

Cross-Cultural Reactions to Academic Sexual Harassment: Effects of Individualist vs. Collectivist Culture and Gender of Participants

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Male and female university students from the United States, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Ecuador, Pakistan, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Turkey read a standardized scenario in which a male professor was accused of sexually harassing a female graduate student. Respondents from individualist countries judged the professor to be guilty of sexual harassment more often than did those from collectivist countries. Women rendered significantly more guilty judgments and assigned more severe punishments to the accused professor than did men. Implications for the individualist–collectivist classification system and cross-cultural research are discussed.

KEY WORDS: sexual; harassment; culture; gender.

In the last 20 years, sexual harassment has become a topic of concern and a focus of psychological research in the United States. Almost one-half of all women in the United States probably have been sexually harassed (e.g., U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1981, 1995), and the negative effects of harassment on physical and emotional well-being have been documented (e.g., Goodman, Koss, & Russo, 1993; Harned & Fitzgerald, 2002).

Researchers have been slower to investigate the impact of sexual harassment multiculturally (e.g., Shupe, Cortina, Ramos, Fitzgerald, & Salisbury, 2002) or cross-culturally. In the present study, we

investigated and compared attitudes toward sexual harassment across nine countries with widely varying geographic, political, and cultural backgrounds. These countries are the United States, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Ecuador, Pakistan, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Turkey. These countries have been grouped into individualist and collectivist cultures, and hypotheses about attitudes toward sexual harassment have been tested on that basis.

Cross-Cultural Incidence of Sexual Harassment

Surveys of the incidence of sexual harassment in Canada have found it similar to, and possibly higher than, the incidence in the United States. Crocker and Kalemka (1999) established that 56% of working women in Canada had experienced sexual harassment in the previous year and that 77% had experienced it in their lifetime. On the basis of a broad definition of harassment that included being stared at, and including public places as well as the workplace and academic settings, 91% of Canadian

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women surveyed said that they had been subjected to sexual harassment at some point in their lives (Lenton, Smith, Fox, & Morra, 1999).

Sexual harassment incidence studies also have been conducted in European countries. Timmerman and Bajema (1999) reviewed 74 surveys on the incidence of harassment in northwest Europe. Frequencies ranged from 2 to 90%, and the authors concluded that the surveys were conducted so differently that no firm estimates could be made of the relative frequency of harassment in the various countries; thus no conclusions could be formed as to whether cultural factors within the countries affected rates of harassment. Timmerman and Bajema cited figures that show that 30–80% of German women said that they had been harassed. The upper figure, however, included respondents' reports of other women being harassed. In the Netherlands, rates ranged from 13 to 58%, and three surveys suggested figures between 50 and 60%. Perhaps the safest conclusion is that rates in northern Europe tend to be similar to those in the United States.

Timmerman and Bajema pointed out that many of the surveys were conducted by governmental agencies, which indicates a growing awareness of the problem among northern and western European nations; fewer surveys have been conducted in southern or eastern European countries. Gregory (1995) traced the development of European law in combating sexual harassment, and concluded that some progress had been made, but less has been accomplished in Mediterranean countries than in northern Europe.

Outside of the United States and Europe, most sexual harassment research has been conducted in Asia. For example, Tang, Yik, Cheung, Choi, and Au (1996) found that approximately 25% of women university students in Hong Kong had experienced sexual harassment, a somewhat lower figure than that at American universities.

The present study was designed to compare attitudes toward sexual harassment across countries. One study (Pryor et al., 1997) with a somewhat similar approach involved college students from Australia, Brazil, Germany, and the United States. The authors found that Brazilian students were more likely to see as flattering some behaviors that were considered harassing by American students. American women perceived several scenarios in the study as more harassing than did American men, but this gender pattern did not emerge in other countries.

Individualism vs. Collectivism

In the present investigation, countries were grouped as to the individualist or collectivist nature of their cultures. This construct was one of several posited by Hofstede (1980) to describe cultures. Individualism was defined basically as a concern about rights over duties and individual accomplishment over group well-being, whereas collectivism stresses the importance of belonging and places the group's needs above the individuals' needs.

We predicted that respondents from individualist countries, because these countries are more supportive of the rights of the individual, would regard sexual harassment more negatively and react more punitively toward an accused harasser than would those from collectivist countries. Although our prediction primarily focused on the type of country, many other factors covary between the two types of countries; individualist countries, for instance, are more Western, wealthier, and are more likely to have democratic governments. These factors also may be related to attitudes toward sexual harassment. Democratic governments generally support individual rights, countries with considerable resources are more capable of attending to the rights of individuals, and Western cultures in general have a stronger tradition of concern about women's rights. In Hofstede's (1980) model, wealth and democracy are interrelated with individualism and are conceptualized as part of the general cultural model. In addition to the complexity of the individualism–collectivism concept itself, many of the countries which are classified as individualistic in our study, particularly the United States, are multicultural, and thus contain numerous collectivistic subgroups.

As a consequence of the above issues, we do not intend to attribute all differences in attitudes toward sexual harassment that may occur among the various countries sampled in the present study solely to attitudes about individual versus group welfare, but to the web of interconnected factors that make up individualist vs. collectivist countries. Further, conclusions about the attitudes of respondents from individualist countries in particular will be limited to the dominant traditional culture of each country.

