

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PERCEPTIONS IN COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE
#METOO MOVEMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

The #metoo movement has spurred women and men to come forward with their stories and claims of sexual harassment. Limited research has examined how young adults perceive sexual harassment at work. This study seeks to gain a better understanding of how young adults' perceptions of sexual harassment are influenced by their work centrality beliefs, their parents' work centrality beliefs, and the amount of parental support they receive. The results found that young adults with low work centrality beliefs are more likely to perceive behaviors as gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. Young adults' perceptions of their parents' work centrality and parental support were not found to be unique predictors of perceiving behaviors as sexually harassing.

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CHAPTER I: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Many individuals experience sexual harassment for the first time as a high school student at their first part time job and do not realize they were harassed until later in life. For instance, CNN published an article in 2018 describing a woman who experienced sexual harassment at her first job, but she did not recognize it until she was older (Carpenter, 2018). Her manager asked her about her dating life, sex life, and eventually pinned her behind the counter with his crotch on her hand. She never told her parents about her experiences at work and was not confident of the reporting policy at the time (Carpenter, 2018).

From this one article, individuals have begun to recall previous experiences as sexually harassing. The #metoo movement has spurred women and men to come forward with their stories and claims of sexual harassment. According to The New York Times, since Harry Weinstein was accused of sexual harassment in 2017, over 71 high-profile men have received allegations of sexual harassment (Almukhtar, Gold, & Buchanan, 2018). This number is even more alarming given that only 5 months had passed between when the article was written and when the allegations against Weinstein came to light. These allegations are just the beginning of more women and men coming forward with their stories and creating a reporting culture within organizations. One of the issues that may have led to the rise of the #metoo movement is the issue of changing perceptions regarding what is and what is not considered sexually harassing behavior. What may have been considered *normal* behavior in the 1980s may not be considered normal behavior now. For instance, Judge Brett Kavanaugh was nominated for a position on the Supreme

court, and faced sexual assault allegations for behavior that occurred in the 1980s (Kelly & Rossman, 2018).

In addition to adults, young adults have experienced sexual harassment in a variety of settings. These may include school, work, or even on the street. Around 51% of women and 53% of men had experienced some form of unwanted sexually charged interaction in public places, like cat-calling, by the age of 17 (Kearl, 2014). There is growing concern for protecting teens within the workplace from sexual harassment as well. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has developed a website that includes resources to assist youths at work who may have experienced sexual harassment at work as well as information regarding the proper steps to take when filing a claim (EEOC, 2018b).

Given these issues, the purpose of the present research is to examine whether people, specifically young adults, perceive potentially sexually harassing behavior as harassment or not. In addition, I examine the importance of work to one's identity (i.e., work centrality), the perceived importance of work to one's parents' identity (i.e., parental work centrality), and social support as potential factors that may influence whether a behavior is viewed as sexually harassing or not. In the following sections, I review the literature on mistreatment at work, focusing on sexual harassment. I then turn to perceptions of sexual harassment, sexual harassment among young workers, followed by individual and parental work centrality attitudes and ending with social support.

Mistreatment at work

Workplace mistreatment has been defined as an interpersonal situation in which at least one person initiates counter-normative negative actions or stops normative positive

actions toward another member at the same workplace (Cortina & Magley, 2003). There are many types of workplace mistreatment, but the three most common forms of mistreatment are incivility, aggression, and bullying (Yang et al., 2014). Workplace incivility is considered a low intensity mistreatment, which is the intent to harm the target and violates norms for mutual respect in the workplace (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Workplace aggression has been defined as overt physical or nonphysical behavior that harms employees (Neuman & Baron, 2005). Bullying is defined as a situation whereby targets are exposed to abusive and offensive acts repeatedly over time, and have difficulty defending themselves (Einarsen, 2000; Rayner, 1997). As mentioned, workplace incivility is considered low intensity, physical aggression is high intensity, and bullying is considered moderate intensity. Incivility has an ambiguous intent to harm, and nonphysical, physical, and bullying all have a clear intent to harm (Yang et al., 2014; Tepper & Henle, 2011).

In 2017, the Workplace Bullying Institute published survey results showing 19% of Americans had suffered abusive conduct at work, 19% had witnessed it, and 63% were aware bullying happens at work. Of the 19% of Americans who have experienced abusive conduct at work, 9% were currently being bullied and 10% had been bullied at some point in their work life but not within the last year (Namie, Christensen, & Phillips, 2017). Specifically, 60.3 million U.S. workers have reported being affected by bullying or witnessing bullying experiences (Namie, Christensen, & Phillips, 2017). These results establish that rates of bullying are high and the likelihood of an individual experiencing bullying at least one time while at work can be anticipated. Given the prevalence of

mistreatment at work, parents could be, indeed *should* be, teaching young adults how to appropriately identify and respond to negative experiences at work.

According to Stern, Stone, Hopkins, & McMillion (1990), young adults learn work-related attitudes and appropriate work behaviors from employment experiences. If these experiences are primarily negative, our youth may have jaded views of the workplace and, depending on personal values, may be more accepting of negative experiences at work (Stern, Stone, Hopkins, & McMillion, 1990). The acceptance of these negative work experiences may also be attributed to sexual scripts. According to script theory, sexual scripts are learned scripts (i.e., information about how routine events occur) that are formed from interactions with others, are associated with one's gender, and assist individuals in recognizing potentially sexual situations (Gagnon & Simon, 1973). Given that sexual scripts are formed during adolescence and young adulthood (Wiederman, 2015) when people may be experiencing their first job, it is vital to understand how potentially sexually harassing behaviors may be viewed, perhaps differently, by young adults. After all, the overall quality of the youth's employment experience may impact their feelings about work in general (Stern et al., 1990). In this study, sexual harassment will be considered a negative experience and a form of mistreatment at work. Additionally, perceptions of sexual harassment is the key variable of interest. In the following section, I discuss how the literature has defined and operationalized sexual harassment.

Defining sexual harassment

Throughout the years, the definition of sexual harassment has evolved to have different meanings between legal and psychological contexts. To begin, sexual

harassment has traditionally been thought of as sexual behaviors and sex-based discrimination towards women or men at work (Berdahl, 2007). The EEOC defines sexual harassment as:

unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature that explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating hostile or offensive work environment (EEOC, 2018a).

Further, Black's Law Dictionary (2018) vaguely defines sexual harassment as "unwelcome and unwanted advances made to a person by one or more employees and the comments are of personal nature and often are sexual in style and manner." Sexual harassment includes two types of harassment: quid pro quo and hostile work environment (EEOC, 2018c). Quid pro quo harassment occurs when "the submission or rejection of an unwelcome sexual conduct is used for the basis of employment decisions" (EEOC, 2018c). A hostile work environment involves "unwelcome sexual conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual's job or working environment" (EEOC, 2018c). For example, the U.S. Supreme Court, in the *Harris vs Forklift Systems, Inc.* case in 1993, defined sexual harassment as a hostile work environment "[w]hen the workplace is permeated with 'discriminatory intimidation, ridicule, and insult' ... that is 'sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the victim's employment and create an abusive working environment,' and must pass the subjective and objective test" (*Harris v Forklift Systems, Inc.*, 1993, p. 21).

From a psychological context, others have defined sexual harassment as any unwanted, unwelcome, repetitive, gender-related behaviors, such as sexual coercion, offensive sexual attention, and hostile verbal and physical behaviors that focus on gender (Fitzgerald et al., 2001; Gutek, Murphy, & Doumna, 2004). More recently, the definition has evolved to view sexual harassment as behaviors that derogate, demean, or humiliate an individual based on the individual's sex (Berdahl, 2007). Katherine Franke (1997) suggested sexual harassment be thought of as the enforcement of gender norms for men and women (i.e., enforcement of sexual scripts); it regulates a specific view of how women and men *should be* and punishes those who deviate from their gender role (Street, Gradus, Stafford, & Kelly, 2007). Additionally, Berdahl, Magley & Waldo (1996) defined sexual harassment as a behavior motivated by the gender of the victim, is unwelcome, repetitive, and can lead to negative organizational or psychological outcomes.

