hurt, 2000; Wiener, Hurt, Russell, Mannen, & Gasper, 1997). In addition, there was an emphasis on articles published in management and organizations journals, given our interest in workplace SH (e.g., we did not include research in education journals that addressed student SH).
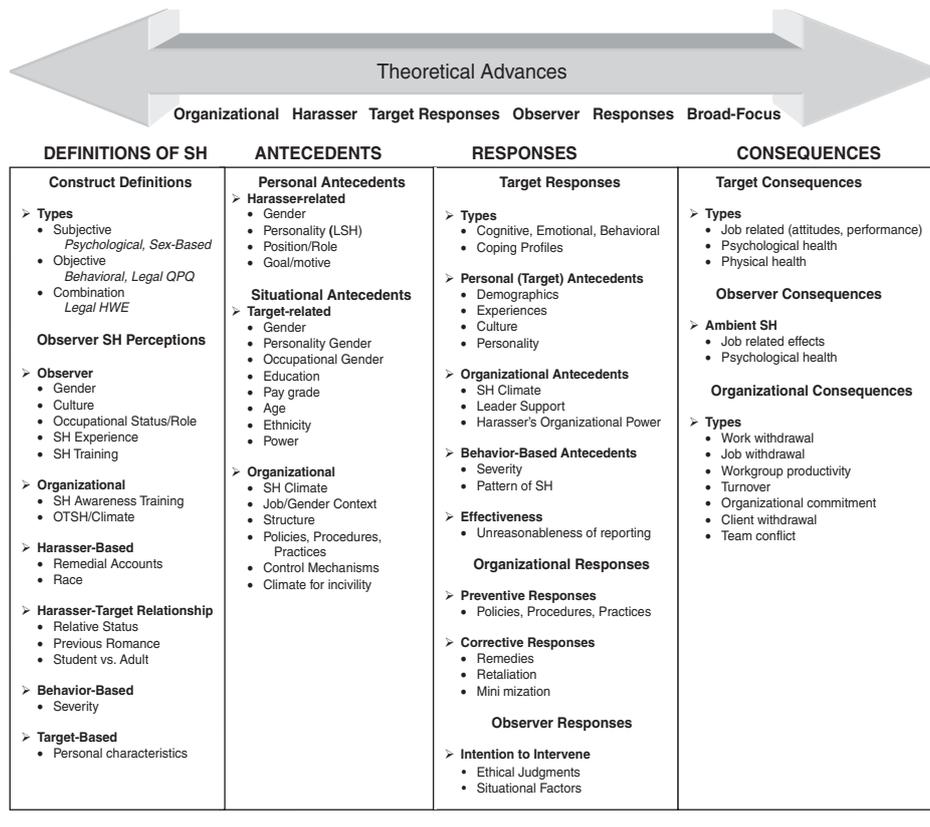
These articles were divided across the four authors, and each article was reviewed and summarized. We then identified content themes representing the primary focus of each article we reviewed. These themes are discussed in context of the organizing framework depicted in Figure 1. Specifically, we examine research advances in the definition and perceptions of SH, theoretical frameworks guiding SH research, antecedents to SH, responses to SH, and consequences that result from SH.

Definitions and Perceptions of SH

Definitions of SH as a Construct

Lengnick-Hall (1995: 842) noted more than a decade ago that "construct confusion" had created many problems for SH research. At the time of his work in 1995, there were only two definitions of SH, legal and psychological.[2] The legal definition (then and now) entails two types of SH: quid pro quo (QPQ) and hostile work environment (HWE). QPQ SH entails threats to make employment-related decisions (e.g., hiring, promotion, termination) on the basis of target compliance with requests for sexual favors, whereas HWE SH involves sex-related conduct that "unreasonably interfer[es] with an individual's work performance" or creates "an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment" (29 C.F.R. § 1604.11[a][3]). In accordance with the legal definition, an individual is considered to have experienced

Figure 1
A Summary of Recent Sexual Harassment Research

DEFINITIONS OF SH	ANTECEDENTS	RESPONSES	CONSEQUENCES
Construct Definitions	**Personal Antecedents**	**Target Responses**	**Target Consequences**
➢ **Types**	➢ **Harasser-related**		➢ **Types**
• Subjective	• Gender	➢ **Types**	• Job related (attitudes, performance)
Psychological, Sex-Based	• Personality (LSH)	• Cognitive, Emotional, Behavioral	• Psychological health
• Objective	• Position/Role	• Coping Profiles	• Physical health
Behavioral, Legal QPQ	• Goal/motive		
• Combination		➢ **Personal (Target) Antecedents**	**Observer Consequences**
Legal HWE	**Situational Antecedents**	• Demographics	
	➢ **Target-related**	• Experiences	➢ **Ambient SH**
Observer SH Perceptions	• Gender	• Culture	• Job related effects
	• Personality Gender	• Personality	• Psychological health
➢ **Observer**	• Occupational Gender		
• Gender	• Education	➢ **Organizational Antecedents**	**Organizational Consequences**
• Culture	• Pay grade	• SH Climate	
• Occupational Status/Role	• Age	• Leader Support	➢ **Types**
• SH Experience	• Ethnicity	• Harasser's Organizational Power	• Work withdrawal
• SH Training	• Power		• Job withdrawal
		➢ **Behavior-Based Antecedents**	• Workgroup productivity
➢ **Organizational**	➢ **Organizational**	• Severity	• Turnover
• SH Awareness Training	• SH Climate	• Pattern of SH	• Organizational commitment
• OTSH/Climate	• Job/Gender Context		• Client withdrawal
	• Structure	➢ **Effectiveness**	• Team conflict
➢ **Harasser-Based**	• Policies, Procedures,	• Unreasonableness of reporting	
• Remedial Accounts	Practices		
• Race	• Control Mechanisms	**Organizational Responses**	
	• Climate for incivility		
➢ **Harasser-Target Relationship**		➢ **Preventive Responses**	
• Relative Status		• Policies, Procedures, Practices	
• Previous Romance			
• Student vs. Adult		➢ **Corrective Responses**	
		• Remedies	
➢ **Behavior-Based**		• Retaliation	
• Severity		• Mini mization	
➢ **Target-Based**		**Observer Responses**	
• Personal characteristics			
		➢ **Intention to Intervene**	
		• Ethical Judgments	
		• Situational Factors	

SH if the sex-related behavior meets the requirements of either QPQ SH or HWE SH. Alternatively, an individual is considered to have experienced SH if he or she *feels* harassed (whether or not the sex-related behavior is illegal) under the psychological definition.

Current Definitions

As of 2008, there are four definitions of SH.[3] In addition to the *legal* and *psychological* definitions described above, the construct of SH has been defined from *behavioral* and *sex-based* perspectives. As indicated in Figure 1, the four perspectives differ in the extent to which they define SH as a subjective and/or objective phenomenon. The psychological and sex-based perspectives define SH subjectively. In accordance with the psychological perspective, SH is "unwanted sex-related behavior at work that is appraised by the recipient as offensive,

exceeding her resources, or threatening her well-being" (Fitzgerald, Swan, & Magley, 1997: 15). The sex-based perspective (Berdahl, 2007a: 644) defines *sex-based harassment* (SBH) as "behavior that derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual based on that individual's sex" including "seemingly sex-neutral acts, such as repeated provocation, silencing, exclusion, or sabotage, that are experienced by an individual because of sex."[4]

As described previously, the legal QPQ perspective is objective; if the sex-related behavior meets the provisions of the law, then it constitutes SH. The behavioral perspective also defines SH objectively. From a behavioral perspective, specific sex-related behaviors are considered SH whether or not they cause psychological discomfort to targets or are illegal (Bowes-Sperry & Tata, 1999). Fitzgerald and her colleagues (Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995; Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999) argued that SH is a stable behavioral construct consisting of three primary dimensions: gender harassment, which consists of sexual hostility (explicitly sexual verbal and nonverbal behaviors) and sexist hostility (insulting verbal and nonverbal behaviors that are *not* sexual but are based on gender), unwanted sexual attention (unwelcome, offensive interest of a sexual nature), and sexual coercion (requests for sexual cooperation in return for job benefits).[5]

Finally, the legal HWE perspective includes both subjective and objective elements. The subjective element is that the plaintiff must prove that *he or she* was adversely affected by sex-related behavior; the objective element is that the plaintiff must prove a "reasonable person" would be affected in a similar way (Bowes-Sperry & Tata, 1999).

Observer Perceptions of SH

In the previous section, we described four definitions of the SH construct used by researchers. In this section, we focus on what can be referred to as "personal definitions" (O'Connor, Gutek, Stockdale, Geer, & Melancon, 2004) of SH used by individuals to make sense of sex-related behavior *experienced by others*. There has been significant research, prior to and since 1995, on the conditions that are associated with observers' labeling of behavior as SH. Here, we review recent research on this question. In this section, we describe conditions that are empirically linked to the *labeling* of behavior as SH by those who observe it.