The Hofstede construct has been widely used in cross-cultural research. A recent investigation by Oyserman, Coon, and Kimmelmeier (2002) provided a meta-analysis of 50 studies in which United States and Canadian samples were compared with samples from other countries on the key concepts of

individualism and collectivism. The authors pointed out that, although Hofstede regarded individualism and collectivism as points on either end of a continuum, it might be more useful and accurate to conceive the two types as separate constructs measured on different dimensions, which usually but not always are in contrast to each other. In terms of the countries included in the present study, Oyserman et al. generally confirmed our conceptualization that the United States and Canada are more individualistic and less collectivistic than most other countries. Germany fell close to the United States on both constructs, and actually was rated as less collectivistic than the United States. Taiwan, Pakistan, and the Philippines were more collectivistic than the United States. The Netherlands was not included in the Oyserman et al. analysis. The only comparison that was somewhat divergent from our categorization was Turkey, which was seen as more collectivistic but also more individualistic than the United States.

In general, the Oyserman et al. findings supported the broad grouping of individualist vs. collectivist countries that formed the basis of the present study. We used this broad dichotomous categorization to distinguish the countries sampled in our investigation.

Cross-Cultural Legislation Against Sexual Harassment

All of the countries in our study, with the exception of Turkey, have some type of government law against sexual harassment, but this legislation varies considerably in terms of how it is stated and enforced. Although some countries may have more punitive laws than the United States, U.S. laws are among those most widely enforced. There are three types of statutes: 1. Statutory regulations that allow individuals to seek compensation; this approach is followed in the United States and Canada; 2. Criminal prohibitions are established to make sexual harassment a criminal offense; the Philippines and Taiwan have this type of law; 3. Regulations that permit those who are sexually harassed to leave their jobs without penalties and to obtain compensation from their company, a model adopted in Germany (Maatman, 2000). In terms of the other countries sampled in our research program, the Netherlands has enacted legislation that requires companies to protect their employees from sexual harassment (Netherlands, 2004). In addition, a public educational program against sexual harassment has been funded by the Dutch

government. In another of the countries sampled in the present investigation, Ecuador in 1995 passed domestic violence legislation that includes support for opposition to sexual harassment (United Kingdom Home Office, 2003). Hong (2004) also suggested that support is growing for toughening Taiwan's law against sexual harassment. Finally, in Turkey, legislation has been proposed to make adultery a crime. This antiadultery legislation has included sexual harassment as a crime also, but because of strong resistance in the country against legislating Islamic law, the antiadultery law is not expected to be passed (News24.com).

Gender Differences

According to Blumenthal's (1998) meta-analysis, gender differences in perceptions of and reactions to sexual harassment tend to be small in scale but rather consistent. Gutek (1995) suggested that women may respond more negatively than men toward sexual harassment when the harassment is more ambiguous and less severe, conditions which exist in our scenario study.

Struch, Schwartz, and van der Kloot (2002) conducted a value survey of over 11,000 respondents in eight countries, and they found that value judgments do not show cross-culturally consistent gender effects. By implication, therefore, we cannot be sure that differences found in the United States between men's and women's reactions to sexual harassment will be replicated across countries. However, as Struch et al. did not specifically focus on attitudes toward harassment in their study, our hypothesis was that women would see the accused professor's behavior as more harassing and deserving of stronger punishment than would men across all countries.

Overview of the Present Study

We investigated university students' reactions to an academic sexual harassment scenario that described "unwanted sexual attention." This type of harassment involves unwanted touching, sexually related comments about appearance, and persistent pressure for dates. The same standardized scenario and measures were administered to university students in the United States, Canada, Ecuador, Germany, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Turkey. In addition, a scale that

measures general attitudes toward sexual harassment were completed by participants.

The first hypothesis stated that participants from individualist countries (i.e., U.S., Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands) would judge the accused perpetrator to be guilty of sexual harassment more often than would those from collectivist countries (i.e., Ecuador, Pakistan, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Turkey). According to the second hypothesis, participants from individualistic countries also were expected to attribute less responsibility to the victim and more to the harasser than were participants from collectivist countries. The third prediction was that women would judge an accused harasser to be guilty more often than would men. The fourth hypothesis was that women were expected to attribute more responsibility to the accused harasser and less to the victim than were men. The fifth hypothesis stated that participants from individualist countries would demonstrate a greater preference for severe penalties for a guilty harasser than would collectivist culture participants. The sixth hypothesis stated that women would select more severe punishment options for a guilty harasser than would men. In addition, it was proposed (seventh hypothesis) that participants from individualist countries would demonstrate more hostility toward sexual harassment on a general attitude measure than would those from collectivist countries. Finally, the eighth hypothesis was that women would exhibit more negative general attitudes toward sexual harassment than would men.

METHOD

The same basic standardized materials were used in all nine countries and all participants were university students. However, participant recruitment, sample size, and administrative details varied from country to country.

Participants

United States

Seventy-eight undergraduates (53 women and 25 men) in introductory psychology classes at a university in the New York metropolitan area received experimental credit for their participation in the study. The average age of participants was 19.8, and the majority of the students (82%) were

in their first or second year of college. There were 31 European Americans, 18 African Americans, 13 Hispanic Americans, and 10 Asian Americans in this multicultural sample; six participants were unclassified as to ethnicity.

Canada

Thirty-five undergraduate and graduate students (29 women and 6 men) at a university in Montreal constituted the Canadian sample. Students were volunteers who were recruited by a research assistant assigned to a table in the lobby of a classroom building. The average age of the participants was 26.7 years, and 74% of the volunteers were undergraduates.

Ecuador

Fifty-seven volunteers (32 women and 25 men) were recruited from colleges in Quito, Ecuador. A research assistant approached students on campus and asked for volunteers. The average age of the participants was 24.2 years, and the majority (75%) of the students were juniors and seniors in college. Most of these college students were fluent in written English. Therefore, the materials were not translated for the participants from Ecuador.

Germany

Forty-one students (23 women and 18 men) at a university in Frankfurt volunteered to participate in the study. The average age of these volunteers was 27.3 years, and the majority of the participants were advanced graduate students. Most of the participants had considerable facility in English. Only the informed consent form and the debriefing form were translated into German.

