

Beyond Targets: Consequences of Vicarious Exposure to Misogyny at Work

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The present study tested a model examining 2 indicators of a hostile interpersonal workplace climate for women—observed hostility (i.e., incivility and sexual harassment) toward women and perceived organizational unresponsiveness to sexual harassment—and how they relate to well-being and withdrawal for employees. Participants included 871 female and 831 male employees from a public university. According to structural equation analyses, observing hostility toward women and perceiving the organization as lax about harassment predict lower well-being, which translates into higher organizational withdrawal for both female and male employees. Results hold even after controlling for personal mistreatment, negative affectivity, and observed hostility toward men. These findings suggest that working in a misogynistic environment can have negative effects for all employees.

Keywords: incivility, sexual harassment, gender, well-being, withdrawal

In recent decades researchers have documented the pervasiveness and seriousness of different forms of hostility toward women in the workplace. Most of this work has focused on sexual harassment and the consequences of being the target of such mistreatment (e.g., Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997; K. T. Schneider, Swan, & Fitzgerald, 1997). Some scholars have taken this research a step further and begun to examine the consequences for employees who merely observe or perceive hostile behavior, especially sexual harassment, directed at female coworkers. These studies suggest that simply working in a context where women are mistreated can have detrimental effects similar to those experienced by direct targets of hostility (Glomb et al., 1997; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004; Richman-Hirsch & Glomb, 2002; K. T. Schneider, 1996).

There remain gaps in this literature, however. For example, nontargets can experience hostility toward women by observing not only sexual harassment but also general, nonsexual incivility directed at female colleagues. They can also perceive their organization to be lax about sexual harassment, which is an aggressive behavior that primarily affects women. Such observations and perceptions combine to reflect the interpersonal climate for women in an organization. This study examines how these two features jointly influence the well-being and withdrawal behaviors of employees. Moreover, because very little is known about how the gender of the observer affects these processes, we also theorized

about and tested how men and women might be differentially affected by such vicarious exposure to misogyny.

We focused on the mistreatment of women in this research because, although men can certainly be victims of rude, condescending, sexually harassing behavior in the workplace, these abuses are especially likely to happen to women. Research shows that women are more likely to be the targets of both incivility and sexual harassment in the workplace (e.g., Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Cortina et al., 2002; Koss et al., 1994). For instance, in 2005, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reported that 86% of sexual harassment claims were filed by women, compared with only 14% made by men. Thus, in this study we examined how male and female employees' observations and perceptions of hostility toward women in their work organization influence their well-being and, in turn, withdrawal behaviors.

Defining Climate

Note that the workplace features examined in this research (e.g., observations of hostility toward women and perceptions of the organization's responsiveness to sexual harassment) pertain not to personal experiences of hostility and harassment but rather to perceptions and observations of the organizational context. That is, they constitute part of the workplace climate (Denison, 1996; Reichers & Schneider, 1990). James and Jones (1976) differentiated organizational climate from psychological climate. They defined *organizational climate* as aspects of the organizational environment that are related to characteristics of the organization (e.g., policies regarding sexual harassment). The *psychological climate* of the organization, in contrast, refers to perceptions of aspects of the organizational environment that are related to characteristics of the organization (e.g., perceptions of how permissive the organization is of sexual harassment). Psychological climate, then, refers to individual perceptions of the work environment. The approach to climate in the present research is most consistent with James and Jones's conceptualization of psychological climate in

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the workplace. Although this perceptual approach has been the target of criticism, perceptions are necessary to understanding individual outcomes, because it is people's perceptions of their environment and situation that often determine how they respond to it. Of importance, these perceptions need not agree with others' perceptions in the same environment to be meaningful, because each individual's environment may be distinctive (Rousseau, 1988).

B. Schneider and Reichers (1983) argued for a more precise specification of climate and for more facet-specific climate perceptions. Following this idea, there has been a shift toward facet-specific climate (e.g., "climate for whistle-blowing," Miceli & Near, 1985; "climate for safety," Zohar, 1980). Rousseau (1988) argued that this movement "reflects the trend toward conceptual rigor, methodological sophistication, and precision in the use of perceptual data" (p. 148)." In the present study, we followed this trend by examining the "interpersonal climate for women." In particular, we considered indicators of a *negative* climate for women, or an antifemale climate.

