

Interpersonal Mistreatment in the Workplace: The Interface and Impact of General Incivility and Sexual Harassment

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This article examined the relationships and outcomes of behaviors falling at the interface of general and sexual forms of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. Data were collected with surveys of two different female populations ($N_s = 833$ and $1,425$) working within a large public-sector organization. Findings revealed that general incivility and sexual harassment were related constructs, with gender harassment bridging the two. Moreover, these behaviors tended to co-occur in organizations, and employee well-being declined with the addition of each type of mistreatment to the workplace experience. This behavior type (or behavior combination) effect remained significant even after controlling for behavior frequency. The findings are interpreted from perspectives on sexual aggression, social power, and multiple victimization.

Among the different forms of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace, sexual harassment has probably received the most attention in the media, the academy, and the law. However, in recent years interest has increased in “milder” forms of workplace mistreatment, known under various names: emotional abuse (Keashly, 1998), bullying (Einarsen, 1999), generalized workplace abuse (Rospenda, Richman, Wislar, & Flaherty, 2000), and incivility (e.g., Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001). Such mistreatment refers to behaviors such as verbal aggression (e.g., swearing), disrespect (e.g., interruption, public humiliation), and isolation (e.g., from important work activities). Although most would agree that all of these antisocial acts—both sexual and general—fall under the same larger rubric of *interpersonal mistreatment*, researchers have tended to focus on each category of behavior in isolation. As a result, the literatures on sexual and general mistreatment have been developing along separate lines. The present study attempts to bridge this divide by integrating perspectives on sexual harassment and general incivility.

Central Constructs

Fitzgerald and colleagues (e.g., Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1988) asserted that sexual harassment

consists of three theoretically distinguishable but related categories of behavior. *Gender harassment* refers to experiences of disparaging conduct not intended to elicit sexual cooperation; rather, these are crude, verbal, physical, and symbolic behaviors that convey hostile and offensive attitudes about members of one gender—typically women. By contrast, *unwanted sexual attention* involves experiences of sexually inappropriate behaviors that are unwanted and unreciprocated by the recipient. This includes such verbal and physical actions as sexually suggestive comments, attempts to establish sexual relationships despite discouragement, and unwanted touching. The third category is *sexual coercion*, which parallels the legal concept of *quid pro quo*: subtle or explicit bribes or threats to make job conditions contingent on sexual behavior. Gelfand, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow (1985) argued that these three categories “are necessary and sufficient to classify any particular incident of sexual harassment . . . they constitute the irreducible minimum of the construct as it is currently understood” (p. 167).

Now that research has explicated the domain of behavior known as sexual harassment, an important next step is to understand its relationships to adjacent domains. Such relationships might manifest themselves in terms of behavioral co-occurrences in the workplace environment or, at a more conceptual level, links in the nomological net. To test such possibilities, we examined sexual harassment in the context of a more general form of workplace mistreatment: incivility.

Andersson and Pearson (1999) defined *workplace incivility* as “low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others” (p. 457). Incivility is a specific form of employee deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), which in turn represents a subset of antisocial employee behavior (Giacolone & Greenberg, 1997). When unambiguous intentions and expectations to harm the target or organization are present, definitions of incivility overlap with psychological aggression. However, incivility differs from psychological aggression when behaviors lack clear intentionality. That is, while incivility may occasionally have

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visibly injurious objectives, it can often be attributed to other factors, such as the instigator's ignorance, oversight, or personality; intent, whether present or not, is ambiguous to one or more of the parties involved (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001).

Articulating the Relationship Between Sexual Harassment and Incivility

Although incivility and sexual harassment are both forms of interpersonal mistreatment, past research has typically studied them separately. This is not surprising, given that incivility is more prevalent in many workplaces, has no gendered or sexualized content on its face, and generally does not violate law. In addition, the notion of "workplace incivility" is relatively new to the psychological literature. Nevertheless, we investigated sexual harassment and incivility simultaneously, seeing strong connections between these two constructs.

Theoretical and empirical evidence lends support to the likelihood of a link between sexual harassment and incivility. Feminist theorists have long argued that the underlying motivation for sexual aggression is one of power and dominance rather than a desire for sexual gratification (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975; Farley, 1978; Groth, 1979; MacKinnon, 1979). In the workplace, sexual harassment is one means by which perpetrators exert their power to acquire desired outcomes or resources (e.g., Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; Thacker & Ferris, 1991). Similarly, several studies have shown that men who are sexually aggressive also tend to be aggressive nonsexually (e.g., Lim & Howard, 1998; Sigelman, Berry, & Wiles, 1984), and they cognitively connect sexuality and social dominance (Pryor, Lavite, & Stoller, 1993). From the target's perspective, women who have experienced unwanted sexual attention and coercion in the workplace have typically also endured general disparagement toward their gender (Fitzgerald et al., 1988, 1995; Schneider, Swan, & Fitzgerald, 1997). These empirical findings support feminist arguments that sexual intention is not the sole motivation behind this collection of behaviors (MacKinnon, 1979). Dominance and power also seem to be a driving force behind workplace sexual harassment, and they could motivate workplace incivility as well.

Gender harassment is an important indicator of sexual harassment, and it may also be the type of harassment most closely connected to incivility. Unlike sexual attention and coercion, gender harassment conveys hostility devoid of any explicit sexual motive. Likewise, incivility is also manifested in terms of rude and disrespectful behaviors with no sexual intent. We therefore see gender harassment as the bridge between other forms of sexual harassment and incivility. In other words, we hypothesized (H1) that gender harassment will be correlated with incivility, in addition to being correlated with unwanted sexual attention/coercion. Another manifestation of this relationship would be the frequent co-occurrence of different forms of mistreatment within the same employees' experiences. In fact, some past research (Gutek, 1985; Richman et al., 1999; Rospenda et al., 2000) suggested that such joint manifestations of mistreatment may be the norm rather than the exception.

Because of strong correlations among gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion, past researchers have generally studied "sexual harassment" as a global construct, col-

lapsing across all three dimensions (e.g., Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999; Glomb, Munson, Hulin, Bergman, & Drasgow, 1999; Munson, Hulin, & Drasgow, 2000). Although this procedure permits examination of sexual harassment as a holistic phenomenon, it obscures relationships among harassment subtypes. These relationships become important when we try to compare harassing behavior with other, more general forms of mistreatment (i.e., incivility). Unwanted sexual attention, as the name suggests, represents unwelcomed, unreciprocated behaviors aimed at establishing some form of sexual relationship. One could argue that sexual coercion is a specific, severe, rare form of unwanted sexual attention, involving similar sexual advances coupled with bribery or threats to force acquiescence. Although the distinction between unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion is practical from a legal standpoint, from a behavioral perspective, these constructs show more similarities than differences. This becomes particularly apparent when comparing these behaviors to less sexualized forms of workplace mistreatment, such as gender harassment and incivility.

Given the parallels between unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion, from this point forward we combine the two constructs into a single, parsimonious category termed *sexualized harassment*. This encapsulates all inappropriate and unwanted behaviors in the workplace that aim to gain sexual access to a target. Gender harassment, being hostile but nonsexual, should remain a separate construct that is correlated with sexualized harassment. Incivility, which has no sexual or gendered content on its face, should be even more removed, albeit still correlated.