Some psychological definitions have considered sexual harassment to be a stressor in an individual's life. Fitzgerald, Swan, & Fischer (1995) and Fitzgerald, Swan, & Magley (1997) concluded the behaviors must be stressful and threatening to the victim's well-being for the behavior to be considered sexual harassment. In this definition, sexual harassment has been conceptualized as psychologically harassing because the target perceives it as a threat to his or her well-being (Fitzgerald, Swan, & Magley, 1997).

From the array of sexual harassment definitions listed above, it is clear the definition of sexual harassment has evolved over time. The current definition includes conduct of sexually oriented verbal, physical, and gender based discrimination (e.g.,

demeaning women or treating them more harshly). Therefore, I have chosen to define sexual harassment as any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is motivated by the gender of the victim, and includes gender based discrimination. These behaviors are unwelcome and repetitive to the victim, and can lead to negative job performance or work environment.

Perceptions of sexual harassment

Given the rise of the #metoo movement and the nature of arguments that have been offered by both accusers and alleged assailants, it is not surprising that men and women perceive sexual harassment behaviors differently. Specifically, Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett (2001) found that women are more likely than men to define a broader range of behaviors as harassing. The way behaviors are perceived depends on the type of sexual behavior displayed *and* the situation. Specifically, the difference between women and men was larger for less extreme and more ambiguous behaviors (e.g. derogatory attitudes, dating pressure) than for sexual propositions and sexual coercion (Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett, 2001). Additionally, the differences in the physical sexual contact category were extreme, which supports previous findings that women are more likely than men to perceive sexual touching as harassment (Gutek, 1985; Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett, 2001). When the category was physical nonsexual contact, the behaviors were less extreme, and a smaller gender difference was found (Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett, 2001).

Along with gender differences, the perception of sexual harassment is also influenced by several different variables, such as the individual's country (Wayne, Riordan, & Thomas, 2001), occupational status (Icenogle, Eagle, Ahmad, & Hanks,

2002), personal definition of sexual harassment (O'Connor et al., 2004), and even sexual harassment awareness training (Wilkerson, 1999). For example, Icenogle, Eagle, Ahmad, and Hanks (2002) found women in white-collar jobs were more likely to label behaviors as sexually harassing than women in blue-collar jobs. Women are also more likely to perceive and report sexual harassment as threatening (Estrich, 1987). This difference may be attributed to the different standards of sexuality men and women are held to (Estrich, 1987) and may originate in the sexual scripts/schemas that people develop (Gagnon & Simons, 1973). In conjunction with traditional standards, men possess more sexual power and organizational power than women and lack a clear cultural reference point to compare sexual harassment behaviors to (Ragin & Sundstrom, 1989; Uggen & Blackstone, 2004; MacKinnon, 1979).

From this research, it is clear that the way sexually harassing behaviors are perceived varies between men and women and these perceptions are further influenced by a variety of external factors. Currently, the literature fails to examine external factors regarding how perceptions are influenced by an individual's work centrality, an individual's perceptions of one's parents' work centrality, or perceived social support.

Sexual harassment in young adults

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018), there were approximately 20.9 million 16 – 24 year olds employed in the U.S. in July 2018. Of all those in this age group, 54.8% of females and 55.2% of males were employed. The leisure and hospitality industry had the largest percentage of employed youth at 26%, followed by 18% in the retail industry, and 11% in education and health services. From

these statistics, it is clear many young adults are employed throughout their high school and college careers.

Along with the increasing employment rate, young adults are also at risk for experiencing sexual harassment at work. Strauss & Espeland (1992) found that 30% of female high school vocational students had been sexually harassed at work. More recently, the EEOC (2016) report on workplace harassment noted that teen workers are particularly vulnerable. Specifically, the industry of the workplace and the age of young adults may increase their likelihood of experiencing sexual harassment at work. The leisure and hospitality industry was found to be the most common place for young adults to work (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Bullying and sexual behaviors, like flirting, are more likely to occur in the leisure and hospitality industry than in other work environments (Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006; Williams, 2004; Folgero & Fjeldstad 1995; Giuffre & Williams 1994; Hall, 1993; LaPointe, 1992).

Research also demonstrates that young adults may be at risk for experiencing sexual harassment at work because of their age (Fineran, 2002). In a study conducted by Fineran (2002), 712 high school students aged 14 to 19 years old were surveyed to assess their sexual harassment experiences at work. Fineran (2002) found 35% of employed high school youth experienced sexual harassment on the job. Of the students who were harassed at work, 19% were harassed from supervisors, and 61% were harassed from their peers (Fineran, 2002). In a similar study, Fineran & Gruber (2009) also found 56% of perpetrators were coworkers, while supervisors accounted for approximately 22% of the rest of harassment. Disturbingly, 46% of perpetrators were described as older than 30 years old (Fineran & Gruber, 2009).

The negative consequences of experiencing sexual harassment at work also carry over into the individual's school life. Students who experienced sexual harassment at work did not find school to be as exciting or engaging as others and tend to avoid school, day dream in class, and earn lower grades (Fineran & Gruber, 2009). Along with school withdrawal, young victims of sexual harassment at work may experience lower satisfaction with their job. Fineran & Gruber (2009) that found high school girls who experienced sexual harassment had more work stress and lower satisfaction with their coworkers and supervisors. These findings demonstrate young adults who experience sexual harassment at work may lead to negative consequences in their lives.

Work centrality attitudes

Parental employment experiences and work values have an impact on a young adult's work attitudes and values. By the age of about 7 or 8, children are able to understand work and can accurately report on their parent's job satisfaction (Berti & Bombi, 1988; Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992). This understanding of their parents' employment and economic circumstances impacts the child's attitudes of work and employment (Dickinson & Elmer, 1992). For example, Barling (1990) found fathers work values influence their son's work attitudes (Loughlin & Barling, 1998). Family values also influence the formation of adolescents' educational and occupational aspirations and expectations (Loughlin & Barling 1998). Parents' occupational aspirations for their children define the acceptable range of occupations for these young individuals (Parsons, Adler, & Kaczala, 1982). Similarly, family socio-economic status (SES) affects the development of adolescents' occupational aspirations and expectations,

with higher SES youth expecting to reach higher education and occupation (Gottfredson, 1981).

For the present study, work centrality attitudes will be categorized into individual attitudes and the attitudes parents hold about their employment experiences. Further, work centrality is an individual's beliefs regarding the degree of importance that work plays in their lives (Paullay, Alliger, & Stone-Romero, 1994). This definition comes from the protestant work ethic theory, which argues that people have a strong identification with work and consider work a central part of their lives (Weber, 1905; Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000). Work centrality was found to be associated with a person's value system and self-identity in non-work considerations, such as roles outside of work, are related to the level of centrality of work in one's life (Kanungo, 1982a; Stephens & Feldman, 1997). Both a protestant work ethic and work involvement may be considered part of the work centrality. Work ethic is defined as one's view that dedication to work is positive and necessary to succeed in society (Buchholz, 1976). Essentially, those who do not work are not useful members of society (Buchholz, 1976). Similarly, Kanungo (1982a) defined work involvement as the degree one relates to work and the importance of work in one's life.

