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Terri D. Fisher, Clive M. Davis, William L. Yarber, Sandra L. Davis

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Peer Sexual Harassment Victimization Scale

JENNIFER PETERSEN1 AND JANET SHIBLEY HYDE, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The purpose of this scale is to assess incidents of peer sexual harassment victimization among youth and to distinguish between same-gender and cross-gender harassment. Additionally, this scale identifies victims’ reactions to peer sexual harassment victimization.

Description

The Peer Sexual Harassment Victimization Scale consists of 15 different sexual behaviors that could be considered sexually harassing. Fourteen of these behaviors were taken from the American Association of University Women (AAUW) study on peer sexual harassment (1993, 2001). The fifteenth behavior, “called you a slut or a whore,” was added based on pilot interviews designed to discover sexually harassing behaviors that could be perpetrated by girls toward female victims. This scale does not ask victims to report their perceptions of sexual harassment. Instead, it asks whether specific behaviors have occurred and how upset participants were by the behaviors. Participants are asked to report the frequency of being victims of each behavior perpetrated by their peers during the past school year. For each behavior that is endorsed, participants are asked a series of follow-up questions, including how upset they were by the harassment, the gender of the perpetrator, and their reactions to the harassment. This scale was administered to a sample of 9th graders, but would be appropriate for other high school students and undergraduates as well.

1Address correspondence to Jennifer Petersen, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Psychology Dept., 1202 W. Johnson St., Madison, WI 53706; e-mail: Petersen1@wisc.edu
Response Mode and Timing

Although this scale may be administered as a paper-and-pencil questionnaire, we recommend the use of computer-assisted interviewing. This response mode may provide follow-up questions only when sexually harassing behaviors are endorsed, to avoid the confusion of skipping questions that are not applicable. Computer-assisted interviews also increase respondents’ feelings of anonymity, thereby increasing accurate reporting. This scale is completed in approximately 15 minutes.

Scoring

Frequency of harassment is scored on a 0 (Never) to 3 (Several Times) scale. Frequency of all behaviors may be summed to obtain a frequency of harassment scale. Upset ratings for each behavior are scored from 0 (Not Upset) to 2 (Very Upset). Upset ratings for all behaviors may be summed to create a total upset score. Frequency of harassing behaviors may be multiplied by total upset score to obtain a weighted score of harassing events that caused distress.

Gender of the perpetrator may be compared to gender of the victim to assess same-gender and cross-gender sexual harassment. The responses “a girl” and “a group of girls” should be combined, and the responses “a boy” and “a group of boys” should be combined. Participants who responded “a group of boys and girls” may be analyzed separately or set to missing, if these responses are infrequent. Once these responses are combined, researchers may compare responses to victim’s gender to assess same-gender and cross-gender harassment. Harassment perpetrated by girl(s) is scored as 0 and harassment perpetrated by boy(s) is scored as 1 for each behavior. These variables should be multiplied by frequencies of each corresponding behavior to create frequency of cross-gender harassment for girl victims and frequency of same-gender harassment for boy victims. Gender of the perpetrator should then be rescored as 0 for harassment perpetrated by boy(s) and 1 for harassment perpetrated by girl(s) for each behavior. These variables should again be multiplied by frequency of each corresponding behavior to create frequency of same-gender harassment for girl victims and frequency of cross-gender harassment for boy victims. Frequencies of same-gender and cross-gender harassment for each behavior may be summed for both boys and girls to create the measure’s total frequency of same-gender and cross-gender harassment. Each reaction to harassment is coded as 0 (Not Experienced) and 1 (Experienced) for each behavior.

Reliability

Cronbach’s alpha for harassing behaviors = .87. Test-retest reliability for the behaviors was assessed by the AAUW (1993, 2001) with a correlation of .95.

Validity

Detailed information about construct validity and scale formation is reported by the AAUW (1993, 2001).

References


Exhibit

Peer Sexual Harassment Victimization Scale

Participant ID ________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Below are some things that sometimes happen to kids at school. In the PAST SCHOOL YEAR how often did kids do these things to you? Circle your response.

1. Made sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or looks.*

   Never Once A Few Times Several Times

   1a. If more than “Never,” how upset were you by this?

   Not at all Upset Somewhat Upset Very Upset

   1b. The main time this happened, who did it to you?

   A Girl A Boy Group of Girls Group of Boys Group of Boys and Girls
The Likelihood to Sexually Harass Scale

JOHN B. PRYOR, Illinois State University
ERIC D. WESSELMANN, Purdue University

The Likelihood to Sexually Harass (LSH) scale was developed to measure men’s proclivities to sexually harass women (Pryor, 1987). The LSH measures a readiness for a specific type of sexually harassing behavior, sexual exploitation (Pryor & Whalen, 1997) or the tendency to use social power for sexual access or gain. Researchers have found that men’s tendency to behave in a sexually exploitative manner toward women may be predicted by the LSH in combination with certain social normative factors that permit or condone such behavior (Pryor, Giedd, & Williams, 1995; Pryor, LaVite, & Stoller, 1993).

Description

The original LSH scale consists of 10 brief scenarios describing social situations in which a male protagonist has the power to sexually exploit a female with impunity. Male respondents are asked to imagine themselves in the role of the protagonist in each scenario. Following each scenario, respondents are asked to rate the likelihood that they would perform an act of quid pro quo sexual harassment. Since its initial publication in 1987, several studies have reported shorter versions of the LSH that have used a subsample.