The Netherlands

The Dutch sample consisted of 136 undergraduates (90 women and 46 men) attending a university in Amsterdam. Students were recruited from various academic departments, and they received a small monetary compensation for their participation. The average age was 21.5 years, and the majority (63%) were sophomores or juniors in college. The materials were translated for this sample.

Pakistan

Sixty-seven student volunteers (35 women and 32 men) were recruited from colleges in Lahore, Pakistan. All participants were proficient in English, therefore the materials were not translated for this sample. The average age of the participants was 21.2 years, and the majority of respondents were undergraduates, although some graduate students also participated in the study.

The Philippines

Sixty-three English-speaking undergraduate and graduate students (44 women and 19 men) at a university in Angeles City volunteered to participate in the study. The average age of the volunteer sample was 22.3 years, and the majority of the students were seniors in college. The materials were not translated for this sample.

Taiwan

Eighty-seven undergraduate volunteers (77 women and 10 men) from Introduction to Social Work classes at universities in Taipei were asked to volunteer to participate in the research project. The majority of the students were first year students (80%). The average age of the Taiwanese sample was 21.3. All the materials were translated for the Taiwan participants.

Turkey

One hundred eighty-five (147 women and 38 men), primarily first and second year undergraduates from psychology courses at a university in Istanbul were recruited for the project. Respondents voluntarily participated in the study. The average age of the sample was 20.9 years. The materials were translated for this sample.

Materials and Measures

The first author developed an academic scenario that described the testimony of a woman who was bringing sexual harassment charges against a male professor during a University Committee Hearing. The woman accused the professor of engaging in frequent nonsexual touching, making

inappropriate personal comments about her appearance and continually pressuring her for dates (including going away together for a weekend). The behaviors described constitute “unwanted sexual attention” (Gelfand, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1995), which includes touching and persistent attempts to date someone despite that person’s refusals. However, no threats were issued by the harasser. The victim reported that she had asked the professor to stop these behaviors on numerous occasions. The accused professor denied any wrongdoing, and he indicated that the victim’s charges were unreasonable because he was only trying to date her. The harassment incidents allegedly took place during required meetings between the female student and the male professor.

The original scenario included a manipulation in which the victim was presented either as a graduate student or a junior faculty member, with all other details kept constant. There were significant effects of the victim’s status in that students rated the accused professor as guilty of sexual harassment more often when the victim was a graduate student than when she was a junior faculty member. However, because our main interest here is cross-cultural differences in reactions to academic sexual harassment, and the data on victim status effects have been presented elsewhere (Sigal & Jabcobsen, 1999; van Baarsen & van der Pligt, 1998), we will focus on reactions to the basic graduate student victim scenario.

The scenario was administered to university students in the same form in most of the samples, although names of the characters in the scenarios were altered to be culturally familiar. The entire version in the Netherlands was translated into Dutch by the tenth and eleventh authors (van Baarsen & van der Pligt), the Taiwanese version was translated into Chinese by the sixth author (Hsu), and all the materials were translated for the Turkish sample by the eighth author (Boratav) and her associates. In addition, the informed consent and debriefing forms were translated by our assistant for the German sample.

Our authors judged the cultural appropriateness of the scenario for the Pakistan sample (Rashid & Anjum), the Turkish sample (Boratav), the Philippine sample (Carson-Arenas), the Netherlands sample (van Baarsen & van Pligt), and the Taiwan sample (Hsu). Graduate students from Ecuador and Germany reviewed the scenario for their respective samples. No major changes had to be made to the scenarios in any of the countries except Pakistan. Certain modifications to enhance

cultural acceptability in Pakistan were introduced by the fourth author (Rashid) and approved by the first author (Sigal) to ensure comparability of the scenario in all cultures. The female victim was dating someone else in the original scenario, but was described as engaged in the Pakistani version because having a boyfriend is considered “loose behavior” in Pakistan. In addition, all mention of touching was eliminated because any touching between unmarried men and women is prohibited in Pakistan. “Sensuous looks” were substituted for touching in the Pakistani version.

Guilt and Penalty Measures

There were two measures of perceptions of the guilt of the accused harasser. The first measure asked participants to judge whether the harasser was or was not guilty of sexual harassment. Participants also were asked to estimate the likelihood that the professor had committed sexual harassment on a 7-point Likert-type scale with lower numbers indicating a higher likelihood of sexual harassment.

If the professor was seen as guilty of sexual harassment, participants were asked to select a punishment option from the following list: verbal warning, letter of censure, forced psychological treatment, suspension or expulsion from the university, and criminal charges.

Responsibility Attributions

Perceptions of the responsibility of the victim and professor for the harassment incident were assessed on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with higher numbers representing greater attributions of responsibility to the victim or accused harasser.

General Attitudes Toward Sexual Harassment

Participants also completed a 10-item attitude scale, the Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory (TSHI; Lott, Reilly, & Howard, 1982). On the TSHI, respondents indicate a level of agreement with the items using a 5-point Likert-type measure. Scores on the TSHI are computed by reversing the scoring on two items and then summing the responses to yield a total score. *Low* values indicate *high* tolerance for sexual harassment, and *high* values reflect *low* tolerance of sexual harassment (i.e., negative attitudes toward sexual harassment).

Procedure

Although informed consent forms generally are not used in countries outside the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, we included these forms for all respondents with the exception of the German students who refused to sign anything, and the Dutch students who were not given these forms in order to avoid arousing anxiety and suspicion. Participants first completed an informed consent form, then read the scenario, and answered questions based on the scenario. Following these measures, participants completed the TSHI, filled out a demographics questionnaire, and read a debriefing form.