While no research has yet explicitly examined the relationship between work centrality and perceptions of sexual harassment, evidence from the social identity theory research suggests there may be a link. Specifically, social identity theory argues that one's self-concept is created from the status of the group one belongs to (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Brewer, 1979; Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Individuals tend to create a positive self-image by enhancing their status within the group, but if their

status is threatened, they may find ways to defend their status (Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, & Grasselli, 2003).

Experiencing a potential sexual harassment incident in the workplace may serve as a threat to one's social identity *at work* which, may then, in turn, influence how the individual perceives the event (as either harassment or not). Indeed, Maass et al. (2003) showed that men tend to harass women when they feel threatened, but the degree of the harassing behavior will vary depending on the perceived threat. Because parental work experiences and attitudes have been shown to influence the development of young adult's perceptions of work and social identity is related to perceptions of sexual harassment, I am proposing the following research questions:

1. Are young adults with strong work centrality beliefs less likely to perceive gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention as sexual harassment?
2. Will young adult's perception of their parent's work centrality beliefs influence their perception of gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention as sexual harassment?

Parental support

Previous research, has shown parents' work values and experiences influence their children's work values and even choice of occupation. The amount of social support parents display to their children greatly influences their lives. Parents and peers are considered the most important sources of support in adolescents' lives (Harter, 2003). For example, mothers and fathers play different roles as sources of social support for adolescent girls. Girls tend to be more disclosing with mothers than fathers (Smetana, Metzger, Gettman, & Campione-Barr, 2006). The social support provided by parents can

be important in adolescents' coping responses to stressful events (Fryenberg & Lewis, 1993). Specifically, sexual harassment would be a stressful event and if young adults are not provided the proper social support by their parents, this could lead to negative outcomes. For example, a young adult experienced being sexually harassed at work and may call their parents to ask how to handle the situation. Their parents can support their child by encouraging them to file a report or can dismiss the claim and encourage the young adult to keep working.

Perceived social support is the cognitive appraisal of being reliably connected to others (Barrera, 1986). Cognitive models of stress and coping processes emphasize the appraisal of threatening situations and the resources that can be used for coping efforts (Folkman, Schaefer, & Lazarus, 1979; Lazarus & Launier, 1978). Measures of social support are designed to capture individual's confidence that support would be available if it was needed or determine if an environment was helpful or cohesive (Barrera, 1986). As previously mentioned, the amount social support provided by parents may have an impact on how young adults perceive a negative work experience, so I am proposing the following research question:

3. Are young adults with strong parental support more likely to perceive gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention as sexual harassment?

Figure 1 represents my proposed research model.

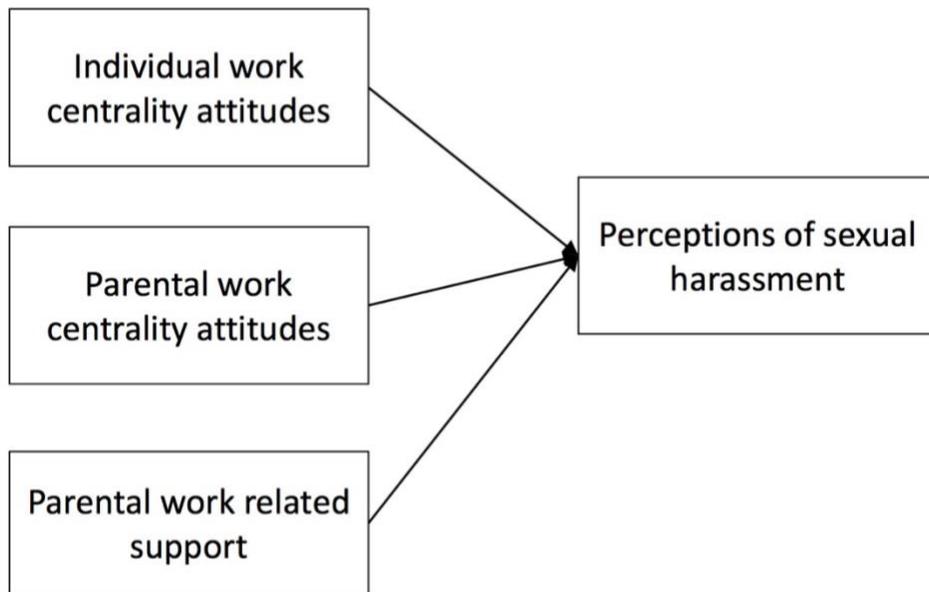


Figure 1. The model represents the proposed research questions.

CHAPTER II: METHOD

Participants

A total of 295 undergraduate students were recruited from general psychology courses at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). Of the 295 participants, 46 were removed for not completing the survey, which created a useable sample of 249 participants. Participants who completed the online survey were awarded course credit through SONA systems or extra credit through in-class participation. Of the 249 participants, 162 were female and 87 were male. Descriptive statistics showed the majority of participants were white (55%) and 92% of participants were in the 18-23 age range. Approximately 64% of participants stated they were part time employees, 27% were not currently employed, and 9% were full time employees.

Procedure

Participants were directed to review and accept the informed consent to participate in the online survey. The individuals were asked to complete a series of questions to assess their own work centrality beliefs, their parents' work centrality beliefs, and parental support. Next, participants were instructed to rate the degree to which they believed a behavior was sexually harassing. A follow-up question was asked to determine whether the participant had personally experienced that behavior at work. Another follow-up question asked the participant how frequently they had experienced the previous behavior. Then participants were prompted to rate the degree to which they believed a behavior was bullying. The same follow-up questions were asked as mentioned above. Demographic information was collected at the end of the survey. Once

the survey was complete, participants were debriefed with additional resources and thanked for their time.

Measures

Work centrality beliefs. Work centrality is an individual's belief regarding the degree of importance that work plays in their lives (Paullay et al., 1994). Hirschfeld & Field (2000) adapted a 12-item work centrality scale using Paullay et al. (1994) and Kanungo's work involvement questionnaire Kanungo's (1982b) items. This scale has a coefficient alpha of .76. Items were rated using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). Sample items include, "Work should be considered central to life" and "I would probably keep working even if I didn't need the money." The scale was further adapted to fit my sample by changing two items to be future career oriented. For example, an item was changed from "my work" to "my career will be considered central to life."

Parental work centrality beliefs. To assess young adult's perception of their parents' work centrality beliefs, the 12-item scale was further adapted to include the phrase "My parents" in the items. For example, "My parents considered work to only be a small part of one's life," was an adapted item. Items were still rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). The scale was found to have a reliability of .80, which indicates adequate reliability.

Parental support. Parental support is defined as young adult's perception of being reliably connected to their parents and if put in a threatening situation they would have resources available to cope (Barrera, 1986; Folkman, Schaefer, & Lazarus, 1979; Lazarus & Launier, 1978). To assess the level of parental support that the participant

feels, the Family Support Inventory for Workers (FSIW) scale was adapted. The FSIW was developed to measure perceived family social support provided to workers (King, Mattimore, King, & Adams, 1995). There is a total of 44 items with two dimensions: emotional sustenance (29 items) and instrumental assistance (15 items). For this survey, the scale was shortened to only include the emotional sustenance items and the word parent replaced family member within each item. The scale was further shortened to 23 items because irrelevant items were removed. A 5-point Likert scale was used as the response format, ranging from (1 = *strongly agree*, 5 = *strongly disagree*). Items include “When I succeed at work, my parents show that they are proud of me” and “My parents do not seem very interested in hearing about my work day.” The coefficient alpha for emotional sustenance is .93, which indicates adequate reliability.