To test this new conceptualization of the larger construct domain, in the present study we empirically examined the relationships among incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment. Specifically, we compared three different models of mistreatment. Figure 1 presents conceptual representations of these models. The first—our proposed three-factor model—specified three constructs (incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment) that are interrelated. The second, two-factor model included an incivility construct and a sexual harassment construct (the latter collapsing across gender harassment and sexualized harassment). The third model specified only one construct, so as to test the plausible alternative that incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment are best represented as components of a global mistreatment construct (one-factor model). On the basis of our prior arguments, we expected to find the strongest support for the first model. Next, we turn to potential outcomes of this collection of abusive behaviors in the workplace.

Implications for Employee Outcomes

If the joint occurrence of general incivility and sexual harassment is indeed frequent, questions arise about implications for the well-being of targeted employees. Theory and data already suggest that both general and sexual mistreatment in the workplace can trigger a range of adverse effects. For example, in his model of workplace violence, Barling (1996) theorized that experiences of abusive behaviors at work lead to negative mood, cognitive distraction, and fear. These affective and cognitive reactions, in turn, adversely affect victims' organizational, psychological, and somatic functioning. Similarly, Fitzgerald, Swan, and Magley (1997) proposed a model of harm, theorizing how person and situational

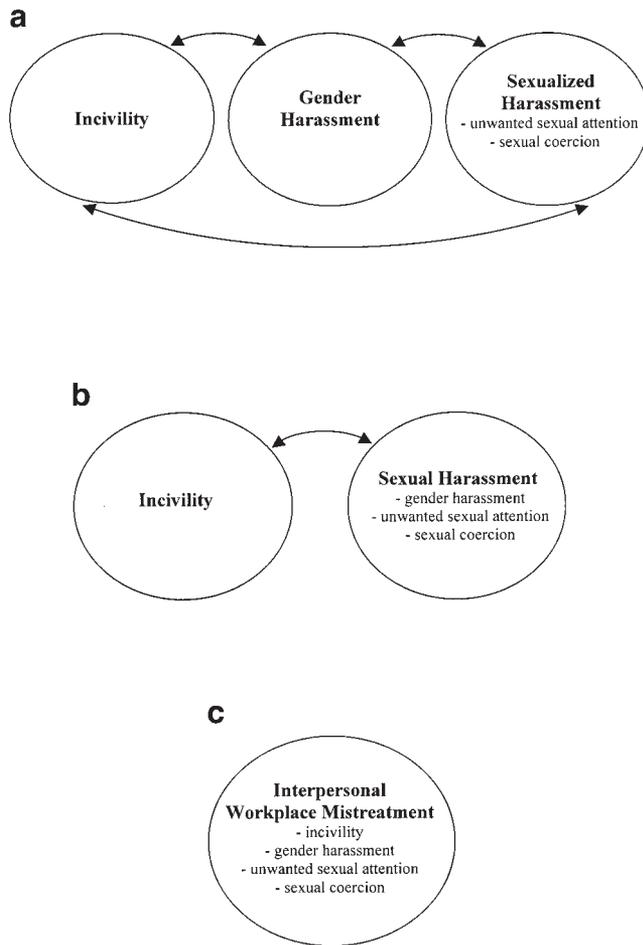


Figure 1. (a) Conceptual representation of proposed three-factor model, specifying gender harassment as a “bridge” between general incivility and sexualized harassment. (b) Alternative model specifying two factors. (c) Alternative model specifying one overall mistreatment construct.

factors determine negative job-related, psychological, and health-related outcomes of sexual harassment.

Supporting such theory, empirical studies have documented harmful effects of workplace mistreatment on targeted employees. For example, Pearson, Andersson, and Porath (2000) found qualitative evidence of impaired concentration, productivity decline, and turnover cognitions among employees who had faced uncivil encounters at work; 12% ultimately quit their jobs. Similarly, Cortina et al. (2001) reported that uncivil workplace experiences were associated with lower job satisfaction, increased job withdrawal, and greater psychological distress. In a similar vein, numerous studies have documented a plethora of negative outcomes among targets of sexual harassment (e.g., Dansky & Kilpatrick, 1997; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999; Gutek, 1985; Rospenda et al., 2000). These included job-related consequences (e.g., negative job attitudes, turnover intentions), psychological problems (e.g., fear, anxiety, depression), and impaired health (e.g., psychosomatic symptoms). An important next step for organizational research is to integrate these two lines of mistreatment–outcome scholarship, systematically examining

the effects of generalized forms of interpersonal mistreatment when they converge with sexual harassment.

In the current study, we investigated how combined forms of mistreatment relate to employees’ occupational, psychological, and physical health. Whereas experiencing workplace incivility by itself is known to have a multitude of negative consequences, targets that also encounter gender and sexualized harassment may suffer even more adverse outcomes. Support for this argument comes from studies in the clinical psychology literature documenting effects of multiple stressors, victimizations, and traumas (e.g., Banyard, Williams, & Siegel, 2001; Follette, Polusny, Bechtle, & Naugle, 1996). For example, the additive impact of life stressors—particularly negative life events—has long been documented in studies of depression (e.g., Brown & Harris, 1978; Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974). More recently, Green et al. (2000) studied 1,909 sophomore women, finding that participants who reported multiple, different types of interpersonal trauma (e.g., physical abuse, molestation, sexual assault) had significantly more mental health symptoms than all other groups, including those who had been repeatedly exposed to any single type of trauma. Likewise, in a study of 16,000 adults nationwide, Pimlott-Kubiak and Cortina (2003) documented more depression, substance use, and health impairment among people who had experienced multiple forms of interpersonal aggression across their lifetimes, compared with nonvictims and victims of single forms of abuse.

Although studies of multiple victimization have rarely focused on workplace settings, it appears reasonable that such findings would translate to the context of work. Compared with employees who are subjected to incivility only, those targeted with both incivility and gender harassment should suffer more detrimental effects on their work and their psychological and health functioning. Moreover, individuals exposed to incivility and gender harassment as well as sexualized harassment are likely to suffer the worst outcomes. One reason for this pattern is that, in general, it may be difficult for employees to develop effective coping mechanisms in the face of varied or evolving manifestations of antisocial behavior. In addition, the potential for physical harm to the targeted employee and the perceived intent of the perpetrator may be unclear in the case of incivility alone, but harm potentials and intentions may be more evident with gender harassment and quite obvious with sexualized harassment. Furthermore, the target group may become increasingly personal, as the mistreatment ranges from incivility (which can include generally rude behaviors targeted toward anyone and everyone within earshot) to gender harassment (targeted to one’s gender group) to sexualized harassment (targeted to oneself). On the basis of such arguments, we hypothesized (H2) that employee well-being will worsen as mistreatment becomes increasingly complex, involving more gendered and sexualized behaviors.

The Current Studies

Data were collected from two surveys of employees working in very different roles in the context of the U.S. federal courts: the Court Employee Survey (Study 1) and the Attorney Survey (Study 2). In this article, we focus only on female respondents, for several reasons. First, past research has consistently shown that women constitute the great majority of sexual harassment victims (e.g., APA Taskforce on Male Violence Against Women, 1994; Fitzger-

ald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999). Indeed, according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2003), more than 85% of the sexual harassment charges across the country were filed by women. Second, men's experiences of sexual harassment appear to differ from those of women. Research has shown that men are considerably less threatened than women by behaviors that women find harassing, and men also identify behaviors as harassing that have not been identified for women (e.g., Berdahl, Magley, & Waldo, 1996; Gutek, 1985). Given such disparities, we chose not to include data from men in the current article, to maintain a tight focus on sexual harassment (and incivility) from the unique perspective of women. For the remainder of this article, we thus focus exclusively on women's experiences.