In the U.S. sample, students were tested in small groups. The Turkish, Taiwanese, and Dutch students completed the study in class. The Ecuadorian, Canadian, German, Pakistani, and Philippine samples participated in the study individually in various locations on campus.

RESULTS

Guilty–Not Guilty Judgments

Type of Country

There was a significant difference in the ratio of guilty to not guilty judgments between individualist and collectivist countries, $\chi^2(1, N = 750) = 7.21, p < .007$. In support of the first hypothesis, the odds of a guilty as opposed to a not guilty judgment were more than 1.5 times greater in individualist as in collectivist countries, OR = 1.51 (95% CI = 1.11, 2.04). Table I shows the percentage of guilty judgments for each of the nine countries.

Further support for the first hypothesis is illustrated by the finding that the accused harasser was

Table I. Percentage of Guilty Verdicts and Hofstede’s (1980) Individualistic Rankings for Countries

Type of country	Ranking	<i>N</i>	% Guilty verdicts
Individualist			
United States	1	78	63
Canada	4	35	63
Netherlands	4	136	74
Germany	15	41	49
Collectivist			
Turkey	28	185	66
Philippines	31	61	46
Taiwan	43	84	70
Pakistan	47	61	36
Ecuador	52	57	37

seen as more likely to have committed sexual harassment by participants from individualist countries ($M = 3.44$; $SD = 1.43$) than participants from collectivist countries ($M = 3.84$; $SD = 1.62$); lower numbers reflect a greater likelihood of sexual harassment. The ANOVA for type of country yielded a significant effect, $F(1, 741) = 13.81$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .018$.

Gender of Participant

A significant difference in the number of guilty and not guilty judgments between men and women was revealed in an analysis for the third hypothesis, $\chi^2(1, N = 738) = 22.02$, $p < .001$. The odds of a female participant reaching a guilty judgment were more than twice that of a male participant, which supports the gender prediction, $OR = 2.157$ (95% $CI = 1.560, 2.983$).

Further support for the third hypothesis was obtained in an ANOVA performed on perceptions of whether the harasser had committed sexual harassment, $F(1, 741) = 29.48$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .38$. Women ($M = 3.50$; $SD = 1.48$) judged the accused professor as significantly more likely to have committed sexual harassment than men did ($M = 4.15$; $SD = 1.65$); lower numbers represent a higher likelihood of sexual harassment.

Suggested Penalties for Harassment

In all analyses related to recommended penalties, the six alternative penalties were categorized as either lenient or severe. Lenient penalties consisted of verbal warnings, letters of censure, and forced psychological treatment. Severe penalties consisted of suspension or expulsion from the university and criminal charges. This dichotomized categorization was adopted because it was assumed that participants from the various countries might not be equally familiar with the specific penalty categories.

Type of Country

The initial analysis of choice of penalty selected by participants from individualist and collectivist countries yielded a significant result, $\chi^2(1, N = 729) = 6.88$, $p < .009$. Contrary to predictions, participants from individualist countries revealed a less than expected preference, and collectivist country participants showed a greater preference, for severe penalties. The odds were greater than 1.6 that students from individualist countries would choose

the less severe penalties as compared with the choices of students from collectivist countries, $OR = 1.605$ (95% $CI = 1.126, 2.288$). A further analysis in which we examined the nine countries individually yielded a significant difference, $\chi^2(8, N = 729) = 24.46$, $p < .002$. This analysis indicated that students from Germany and the Netherlands exhibited a lower preference, and students from Taiwan a higher preference for severe penalties than expected. Data from the respondents in other countries followed the expected pattern of results.

Gender of Participant

The analysis revealed a significant effect of gender of participant on selection of penalties for the accused harasser, $\chi^2(1, N = 719) = 4.76$, $p < .03$. As predicted, the odds of a female participant selecting a severe penalty were 1.5 times that of a male participant, $OR = 1.545$ (95% $CI = 1.043, 2.289$).

Perceptions of Victim and Perpetrator Responsibility

Type of Country

The second hypothesis was supported by an ANOVA of victim responsibility ratings which produced a significant effect, $F(1, 741) = 19.93$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .026$. Participants from individualist countries ($M = 2.92$; $SD = 1.73$) rated the victim as having less responsibility for the incident than did those from collectivist countries ($M = 3.55$; $SD = 1.78$); higher numbers represent more responsibility attributed to the victim.

Correspondingly, this hypothesis was supported by results obtained from an ANOVA of perpetrator responsibility that was also significant, $F(1, 740) = 33.70$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .044$. Students from individualist countries ($M = 5.87$; $SD = 1.16$) demonstrated a greater attribution of responsibility to the perpetrator than did students from collectivist countries ($M = 5.30$; $SD = 1.40$); again, higher numbers were associated with increased perpetrator responsibility. It should be noted, however, that both types of respondents rated the perpetrator's responsibility as high.

Gender of Participant

As predicted, a significant ANOVA, $F(1, 741) = 19.75$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .026$, indicated that women

($M = 3.14$; $SD = 1.75$) judged the victim as less responsible for the incident than did men ($M = 3.71$; $SD = 1.81$). Also as hypothesized, women ($M = 5.66$; $SD = 1.23$) perceived the perpetrator as significantly more responsible for the incident than did men ($M = 5.17$; $SD = 1.53$), although both men and women rated the perpetrator as having a high degree of responsibility. The ANOVA reached significance $F(1, 740) = 24.23, p < .001, R^2 = .032$.

TSHI Results

Type of Country

As predicted, participants from individualist countries ($M = 36.27$; $SD = 6.56$) were less tolerant of sexual harassment than were those from collectivist countries ($M = 17.26$; $SD = 16.92$); higher numbers represent less tolerance of sexual harassment. The ANOVA was significant, $F(1, 622) = 199.04, p < .001, R^2 = .242$.

