Dear [Name],

I am writing to report an incident of sexual harassment that occurred at work. During our recent meeting, [Offender] made inappropriate comments and gestures towards me. Although I tried to laugh it off, I felt very uncomfortable and insulted.

I want to make sure that this behavior is not tolerated in our workplace. I believe that such incidents not only affect the victim but also create a toxic work environment for other employees.

I am attaching a witness statement from [Witness], who also witnessed the incident.

I urge you to take this matter seriously and ensure that such incidents are handled appropriately. I would appreciate it if you could provide me with an update on this matter.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

[Mindy Bergman]

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Organizational Influences on Sexual Harassment

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Building on broad theories of organizational climate and culture, this chapter examines the hypothesis that an organization’s climate for sexual harassment is a critical antecedent to sexually harassing behavior and may be a direct contributor to negative outcomes beyond the personal experiences of sexual harassment. Using a facet analysis approach, we describe scale development of the Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory (OTSHI), which measures the extent to which respondents perceive that sexually harassing behavior will be associated with negative consequences in their organization. Data from graduate students at a midwestern university (N = 263) and employees at a West Coast public utility (N = 1,156) provide evidence of the scale’s reliability and validity. Moreover, the OTSHI not only predicted occurrences of sexual harassment but was found to be a stronger predictor of negative work-related, psycho-

AUTHORS’ NOTE: The conceptual developments that led to the items and scales assessing organizational culture/climate are the product of weekly research group meetings that have been conducted during the past three years. The contributions of Jennifer Berdahl, Michele Gelfand, Vicki Magley, Diane Payne, Kim Schneider, Craig Waldo, and Mike Zickar are gratefully acknowledged. The contributions of the alphabetically hindmost of this group to data analysis are also noteworthy. In addition, Kathy Hanisch has contributed to the background thinking of the causal model, patterned ways individuals behave in organizations, and to the conviction that we must study sexual harassment in organizations as it occurs within a broader organizational framework.
logical, and physical outcomes than were direct experiences of sexual harassment. Implications for the role of sexual harassment climate on general well-being of employees and for creating harassment-free workplaces are discussed.

Sexual harassment in organizations has a long past but a short history. Documented in historical accounts since the advent of the Industrial Revolution led large numbers of women to work outside the home (Bularzik, 1978), it has only lately been recognized as an important social problem. Recently, as the impact of sexual harassment has become increasingly well documented (Dansky & Kilpatrick, in press; Fitzgerald, 1993; Fitzgerald & Ormerod, 1993; Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993; Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Koss, 1993; Koss, 1990; Pryor & McKinney, in press; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board [MSPB], 1981, 1988), organizations have been confronted with new issues of corporate ethical responsibility, legal liability, organizational productivity, and employee well-being. Organizational networks of roles, authority, and responsibility, as well as the high degree of control often exercised by harassers over targets’ jobs and careers, imply that harassment is an organizational problem of significant magnitude rather than simply one of individual deviance.

The organizational settings in which harassment occurs can be conceptualized very generally as comprising technical systems (which determine task characteristics and work flow) and social systems (which comprise individuals, work groups, and their interrelations). Such technical and social systems, and their complex interfaces, are considered by some to represent the core of an organization (Trist & Bamforth, 1951); we argue here that each is likely to influence the occurrence and impact of sexual harassment and that the scientific study of such behaviors requires that we develop theoretical frameworks that reflect these influences (Hulin & Roznowski, 1985; Perrow, 1965; Trist & Bamforth, 1951; Woodward, 1965, 1970).

Although both technical and social systems are relevant to such an undertaking, the effects of the former are relatively indirect, exerting their influence mainly via the social-technical interface; that is, technical systems determine to a large extent the particular tasks performed in an organization and influence the kinds of individuals hired to perform these tasks. Group characteristics of such sociotechnical systems, on the other hand, in particular the interaction of individuals and their work groups, more directly affect harassment and the systemic context in which social systems that are the focus of this chapter.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

In a recent paper (Fitzgerald, Hulin, & Drasgow, 1988), we developed a theoretical model of the antecedents and consequences of harassment in work organizations. Briefly, harassment is primarily a function of a masculine and a tolerant organizational climate. By masculinity we mean the degree to which a work group is led by men, and the job duties and tasks are thought to be stereotypically masculine in nature. By organizational climate, we mean the degree to which an organization (or its component parts) is perceived as insensitive to or tolerant of harassment. Although not denying the role of individual propensity to sexually harass (Pryor, 1987; Pryor & McKinney, 1988), we contend that organizational factors are the most important determinants of whether harassment will occur. With this model in mind, this chapter explores a number of causal factors that may moderate the relationship between harassment and the implications of the findings for prevention (Hulin & Roznowski, 1985). It should be noted that these factors include conscious decisions by management about harassment policies and procedures (Perrow, 1965).
than were direct experiences of sexual harassment. These experiences are often more common and less recognized as an important factor in creating harassment-free workplaces are discussed.

organizations has a long past but a short history. accounts since the advent of the Industrial Revolution, women have been recognized as an important group in society, as the impact of sexual harassment has been documented (Dancy & Kilpatrick, in press; Stoll & Ormerod, 1993; Fitzgerald & Shullman, & Ross, 1993; Ross, 1990; Pryor & McKinney, 1981, 1988), confronting new issues of corporate ethicality, organizational productivity, and employee networks of roles, authority, and responsibility. The degree of control often exercised by harassers, whether formal or informal, implies that harassment is an organizational phenomenon rather than simply an individual happening in which harassment occurs can be conveyed as comprising technical systems (which consist of work flow) and social systems (which consist of groups and their interrelations). Such technical and social systems are relevant to such an extent that the formation of technical frameworks that reflect these factors are considered core of an organization (Trist & Bamforth, 1970). The general idea that harassment is to some degree a function of organizational variables is not new in this burgeoning literature. The first major study of sexual harassment found a relationship between what we refer to as a masculine job gender context and higher levels of sexual harassment (U.S. MSPB, 1981) nearly 15 years ago; not only was this replicated some years later (U.S. MSPB, 1987), but a recent reanalysis of these data demonstrated relationships between organizational context (operationalized as ratings of the presence and effectiveness of sexual harassment policies and procedures) and incidence of harassing behavior (Hessen-McInnis & Fitzgerald, 1995). Similarly, Gutek (1985) has argued that a sexualized work environment (e.g., one where
Figure 7.1. An Integrated Process Model of the Antecedents and Consequences of Sexual Harassment in Organizations

sexual innuendo, comments, and interactions are rife) leads to greater frequency of harassment, and Bond (1988) reported that academic departments in which faculty-student dating was the norm were those where female graduate students were more likely to say they had been harassed.