Observer antecedents of SH perceptions. The most explored category of antecedents involves observer characteristics, with the most commonly examined factor being observer gender. The fundamental research question here is whether male and female observers are differentially likely to regard negative conduct as SH. The existence of such a gender difference is important because if women have a broader definition of SH, then there may be justification for the "reasonable woman" standard, which encourages a gender-conscious interpretation of negative conduct in legal judgments (Blumenthal, 1998). The results of meta-analytic studies of gender differences in observer perceptions of SH (Blumenthal, 1998; Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett, 2001) indicate a stable, but small, gender difference in SH perceptions (e.g., an overall standardized mean difference of .35 in Blumenthal and of .30 in Rotundo et al.).[6] Furthermore, these gender differences were found to be context dependent; they were generally larger when the sex-based behavior was hostile environment

rather than QPQ (Rotundo et al., 2001), the harasser had higher status than the target, the study involved work (as opposed to legal) scenarios, and participants were students rather than work force members (Blumenthal, 1998).[7] Because of the small effect sizes for gender, the authors of both meta-analytic reviews concluded that there is minimal support for the assumptions used to justify the reasonable woman standard.

Empirical research conducted after the 2001 meta-analysis (e.g., Wayne, Riordan, & Thomas, 2001) confirms the findings regarding gender differences and identifies both moderating and mediating variables. Cross-cultural research that finds gender differences are less pronounced in Australia, Brazil, and Germany than in the United States (McCabe & Hardman, 2005; Pryor et al., 1997) suggests that country is a moderator. Perhaps these variations by country are attributable to cross-cultural differences in definitions of SH that have been identified in previous research (Barak, 1997; Pryor et al., 1997). This cross-cultural variation in SH definitions may be because of differential cultural values, such as those defined by Hofstede (1980) and Schwartz (1990) (for a more detailed discussion, see Luthar & Luthar, 2007). Finally, research by Icenogle, Eagle, Ahmad, and Hanks (2002) suggests that occupational status may moderate the relationship between observer gender and SH perceptions. They found that white-collar (vs. blue-collar) women were more likely to label behaviors as SH; indeed, nearly 16% of blue-collar women in a manufacturing plant indicated that a supervisor asking an employee to have sex with the promise of job rewards is "never" or "hardly ever" SH.

Although it is important to know that gender differences in observers' judgments of SH exist, it is more important to understand *why* these differences exist. The research of O'Connor et al. (2004) provides insight regarding the reason for these gender differences. They found that the relationship between gender and observer judgments of SH was explained (in part) by hostile sexism, the ability to use the self as a reference point in making SH judgments, and complainant credibility. In addition to establishing these mediating effects, O'Connor et al. also found that the definition of SH used when making judgments (i.e., personal vs. legal) affected gender differences such that larger gender differences occurred when individuals used their own personal definition of SH rather than the legal definition of SH.

Several recent studies have addressed factors—such as a personal history of SH, SH awareness training, and organizational role—that might make observers more attuned to SH. Stockdale, O'Connor, Gutek, and Geer (2002) addressed the prediction from revictimization theory (Finkelhor & Browne, 1985) that individuals with a personal history of SH or unwanted sexual experiences outside of work would be hypersensitive to sexual conduct and thus more likely than others to label behavior as SH. They tested this proposition by reviewing existing research and conducting a series of five studies.[8] Neither the literature review nor the findings from the studies provided strong evidence that those with a history of SH or other abuse are more prone to identify conduct as sexually harassing. Wilkerson (1999) investigated the effects of SH awareness training and organizational role on SH labeling. He found that training had a positive effect on labeling for sexual coercion but no effect for labeling of gender harassment. Furthermore, he found that those in managerial and executive positions were more likely than frontline supervisors to agree that displaying posters of seminude women and sexual coercion constituted SH.

Organizational antecedents of SH perceptions. Recent research on organizational factors has examined the influence of SH awareness training, organizational tolerance for SH, and sexualization of the work environment on observers' labeling of SH. Results of this research suggest the importance of specifying whether or not study participants are employed by the organization in which the behavior of concern took place (we use the terms *inside observer* and *outside observer* to refer to those who are employed by the organization and those who are not, respectively).[9] In a study using *inside* observers, McCabe and Hardman (2005) found that observers who perceived *their* organization as more tolerant of SH (i.e., believed that their organization would not take complaints of SH seriously or take action to correct SH) were less likely to label behavior as SH.[10] In a study using *outside* observers, O'Connor et al. (2004: 89) found that observers who perceived *the organization in which the behavior occurred* as having a more (vs. less) sexualized work environment (one that includes sexualized banter and materials) were more likely to label behavior as SH. O'Connor et al. suggest that "response to a sexualized environment may differ for an actor who has time to become acclimated to that environment and an outside observer who does not." Although the studies described above involved observers' perceptions of the organization, research by Antecol and Cobb-Clark (2003) examined the effect of a specific organizational action—providing SH awareness training to employees. Their results indicated that observers (especially men) working in organizations with SH awareness training are more likely to label sex-related behavior as SH than those in organizations without training. Taken together, these studies suggest that organizational policies and actions influence observers' sense-making processes around SH.

Harasser-based antecedents of SH perceptions. Oddly, few recent studies have examined how characteristics of the harasser might influence judgments about whether conduct is SH. One exception is a study (Tata, 2000) that examined the influence of remedial accounts by the harasser on observers' perceptions of SH (and other outcomes). Remedial accounts included denial, excuses (describing external circumstances that caused the event), justification (highlighting that there was no harm), and concession (expression of remorse). Harasser denials were the most effective method for minimizing observers' perceptions of SH, followed by excuses, justifications, and concessions. The ratings of male participants were more influenced by denials, and those of female participants were more influenced by concessions. This study introduced two interesting aspects: the focus on accountability and the importance of gender in affecting not only perceptions of conduct but also perceptions of explanations for conduct.

A second recent study that examined harasser characteristics focused on the race of the harasser. In a focus group study of 35 women in seven groups in Canada, Welsh, Carr, MacQuarrie, and Huntley (2006) found that the SH perceptions of Black (but not White) women were influenced by perpetrator race. Specifically, Black women viewed the behavior of White men as more harassing than that of Black men. With the latter, they described the behavior as less harassing and more a result of historical sexism existing in the Black community. However, given the limited sample size, these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Harasser–target relationship-based antecedents of SH perceptions. Another line of inquiry involves factors in the harasser–target relationship that might influence observer

perceptions. Previous research suggests that conduct is more likely to be regarded as SH when the harasser is of higher status than the target (e.g., Bursik, 1992; Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; Lester, Banta, Barton, et al., 1986; Popovich, Gelhauf, Jolton, Somers, & Godinho, 1992; Pryor & Day, 1988). We identified one recent study (Gordon, Cohen, Grauer, & Rogelberg, 2005), a scenario study involving working adults, that replicated this. We remind the reader that Blumenthal's (1998) meta-analyses of gender differences also demonstrated stronger perceptions of SH in cases where the harasser has higher status than the target.

A related line of research explored the effects of a dissolved workplace romance on judgments of responsibility for a subsequent SH complaint. The criterion variable in these studies (i.e., observer perceptions about who is responsible for SH) is related to, but distinct from, that described to this point (i.e., observer perceptions about whether conduct is SH). In general, these studies (Pierce, Aguinis, & Adams, 2000; Pierce, Broberg, McClure, & Aguinis, 2004) found that observers assign greater responsibility for SH to male harassers and to female complainants when their motive for the relationship was not love related (e.g., because of ego- or job-related motives). In general, rater gender was not influential in these judgments. These studies highlight the importance of perceived motive in observer judgments around SH.

We also note that research examining the gender composition of the harasser–target dyad (i.e., male harasser–female target, female harasser–male target, male harasser–male target, female harasser–female target) suggests the importance of distinguishing between student and employed observers. In a study using employed observers, McCabe and Hardman (2005) found that observers were more likely to label sex-related behavior as SH when the behavior was initiated by a man toward a woman than when it was initiated by a woman toward a man. However, a study by Wayne et al. (2001) using student observers found no such effect. These discrepant results may be explained by research finding that students are less likely than employees to label behavior as SH (e.g., O'Connor et al., 2004). Wayne et al. found that observers were more likely to label behavior as SH when the harasser and target were of different genders than when they were of the same gender.

Behavior-based antecedents of SH perceptions. Previous research has focused on one primary aspect of conduct, its severity. This research generally suggests that severe conduct is more often labeled as SH (e.g., Barak, Fisher, & Houston, 1992; Ellis, Barak, & Pinto, 1991; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Guiffre & Williams, 1994), and recent research on this issue is consistent in its findings (e.g., Wilkerson, 1999). It should be noted, however, that different forms of conduct co-occur (e.g., severe occurs along with less severe), so severity contains an element of frequency (Magley, Hulin, Fitzgerald, & DeNardo, 1999).

In a recent and more finely grained analysis, J. W. Lee and Guerrero (2001) examined undergraduate students' perceptions of nine types of touch depicted in videotaped scenarios (handshake, clasping hands, soft touch on forearm, arm around shoulder, arm around waist, soft touch on cheek, tapping shoulder in condescending manner, push against shoulder, no touch). Results indicated that face touching was regarded as the most sexually harassing, followed by an arm around the waist; no touching, tapping the shoulder, and shaking hands were regarded as the least sexually harassing types of touch.