Gender of Participant

Contrary to predictions, women participants ($M = 24.56$; $SD = 17.48$) did not exhibit significantly higher TSHI scores (i.e., they were not significantly less tolerant of sexual harassment) than men ($M = 25.17$; $SD = 14.29$). However, there was a significant interaction between type of country and gender of participant, $F(1, 622) = 7.78, p < .005, R^2 = .012$. In individualist countries, women ($M = 37.61$; $SD = 6.29$) had higher TSHI scores than men did ($M = 33.21$; $SD = 6.14$). However, in collectivist countries, men ($M = 19.13$; $SD = 15.65$) had higher TSHI scores than women did ($M = 16.59$; $SD = 17.33$).

DISCUSSION

Guilty vs. Not Guilty Judgments and Type of Culture

As predicted, participants from individualist countries judged the accused professor as guilty of sexual harassment significantly more often than did participants from collectivist countries. In addition, participants from individualist countries attributed less responsibility to the victim and more responsibility to the harasser than did participants from collectivist countries. Following this pattern of results,

respondents' scores on the TSHI, which is a general attitude measure of hostility toward sexual harassment, were significantly more negative for participants from individualist countries than for participants from collectivist countries. These results are consistent with the conceptualization of individualist countries as more concerned with individual rights and collectivist countries as more motivated to preserve harmony in society and to value the needs of society above the rights of individuals.

These results suggest that, despite some critical evaluations of Hofstede's (1980) original classification system, his rankings have heuristic value. However, further examination of our results makes it clear that the conceptualized dimensions are quite complex. Earlier we indicated that it is important to acknowledge that other factors may covary with individualism and may influence respondents' reactions to sexual harassment. In particular, the countries that were characterized as individualistic in the present study are somewhat homogeneous as far as the traditional dominant culture is concerned (although the United States and Canada in particular are increasingly multicultural) in that all the countries basically are Western in culture, have democratic governments, are highly industrialized, and rank among the wealthier countries in the world. All of these factors may contribute to the pattern of hostility toward sexual harassment, more concern about women's rights, development of laws against sexual harassment, and considerable discussion of the sexual harassment issue in the media.

A much more diverse pattern is illustrated by the countries included in the collectivistic category. One obvious difference among the countries of Ecuador, Pakistan, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Turkey is geographical diversity. Our collectivist cultures are situated in the Far East, the Middle East, and South America. However, many other differences are more difficult to identify and classify. Taiwan, the Philippines, and Turkey appear to be more open to Western influences than are Pakistan and Ecuador. Pakistan may be categorized as exemplifying religious collectivism, with a clear majority of Muslim residents. On the other hand, although approximately 98% of Turkish residents are Muslims, the percentage of devout Muslims probably is lower in Turkey than in Pakistan, which suggests that characterizing Turkey as homogeneous in religious practices (i.e., religious collectivism) would be inaccurate. In addition, Turkey's government has been secular and democratic since the early

1920s when it adopted the Parliamentary Democratic Government system, although just recently, a religious party, the Muslim Democrats, has been elected to power. Women are highly visible in the professions in Turkey (Wasti, Bergman, Glomb, & Drasgow, 2000), but the percentage of women in top management power positions is substantially less than it is at lower managerial positions. To add to the complexity of categorization, at present, Pakistan does not have a democratic government, but in the past has had women prime ministers.

The characterization of Taiwan is also complex. There is more diversity of religion in Taiwan than in Turkey or Pakistan. The major religions are a blend of Taoism and Buddhism, and both these religions foster familial collectivism. Taiwan also is associated with a strong tradition of democratic governments, which is particularly impressive in the light of the threat from mainland China.

Adding to the complexity of the collectivist category countries, the Philippines and Ecuador both are characterized as democratic republics with elected leaders. As is the case of Taiwan, both countries appear to be somewhat diverse in terms of types of religion.

A factor that may be characteristic of some of the collectivist countries is the relative lack of legal cases and discussion of the issue of sexual harassment in the media as compared to that in individualist countries. Although the greatest volume of cases, as well as the most public discussion of the issue took place in the United States, particularly following the highly publicized Anita Hill testimony at the Senate Hearings on the confirmation of Clarence Thomas as a Supreme Court Justice, the topic also has been discussed widely in the other individualistic countries. In Turkey and Pakistan, little psychological research has been conducted on sexual harassment, and it is difficult to persuade individuals to participate in this type of research (e.g., Kamal & Tariq, 1997). In addition, this issue is not discussed at all in public. In Pakistan, any interaction between mixed dyads is prohibited, so certainly there would be no public discussion of possible acts of sexual harassment.

Another factor is the reaction of the public to sexually harassing behavior. In Latin America, according to Shupe et al. (2002), some behaviors that would be considered offensive in other countries are considered normal and acceptable. Therefore, the less severe, more ambiguous scenario described in the present study possibly would not appear offen-

sive to the majority of our Ecuadorian respondents. A similar line of reasoning may apply to our Turkish participants. According to Wasti et al. (2000), as a result of the importance of and expectation of traditional gender roles in the workplace, women may be vulnerable to the hostile work environment associated with some forms of sexual harassment. However, Turkish women may not see this type of sexual harassment as a problem because it is expected or seen as normative in the Turkish culture.

All of these suggested interpretations imply that the concept of collectivism should be expanded and at least divided into more complex categories such as religious, economic, and familial collectivism. In addition, rather than simply relying on the basic distinction between individualist and collectivist cultures that focuses on the relative importance of the individual and society, the influence of other factors such as the type of government, the role and status of women, the incidence of sexual harassment, different normative cultural definitions of appropriate sexually related remarks and behaviors, and the prevalence of public discussions of the issue should be examined.

