The Unexpected Effects of a Sexual Harassment Educational Program

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This study evaluated a sexual harassment program for staff and faculty employees at a metropolitan university. One hundred men and 97 women who participated in the program and 141 men and 178 women who did not participate responded to a self-report questionnaire through campus mail. Analysis of variance was used to test for effects of program participation and employee gender on five outcome variables. Results indicated that participants showed more knowledge about sexual harassment than did nonparticipants and had a stronger attitude that sexual behavior at work is inappropriate. Men had more favorable attitudes toward sexual behavior at work than did women. Moreover, program participation and employee gender interacted, indicating an adverse reaction to the program among male participants. Male participants were less likely than other groups to perceive coercive sexual harassment, less willing to report sexual harassment, and more likely to blame the victim. Implications of the findings are discussed.

Sexual harassment is a complex organizational problem in contemporary American culture. Understanding sexual harassment, why it occurs, and what can be done about it is a tremendous challenge even for dedicated researchers and organizational practitioners. For researchers, explaining sexual harassment in the workplace has been difficult, largely because it takes varied forms, is motivated by many factors, and is perceived differently depending on variables such as gender, age, status, and context (Fitzgerald, Swan, & Magley, 1997; Frazier, Cochran, & Olson, 1995; Gutek, 1995).

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Moreover, because sexual harassment is a sensitive and often sequestered organizational problem (Clair, 1993), it is challenging to study it in actual organizations. Much of what we know about this phenomenon is based on people's reactions to hypothetical scenarios (Lengnick-Hall, 1995).

Parallel to the efforts of academic researchers, organizations are struggling to understand sexual harassment and are searching for ways to prevent it. Many organizations have attempted to remedy the problem by developing policies, grievance procedures, and training programs consistent with sexual harassment law (Gutek, 1997).[1] Although sexual harassment programs may provide organizations with limited protection against legal liability, the actual effects of these programs are not known, as most organizations neglect to adequately evaluate these programs' impact on employees (Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993; Grundmann, O'Donohue, & Peterson, 1997; Gutek, 1997; Pryor & Whalen, 1997). In fact, our search of the literature located only nine published research reports describing and systematically evaluating a sexual harassment program in a workplace or educational setting (Barak, 1994; Beauvais, 1986; Blaxall, Parsonson, & Robertson, 1993; Bonate & Jessell, 1996; Maurizio & Rogers, 1992; Moyer & Nath, 1998; Perry, Kulik, & Schmidtke, 1998; Roscoe, Strouse, Goodwin, Taracks, & Henderson, 1994; York, Barclay, & Zajack, 1997).[2]

Failure to evaluate sexual harassment interventions in organizations is based on the same faulty assumptions that have hindered the evaluation of other training and development efforts in the past (Goldstein, 1993). Specifically, programs designed to prevent or remedy a social or organizational problem are assumed to be effective or to be impossible to evaluate (Bickman, 1983). To the extent that these programs are evaluated at all, organizations typically presume that the reactions of participants (e.g., level of satisfaction) serve as an adequate barometer of the intervention's success or failure. Although reviews of literature have documented numerous studies that refute these assumptions (e.g., Goldstein, 1993; Latham, 1988), sexual harassment programs continue to be utilized without proper evaluation (Grundmann et al., 1997).

The few pioneering studies that have evaluated sexual harassment programs should be commended for breaking ground in this important area of research. However, the contribution of these studies is limited in at least three respects. First, most of the research has questionable relevance to employees in an organizational setting. The majority of studies use students as participants (e.g., Bonate & Jessell, 1996; Perry et al., 1998), and neither the training nor the evaluations of the programs are conducted in a workplace environment. Unrepresentative samples and the lack of a relevant context raise questions about whether the findings are applicable to the problem of sexual harassment in organizations.

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Second, in the handful of studies that have been set in organizations, gender has not received adequate attention. Numerous studies suggest that men and women have different experiences, perceptions, and attitudes regarding sexual harassment (Frazier et al., 1995; Gutek, 1995; Morrow, McElroy, & Phillips, 1994). These findings justify including both male and female respondents in research on sexual harassment programs so that the effects on these groups can be compared. However, though studies designed for students have included both sexes (e.g., Roscoe et al., 1994; York et al., 1997), the rarer nonstudent samples have been predominantly or exclusively female (Barak, 1994; Blaxall et al., 1993; Maurizio & Rogers, 1992). Ironically, male employees who are not students may be the most likely perpetrators of sexual harassment, but they have been virtually excluded from the research.

A third limitation of the research on sexual harassment programs is that it has not assessed ordinary programs that are administered in many workplaces. Researchers have developed and evaluated admirable sexual harassment programs (Barak, 1994; Blaxall et al., 1993; Maurizio & Rogers, 1992), whereas evaluation of the majority of arguably lesser quality programs has been neglected. Limited resources and ambivalence toward the legitimacy of sexual harassment complaints breed reluctance in organizations to produce exemplary interventions (Grundmann et al., 1997; Gutek, 1997). Many organizations administer substandard programs, providing employees with only the most basic information about sexual harassment law and organizational policy ("Helping Companies," 1998). Only by assessing these more limited efforts can researchers begin to test the implicit assumption that any activity designed to address sexual harassment in the workplace is superior to taking no action at all.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a rudimentary sexual harassment program for employees of a medium-size university in the midwestern United States. The program was developed by a committee of staff and faculty members and was administered to employees of both sexes at regular unit meetings in the normal work environment. We examined the main and interaction effects of participation in the program and employee gender on five outcome variables: knowledge about sexual harassment, perceptions of potential sexual harassment, willingness to report sexual harassment, attributions of blame for sexual harassment, and attitudes toward sexual behavior at work.

Our role in the development of the program was more removed than has been typical in previous research. Other researchers have designed and implemented the sexual harassment programs they evaluated in organizations.[3] In contrast, the program we assessed was created and administered by a large, voluntary committee of employees. We became aware of the committee through regular channels, volunteered for it ourselves, participated in meetings, and acted in the capacity of researchers. We did not assume the role of consultants, nor did we have authority to shape the program's design according to textbook standards. Rather, we were two people serving on a committee in the context of multiple stakeholders with limited resources and different and sometimes competing views about what the program should include.

Our relatively low power role in the intervention had both advantages and disadvantages. Our role allowed the committee to design and implement the intervention essentially as it would have without our participation, thus enabling us to evaluate this "natu-

rally" occurring program while minimizing our intrusion on the intervention process. Furthermore, reviews of literature suggest that involvement of organizational members is critical to organizational change (e.g., Porras & Robertson, 1992). However, the collaborative work of the committee created a challenging context in which to evaluate this program. What we encountered was typical of messy, real-world research, especially that involving a hot-button topic such as sexual harassment: Multiple and strong opinions were common, and the decisions of the committee sometimes compromised the rigor we would have desired.

THE EVALUATION APPROACH

In evaluating the program, we drew from Chen's (1990; Chen & Rossi, 1981) theory-driven perspective on program evaluation, which emphasizes the integration of program theory into evaluation processes. Program theory specifies the underlying theory of a program and allows that theory to be tested. We developed what Chen (1990) describes as a "causative" program theory in the "impact" domain, where researchers theorize and evaluate the causal effects of a program on intended and unintended outcomes. This approach is developed by integrating the logic, assumptions, and objectives of the program's key stakeholders (e.g., program administrators and decision makers) with existing social science research, theory, and knowledge. Through this process of integration, researchers develop a framework in which they identify outcome variables and theorize relationships between the variables and the program treatment.