Target-based antecedents of SH perceptions. Magley et al. (1999) suggested that much of the prior research on labeling involved observer perceptions of personal factors in the target, such as personal attractiveness, sexual inexperience, and the need for social approval. In general, these have failed to account empirically for labeling (Magley et al., 1999). We identified little other recent research focused on target-based antecedents to labeling, suggesting that this has not been a primary focus of study since 1995.

Theoretical Advances in SH Research

At the beginning of our review period, there were several theoretical explanations for SH. These included the *sex-role spillo*ver explanation (e.g., Gutek & Morasch, 1982), which suggested that SH results from the inappropriate carryover of sex-based expectations into work; the *contact hypothesis* (e.g., Gutek, Cohen, & Konrad, 1990), in which SH occurs because of the sexualized environment created by contact or interactions between men and women at work; and the *power and dominance* explanation (e.g., Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979), which suggests that SH occurs because of unequal power across men and women in society and the workplace. Recently, several additional theoretical explanations (focusing on organizational influences, harasser decisions, target responses, observer responses, and some broadly focused models) have emerged (as shown at the top of Figure 1).

Organizational Influences on SH

At the time of the last review, Fitzgerald, Hulin, and Drasgow (1994) had just presented a model that outlined the antecedents and consequences of workplace SH. This model, which regarded SH as a work stressor, suggested two organizational environment factors as direct antecedents to SH: job context (i.e., gender domination by men in a work group is associated with more frequent SH) and organizational context (organizational climate for SH is associated with more frequent SH). The model predicted numerous negative outcomes from the experience of SH, including job-related, psychological, and health detriments. These relationships were expected to be moderated by the target's personal vulnerability and response styles. As we will see, this model has had great influence on recent empirical research.

Harasser's Decision to Initiate SH

There is recent theoretical guidance on the question of why harassers choose SH actions. In an article that positioned SH as a form of aggressive work behavior, O'Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, and Griffin (2000) suggested a model in which potential harassers are viewed as decision makers pursuing valued goals. From this perspective, SH, like other forms of aggression, can serve a variety of actor goals, including emotional (desire to rid themselves of negative affect), retributional (desire to punish others for a perceived injustice), and self-presentational (desire to establish a desired social image). SH is viewed as a goal-directed behavior that is chosen when it is believed to have a high probability of success and low probability of punishment.

It also has been suggested that harassers are influenced by moral intensity perceptions (O'Leary-Kelly & Bowes-Sperry, 2001). According to Jones (1991), moral intensity is a multidimensional construct that assesses the degree of moral imperative inherent in an issue and influences progression through the stages of the ethical decision-making process. O'Leary-Kelly and Bowes-Sperry (2001) argued that there is much inherent to the SH phenomenon that discourages actors from regarding it as a high moral intensity issue. For example, moral intensity is lower when there is low social consensus regarding the act (as is the case for some types of SH), low proximity between the parties (targets and harassers often are dissimilar in factors such as gender and job level), and low probability and magnitude of consequences (actors tend to underestimate the magnitude of harm done because targets often suffer in silence). Furthermore, they propose that if potential harassers do not recognize SH as an ethical issue, they will be more likely to engage in sexually harassing behavior; therefore, perceiving SH as low in moral intensity is expected to result in increased SH.

Target Responses to SH

Knapp, Faley, Ekeberg, and Dubois (1997) developed a typology of target responses based on theory from the whistle-blowing (Near & Miceli, 1985) and stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) literatures. They proposed that target responses to SH vary in terms of the focus of response (self vs. initiator) and the mode of response (self vs. supported), resulting in four response strategies: *avoidance/denial* (e.g., interpreting behavior as a joke), *social coping* (e.g., discussing the behavior with friends), *confrontation/negotiation* (e.g., asking the harasser to stop), and *advocacy seeking* (e.g., filing a formal report). Target decisions among these actions are proposed to be influenced directly by characteristics of the reporting process, target expectations regarding the outcomes of various responses, severity of SH experienced, and the target's level of psychological distress. Furthermore, these predictors are expected to be affected by targets' individual characteristics and power as well as characteristics of the workgroup, organization, and legal and economic environment. Tests of this typology are generally supportive (Malamut & Offermann, 2001; although for an exception, see Magley, 2002), including research establishing cross-cultural generalizability (Wasti & Cortina, 2002).

The O'Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, and Griffin, (2000) model also provides theoretical insights into target responses to SH. This model suggested that target perceptions of actor culpability are dependent on attributional judgments about actor intentionality and justifiability and on the forseeability of negative target outcomes. Furthermore, target perceptions about the likelihood of future SH, which influence the target's chosen response, depend on attributions regarding the stability of actor behavior. Targets' emotional and behavioral responses are expected to depend on their attributional judgments, their own goals (emotional, retributive, self-presentational), and their beliefs about the likelihood that various responses will facilitate goal success.

Observer Responses to SH

Bowes-Sperry and Powell (1999) adopted an ethics framework to explain observers' intentions to intervene in a SH situation. Specifically, Jones's (1991) theory was used as a framework, suggesting that intention to intervene would be higher when SH was identified as

an issue high in moral intensity. In a vignette study of full-time employees, they found that observers were most likely to recognize conduct as SH and to express the intent to intervene when (a) they perceived social consensus that the conduct was SH and (b) the magnitude of consequences for the target was severe. Furthermore, the observer's relativistic ethical orientation (i.e., belief that moral rules are relative, not absolute) was negatively related to recognition of the behavior as an ethical issue, whereas the observer's idealistic ethical orientation (i.e., belief that desirable outcomes can be achieved) was positively related. Finally, they found that sexualization of the work environment moderated the relationship between recognition of the conduct as an ethical issue and intention to intervene, such that the relationship was less positive in more sexualized work environments.

Extending this, Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly (2005) presented a typology of potential observer interventions. This typology crossed two levels of involvement (degree to which observers immerse themselves in the SH situation) with two levels of intervention immediacy (whether the intervention occurs as the SH event unfolds or subsequently) to create four categories of intervention behaviors: *low immediacy–low involvement* (e.g., observer privately advises the target to avoid the harasser), *high immediacy–low involvement* (e.g., observer redirects the harasser from the unfolding SH event), *low immediacy–high involvement* (e.g., the observer accompanies the target when he or she reports the event after it has unfolded), and *high immediacy–high involvement* (e.g., observer tells the harasser to stop the conduct as the event unfolds). Observers' decisions among these actions are expected to depend on perceptions that action is required (influenced by ambiguity of conduct, moral intensity of incident, and social influence effects), perceptions of personal responsibility for action (influenced by actor–target relationship, social appropriateness of intervention, and social identity), decisions about immediacy (influenced by intervention scripts, emotional reactions, recurrence beliefs, perceived harm, and perceived welcomeness), and costs of involvement. Taken together, this suggests that observer intervention decisions are shaped by myriad factors that reside in the observer, the relationship with the target, perceptions of the situation and the conduct, and workplace norms.

Broad Theoretical Approaches

Three recent articles took a broader approach to theory development (i.e., the focus was not on just targets or just harassers or just the organization). Berdahl's (2007a) theory of harassment based on sex extends the view of SH as goal-directed behavior and locates SH within the broader harassment literature. There are three central tenets of this theory. First, the "primary motive underlying *all* harassment is a desire to protect one's social status when it seems threatened" (2007a: 641, italics added). Second, the existence of gender hierarchy (at the societal level) renders sex a useful basis on which to harass. Third, distinctions are made within sexes as well as between them. Berdahl proposes that SH is influenced by both contextual and personal factors. Contextual factors include gender hierarchy at the organizational level as well as the existence and type of threat to social identity (i.e., threats that emphasize gender distinctions versus those that challenge them). Personal factors include the actor's sex, sexist attitudes, and

gender role conformity. This theory also provides insight into targets. Given that identity threat motivates actors to harass, individuals who threaten the gender identity of an actor (e.g., by confounding distinctions between the sexes) are likely to become targets of SH. This suggests that the most likely form of SH is men harassing women, especially women who challenge men's status; men will also harass other men who threaten their status, and when women harass they will primarily target other women, particularly those who represent a status threat. Although we do not focus on legal theory in our review, it is worth noting that similar arguments have been made in legal journals. Franke (1997) argued that SH be regarded as a form of sex discrimination, not because men initiate it against women but because it is a tool for enforcing traditional gender norms, one that can be used against both women and men.

Another broad approach (O'Leary-Kelly, Tiedt, & Bowes-Sperry, 2004) used accountability theory to explain SH, with accountability defined as the "perceived need to justify or defend a decision or action to some audience(s) which has potential reward and sanction power and where such rewards and sanctions are perceived as contingent on accountability conditions" (Frink & Klimoski, 1998: 9). Accountability theory suggests conditions that limit the accountability harassers feel for their actions (e.g., fragmentation of responsibility, competing role expectations, reactance to new imposed standards on previously accepted behavior). Although no formal model was presented, theoretical principles explained why targets of SH often choose passive rather than direct or active responses (e.g., lack of clarity in prescriptions for behavior, identity implications). Finally, accountability theory provided insights into observers' inaction after witnessing SH (lack of connection between the event and the observer identity, ambiguity in role expectations).