Personal and Vicarious Experiences of Mistreatment

Both theory and data suggest that being the target of hostility in the workplace has a number of negative outcomes. Barling (1996) proposed that nonphysical aggression in the workplace can have negative psychological, psychosomatic, and organizational effects. In a test of this model, Barling, Rogers, and Kelloway (2001) found that experiences of both general hostility and sexual harassment related to fear, negative mood, and perceptions of injustice, which in turn predicted lower organizational affective commitment, enhanced withdrawal intentions, poor job performance, and cognitive difficulties. Similarly, Fitzgerald and colleagues (1997) found that women's personal encounters with sexual harassment were associated with lower psychological and occupational well-being, triggering more health problems and organizational withdrawal. Other research also shows that responses to sexual harassment include lowered job satisfaction and organizational commitment and decreases in psychological and physical functioning (Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Koss, 1993; K. T. Schneider et al., 1997). Perhaps one of the most documented findings in the harassment literature is that most perpetrators are male and most victims female (e.g., Koss et al., 1994; Magley, Waldo, & Drasgow, 1999).

A few research studies have also linked personal experiences of workplace incivility with detrimental outcomes for targets. *Workplace incivility* is defined as rude and discourteous behavior that displays a lack of regard for others, violating workplace norms for mutual respect (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Examples of workplace incivility include interrupting colleagues, addressing others in an inappropriate way, and making jokes at another's expense. Neuman and Baron (1998) described these behaviors as *expressions of hostility* that occur in the workplace. Research shows that being a target of workplace incivility is associated with a number of negative outcomes, such as declines in job satisfaction and increases in psychological distress and organizational withdrawal behaviors (Cortina et al., 2001, 2002). Research also suggests that organizations characterized by a climate of incivility have problems with lowered morale and productivity, sabotage, slowdowns, tardiness, absenteeism, and turnover (Neuman & Baron, 1997;

Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001). As with sexual harassment, numerous researchers have documented that men are more likely to be instigators of incivility and women are more likely to be targets (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back, 1994; Cortina et al., 2002; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath 2000).

Most research on workplace hostility, including sexual harassment and incivility, has focused on primary or direct targets (i.e., the individual victim). Barling (1996) argued that researchers must also consider the perceptions and responses of what he called *secondary victims*, or employees who are vicariously exposed to the hostility. Research has only just begun addressing these non-targets. This preliminary work suggests that vicarious experiences of hostility and mistreatment in the workplace are common. For example, Hitlan, Schneider, and Estrada (2002) found that more than 70% of the women in their sample reported observing the sexual harassment of other women in their work organization. Other research also shows that employees are aware of sexual harassment in their work group and often know who among their male coworkers harasses female employees (Gutek, 1985). Employees also frequently know about harassment complaints and investigations happening in their organization and how they are resolved (Glomb et al., 1997). Similarly, theory holds that incivility, if left unchecked, can permeate every aspect of the organization and become the defining characteristic of the workplace climate (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson et al., 2001). Because of this, Andersson and Pearson theorized that the negative effects of incivility affect not only instigators and targets but also observers.

Only a few studies have empirically examined whether and how negative outcomes extend to employees who vicariously experience the mistreatment of women in their workplace. Specifically, K. T. Schneider (1996) found that witnessing or hearing about the sexual harassment of a female coworker can foster *bystander stress*, which was associated with lower levels of coworker satisfaction. This relationship held even after controlling for personal experiences of sexual harassment, negative disposition, and general job stress. Glomb et al. (1997) found that women facing *ambient sexual harassment* in their work group experienced negative outcomes that parallel those of direct sexual harassment victims; these outcomes emerged over and above effects of personal experiences of sexual harassment and general occupational stress. Likewise, Raver and Gelfand (2005) recently reported that ambient sexual harassment in work teams was related to more team conflict, less team cohesion, and declines in team financial performance. Finally, Miner-Rubino and Cortina (2004) found that employees who observed rude, condescending (i.e., uncivil) behavior toward women also described reduced health satisfaction.

Research also suggests that perceptions of an organization's unresponsiveness to harassment may lead to negative consequences. For example, studies show that perceptions of an organization as tolerant of sexual harassment are associated with more frequent incidents of actual harassment (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Hesson-McInnis & Fitzgerald, 1997; Hunter-Williams, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1999); greater bystander stress (K. T. Schneider, 1996); and lower job satisfaction, health satisfaction, and productivity (Hunter-Williams et al., 1999; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004). Likewise, Bond, Punnett, Pyle, Cazeca, and Cooperman (2004) found that working in a climate perceived as

unresponsive to gender discrimination related to lower job satisfaction and higher psychological distress.