Following Chen's suggestions, we integrated information from constituents within the university who had a stake in the outcome of the sexual harassment program with knowledge from the social science literature. As a result of this process, we selected outcome variables for the study and conceptualized relationships between the program treatment, the gender of the participants, and the outcomes.

The Sexual Harassment Program

We participated in meetings with three types of stakeholders at the university, including members of the administration, staff and faculty employees on the committee in charge of the program, and employees in the university's personnel office. Our primary objectives were to learn why the program was developed, discover the stakeholders' goals and assumptions about how the program would work, and become familiar with the program's format and content.

Emergence of the program. The program was developed under suboptimal conditions by a standing committee of staff and faculty members who volunteered from various departments and positions at the university. Although the committee cared deeply about the issue of sexual harassment, its members had no formal background in training and development or sexual harassment prevention. Moreover, no assessment of

participants' needs was conducted prior to the program. Rather, the program was developed in response to anecdotal evidence of sexual harassment on the campus and a general sense that employees were underinformed and apathetic about the problem. Although committee members would have preferred a more elaborate program, funding for such an effort was not made available. In short, the assumption that "any effort is better than no effort" appeared to drive the program forward despite early reservations that it might be inadequate.

Goals and assumptions. Although there were no delusions that the brief program would eliminate sexual harassment at the university, there was a sense that repeating the program might achieve particular goals over the long term. Administrators were most concerned that employees should know more about university policy and legal constraints that pertain to sexual harassment. The committee in charge was more interested in raising awareness of the broad scope of behaviors that can be sexually harassing. The personnel office hoped the program would encourage employees to report sexual harassment through proper channels. Underlying all these goals was the assumption that employees who become more informed about sexual harassment would be more likely to report it and less likely to enact it. Finally, many committee members were intuitively concerned that the program might evoke defensiveness because its content would be interpreted as an attack on men. The committee decided to employ mixed-sex presentation teams, assuming a gender balance would help ward off such reactions.

Program format and content. The committee developed a 30-minute program consisting of three components: a 3-minute videotaped speech by the chancellor; a handout and oral presentation by mixed-sex, two-person teams of university staff and faculty; and a 5-minute discussion. The chancellor's speech emphasized the university's lack of tolerance for sexual harassment. He discussed the harm of harassing conduct, the importance of reporting it, and disciplinary action to be taken against perpetrators. He told employees they must learn to define sexual harassment and urged them to work together to prevent it from interfering with the university's mission. The second component mainly defined sexual harassment and discussed the consequences of policy violations. It gave legal and policy definitions of the phenomenon, emphasized the victim's perceptions as paramount in defining sexual harassment, and affirmed that both sexes may be perpetrators or victims. It listed possible forms of sexual harassment, ranging from forced physical contact and threats, to sexual propositions, to more ambiguous behaviors such as suggestive comments, gestures, and staring. It warned that the university would punish culpable employees and proceed against them for any expenses incurred by the institution. Participants were urged to avoid harassing others and to report incidents they might experience or witness to certain individuals on campus. Finally, the discussion component served to clarify content. Employees whose questions could not be answered in the time allotted were asked to call appropriate offices on campus. At the end of the discussion, employees were encouraged to continue talking about sexual harassment issues among themselves.

Conceptual Framework

Previous evaluations of sexual harassment programs have been criticized for failing to assess their impact on the prevalence of sexual harassment (Grundmann et al., 1997; Pryor & Whalen, 1997). Although this criticism is justified, it does not consider the obstacles that impede researchers from obtaining valid, longitudinal measures of sexual harassment frequency (Biaggio, Watts, & Brownell, 1990; Rigor, 1991). The university at which the present study was conducted did not have accurate records of sexual harassment incidents. It did not keep records of informal reports, there had been no efforts to conduct a survey of the prevalence of sexual harassment, and there was disagreement within the institution about whether such information should even be recorded.

The lack of a valid measure of sexual harassment frequency should not prevent researchers from properly evaluating sexual harassment programs. As in the present project, studies can assess proximal outcomes of a program within a framework that conceptualizes potential linkages between the program, its immediate outcomes, and sexual harassment frequency. If short-term outcomes are found, subsequent research can test the relationships between these outcomes and the prevalence of sexual harassment. In this way, researchers can contribute to an emerging body of research on sexual harassment interventions.

The five outcome variables assessed in this study were knowledge about sexual harassment, perceptions of potential sexual harassment, willingness to report sexual harassment, attributions of blame for sexual harassment, and attitudes toward sexual behavior in the workplace. These variables were selected on the basis of two criteria. First, we included variables that coincided with the stakeholders' goals and assumptions about the program. Second, we selected variables that research, theory, and knowledge suggest are relevant to both the content of the program and the ultimate goal of reducing sexual harassment. Although other pertinent outcomes arguably could have been measured, organizational constraints compelled us to choose a limited set of variables that we believed could provide a practical assessment of the program and contribute to theory development on sexual harassment interventions. As the following review indicates, there is evidence to support positive and/or negative main and interaction effects for program participation and employee gender on each of the five outcome variables.

Knowledge about sexual harassment. The relevance of knowledge to the prevalence of sexual harassment is generally supported in the literature. Policies and legal threats are not sufficient for gaining compliance (Barak, 1994), but there is agreement that organizations should disseminate information that makes policies and procedures clear (e.g., Gutek, 1997; Paludi & Barickman, 1991; Peirce, Rosen, & Hiller, 1997). In short, knowledge of pertinent laws and policy issues is considered a necessary but not sufficient condition for reducing sexual harassment.

The likelihood that program participation would increase employees' knowledge about sexual harassment would depend on communication effectiveness and employees' initial levels of knowledge. From a mechanistic perspective on organizational

communication (Krone, Jablin, & Putnam, 1987), participants' knowledge would be expected to increase if the program transmits legal and policy information that is new to them.[4] However, if employees already were well informed about sexual harassment, message transmission might have no impact on knowledge and nonparticipants would be just as knowledgeable as participants.

We expected a main effect of gender on knowledge, with women being more knowledgeable than men, regardless of program participation. The primary basis for this prediction is that women have more experiences and awareness of sexual harassment (Grauerholz, 1994) and that sexual harassment laws and the organizational policies flowing from them were intended to reflect women's experiences (MacKinnon, 1987).[5]

An interaction between participation and gender would be expected if women's knowledge is uniformly high and men's knowledge changes as a result of participation. However, the form of the interaction is not clear. Knowledge might increase more for male participants because more of the information might be new to them. Conversely, men may tend to be less interested than women in attending to and remembering the information presented, resulting in lower levels of knowledge for men.

Perceptions of potential sexual harassment. Many authors have argued that more accurate perceptions of sexual harassment are relevant to its pervasiveness (Bonate & Jessel, 1996; Paludi & Barickman, 1991; Roscoe et al., 1994). Although a clear definition of sexual harassment cannot completely eliminate it, clarity of perceptions should enable employees to detect sexual harassment in their own and others' behavior and thus take action against it. Overly narrow definitions that recognize only extreme forms of harassment allow some perpetrators to continue illegal behaviors and avoid being blamed (Biaggio et al., 1990; Rigor, 1991). Vague definitions may exacerbate confusion among some employees, feed fears that innocent behaviors will be misconstrued, and foster skepticism about the legitimacy of sexual harassment allegations (Gutek, 1997; Nicks, 1996).