In another broad theory piece, DeCoster, Estes, and Mueller (1999) applied the routine activities perspective from the criminology literature (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978) to explain SH victimization at work. They suggested that some individuals are more prone to victimization because their daily activities bring them in direct contact with predators (Cohen & Felson, 1979; DeCoster et al., 1999). More specifically, this suggests that three conditions are important to victimization: (a) a motivated harasser, (b) a suitable target (i.e., proximity to predators, material attractiveness to predators), and (c) the absence of guardians who can prevent the SH incident. As with the representation of harassers in O'Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, and Griffin, (2000), this perspective assumes a rational harasser who strives to minimize costs and maximize outcomes. These theoretical propositions are tested, and findings indicate that guardianship (i.e., supportive supervisors, supportive work group cultures, work-group solidarity), target proximity (i.e., working in a male-dominated job or a highly populated job location), and target attractiveness (i.e., female targets being educated or having high organizational tenure, which are depicted as evidence of a power threat to male employees; being single) are predictive of the SH of women. These effects were additive but did not interact to predict victimization as the routine activities model would predict.

Antecedents to SH

A great deal of research since 1995 examines the conditions that prompt SH. As a framework for this discussion, we regard the harasser as a motivated actor who is driven by individual predispositions and who reacts to situational triggers. Therefore we discuss

personal- or harasser-related antecedents and situational antecedents (including characteristics of the target and of the organizational climate).

Personal- or Harasser-Related Antecedents

Extensive research indicates that although harassers are most likely to be male (e.g., Gutek, 1985; Martindale, 1990; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board [USMSPB], 1981, 1988, 1995), most men are not harassers. Many researchers have noted the lack of research attention given to harassers (e.g., Lucero, Middleton, Finch, & Valentine, 2003; O'Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, and Griffin, 2000), with a likely reason being the difficulty of gaining access to samples of adequate size. According to Pryor, Giedd, and Williams (1995), the first USMSPB (1981) survey attempted to examine characteristics of sexual harassers but was unable to do so because so few people responded affirmatively when asked if they had ever been accused of "sexually bothering" someone at work. However, three harasser-based antecedents have received some research attention: the likelihood to sexually harass, the position or role of the harasser, and harasser's goals or motives.

Harasser likelihood to sexually harass. Much of what we know about harassers comes from research conducted using Pryor's (1987) Likelihood to Sexually Harass (LSH) scale, which "measures a readiness to use social power for sexually exploitive purposes" (Pryor, Lavite, & Stoller, 1993: 74). Most empirical research on LSH (both that before and after 1995) has focused on developing a personality profile of *men* (for exceptions, see Isbell, Swedish, & Gazan, 2005; Luthar & Luthar, 2008) who are likely to become sexual harassers. This research suggests that high LSH men are more likely than low LSH men to (a) be prone to sexual violence, that is, they express a likelihood to rape, hold adversarial sexual beliefs, and accept rape myths (e.g., Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995; Begany & Milburn, 2002; Pryor, 1987), (b) cognitively link the concept of social dominance with sexuality (Pryor & Stoller, 1994), (c) differentiate themselves from women, that is, they prefer traditional male sex-role stereotypes, rate themselves as less feminine, and are lower in empathy, which is a stereotypically feminine characteristic (Driscoll, Kelly, & Henderson, 1998; Pryor, 1987), (d) have negative and hostile attitudes toward women (Begany & Milburn, 2002; Driscoll et al., 1998), and (e) have personalities that are high in authoritarianism, low in honesty humility, and low in self-monitoring (Dall'Ara & Maas, 1999; K. Lee, Gizzarone, & Ashton, 2003; Pryor, 1987). There also is evidence that, in certain situations, high (vs. low) LSH men are more likely to initiate unwanted sexual attention (Fitzgerald et al., 1994; Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al., 1993). More recent research has extended the predictive validity of LSH to other types of sexually harassing behaviors. The research of Maas and colleagues (Dall'Ara & Maas, 1999; Maas, Cadinu, Guarnieri, & Grasselli, 2003) established the validity of LSH for predicting sexual hostility, which is a form of gender harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1999). Their research indicates that high (vs. low) LSH men are more likely to send pornographic material to a female interaction partner and that this likelihood increases in response to gender identity threats. LSH also predicts sex-based (i.e., not sexual) harassment, such as asking sexist questions of a female during an interview (Rudman & Borgida, 1995), rating a female's performance or competency on a task as low

(Driscoll et al., 1998), spending less time with a female in a subordinate position (Murphy, Driscoll, & Kelly, 1999), and providing less feedback regarding the performance of a female they have been asked to evaluate (Murphy et al., 1999).

Research on observer perceptions of potential harassers provides evidence of the validity of the LSH measure. Participants who watched videotaped interactions between a man and woman were able to differentiate between high and low LSH men. More specifically, observers' ratings of men's LSH were positively related to men's self-reported LSH (Driscoll et al., 1998). Furthermore, when asked, "What would it be like to have this man as your employer?" observers were more likely to provide negative (vs. positive) evaluations for men high (vs. low) in LSH (Craig, Kelly, & Driscoll, 2001).

Position or role of the harasser. Although most SH research has focused on individuals within an organization, Gettman and Gelfand (2007) argued that clients and customers are also potential sources of SH, particularly in the service sector. They developed a theoretical model of client sexual harassment (CSH) based on the intraorganizational model of Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, and Magley (1997), which they tested in two field studies. Their results indicated that client power (assessed using perceptions of target and organization dependency on the client) was significantly, strongly, and positively related to CSH.

Harasser goals and motives. Recent research has considered SH as goal-directed behavior chosen by an actor for a specific purpose (O'Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, & Griffin, 2000). Although empirical research that examines specific harasser motives is very limited, there is accumulating evidence that sexual harassers are motivated by social identity concerns (i.e., they initiate sexually harassing behavior with the goal of establishing or protecting a specific social identity). Maas and her colleagues (Dall'Ara & Maas, 1999; Maas et al., 2003) examined various aspects of identity threat using a "computer harassment paradigm" in which male participants interacted virtually with (fictitious) females to complete a task. Their results indicated that male participants exposed to gender identity threats (e.g., interacting with a woman espousing feminist values, having their masculinity questioned) were more likely than those with no exposure to engage in sexually hostile behavior. In addition, gender identity threat also predicted intentions to engage in sexually coercive behavior in future situations unrelated to the computer task. However, consistent with the notion that only some men enact SH, individual difference factors such as LSH, gender identification, and social dominance orientation influenced the extent to which gender identity threats prompted SH. Finally, Berdahl's (2007b) finding that women with more masculine (as opposed to less masculine) personalities and occupations are more likely to be targets of SH implies that harassers are motivated to punish gender role violators.

Another aspect of the goal-directed harasser model (O'Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, & Griffin, 2000) is that harasser behaviors are enacted in accordance with target responses to initial SH. Recent empirical research by Lucero and her colleagues provides support for this perspective. Lucero et al. (2003) and Lucero, Allen, and Middleton (2006) used published arbitration cases to examine data on individuals who had been disciplined by their employer for SH. Their work suggested that these harassers could be distinguished by the nature of their behavior; some harassers had a more sexual repertoire of behaviors, whereas others had a

more aggressive repertoire (Lucero et al., 2003). Furthermore, these repertoires remained consistent over time for the majority of harassers; when change did occur, it tended to entail the addition of a new type of SH behavior rather than the replacement of one behavior type with another (Lucero, Allen, & Middleton, 2006). Although this research focuses on harasser conduct, we can make inferences about the harasser motives that are the basis for this conduct. For example, it is reasonable to assume that individuals who initiate gender harassment (aggressive sex-based behavior) are not motivated by sexual desire.

Situational Antecedents

Recent research also has explored characteristics of the environment that are encountered by sexual harassers. Here we discuss research regarding characteristics of the target and of the organizational environment.

Target-related antecedents. Characteristics of the targets themselves may be associated with the occurrence of SH. Much research indicates that women are more likely than men to be targets (e.g., Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Gutek, 1985; Martindale, 1990; USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995). A provocative recent study (Berdahl, 2007b), however, suggested this finding may be, in part, a methodological artifact. Here, gender was relevant to being a target of SH *only* in male-dominated organizations, which have been the focus of most prior SH research.

As discussed previously, Berdahl (2007a) proposed that sexual harassers are motivated to punish individuals who violate gender-role norms. Berdahl (2007b: 425) investigated the effects of "personality gender" (i.e., the extent to which one's personality exhibits stereotypically masculine and feminine traits) and "occupational gender" (i.e., male- or female-dominated occupation) on becoming a SH target. Her results indicated that women who had more (vs. less) masculine personalities experienced more SH and those who occupied traditionally masculine (vs. feminine) jobs experienced more SH. This work suggests that SH is targeted at "uppity" women who step out of place by assuming characteristics considered more desirable for men (Berdahl, 2007b).