The most explicit statement of the role of organizational variables has been made by Pryor (Pryor, Giedd, & Williams, 1995; Pryor et al., 1993; Pryor & Whalen, in press). Briefly, Pryor argues that sexual harassment occurs when a man who is predisposed to do so finds himself in a setting where such behavior is tolerated, modeled, or encouraged. Pryor’s first set of studies (1992; Pryor et al., 1993) examined data from a federal agency employing several thousand workers, geographically dispersed in offices across the country. Employees were surveyed about their own experiences of sexual harassment as well as their perceptions of management’s stance toward this issue. Women’s reports of various types of sexually harassing experiences were significantly correlated with their impressions of organizational tolerance of such harassment; those who thought that management had made good-faith attempts to stop harassment and provided good role models were less likely to have experienced sexual harassment on the job. The reverse was true for those who believed that management ignored the problem, discouraged reporting, and so forth.

More recently, Pryor and Stoller (1994) found that men high in likelihood to sexually harass tended to emulate the sexually harassing behaviors of a high-authority role model in an experimental situation, whereas Pryor et al. (1995) reported that sexual harassment lead of peers, particularly when social norms permit such behavior. Such behavior, when the social situation is not ripe for sexual harassment, is . . . . For sexual exploitation to occur, social norms must exist.

Summary. This brief review reveals a complex and confusing, but revealing, literature on the organization’s tolerance of the harassment of sexual minorities, is a critical antecedent of sexism. Swan, & Fisher, 1995; Hulin, 1993; Zickar and Zickar, independent contributor to negative outcomes, over and above the effects of harassment itself. Our argument within classic formulations of whether climate, with specific reference to the theoretical work of Pritchard, and Ilgen (1980).

We begin our development by asking how the specific aspects of climate related to sexual harassment and general behavior to be the settings where greater frequency of harassment. Individuals within such organizations are not likely to have personal experience harassment firsthand, but are likely to have recourse and fewer effective remedies when
and interactions are rife) leads to greater stress Model of the Antecedents and outcomes in Organizations

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of the role of organizational variables has been tended, modeled, or encouraged. Pryor et al. (1993) examined data from a federal thousand workers, geographically dispersed. Employees were surveyed about their own environment as well as their perceptions of man's issue. Women's reports of various types of harassment were significantly correlated with an organizational tolerance of such harassment; those who had made good-faith attempts to stop role models were less likely to have been on the job. The reverse was true for management ignored the problem, discouraged

Stoller (1994) found that men high in tended to emulate the sexually harassing role model in an experimental situation, whereas Pryor et al. (1995) reported that such men also followed the harassing lead of peers, particularly when group cohesion was high. Thus Pryor and Whalen (in press) assert,

Men who want to sexually exploit do so when the circumstances or local social norms permit such behavior. Such behavior seems unlikely to occur when the social situation is not ripe for sexual exploitation (Pryor et al., 1995). . . . For sexual exploitation to occur repeatedly, facilitative local norms must exist.

Summary. This brief review reveals a considerable literature arguing and demonstrating that organizational variables act as facilitators, inhibitors, or triggers for sexually harassing behavior. A variety of variables, both behavioral and attitudinal, have been studied and show promise for our understanding of harassment. One shortcoming of this research, however, is that it lacks any conceptual grounding in the more general literature on organizational behavior as well as any systematic method for assessing the critical variables. We address these lacunae below.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

We hypothesize that organizational climate, as reflected in an organization's tolerance of the harassment of some of its members by other members, is a critical antecedent of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald, Swan, & Fisher, 1995; Hulin, 1993; Zickar, 1994) and may be a direct and independent contributor to negative psychological and other outcomes, over and above the effects of harassment itself. We locate our argument within classic formulations of organizational culture and climate, with specific reference to the theoretical proposals of Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen (1980).

We begin our development by asking how organizational culture, and the specific aspects of climate related to sexual harassment, are translated into individual behavior. First, it is reasonable to propose that organizations that are more tolerant of sexual harassment are likely to be the settings where greater frequency of harassment occurs; thus individuals within such organizations are not only more likely to experience harassment firsthand, but are likely to have less institutional recourse and fewer effective remedies when they do. They may be less
likely to complain about their experiences and more likely to be retaliated against if they do so. In other words, a tolerant organizational climate should give rise not only to higher levels of harassment itself but also to worse outcomes for those who experience it. These manifestations are, however, only the most obvious consequences of an organizational climate tolerant of sexual harassment; we propose that the effects of climate reach beyond those experienced by victims themselves to affect female employees generally. Whether directly harassed or not, women employed in such organizations, who observe harassment occurring to their coworkers, must accommodate themselves as best they can to a working environment that is inhospitable to women. Waiting for the sexual harassment “shoe” to drop, watching their colleagues be harassed with few or no sanctions for harassers, and wondering when or if it will happen to them are only a few of the experiences that may be nearly as stressful as being a direct target. Schneider (1995) labels this phenomenon “bystander stress.”

What exactly is meant by the phrase organizational climate, and how can a tolerant climate be identified? When we venture onto such terrain, we move into territory that is relatively unexplored conceptually and poorly charted empirically. Schein (1990) noted that anthropology, sociology, political science, social psychology, and organizational behavior all claim some part of this concept and employ it in one or more paradigms. After implying that the concept of organizational culture was a mess, Schein (1990) supported this implication by defining it as a pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 111)

This definition does not differentiate organizational culture from the broader concepts of group norms, shared attitudes, or common beliefs. Schein goes on to argue that organizational climate is a surface manifestation of organizational culture and is the more salient concept, lending itself to direct observation and measurement. Within the framework of this terminology, our proposed construct would be conceptualized as a specific dimension of organizational climate, reflecting an organization’s tolerance for sexual harassment of and by its members, as reflected in employee perceptions of, or consequences of sexually harassing behaviors.

We build most explicitly on aspects of Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen’s discussions of contingencies of sexual harassment, behaviors, lending itself to open dimensions of climate that are likely antecedent patterns. Specifically, we define organizational climates, following Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen’s assumptions, among members of a relevant group, dimensions of contingencies between specific behaviors that are both private and public. Positive and negative.