The current study advances previous research by integrating these various outcomes of both observed mistreatment and perceived unresponsiveness into a single, unified model. We also make novel contributions by examining alternative forms of organizational withdrawal, namely, job burnout and lowered affective commitment to the organization. On the basis of the research reviewed earlier, we predicted that working in a negative interpersonal climate for women would be associated with adverse outcomes in two domains: well-being (occupational, psychological, and physical) and withdrawal (from the organization). More specifically, we predicted that observing hostility (i.e., incivility and sexual harassment) directed toward women and perceiving the organization as unresponsive to sexual harassment would be related to lowered well-being (as indicated by lowered job satisfaction and more psychological symptoms and health problems; Hypothesis 1), and that lower well-being in turn would be related to increased organizational withdrawal (i.e., job burnout, lower commitment, and turnover intention; Hypothesis 2). Figure 1 displays the proposed model. It also summarizes our specific predictions, showing which relationships are expected (evidenced by an arrow between constructs) and the anticipated valence of each relationship (positive or negative).

Note that the configuration of outcomes in the proposed model is based on extensive empirical and meta-analytic research (A. Cohen, 1993; Fitzgerald, Hulin, & Drasgow, 1994; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Glomb et al., 1997; Glomb, Munson, Hulin, Bergman, & Drasgow, 1999; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Price & Mueller, 1986; Tett & Meyer, 1993; Williams & Hazer, 1986). For example, Griffeth et al.'s meta-analysis on the antecedents of employee turnover showed that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are both robust predictors of turnover. Although in the present study we did not assess actual turnover, this same research shows that withdrawal cognitions (i.e., turnover intentions, which we did assess) remain the best predictor of actually leaving an organization. Meta-analytic findings by Tett and Meyer also document direct relationships between both job

satisfaction and organizational commitment and turnover intention. Some research (e.g., Price & Mueller, 1986; Williams & Hazer, 1986) further shows that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Finally, job burnout has been linked with both job satisfaction and turnover intentions in a number of studies (e.g., Lee & Ashforth, 1996).

Although some of the predicted relationships in the proposed model (such as those among the outcomes described above) are well documented, others require further explanation. For example, we predicted that vicarious exposure to the interpersonal mistreatment of women would be related to lowered psychological well-being, which in turn would predict lowered physical well-being. We further predicted that lowered physical well-being would be associated with increased job burnout and declines in affective commitment. We based these expectations primarily on the work of Fitzgerald et al. (1997) and Glomb et al. (1997), who found that reports of physical health symptoms and physical health satisfaction mediate the relationship between psychological well-being and two organizational withdrawal variables (i.e., work withdrawal and turnover intention). According to these researchers, it is not until psychological distress associated with personal and observed mistreatment becomes physically debilitating that it affects organizational withdrawal behaviors. In the present study we included a different measure of physical well-being (i.e., number of days ill, missed work because of illness, and doctor visits in the last month) to assess physical health. This health measure has the advantage of being more succinct than those used in past research, lessening the time to complete the survey. Our operationalization of physical health thus differed from that of Fitzgerald et al. (1997) and Glomb et al. (1997), but the latent construct remains physical health.

Extending prior research, we predicted that vicarious exposure to the mistreatment of women would indirectly (via psychological and physical well-being) lead to increases in job burnout and declines in affective organizational commitment. We conceptualized reduced commitment and increased burnout as psychological manifestations of withdrawal from the workplace (Taris, Van Horn, Schaufeli, & Schreurs, 2004). That is, employees may