A recent large-scale study (Jackson & Newman, 2004), using USMSPB's survey of federal workers, examined the interplay of gender and other predictors of SH. For women, but not men, education and pay grade were positively associated with SH experience. Furthermore, there was a stronger association between job status (blue collar, white collar) and SH for women than for men, with blue-collar women experiencing very high levels of SH; these findings appear consistent with the "uppity women" prediction just mentioned. It also was noteworthy that age had differential effects such that SH dropped off considerably for women as they aged, but this effect was less pronounced for men.

Ethnicity has also been examined as a potential target-related antecedent. Berdahl and Moore (2006) explored the effects of ethnicity and sex on various forms of SH. They found that being an ethnic minority in a workgroup was positively related to traditional forms of SH (e.g., gender harassment) and that ethnicity predicted "not-man-enough harassment" (e.g., not meeting masculine ideals, being too much like a woman). Similarly, Gettman and Gelfand

(2007) found that non-White employees (in both professional and nonprofessional occupations) experienced more SH at the hand of clients and customers than did White employees.

Another study (Harned, Ormerod, Palmieri, Collinsworth, & Reed, 2002) examined target power as an antecedent to various types of SH (sexist hostility, sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion) and sexual assault. In a large-scale study of female members of the military, the authors examined negative conduct experienced at the hands of personnel employed in the military workplace. Two target-related antecedents were examined: organizational power (measured via pay grade and years of active duty service) and sociocultural power (measured via age, education, race/ethnicity, marital status). Their findings suggested that 4% of servicewomen reported an attempted or actual rape by colleagues with the past 12 months, and they found that both forms of power predicted SH and sexual assault (with lower power being associated with increased likelihood of SH and sexual assault).

Organizational antecedents. The introduction of the organizational tolerance for sexual harassment (OTSH) construct by Hulin, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow (1996) prompted significant research on organizational antecedents to SH. OTSH is based on the Fitzgerald et al. (1994) model that outlined the organizational antecedents and consequences of work SH. OTSH, which reflects one dimension of an organization's overall climate, reflects respondents' perceptions of the contingencies between SH behavior and consequences, for targets and harassers, within their organizational context. In organizations characterized by strong OTSH perceptions, employees believe that reporting of SH is risky, that complainants are unlikely to be taken seriously, and that there would be few consequences for perpetrators (Hulin et al., 1996). There is now a well-established measure of OTSH (the OTSH Inventory), which has been used in multiple studies to date (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Hulin et al., 1996; Wasti, Bergman, Glomb, & Drasgow, 2000). The inventory asks respondents to review six scenarios (depicting gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion; Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Gelfand, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1995) and to rate their perceptions of the likely outcomes (i.e., risk to the complainant, degree to which complaint is taken seriously, consequences for harasser) if a woman in their department were to complain about these types of behaviors initiated by a supervisor or coworker.

A recent meta-analysis demonstrates the importance of organizational factors as predictors of SH. Willness, Steel, and Lee (2007), in a meta-analytic review of 41 studies and almost 70,000 respondents, examined two organizational antecedents: organizational climate perceptions (e.g., OTSH) and job–gender context (e.g., proportion of women in workgroup, composition of workgroup). Results indicated a significant and robust relationship between organizational climate and SH (weighted mean correlation corrected for reliability was equal to .364). Job–gender context also emerged as a significant predictor of SH experiences, but the effect size was smaller (corrected correlation = –.192). Results of a moderator analysis indicated these effects are stronger for nonmilitary compared to military samples.

Research using the OTSH Inventory demonstrates that the inventory predicts respondents' reports of SH (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Hulin et al., 1996), making it a useful diagnostic tool for managers who want to anticipate hostile climates. Although we discuss SH consequences in detail later, it should be mentioned here that research suggests that OTSH is directly associated with well-being-related variables such as work satisfaction, job

withdrawal, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, anxiety and depression, physical health, and health satisfaction (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Hulin et al., 1996) and that these effects occur for both male and female employees. Perhaps more surprising, one study (Hulin et al., 1996) demonstrated that OTSH explains more variance in well-being outcomes than does the direct experience of SH. Essentially, a high-OTSH climate is one in which employees perceive that they face considerable risk if they report SH (because of the normative nature of SH and because of the negative individual outcomes just mentioned). Oddly, this means that in those workplaces that are most poisoned, reporting of SH is least likely, suggesting a very negative spiral.

If, as suggested by the Willness et al. (2007) meta-analysis, a SH-tolerant organizational climate has negative effects, it is important to ask which aspects of the environment create this negative climate. Unfortunately, we found few studies that have explored this issue. In one notable exception, Williams, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow (1999: 306) examined three climate aspects in a military setting: organizational policies (formal written guidelines for behavior), organizational procedures ("formal or informal steps for filing grievances, investigating complaints, and enforcing penalties"), and various organizational practices (actual organizational actions around SH). Results suggest that one practice (implementation) was associated with SH reports (by both male and female employees). A second study examining climate factors (Amick & Sorenson, 2004) found that OTSH perceptions were strongest when respondents believed that coworkers held traditional attitudes toward women but that respondent job type (traditional or nontraditional) and workgroup gender mix were not significant predictors of OTSH.

Another outgrowth of the focus on organizational climate in recent research is the interesting question of whether it is reasonable to expect one SH climate within a work environment. In the initial work on OTSH (Hulin et al., 1996), it was noted that male and female employees held significantly different perceptions of OTSH, with women reporting higher levels. A qualitative study (Rogers & Henson, 1997) also provides support for the idea of multiple climates. Here, they found that temporary clerical workers operated in a more sexualized climate than did permanent workers, with temporary workers experiencing more SH and having less power to obtain remedy.

Two recent studies are interesting because they broaden the focus of either the organizational antecedent variables or the SH criterion variable. In the former, Mueller, DeCoster, and Estes (2001: 417) examined the relationship between general organizational conditions and SH, with general organizational conditions defined as those indicative of "modern methods of organizational control," including social integration, structural differentiation, decentralization, and formalization and legitimacy. These features of the general work environment were expected to be associated with lower levels of SH because they encourage coworkers to protect one another, they recognize professional behavior as necessary to organizational mobility, and they empower individuals to protect themselves from SH. In general, results supported these predictions.

The second, which broadened the focus of the SH criterion variable, examined SH experiences in the context of the climate for workplace civility (Lim & Cortina, 2005). In two studies of women in the federal court system, results provided support for the co-occurrence of SH and workplace incivility, in that almost all women who experienced SH also experienced incivility. These studies highlight that SH occurs within a broader context of mistreatment and disrespect and raise interesting questions about whether the same actors initiate

both forms of negative conduct and whether the same organizational conditions might contribute to both. These results also emphasize the cumulative nature of multiple victimization, in that women who experienced both forms of mistreatment reported lower levels of organizational and psychological well-being.

Responses to SH

Although most research on responses relates to the question of how SH targets respond or cope, there also is recent research examining the responses of SH observers and of the employer (organization).

Target Responses

Types of target responses. Target responses to SH have cognitive (e.g., labeling behavior as SH, discussed in detail earlier), emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Research indicates that pervasiveness and type of SH influence targets' cognitive or emotional responses (e.g., subjective appraisals of distress), which in turn influence behavioral responses such as confronting the harasser or seeking social support (Langhout et al., 2005; Malamut & Offermann, 2001). Furthermore, cognitive or emotional responses have been found to mediate relationships between other antecedents and target responses. For example, the target's appraisal of distress has been found to mediate the impact of occupational status, organizational climate, frequency and duration of SH, and power differentials between target and harasser on a variety of target responses (Bergman, Langhout, Palmieri, Cortina, & Fitzgerald, 2002; Langhout et al., 2005; Malamut & Offermann, 2001).

Research indicates that although targets engage in multiple strategies when responding to SH (e.g., Cortina & Wasti, 2005; Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Gruber, 1989; Magley, 2002; Wasti & Cortina, 2002), some responses are more common than others. For example, both early and recent research has found that although many targets engage in avoidance responses, few ever formally report their experiences (e.g., Cochran, Frazier, & Olson, 1997; Culbertson, Rosenfeld, Booth-Kewley, & Magnusson, 1992; Magley, 2002; Malamut & Offermann, 2001; Martindale, 1990; USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995; Wasti & Cortina, 2002). Moreover, these multiple responses have been found to form specific *coping profiles* over time (Cortina & Wasti, 2005). In addition to knowledge regarding the frequency with which various responses are used, empirical research has identified numerous predictors of target responses. We use Knapp et al.'s (1997) theoretical model (described earlier) to structure our discussion of these predictors.