This framework is also consistent with the discussions by Triandis (1972). He argues that culture: a distinctive subjective subculture viewing the human-made part of their environment, norms, attitudes, and roles—that is shaped by the group’s history. Triandis operation values that frame assumptions about what is true, which negative outcomes accompany and are made manifest and salient by specific sanctions. These sanctions provide guideline behavioral choices for organizational members.

In the current case, it can be argued that with few contingencies between harassing behaviors may regard harassment as a manifestation culture that permits dominance of certain other groups. Such dominance is not reflected supervisory or control relationships but reflects employees using putdowns, unwanted physical, verbal threats, and sexual coercion to female employees. The “rules” governing known to most organizational members, and highly scripted to follow these rules. Since
their experiences and more likely to be retaliated against. In other words, a tolerant organizational climate may only lead to higher levels of harassment itself for those who experience it. These manifestations are the obvious consequences of an organizational climate that is hostile to women. The phrase "shoe" to drop, watching their colleagues or no sanctions for harassers, and wondering if they are only a few of the experiences that can be described as a direct target. Schneider (1995) described this as the "stander stress."

The person or organizational climate, and how it is defined. When we venture onto such terrain, we realize the difficulties of the conceptualization. Schein (1990) noted that anthropology, social psychology, and organizational behavior all contribute to this concept and employ it in one or more ways. The concept of organizational culture supports this implication by defining it as a group's shared culture, norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors that are learned, shared, and transmitted through the socialization process.

Differentiate organizational culture from the norms, shared attitudes, or common beliefs. An organizational climate is a surface manifestation of culture and is the more salient concept, vation and measurement. Within the framework proposed, organizational climate is conceptualized as an aspect of organizational climate, reflecting an aspect of sexual harassment of and by its members, as reflected in employee perceptions of, or beliefs about, the consequences of sexual harassing behaviors.

We build most explicitly on aspects of Naylor et al.'s (1980) approach to organizational climate. Based on the judgment and decision-making literature, their conceptualization provides a critical link between employee perceptions of organizational characteristics and subsequent employee behaviors, lending itself to operationalization of specific dimensions of climate that are likely antecedents of relevant behavioral patterns. Specifically, we define organizational climate conceptually, following Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen's approach, as shared perceptions, among members of a relevant group, department, or organization, of contingencies between specific behaviors and their consequences, both private and public, positive and negative.

This framework is also consistent with the definition of culture as discussed by Triandis (1972). He argues that each cultural group possesses a distinctive subjective subculture—that is, a particular way of viewing the human-made part of their environment, including values, norms, attitudes, and roles—that is shaped by that group's ecological environment. The environment comprises, inter alia, available resources, past reinforcements for specific behaviors by group members, and the group's history. Triandis operationalizes group culture by its values that frame assumptions about what is important. The degree to which negative outcomes accompany and are contingent upon certain behaviors reflects the values of at least some influential organizational members. Organizational outcomes, positive or negative, that accrue to certain behaviors mirror the values placed on those behaviors, values that are manifest and salient by specific and definable patterns of sanctions. These sanctions provide guidelines that then influence some behavioral choices for organizational members.

In the current case, it can be argued that employees in organizations with few contingencies between harassing behaviors and negative sanctions may regard harassment as a manifestation of an organizational culture that permits dominance of certain groups of employees over other groups. Such dominance is not reflected only or mainly in formal supervisory or control relationships but may take the form of male employees using putdowns, unwanted physical contact, verbal harassment, verbal threats, and sexual coercion to establish dominance over female employees. The "rules" governing such behavior may be well known to most organizational members, and the behaviors may even be highly scripted to follow these rules. Similarly, a lack of formal or
informal contingencies between harassing behaviors and outcomes may be perceived as permission for those who may feel threatened by women entering previously all-male work groups to retaliate by behaving aggressively or threateningly toward the interlopers.

As we emphasize above, the realization that a lack of organizational sanctions for harassing behavior reflects the dominant values of the organization may lead directly to job stress and other negative outcomes whether or not the focal employee is herself a target of harassment. That is, wondering whether one will be the next target, or watching one’s coworkers treated as pariahs or “whistle-blowers” while their harassers go unpunished, may be nearly as stressful as being the actual target of a harassing episode.

Although the psychological processes involved in the translation of such perceptions of organizational climate into employee response patterns have yet to be fully explicated, it seems reasonable to argue that they are learned by organizational members via observation, modeling, and other standard acquisition processes; reflect organizational reality to some degree; and are, as well, cognitive representations of likely consequences of specific behaviors. Empirical support for this position is summarized in Pryor and Whalen (in press). Contingencies thus serve as guides to individuals in organizations—or particular work groups—for behavioral choices as they negotiate the thickets of conflicting pressures, norms, and beliefs about permitted and sanctioned organizational behaviors.

Objective contingencies between behaviors and outcomes are communicated formally to organizational members in a variety of ways as well as indirectly (but effectively) through repeated examples. Informal communications within groups and departments provide additional information about contingencies that may or may not reflect “objective” organizational realities. Myths, stories, legends, and other forms of oral history (Green, 1972) represent important sources by which contingencies may become part of an organization’s culture and climate. Communications about such contingencies take place during the organizational indoctrinations and “boot camps” that represent rites of passage from outsider to organizational member (Van Maanen, 1988).

Summary: In this section of the chapter, we have attempted to anchor the literature on organizational influences on sexual harassment within the more general literature on organizational climate and culture. We argue that employee perceptions of the contingencies between sexually harassing behaviors and outcomes (for example, facilitating or inhibiting such behavior as well as reporting and outcomes). We label this organizational tolerance for sexual harassment as a specific dimension of the broader organizational climate. The remainder of our chapter describes the preliminary validation of an inventory to measure Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment.

DEVELOPMENT OF CLIMATE SCALE

We begin by assuming that sexual harassment is likely to exist to some degree in all organizations and can range from (common) misogynistic views of women or in their presence, through job-related unwanted sexual attention, the solicitation of favors in return for favorable job outcomes, to the outright physical and sexual assault. Empirical evidence for sexual harassment of working women typically shows that 50% (Fitzgerald, 1993; Gutke, 1985; Kotter, 1981, 1988) with estimates in some organizations up to higher (e.g., Martin with, 1990; Schneider, 1988) to as high as 70% in large organizations, occurring more frequently than others. It is a major premise of our climate is a primary explanatory variable influencing rates. These acts of harassment, their interrelationships, and the environmental factors that influence them are grist for the mills of the other sections of the climate of organizations or of the work setting. They are based on cognitive representation of situations.