Penalty Decisions and Type of Culture

The hypothesis that participants from individualist countries would select more severe penalties than would those from collectivist countries was not supported. However, a significant effect was obtained in a direction opposite to the hypothesis; participants from collectivist countries chose more severe penalties than did those from individualist countries. In an analysis designed to obtain a clearer picture, the pattern of penalty choices associated with each of the nine countries revealed that respondents from the individualist countries the Netherlands and Germany selected less severe penalties than expected, and respondents from the collectivist country of Taiwan selected more severe penalties than expected.

Although interpretation of differences in penalty choices is a complex task, some plausible interpretations might be proposed to explain the unexpected German and Dutch punishment selections. For example, it has been suggested (e.g., Trommsdorf & Iwawaki, 1989) that German individuals place a great importance on personal rights, independence, and personal boundaries. Support for this cultural characteristic was reflected in the present study by the percentage (over 25%) of the

German students who refused to sign the informed consent form because they considered it to be an infringement on individual rights to privacy rather than protection for respondents. Although this attitude easily could be applied to an interpretation of German respondents' hostility toward sexual harassment, which clearly constitutes an infringement upon a person's rights in the workplace or academia, application of this interpretation to the penalty judgment measure is more complex. German students may be hesitant to impose their own judgments on individuals who have performed wrongful behavior because they may be overstepping others' personal boundaries. Consequently, these students may see the professor as someone who has worked very hard to achieve his goals, and they may be reluctant to punish him harshly.

An alternative approach may be more appropriate for understanding the Dutch students' deviation from the expected pattern of selecting severe penalties for the harasser. Graham, Werner, and Zucker (1997) identified a "retribution" approach to punishment that suggests that the "punishment should fit the crime" and a "rehabilitation" approach that focuses on the goal of reforming wrongdoers so that they can return to society. An investigation by Marlatt and Tapert (1993) on a different topic supported the concept that Dutch respondents may favor less severe penalties for wrongdoers because of a preference for rehabilitation rather than retribution.

The preference for more severe punishment options expressed by the Taiwanese respondents is difficult to explain as Taiwan was identified as more collectivistic and less individualistic than the United States and Canada. However, although Taiwan is characterized by familial collectivism, it also seems to be strongly influenced by Western culture. In addition, Chia, Moore, Lam, Chuang, and Cheng (1995) found similar scores on the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS) for U.S. and Taiwanese respondents. Chia, Allred and Jerzak (1997) suggested that, as countries become more modern and democratic, the status of women and attitudes toward women may become more positive. This trend, which certainly has characterized Taiwan since its inception, may help to explain the imposition of severe penalties for sexual harassment by Taiwanese participants. One other explanation stems from the fact that the gender imbalance was particularly extreme in the Taiwan sample, which included 77 women and only 10 men. This imbalance also may have contributed to the penalty selection. Finally, Taiwan may be con-

sidered to be somewhat "retributive" in reaction to wrongdoing. According to Internet figures (Amnesty International, 1999), the death penalty must be imposed in Taiwan for 65 different offenses, and it is optional for several other offenses.

Explanations may vary even for collectivist countries that followed the expected pattern of penalty choices. For example, because the death penalty exists in the Philippines, that might suggest a more retributive attitude that does not conform to the Philippine respondents' penalty preferences. However, the Philippines ranks high (#3) on Hofstede's (1980) "power distance" measure. According to Hofstede, this measure relates to respect and deference to those in authority. The high ranking of the Philippines on the power-distance dimension suggests that Filipinos/as may be reticent about lodging, or even expressing, complaints to authority figures. The professor in the scenario represents an authority figure, and Filipinos/as may be reluctant to recommend severe penalties for the harasser. In addition, according to Chan, Tang, and Chan (1999), in collectivist countries such as the Philippines, individuals tend to avoid conflict because maintaining harmony is paramount. Certainly, recommending severe penalties for the accused professor would be seen as introducing conflict into the academic setting.

In terms of the Turkish sample's punishment option preferences, sexual harassment has only recently begun to be discussed as a major public issue in Turkey, and there are almost no preventive/educational efforts on university campuses or in organizational workplaces. Therefore, Turkish students most likely are not familiar with possible punishment of harassers. In addition, Turkish society is patriarchal and probably protective toward men (Wasti et al., 2000). This reasoning in terms of a patriarchal culture, the lack of information about sexual harassment, and the conflict-avoidance tendency in collectivist countries, also characterizes the Pakistani culture, and might explain Turkish and Pakistani respondents' preference for lenient penalties. Traditional gender roles predominate in these countries, and this may discourage women from directly confronting the harasser. In previous research on sexual harassment in Turkey, for example, Wasti and Cortina (2002) found that women tended to cope with sexual harassment by using subtle, indirect, and often nonverbal forms of communication.

The explanation for Ecuadorian students' conformity to the expected penalty choices may be different from the above interpretations. As

discussed earlier, the behaviors described in the scenario may have appeared normal and acceptable in Latin America. In addition, because few laws against sexual harassment exist in these countries (DeSouza, Pryor, & Hutz, 1998), and there is a "sexual silence" (Pryor et al., 1997; Shupe et al., 2002) that makes it difficult to discuss sexual issues in public, these students maybe unaware of appropriate penalties.

The results of the present study and those of DeSouza et al. (1998) suggest that the range of measures of reactions to sexual harassment should be expanded to include penalty options.

The results of the TSHI supported the culture prediction and can be interpreted with the reasoning which we have already presented.