Personal or target antecedents. Knapp et al. (1997) proposed that personal characteristics of targets (e.g., age and gender) influence their behavioral responses to SH. Several demographic characteristics of targets have been found to influence their responses. Cortina and Wasti (2005) found that age was positively associated with a "detached" coping profile in which targets exhibit an absence of coping with the situation. Malamut and Offermann (2001) found that women were more likely than men to use social coping, advocacy seeking, and confrontation, yet women and men were equally likely to engage in avoidance and denial

responses. Some studies have found effects of personal target characteristics on the coping response of reporting; target reporting has been found to be positively related to target education level and previous SH experience (Perry, Kulik, & Schmidtke, 1997) and negatively related to occupational status (Malamut & Offermann, 2001). Finally, cultural affiliation has been found to predict target responses and coping profiles; targets from collectivistic cultures are more likely than those from individualistic cultures to engage in avoidance, denial, and negotiating responses (Cortina & Wasti, 2005; Wasti & Cortina, 2002). Furthermore, perhaps because of cultural factors, Hispanic women who experience SH seek support from friends and family more than from formal organizational support mechanisms (Cortina, 2004). Research indicates that personality characteristics also influence target responses. For example, target assertiveness has been found to be positively related to confronting the harasser (Adams-Roy & Barling, 1998), and conflict avoidance has been found to be negatively related to intentions to engage in such confrontation (Goldberg, 2007).

Organizational antecedents. Empirical research on targets' responses indicates strong support for organizational antecedents. Various measures of perceived organizational climate have been found to influence target coping responses. For example, Malamut and Offermann (2001) found that targets' perceptions of OTSH were positively related to their use of avoidance denial, social coping, and advocacy seeking but not confrontation. Cortina and Wasti (2005) found that women who perceived higher levels of social support from organizational leaders (which is one aspect of climate) were more likely to fit the "detached" coping profile. Offermann and Malamut's (2002) results demonstrated that women who believed that military leaders (at multiple levels) made genuine efforts to end SH reported stronger reporting freedom, greater satisfaction with the reporting process, and more positive attitudes. It is noteworthy that these effects occurred after controlling for the effects of general work climate (having policies and procedures against SH). Cortina's (2004) study of Hispanic women found that these women sought more support from all sources (personal and organizational) when the harasser had high (vs. low) organizational power. Finally, research indicates that OTSH influences target reporting responses; Bergman et al. (2002) found an indirect effect (through SH history and frequency) of OTSH and Welsh and Gruber (1999) found a direct effect of OTSH.

Behavior-based antecedents. Research also indicates that SH severity is related to target responses. For example, Munson, Hulin, and Drasgow (2000) found that targets were more likely to use external coping strategies when SH severity was high than when it was low. Research on target reporting of SH (which is a type of external coping strategy) found that target reporting was more likely when harassers were supervisors, when there were multiple harassers, and when the type of behavior was sexual coercion (Lee, Heilmann, & Near, 2004; Welsh & Gruber, 1999). Bergman et al. (2002) found an indirect effect (through cognitive appraisal) of SH severity on reporting. Malamut and Offermann (2001) hypothesized that targets would use a full spectrum of strategies for severe SH (which they assessed in terms of SH type and SH frequency or duration). They found that as frequency or duration of SH increased, targets increased their use of avoidance denial, social coping, and advocacy seeking, but there was no effect on the use of confrontation. They also found that sexual coercion (the more severe type of SH) was positively

related to the use of social coping and confrontation, but there was no effect on the use of avoidance denial or advocacy seeking. Finally, Cortina and Wasti (2005) found that SH severity was one of the strongest determinants of target responses; more specifically, as SH severity increased, so did the number of coping behaviors used by targets.

Rospenda, Richman, Ehmke, and Zlatoper (2005: 96) examined the influence of different patterns of SH and generalized work harassment (GWH; defined as "negative workplace interactions that affect the terms, conditions, or employment decisions related to an individual's job, or create a hostile, intimidating, or offensive working environment, but which are not based on legally-protected social status characteristics") on use of services as a coping mechanism for SH and GWH. This study, which spanned a multiyear period, demonstrated that different patterns of harassment experiences are not equivalent. For both SH and GWH, they found that those who experienced intermittent (on and off harassment over time) or chronic (harassment that continues across time periods) harassment were most likely to seek professional services. Contrary to expectations, those experiencing SH remission (cessation of harassment) also reported increased service use.

Effectiveness of target responses. Knapp et al. (1997) proposed that avoidance or denial responses are the least effective (in that they do not stop SH) and most costly to organizations (in that they result in decreased productivity and turnover). They recommended that targets engage in advocacy-seeking behavior such as reporting SH to others within the organization, especially those with formal authority to take action. Because reporting SH is often ineffective and at times harmful to the target (Hesson-McInnis & Fitzgerald, 1998; Magley et al., 1999; Stockdale, 1998), Bergman et al. (2002) examined the reasonableness of reporting to determine if reporting was more effective under certain conditions than others. Their results suggested that it is not the act of reporting SH per se that determines consequences for targets but rather the organization's responses to such reporting.

Organizational Responses to SH

Although organizational policies, procedures and practices were discussed previously as organizational antecedents, they can also be conceptualized as organizational responses to the law. If a charge of SH is filed against an organization, the existence of SH awareness training can help establish an affirmative defense by demonstrating that it exercised reasonable care to prevent sexually harassing behavior. On the other hand, failure to provide training has resulted in employer liability for SH in U.S. federal courts (Zugelder, Champagne, & Maurer, 2006). Thus, organizational responses to SH can be characterized as either preventive (e.g., training) or corrective (e.g., disciplining or counseling harassers).

Although an important topic, there has not been much recent research examining organizational responses to SH. In a noteworthy exception, Bergman et al. (2002) investigated corrective organizational responses following a formal report of SH. More specifically, they examined antecedents and consequences of organizational remedies (e.g., disciplining the harasser), organizational retaliation (e.g., transferring targets who report SH against their will), and organizational minimization (e.g., encouraging targets to drop their complaints).

They found that all three organizational responses influenced the effectiveness of reporting (measured as targets' satisfaction with the reporting process). It is not surprising that organizational responses of retaliation and minimization were negatively related to targets' satisfaction whereas providing organizational remedies was positively related. Furthermore, they found that targets' satisfaction with the reporting process was positively related to job-related, psychological, and health outcomes. Another exception is the study of women in the federal circuit court system by Miner-Rubino and Cortina (2007). These authors found that when organizations were unresponsive to an environment characterized by hostility toward women, female employees reported decreased levels of organizational commitment. With regard to preventive or proactive organizational responses, SH awareness training has been found to increase the likelihood of respondents labeling sex-related behavior as SH (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2003; Wilkerson, 1999).

It is important to note that theoretical models propose reciprocal influences between organizational and target responses. For example, Knapp et al. (1997) proposed that factors associated with the reporting process (e.g., failure to resolve previous SH complaints to the target's satisfaction, extent to which procedures are understood) influence targets' responses to SH. Little empirical research, however, has addressed these predictions.

Observer Responses to SH

Raver and Gelfand (2005), in a study that found that the level of ambient SH (i.e., the general level of SH in the work group; Glomb et al., 1997) within a team was positively related to team conflict, argued that this conflict could result from observers adopting coping strategies such as confronting or refusing to speak to the harasser. Bowes-Sperry and colleagues conceptualized such actions as forms of observer intervention, which are one form of observer coping. Bowes-Sperry and Powell (1999) found support for an ethical decision-making model of observers' intentions to intervene in hypothetical scenarios of SH; both individual (i.e., ethical ideology) and situational (e.g., severity of SH) factors influenced observer intentions such that they were more likely to intervene if they recognized the incident as an ethical issue. As mentioned earlier, Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly (2005) contributed a typology of observer intervention behaviors in SH; however, this typology has not been empirically tested.

Consequences of SH

SH has broad and negative consequences that affect SH targets, observers, and the organization as a whole. In this section, we highlight recent research that examines each of these forms of consequence.

Consequences for Targets of SH

The Willness et al. (2007) meta-analysis mentioned earlier examined not only antecedents to SH but also consequences experienced by SH targets.[11] Results demonstrated that most

consequence variables proved to be significantly correlated with SH experience. SH experience was consistently associated with lower job satisfaction, regardless of how this latter construct was measured (individual facets, global measure), with effect sizes (weighted mean correlation corrected for reliability) ranging from $r_c = -.241$ to $r_c = -.316$. As predicted by the researchers, satisfaction with coworkers and supervisors (interpersonal work dimensions) was more negatively affected by the experience of SH than was work satisfaction. There was also a significant negative relationship between SH experience and organizational commitment ($r_c = -.249$), suggesting that this experience has a negative impact on attitudes toward the employer. Again, moderator analyses indicated that individuals in military contexts demonstrated distinct results; in military samples, there was a stronger relationship between the experience of SH and job satisfaction.

The findings related to psychological and health outcomes also demonstrate the highly negative effects of SH experience. There were significant relationships with mental health ($r_c = -.273$), physical health ($r_c = -.247$), and PTSD ($r_c = .247$). The relationship with life satisfaction was also significant but more limited ($r_c = -.119$), a finding that might be expected given the range of issues that compose life satisfaction.

Research not included in this meta-analysis also demonstrated the negative effects of SH. For example, Woodzicka and LaFrance (2005), who studied women exposed to mild gender harassment (e.g., asking a sexist question) during a job interview, found that SH had negative consequences for their performance. Participants in the harassing condition used significantly more diluted language, repeated words more frequently, exhibited more false starts, and were judged as having lower quality answers than those who were not harassed.