Development of Item Pool

Our assessment of climate focuses on the organizational repercussions—to both a target and a perpetrator—of a complaint of sexual harassment. It includes a multi-facet analysis of harassing incidents that
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harassing behaviors and outcomes (for both target and perpetrator)
facilitate or inhibit such behavior as well as other related behaviors
(e.g., reporting) and outcomes. We label these perceived contingencies
organizational tolerance for sexual harassment, which we conceptual-
ize as a specific dimension of the broader concept of organizational
climate. The remainder of our chapter describes the development and
preliminary validation of an inventory to assess this construct: the
Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory (OTSHI).

DEVELOPMENT OF CLIMATE MEASURE

We begin by assuming that sexual harassment of female employees
is likely to exist to some degree in all organizations. Such harassment
can range from (common) misogynistic comments made directly to
women or in their presence, through jokes more cruel than funny,
unwanted sexual attention, the solicitation of sexual cooperation in
return for favorable job outcomes, to the relatively rare instances of
 outright physical and sexual assault. Empirical estimates of incidents of
sexual harassment of working women typically average approximately
50% (Fitzgerald, 1993; Gutek, 1985; Koss et al., 1994; U.S. MSPB,
1981, 1988) with estimates in some organizations running considerably
higher (e.g., Martindale, 1990; Schneider & Swan, 1994). Given this
base rate, it is likely that some degree of sexual harassment exists in all
large organizations, occurring more frequently in some organizations
than others. It is a major premise of our theory that organizational
climate is a primary explanatory variable in such differential prevalence
rates. These acts of harassment, their interpretations by harassers and
recipients alike, the sanctions meted out for harassers, the reaction to
those who complain about harassment, and related social-organizational
phenomena are grist for the mills of the observers. Overall perceptions
of the climate of organizations or of the work groups embedded in them
are based on cognitive representation of such events.

Development of Item Pool

Our assessment of climate focuses on the likely outcomes—that is,
organizational repercussions—to both a target and a perpetrator follow-
ing a complaint of sexual harassment. Items were written based on a
facet analysis of harassing incidents that suggested two major facets:
organizational role of the harasser and type of harassing behavior. With respect to the harasser role, we focused on supervisors and colleagues/coworkers; we excluded subordinates as harassers because of the low frequency with which such incidents are reported in the literature. Given practical considerations of instrument length, we also excluded harassment by clients, customers, and other, less included, organizational members—reasoning that organizations that tolerate sexual harassment on the part of supervisors or coworkers would also tolerate it on the part of less included organizational members. We note, however, that this is an empirical question that deserves further examination especially in service organizations in which interactions with clients or customers may represent the majority of employee’s work-related interactions. Examples such as flight attendant, waitress, and nurse come readily to mind.

The second facet focused on the type of harassment experienced by a target; for this aspect of our design, we employed the model developed in the Illinois studies of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995; Gelfand, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1995). This model, which enjoys strong empirical support, identifies three general categories of behavior as necessary and sufficient to account for all specific manifestations of harassment: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion.

Gender harassment is characterized by insulting, misogynistic, and degrading remarks and behavior. Although not designed to elicit sexual cooperation, such behavior is typically highly sexualized (via the use of derogatory sexual terminology, insulting names for women’s body parts, and so on) in a way that conveys hostility and degrading attitudes about women. Unwanted sexual attention consists of unwelcome sexual behavior that is unwanted and unreciprocated by the recipient but that is not tied to any job-related reward or punishment. Sexual coercion refers to implicit or explicit threats or promises of job-related outcomes conditioned on sexual cooperation. Sexual coercion is thus the behavioral equivalent of the legal concept of quid pro quo, whereas unwanted sexual attention and gender harassment constitute the two aspects of a hostile work environment.

Our facet analysis generated a six-cell design, crossing two harasser roles (supervisor, coworker) with three types of harassing behavior (gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion). Sexual harassment vignettes were written for each of these six cells, depicting either a supervisor or a coworker engaging in one of the three types of harassment behaviors. In each case, the behavior was a female employee; this design generality because women are overwhelmingly the targets of sexual harassment (Berdahl, Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Gutek, 1985; U.S. Merit). In each item, respondents were asked to imagine a woman in their department was experiencing behavior. We focused on the outcomes of complaint rather than those directly contingent because organizational managers and supervisors are responsible for the former, thus making it a more logical comparison.

Specifically, we asked respondents to rate complained about different kinds of harassment, what would be the likely response of managers and coworkers (that might deflect complaining) and more specific response (complaint of harassment seriously). The perceptions of what might happen to the harasser, in the Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen (1980) perspective, several steps removed from the context of the harassment, the perceptions of some negative outcomes for the harasser that were possible, while empirical member.

This crossed design has disadvantages for formal analysis. But to ensure that no harassment episode will be ignored in our analysis, specific behaviors is limited, however, and there are correspondingly greater chances of example, by inadvertently describing more supervisors than by coworkers). In the case possibility is unlikely. Not only did we take a closely, but we also possess some empirical was successful. Specifically, in the origin, included two scenarios for each type of harasser but found no reliable response distributed to the specific episodes. Rather, vari-
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A six-cell design, crossing two harasser ith three types of harassing behavior sexual attention, sexual coercion). Sex-
written for each of these cells, depict-
orker engaging in one of the three types
of harassment behaviors. In each case, the target of the harassing behavior was a female employee; this design results in minimal loss of generality because women are overwhelmingly more likely than men to be the targets of sexual harassment (Berdahl, Magley, & Waldo, 1994; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Gutek, 1985; U.S. MSPB, 1981, 1988). Following each item, respondents were asked to indicate the probable outcomes if a woman in their department were to complain about such behavior. We focused on the outcomes of complaints about the harassment rather than those directly contingent upon the harassment itself because organizational managers and supervisors have more control over the former, thus making it a more logical indicator of organizational climate.

Specifically, we asked respondents to rate the risk to a woman who complained about different kinds of harassment by different organizational members, what would be the likelihood that she would be taken seriously, and what would be the likely consequences for the supervisor or coworker who had engaged in the harassment behavior. The first two of these response scales sample perceptions of general responses by managers and coworkers (that might define organizational risk for complaining) and more specific responses by managers (taking the complaint of harassment seriously). The final scale, assessing perceptions of what might happen to the harasser, is the most problematic from the Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen (1980) perspective; it defines an outcome several steps removed from the complaint and is the result of a lengthy and tangled administrative process. Nonetheless, perceptions of the likelihood of some negative outcomes for the harasser should be part of the perceptions by organizational members of relevant contingencies.