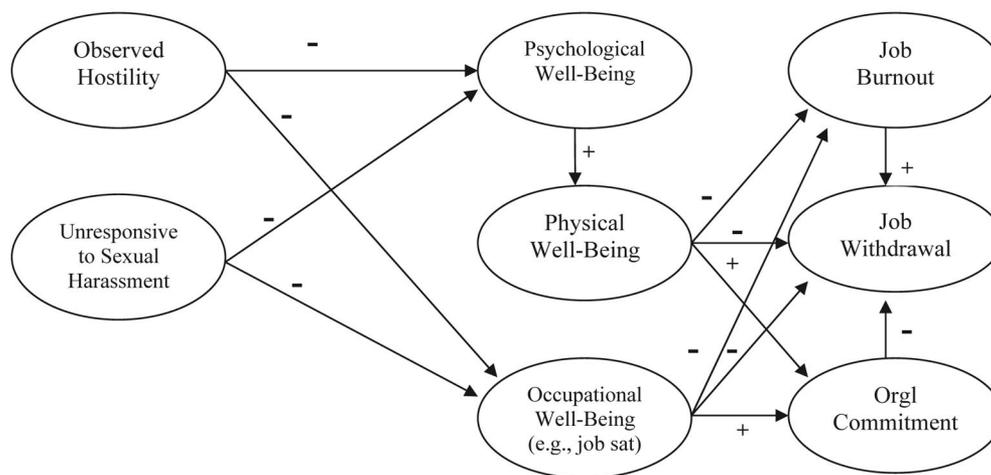


Figure 1. Proposed model, showing all expected relationships and their predicted valence. sat = satisfaction; Orgl = organizational.

remain within an organization yet become psychologically disengaged from and uncommitted to it. This research builds on prior work on personal and ambient sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Glomb et al., 1997), which has focused more on behavioral manifestations of organizational withdrawal (e.g., absenteeism, tardiness, turnover).

Gender as a Moderator

Because very little is known about the role that gender of the observer–perceiver plays in these relationships, this study also contributes to the literature by systematically examining whether working in an antifemale climate differentially affects male and female employees. Women may be more negatively affected than men simply because they have a greater connection to victimized female colleagues. We base this thinking on *similarity–attraction theory* (Byrne, 1971), which proposes that people are attracted and feel connected to similar others. Likewise, the principle of *homophily* posits that similarity breeds connection; when individuals are similar on some demographic, they are more likely to have contact and feel connected (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) argued that easily visible demographic characteristics such as gender are commonly used as indexes of similarity.

When women see or hear about a female coworker being targeted for uncivil or sexually harassing behavior, they might empathize with the victim or fear that they will be the next target of mistreatment because of their shared gender. Women might also conclude that the organization is unfair to women or insensitive to their plight when they observe women being treated rudely and perceive lax enforcement of policies designed to curb the harassment of women. As a result, women's well-being could suffer, which in turn could prompt organizational withdrawal, such as intention to leave the organization. Women's declines in well-being could also lead to feelings of burnout and lower commitment to the organization. For example, when women observe other women being mistreated at work, they may become dissatisfied with their job, which in turn could result in a lessened sense of belonging and connection with their workplace. They might also feel simply exhausted and disengage from their work. Similarly, when women's physical well-being declines as a result of working in a hostile climate for women, they might feel less attached to and more disengaged from the work environment.

Men, in contrast, may be less negatively affected by working in a hostile interpersonal climate for women, simply because they are less aware of the hostility that women face. Research suggests that those in powerful positions are often oblivious to disadvantages of less powerful groups (e.g., Fiske, 1993). Men may also not be as distressed simply because they are more tolerant of sexual harassment and sexual behavior in the workplace (e.g., Foulis & McCabe, 1997; Morrow, McElroy, & Phillips, 1994; Sigal & Jacobsen, 1999). In addition, Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly (2005) suggested that men may not be affected by observing sexual harassment in the workplace because they are motivated to interpret hostile behavior toward women as something other than gender based, so as to maintain a positive attitude about their own gender group.

Despite the aforementioned theories, some preliminary research suggests that men are indeed troubled by observing the mistreatment of women at work (Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004;

Richman-Hirsch & Glomb, 2002; K. T. Schneider, 1996). However, only one of these studies directly compared women's and men's reactions by including them in the same analysis. In addition, none of these studies controlled for personal experiences of mistreatment, to ensure that the negative outcomes for men are not due to their own direct mistreatment experiences. Because of the nascent state of this literature, we made no specific hypothesis about the role that gender plays in these processes but instead conducted systematic, exploratory tests of gender as a moderator.