Study 1: The Court Employee Survey

Method

Participants and Procedure

Paper-and-pencil surveys were mailed to all 1,662 employees, excluding judges, of one of the larger federal judicial circuits. Participants were told that the surveys were part of a study commissioned by the Circuit Judicial Council to examine work experiences and gender in the federal courts. Special care was taken to emphasize the confidentiality of survey responses, which were directly sent to an external university for data analysis. Participants were also informed that no judges, court staff, or other organizational members would see their individual survey responses, and no individuals would be identified in any reports of the study.

Several procedures were implemented to maximize the response rate. These included a cover letter from the chief judge of the circuit, encouraging participation; a reminder postcard; and the mailing of a second survey to nonrespondents. A response rate of 71% was obtained, but 13 individuals were excluded from all analyses because of extensive missing data. Subsequent analyses were conducted on the women's data only ($N = 833$). These women ranged in age from 21 to 78 years ($M = 40.31$). Most were European American/White (88%), and the majority were married (69%). They worked in a range of occupations, with 13% employed as managers, supervisors, or unit heads, 14% as attorneys, 18% as specialists (e.g., budget analyst, personnel specialist, systems administrator), 16% as secretaries, and 39% as administrative support staff (e.g., library technician, data quality analysts, mail room clerk). Ninety percent of these women reported that they held jobs traditional for their gender, and 91% worked in units where women were either equally represented or in the clear majority.

Measurement

Construction of the survey focused primarily on two issues: psychometric rigor and minimization of response bias. The placement of measures within the survey partly addressed the latter concern. For example, scales intended to measure outcomes of interpersonal mistreatment preceded the scales assessing interpersonal mistreatment so that respondents' experiences of mistreatment would not bias their descriptions of their job satisfaction, psychological well-being, and so forth. Table 1 presents summary statistics and intercorrelations for all constructs. Note that all items were coded such that higher scores reflected greater levels of the underlying construct. We then summed constituent items to create the corresponding scale composites for the following measures.

Incivility. Four items from the Workplace Incivility Scale (Cortina et al., 2001) measured the frequency of participants' experiences of incivility (e.g., disrespect, rudeness, condescension) from superiors or coworkers

Table 1
Summary Statistics and Correlations Among Study 1 Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Incivility	3.44	3.62	.85														
2. Gender harassment	1.62	2.41	.50**	.76													
3. Sexualized harassment	1.03	2.92	.32**	.54**	.87												
4. Mistreatment frequency	0.34	0.41	.81**	.82**	.76**	.87											
5. Work satisfaction	20.46	6.80	-.25**	-.11**	-.10**	-.19**	.87										
6. Coworker satisfaction	19.79	5.50	-.38**	-.24**	-.14**	-.31**	.36**	.42**									
7. Supervisor satisfaction	20.29	7.43	-.49**	-.24**	-.12**	-.35**	.36**	.42**	.88								
8. Pay and benefit satisfaction	18.85	7.17	-.24**	-.05	-.04	-.15**	.27**	.21**	.24**	.83							
9. Promotion satisfaction	9.43	6.71	-.38**	-.18**	-.13**	-.30**	.39**	.30**	.44**	.44**	.84						
10. Job withdrawal	2.26	2.55	.38**	.17**	.10**	.28**	-.47**	-.33**	-.40**	-.29**	-.38**	.75					
11. Job stress	12.26	7.76	.36**	.20**	.07*	.25**	-.13**	-.21**	-.35**	-.24**	-.25**	.32**	.86				
12. Psychological well-being	8.87	2.08	-.17**	-.06	-.07*	-.14**	.35**	.20**	.25**	.17**	.17**	-.28**	-.26**	.85			
13. Psychological distress	13.84	5.65	.27**	.15**	.09*	.21**	-.28**	-.21**	-.30**	-.15**	-.15**	.28**	.37**	-.69**	.91		
14. Life satisfaction	17.81	3.48	-.18**	-.08*	-.08*	-.15**	.31**	.13**	.18**	.23**	.17**	-.17**	-.20**	.52**	-.47**	.84	
15. Health satisfaction	10.41	3.21	-.13**	-.03	-.02	-.10**	.16**	.09*	.15**	.08*	.07	-.05	-.16**	.41**	-.40**	.36**	.74

Note. Correlations appear below the diagonal, and coefficient alphas appear italicized along the diagonal. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

within the previous 5 years. Sample items include “put you down or was condescending to you”; “doubted your judgment on a matter over which you have responsibility”; and “paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinion.” Note that these items assessed behaviors with no overtly gendered or sexual content, and intention to harm the target or organization was not readily apparent. Further, these items were consistent with the most common negative acts in the workplace identified by Einarsen, Raknes, Matthiesen, and Hellesøy (1994). Respondents used a 5-point response scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*most of the time*) to rate the frequency with which they had experienced each behavior. Cortina et al. (2001) reported an alpha coefficient of .89 for the Workplace Incivility Scale and found that it correlated $-.59$ with Donovan, Dragow, and Munson’s (1998) Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment Scale, thus supporting its reliability and construct validity.

Sexual harassment. Participants completed an abbreviated version of the behavioral Sexual Experiences Questionnaire—Revised (Fitzgerald et al., 1988, 1995). This instrument was composed of four items that assessed the participants’ experiences of gender harassment (e.g., “made offensive remarks or jokes about women in your presence”), seven items that assessed unwanted sexual attention (e.g., “touched you in a way that made you uncomfortable”), and three items that assessed sexual coercion (e.g., “made you afraid that you would be treated poorly if you did not cooperate sexually”). We combined items measuring unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion into the “sexualized harassment” composite. This instrument used a 5-point response scale that paralleled that of the Workplace Incivility Scale. In developing the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire—Revised, Fitzgerald et al. (1988) found high internal consistency and test–retest reliability as well as strong evidence of content and criterion-related validity.

Job-related outcomes. Three types of job-related outcomes were examined in this study: (a) job satisfaction, (b) job withdrawal, and (c) job stress. Job satisfaction was measured with a 43-item version of the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969; revised by Roznowski, 1989). On a 3-point response scale (0 = *no*, 1 = *cannot decide*, 3 = *yes*), respondents described whether they were satisfied with five aspects of their jobs: work, coworkers, supervisor, pay and benefits, and promotional opportunities. The JDI is one of the most frequently used measures of job satisfaction and has been subjected to rigorous psychometric evaluation (Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim, & Carson, 2002; Smith et al., 1969).

Three items from the Job Withdrawal Scale (Hanisch, 1990; Hanisch & Hulin, 1990, 1991) were used to assess organizational withdrawal behaviors. This scale tapped turnover thoughts or intentions, asking respondents questions such as “how likely is it that you would quit in the next few months.” A 5-point response scale (with varying anchors) was used for this measure. Hanisch (1990) conducted psychometric evaluation of the Job Withdrawal Scale, reporting longitudinal data linking earlier job attitudes and stresses and subsequent job withdrawal 3 years later.

In addition, nine items from the Stress in General Scale (Stanton, Balzer, Smith, Parra, & Ironson, 2001) measured job stress. Using the same 3-point response scale as the JDI, respondents indicated whether each of a list of adjectives (e.g., “hectic,” “tense,” “calm”) described their “job in general.” Stanton et al. reported evidence of the convergent and discriminant validity of this scale.