Perceptions of sexual harassment. Participants also completed the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire – Department of Defense (SEQ - DoD) (Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999). The purpose of the SEQ is to assess how often an individual has experienced a form of sexual harassment. The items are broken down into three different dimensions: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion (Fitzgerald et al., 1999). Gender harassment consists of two categories, sexist hostility and sexual hostility. *Sexist* hostility is considered discriminatory experiences based on one’s sex (Fitzgerald et al., 1999). *Sexual* hostility is defined as experiences that are more explicitly sexual in nature (Fitzgerald et al., 1999). Both of sexist and sexual hostility are in the gender harassment category because the harassment includes demeaning gender-based attitudes or beliefs (Fitzgerald et al., 1999). In a review by Gutek et al. (2004) it is noted the SEQ lacks one standard version and is often modified to fit the need of the

researcher. After thoroughly reviewing the literature, it is clear that the SEQ is still being used as the primary way to measure sexual harassment (e.g., Murdoch, Pryor, Griffin, Ripley, Gackstetter, & Polusny, 2011).

For this study, of the original 26 items, only 17 items were used. Items were removed from the survey based on the severity of the behavior. The scale was further adapted by assessing the degree to which the participant thought a behavior was sexually harassing, instead of rating the frequency of the behavior. Participants were asked to select the degree to which they believed the behavior was sexual harassment. Items were rated using a 5-point Likert scale, (1 = *definitely yes*, to 5 = *definitely not*). Participants were directed to respond with yes or no, if they had experienced the previous behavior at work. Then participants were asked to rate the frequency of the item on a 3-point Likert scale, (1 = *never*, 2 = *once*, 3 = *more than once*). Sample items include, “Repeatedly told sexual stories or jokes that were offensive to you?” and “Put you down or was condescending to you because of your gender?”.

The reliability of the SEQ has been questionable and has varied from high to low depending on the scale (Gutek et al., 2004). The items on the scale range from extreme to discrete sexually harassing behaviors, so one would not expect reliability. The variation may be occurring because the scale is not unidimensional therefore we will be assessing the reliability of the scale ourselves through the three dimensions Fitzgerald and colleagues (1999) used: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion.

Workplace bullying. For exploratory purposes, participants were asked to rate person-related bullying items. These 13-questions were adapted from the Negative Acts

Questionnaire – Revised (NAQ-R) (Einarsen, Hoel, Notelaers, 2009). This measure has a Cronbach’s alpha of .88, which is adequate reliability. Participants were asked to select the degree to which they believed the behavior was bullying at work, using a 5-point Likert rating scale (1 = *definitely yes*, to 5 = *definitely not*). Sample items include, “Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work” and “Having allegations made against you.”

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

Prior to testing the research questions, the reliabilities of the individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support scales were examined. Before running the reliabilities of the individual and parental work centrality scales, items one, six, nine, and ten were reversed scored. The individual work centrality scale had a reliability of $\alpha = .78$. This was found to be consistent with previous research findings (Hirschfeld & Field, 2000), so no items were removed. The parental work centrality scale reliability was found to be $\alpha = .73$. To improve the reliability, items 13, 14, and 15 were removed from the scale. These items were not part of the original scale and when removed the reliability improved to $\alpha = .80$. For the parental support scale, items two, four, seven, nine, 11, 12, and 18 were reversed scored before the reliability was calculated. The parental support scale was found to have a reliability of $\alpha = .93$, which indicates adequate reliability. Additionally, reliabilities for the SEQ and its four-sub-dimensions along with descriptive statistics can found in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and reliabilities for variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Individual Work Centrality (IWC)	3.38	0.66	.78
Parental Work Centrality (PWC)	3.26	0.72	.80
Parental Support (PS)	3.39	0.38	.93
Sexual Experience Questionnaire (SEQ)	3.61	1.31	.97
Gender Harassment Sexual Hostility (GHSL)	3.66	1.28	.91
Gender Harassment Sexist Hostility (GHST)	3.38	1.36	.93
Unwanted Sexual Attention (US)	3.67	1.46	.94
Sexual Coercion (SC)	3.71	1.68	.96

Next, an overall score was computed for the SEQ along with composite scores for each sub-dimension. This method of calculating the SEQ score was recommended by Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo (1999). Each item was averaged together to create an overall SEQ composite score. Then the composite scores for each sub-dimension were also calculated. The four sub-dimensions are: a) gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility, b) gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility, c) unwanted sexual attention, and d) sexual coercion (Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999).

Next, correlations between each of the variables were examined (See Table 2). Additionally, because sex appears to be related with several of the sexual harassment variables, descriptive statistics for each sex on all the study variables are displayed in

Table 3. The first obvious finding displayed in Table 3 is the relationship between sex and the overall SEQ. There were significant mean differences between males and females. Significant differences were found for parental support, gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility and sexist hostility, and unwanted sexual attention. This finding demonstrates that females are perceiving these behaviors as significantly more sexually harassing than males, and females are perceiving more parental support compared to males.

Table 2

Pearson correlations for perceptions of sexual harassment

	IWC	PWC	PS	SEQ	GHSL	GHST	US	SC
IWC	-							
PWC	.56*	-						
PS	.16*	.09	-					
SEQ	-.23*	-.13*	.07	-				
GHSL	-.20*	-.13*	.10	.96*	-			
GHST	-.21*	-.10	.16*	.91*	.84*	-		
US	-.22*	-.13*	.01	.97*	.89*	.82*	-	
SC	-.22*	-.11	-.02	.92*	.81*	.78*	.93*	-

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality, PS = Parental support, SEQ = Sexual experiences questionnaire, GHSL = Gender harassment sexual hostility, GHST = Gender harassment sexist hostility, US = unwanted sexual attention, SC = Sexual coercion.

* $p < .05$

Table 3
Descriptive statistics for perceptions of sexual harassment based on sex

	Male		Female		T-test	Cohens <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
IWC	3.39	0.65	3.37	0.67	0.31	0.03
PWC	3.30	0.69	3.24	0.74	0.64	0.08
PS	3.28	0.35	3.44	0.39	-3.13*	0.43
SEQ	3.23	1.37	3.81	1.24	-3.38*	0.44
GHSL	3.18	1.30	3.91	1.20	-4.48*	0.58
GHST	3.10	1.42	3.55	1.30	-2.62*	0.33
US	3.30	1.51	3.87	1.40	-2.99*	0.39
SC	3.53	1.75	3.80	1.64	-1.23	0.16

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality, PS = Parental support, SEQ = Sexual experiences questionnaire, GHSL = Gender harassment sexual hostility, GHST = Gender harassment sexist hostility, US = unwanted sexual attention, SC = Sexual coercion.

Male $n = 87$, Female $n = 162$

* $p < .05$

This is highlighted by some of the comments participants provided to the question, “Other sex(gender)-related behavior not listed above?”. For instance, females provided 62 unique responses, but males only provided 22 unique responses. Men and women did report several of the same behaviors. Both men and women mentioned experiencing unwanted touching, being treated differently at work based on gender, and being objectified in front of coworkers. However, the nature of the comments appeared to differ. For example, a female reported being complimented on her body when they were younger than the individual making the comment as harassment. Women also reported being cat-called, enduring someone intentionally standing in their way, and experiencing someone repeatedly making suggestive comments about women’s clothing. In general,

women left more detailed comments about other gender-related behaviors experienced, but were not listed in the SEQ.

The correlations in Table 2 show that an individual's work centrality beliefs and parental work centrality beliefs are negatively related to whether a behavior is perceived as sexually harassing or not. This suggests that individuals with low work centrality and parental work centrality beliefs are *more* likely to perceive behaviors as sexual harassment compared to those who have strong work centrality and parental work centrality beliefs. Additionally, we can see individual work centrality beliefs are negatively related to all sub-dimensions within the SEQ, and parental work centrality is negatively related to only gender harassment sexual hostility and unwanted sexual attention. Parental support was found to be positively related to perceptions of gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility. Individuals with low work centrality beliefs are more likely to perceive behaviors as gender harassment, as unwanted sexual attention, and as sexual coercion. These findings provide an initial answer for research question one. Specifically, young adults with strong work centrality beliefs are less likely to perceive sexual harassment including all sub-dimensions.