It was difficult to predict what impact the program's list of behaviors might have on perceptions. The program included ambiguous conduct when defining sexual harassment, such as suggestive staring and comments.[6] If participants with initially narrow definitions accept the program's definition as factual, they might be expected to respond by viewing more behaviors as harassing. Conversely, if participants reject the program's behavioral definition as ambiguous and think it will invite frivolous accusations (Gutek, 1997), their perceptions would be expected to not change or to become narrower.

Gender was expected to affect perceptions of sexual harassment because many studies have found women to see a broader range of behaviors as sexually harassing than men do, though there is more agreement on overt forms of sexual harassment than when the behavior is subtle (Bonate & Jessell, 1996; Gutek, 1995). Based on these findings, we expected women to view more behaviors as sexual harassment than men do, especially the subtler forms.

An interaction would be expected if women's perceptions of sexual harassment are broad and inclusive, regardless of program participation, whereas men's program par-

ticipation heightens their awareness of more subtle forms of sexual harassment. Another form of an interaction might be due to men's perceptions narrowing as a result of participation. Reactance theory (Brehm & Brehm, 1981) suggests that men, who are more likely than women to be accused of this offense (Pryor & Whalen, 1997; Shoop & Edwards, 1994), might perceive fewer ambiguous behaviors as sexually harassing in an attempt to psychologically restore their threatened freedom.

Willingness to report sexual harassment. Employees' willingness to report sexual harassment also is relevant to its prevalence (Blaxall et al., 1993). Although research indicates that reporting sexual harassment to authorities does not necessarily improve the situation for victims (Dansky & Kilpatrick, 1997), such reports may be a critical deterrent to future harassment if organizations act on them appropriately (Biaggio et al., 1990; Knapp, Faley, Ekeberg, & Dubois, 1997). Thus, reporting sexual harassment is viewed in the literature as a prerequisite to organizational action against perpetrators (Brooks & Perot, 1991) but not as a sufficient strategy for eliminating sexual harassment.

We conceptualized the possible effects of participation and gender on employees' willingness to report sexual harassment by drawing from a theoretical model developed by Brooks and Perot (1991). The model predicts victims' reports of sexual harassment based on normative expectations for reporting, perceived outcomes of reporting, and perceived offensiveness of harassment. Employees' willingness to make a report might be heightened, then, if the program depicts reporting as normative and important, the consequences of reporting as favorable, and sexual harassment as offensive.

The program addressed all three dimensions of the Brooks and Perot (1991) model to some degree. It addressed normative expectations for reporting by urging the campus community to unite to eliminate sexual harassment. It addressed outcomes of reporting by framing reports as a positive way to eliminate a problem that was interfering with the university's mission. However, it did not alleviate concerns about negative outcomes, such as retaliation or damage to one's career and reputation (Dansky & Kilpatrick, 1997; Knapp et al., 1997; Peirce et al., 1997). Finally, the program addressed perceived offensiveness by describing sexual harassment as illegal and discriminatory and discussing its harmful effects. Because the dimensions of the model were all weakly addressed by the program, participation in it might be expected to increase employees' willingness to report sexual harassment.

A main effect for gender on the willingness to report sexual harassment was expected using the model's three dimensions. Considering men's greater likelihood of being accused of sexual harassment, men might be less eager than women to participate in norms for reporting and more concerned about negative consequences for the perpetrator. Studies show that men also tend to see sexual harassment as less offensive than women do (Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993), making men less likely to report it.

An interaction between program participation and gender also might be expected based on the Brooks and Perot (1991) model. A program that promotes anti–sexual harassment norms, stresses positive consequences of reporting, and confirms the offensiveness of sexual harassment might be perceived as serving women's interests,

leading to women's greater willingness to file a report. In contrast, the program's emphasis on negative consequences for perpetrators and its inclusion of subtle behaviors as potential sexual harassment might be expected to diminish men's willingness to make a report.

Attributions of blame. Pertinent literature suggests that the tendency to blame victims for sexual harassment is relevant to its prevalence in at least three ways. First, victim blame may affect a bystander's impulse to intervene or file a report to help a victim (Gruder, Romer, & Korth, 1978; Latane & Darley, 1970). Similarly, feelings associated with self-blame may reduce victims' confidence to report sexual harassment (Jensen & Gutek, 1982; Wood, 1994, pp. 26-27). Finally, blaming the victim may be related to men's proclivity to engage in sexual harassment (Bingham & Burleson, 1996).

Attribution theories offer mixed predictions about how the sexual harassment program might affect blaming the victim. By suggesting that the university's policy depends on victims to define sexual harassment, the program could be expected to increase the belief that victims control sexual harassment situations and to exacerbate victim blame. The program's emphasis on reporting also might lead employees to anticipate more frivolous accusations and thus to attribute more blame to victims. On the other hand, Kelley's (1967) covariation model suggests that the program might be expected to reduce victim blame because it describes sexual harassment as pervasive (high consistency and low distinctiveness) and not welcomed by targets (high consensus).

A main effect for gender also would be expected based on attribution theories and previous research (Jensen & Gutek, 1982; Summers, 1991). Because men may be more likely than women to identify with accused offenders, attribution theories predict that men will attribute more harassing behaviors to external causes, such as the victim (Jensen & Gutek, 1982; Rigor, 1991; York et al., 1997). Men also might be more willing to see the victim as in control of the situation and thus deserving blame.

An interaction between participation and gender would be expected if women uniformly do not blame victims for sexual harassment and if participation changes men's attributions of blame, though the exact form this interaction might take is unclear. The program's attention to the damaging effects of sexual harassment might reduce male participants' tendency to blame the victim. Alternatively, the program's emphasis on the victim's perspective and the need to report sexual harassment might heighten men's expectations of being accused, leading them to attribute more blame to victims as a psychological defense against being blamed in the future (Jensen & Gutek, 1982; Summers, 1991).

Attitude toward sexual behavior at work. The final outcome variable was the attitude that sexual behavior at work is a harmless and enjoyable aspect of organizational life. The relevance of this attitude to the prevalence of sexual harassment is an ideological issue and is not agreed upon. Many sexual behaviors that are considered fun and friendly by some employees may be seen as offensive and harassing by others or in a court of law (Blakely, Blakely, & Moorman, 1995). The attitude that sexual behavior at

work is benign can function to trivialize sexual harassment and may contribute to its prevalence (Clair, 1993; Evans, 1978; Paludi, 1990). However, many men and some women view sexual behavior in organizations as innocuous or even flattering (Gutek, 1989), and office romance is normally protected by employees' rights to privacy unless job performance is negatively affected (Hoffman, Clinebell, & Kilpatrick, 1997).

It was unclear from the literature whether attitudes toward sexual behavior in the workplace would change as a result of participation in the program. Attitudes are highly resistant to change and might be expected to be unaffected by program participation. If the program raised awareness that others may not welcome sexual behavior at work, participation could be expected to have a positive effect. Conversely, a negative effect for participation would be expected if employees interpret the program as attempting to outlaw enjoyable, innocent behavior that they previously engaged in without penalty. This interpretation might trigger a form of psychological reactance (Brehm & Brehm, 1981), which could lead participants to more firmly defend the acceptability of sexual behavior at work.

Stronger evidence exists for the effect of gender on attitudes toward sexual behavior in the workplace. Considerable research indicates that men are less likely than women to view sexual behavior at work as negative and offensive (Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993). These attitudes may reflect gender-based socialization and power inequities that shape men and women to experience power and sexuality in different ways (Grauerholz, 1994). In a culture where women are more often sexually objectified and have fewer resources at their disposal than men do, sexual behavior at work should be expected to carry more negative meanings and consequences for women than for men (Conte, 1997; Grauerholz, 1994).