Psychological and health outcomes. Psychological and physical health outcomes included in this study were (a) psychological well-being and distress, (b) life satisfaction, and (c) health satisfaction. Specifically, 12 items from the Mental Health Index (Veit & Ware, 1983) assessed emotional well-being and common psychiatric symptoms of anxiety (feeling “tense or high strung” or “restless, fidgety, or impatient”) and depression (feeling “downhearted and blue” or “in low or very low spirits”). On a scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*most of the time*), respondents indicated the frequency of these feelings in the prior month. This psychometrically

sound scale (Brooks et al., 1979) has appeared in various studies of general health and victimization (Koss, Koss, & Woodruff, 1991).

The five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, 1984; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) assessed participants’ global subjective well-being or overall satisfaction with life. This scale required respondents to rate statements such as “the conditions of my life are excellent,” using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Diener et al. have found that items in this scale were internally consistent, correlated appropriately with personality measures, and loaded on a single common factor.

We assessed health satisfaction with a subscale of the Retirement Descriptive Index (Smith et al., 1969), which contains short, descriptive, health-related phrases and adjectives (e.g., “never felt better”; “feel tired all the time”). Respondents indicated whether each phrase described their health, using the same 3-point response scale as the JDI. Hanisch and Hulin (1990) reported a coefficient alpha of .70 and a 2-year stability coefficient of .63 for this scale. They also found links between health satisfaction and health conditions, supporting the validity of the index as an indicator of health status.

Results

Analyses followed multiple stages. After reviewing descriptive findings about the incidence rates of each type of mistreatment, we used structural equation modeling to test the three competing models of mistreatment relationships. This was followed by multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to determine the effect of mistreatment frequency and type on employee outcomes. Finally, we conducted discriminant function analyses to further probe outcome differences on the basis of different types and combinations of interpersonal mistreatment.

Incidence of Mistreatment

Incidence rates were calculated on the basis of the report of at least one incident (i.e., a response of “1” or above for any behavior) within each category of mistreatment. Results revealed frequent co-occurrence in experiences of incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment. Whereas 23% of the women ($n = 187$) experienced general incivility alone, only 3% ($n = 22$) experienced gender harassment alone, 1% ($n = 7$) experienced unwanted sexual attention alone, and none experienced sexual coercion alone. On the other hand, 22% ($n = 178$) experienced both general incivility and gender harassment, and 21% ($n = 171$) experienced general incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment.

Relationships Among Types of Mistreatment

We conducted confirmatory factor analyses to test latent variable models of the relationships in Figure 1 using EQS software (Bentler, 1995). This analytic technique allows one to generate an estimated covariance matrix by solving a series of regression equations simultaneously. The estimated matrix is then evaluated against the actual sample covariance matrix to determine whether the hypothesized model is an acceptable representation of the data. For this procedure, we randomly assigned and summed incivility items into three manifest indicators, and then followed the same procedure to create three gender harassment indicators and three sexualized harassment indicators (nine indicators total). In the

three-factor model, each collection of indicators was allowed to load onto a separate latent construct, and the latent constructs were allowed to correlate. We specified the two-factor model such that the gender and sexualized harassment indicators all loaded onto a common latent construct, leaving the incivility indicators to load onto a second construct; again, a correlation was permitted between constructs. The single-factor model allowed all nine indicators to load onto one latent construct. Using maximum likelihood estimation, we then estimated the parameters of each model. To assess data-model fit, a variety of statistics were examined, including the chi-square-to-degrees-of-freedom ratio, the normed fit index (NFI), the nonnormed fit index (NNFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMSR).

Supporting our proposed conceptualization, the three-factor model provided a good fit to the data: $\chi^2(24, N = 805) = 135.92$, $NFI = .97$, $NNFI = .96$, $CFI = .97$, $RMSEA = .08$, $SRMSR = .05$. By contrast, fit indices for both the two-factor model, $\chi^2(26, N = 805) = 726.14$, $NFI = .83$, $NNFI = .77$, $CFI = .83$, $RMSEA = .18$, $SRMSR = .13$, and the one-factor model, $\chi^2(27, N = 805) = 1,518.79$, $NFI = .63$, $NNFI = .52$, $CFI = .64$, $RMSEA = .26$, $SRMSR = .17$, were unacceptably poor.

As shown in Figure 2a, all loadings for the three-factor model were statistically significant, with standardized values ranging from .69 to .95. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, gender harassment was highly correlated with both general incivility ($r = .56$) and sexualized harassment ($r = .61$). In addition, a moderate correlation ($r = .34$) emerged between general incivility and sexualized harassment.

Outcomes of Interpersonal Mistreatment

To examine job-related, psychological and health outcomes of different constellations of interpersonal mistreatment, we first conducted a MANCOVA, with type of mistreatment as the predictor and frequency of mistreatment as the covariate. An extension of analysis of variance, the MANCOVA procedure allows us to examine whether both type and frequency of mistreatment are significantly associated with reliable mean differences in linear combinations of outcomes. By focusing on a series of related outcomes simultaneously, this analysis maximizes parsimony while reducing alpha inflation.

To create a variable to indicate type of mistreatment, we categorized respondents according to their mistreatment experiences. The descriptive data revealed that those who had experienced gender harassment typically reported concomitant incivility, and respondents who had endured sexualized harassment also tended to report gender harassment and incivility. Thus, we divided respondents into four groups. The first group contained employees who did not report any experience of mistreatment (i.e., gave a response of “never” to all mistreatment questions; $n = 216$). The second group consisted of those who had experienced at least one uncivil behavior but no gender or sexualized harassment (i.e., employees who gave a response other than “never” to at least one incivility item and “never” responses to all gender harassment and sexualized harassment items; $n = 187$). The third group contained employees who had experienced at least one instance of incivility

and at least one instance of gender harassment but no sexualized harassment (i.e., employees who gave responses other than “never” to at least one incivility item and to at least one gender harassment item and “never” responses to all sexualized harassment items; $n = 178$). The fourth group consisted of respondents who had experienced incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment (i.e., employees who gave responses other than “never” to at least one incivility item, at least one gender harassment item, and at least one sexualized harassment item; $n = 171$). On the basis of this categorization scheme, we created a mistreatment-type variable with four categories.

In analyses of the effect of mistreatment type on outcomes, it seemed important to take mistreatment frequency into account. For this purpose, we created a variable based on the mean of all mistreatment items, scored polytomously along their full 5-point response scales (from 0 = *never* to 4 = *most of the time*). The resulting score represented the average behavioral frequency (i.e., magnitude) of mistreatment. This variable constituted the covariate in the MANCOVA equations.

We performed separate multivariate analyses of covariance on the two sets of dependent variables, namely, job-related outcomes (including job stress, job withdrawal, and five facets of job satisfaction) and psychological/health outcomes (i.e., psychological distress and well-being, life satisfaction, health satisfaction). Results suggested mistreatment frequency to be significantly related to the multivariate collection of job-related outcomes, Wilks's lambda = .91, $F(7, 628) = 9.02$, $p < .01$, but its effect fell just short of significance for the psychological/health outcomes, Wilks's lambda = .99, $F(4, 706) = 2.22$, $p = .07$. After controlling for frequency of mistreatment, type of mistreatment had a multivariate main effect on both job outcomes, Wilks's lambda = .90, $F(21, 1804) = 3.07$, $p < .01$, and psychological/health outcomes, Wilks's lambda = .96, $F(12, 1868) = 2.54$, $p < .01$.