This crossed design has disadvantages as well as advantages. The formal facet analysis helps ensure that no relevant aspects of a sexual harassment episode will be ignored in our assessments. The sampling of specific behaviors is limited, however, and with few items sampled, there are correspondingly greater chances of biasing the results (for example, by inadvertently describing more extreme harassment by supervisors than by coworkers). In the current case, we believe this possibility is unlikely. Not only did we take care to balance the scenarios closely, but we also possess some empirical evidence that this attempt was successful. Specifically, in the original version of the scale, we included two scenarios for each type of harassment and job level of the harasser but found no reliable response differences that could be attributed to the specific episodes. Rather, variance in responses was due to
systematic differences in types of harassment (gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion), job level of the harasser (supervisor, coworker), and gender of the respondent; trivially small amounts of variance were contributed by the specific examples of harassing behaviors depicted in the scenarios. Further examination of the individual items composing the replication factor revealed few differences in correlations that could be attributed to specific items. Thus we are confident that our scenarios tap general categories rather than representing idiosyncratic examples.

Table 7.1 contains six of the scenarios and the three response scales that were used with each. The six scenarios and their replications provided 12 item stems with three responses per stem; these 36 item responses permitted us to partition the variance of the responses into the proportion due to work role of the harasser (a random effect), the proportion due to type of harassment (a fixed effect), the proportion due to response scales (nested within scenarios), as well as interactions.

Pilot Research

This original 36-item version was included in two of three forms of a questionnaire distributed to graduate students in four departments at a large midwestern state university. An initial phone call soliciting cooperation and a chance to win a lottery prize (one $50 prize given for every 50 respondents who returned the questionnaire) generated approximately a 40% response rate for women and 46% response rate for men. Two female graduate students were sampled for every male student. The final sample of 520 contained approximately 67% women and 33% men, of which 263 respondents received one of the forms of the questionnaire containing the organizational climate items; only these respondents are included in the analyses reported here.

Internal consistency. Internal consistency estimates (coefficient α's) of the response scales created by summing the three types of contingency perceptions (risk, taken seriously, likelihood of sanctions) across the 12 scenarios were .90, .91, and .94. Coefficient α for the overall climate score, created by summing across all 36 responses, was .96.

Although the individual scales demonstrated very high internal consistency, there was little discriminant validity among them, as each scale was correlated between .92 and .95 with the sum of all responses. The sums of the items assessing perceived risk, chances of being taken

| Table 7.1. Scenarios and Response Scale Assessment of Tolerance for Sexual Harassment |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Work Role of Harasser | Gender Harassment | Unwanted Sexual Attention |
| Supervisor | A supervisor in your department makes reference to "incompetent women trying to do jobs they were never intended to do and taking jobs away from better qualified workers." He makes all women in the department feel incompetent and unwanted. | A supervisor in the department tells his female subordinate that she is "a very good chance she would be taken seriously." Options scored as (5) to (1) seriously. Options ranged from Nothing . . . (5) to There would be no discipline (1). |
| Coworker | One of the employees in your department makes frequent remarks about incompetent women doing jobs they are incapable of doing and refers to them as "affirmative action" hires and "bitches with attitudes" in their presence. | An employee in the department tells you to pressure the guy in the department to go out with him. They have made clear that they are interested. |

Note: Response scales ranged, with reliability coefficients for all six of these scenarios .90, .91, and .94. Coefficient α for the overall climate score, created by summing across all 36 responses, was .96. Although the individual scales demonstrated very high internal consistency, there was little discriminant validity among them, as each scale was correlated between .92 and .95 with the sum of all responses. The sums of the items assessing perceived risk, chances of being taken
Table 7.1. Scenarios and Response Scale Assessing Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Role of Harasser</th>
<th>Gender Harassment</th>
<th>Unwanted Sexual Attention</th>
<th>Quid Pro Quo or Sexual Coercion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>A supervisor in your department makes reference to &quot;incompetent women trying to do jobs they were never intended to do and taking jobs away from better qualified workers.&quot; He makes all women in the department feel incompetent and unwanted.</td>
<td>A supervisor in your department talks a great deal about his sex life and tries to get his female subordinates to tell him about their personal lives also.</td>
<td>A supervisor in your department has said several times that the way for women to get good job assignments is to be &quot;more friendly and nice&quot; to him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworker</td>
<td>One of the employees in your department makes frequent remarks about incompetent women doing jobs they are incapable of doing and refers to them as &quot;affirmative action&quot; hires and &quot;bitches with attitudes&quot; in their presence.</td>
<td>An employee in your department continues to pressure the women in the department to go out with him after they have made it clear that they are not interested.</td>
<td>An employee in your department has implied that he can make life on the job very difficult for a female employee by withholding information and interfering with her work unless she has sex with him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Response scales repeated for all six of these scenarios were as follows: Perceptions of risk if a woman in the department made a formal complaint. Options ranged from "It would be extremely risky"... scored as (5) to "It would not be any risk"... scored as (1). Likelihood of complaint raising being taken seriously. Options ranged from "There is almost no chance she would be taken seriously" (5) to "There is a very good chance she would be taken seriously" (1). What would be done if a woman made a formal complaint? Options ranged from "Nothing..." (5) to "There would be very serious consequences for him: he would be disciplined" (1).

seriously, and chances that action would be taken against the harasser were intercorrelated between .56 and .81 in the combined sample. Perceptions that an organization tolerates one kind of sexual harassment—say, gender harassment—are thus accompanied by perceptions that it tolerates other kinds of sexual harassment as well. Some of the correlations discussed below involving relations between perceptions of victims being taken seriously and chances that some action will be
taken against the harasser, however, suggest some advantages for analyzing the three response scales separately.

**Substantive findings.** An examination of the 36 by 36 correlation matrix derived from the responses reveals several trends. First, as noted above, the three response scales were substantially correlated within-scenario; consistently, however, the highest correlations were between perceived likelihood that the complainant would be taken seriously and the perception that some action would be taken against the harasser. This trend was observed within all 12 scenarios. One interpretation of these consistent correlations is that they reflect some degree of perceived causality. That is, the perception that organizations must take a complaint seriously before anything can be done about it may be responsible for the correlations. Alternatively, the consistently high correlations may be based on respondents' perceptions of past chains of events. That risk of reporting was less highly correlated with the other two scales suggests retaliation against targets for reporting may be somewhat independent of whether the complaint is taken seriously or the perpetrator is punished. Given that retaliation can (and often does) come from coworkers as well as management, this finding is intuitively reasonable. Such post hoc explanations for the relationships among the three scales need further testing, however.