It was not clear whether gender would interact with program participation to affect attitudes toward sexual behavior at work. An interaction would be expected if women's attitudes remained negative toward sexual behavior at work across participation conditions and if men's became more positive or more negative as a result of participation. However, due to the limited nature of the intervention, it was equally likely that men's attitudes would not change.

In sum, the purpose of this study was to examine the main and interaction effects of participation in the sexual harassment program and employee gender on five outcome variables: knowledge about sexual harassment, perceptions of potential sexual harassment, willingness to report sexual harassment, attributions of blame for sexual harassment, and attitudes toward sexual behavior at work. Although the development of social science theory, research, and knowledge about how to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace is in its infancy (Grundmann et al., 1997), we were able to draw from relevant literature to conceptualize possible relationships between program participation, employee gender, and the five outcome variables. As the review reveals, we often found equally compelling arguments for predicting positive and negative program effects, both independent and in interaction with employee gender.

METHOD

Participants

Respondents were 530 employees (249 males and 281 females) working at least half-time at a university campus in the Midwest. Staff members made up 60.3% ($n = 320$) of the respondents, while 37.3% ($n = 197$) were faculty members, and 2.4% ($n = 13$) defined their position at the university as "other" or did not indicate their position. The majority of respondents (89%) were Caucasian, 8% were from other racial/ethnic groups, and 3% did not specify their race/ethnicity.

Research Design and Procedures

We randomly assigned departments to the experimental (program participation) and control (program nonparticipation) conditions. Staff and faculty departments were chosen from separate lists, with staff departments organized by type of labor (administrative vs. nonadministrative) and faculty departments organized by college; this stratification procedure assured that different categories of staff and faculty departments in each of the colleges would be represented in the two conditions. Random selection of departments rather than individuals resulted in a quasi-experimental design in which each employee and combination of employees did not have an equal chance of being assigned to one of the two conditions of the study. Because our unit of analysis was the individual employee, we explored possible sources of bias due to differences between employees who were assigned to the experimental and control conditions. Specifically, we compared the questionnaires returned by experimental and control groups on both demographic and experiential variables. Pearson chi-square analyses ($p \leq .05$) were performed to test the associations between participation condition and each variable. The composition of the two respondent groups was not significantly different in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, position at the university, prior experience as a perpetrator of sexual harassment, experience being accused of sexual harassment, or experience as a sexual harassment victim. The phi coefficients for this set of variables ranged from .03 to .06. These results suggest that employees in the two groups were comparable in important respects prior to the intervention.

Administration of the program to departments was completed within 5 weeks.[7] Questionnaires were then mailed to all permanent and regular employees at their campus addresses ($N = 1,226$). Questionnaires were returned by 43% ($n = 530$) of the employees through campus mail within 1 week. Respondents remained completely anonymous, and no follow-up questionnaires were distributed. Respondents were assumed to be members of the experimental or control group based on their response to a questionnaire item asking whether they had viewed the chancellor's videotaped speech on sexual harassment. Respondents who were unsure, or who did not indicate whether they had viewed the videotape, were excluded from the study ($n = 14$).

Crossing two levels of gender with the two conditions of participation in the sexual harassment program (participation, nonparticipation) resulted in four cells: participat-

ing males ($n = 100$), participating females ($n = 97$), nonparticipating males ($n = 141$), and nonparticipating females ($n = 178$). Due to missing data, only 516 of the 530 cases were used in the analyses.

Dependent Measures

A self-report instrument was used to evaluate the effects of the sexual harassment program. We developed questionnaire items to assess how participation in the program affected employees' knowledge about sexual harassment, perceptions of potential sexual harassment, willingness to report sexual harassment, attributions of blame for sexual harassment, and attitudes toward sexual behavior at work. The questionnaire items are provided in the appendix.

Knowledge scale. Five questions measured respondents' knowledge of legal and policy aspects of sexual harassment as emphasized in the educational program. The number of affirmative responses was summed to form a knowledge index for each respondent. Scores ranged from 0 to 5.

Perception scales. Respondents' perceptions of sexual harassment were determined by their responses to two lists of 24 behaviors regarded in the sexual harassment literature as harassing or possibly harassing (e.g., Blakely et al., 1995; Frazier, Cochran, & Olson, 1995). The instructions for the first list asked respondents to assume they were a supervisor or teacher and to indicate which behaviors they thought would constitute sexual harassment if they, themselves, directed them toward a subordinate or student. Similarly, the instructions for the second list asked respondents to indicate which behaviors they thought would constitute sexual harassment if they directed them toward a coworker or colleague. The behaviors on the two lists were identical, except for two items that were modified appropriately for the two types of targets. The two lists also differed in the sequencing of the 24 behaviors and were separated on the questionnaire by items assessing other variables.

Drawing from previous research (e.g., Fitzgerald & Hesson-McInnis, 1989; Gruber, 1992), a coding system consisting of five categories of potential sexual harassment was developed to classify the 24 behaviors listed on the questionnaire. The five categories were coercion, sexual imposition, seduction, relational imposition, and gender harassment (see the appendix). A sixth category, professional behavior, was also provided. This category included nonharassing behaviors that have no sexual or romantic implications, are not coercive, and emphasize the person's work role.

Using a coding sheet that we developed, three independent coders placed each of the 24 behaviors into one (and only one) of the six categories. The coding procedure was followed twice, once for each target of sexual harassment. Computation of the kappa coefficient of agreement (Siegel & Castellan, 1988) indicated a high level of intercoder reliability ($k = .86, z = 14.35, p < .0001$). We resolved coders' disagreements over the classification of a given behavior. One item was categorized as professional behavior and dropped from further analysis. Classification of the behaviors did not vary by target.

TABLE 1
Factor Loadings and Final Communalities for Attribution and Attitude Items

Attributions and Attitudes	*Factors*			*Final Communality Estimates*
	1	*2*	*3*	
1. Victims encouraged it	**.70**	.05	.02	.52
2. Harassment encouraged by target	**.63**	.16	.03	.52
3. Harassed people could prevent it	**.64**	.01	–.03	.43
4. Sexual remarks harmless	.04	**.58**	.05	.34
5. Not harassment if fun/kidding	.16	**.56**	.04	.41
6. Most people enjoy sexual attention	.16	**.56**	.04	.46
7. Helps careers more than hurts	.20	**.42**	–.01	.31
8. University dull if no flirting/jokes	-.06	**.60**	–.10	.39
9. Most people offended	.06	–.13	**.47**	.29
10. Should fire people who harass	–.25	.20	**.43**	.18
11. Sexual attention never appropriate	.05	–.13	**.53**	.35

NOTE: Attributions and attitudes listed are abbreviated versions of questionnaire items. Factor loadings for items defining each factor are indicated in bold.

Based on these analyses, five perception scales were formed, with each scale corresponding to each of the five categories of potential sexual harassment. We summed the number of behaviors perceived as being sexually harassing within each scale for each of the two targets. For example, the three items within the coercion category resulted in a score ranging from 0 to 3 with subordinate/student as the target and another score of 0 to 3 for coworker/colleague as the target.

Willingness-to-report scale. Two items measured whether respondents were willing to report sexual harassment they might experience or observe. The number of affirmative responses was summed to form an index of the willingness to report sexual harassment for each participant. Scores ranged from 0 to 2.