In order to further investigate the effects of types and combinations of mistreatment on outcomes, we conducted multiple-group discriminant function analyses following the MANCOVA. A *discriminant function* represents a linear combination of discriminating variables—in this case, outcomes—weighted in such a way as to maximize the between-groups differences. Because average discriminant scores (centroids) can be computed for each group, we can plot and compare group centroids to determine how each group fares relative to other groups on the basis of the multivariate collection of outcomes (for more details about this analytic approach, see Klecka, 1980).

One significant discriminant function, Wilks's lambda = .80, $\chi^2(21, N = 639) = 142.17$, $p < .01$, accounted for 90% of the between-groups variance in job-related outcomes. To interpret the substantive meaning of the function, we examined the structure coefficients (i.e., correlations between each of the outcomes and the function); these appear in Table 3. According to these coefficients, the function was defined negatively by job stress and job withdrawal and positively by the various facets of job satisfaction, suggesting a continuum of occupational well-being that ranged from negative to positive.

Figure 3a displays the group centroids (i.e., each group's mean score on the linear combination of outcomes). Work appeared to become increasingly negative with additional types of mistreatment. That is, the group that did not describe any experiences of

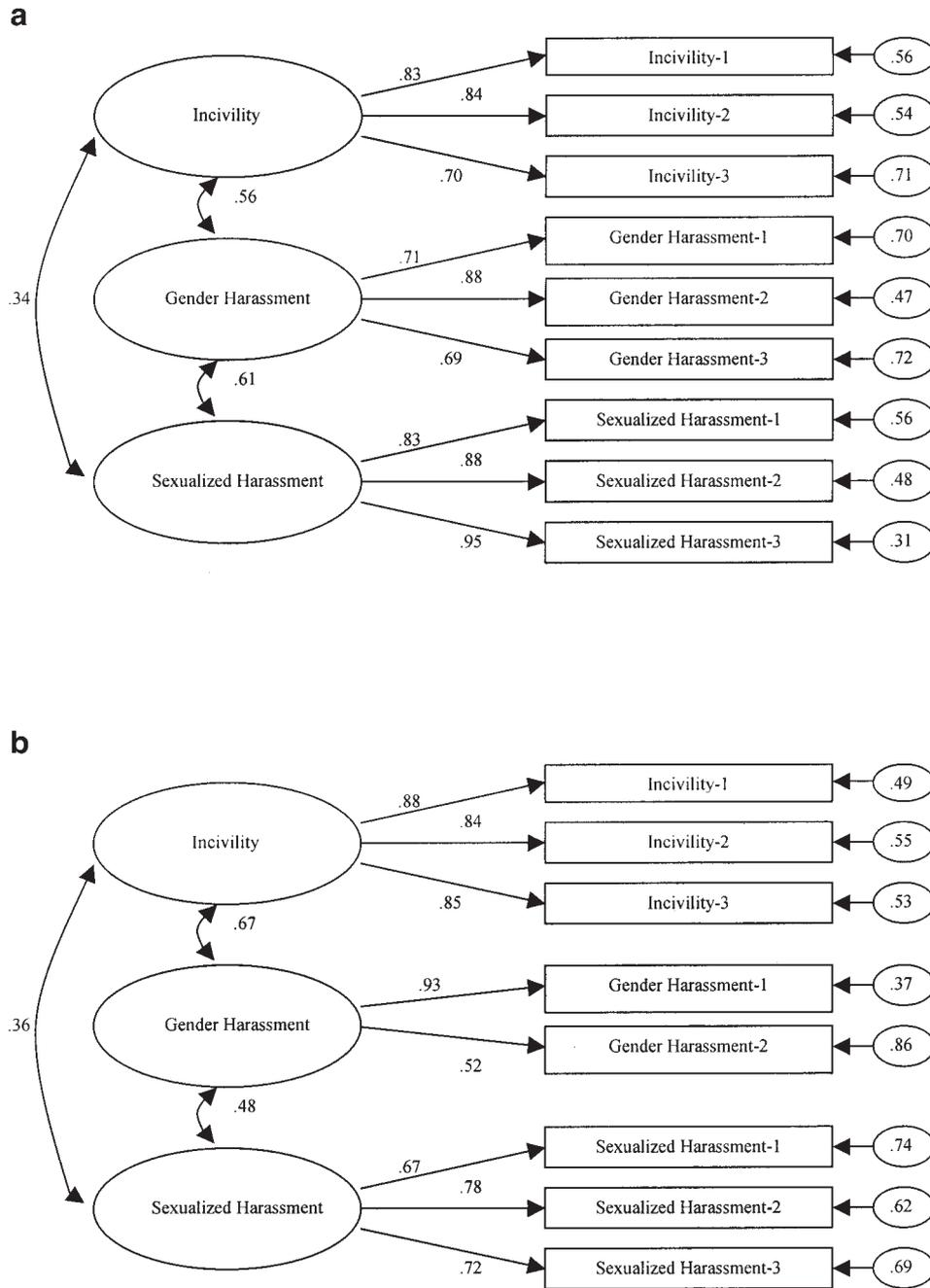


Figure 2. (a) Study 1: Proposed model with standardized factor loadings and path coefficients. (b) Study 2: Proposed model with standardized factor loadings and path coefficients.

mistreatment at work, reported the highest occupational well-being. Well-being dropped for the group that reported incivility by itself, and it dropped further for the incivility plus gender harassment group. The final group, which had experienced all types of mistreatment, reported the lowest occupational well-being.

Similar to job-related outcomes, one significant discriminant function, Wilks's lambda = .92, $\chi^2(12, N = 714) = 62.96, p < .01$, accounted for 92% of the between-groups variance in psychological and health outcomes. The structure coefficients appear in

Table 3. According to these coefficients, life satisfaction and psychological distress defined the positive and negative poles, respectively, of this continuum of psychological and physical well-being.

As shown in Figure 3b, the addition of each type of mistreatment to employee histories was associated with incremental declines in their psychological and health functioning. In other words, whereas the group not reporting any mistreatment at work reported the best mental and physical health, a dip was apparent for

Table 2
Summary Statistics and Correlations Among Study 2 Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Incivility	3.15	3.69	.85						
2. Gender Harassment	0.49	1.04	.56**	.57					
3. Sexualized Harassment	0.19	0.81	.31**	.42**	.70				
4. Mistreatment Frequency	0.30	0.37	.96**	.74**	.51**	.82			
5. Job Satisfaction	16.06	2.78	-.18**	-.02	-.04	-.15**	.79		
6. Job Stress	13.90	3.79	.26**	.09**	.07*	.23**	-.55**	.78	
7. Job Withdrawal	6.00	2.93	.09**	.03	.03	.09**	-.43**	.43**	.74

Note. Correlations appear below the diagonal, and coefficient alphas appear italicized along the diagonal.
 * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

the incivility-only group, and a further decrease was found for the incivility plus gender harassment group. Once again, the group that encountered incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment reported the worst outcomes. Overall, these findings provided good support for Hypothesis 2.