In general, analyses partitioning the variance of the responses suggested a moderate degree of construct validity. Across scales, gender of the respondent accounted for approximately 5% of the response variance ($\omega^2 = .05, \eta^2 = .04$; as $\omega^2$ and $\eta^2$ yielded nearly identical results in all cases, $\eta^2$ values will be reported). Job level of the harasser accounted for approximately 28% of the variance, type of harassment accounted for approximately 5%, and the harasser job level by type of harassment interaction accounted for 9% of the variance.

The mean differences responsible for the variance accounted for by these variables contained few surprises. Female graduate students perceived the university as more tolerant of sexual harassment than did the male students, and both groups perceived the university as more tolerant when a harasser is a supervisor rather than a co-worker. In addition, students of both sexes perceived their university as most tolerant of gender harassment and least tolerant of sexual coercion. An interaction, accounting for 9% of the response variance, involved differences between perceptions of male and female students of tolerance for different types of harassment by supervisors and coworkers. Students perceived the university as equally sensitive to harassment by supervisors than of unwanted contact by harassers perceived the university as equally sensitive to harassment, regardless of harassers' job levels.

As described above, we examined the data for specific incidents (i.e., scenarios) within each cell, leaving one scenario describing each supervisor and one by a co-worker. This range from 36 to 18; such a reduction appears justified by the total score ($= .96$), the lack of impact on the replication factor, and the practical scale.

**Results From a Public Utility Organization**

The final version of the OTSHI (six scales each) were subsequently administered to 1,188 individuals employed by a West Coast electric utility company in 1984. With other scales assessing job attitudes, job satisfaction, job stress, and behavioral responses to organizational influence, the final version of the OTSHI was designed to assess a work environment survey that was part of a series of organizational surveys conducted by the authors. The survey was administered during a five-day period; questionnaires went to all employees' work sites to groups ranging from 697 to 459 employees at each group, depending on size and diversity of the workplace. The 18-item total scale was .96 for the male sample, .96 for the female sample, and .96 overall. Consistent three subscales were correlated between .4 and .7 within the male and female samples, as well as .4 and .7 overall. Consistent with our previous findings,
types of harassment by supervisors and coworkers. Whereas the male students perceived the university as being less tolerant of gender harassment by supervisors than of unwanted sexual attention, female students perceived the university as equally (and more) tolerant of harassment, regardless of harassers’ job levels or type of harassment.

As described above, we examined the data to determine whether the specific incidents (i.e., scenarios) within each type of harassment accounted for unique variance in responses; given that no differences were found, the scales were shortened by eliminating one of the scenarios in each cell, leaving one scenario describing each type of harassment by a supervisor and one by a coworker. This reduced the number of items from 36 to 18; such a reduction appears justified by the overall reliability of the total score (=.96), the lack of important differences attributable to the replication factor, and the practical value of shortening the scale.

**Results From a Public Utility Organization**

The final version of the OTSHI (six scenarios with three response scales each) were subsequently administered to a 50% sample (N = 1,188) of individuals employed by a West Coast public utility, along with other scales assessing job attitudes, job stress, incidents of sexual harassment and hazing, organizational withdrawal, and other attitudinal and behavioral responses to organizational and job characteristics. The study, conducted as part of the organization’s efforts to develop a harassment-free workplace, was described to employees as a workplace environment survey that was part of a series of such studies conducted by the authors as independent researchers, not consultants retained by the organization. An eight-person team administered the questionnaires during a five-day period; questionnaires were administered at the employees’ work sites to groups ranging from 1 to 78, under conditions of guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.

These procedures resulted in a total of 1,156 usable questionnaires, 697 from male employees and 459 from female employees. The reliability of the 18-item total scale was .96 for the female sample, .95 for the male sample, and .96 overall. Consistent with our pilot results, the three subscales were correlated between approximately .60 and .80 within the male and female samples, as well as in the combined sample. Also consistent with our previous findings, items assessing perceptions
that the complainant would be taken seriously and perceptions of harasser sanctions were more highly correlated with each other than with perceptions of victim risk for complaining. The intercorrelations of the three subscales, and their coefficient α, means, and standard deviations, appear in Table 7.2.

Table 7.3 presents the mean perceived tolerance scores across gender of respondent, job level of harasser, and type of harassment. These results generally parallel the results of the pilot study. Female employees perceived the organization as more tolerant of sexual harassment than did male employees (η² = 6.5%, the comparable estimate from the pilot study being 5%). Overall, the employees reported that their organization was more tolerant of sexual harassment by supervisors than by employees (η² = 15%; the comparable estimate from the pilot study was 28%). Type of harassment accounted for 6.5% of the variance in responses to the two studies. However, the comparable estimate from the pilot study was 5% for the university sample. A harasser level by type of harassment interaction accounted for 10% of the variance, compared with 9% in the pilot study.

With respect to coworker harassment, the organization was seen as being most tolerant of gender harassment, less tolerant of unwanted sexual attention, and least tolerant of sexual coercion (quid pro quo harassment). For harassment by supervisors, gender harassment was perceived as the least likely to be tolerated, but there were no differences between unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion.

These results should be considered with some caution because harassment is represented by only one item in each type of harassment for each type of harassment by job level. The results are shown graphically in Figure 7.2.

Despite differences in some scales, the main results are their similarity across the two studies of the responses and the homogeneity estimates for the intercorrelations of response scales within and across the two organizations. These results suggest that the properties and internal structure of the items are stable and consistent across organizations, types of supervisors (professor versus formal), and work environments. Substantive results are presented below that indicate the reliability and usefulness of the scale.

Substantive results. In this public utility, small but statistically reliable differences in organizational tolerance between employees assigned to administrative offices and those assigned to field locations. Employees in administrative offices viewed the organization as engaging in more sexual harassment than their counterparts in the field. Organizational efforts to eliminate sexual harassment have been concentrated on field sites (which were
Table 7.3. Means and Standard Deviations for Perceptions of Tolerance for Each Type of Harassment by Job Level of Harasser and Sex of Respondent—Public Utility Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Unwanted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>Sexual Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.6)</td>
<td>(2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.2)</td>
<td>(2.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: For male employees, N = 645; for female employees, N = 418.

