Sexual Harassment Attitudes Questionnaire

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Description

The incidence of sexual harassment in educational settings is well documented, yet the psychological dynamics that underlie the perpetuation of sexual harassment are still only partially understood. The Sexual Harassment Attitudes Questionnaire was developed as a research tool to explore psychological factors associated with sexual harassment in educational settings. The questionnaire measures respondents’ attitudes regarding (a) responsibility for harassment behaviors, (b) appropriate responses to sexual harassment, and (c) effects of sexual harassment on victims. Respondents first read two scenarios that depict clear-cut incidents of sexual harassment in a college setting. After each scenario, they indicate to whom they attribute responsibility for the incident. Two questions pertain to victim blame, two to perpetrator blame, and two to no blame. A second set of six questions taps respondents’ attitudes about appropriate responses to sexual harassment. Two questions refer to confronting the harassing behavior, two to complying with the harasser, and two to ignoring the harassment. Finally, a set of eight questions measures expectations of the effects of the harassment. Two questions refer to educational effects and six to emotional effects. All questions have 6-point Likert-type scales except for the questions regarding emotional effects, which have 7-point Likert-type scales.

Validity

Based on responses of 113 female and 111 male college undergraduates, the questionnaire shows evidence of construct validity (Malovich & Stake, 1990). Perpetrator blame scores in this sample were negatively related to victim blame (−.36) and no blame (−.57) scores. Victim blame was positively related to recommendations for compliance (+.47) and expectations for positive educational effects (+.32), and negatively related to recommendations for confrontive action (−.30), expectations for negative emotional effects (−.44), and liberal sex role attitudes (Attitudes Toward Women scores and victim blame: −.22). In contrast, perpetrator blame was positively related to recommendations for confrontive action (+.45), expectations for negative emotional effects (+.54), and liberal sex role attitudes (+.22), and negatively related to recommendations for compliance (−.45) and expectations for positive educational effects (−.37).

Reference


Exhibit

Sexual Harassment Attitudes Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine relationships between instructors and students. You will read two scenarios involving instructors and students. Each will be followed by a set of questions consisting of statements about the scenario you have read. You will be asked to imagine that you or a close woman friend of yours is the student in the situation presented. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. If you are unsure about an answer, just indicate the response that best fits your own opinion.

Scenario 1

Suppose that you or a close woman friend of yours is attending classes on this campus. After class one day, a professor asks that you come to his office to discuss your grade with him. When you get there he notes that you barely passed the last exam and are in danger of receiving a D for the course. He then tells you at length how much he enjoys having you in the class, leading up to a dinner invitation. He states that if you “get to know each other better” he might be able to work things out so that you can get a better grade.

The following are a number of statements about the situation that might help to explain why the above incident occurred. Rate your agreement with each of the following comments. Mark the number on your answer sheet that best describes your feeling. Use the following key:

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree
6. Strongly disagree
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0 = Strongly disagree
1 = Moderately disagree
2 = Somewhat disagree
3 = Somewhat agree
4 = Moderately agree
5 = Strongly agree

1. The student is probably hoping that getting to know the professor personally will help her get a better grade in the course.
2. The professor probably meant no harm so it should not be taken too seriously.
3. The professor is using his status unfairly to pressure the student into dating him.
4. The professor is responding to normal sexual attraction and cannot really be blamed for his actions in the situation.
5. The professor’s actions were unethical and could be harmful to his students.
6. The student is most likely a flirtatious type who enjoys getting special attention from her professors.

The following are a number of statements describing possible ways that you could deal with the situation. Rate your agreement with each of the following statements. Mark the number on your answer sheet that best describes your feelings. Use the following key:

0 = Strongly disagree
1 = Moderately disagree
2 = Somewhat disagree
3 = Somewhat agree
4 = Moderately agree
5 = Strongly agree

7. Change the subject and try to forget about the conversation.
8. Go to dinner with the professor and talk over the problems you are having in the class.
9. Continue to work hard in the class and avoid any individual conversations with the professor.
10. Tell the professor that you are not interested in a personal relationship, and that this should have nothing to do with your grade in the course.
11. See the professor on a social basis if he is interested as it may help your grade.
12. Go to the department head and tell him/her about the professor’s actions.

Below is a set of word pairs that describe how you or a close woman friend might feel about this experience. The two feelings in each pair are separated by a 7-point scale, with one word on each side on the scale. For each word pair, mark the number on your answer sheet that is closest to how you think you or your friend might feel.

13. Insulted 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Flattered
14. Pleased 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Angry
15. Comfortable 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Uncomfortable
16. Relaxed 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Nervous
17. Intimidated 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Powerful
18. Embarrassed 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Proud

**Scenario 2**

Suppose that you or a close woman friend of yours is attending this campus. Through the course of the semester you notice that a professor in one of your classes frequently seems to be staring at you. When talking with him after class one day about an upcoming essay exam, he puts his arm around you (or the woman friend) and touches your hair. He then suggests that you come to his office at the end of the day so that the exam can be discussed further. He adds that if you fail to do so, you will probably not do as well on the exam as expected.

*Questions 19–36 are identical to questions 1–18.*