Study 2: The Attorney Survey

Conducting one of the first studies to examine sexual harassment and general incivility concurrently, we sought to validate Study 1 results using data collected from a fairly different and much larger sample.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Based on a list of cases filed in the same large federal judicial circuit, a disproportionate, stratified random sample of 9,223 names was drawn, balanced across gender, geographical location, and type of practice. Because of the greater proportion of men in federal legal practice, the sample contained more men than women. The purpose of the survey provided to participants was similar to Study 1, and equivalent procedures were implemented to maximize the response rate, resulting in a 53% response. Again, analyses focused only on women ($n = 1,425$); the female participants ranged in age from 24 to 79 years ($M = 49.1$). The majority were European American/Caucasian (93%) and were either married or living with a partner (68%). Unlike the women in the court employee sample, these women all had at least a juris doctor, if not an additional, graduate degree, and they all worked in an occupation that is nontraditional for women, in environments where women remain a clear minority.

Measurement

Similar to Study 1, questions were carefully ordered within the survey to minimize potential response bias. We piloted this survey on a sample of attorneys practicing in the federal courts of a different federal circuit. Table 2 presents summary statistics and intercorrelations for each construct. All items were coded such that higher scores reflected greater levels of the underlying construct. Responses to each item were summed to create the corresponding scale composites for the following measures.

Incivility and sexual harassment. Similar to Study 1, incivility was assessed by five items from the Workplace Incivility Scale (Cortina et al., 2001). In addition, a subset of eight Sexual Experiences Questionnaire—Revised items (Fitzgerald et al., 1988) from Study 1 measured participants' experiences of gender harassment (two items), unwanted sexual attention (four items), and sexual coercion (two items).

Job-related outcomes. Three measures of job outcome were developed for Study 2 on the basis of collaboration between social scientists and legal practitioners. Specifically, a four-item, global Job Satisfaction Scale assessed satisfaction with work and relationships in the federal courts (e.g., "On the whole, I am satisfied with my professional work in federal court"). Six items measured the extent to which attorneys experienced work in federal court as stressful (e.g., "My experiences working in federal court are frustrating"). A three-item Job Withdrawal Scale assessed attorneys' intentions to leave or change their work situations, including thoughts about leaving federal litigation altogether. All three measures were rated on a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Results

Incidence of Mistreatment

Similar to Study 1, there was significant co-occurrence in women's experiences of the different types of mistreatment. Whereas 40% of the women ($n = 543$) experienced general incivility only, fewer than 1% experienced gender harassment alone ($n = 8$) or unwanted sexual attention alone ($n = 1$), and none experienced sexual coercion alone. On the other hand, 16% ($n = 217$) experienced both general incivility and gender harassment, and 7% ($n = 93$) experienced general incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment.

Relationships Among Types of Mistreatment

In order to validate the latent variable model depicted in Figure 2a, we tested competing factor models that paralleled those from Study 1. Again, our proposed three-factor model provided a satisfactory fit to the data: $\chi^2(17, N = 1321) = 184.60$, NFI = .96, NNFI = .94, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .086, SRMSR = .045. By contrast, the fit indices for the two-factor model, $\chi^2(19, N = 1321) = 752.13$, NFI = .84, NNFI = .76, CFI = .84, RMSEA = .171, SRMSR = .12, and the one-factor model, $\chi^2(20, N = 1321) = 1287.60$, NFI = .72, NNFI = .61, CFI = .72, RMSEA = .219, SRMSR = .14, were unacceptably poor.

As shown in Figure 2b, all factor loadings were statistically significant in the three-factor model, with standardized values ranging from .52 to .93. Similar to Study 1, gender harassment was correlated with both general incivility ($r = .67$) and sexualized harassment ($r = .48$). A moderate correlation ($r = .36$) also emerged between general incivility and sexualized harassment.

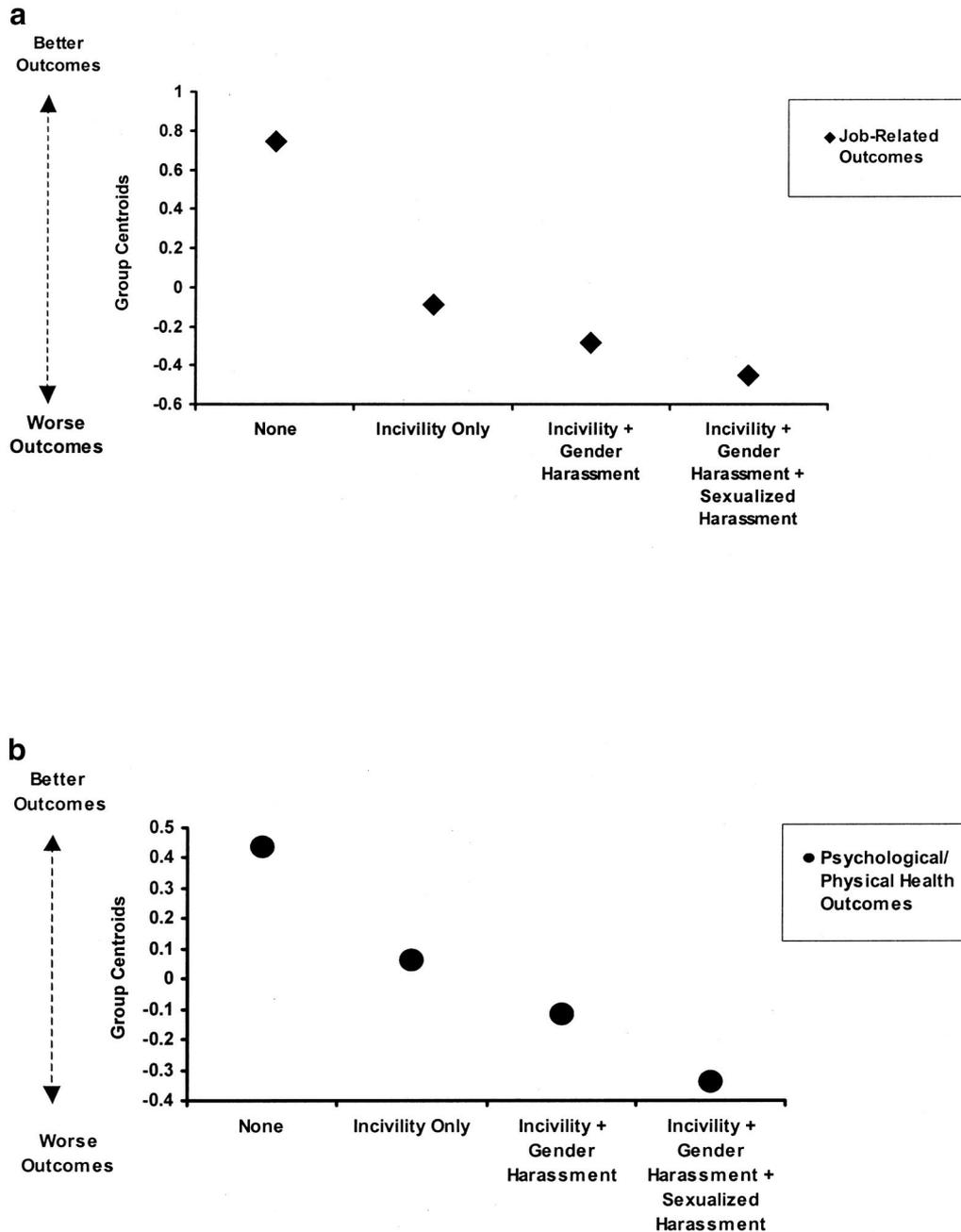


Figure 3. (a) Study 1: Job-related outcomes of interpersonal mistreatment. (b) Study 1: Psychological/physical health outcomes of interpersonal mistreatment.