Guilty–Not Guilty Judgments and Gender

As predicted, women judged the professor as guilty of sexual harassment more often than did men, and they attributed less responsibility to the victim and more responsibility to the accused harasser than did their male counterparts. Berdahl, Magley, and Waldo (1996) suggested some explanations for this generally consistent gender effect. The higher actual incidence of sexual harassment for women than for men in the workplace implies that women would feel more threatened by sexual harassment. Women tend to identify more with the victim, and that tendency could have been enhanced in the present study because the victim was female. In addition, Berdahl et al. used the power interpretation to expand their explanation. They concluded that because harassment is associated with power on the part of the harasser, and women historically have been victims of social power employed by men, women can relate more strongly to the described sexual harassment scenarios than men can. Therefore, it seems reasonable that women would react more negatively toward the harassment in our scenario than would men. The results of the present study suggest that these gender effects may be consistent across cultures, at least for the countries included in our analysis.

Penalty Choice and Gender

Further evidence of a gender difference in reactions to alleged sexual harassment was illustrated in the finding that, as hypothesized, women assigned significantly more severe penalties to the accused harasser than men did. Similar results were obtained by DeSouza et al. (1998), which indicate that women

perceive sexual harassment as a serious problem that should be punished severely.

Gender results on the TSHI were mixed. The finding that women from individualist countries scored higher on the measure, which indicates that they hold more negative attitudes toward sexual harassment than men do, is consistent with the above reasoning. However, men from collectivist countries scored higher on the TSHI than did women from those countries. This finding may support the contention that gender effects are inconsistent across cultures (e.g., Struch et al., 2002), but several factors argue against such a definitive conclusion. The TSHI measure is a generalized attitude scale. It is unclear whether or not this scale can predict behavior (e.g., Boninger, Krosnick, & Berent, 1995), or whether the scale is culturally appropriate for all of the collectivist cultures included in our study. In addition, it also is possible that the translations of the TSHI were not sufficiently accurate, as our coauthors are not experienced translators.

Strengths and Limitations of the Present Study

We administered identical materials in all nine countries so that comparisons could be made on a number of dependent measures. Our approach of administering identical materials, with a combination of scenarios and general attitude measure increases the rigor of this type of research.

Our team was comprised of cross-cultural researchers from several of the countries sampled in the project. Each cross-cultural researcher examined the materials for cultural appropriateness and provided interpretations of the various findings for the particular country, thus enhancing the validity of and the explanation of the results. Finally, by conceptualizing the study within the framework of the popular explanatory model of individualism vs. collectivism, we attempted to expand knowledge about this categorization system.

Limitations of the present cross-cultural investigation include the fact that all respondents consisted of convenience samples of university students recruited in various ways in the different countries. Although this problem is a consistent one in cross-cultural research (e.g., Sigal & Jacobsen, 1999), more attempts should be made to recruit representative and older samples, as well as people in the workforce. One other point relates to the differential ages of our samples. Although we attempted to control for the type of respondent by involving only

university students in the samples, the participants varied in age and level of education, as well as type of college/university. Future studies should attempt to equate the ages of the various samples and to include respondents from similar educational levels and socioeconomic status. Another limitation relates to the materials in the study, which were translated in some of the countries and which were altered in the Pakistani version to be culturally appropriate. Although culturally appropriate material is important to include and the wording of the translation may be identical to the original script, it still is possible that the meaning of the material in the translation may differ from the original. In addition, as indicated earlier, none of the coauthors who performed the translations were experienced translators. Conditions of administration also were determined by the local researchers, and these varied considerably among our samples.

Another issue relates to the validity of the individualism–collectivism dichotomy (Voronov & Singer, 2002). This dichotomy appears to be too simplistic. For example, Oyserman et al. (2002) argued that researchers should include individual measures of individualism–collectivism rather than relying on countrywide ratings because the construct can vary widely between subcultures and individuals within a country. Future researchers should include measures of individualism and collectivism both at the national level and the individual level within each country.

An alternative approach to identifying the cultures sampled in our study, or in future studies, would focus on the existence or status of laws or statutes against sexual harassment in the various countries. However, it is almost impossible to compare laws or statutes across nations because the forms of these statutes, the penalties for sexual harassment behavior, and the information available on relevant laws or statutes vary considerably from country to country, as we indicated when we addressed this issue earlier.

Although we sampled respondents in North America, South America, Europe, and Asia, additional efforts should be made to expand the range of countries in cross-cultural studies. Finally, all attitude measures, should be evaluated for cross-cultural viability.

In conclusion, participants from four individualistic countries responded more negatively toward an academic sexual harassment scenario than did participants from five collectivist countries. The selection of severe versus lenient penalties for the harasser did not follow the expected pattern. Women across coun-

tries, in general, responded with more hostility toward the described sexual harassment than men did. The present investigation indicated that research relevant to gender roles can produce interesting results. At the same time, our research illustrated a number of the difficulties endemic to cross-cultural research.

APPENDIX: SEXUAL HARASSMENT SCENARIO

Imagine that you are a student member of a University Committee on Sexual Harassment. You are hearing the following case in which Miss Lynne Nelson is accusing Dr. Edward Boland of sexual harassment.

Miss Lynne Nelson is in her late twenties and is a graduate student for a Masters degree in anthropology at a large metropolitan university. She is a good student, she is dating someone on a regular basis, and has a number of friends. In order to fulfill course requirements, Miss Nelson, and another student, Mr. John Marshall, had to take an independent study. This type of course involves students engaging in guided reading and meeting once a week with the professor in charge. Miss Nelson and Mr. Marshall did an independent study on cultural anthropology with Dr. Edward Boland. Dr. Boland is a specialist in cultural anthropology, is in his early forties, and has worked as a professor in the Anthropology Department for nearly fifteen years. Dr. Boland was divorced about four years ago. Miss Nelson has made an appeal about Dr. Boland's conduct during study meetings to the University Committee on Sexual Harassment, of which you are a member. The committee is hearing her story and will also question Dr. Boland. The chair of the committee, Dr. Reynolds, will conduct the actual questioning of Miss Nelson and Dr Boland, using questions submitted by the committee members.