Attributions and attitude scales. Eleven items were written to assess respondents' attributions and attitudes toward sexual harassment. Three items were adapted from Jensen and Gutek (1982) to measure respondents' tendency to attribute blame to the victim when sexual harassment occurs. Eight additional items were written based on Evans (1978) to assess the attitude that sexual behavior at work is harmless and enjoyable. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

The 11 items assessing respondents' attributions and attitudes were factor analyzed using the principle axis method of extraction. Discontinuity analysis indicated that a three-factor solution best fit the data, accounting for a total of 40.1% of the common variance. Because the three factors were somewhat correlated and factor interpretability was paramount, the factors were rotated to an oblique, Promax solution. Final communality estimates were acceptable for all items, and the rotated factor-

loading matrix revealed a highly interpretable solution, with each of the 11 items loading on only one of the factors (see Table 1). Items comprising each of the three factors were used to form the three attribution and attitude scales.

The first scale, the attribution-for-blame scale, was defined by three items that tapped the attribution that people provoke sexual advances at work. The second scale was defined by five items indicating the attitude that sexual behavior at work is harmless and enjoyable; this scale was labeled *sexual behavior is harmless*. The third scale, labeled *sexual behavior is inappropriate*, was defined by three items that assessed the attitude that sexual behavior at work is inappropriate and offensive and that sexual harassment should be punished. Responses to the items defining each scale were summed and averaged to form scores ranging from 1 to 5 for blaming the victim and for each of the two attitude measures.

Reliability estimates using Cronbach's coefficient alpha were calculated for all scales and are reported in the appendix. Reliabilities for 10 of the scales reached the conventionally accepted level of .70 (see Nunnally, 1978, p. 238). Three scales showed reliabilities between .52 to .64. The reliability estimates for the willingness-to-report scale ($\alpha = .39$) and the knowledge scale ($\alpha = .36$) are the greatest cause for concern, as this low level of unreliability could severely hamper the study's power or ability to detect effects on these two outcome variables. We chose not to correct for unreliability in the outcome scales because there is much controversy surrounding the use of correction for attenuation formulas. Ghiselli, Campbell, and Zedeck (1981) warn that the formula for the correction for attenuation is "quite sensitive to variations in the magnitudes of the reliability coefficients . . . and estimates of relationships between perfectly reliable scores may be substantially in error" (p. 214). However, by not correcting for unreliability in the outcome scales, we increase the risk of incorrectly concluding that the sexual harassment program and gender had no impact on the outcome variables examined.[8]

RESULTS

To address the research questions, we tested the general prediction that participation in the sexual harassment program and gender would affect knowledge, perceptions, willingness to report, attributions, and attitudes. Two-tailed rather than one-tailed tests of the hypotheses were employed because negative results, not merely null results, from interventions are possible, as evidenced by the findings of program evaluators and organizational development researchers (e.g., Porras & Robertson, 1992; Posavac & Carey, 1989).[9]

A general linear model procedure using the least squares method was employed to perform analysis of variance for unbalanced designs (SAS Institute, 1989). Due to unavoidable unequal cell sizes, the resulting nonorthogonal design made it necessary "to take into account or adjust for the intercorrelations among main effects and interactions" (Pedhazur, 1982, p. 375). We proceeded by following the testing procedure suggested by Pedhazur (1982). For each dependent variable, we began by testing the interaction. When the interaction was not significant, we tested each factor while

TABLE 2
Knowledge and Attitude That Sexual Behavior is Inappropriate: Mean Scores of Participants and Nonparticipants

	Dependent Variables					
	Knowledge			*Sexual Behavior Is Inappropriate*		
Participation	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Participants	4.33_a	0.81	197	3.77_a	0.81	195
Nonparticipants	3.94_b	0.99	319	3.64_b	0.82	319

NOTE: Within columns, means with different subscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$.

adjusting it for the other factor. For all analyses, results did not vary depending on the entry order of the independent variables, thus minimizing interpretive problems common in nonorthogonal designs. When the interaction was significant, post hoc analysis using the least significant differences procedure ($p < .05$) was used to assist interpretation. For significant results, an effect size, d, or the standardized mean difference, is reported.

Knowledge About Sexual Harassment

The analysis of variance supported the intended effect of participation in the sexual harassment program on knowledge, $F(1, 512) = 21.53$, $p < .0001$, $d = .43$. As shown in Table 2, employees who participated in the program ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.81$) were significantly more knowledgeable about legal and policy aspects of sexual harassment than were employees who had not participated in the program ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 0.99$). There was no significant effect of gender on knowledge.

Perceptions of Sexual Harassment

Separate tests assessed the effects of gender and participation on perceptions of each type of potential sexual harassment for each of two targets. Gender and participation had no significant effects on perceptions of sexual imposition, seduction, relational imposition, and gender harassment for either target and had no significant effect on perceived coercion of a coworker or colleague. However, a significant interaction effect between gender and participation was obtained for perceptions of coercion when the target was a subordinate or student, $F(1, 512) = 6.49$, $p < .01$, $d = .23$. Contrary to the intent of the program, post hoc analysis revealed that participating males ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.75$) were significantly less likely to view coercion of a subordinate or a student as sexual harassment than were nonparticipating males ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 0.42$) or participating females ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.14$), whose perceptions did not significantly differ from each other (see Table 3). Nonparticipating females' perceptions ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 0.49$) did not significantly differ from the perceptions of any other group.

TABLE 3
Perception of Coercion of a Subordinate or Student: Mean Scores of Males and Females by Participation

	Male			*Female*		
Participation	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Participants	2.78_a	0.75	100	2.98_b	0.14	97
Nonparticipants	2.90_b	0.42	141	2.89_{ab}	0.49	178

NOTE: Means with different subscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$.

TABLE 4
Willingness to Report Sexual Harassment: Mean Scores of Males and Females by Participation

	Male			*Female*		
Participation	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Participants	1.25_a	0.76	100	1.45_b	0.68	97
Nonparticipants	1.52_b	0.66	141	1.48_b	0.66	178

NOTE: Means with different subscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$.

Willingness to Report Sexual Harassment

The analysis of variance indicated that participation and gender interacted to affect the willingness to report sexual harassment, $F(1, 512) = 3.87$, $p < .05$, $d = .17$. Contrary to the goals of the program, post hoc analysis indicated that participating males (M = 1.25, SD = 0.76) reported significantly less willingness to report sexual harassment than did nonparticipating males (M = 1.52, SD = 0.66), participating females (M = 1.45, SD = 0.68), or nonparticipating females (M = 1.48, SD = 0.66) (see Table 4).

Attributions and Attitudes

The analysis-of-variance tests indicated that participation and/or gender had significant effects on all three of the attribution and attitude variables. First, participation and gender had a significant interactive effect on blaming the victim, $F(1, 511) = 9.17$, $p < .01$, $d = .27$. As shown in Table 5, post hoc analysis indicated that participating males (M = 2.71, SD = 0.66) were significantly more likely to blame the victim than were all other groups: nonparticipating males (M = 2.52, SD = 0.52), participating females (M = 2.32, SD = 0.50), or nonparticipating females (M = 2.44, SD = 0.55). Nonparticipating males also were significantly more likely to blame the victim than were participating females.

For the attitude that sexual behavior is harmless, only a significant main effect for gender was obtained, $F(1, 511) = 5.44$, $p < .05$, $d = .21$. Men ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 0.74$) were

TABLE 5
Blaming the Victim: Mean Scores of Males and Females by Participation

	Male			*Female*		
Participation	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Participants	2.71_{a}	0.66	99	2.32_{c}	0.50	97
Nonparticipants	2.52_{b}	0.52	141	2.44_{bc}	0.55	178

NOTE: Means with different subscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$.