Individual's with low parental work centrality beliefs are more likely to perceive gender harassment sexual hostility and unwanted sexual attention as sexual harassment. While the correlations are low, this finding provides an initial answer for research question two. Young adult's perceptions of their parent's work centrality beliefs influence their perception of gender harassment sexual hostility and unwanted sexual attention.

Lastly, individuals with high levels of parental support are more likely to perceive gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility. This finding partially answers research question three. Young adults with strong parental support are more likely to perceive gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility as sexual harassment. Gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion were not perceived as sexual harassment in young adults with strong parental support.

Primary Research Question

Next, multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine if individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support were unique predictors of the overall SEQ. See Table 4 for the full regression model. The overall model was found to be significant, $R^2 = 0.06$, $F(3, 244) = 5.46$, $p < .01$. Individual work centrality was found to have a significant negative relationship with overall sexual harassment behaviors, $\beta = -0.24$, $t(244) = -3.22$, $p < .01$. Parental work centrality ($\beta = -.00$, $t(244) = -0.01$, $p < .99$) and parental support ($\beta = 0.11$, $t(244) = 1.79$, $p = .07$) were not significantly unique predictors of the SEQ.

Table 4
Multiple Regression Analysis predicting perceptions of overall Sexual Experiences Questionnaire

Variable	β	t	p	F	df	p	R^2
Overall model				5.46	3, 244	.001	0.06
IWC	-0.24	-3.22	.001				
PWC	-0.001	-0.01	.99				
PS	0.11	1.79	.07				

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality, PS = Parental support.

Subscales within the SEQ

Multiple regressions were also run for each subscale within the SEQ. See Tables 5-8 for the full regression model. The four subscales include: gender harassment in the form of *sexist* hostility, gender harassment in the form of *sexual* hostility, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion.

For gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility, the overall model was found to be significant, $R^2 = 0.09$, $F(3, 244) = 7.57$, $p < .01$. Individual work centrality was found to have a significant negative unique relationship with gender harassment sexist hostility, $\beta = -0.26$, $t(244) = -3.47$, $p < .01$. Parental support was also found to have a significant positive unique relationship with gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility, $\beta = 0.20$, $t(244) = 3.23$, $p < .01$. However, parental work centrality was not a significant unique predictor of gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility, $\beta = 0.02$, $t(244) = 0.30$, $p = .76$.

For gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility, the overall model was found to be significant, $R^2 = 0.06$, $F(3, 244) = 4.82$, $p < .01$. Individual work centrality was found to have to have a significant negative unique relationship with gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility, $\beta = -0.20$, $t(244) = -2.70$, $p < .01$. Parental support was also found to positively predict gender harassment sexual hostility, $\beta = 0.13$, $t(244) = 2.10$, $p = .04$. Parental work centrality was found to not be a significant unique predictor of gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility, $\beta = -0.02$, $t(244) = -0.31$, $p = .76$.

The overall model for unwanted sexual attention was found to be significant, $R^2 = 0.05$, $F(3, 244) = 4.52$, $p < .01$. Individual work centrality was found to have a

significant negative unique relationship with unwanted sexual attention, $\beta = -0.23$, $t(244) = -3.05$, $p < .01$. Parental work centrality ($\beta = -0.00$, $t(244) = -0.03$, $p = .97$) and parental support ($\beta = 0.05$, $t(244) = 0.77$, $p = .44$) were not significantly unique predictors of unwanted sexual attention.

The overall model for sexual coercion was found to be significant, $R^2 = 0.05$, $F(3, 244) = 4.40$, $p < .01$. Individual work centrality was found to have a significant negative unique relationship with sexual coercion, $\beta = -0.24$, $t(244) = -3.21$, $p < .01$. No significantly unique relationships were found between sexual coercion and parental work centrality ($\beta = 0.03$, $t(244) = 0.37$, $p = .72$) and parental support ($\beta = 0.02$, $t(244) = 0.34$, $p = .73$).

In conclusion, individual work centrality and parental work centrality were found to be negatively correlated with the perceptions of sexual harassment, but the regression showed only individual work centrality as a unique predictor of perceptions of sexual harassment. This suggests that when an individual has strong belief in the centrality of then sexually harassing behaviors are likely to be perceived.

Table 5
Multiple Regression Analysis predicting perceptions of SEQ subscale - Gender harassment sexual hostility

Variable	β	t	p	F	df	p	R^2
Overall model				4.82	3, 244	.003	0.06
IWC	-0.20	-2.70	.007				
PWC	-0.02	-0.31	.76				
PS	0.13	2.10	.04				

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality, PS = Parental support.

Table 6
Multiple Regression Analysis predicting perceptions of SEQ subscale - Gender harassment sexist hostility

Variable	β	t	p	F	df	p	R^2
Overall model				7.57	3, 244	.000	0.09
IWC	-0.26	-3.47	.003				
PWC	0.02	0.30	.98				
PS	0.20	3.23	.44				

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality, PS = Parental support.

Table 7
Multiple Regression Analysis predicting perceptions of SEQ subscale - Unwanted sexual attention

Variable	β	t	p	F	df	p	R^2
Overall model				4.52	3, 244	.004	0.05
IWC	-0.23	-3.05	.003				
PWC	-0.002	-0.03	.98				
PS	0.05	0.77	.44				

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality, PS = Parental support.

Table 8
Multiple Regression Analysis predicting perceptions of SEQ subscale - Sexual Coercion

Variable	β	t	p	F	df	p	R^2
Overall model				4.40	3, 244	.005	0.05
IWC	-0.24	-3.21	.002				
PWC	0.03	0.37	.72				
PS	0.02	0.34	.73				

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality, PS = Parental support.

Exploratory analyses

Because there were significant differences between men and women on parental support, the SEQ, gender harassment in the form of sexist and sexual hostility, and unwanted sexual attention exploratory analyses were conducted (See Table 3) to examine the impact sex has on the observed relationships. To further examine whether sex moderated the relationship between individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support and perceptions of sexual harassment in young adults a moderated regression was conducted. The main effect of sex was entered in Step 1. Next, individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support variables were mean centered to minimize the effects of multicollinearity in the interaction analysis. These variables were then entered in at Step 2. Lastly, interaction terms were created between sex and each mean centered variable. These interaction terms were entered into Step 3. See Table 9 for the full moderated regression model.

As shown below, the overall model in step 1 was significant, $R^2 = 0.04$, $F(1, 246) = 11.40$, $p < .01$. Further, sex was found to positively predict perceptions of sexual harassment behaviors, $\beta = 0.21$, $t(246) = 3.37$, $p < .01$. Similarly, the addition of individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support to the model in step 2 significantly improved the model, $\Delta R^2 = .54$, $F(3, 243) = 4.85$, $p < .01$. The overall model in step 2 was significant, $R^2 = 0.10$, $F(4, 243) = 6.62$, $p < .01$. A significant negative relationship was found between individual work centrality beliefs and the SEQ, ($\beta = -0.24$, $t(243) = -3.21$, $p < .01$).