The Present Study

The purpose of the present study was to examine how working in a negative interpersonal climate for women affects employees, both male and female. This research contributes to the literature on vicarious workplace mistreatment in multiple ways. First, this study combined observations and perceptions of the interpersonal workplace climate for women into a unified model, thus integrating several disparate lines of research. Second, we examined the moderating role of gender in these processes. Third, we expanded past research by incorporating additional, nonresearched outcomes of vicarious mistreatment (commitment and burnout) and also testing for alternative explanations of outcome findings (personal mistreatment, negative affectivity, hostility toward men).

Method

Participants and Procedure

All faculty and staff at a small northwestern public university ($N = 2,773$) were invited to participate in a "respectful climate survey," the purpose of which was to "provide valuable information on aspects of the university climate that need greater attention." Participants had the option of completing surveys either online or on paper. Employees were sent advance notices, invitations, and reminders about the survey, all from the university president, to maximize return rates (Dillman, 1999). On the first page of the questionnaire itself, instructions described the purpose of the study, assured confidentiality, and reminded employees that they could skip any items. As a further participation incentive, respondents had the opportunity to win gift certificates. Using these procedures, 1,843 employees completed the questionnaire (67% response rate). Because of extensive missing data, 141 surveys were excluded. Thus, the total number of participants with usable data was 1,702 (51% women). Of those, 1,390 completed the survey online (82%); the remaining participants mailed in their completed paper survey.

Participants ranged in age from 20 to 75 ($M = 43.63$, $SD = 10.24$), and most were White (92%), were married (90%), were employed full-time (93%), and had at least some college or a college degree (94%). They had worked for the university an average of 10 years. Employees throughout the university participated, representing the following job classifications: technical, paraprofessional, or skilled craft (31%); full or associate professor (20%); nonfaculty exempt (16%); assistant professor, lecturer, or instructor (12%); secretarial or clerical (12%); administrator (3%); irregular help (3%); and service or maintenance (2%).

Measures

The surveys included a number of multi-item scales; most relevant to the current study are measures of participant demo-

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Scale Reliabilities, and Correlations Between Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Intercorrelations between study variables													
1. Observed hostility toward women	0.43 (0.30)	0.42 (0.38)	.82 (.78)	.20**	-.28**	-.05	-.23**	.23**	.24**	-.15**	.55**	.10*	.85**
2. Organizational unresponsiveness	1.66 (1.64)	0.42 (0.44)	.27**	.90 (.91)	-.12*	-.02	-.23**	.17**	.22**	-.27**	.25**	.12*	.22**
3. Psychological well-being	3.62 (3.64)	0.39 (0.39)	-.21**	-.12*	.85 (.86)	.17**	.31**	-.57**	-.31**	.17**	-.32**	-.42**	-.26**
4. Physical well-being	-0.07 (0.07)	0.83 (0.63)	-.03	-.01	.15**	.56 (.73)	.08*	-.16**	-.05	.06	-.06	-.10*	-.09*
5. Job satisfaction	5.84 (5.80)	1.10 (1.10)	-.29**	-.20**	.40**	.11*	.83 (.83)	-.60**	-.64**	.61**	-.23**	-.39**	-.22**
6. Job burnout	3.28 (3.14)	0.97 (0.96)	.26**	.17**	-.52**	-.16**	-.66**	.85 (.84)	.55**	-.43**	.28**	.48**	.22**
7. Job withdrawal	2.83 (2.97)	1.70 (1.86)	.32**	.19**	-.33**	-.09*	-.70**	.62**	.78 (.74)	-.53**	.25**	.28**	.24**
8. Affective commitment	5.00 (4.99)	1.35 (1.33)	-.17**	-.26**	.21**	.03	.56**	-.42**	-.51**	.73 (.71)	-.16**	-.33**	-.14**
9. Personal mistreatment	0.38 (0.37)	0.27 (0.28)	.63**	.24**	-.35**	-.05	-.34**	.37**	.39**	-.19**	.83 (.82)	.15*	.62**
10. Negative affectivity	2.58 (2.74)	0.84 (0.93)	.05	.13*	-.36**	-.08*	-.28**	.34**	.20**	-.23**	.12**	.86 (.88)	.11*
11. Observed hostility toward men	0.28 (0.31)	0.36 (0.38)	.73**	.20**	-.20**	-.03	-.23**	.22**	.23**	-.12*	.51**	.05	.76 (.78)
Correlations between gender and study variables													
Gender			-.17**	-.03	.02	.11**	-.04	-.07*	.06*	-.02	-.02	.11**	.04

Note. $n = 871$ for women, and $n = 831$ for men. Scale reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) are shown in boldface along the diagonal. Means, standard deviations, and scale reliabilities for men are in parentheses. Intercorrelations for women are shown below the diagonal, and the intercorrelations for men are shown above the diagonal. The gender variable was dummy coded 1 = male, -1 = female.