Recent work on CSH by Gettman and Gelfand (2007) demonstrated that the negative effects of SH are similar whether the harassment is initiated by organizational members or clients. Their cross-sectional study of professional women indicated that CSH is negatively related to job satisfaction and health satisfaction and positively related to psychological distress. Their study of CSH among nonprofessional food service workers indicates that CSH predicts job satisfaction, even after controlling for SH by organizational members.

Earlier, we described a study that examined a specific, and severe, form of SH—sexual assault (Harned et al., 2002). This cross-sectional study also examined job-related affect (e.g., supervisor, coworker, and work satisfaction) and psychological health (psychological well-being, health satisfaction). In general, the findings indicated that SH was most strongly related to job-related factors whereas sexual assault was most strongly related to health outcomes.

One series of studies (Rospenda, 2002; Rospenda et al., 2006; Rospenda, Richman, Ehmke, & Zlatoper, 2005) examined the effects of SH in context of a broader harassment construct, generalized work harassment (GWH). These studies posed SH as a form of WPA that is expected to be associated with other forms of aggression such as assault. In a study of university employees surveyed at multiple points in time, results suggested that both SH and GWH were associated with high levels of self-reported illness, injury, and assault. It is interesting that men (vs. women) suffered greater illness, injury, and assault as a result of SH experience.

The focus on SH climate in recent research seems to have sparked an interest in other related aspects of climate. Specifically, two studies have explored the effects of a generally misogynistic and hostile context on the well-being of employees who are not specifically targeted by hostile conduct. Miner-Rubino and Cortina (2004) examined, among federal

circuit court employees, the well-being related effects of working in an environment that includes incivility directed at women. This cross-sectional research suggested that women-directed incivility (actions akin to hostile environment SH) was associated with lower health satisfaction (but not lower work satisfaction) for both female and male employees. A second study (Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2007) examined the vicarious effects of two aspects of climate: observed hostility toward women (a construct composed of both observation of workplace incivility directed at women and observation of SH behavior toward female employees) and perceptions of the organization's unresponsiveness to SH (measured with a scale other than the OTSH Inventory). This study supported the notion that employees, both male and female, who work in environments permeated with negative attitudes and behavior toward women experience negative effects on their psychological well-being and job satisfaction. Furthermore, organizational unresponsiveness to this negative environment is also associated with negative outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Several other cross-sectional studies suggested a more complicated picture in terms of the effects of SH on outcomes. In a sample of military employees, Murry, Sivasubramaniam, and Jacques (2001) found some evidence for supervisory support and a strong supervisory exchange relationship in mitigating negative effects of SH on attitudinal outcomes. Furthermore, a series of interesting studies raised the question of whether self-labeling is necessary for negative effects of SH to occur. Based on the stress and coping literature, it is reasonable to expect that labeling is a cognitive mediator between SH and negative outcomes of SH. However, two studies (Magley et al., 1999; Munson, Miner, & Hulin, 2001) demonstrated that regardless of labeling there were negative effects (e.g., on organizational commitment, group cohesion, emotions) from SH experiences (even mild SH) for both women and men.

Finally, one study addressed the question of *why* gender harassment has negative effects on target well-being (Parker & Griffin, 2002). In a cross-sectional study of police officers, there was support for a model predicting that the negative effects of gender harassment on female officers' psychological distress were mediated by overperformance demands (i.e., the belief that one needs to constantly prove oneself to gain acceptance in the work group).

Consequences for Observers

The emphasis given to organizational factors such as SH climate has expanded the focus of SH research beyond the harasser–target dyad to include other organizational members who have observed or are aware of the harassment. Research finds that individuals are often aware of SH directed at those within their workplace and that such awareness results in negative consequences for these observers or bystanders (e.g., Glomb et al., 1997; Hitlan, Schneider, & Walsh, 2006). For example, Hitlan et al. (2006) found that observing the harassment of coworkers (which they refer to as "bystander harassment") can make the experiences of direct SH more upsetting to targets. Glomb et al. (1997) found that members of a target's work group who were indirectly exposed to SH experienced negative psychological and job-related consequences similar to those

experienced by the target. Furthermore, these consequences were greater as ambient SH (i.e., the general level of SH in the work group) increased. They argued that this reflects covictimization (Jacobson, Koehler, & Jones-Brown, 1987) of group members resulting from the stress of indirect exposure to SH.

Consequences for Organizations

The Willness et al. (2007) meta-analysis mentioned earlier also examined the effects of SH on organization-related outcomes. They found negative relationships between SH and both work withdrawal ($r_c = .299$) and job withdrawal ($r_c = .161$), suggesting that targets of SH may respond with missed work and work distraction as well as intentions to leave the organization. Findings also indicated a significant negative correlation with workgroup productivity ($r_c = -.221$), suggesting that SH has disruptive effects on employees' abilities to work effectively.

A recent longitudinal study (Sims, Drasgow, & Fitzgerald, 2005) of 11,000 military servicewomen examined turnover behavior (leaving the military for reasons other than conclusion of term of duty, death, retirement, or transfer to an officer training program). Specifically, this research found direct effects of SH on turnover, not mediated effects as suggested by the Fitzgerald et al. (1997) model. They argued that the experience of SH can trigger an avoidance response (Magley, 2002) and a flight response (Mayes & Ganster, 1988), suggesting the possibility of a direct effect. This view of turnover, in which both mediated and direct effects are possible, is consistent with recent turnover models (T. W. Lee & Mitchell, 1994; T. W. Lee, Mitchell, Wise, & Fireman, 1996).

Several previously mentioned studies also demonstrated negative effects of SH on organizational outcomes. The study of CSH (Gettman & Gelfand, 2007) found that CSH was associated with lowered target organizational commitment, higher turnover intentions, and greater withdrawal from clients. In the Miner-Rubino and Cortina (2004) study of male and female federal circuit court employees, there was a significant interaction between observation of women-directed incivility and workgroup gender ratio on observer work withdrawal such that observed incivility had little effect on work withdrawal in female-skewed work units, but there was a positive relationship in male-skewed work units. This study demonstrated that an environment characterized by misogynistic behaviors has damaging effects for the organization, particularly when women already are underrepresented in the workplace.

In one of the few SH studies that has moved beyond the individual-level of analysis, Raver and Gelfand (2005) examined the effect of ambient SH on team-level process (conflict, cohesion, and OCB) and outcome (financial performance) variables. They found that overall ambient SH in the team was positively related to relationship conflict and task conflict. Furthermore, the impact of ambient SH on team processes and outcomes depended on the type or types of ambient SH experienced within the team. More specifically, ambient sexual hostility predicted team process and outcome variables, whereas ambient unwanted sexual attention predicted only team process variables, and ambient sexist hostility predicted neither.

Discussion

Summary

After reviewing this body of research, we are encouraged by the significant progress that has been made toward understanding the nature of workplace SH since the last major literature review. In this section, we highlight a few of the reasons for our optimism. First, there has been significant progress on the theoretical front. We now have useful models that address harasser decisions and motives, target responses, and observer sense making and behavior. These theories are being used to frame research inquiries and empirical research testing these models is beginning to appear. These are positive trends that bring focus to this broad and diverse literature.

Second, in recent years researchers have adopted a broader focus in their studies of SH. For example, there is consideration of a broader range of potential harassers (e.g., clients), a broader range of conduct (e.g., sexual assault), a broader range of harasser motives (e.g., identity threat), and a broader range of interested parties (with the focus on SH bystanders or observers). There is also an interesting trend toward situating SH within a broader realm of organizational misbehavior, including incivility and GWH. These trends are beneficial for two reasons. First, they extend our knowledge base about SH phenomenon. Second, they encourage us to recognize SH as an event situated in organizational life—that is, an event motivated by a range of factors in the organizational environment, an event witnessed by organizational members, and an event that occurs in conjunction with other organizational events. This contextualization of SH within the organizational environment can richen our research questions and results.

We suspect that this trend toward examining SH as "organizationally situated" resulted from the increased research attention given to organizational climates. We argued earlier that there has been a noticeable shift in the focus of SH research in the past decade toward an emphasis on organizational climate as a facilitator or inhibitor of SH. These years have brought well-tested models that identify climate-related antecedents and consequences and an often-used measure of the perceived organizational climate for SH. Although the vast majority of tests of these models examine climate at the individual level, some researchers are beginning to move to the team or group level to assess climate, a trend we hope will continue.

Finally, it is important to recognize that SH researchers are doing an effective job of cumulating research results. Meta-analyses have been used effectively to aggregate across studies examining similar research questions, such as gender effects in the labeling of SH and SH antecedents and consequences. This is important so that research can proceed effectively (i.e., so research on the same issues does not continue ad infinitum). However, it is important to note that meta-analyses do not correct for limitations in the data themselves, and one key issue in regard to data on SH phenomena is their cross-sectional nature. Most research, even that which proposes antecedents and consequences of SH, is not longitudinal. Although SH theory may provide some justification for posing certain variables as antecedents and others as consequences, the question of causality is largely unestablished (with a few notable exceptions such as Glomb et al., 1999). Because many reverse causality

predictions are quite reasonable (e.g., instead of job satisfaction and organizational commitment being consequences of SH perceptions, perhaps highly satisfied and committed employees are less likely to perceive conduct as SH), this is an important limitation.