Table 9
Moderated regression testing sex as a predictor of SEQ

Variable	β	t	p	F	df	p	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1								
Overall model				11.40	1, 246	.001	0.04	0.04
Sex	0.21	3.38	.001					
Step 2								
Overall model				4.85	3, 243	.003	0.10	0.08
IWC	-0.24	-3.21	.002					
PWC	0.01	0.11	.91					
PS	0.07	1.17	.24					
Step 3								
Overall model				1.20	3, 240	.312	0.11	0.09
Sex*IWC	0.13	1.08	.28					
Sex*PWC	0.09	0.68	.50					
Sex*PS	-0.09	-0.82	.42					

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality, PS = Parental support.

However, the relationship between the SEQ and parental work centrality beliefs ($\beta = 0.01$, $t(243) = 0.11$, $p = .91$) and parental support ($\beta = 0.07$, $t(243) = 1.17$, $p = .24$) were not significant. In step 3, the addition of the interaction terms did not significantly improve the model, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $F(3, 240) = 1.20$, $p = .31$. The overall model remained significant, $R^2 = 0.11$, $F(7, 240) = 4.31$, $p < .01$. No significant interactions were found between sex and individual work centrality ($\beta = 0.13$, $t(240) = 1.08$, $p = .28$), sex and parental work centrality ($\beta = 0.09$, $t(240) = 0.68$, $p = .50$), or sex and parental support ($\beta = -0.09$, $t(240) = -0.82$, $p = .42$) when predicting overall sexual harassment perceptions. These findings provide evidence that sex *does not* moderate the relationships between individual work centrality, parental work centrality, parental support and the SEQ.

Testing of the subscales within the SEQ

Furthermore, four additional moderated regressions were conducted to determine whether sex moderated the relationship between individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support and the specific subscale of the SEQ. The four subscales of the SEQ include, gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility, gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. As previously mentioned, gender harassment consists of sexist and sexual hostility. Sexist hostility is considered discriminatory experiences based on one's sex (Fitzgerald et al., 1999). Sexual hostility is defined as experiences that are more sexual in nature (Fitzgerald et al., 1999). The same steps were used as listed above to enter variables into the moderated regression. See Tables 10-13 for the full moderated regression models for each subscale.

For gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility, the overall model in step 1 was significant, $R^2 = 0.75$, $F(1, 246) = 20.04$, $p < .01$. Further, sex was found to positively predict perceptions of gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility behaviors, $\beta = 0.27$, $t(246) = 4.48$, $p < .01$. Similarly, the addition of individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support to the model in step 2 significantly improved the model, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $F(3, 243) = 3.93$, $p < .01$. The overall model in step 2 was significant, $R^2 = 0.12$, $F(4, 243) = 8.14$, $p < .01$. A significant negative relationship was found between individual work centrality beliefs and gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility, ($\beta = -0.20$, $t(243) = -2.70$, $p < .01$). However, the relationship between gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility and parental work centrality beliefs ($\beta = -0.01$, $t(243) = -0.16$, $p = .87$) and parental support ($\beta = 0.08$,

$t(243) = 1.30, p = .20$) were not significant. In step 3, the addition of the interaction terms did not significantly improve the model, $\Delta R^2 = .02, F(3, 240) = 1.36, p = .26$. The overall model remained significant, $R^2 = 0.13, F(3, 240) = 5.26, p < .01$. No significant interactions were found between sex and individual work centrality ($\beta = 0.10, t(240) = 0.80, p = .42$), sex and parental work centrality ($\beta = 0.11, t(240) = 0.87, p = .39$), or sex and parental support ($\beta = -0.14, t(240) = -1.28, p = .20$). These findings provide evidence that sex does not moderate the relationships between individual work centrality, parental work centrality, parental support and gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility.

For gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility, the overall model in step 1 was significant, $R^2 = 0.03, F(1, 246) = 6.88, p < .01$. Further, sex was found to positively predict perceptions of gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility behaviors, $\beta = 0.17, t(246) = 2.62, p < .01$. Similarly, the addition of individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support to the model in step 2 significantly improved the model, $\Delta R^2 = .74, F(3, 243) = 6.62, p < .01$. The overall model in step 2 was significant, $R^2 = 0.10, F(3, 243) = 6.80, p < .01$. A significant negative relationship was found between individual work centrality beliefs and gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility, ($\beta = -0.26, t(243) = -3.44, p < .01$). The relationship between gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility and parental work centrality beliefs was not significant ($\beta = 0.03, t(243) = -0.38, p = .70$). However, a positive significant relationship was found between gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility and parental support ($\beta = 0.18, t(243) = 2.78, p < .01$). In step 3, the addition of the interaction terms did not significantly improve the model, $\Delta R^2 = .01, F(3, 240) = 0.854, p = .47$. The overall model remained

significant, $R^2 = 0.11$, $F(3, 240) = 4.25$, $p < .01$. No significant interactions were found between sex and individual work centrality ($\beta = 0.09$, $t(240) = 0.72$, $p = .47$), sex and parental work centrality ($\beta = 0.10$, $t(240) = 0.77$, $p = .44$), or sex and parental support ($\beta = -0.08$, $t(240) = -0.68$, $p = .50$). These findings provide evidence that sex *does not* moderate the relationships between individual work centrality, parental work centrality, parental support and gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility.

For unwanted sexual attention, the overall model in step 1 was significant, $R^2 = 0.04$, $F(1, 246) = 8.94$, $p < .01$. Further, sex was found to positively predict perceptions of unwanted sexual attention behaviors, $\beta = 0.19$, $t(246) = 2.99$, $p < .01$. Similarly, the addition of individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support to the model in step 2 significantly improved the model, $\Delta R^2 = .05$, $F(3, 243) = 4.33$, $p < .01$. The overall model in step 2 was significant, $R^2 = 0.08$, $F(3, 243) = 5.58$, $p < .01$. A significant negative relationship was found between unwanted sexual attention and individual work centrality beliefs, ($\beta = -0.23$, $t(243) = -3.03$, $p < .01$). However, the relationship between unwanted sexual attention and parental work centrality beliefs ($\beta = 0.01$, $t(243) = 0.08$, $p = .93$) and parental support ($\beta = 0.01$, $t(243) = 0.19$, $p = .85$) were not significant. In step 3, the addition of the interaction terms did not significantly improve the model, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $F(3, 240) = 1.29$, $p = .28$. The overall model remained significant, $R^2 = 0.10$, $F(3, 240) = 3.75$, $p < .01$. No significant interactions were found between sex and individual work centrality ($\beta = 0.16$, $t(240) = 1.28$, $p = .20$), sex and parental work centrality ($\beta = 0.08$, $t(240) = 0.59$, $p = .55$), or sex and parental support ($\beta = -0.06$, $t(240) = -0.51$, $p = .61$). These findings provide

evidence that sex *does not* moderate the relationships between individual work centrality, parental work centrality, parental support and unwanted sexual attention.

For sexual coercion, the overall model in step 1 was not significant, $R^2 = 0.01$, $F(1, 246) = 1.52$, $p < .01$. Further, sex was not found to predict perceptions of sexual coercion, $\beta = 0.08$, $t(246) = 1.23$, $p = .22$. The addition of individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support to the model in step 2 significantly improved the model, $\Delta R^2 = .05$, $F(3, 243) = 4.33$, $p < .01$. The overall model in step 2 was significant, $R^2 = 0.06$, $F(3, 243) = 3.64$, $p < .01$. A significant negative relationship was found between sexual coercion and individual work centrality beliefs, ($\beta = -0.24$, $t(243) = -3.19$, $p < .01$). However, the relationship between sexual coercion and parental work centrality beliefs ($\beta = 0.03$, $t(243) = 0.41$, $p = .68$) and parental support ($\beta = 0.01$, $t(243) = 0.11$, $p = .92$) were not significant. In step 3, the addition of the interaction terms did not significantly improve the model, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $F(3, 240) = 0.86$, $p = .46$. The overall model remained significant, $R^2 = 0.01$, $F(3, 240) = 2.45$, $p < .01$. No significant interactions were found between sex and individual work centrality ($\beta = 0.17$, $t(240) = 1.30$, $p = .20$), sex and parental work centrality ($\beta = 0.02$, $t(240) = 0.12$, $p = .91$), or sex and parental support ($\beta = -0.05$, $t(240) = -0.43$, $p = .68$). These findings provide evidence that sex *does not* moderate the relationships between individual work centrality, parental work centrality, parental support and sexual coercion.