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

graphics; psychological, physical, and occupational well-being; job burnout, organizational commitment, and turnover intention; and aversive workplace experiences. Survey construction focused on minimizing response bias and using valid and reliable measures. Outcome measures appeared prior to questions about hostile experiences to allow for an unbiased assessment of employee functioning. All items were scored such that higher values reflect higher levels of the underlying construct. Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and coefficient alphas for all variables, separately by gender.

Climate measures. Two sets of questions assessed observed hostility toward women. First, we measured observed incivility toward women with items based on the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS; Cortina et al., 2001). Specifically, participants rated three items on a response scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 2 (*more than once or twice*), asking how often in the past year they had observed disrespectful, rude, and condescending behavior directed toward female employees. Sample behaviors include "speak in a condescending or patronizing manner" or "treat in a disrespectful or discourteous manner." We also measured observed sexual harassment with three items adapted from the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ; Fitzgerald et al., 1988). Using the same response format, participants indicated how often they had observed sexually harassing behavior ("make sexually suggestive comments") directed toward female employees in the prior year. Together, these six observed-hostility items formed a reliable scale.¹ All

items assessing observed hostility toward women appear in the Appendix.

Perceived organizational unresponsiveness to sexual harassment was assessed by nine questions about perceptions of university policies and practices regarding harassment (Langhout et al., 2000). Using a simple "yes," "don't know," "no" response format (scored 1, 2, and 3, respectively),² participants indicated agreement with such statements as, "To my knowledge, this university investigates harassment complaints no matter who does the harassment," and "To my knowledge, this university makes strong public statements about the seriousness of harassment." The items were

¹ This approach (of combining observed incivility and observed sexual harassment) into one latent variable is consistent with published research assessing similar constructs (e.g., Barling, Rogers, & Kelloway, 2001; Cortina et al., 2002). In addition, correlational analyses revealed a similar pattern of relationships between the separate variables (observed incivility and observed sexual harassment) and the outcome measures, further justifying our decision to combine the two observed measures.

² Note that we coded the "don't know" category as between "yes" and "no," assuming that this reflected perceptions of the university as being neither fully "responsive" nor fully "unresponsive." In case participants interpreted this response option in some other way, we also reran the final structural equation analysis excluding the 1,113 respondents who reported "don't know" for the majority of items on the scale (leaving an n of 589 for analysis). Excluding these participants from the analysis did not alter the results.

averaged into a composite measure with high scores representing greater perceived unresponsiveness to harassment. The Appendix contains all items.

Well-being measures. Psychological well-being was measured with the Anxiety and Depression subscales of the Brief Symptom Inventory (Derogatis & Spencer, 1983), which has been used extensively in both psychiatric and nonpsychiatric populations. This measure asked employees to indicate the extent to which each of a list of 12 symptoms (e.g., “feeling blue,” “feeling fearful”) had distressed or bothered them during the previous 7 days, from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Extensive psychometric evaluations support the reliability and validity of this instrument, including strong correlations with relevant Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory subscales (Boulet & Boss, 1991; Derogatis & Savitz, 2000). This measure was coded so that high scores represented higher psychological well-being.

Physical well-being was assessed with three items adapted from work by Pennebaker (1982). These items asked respondents how many days in the past month they had been ill, visited a medical doctor, and missed work because of illness. We coded these items so that high scores represented higher physical well-being. In addition, the items included in this measure were *z* scored before they were averaged into a composite.

Occupational well-being was operationalized as job satisfaction, measured with items from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979). Respondents indicated on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) the extent to which each of three statements characterized their work: “All in all, I am satisfied with my job,” “In general, I like working here,” and “In general, I don’t like my job” (reverse coded).

Withdrawal measures. Job burnout was measured using the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). This instrument assesses two aspects of job burnout: exhaustion (physical, cognitive, and affective) and disengagement from work. Respondents were asked to indicate, using a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with 12 statements such as “During my work, I often feel emotionally drained” and “I get more and more engaged in my work” (reverse coded).