Outcomes of Interpersonal Mistreatment

To parallel Study 1 job–outcome analyses, we again divided respondents into four groups: (a) those who did not report any experience of mistreatment ($n = 495$), (b) those who experienced incivility only ($n = 543$), (c) those who experienced both incivility and gender harassment ($n = 217$), and (d) those who experienced incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment ($n = 93$). Specific criteria for categorization into a mistreatment group were the same as those used in Study 1. This yielded a four-category

variable that constituted the independent variable in the MANCOVA. For the MANCOVA covariate, we again created one composite variable based on the mean of all mistreatment items, resulting in a measure of average mistreatment frequency.

MANCOVA results revealed that mistreatment frequency was significantly related to the multivariate collection of job outcomes, Wilks’s lambda = .96, $F(3, 1138) = 15.82, p < .01$. Controlling for this frequency of mistreatment, type of mistreatment also had a significant effect on these outcomes, Wilks’s lambda = .98, $F(9,$

Table 3
Structure Coefficients (Pooled Within-Group Correlations Between Each of the Measures and the Function) for All Discriminant Function Analyses

Outcome measure	<i>r</i>
<i>Study 1: Job-related function</i>	
Job stress	-.62
Job withdrawal	-.57
Pay and benefit satisfaction	.23
Work satisfaction	.39
Promotional opportunity satisfaction	.61
Coworker satisfaction	.64
Supervisor satisfaction	.75
<i>Study 1: Psychological and health function</i>	
Psychological distress	-.94
Health satisfaction	.39
Psychological well-being	.44
Life satisfaction	.49
<i>Study 2: Job-related function</i>	
Job stress	-.89
Job withdrawal	-.03
Job satisfaction	.24

2770) = 2.99, $p < .01$. As in Study 1, we conducted follow-up discriminant function analyses to explore the nature of these outcome differences on the basis of type and combination of experience.

Echoing the results from Study 1, one significant discriminant function emerged, Wilks's $\lambda = .97$, $\chi^2(9, N = 1145) = 38.49, p < .01$. This accounted for 99% of the between-groups variance for job-related outcomes. The structure coefficients appear in Table 3. According to these coefficients, the function was defined negatively by job stress and positively by job satisfaction. Figure 4 shows that, again, occupational well-being decreased with the addition of each type of mistreatment to a respondent's history.

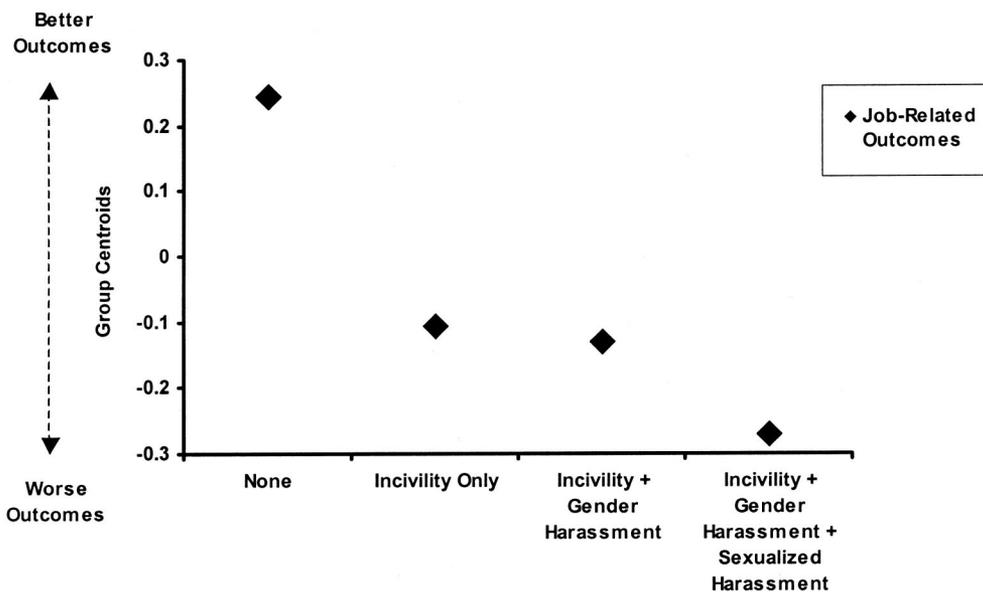


Figure 4. Study 2: Job-related outcomes of interpersonal mistreatment.

Discussion

This article attempts to integrate the literature on sexual harassment with emerging research on generalized interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. Overall, results underscore the need to look at sexual harassment as an experience embedded in a larger context of disrespect. These findings should cast a new perspective on how such seemingly different forms of antisocial behavior relate and combine to interfere with working women's occupational, psychological, and physical health.

Relationship Between Sexual Harassment and General Incivility

The first aim of this article was to investigate the relationship between sexual harassment and general incivility. Consistent with our hypothesis, gender harassment correlated strongly with both general incivility and sexualized harassment (i.e., sexual attention/coercion) in two female samples. A moderate correlation also emerged between incivility and sexualized harassment, even after controlling for the relationship between incivility and gender harassment. In fact, almost all women who had been subjected to gender or sexualized harassment also reported experiencing general incivility (but not vice versa). It appeared that sexual harassment often took place against a backdrop of generalized disrespect in the workplace.

The association and co-occurrence between sexual harassment and general incivility fall in line with feminist theories of sexual aggression, which argue that sexuality and dominance are interconnected. In fact, we suspect that the perpetrators of the different forms of mistreatment could often be the same person(s). That is, the same aggressors may instigate multiple forms of mistreatment—both sexualized and generalized—in efforts to debase women and reinforce or raise their own social advantage. The result of such aggressor behavior would be a combined manifes-

tation of sexualized harassment, gender harassment, and incivility within the targets' experiences—exactly what we found. This would argue against notions that sexual harassment is merely natural sexual attraction or innocent flirting. Indeed, the present studies raise a number of interesting questions about the intersection of gender, power, and the perpetration of workplace mistreatment, a topic that clearly warrants further research.

Organizational climates may also help explain relations between sexual and nonsexual forms of hostile behavior. Previous sexual harassment research has revealed that climate plays an important role in fostering or inhibiting harassment (e.g., Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, et al., 1997; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999; Hulin, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1996; Williams, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1999). In “tolerant” organizational climates, management tends to overlook or appear indifferent to sexually harassing behavior. As a result, victims have little voice, and perpetrators receive little or no punishment. Although the organizational antecedents of harassment are not the focus of the current study, it seems likely that an environment that permits or contributes to the incidence of sexual harassment would also be conducive to nonsexual forms of mistreatment, such as general incivility. If harassment of a sexual nature is not seen as a deviant behavior that warrants correction, incidents of general incivility should be even less likely to receive attention from management.

A third explanation for the high co-occurrence of incivility and harassment also bears mentioning. That is, the experience of one form of interpersonal mistreatment might sensitize targets to other varieties of antisocial behavior, increasing the chance that they will notice other interpersonally inappropriate acts. Along these lines, the social psychology literature clearly indicates that targets of stereotyping and discrimination are more likely to notice even subtly biased behaviors, as compared with nontargets (e.g., Fiske, 1993; Swim, Scott, Sechrist, Campbell, & Stangor, 2003). To shed more light on these issues, future qualitative and longitudinal work on workplace mistreatment should focus, in particular, on perpetrators, climates, and other factors that might account for the convergence of different types of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace.