These results should be considered with some caution, given that type of harassment is represented by only one item in these analyses. The results are shown graphically in Figure 7.2.

Despite differences in some scales, the most striking feature of the results is their similarity across the two studies. The internal structure of the responses and the homogeneity estimates are remarkably similar; the intercorrelations of response scales within the six scenarios, as well as those obtained by collapsing across the scenarios, are also similar across the two organizations. These results suggest that the psychometric properties and internal structure of the items and scales are reasonable and consistent across organizations, types of respondents, and even types of supervisors (professor versus formal supervisors). A number of substantive results are presented below that are relevant to the validity and usefulness of the scale.

Substantive results. In this public utility organization, we found small but statistically reliable differences in perceptions of organizational tolerance between employees assigned to office locations and those assigned to field locations. Employees of both sexes who work in administrative offices viewed the organization as more tolerant of sexual harassment than their counterparts in the field (p < .10). Because organizational efforts to eliminate sexual harassment had up to that time been concentrated on field sites (which were perceived by management
than did their counterparts who were supervised by male employees. In addition, women who reported that they were supervised by male employees in their job category viewed the organization as more tolerant of sexual harassment than did other women. Differences account for very small amounts of variance; however, they are consistent and suggest that women in nontraditional jobs are more likely to occur (i.e., those with a male supervisor who are in nontraditional jobs) view the organization as more tolerant to such behavior.

The correlations between individual employment of sexual harassment and their perceptions of such harassment were .45 for reports of gender harassment, .40 for reports of unwanted sexual attention, and .36 for reports of sexual coercion. When corrected for unreliability, these correlations are all .51, .43, and .30; all three of these correlations are statistically significant (p < .01). The relative sizes of the relative base rate differences, base rate differences in the item of harassment, or both. The correction for unreliability, for the effects of base rates in the response to the scales. The total scale scores of reported harassment and sexual coercion episodes are badly skewed by gender harassment. Such skewed distribution biasing effects on the correlation.

Finally, there is an intriguing finding in the data. Several outcome measures were included to assess the impact of sexual harassment on the organization; these included measures of psychological well-being, anxiety and depression, physical health, alcohol use, job satisfaction, and other related re- sponse. The total scale scores of reported harassment and sexual coercion episodes obtained from the Sexual Experience Questionnaire were significantly correlated with the measures of organizational tolerance scored at the time of data collection. These findings were unexpected; although women in nontraditional jobs might affect women negatively, both harassment and sexual harassment would be by far the more powerful. A second finding had to do with the sex of supervisor; female employees with a male supervisor viewed the organization as more tolerant of harassment. Students are working in a hostile and threatening work environment, it may be triggered by a perception that the orgi
than did their counterparts who were supervised by a male
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employees in their job category viewed the organization as more tolerant of sexual harassment than did other women who are consistent and suggest that women in nontraditional jobs view the organization as more likely to occur (i.e., those with a female supervisor). The correlations between individual perceptions of sexual harassment and their perceptions of the presence of such harassment were .45 for reports of gender harassment and .47 for reports of unwanted sexual attention and coercion. When corrected for unreliability, the correlations were .51, .43, and .30; all three of these correlations were significantly different from zero ($p < .01$). The relative sizes of the reliability differences, base rate differences in the item means, and the item means themselves are all independent of each other. The correction for unreliability holds constant the effect of base rates in the response scales. The total scale scores of reported harassment and sexual coercion episodes are highly skewed. Such skewed distribution can bias the results of the correlation.

Figure 7.2. Tolerance for Sexual Harassment by Type of Harassment, Gender of Respondent, and Job Level of Harasser for Public Utility Organization

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as having more problems), it is reasonable to suppose that the results may reflect these efforts, suggesting that the OTSHI may be sensitive to training and prevention efforts by management.

A second finding had to do with the sex of supervisor; female employees with a male supervisor viewed the organization as more tolerant

These findings were unexpected; although we anticipate that climate might affect women negatively, we view this as an indication that harassment would be by far the more powerful predictor of how women perceive the organization. The findings strongly reflect apprehension and fear on the part of women. These findings suggest that women are working in a hostile and threatening work environment. The readings may be triggered by a perception that the organization is more likely to tolerate such behavior.

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Finally, there is an intriguing finding in the data. Several outcome measures were included to assess the impact of sexual harassment on employee health and psychological well-being, anxiety and depression, physical health, withdrawal, job stress, and other related factors. Female employees, assessments of psychosocial health, and health satisfaction than did reports obtained from the Sexual Experience

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than did their counterparts who were supervised by women ($p < .05$). In addition, women who reported that they were one of the first female employees in their job category viewed the organization as being more tolerant of sexual harassment than did other female employees. These differences account for very small amounts of variance (1%); however, they are consistent and suggest that women in positions where harassment is more likely to occur (i.e., those with a male supervisor and those who are in nontraditional jobs) view the organization as more willing to tolerate such behavior.

The correlations between individual employees’ reports of incidents of sexual harassment and their perceptions of organizational tolerance of such harassment were .45 for reports of gender harassment, .38 for reported incidents of unwanted sexual attention, and .19 for reports of sexual coercion. When corrected for unreliability, the correlations are .51, .43, and .30; all three of these correlations are reliably different than zero ($p < .01$). The relative sizes of the relationships may reflect true differences, base rate differences in the items assessing different kinds of harassment, or both. The correction for unreliability adjusts, only in part, for the effects of base rates in the responses to the items composing the scales. The total scale scores of reported unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion episodes are badly skewed relative to the scores for gender harassment. Such skewed distributions will introduce downward biasing effects on the correlation.

Finally, there is an intriguing finding in the data from this organization. Several outcome measures were included in the questionnaire to assess the impact of sexual harassment on the employees who experienced it; these included assessments of psychological well-being, symptoms of anxiety and depression, physical health, job withdrawal, work stress, and other related responses. In the sample of female employees, assessments of psychological climate (i.e., perceptions of organizational tolerance scored at the individual level) consistently accounted for more variance in job withdrawal, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, anxiety and depression, physical health conditions, and health satisfaction than did reports of sexual harassment episodes obtained from the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ). These findings were unexpected; although we had thought that a tolerant climate might affect women negatively, we had assumed that sexual harassment would be by far the more powerful variable. Our results may reflect apprehension and fear on the part of women who perceived they are working in a hostile and threatening work environment, feelings that may be triggered by a perception that the organization tolerates harass-
ment and the inference of managerial values consistent with this kind of climate, *without the necessity of being personally harassed.* Women in such organizations have to live with these perceptions every day, and the findings may reflect this chronic effect. They may also reflect reactions to beliefs that female employees who complain about harassment are treated as "whistle-blowers" whereas little is done to their harassers.