Dr. Reynolds: Miss Nelson, will you please tell us your story?

Miss Lynne Nelson: This is difficult for me to talk about. Approximately six months ago we started work with Dr. Boland, and he almost immediately seemed interested in more than my work. He made comments each time we met on my clothes and how they fit me. It was really upsetting. After a couple of meetings, as Mr. John Marshall and I were leaving his office, he called me back and asked me to meet him for coffee or lunch. I told him I was not interested and left his office. A couple of weeks later, he asked

me to go to dinner with him and I again said no. Later in the term he phoned me at home and asked me to go on a ski trip with him. This really bothered me and I said that I definitely would not go out with him and not to call me at home again. He apparently refused to accept no for an answer because he called me several more times at home and made comments about my going out with him. I was becoming increasingly uncomfortable during the study meetings because his comments also included more and more sexual references. Also, another thing that I really didn't like was that at the meetings, especially later on, he frequently touched me. Only mild I suppose, like a pat on the arm or the shoulder usually, but I really didn't like it. It was more upsetting each time he did it.

Dr. Reynolds: Thank you, Miss Nelson. I'd now like to ask you some questions about the events. Would you like to stop for a few moments to compose yourself?

Miss Lynne Nelson: No thank you, I can continue.

Dr. Reynolds: This touching, was it ever what you would call sexual touching?

Miss Lynne Nelson: Well, I felt that it was sexual. I felt that the intention was sexual, but I think I understand what you mean to ask and no, it was never on any intimate place. I still found it unpleasant though.

Dr. Reynolds: So the unpleasantness was due to the way he touched you rather than where he touched you?

Miss Lynne Nelson: Yes, and the fact that he did it so often.

Dr. Reynolds: I see. Could I ask you about the comments he made that were sexual in nature? Could you be more specific and give some examples?

Miss Lynne Nelson: Well, first of all, he just made general comments like "you look very pretty today" or "you've got nice hair," but later on they got much more offensive.

Dr. Reynolds: Could you give an example?

Miss Lynne Nelson: Well, on one occasion he said that he liked the jeans that I was wearing because they really showed off my legs and were very sexy. There wasn't anything special about the jeans. He seemed to think anything I wore was sexy.

Dr. Reynolds: When these conversations occurred, what did you say or do?

Miss Lynne Nelson: Well, I talked about it with John, who was very supportive.

Dr. Reynolds: Did you tell anyone else?

Miss Lynne Nelson: At first I was afraid that no one else would believe me. But after a while, I felt I had to tell someone so I told my boyfriend and my best friend.

Dr. Reynolds: And what did they say?

Miss Lynne Nelson: They also supported me, and they said I should appeal to the University Committee on Sexual Harassment.

Dr. Reynolds: How did you feel about that?

Miss Lynne Nelson: I was finding his offensive behavior very upsetting. I was annoyed and I was finding it difficult to concentrate on my work. I was also embarrassed by the situation, and frustrated because it wouldn't stop, so I called you, Dr. Reynolds.

Dr. Reynolds: Thank you, Miss Nelson. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Miss Lynne Nelson: No.

Dr. Reynolds: Thank you, Miss Nelson. Now, Dr. Boland I am going to ask you for your comments on what happened.

Dr. Edward Boland: Well, I admit I was interested in dating Lynne. I thought she was very attractive, and liked her very much. I don't understand why she's so upset. I never got the idea that she was upset—she certainly never said anything to me about being upset. I really don't see what the complaint is. I never made any physical advances and I never tried to threaten or bribe her. I just wanted to know her better. I'm single, she's single. I don't see anything wrong.

Dr. Reynolds: So you do not deny repeatedly asking her for dates when she clearly told you that she was not interested?

Dr. Edward Boland: Well, sometimes people may say they're not interested when they're not sure, or might change their mind. I was pretty persistent, yes, but I really wanted to get to know her better.

Dr. Reynolds: What about the frequent comments about her appearance, saying she looked sexy for instance?

Dr. Edward Boland: I used a lot of compliments, yes, but I never said anything offensive.

Dr. Reynolds: Didn't Miss Nelson indicate to you that she found the comments offensive?

Dr. Edward Boland: Not really, no. She sometimes said I should stop making complimentary remarks, but I just put that down to modesty.

Dr. Reynolds: So you are saying that you had no idea that you were upsetting her in any way?

Dr. Edward Boland: No.

Dr. Reynolds: Have you anything else to add?

Dr. Edward Boland: Not really, but I just would like to say that she's being pretty unreasonable about this. If she was upset about it she should have told me and I would have stopped.

Additional testimony was heard from Mr. John Marshall, the third person in the meetings. He stated that he noticed that Miss Nelson seemed uncomfortable in the meetings after the first couple of weeks, and had been surprised by some of the personal comments Dr. Boland made about her dress. He also confirmed that Dr. Boland made occasional comments, such as the reference to the ski trip, that were related to requests for Miss Nelson to go out with him. However, the comments were not direct and so their meaning had only become clear to Mr. Marshall after Miss Nelson had told him about Dr. Boland's requests for dates.

Testimony was also heard from Dr. Elizabeth Jenkins, a female colleague of Dr. Boland. She stated that there had been no prior complaints about Dr. Boland, and from everything that she had observed, he has always gotten along well with women.

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