Table 10
 Moderated regression testing sex as a predictor of the SEQ subscale - Gender harassment sexual hostility

Variable	β	t	p	F	df	p	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1								
Overall model				20.04	1, 246	.000	0.08	0.08
Sex	0.27	4.48	.000					
Step 2								
Overall model				3.93	3, 243	.009	0.12	0.10
IWC	-0.20	-2.70	.007					
PWC	-0.01	-0.16	.87					
PS	0.08	1.30	.20					
Step 3								
Overall model				1.36	3, 240	.26	0.13	0.11
Sex*IWC	0.10	0.80	.42					
Sex*PWC	0.11	0.87	.39					
Sex*PS	-0.14	-1.28	.20					

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality, PS = Parental support.

Table 11
Moderated regression testing sex as a predictor of the SEQ subscale - Gender harassment sexist hostility

Variable	β	t	p	F	df	p	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1								
Overall model				6.88	1, 246	.009	0.03	0.03
Sex	0.17	2.62	.009					
Step 2								
Overall model				6.62	3, 243	.000	0.10	0.09
IWC	-0.26	-3.44	.001					
PWC	0.03	0.38	.70					
PS	0.18	2.78	.006					
Step 3								
Overall model				0.85	3, 240	.47	0.11	0.08
Sex*IWC	0.09	0.72	.48					
Sex*PWC	0.10	0.77	.44					
Sex*PS	-0.08	-0.68	.50					

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality, PS = Parental support.

Table 12
 Moderated regression testing sex as a predictor of the SEQ subscale -
 Unwanted sexual attention

Variable	β	t	p	F	df	p	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1								
Overall model				8.94	1, 246	.003	0.04	0.04
Sex	0.19	2.99	.003					
Step 2								
Overall model				4.33	3, 243	.005	0.08	0.07
IWC	-0.23	-3.03	.003					
PWC	0.006	0.08	.93					
PS	0.01	0.19	.85					
Step 3								
Overall model				1.29	3, 240	.28	0.10	0.07
Sex*IWC	0.16	1.28	.20					
Sex*PWC	0.08	0.59	.55					
Sex*PS	-0.06	-0.51	.61					

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality,
 PS = Parental support.

Table 13
 Moderated regression testing sex as a predictor of the SEQ
 subscale - Sexual Coercion

Variable	β	t	p	F	df	p	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1								
Overall model				1.52	1, 246	.22	0.01	0.002
Sex	0.08	1.23	.22					
Step 2								
Overall model				4.33	3, 243	.005	0.06	0.04
IWC	-0.24	-3.19	.002					
PWC	0.03	0.41	.68					
PS	0.007	0.11	.92					
Step 3								
Overall model				0.86	3, 240	.46	0.07	0.04
Sex*IWC	0.17	1.30	.20					
Sex*PWC	0.02	0.12	.91					
Sex*PS	-0.05	-0.43	.67					

Note. IWC = Individual work centrality, PWC = Parental work centrality,
 PS = Parental support.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest individual work centrality beliefs influence individual's perceptions of sexually harassing behaviors, specifically gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility, gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. The study also found women perceive behaviors as sexually harassing more than men. The purpose of this study was to examine how young adults individual work centrality beliefs, parental work centrality beliefs, and parental support influence the perceptions of sexual harassment in the workplace for young adults.

This study answers these questions, specifically research question one is answered in the sense that young adults with strong work centrality beliefs are less likely to perceive gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention. This finding was supported through correlations and the regression analyses. Yet, the answer to research question two is not as clear. While a negative correlation was found between parental work centrality and gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility and unwanted sexual attention, the regression analysis did not show parental work centrality attitudes as a unique predictor of perceptions of sexual harassment, meaning it is redundant with individual work centrality. Lastly, research question three is partially answered. Parental support was positively correlated with gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility. This was found in the correlation, but the regression analysis did not show parental support as a unique predictor of overall perceptions of sexually harassment. However, parental support was found to be a unique positive predictor of gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility and gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility.

To further examine the relationship between perceptions of sexual harassment and individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support, multiple regression analyses were conducted to identify unique predictors. Individual work centrality was found to be a significant unique negative predictor of perceptions of sexual harassment in general and the sub-dimensions of gender harassment in the form of sexist and sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. Parental work centrality and parental support were not found to predict perceptions of sexual harassment. Multiple regression analyses were also conducted within each subscale of the SEQ. Individual work centrality was found to negatively predict gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility, gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. Parental support was found to positively predict perceptions of gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility and gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility. Parental work centrality was not found to be predict any perceptions of sexual harassment.

In preliminary analyses, men and women's perceptions of sexual harassment were found to be significantly different from one another. Exploratory analyses were conducted to determine whether sex moderated the relationship between individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support and perceptions of sexual harassment in young adults. The analyses provided evidence that sex *does not* moderate the relationship between the SEQ and individual work centrality, parental work centrality, and parental support. An additional four moderated regressions were conducted to further test the relationships with the four subscales of the SEQ. No significant interactions were found, suggesting sex does not moderate any of the

relationships examined. These findings suggest sex does not influence how sexually harassing behaviors are perceived in regards to an individual's work centrality beliefs, parental work centrality beliefs, and parental support.

Practical and theoretical contributions

Research on how people perceive sexual harassment tends to focus on adult's perceptions and specifically the differences between men and women (Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett, 2001; Gutek, 1985; Estrich, 1987). In this study, women were found to perceive behaviors as more sexually harassing behaviors more than men. Limited research exists on young adults and their experiences at work (Fineran, 2002; Fineran & Gruber, 2009), and of that research young adult's perceptions of sexual harassment are not assessed. This study contributes to the literature by providing insight on young adult's perceptions of sexual harassment, specifically, how those perceptions are influenced by individual work centrality beliefs, parental work centrality beliefs, and parental support.

The findings from the study suggest young individuals whose work is central to their lives are less likely to perceive behaviors as sexually harassing. According to a whitepaper on *How Central is Work to Young Adults*, young adults with high work centrality beliefs were found to have more trust in leaders of religious, business, and government institutions, which may lead to a greater acceptance in conventional values that work should be central to life (Chao & Gardner, 2005). Therefore, young adults' values and beliefs may be easily influenced by the leaders they trust and look up to in the organization. For example, if a manager punishes those who report sexual harassment the young adult may recognize this and avoid reporting sexually harassing behaviors. Additionally, the *How Central is Work to Young Adults* whitepaper, found individuals

with low work centrality were less trusting of leaders of religious, business, and government institutions and were more likely to value job characteristics that minimize stress (Chao & Gardner, 2005). If low on work centrality, young adults who do not have someone to influence their values at work, may be less likely to deal with sexual harassment from their peers or managers. These young adults may be inclined to report the behavior or quit their job.

Furthermore, we can speculate that some young adults may have learned to deal with sexually harassing behaviors at work because their job is important to their survival. These young adults may be staying in their jobs and enduring harassment because their job is essential for maintaining their way of life, such as living expenses, having extra spending money, or putting themselves through school. Managers should be aware of young adults who are dependent on their job and should be emphasizing the organizations sexual harassment policies and reporting procedures. Organizations should take additional steps to train young adults about sexual harassment, what behaviors are considered sexual harassment, and the reporting procedures. Employees should be reassured that no negative consequences will follow those who report sexual harassment.