TABLE 6
Attitude That Sexual Behavior Is Harmless and Sexual Behavior Is Inappropriate: Mean Scores of Males and Females

	Attitude Variables					
	Sexual Behavior Is Harmless			*Sexual Behavior Is Inappropriate*		
Gender	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Males	2.03_{a}	0.74	240	3.49_{a}	0.83	240
Females	1.88_{b}	0.71	275	3.86_{b}	0.77	274

NOTE: Within columns, means with different subscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$.

significantly more likely than women ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 0.71$) to believe sexual behavior at work is harmless (see Table 6).

Significant main effects on the attitude that sexual behavior is inappropriate were indicated for both participation in the program, $F(1, 510) = 4.96$, $p < .05$, $d = .20$, and gender, $F(1, 511) = 29.07$, $p < .0001$, $d = .48$. As shown in Table 2, examination of group means revealed that participants ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.81$) viewed sexual behavior at work as significantly more inappropriate than did nonparticipants ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.82$). Furthermore, as shown in Table 6, women ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.77$) reported viewing sexual behavior at work as significantly more inappropriate than did men ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.83$).

In sum, a total of seven significant effects of participation and gender were obtained involving all of the outcome variables. There were two main effects for participation, two main effects for gender, and three participation-by-gender interactions. The size of these effects ranged from small to moderate. Small effect sizes (d around .2) were observed for the influence of gender on the attitude that sexual behavior is harmless and the effect of participation on the attitude that sexual behavior is inappropriate. The three interactions obtained also showed small effect sizes. Moderate effect sizes (d around .4 to .5) were obtained for the relation between participation and knowledge and for the gender difference obtained for the attitude that sexual behavior at work is inappropriate.

DISCUSSION

Effects of Participation in the Program

Consistent with the university administrators' primary goal for the sexual harassment program, participation was positively associated with employees' knowledge about basic legal and policy aspects of sexual harassment. Although the average scores for respondents suggest that employees were fairly knowledgeable even without the program, participants showed significantly more knowledge than did nonparticipants. These findings substantiate the effectiveness of the program for transmitting organizational information about sexual harassment.

Program participants also were significantly more likely than nonparticipants to endorse the attitude that sexual behavior at work is inappropriate. Though this was not anticipated, it could have occurred due to the program's content, which emphasized legal and policy issues and the university's lack of tolerance for sexual harassment.

Contrary to the goals of the program, however, participation did not successfully broaden employees' perceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment. Unchanged by program participation were employees' perceptions of sexual imposition, seduction, relational imposition, or gender harassment toward a subordinate, student, coworker, or colleague. Also unchanged were perceptions of sexual coercion toward a coworker or colleague. As others have argued, more intensive training methods probably are necessary to affect people's perceptions of sexual harassment, such as the use of case studies and group discussion (Paludi & Barickman, 1991; Thomann, Strickland, & Gibbons, 1989; York et al., 1997).

Effects of Employee Gender

The gender of employees was significantly associated with attitudes toward sexual behavior at work. Consistent with previous research (Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993), women were more likely than men to view sexual behavior as inappropriate and less likely to view it as harmless. These attitudes may reflect gender socialization and experienced power inequities, such that sexual behaviors in the workplace evoke more negative meanings and attitudes for women than for men (Conte, 1997; Grauerholz, 1994).

Perceptions of potential sexual harassment did not differ by gender. Men and women did not differ in their perceptions of sexual imposition, seduction, relational imposition, or gender harassment for either target, nor were there gender differences in perceptions of sexual coercion toward a coworker or colleague. These findings contradict the bulk of prior research, which has found that men are less likely than women to perceive social-sexual behaviors as sexual harassment, particularly when the behaviors are subtle (Bonate & Jessell, 1996; Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993; Gutek, 1995).

Interaction Effects of Program Participation and Employee Gender

Participation in the sexual harassment program and employee gender interacted to affect three outcome variables. Male program participants were significantly less

likely than male nonparticipants to view sexual coercion of a subordinate or student as sexual harassment, to be willing to report sexual harassment, or to direct blame away from the victim, whereas women's scores on these variables did not vary as a function of program participation. Male participants also were significantly less likely than female participants to view sexual coercion of a subordinate or student as sexual harassment, to be willing to report sexual harassment, or to attribute blame for sexual harassment away from the victim. No gender differences emerged for nonparticipants.

Reactance theory (Brehm & Brehm, 1981) suggests an explanation for the interaction we obtained for perceived sexual coercion. Specifically, male participants' reduced perception that sexual coercion of a subordinate or student is sexual harassment may have been a reaction to a perceived threat. The program's emphasis on punishment for sexual harassment might have been viewed by men as a constraint on personal freedom to engage in sexual behavior at work and may reflect their resistance to the university's efforts to control their behavior. It is surprising, however, that the men's negative reaction occurred specifically for sexual coercion of a subordinate or student—one of the most blatant forms of sexual harassment (Gutek & O'Connor, 1995), suggesting that some male participants appear to have responded in a defiant manner to the university's intent to constrain and punish overt sexual harassment.

The interaction effect we obtained for the willingness to report sexual harassment can be explained by drawing from the Brooks and Perot (1991) model for predicting reports of such behavior. According to the model, individuals are more likely to report sexual harassment when they believe reporting it is normative in their workplace, that the outcomes of reporting will be positive, and that sexual harassment is offensive. Our results suggest that the manner in which the program addressed these dimensions of the model was associated with a contrary reaction from male participants. First, some men may have perceived the program as too adamant in its efforts to institute a norm of reporting, especially since subtle behaviors were listed as forms of sexual harassment. Second, because men are most frequently accused of sexual harassment (Pryor & Whalen, 1997; Shoop & Edwards, 1994), the program's discussion of punishment for offenders may have raised male participants' concerns about the unfavorable consequences of reporting it. Finally, exposure to the program's broad list of behaviors that may constitute sexual harassment might have strengthened some men's belief that sexual harassment would not be serious or offensive to them.

Attribution theories offer an explanation for the finding that participation in the program and participant gender interacted to affect attributions of blame. Specifically, the male participants' greater tendency to blame the victim might have been a defensive attribution (Jensen & Gutek, 1982; Summers, 1991) in reaction to the program. Given statistics indicating that most sexual harassment complaints are filed against men, many men may identify less with victims of sexual harassment than with accused perpetrators. The program's emphasis on the victim's central role in defining sexual harassment and the need to report it may have increased some men's expectations of being accused themselves. They therefore may have attributed more blame to victims as a psychological defense against being blamed in the future.

General Interpretations

Two broad interpretations of the pattern of results we obtained are suggested by our discussion. First, the men's negative responses to the sexual harassment intervention may have been due to the inadequacy of a 30-minute program to address an issue as important as sexual harassment. The program used empirical-rational strategies, which assume people will adopt a proposed change if it can be rationally justified to them, and power-coercive strategies, which presume people will comply with a change if they are threatened by legitimate authority or other sources of power (Chin & Benne, 1985). However, consistent with the interaction effects we obtained, empirical-rational strategies and power-coercive strategies often are met with resistance and increased divisiveness when the area of change involves traditional attitudes and values and substantial differences of power and opinion (Chin & Benne, 1985). Participation in the program not only was associated with resistance among men but was also associated with gender differences that were not present among nonparticipants.