We were initially surprised by these findings and considered them somewhat counterintuitive, expecting as we did that harassment itself would result in considerably more negative effects. Recent evidence, however, suggests that they are not anomalous; Culbertson, Rodgers, and Rosenfeld (1994) recently reported conceptually similar results in a study of Navy personnel, using different instruments to assess both harassment and climate. And Hirschman (1995) has recently proposed a legal theory that argues that harassment of one or a few women chills the work environment for all female employees, whether they are themselves personally harassed or not. This is an important area for further research.

**Conceptual Issues and Questions**

There are several issues that we have not addressed in this chapter due to space limitations and, in some cases, a lack of data. One of these is the appropriate referent for measures of climate. We have reported here results based on what is more properly termed *psychological climate* rather than organizational or work group climate (Naylor et al., 1980). The referent for our results is thus the individual, rather than aggregations of individuals representing work groups or entire organizations. This is simply because we would have had an N of 2 if we had aggregated our measure to the level of organization to create climate assessments and because administrative and ethical concerns prevented us from creating intact work groups from the measure we had available to us from the public utility. Our original intent was to aggregate scores to the level of the work group, with each individual receiving a climate score based on the aggregated scores of coworkers, sans his or her own personal score. Thus scores would reflect an employee’s immediate working environment and colleagues’ perceptions of tolerance for sexual harassment. Among the many advantages of this procedure is that relationships between climate and outcomes are not contaminated by response bias; this use of the measures should be pursued. Zickar (1994) has reported some preliminary results based on a single measure of psychological climate and as a measure of climate. Both are promising.

A second conceptual problem is raised by the differences between the climate perceptions of men and women. Such a difference is, of course, understood to reflect differences in existing attitudes, experiences; however, if we pursue this finding further we have two work group climates rather than the responses of a female employee, which might reflect a single measure derived from her entire work group, the female members of which have their own score? Not necessarily; both need to be pursued empirically, clarifying the relationships between these measures to suggest differential relevance of the two measures of climate.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL PR**

A recent Second Circuit Court of Appeals decision (Karabin v. Columbia University, 1979) with direct implications for the theory and climate that we describe in this chapter. That which currently applies only in the Second Circuit after the discovery of patterns of sexual harassment at the university to prevent claims of substantial damages, harassment. Nor are plaintiffs who were targets of sexual harassment required to demonstrate actual economic injury to justify such claims. The prevention of harassment programs would appear to be the best way to reduce their liability exposure.

Our data suggest a link between reports of sexual harassment and perceptions of an organization's tolerance for sexual harassment. Among the many advantages of this procedure is that relationships between climate and outcomes are not contaminated by response bias; this use of the measures should be pursued. Zickar (1994) has reported some preliminary results based on a single measure of psychological climate and as a measure of climate. Both are promising.

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has reported some preliminary results based on the OTSHI scores as a measure of psychological climate and as a measure of work group climate. Both are promising.

A second conceptual problem is raised by our finding of significant differences between the climate perceptions of male and female employees. Such a difference is, of course, understandable and very likely reflects differences in existing attitudes, expectations, beliefs, and experiences; however, if we pursue this finding to its logical conclusion, we have two work group climates rather than one. If we want to predict the responses of a female employee, which is conceptually better: a measure derived from her entire work group, or one derived from only the female members (sans her own score)? Neither solution is conceptually neat; both need to be pursued empirically. Empirically stronger relations between one measure of climate rather than the other would suggest differential relevance of the two measures and also provide some clarification of the appropriate bases for aggregated climate measures.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE

A recent Second Circuit Court of Appeals decision, which was denied certiorari (i.e., appellate review) by the Supreme Court of the United States (Karihan v. Columbia University, 94), raises several issues with direct implications for the theory and scales of organizational climate that we describe in this chapter. The essence of the decision, which currently applies only in the Second Circuit, is that actions taken after the discovery of patterns of sexual harassment may not be sufficient to prevent claims of substantial damages by the targets of such harassment. Nor are plaintiffs who were targets of quid pro quo harassment required to demonstrate actual economic losses. Given these judicial admonitions, the prevention of harassment by aggressive intervention programs would appear to be the best defense organizations have to reduce their liability exposure.

Our data suggest a link between reports of sexual harassment on the job and perceptions of an organization’s tolerance for the sexual harassment of its employees. The content of the OTSHI reflects the perceived risk for targets of sexual harassment who report harassing incidents, the chances that they will be taken seriously by management, and the likelihood that something will be done to the harasser. Each of these
contingencies can be influenced and, at least partially, controlled by organizational managers and supervisors. Establishing and communicating contingencies between sexual harassing behaviors and negative outcomes for harassers, establishing procedures that minimize the risk of reporting sexual harassment (i.e., retaliation), and establishing procedures that ensure complainants, or grievances, will be taken seriously can do a great deal to improve the climate for sexual harassment in an organization. Our data also suggest a spread of affect such that perceptions of a tolerant organizational climate lead to negative outcomes for female employees—negative outcomes that do not appear to require sexually harassing incidents to trigger their occurrence. If organizations now must prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment to reduce their liability exposure (Karibian v. Columbia University, 1994), the scales described in this chapter may offer an assessment and diagnostic approach with much promise as early warning signals as well as being useful for designing programs aimed at preventing sexual harassment.

NOTE

1. Strictly speaking, of course, organizations as such are neither tolerant nor intolerant; more accurately, organizations have (or do not have) policies and procedures that are enforced (or not) by managers and supervisors. Policies may be strong or weak; managers and supervisors may be tolerant or intolerant of sexual harassment. It is these factors that are perceived and responded to by individuals that generate the climate of the organization.

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8

Sexual Harassment Types and Severity: Linking Research and Policy

JAMES E. GRUBER
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Do women of different occupations or nationalities experience similar levels of sexual harassment? And is the impact or severity of sexual harassment similar across groups? The research reviewed here includes a review of the conceptualization and measurement of sexual harassment, and the literature on the context of analyses of the experiences of American women. The results of the analyses provide a basis for further research on sexual harassment as well as for current issues that need to be addressed in the future. Types and severity for policy and legal standard “reasonable person” perspective are discussed.