Job withdrawal (i.e., turnover intention) was measured with Porter, Crampon, and Smith’s (1976) two-item measure. Respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), their level of agreement with the statements “I often think about quitting this job” and “I will probably look for a new job during the next year.”

Organizational affective commitment was measured using items from Allen and Meyer’s (1990) affective commitment measure. Respondents were asked to indicate on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) the extent to which three statements reflect their feelings toward the university (e.g., “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with [this organization]”). Allen and Meyer (1996) provided evidence for the reliability and construct validity of their measure.

Control variables. Personal experiences of mistreatment were included in analyses as a control variable to ensure that the climate effects on well-being and withdrawal were not actually due to personal experiences of hostility. Two scales assessed personal experiences of mistreatment. The first, an adaptation of the Work-

place Incivility Scale (WIS; Cortina et al., 2001), assessed the degree to which participants had been a target of disrespectful, rude, or condescending behavior in the workplace. Instructions asked participants to indicate whether they had experienced any of nine behaviors from a supervisor or coworker (e.g., “put you down or was condescending to you,” “made insulting or disrespectful remarks to you”) within the last year, using a response scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 2 (*more than once or twice*). Surveys also included 12 items from the SEQ, to assess personal experiences of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1988). Instructions asked respondents to indicate whether they had experienced any of a list of behaviors (e.g., “made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of sexual matters,” “touched you in a way that made you uncomfortable”) from other organizational members within the past year, using a response scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 2+ (*more than once or twice*). Together, the items from these scales formed a reliable measure of personal experiences of mistreatment.

Because previous research has demonstrated that dispositional negative affectivity may bias individuals’ responses to items in a survey (such that they answer items with a pessimistic slant; Judge & Hulin, 1993; Levin & Stokes, 1989), we also included a measure of negative affectivity as a control. Specifically, we used the Life Orientation Test (Scheier & Carver, 1985), which assesses dispositional optimism—the tendency to expect favorable outcomes. We scored this scale such that higher scores represent lower optimism, or higher negativity. Instructions asked respondents to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with eight statements, using a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Example items include “If something can go wrong for me, it will” and “Every cloud has a silver lining” (reverse scored).

We also conducted analyses including observed hostility toward men as a control to examine whether the results stemmed from a generally unsupportive, hostile climate for all employees. The measure used to assess observed hostility toward men was identical to the one used to assess observed hostility toward women (described above; also see the Appendix), with one exception: The items assessing observed hostility toward men substituted the word *male* for *female*. Together, the six observed-hostility-toward-men items formed an adequately reliable scale ($\alpha = .77$).

Results

The distributions of some variables (i.e., observed incivility toward women, personal experiences of mistreatment, and physical well-being) were positively skewed, although responses covered the full range of the scales. To correct this, we computed square root transformations to normalize scores; these transformed variables were used in all analyses.

Descriptive Analyses

As shown in Table 1, observed hostility toward women was significantly correlated with perceived organizational unresponsiveness to sexual harassment for both female ($r = .27, p < .001$) and male ($r = .20, p < .001$) participants. Both observed hostility and perceived unresponsiveness were significantly positively correlated with personal experiences of mistreatment ($r = .63, p < .001$, for observed hostility and $r = .24, p < .001$, for organiza-

tional unresponsiveness for female respondents, and $r = .55, p < .001$, for observed hostility and $r = .25, p < .001$, for organizational unresponsiveness for male respondents). In addition, observed hostility toward women was significantly correlated with psychological well-being, job satisfaction, burnout, job withdrawal, and affective commitment for all participants (correlations ranged from $-.15$ to $.32$). Observed hostility was also significantly correlated with negative affectivity for men ($r = .10, p < .05$). Similarly, perceived organizational unresponsiveness to sexual harassment was significantly correlated with psychological well-being, job satisfaction, burnout, job withdrawal, and affective commitment, as well as negative affectivity, for all participants (correlations ranged from $.11$ to $-.27$). There were also significant correlations among the well-being (correlations ranged from $.08$ to $.40$) and withdrawal variables (correlations ranged from $-.42$ to $.62$).