Although we did not include a section in this review on measurement issues in SH research, it should be noted that many of the studies included in this review measure SH with one or more versions of the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ), initially developed by Fitzgerald et al. (1988). Although Fitzgerald and colleagues argued that the SEQ has strong psychometric properties (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1999), Gutek, Murphy, and Douma (2004: 457) argued that

> because of inconsistencies (e.g., in time frame, number of items, wording of items), the SEQ lacks the advantages of standardized measures, such as the ability to assess changes over time. It defines SH very broadly, having the effect of distorting findings about SH. Most importantly, it is not clear what or whose definition of sexual harassment the SEQ assesses.

The degree to which research on SH has been limited or facilitated by use of the SEQ, then, remains a topic of discussion among SH researchers. For now, we simply note that the empirical findings to date rest heavily on the SEQ.

Future Research

As research on any phenomenon progresses, there is a tendency for certain perspectives or approaches to prevail. That is, the questions asked in future research often are built on or shaped by previous research. In an effort to avoid this propensity in the SH literature, in this final section we look at SH through the lens of WPA. SH is one form of WPA or deviance (O'Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, & Griffin, 2000), but research on the two has proceeded in unique ways (Bowes-Sperry, Tata, & Luthar, 2003). The comparisons made here are developed as a way of identifying promising areas for future research on SH.

In some research on WPA there is a motive inherent to the definition and/or measurement of the aggression phenomenon. For example, early research examining *organization-motivated aggression* (O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin, & Glew, 1996) defined this as aggressive conduct that is motivated by some factor within the organization. Similarly, *organizational retaliatory behavior* was defined as conduct motivated by revenge against an organization that was perceived as wronging the employee (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluk, 1999). Although this approach can confound the definition of the construct (O'Leary-Kelly, Duffy, & Griffin, 2000), it does have the advantage of centering the phenomenon within the intentions of the actors. This may be beneficial in regard to SH because, as mentioned earlier, there historically is little research focused on sexual harassers. If we construct future studies of SH in a manner consistent with the WPA research, we might examine, for example, *identity-motivated SH* (in which SH is cued by a perceived identity threat) or *belonging-motivated SH* (in which SH is triggered by a desire to fit in within a work group). In the same way that WPA researchers asked questions such as "What organizational factors can prompt WPA?" or "What actions might an individual take to enact retaliation against the employer?" SH researchers might ask "What organizational

conditions make identity-motivated SH most likely?" and "In which types of work groups will belonging-motivated SH be most likely to emerge?" This shifts the questions we ask in ways that allow for a new focus and level of specificity.

Perceived organizational climate, operationalized through OTSH, is one of the most commonly examined antecedents to SH. However, thinking about this construct from a WPA perspective is enlightening. Essentially, OTSH suggests that SH will occur when there is an organizational climate that tolerates SH. Translated to the WPA phenomenon, this is akin to saying that WPA will occur when there is an organizational climate that tolerates WPA. This explanation is not very satisfying because the obvious subsequent question is, "Exactly what conditions compose a tolerant climate?" In the WPA literature, research has been exploring this question, and meaningful answers are emerging. For example, all of the following climate-related factors have been shown to be associated with WPA: working in a group with high levels of WPA, especially when workers are interdependent (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998), abusive supervision (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, & Duffy, 2008), a lack of charismatic leadership (Brown & Trevino, 2006), being a target of aggression (Glomb & Liao, 2003), and violence in the broader community (Dietz, Robinson, Folger, Baron, & Schulz, 2003), among others. These findings provide the answers that managers need when trying to determine *how* to change a problematic climate. In a similar way, SH research must move to this next level and try to uncover the specific aspects of a climate that create this perception of SH tolerance. Without this information, prescriptions for how to change climates to decrease the occurrence of SH are problematic.

If we consider SH through the lens of WPA, then emotions become more central to the questions we ask about SH. To date, emotions have been given very little attention in SH research, even in regard to target response models (e.g., Knapp et al., 1997). But it is very useful to ask questions such as the following: Is some SH motivated by a desire to purge frustration (Fox & Spector, 1999)? Which target emotions result from SH? Do different forms of SH (sexual coercion, gender harassment, sexist hostility) prompt different discrete emotions in targets? Which emotion management strategies do targets use? and Is emotion management around SH associated with lessened or heightened negative outcomes for targets?

WPA research suggests that WPA can be prompted by aversive treatment, modeling, incentive inducements, and physical environment factors (O'Leary-Kelly, Duffy, & Griffin, 2000). Few of these antecedents have received attention in the SH literature, but all seem relevant. For example, the modeling of one employee's SH behavior by other employees is likely to be a strong contributor to the creation of a HWE. Similarly, the noxious physical elements inherent to a work environment may contribute to the SH that occurs in physical, male-dominated work cultures (e.g., firefighting, oil rig work, welding, trucking).

Discussions of WPA often are framed, at least in conceptual research, in terms of recursive effects. For example, workplace incivility research suggests a negative spiral in which one person's uncivil actions prompt uncivil action by others (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Similarly, recent research suggests that supervisors who experience psychological contract violations are more likely to engage in abusive supervision against employees who then engage in more negative treatment of family members (Hoobler & Brass, 2006). The exploration of similar spiraling effects around SH would be intriguing. Some recent models of SH suggest this interplay between harasser and target, but empirical testing is needed.

WPA research also has examined factors associated with victimization (Aquino, 2000). This work demonstrates that behavioral characteristics of individuals, such as how they respond to conflict (e.g., aggressively or deferentially), may influence their likelihood of subsequent WPA victimization. Perhaps because of a fear of being regarded as "blaming of the victim," few researchers have examined the individual characteristics of SH targets (beyond demographics). It seems likely that certain types of individuals (those with certain characteristics, behavioral patterns, experiences, exposures) may be victimized more often. An understanding of these factors will be beneficial to explaining the occurrence of SH, helping organizations prevent and manage it, and training potential targets to avoid it.

Conclusion

In the preface to her 1979 book introducing SH as a legal construct, Catherine MacKinnon (1979: xii) stated, "To date there are no 'systematic' studies of sexual harassment in the social-scientific sense." Put in that context, there has been remarkable progress toward understanding SH as a workplace phenomenon in a relatively short amount of time. Our review demonstrates that the SH literature continues to mature, with the emergence of stronger theory, new meta-analytic reviews of key findings, an enhanced focus on organizational contexts, and stronger integration with other workplace conduct. As the next decade of SH research unfolds, we hope for similar research progress. More important, we hope that the next decade brings evidence that research efforts are having an impact on the ability of work organizations to eliminate this harmful work-related conduct.

Notes

1. Although it may be desirable to include research prior to 1995 given the differential focus of the Lengnick-Hall (1995) review, the volume of sexual harassment (SH) research also motivated our 1995 start date.

2. Lengnick-Hall (1995) used the term *subjective*, but we prefer the term *psychological* as used by Gutek, Murphy, and Douma (2004).

3. We want to distinguish between definitions and measures. We use the term *definition* to refer to a perspective. There may be multiple measures for each definition or perspective. For example, multiple versions of the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (e.g., Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995) have been used to measure SH from the behavioral perspective.

4. Berdahl (2007a) uses the term *sex-based harassment* (SBH) rather than *sexual harassment* because many of the behaviors examined by SH researchers are not actually sexual in nature (e.g., sexist hostility forms of gender harassment such as referring to women as bitches).

5. It should be noted that there is debate regarding this claim. See Gutek et al. (2004) for an extensive critique of the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (Fitzgerald et al., 1995), which is the most common measure used in the behavioral perspective.

6. The Blumenthal (1998) review examined 83 effect sizes involving 34,350 participants; the Rotundo review examined 66 effect sizes involving 33,164 participants (the second review included 89% of the studies included in the first, with the remainder being unavailable at the time of the second review; Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett, 2001).

7. No effect for harasser status relative to target was found by Rotundo et al. (2001).

8. These studies varied in terms of procedures (written scenarios, videotaped trials), samples (undergraduate students, working adults), and manipulated stimuli (harasser job level and target attractiveness).

9.   O'Connor, Gutek, Stockdale, Geer, and Melancon (2004) used the terms *outside observers* and *actors*, but we prefer the term *inside observers* to *actors* because participants are still making decisions about behavior they have observed.

10.   For a more detailed discussion of organizational tolerance for sexual harassment, see the Organizational Antecedents of SH section of this review.

11.   It should be noted that variables in this meta-analysis are identified as *antecedents* or *consequences* based on predictions made in SH theory, not based on causal analyses or longitudinal research designs. Although some studies included here were longitudinal (e.g., Glomb, Munson, Hulin, Bergman, & Drasgow, 1999), many were not.

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