A third category of strategies called normative re-educative (Chin & Benne, 1985) may be more conducive to effecting change through a sexual harassment program (Thomann et al., 1989). These strategies assume that change occurs when people become actively involved in developing new norms and shared meanings, which also entails changes in attitudes, values, skills, and ways of relating (Chin & Benne, 1985). Although a committee of employees designed and implemented the program and participants were encouraged to continue discussing sexual harassment issues among themselves, normative re-educative strategies were not structured into the program itself. Hence, the program's limited strategic approach may be largely responsible for the unintended outcomes that occurred.

A neglect of men's concerns about issues such as false accusations and due process for the accused may have contributed to the pattern of results. Recent research indicates that fear of false sexual harassment accusations is pervasive, especially among men (Nicks, 1996). The program's cursory treatment of the behaviors that may constitute sexual harassment, its emphasis on victims' perceptions in determining sexual harassment, and its focus on reporting and punishment may have exacerbated some men's concerns about being unfairly accused and punished.

A second interpretation of our results, compatible with the first, focuses on the men's reactions to the program rather than on the inadequacy of the program's strategies and content. Specifically, the men's responses may have been an effort at self-preservation intended to defend and protect against a perceived attack on them. For example, although the program used mixed-sex presentation teams and clearly stated that both sexes engage in sexual harassment of others, male participants may have interpreted the program as an attack directed specifically at men because sexual harassment offenders are more typically men. Furthermore, the male participants' reduced willingness to report or recognize blatant forms of sexual harassment and their heightened tendency to blame the victim may illustrate a backlash (Faludi, 1991) against sexual harassment laws and policies. Such responses may reflect a discomfort with sexual harassment policies that seem to shift power to women that has traditionally belonged to men, namely, the power to define social reality. The responses also

might represent a form of psychological reactance (Brehm & Brehm, 1981) to being told that a traditionally safe avenue for expressing sexuality or dominance toward women is prohibited.

Implications for Organizational Practitioners

The results of this study should raise awareness among those who are attempting to intervene in organizations that there are inherent dangers in cutting corners when developing sexual harassment programs. The typical assumption is that some kind of action is better than no action at all, but our results suggest that this assumption is wrong and potentially dangerous. As Grundmann et al. (1997) contend, ineffective sexual harassment programs may be particularly harmful because they can meet an institution's burden of doing something about the problem without actually affecting the problem in a positive way.

Our findings also should raise awareness that educating employees about an organization's sexual harassment policy can be threatening to them and may lead to negative reactions. A program that informs employees about legal and policy aspects of sexual harassment, the avenues for reporting, and punishments to be imposed may have counterproductive effects on some employees' perceptions, attributions, and willingness to report sexual harassment. Organizations should make efforts to determine the nature and causes of such negative outcomes and should attempt to mitigate them. For example, it may be necessary to modify sexual harassment policies and grievance procedures and the strategies used for effecting change. However, the message that sexual harassment is illegal and intolerable should not be softened to appease employees who are unhappy with the constraints this imposes on their behavior, and such employees might react negatively to a policy and sexual harassment program no matter how skillfully the policy and program are developed. The challenge for change agents is to discover ways to reduce negative responses to sexual harassment policies while still achieving a workplace that is fair and equitable for all employees.

An additional implication that follows from our findings is that organizations should be prepared to develop distinct sexual harassment programs for different groups of employees. As Pryor and Whalen (1997) suggest, certain types of intervention strategies may have different levels of success with particular types of employees and in different organizational contexts. Organizations should conduct needs assessments and measure employees' relevant attitudes and beliefs so programs can be designed for individuals with particular characteristics or for different divisions or subcultures within the organization.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

An important challenge for future research on sexual harassment interventions in organizational contexts is to find ways to effectively deal with the difficulties that hinder their proper evaluation. The limitations we encountered are typical of field experiment research generally, in which practical constraints of the social setting often conflict with the researcher's efforts to control threats to validity. In evaluation studies in

particular, researchers often have little control over the evaluation process and even less control over the object of evaluation (Dearing, 2000). These constraints are intensified when the subject of the program is as sensitive and controversial as sexual harassment in the workplace.

Practical issues prevented our study from meeting standards that often can be met without difficulty in laboratory experiments using student samples. Perhaps the most serious constraint we encountered was the committee's decision to present the sexual harassment program to intact departments, inducing us to assign departments rather than individuals to the two conditions. The result was a quasi-experimental rather than a true experimental design, using a stratified random sampling of departments. Although program participants and nonparticipants did not differ demographically or in their prior experience as perpetrators or victims of sexual harassment, we cannot rule out sample selection bias as a problem.

The response rate was a related limitation in the study. Although low rates of response are not unusual in the sexual harassment literature, our response rate of 43% leaves open the possibility that response bias affected our results (Arvey & Cavanaugh, 1995; Babbie, 1989). Thus, it is possible that self-selection factors could be an alternative explanation for some of the obtained results, such as those obtained for the tendency to blame the victim. For example, perhaps men already high in hostility to anti–sexual harassment efforts and who participated in the program were more likely to return their questionnaires than were male participants who were not hostile.

The time period between the implementation of the program and the dissemination of the research questionnaire was a third potential concern. It took several weeks for the committee to present the sexual harassment program to all of the participating departments. Although the questionnaire was mailed immediately after the last department participated in the program, the delay for some departments may have weakened program effects if participants shared the content with control group employees.

A final issue was the reliability of measurement. The low reliabilities we obtained for the knowledge and willingness-to-report scales in particular indicate that these scales were composed of too few items, that the number of response options was too few, and/or that the items had too little in common (Bobko, 1995, p. 85; Nunnally, 1978, p. 230). These problems emerged in part from our decision to keep the questionnaire short in an effort to maximize the response rate. It may be useful to examine fewer outcome variables but with greater depth.[10]

One of the strengths of this study is that we conceptualized relationships between the sexual harassment program, its immediate outcomes, and the ultimate goal of reducing sexual harassment, even though only immediate effects were assessed. This approach demonstrates the value of program theory (Chen, 1990) and similar perspectives that embed evaluations in research, theory, and knowledge as well as in the goals and assumptions of key stakeholders within an organization. When short-term effects of a program are significant, longitudinal research should examine theorized links between proximal and long-term outcomes, including outcomes that change agents did not expect. Researchers should include behavioral outcomes when possible, including measures of the prevalence and reporting of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is a sensitive issue with legal ramifications, and it can be difficult to persuade executives or administrators that using invasive methods to evaluate a sexual harassment program will pay off in useful information. However, the success of these programs may depend on obtaining precisely these types of data. Our results suggest that providing formative information to assist organizations with program development and improvement should be a top priority for future research. Ideally, multiple methods of evaluation will be used before, during, and after a program, including qualitative methods such as interviews, small-group post-program review meetings, and the review of archival data. Implementation data also are needed to examine issues such as the consistency between the theoretical and actual implementation of an intervention, because unanticipated dynamics that occur within groups during a treatment process may contribute to the effects of a program (Chen, 1990).

Further research designed to assess presumably effective sexual harassment programs is essential, but our study suggests that evaluators should anticipate the possibility of negative program effects. Studies should begin to associate the specific content, components, and change strategies used by particular interventions with both positive and negative outcomes and to describe the variables that facilitate or hinder these outcomes. Furthermore, longitudinal research should examine whether responses to sexual harassment interventions are stable over time. It is possible that initial defensiveness and resistance may lessen through habituation and adaptation to new organizational and social norms.

Conducting research to evaluate a sexual harassment program is challenging, as evidenced by the scarcity of projects of this kind and their limitations. Although in this study we also confronted obstacles, we have demonstrated the importance of assessing such programs in organizational contexts. Moreover, we have opened up possibilities for further research in this area to contribute to scholarly understanding of sexual harassment and to the development of practical strategies for its prevention.