Limitations and future research

One limitation of this research is that this study used undergraduate students as the sample for the study. For example, a group of approximately 20 males continuously selected “No” to all sexual harassment behaviors listed in the SEQ. These individuals who selected this response may have thought the behavior truly is not sexual harassment, may not have understood the question being asked, or may not have cared about the survey. Even though this was the target age group for the study, future research may

consider sampling those who are not current undergraduate students but are still working at this age.

Another limitation of the study is that this study did not directly ask participants if they had been sexually harassed. Future researcher may consider directly asking participants if they have previously been sexually harassed. Additionally, the study was aimed at how young adults perceive their parents work centrality beliefs. Future research may consider sampling parents of the young adults to determine how parents' own perceptions differ from the young adults' perceptions of sexual harassment.

In the open-ended comments provided by participants, a few examples of sexual harassment included technology (i.e. cell phone). A potential limitation of this study is the use of the SEQ to measure the perceptions of sexual harassment. Using an outdated scale for research may have impacted participants' perceptions of the specific behavior. Future research should consider updating the scale or adding items that include technology as part of the sexually harassing behavior, such as sexual harassment via social media or via cellphones.

This study demonstrated the relationships between individual work centrality and perceptions of sexual harassment, parental work centrality and perceptions of sexual harassment, and parental support and perceptions of sexual harassment were not influenced by sex. However, women still perceived many of the behaviors as sexually harassing compared to men, specifically gender harassment in the form of sexist and sexual hostility and unwanted sexual attention. Parental support was also found to have a positive relationship with women, suggesting women are perceiving more parental support compared to men. Future research should identify what other factors may be

influencing women's perceptions of sexual harassment. These factors could include the media, social groups, religious views, etc. This study focused specifically on how young adults perceived sexual harassment, but future research could assess how age interacts with individual and parental work centrality and parental support to influence perceptions of sexual harassment.

Conclusion

Overall, this study found young adult's work centrality beliefs influence their perceptions of sexually harassing behaviors, specifically gender harassment in the form of sexist hostility, gender harassment in the form of sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. Additionally, women were found to perceive behaviors as more sexually harassing more than men. This research provides insight on what influences young adult's perceptions of sexual harassment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MEASURES

Work Centrality (Hirschfeld & Field, 2000)

Instructions: Please rate the following questions based on your work beliefs, 1 = Strongly disagree to 6 = Strongly agree.

1. Work should only be a small part of one's life (reverse scored)
2. In my view, an individual's personal life goals should be work oriented
3. Life is worth living only when people get absorbed in work
4. The major satisfaction in my life will come from my future job.
5. The most important things that happen to me will involve my career.
6. I have other activities more important than my work (reverse scored)
7. My career will be considered central to life.
8. I would probably keep working even if I didn't need the money
9. To me, my work is only a small part of who I am (reverse scored)
10. Most things in life are more important than work (reverse scored)
11. If the unemployment benefit was really high, I would still prefer to work
12. Overall, I consider work to be very central to my existence

Parents work centrality

Instructions: Please rate the following questions based on your work beliefs, 1 = Strongly disagree to 6 = Strongly agree.

1. My parents considered work to only be a small part of one's life. (reversed scored)
2. Parents view work as the only personal life goal someone have in their life.
3. Parents believe life is only worth living when people are absorbed in their work.
4. My parents' major satisfaction in their life comes from work.
5. The most important things that happened to my parents involved their work.
6. My parents enjoyed other activities more important than their work. (reverse scored)
7. According to my parents, work is considered central to life.
8. My parents would urge me to keep working even if I didn't need the money.
9. To my parents, their work is the only a small part of who they are. (reversed scored).
10. Most things in my parents' lives are more important than work. (reversed scored)
11. If the unemployment benefit was really high, my parents would still prefer to work
12. Overall, my parents consider their work to be very central to their existence.

Additional Items:

1. As far as I know my parents have never experience sexual harassment as work.
2. My parents have never complained about being treated badly at work by a peer, coworker, and/or manager.
3. I have heard my parents discuss work problems with each other.

Family support inventory for workers (King et al., 1995)

Instructions: Please rate the following questions from 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree.

1. When I succeed at work, my parents show that they are proud of me.
2. My parents do not seem very interested in hearing about my work day.
3. When something at work is bothering me, my parents show that they understand how I'm feeling.
4. As long as I'm making money, it doesn't really matter to my parents what job I have.
5. I feel better after discussing job-related problems with my parents.
6. My parents are interested in my job.
7. I have difficulty discussing work-related activities with my parents.
8. When I'm frustrated by my work, my parents try to understand.
9. I wish my parents would care more about what I do at work.
10. My parents often provide a different way of looking at my work-related problems.
11. My parents don't want to listen to my work-related problems.
12. My parents have little respect for my job.
13. My parents are happy for me when I am successful at work.
14. My parents help me feel better when I'm upset about my job.
15. I usually find it useful to discuss my work problems with my parents.
16. My parents want me to enjoy my job.
17. My parents have a positive attitude toward my work.
18. When I have a problem at work, my parents seem to blame me.
19. When I have a problem at work, members of my family express concern.
20. I look to family members for reassurance about my job when I need it.
21. I feel comfortable asking my parents for advice about a problem situation at work.
22. My parents are sympathetic when I'm upset about my work.
23. If I have a problem at work, I usually share it with my parents.

Sexual Experiences Questionnaire – DoD (Fitzgerlad, L. F., Magley, V. J., Drasgow, F. & Waldo, C. R., 1999)

Instructions: Please rate the following statement based on the degree you believe it is sexual harassment. (1 = definitely yes, to 5 = definitely not) – (should be the frequency, how often does this happened to you?)

1. Repeatedly told sexual stories or jokes that were offensive to you?
2. Whistled, called, or hooted at you in a sexual way?
3. Made unwelcome attempts to draw you into a discussion of sexual matters? (e.g., attempted to discuss or comment on your sex life)?
4. Made crude and offensive sexual remarks about your appearance, body, or sexual activities, either publicly or to you privately?
5. Treated you “differently” because of your gender (e.g., mistreated, slighted, or ignored you)?
6. Made gestures or used body language of a sexual nature which embarrassed or offended you?
7. Displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials?
8. Made offensive sexist remarks (e.g., suggesting that people of your gender are not suited for the kind of work you do)?
9. Made unwanted attempts to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage it?
10. Put you down or was condescending to you because of your sex (gender)?
11. Stared, leered, or ogled you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable?
12. Continued to ask you for dates, drinks, dinner, etc., even though you said "No?"
13. Made you feel threatened with some sort of retaliation for not being sexually cooperative (e.g., by mentioning an upcoming review)?
14. Touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable?
15. Implied faster promotions or better treatment if you were sexually cooperative?
16. Intentionally cornered you, leaned over you, brushed up against you in a sexual way?
17. Other sex(gender)-related behavior not listed above?

Negative Acts Questionnaire – Revised (NAQ-R) (Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., & Notelaers, G. (2009)

Instructions: Please rate the following statement based on the degree you believe it is bullying.

(1 = definitely yes, to 5 = definitely not)

1. Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work
2. Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks
3. Spreading of gossip and rumors about you
4. Being ignored or excluded
5. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes or your private life
6. Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job
7. Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes
8. Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach
9. Persistent criticism of your errors or mistakes
10. Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with
11. Having allegations made against you
12. Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm
13. Being shouted at or experiencing intimidating behaviors (e.g. finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking your way)