Outcomes of Incivility and Sexual Harassment

To investigate the impact of the various forms and combinations of mistreatment, we conducted MANCOVA and discriminant function analyses of two types of outcomes: job-related and psychological and physical health. Note that the effects of experiencing incivility alone could not be compared against effects of experiencing sexual harassment alone because, as noted above, employees rarely experienced sexual harassment without concomitant incivility. In fact, the joint manifestation of general and sexual mistreatment suggests that simply attributing adverse outcomes to sexual harassment alone might obscure the bigger picture, that is, that sexual harassment typically occurs within a larger context of disregard for social norms of mutual respect.

Results from both studies revealed that the addition of each type of mistreatment to one's workplace history was related to an incremental worsening of outcomes, even after controlling for the overall magnitude or frequency of mistreatment. Specifically, women who had endured incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment reported the worst outcomes, and those who

had faced both incivility and gender harassment (without sexualized harassment) described lower well-being than employees who had “only” encountered incivility. Nevertheless, experiences of incivility alone were sufficient to trigger a decrease in occupational, psychological, and physical health. This last finding highlights the fact that forms of mistreatment that do not violate law can, nevertheless, be harmful to employees. More generally, these outcome findings were consistent with the literatures on multiple victimization and trauma (e.g., Follette et al., 1996; Green et al., 2000; Pimlott-Kubiak & Cortina, 2003), suggesting that exposure to a constellation of interpersonally abusive events increases risk that professional and personal problems will manifest.

Such results support our hypothesis that work, psychological, and health functioning decline as employees' experiences of mistreatment become increasingly gendered and sexualized. We have proposed that this could be explained by the severity of the mistreatment, as defined by multiple criteria: the potential for physical harm to the targeted employee, the perceived intent of the perpetrator, and the extent to which the target group becomes increasingly personal. Consistent with the literature on stress and coping (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), other important indicators of mistreatment severity may be its duration, predictability, and controllability. Indeed, operationalizing severity in the context of interpersonal mistreatment will be a critical direction for future research.

From these cross-sectional data, we cannot make the temporal assumption that the mistreatment progressed over time from general to gendered to sexualized. However, it is possible that some situations follow such a pattern, especially if hostility and dominance are key motivations for the perpetrators. Indeed, this would be consistent with Andersson and Pearson (1999), who argued that unchecked incivility can spiral into increasingly intense aggressive behaviors. Future longitudinal studies, involving methods such as in-depth interviews and daily diaries, could be useful in investigating such possibilities.

Methodological Issues

One might wonder whether the strong relations between incivility and sexual harassment could be the result of “double counting” of the same behavior by respondents. Although scales in the questionnaire were designed to address relatively discrete behaviors, perhaps participants reported the same harassment experiences on both the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire—Revised and the Workplace Incivility Scale. To avoid this possibility, all analyses in the present article included only a subset of the seven original Workplace Incivility Scale items (Cortina et al., 2001), removing the ones that seemed most vulnerable to double counting (e.g., “addressed you in unprofessional terms”). It was thus unlikely that double counting would explain the correlations among the different types of mistreatment.

Regarding the generalizability of our findings, close examination of the court organization under study revealed that it is comparable to many other public-sector organizations in terms of gender ratios and hierarchical power structures. Men dominated the top of the organizational hierarchy, whereas women far outnumbered men at the bottom, and gender ratios approached parity in the middle. Furthermore, we replicated findings in two subpopulations with demographics that varied widely (e.g., by occupational

status, educational background, gender traditionality of occupation, and gender ratios of peers). We believe that these findings would generalize to similar organizations, and future studies should determine whether they apply in other contexts as well.

Questions may also arise about our reporting of Study 1 and Study 2 results separately. This decision was driven by several concerns: cross-validation (noted above), a desire to avoid pooling data from populations that are too dissimilar, and differences in the two surveys. Although data for both studies were collected within the same federal judicial circuit, they came from two very different employee populations. Study 1 ($n = 833$) surveyed women who work directly for the circuit, primarily as secretaries, support staff, and specialists. On the other hand, Study 2 ($n = 1,425$) focused on a specific, high-level occupational group: attorneys who practice in the federal courts (but who are not employed per se by the federal circuit itself, instead working for law firms or other external agencies). Moreover, the Study 1 survey assessed many more psychological constructs than the Study 2 survey, so we relied on Study 2 primarily for the purpose of testing the replicability of findings.

Limitations

Because of practical constraints on the length of the questionnaire, we were only able to include two gender harassment items in Study 2, yielding a measure with less-than-optimal reliability. Low reliability can interfere with the ability to detect significant associations among constructs. However, a major part of our analyses entailed tests of latent variable models, which to some extent correct for measurement unreliability. These Study 2 modeling results closely replicated those of Study 1, including significant relationships between gender harassment and the other mistreatment constructs. However, gender harassment showed fewer significant correlations with Study 2 outcomes than with Study 1 outcomes, perhaps because of the less reliable Study 2 gender harassment measure.

As is typical in survey research, response bias could be a problem. For example, responses to earlier measures in the surveys might have affected responses to later instruments. For this reason, we paid careful attention to scale placement, ensuring that work, psychological, and health measures appeared prior to the assessment of mistreatment experiences. This reduced the likelihood that responses to the outcome measures would be influenced by responses to the mistreatment measures. Furthermore, measurement of the mistreatment constructs was based on reports of specific behaviors, rather than subjective labeling, and none of the items analyzed contained potentially loaded terms such as *sexual harassment*.

Because of the single-source, self-report nature of the data, common method variance or response set could potentially explain some significant relationships. However, the wide range of correlations among variables—including near-zero correlations—argued against a mono-method-bias explanation of findings. For example, consider the relationship between sexual harassment and physical health. Past research (e.g., Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, et al., 1997; Glomb et al., 1997) has suggested that the experience of sexual harassment has the greatest impact on work-related outcomes but does not exert a direct effect on health outcomes (rather, such health effects are mediated by psychological outcomes).

Consistent with this prior work, in Study 1 we found many significant correlations between gender/sexualized harassment and job-related outcomes, but virtually no correlation with health satisfaction (see Table 1). This and similar patterns of results made it unlikely that the relationships among variables in the study were simply a manifestation of common method biases.

A final limitation lies in the perceptual nature of our variables. Consistent with prior workplace victimization research (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, et al., 1997; Gutek, 1985), we examined these experiences from the perspective of individual targets—attending to their subjective experiences of mistreatment. This reflects our reliance on a cognitive stress framework, which defines psychological stress in terms of an individual's appraisal of a situation as challenging, threatening, or harmful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This approach necessarily implies a subjective component to experiences and definitions of workplace stressors such as interpersonal mistreatment. Indeed, it is precisely this personal experience of stress that likely drives the psychological harm of these behaviors.

Concluding Remarks

Results from the current studies lend empirical support to conceptualizations of incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment as associated phenomena. However, current organizational interventions targeting interpersonal mistreatment rarely consider issues of general civility. If they address sexual harassment, they often focus on this behavior in isolation. The present findings suggest that such conventional approaches to intervention are likely to be limited, as interpersonal mistreatment comes in general, gendered, and sexualized varieties that are highly interrelated. These behaviors combine in employees' experiences to have a considerable negative impact on well-being. Thus, sexual harassment interventions might do well to dovetail with those addressing incivility (Cortina et al., 2002). Instead of taking a dual path in combating either sexualized or generalized mistreatment, a concerted effort aimed at eliminating all elements of a hostile work environment might be more effective and efficient.

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