APPENDIX
Instruments

Knowledge About Sexual Harassment ($\alpha = .36$)

Is sexual harassment against university policy?

Is sexual harassment against the law in the State of [name of state]?

Do you know where or to whom on campus you should report sexual harassment? (If yes, please specify.)

Is it your responsibility as a university employee to know the definition of sexual harassment?

Sexual attention from a superior may be sexual harassment even if the superior believes the subordinate/student would welcome it.

Perceptions of Sexual Harassment (S = Subordinate or Student, C = Coworker or Colleague)

Coercion. Explicit propositions for sexual or social encounters that include or strongly imply promises of rewards for complying or threats of punishment for refusing (for S, $\alpha = .87$; for C, $\alpha = .76$).

You imply that S/C can be successful in class or on the job if S/C will have sex with you.
You tell S that he/she will do poorly in classes or on the job unless he/she dates you. (You tell C that you will make things difficult at work unless he/she dates you.)
You offer a better grade, a raise, or promotion to S if he/she will socialize with you. (You offer to do C a favor if he/she will socialize with you.)

Sexual imposition. Forms of deliberate bodily contact that are sexual or potentially sexual in nature (for S, $\alpha = .52$; for C, $\alpha = .64$).
You give S/C a kiss.
You pat, pinch, or brush against S/C.
You put your arm around S/C.

Seduction. Nonverbal sexual behaviors, discussion of sexual matters, sexual jokes, or verbal attempts to become sexually involved without using promises or threats as pressure for compliance (for S, $\alpha = .82$; for C, $\alpha = .83$).
You tell S/C about a sexual experience you've had.
You ask S/C to have sex with you.
You suggest that S/C needs to have sex more frequently.
You tease S/C about his/her sex life or sexual preferences.
You tell a joke with sexual implications to S/C.
You ask S/C questions about his/her sex life.
You tell S/C you think he/she would be a good lover.

Relational imposition. Requests for dates and other indications of romantic interest that do not make reference to sexual activity or the person's sexuality (for S, $\alpha = .76$; for C, $\alpha = .70$).
You write a note to S/C implying romantic interest in him/her.
You invite S/C to lunch for no particular reason.
You frequently telephone S/C at home "just to chat."
You invite S/C on a dinner date.
You ask S/C on a dinner date after being refused several times.

Gender harassment. Nonverbal behaviors, stereotypical (sexist) remarks and jokes, and other comments that are derogatory or complimentary and emphasize a person's gender (for S, $\alpha = .70$; for C, $\alpha = .71$).
You call S/C "honey," "baby," "sweetie," or similar names.
You stare at S/C's body.
You tell S/C he/she has nice legs.
You tell S/C you like his/her outfit.
You tell S/C you find him/her attractive.

Willingness to Report Sexual Harassment ($\alpha = .39$)
I would report sexual harassment if I experienced it personally.
I would report sexual harassment if I observed it firsthand.

Blaming the Victim for Sexual Harassment ($\alpha = .76$)
People who receive sexual advances at work or school usually encouraged it.
Most sexual harassment is consciously or unconsciously encouraged by the "target."
People who receive sexual attention at work or school usually could have prevented it.

Attitude Toward Sexual Behavior at Work

Sexual behavior at work is harmless ($\alpha = .75$)
Sexual remarks in the classroom or workplace are harmless.
Sexual attention is not sexual harassment as long as it is done in the spirit of fun or kidding.
Most people enjoy receiving sexual attention at work or school.

Sexual attention helps people's careers more often than it damages their careers.
This university would be a dull place to work if flirting and sexual joking were eliminated.

Sexual behavior at work is inappropriate ($\alpha = .52$)

Most people are offended by sexual comments or jokes in the classroom or workplace.
People who sexually harass others at work or school should be fired.
Sexual attention at work or school is never appropriate.

NOTES

1. It is unclear what percentage of institutions use sexual harassment educational programs (Grundmann, O'Donohue, & Peterson, 1997). A recent study by a New York–based law firm found that 62% of the companies surveyed had provided some form of anti–sexual harassment training for their supervisors (Laabs, 1998). However, a study by the Society for Human Resources Management found that although 97% of the U.S. companies polled had sexual harassment policies, employees and managers of these companies often had no knowledge of these policies (Cole-Gomolski, 1998). Similarly, a national survey of female managers found that 43% of the respondents were unaware of any sexual harassment policy within their organizations (Peirce, Rosen, & Hiller, 1997). In an effort to obtain comprehensive statistical information regarding the nature, frequency, or effectiveness of sexual harassment educational programs in the United States, we searched computerized databases of academic literature and contacted numerous government agencies, professional associations, and political organizations. Invariably, these sources informed us that the information we sought was unavailable.

2. Two additional research efforts have evaluated sexual harassment interventions. However, the first of these provided only preliminary results and did not fully report the method or the statistical analyses employed (Thomann, Strickland, & Gibbons, 1989). In the second study, Williams, Lam, and Shively (1992) did not evaluate the effects of a delineated educational program. Rather, they monitored the self-reported prevalence of sexual harassment among female undergraduates on a university campus over a period of 6 years after the university introduced a new sexual harassment policy and educational campaign.

3. Although the studies we cite here do not explicitly address the matter, the authors imply that they developed and administered the sexual harassment programs themselves. Blaxall, Parsonson, and Robertson (1993) evaluated the effects of an 11-hour program in which they trained six university employees to serve as contact persons for sexual harassment victims. Barak (1994) assessed the impact of a 1-day workshop she presented to 25 female employees of a government agency to improve their understanding of sexual harassment and appropriate responses to it. Finally, Maurizio and Rogers (1992) evaluated the effects of their 2½-hour training session on the knowledge and attitudes of 735 community care workers.

4. Stated simply, a mechanistic perspective sees organizational communication as the transmission of a message through a channel from a source to a receiver (Krone, Jablin, & Putnam, 1987).

5. Whether sexual harassment law actually represents women's experiences is unclear. Legal scholars have identified disparities between legal perspectives on sexual harassment and women's subjective experiences (Pollack, 1990).

6. It is also important to note that the program listed these forms of potential sexual harassment without context and made no distinction between personal and legal definitions of sexual harassment (see Fitzgerald, Swan, & Magley, 1997).

7. Several procedures were followed to promote standardization of the program in different departments. First, all presentation leaders used a two-page handout and followed an 11-item checklist as a presentation guide. Teaming first-time presentation leaders with leaders who already had conducted at least one presentation also enhanced consistency. Finally, a meeting was held with the presentation leaders to review the program materials and to encourage consistency across presentations.

8. Note also that unreliability can only hurt power and increase the probability of a Type II error; it does not increase the probability of a Type I error or the probability of obtaining spuriously significant results (Cohen & Cohen, 1983, p. 70; Zuckerman, Hodgins, Zuckerman, & Rosenthan, 1993, p. 53).

9. In summarizing the results of organizational interventions on individual-level outcomes (as we report in this study), Porras and Robertson (1992) indicate that fully 14% of the interventions had negative effects on individuals (p. 787).

10. The unreliability of these scales increased Type II error, or the likelihood of falsely concluding that gender and the sexual harassment program had no effect. However, low reliabilities do not increase the probability of obtaining spuriously significant results (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Zuckerman et al., 1993). This study, then, represents a conservative test of the effect of a sexual harassment program and gender on the outcomes examined.

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