Table 1 also shows a number of significant correlations between gender and the climate, well-being, and withdrawal variables; note, however, that many of these associations were quite small (J. Cohen, 1988). For example, women (dummy coded -1) reported that they observed more hostility directed toward women ($r = -.17, p < .001$). Women also reported higher job burnout ($r = -.07, p < .01$). Men (dummy coded 1) reported higher levels of physical well-being ($r = .11, p < .001$), job withdrawal (turnover intentions; $r = .06, p < .01$), and negative affectivity ($r = .11, p < .01$).

Primary Analyses: Structural Equation Modeling

Because a major focus of this study was whether the process studied here varies by gender, we analyzed the data for the proposed model separately and jointly for women and men, using structural equation modeling with latent variables. For latent constructs with two or three items, each item represented a single indicator. In cases where construct items divided into individual subscales (e.g., anxiety and depression for the psychological well-being construct), the items of each subscale were averaged to represent an indicator of the latent construct. In all other cases, items assessing each construct were randomly divided into two to three indicators.

After constructing indicators and computing covariance matrices for women and men, we analyzed the matrices using maximum-likelihood estimation as implemented by LISREL 8.5 (Jöreskog, Sörbom, duToit, & duToit, 2001).³ As suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), we undertook a two-stage approach to modeling. We first estimated the measurement model for the latent variables to ensure that the psychometric properties of the measures were adequate and loaded on the hypothesized factors. After testing the measurement model, we estimated the structural model. For all models, we evaluated overall fit using both "incremental" and "absolute" fit indices (e.g., Hu & Bentler, 1995, 1999). The results for the modeling process for women and men are reported separately. We then describe multigroup analyses assessing gender as a moderator.

Modeling results for women. We first estimated the parameters of the measurement model for women. As indicated from the goodness-of-fit indices in Table 2, the measurement model provided a satisfactory fit to the data for women. Standardized loadings for the multi-item factors ranged from $.43$ to $.90$, with a mean

Table 2
Goodness-of-Fit Indices by Gender

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	NNFI
Women						
Measurement	718.68*	230	.06	.97	.95	.96
Structural	1,225.37*	255	.07	.94	.92	.93
Revised structural	1,210.63*	254	.07	.94	.92	.93
Men						
Measurement	662.16*	230	.05	.97	.96	.96
Structural	1,091.39*	255	.07	.95	.93	.94
Revised structural	1,080.68*	254	.07	.95	.94	.94

Note. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; NFI = normed fit index; NNFI = non-normed fit index. * $p < .01$.

of $.72$. Hence, the items were strongly related to their corresponding latent variables. Because the measurement model showed an adequate fit to the data for the women, we proceeded to test the structural model depicted in Figure 1.

As shown in Table 2, we also found an overall good fit of the structural model to the data. Still, modification indices suggested that the model could be considerably improved by the addition of a direct path from organizational unresponsiveness to sexual harassment to organizational affective commitment. This link seemed reasonable given that both constructs assess organizational-level perceptions and attitudes. This revision significantly improved model fit, as indicated by a significant change in chi-square ($\Delta\chi^2 = 14.74, \Delta df = 1$). Other fit indices appear in Table 2. Figure 2 depicts the standardized coefficients for the final revised model for women.⁴

Supporting Hypothesis 1, the more that women observed hostility toward other women at work, the lower their reported psychological well-being ($\beta = -.11$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = -.25$); lower psychological well-being in turn related to lower physical well-being ($\beta = .27$). In addition, as women perceived the university as more lax about sexual harassment, they described less job satisfaction ($\beta = -.12$) and affective commitment ($\beta = -.15$). In Cohen's terms (J. Cohen, 1988), the magnitude of these effects ranged from small to moderate. The reader should keep in mind, however, that all of these paths represent effects of the vicarious variables on well-being after controlling for negative affectivity and personal mistreatment experiences.

Partially supporting Hypothesis 2, we further found that lower physical well-being and job satisfaction were both related to more job burnout ($\beta = -.18$ and $\beta = -.87$, respectively). Lower job satisfaction was in addition associated with lower organizational commitment ($\beta = .69$) and more job withdrawal ($\beta = -.35$). Lower organizational commitment and higher job burnout also

³ Only participants who had complete data were included in the structural equation analyses. After listwise deletion of cases with missing values, the resulting sample size was 730 for women and 710 for men.

⁴ To avoid capitalizing on chance, we retained all nonsignificant paths in the revised models for both women and men, as well as for all multigroup models.

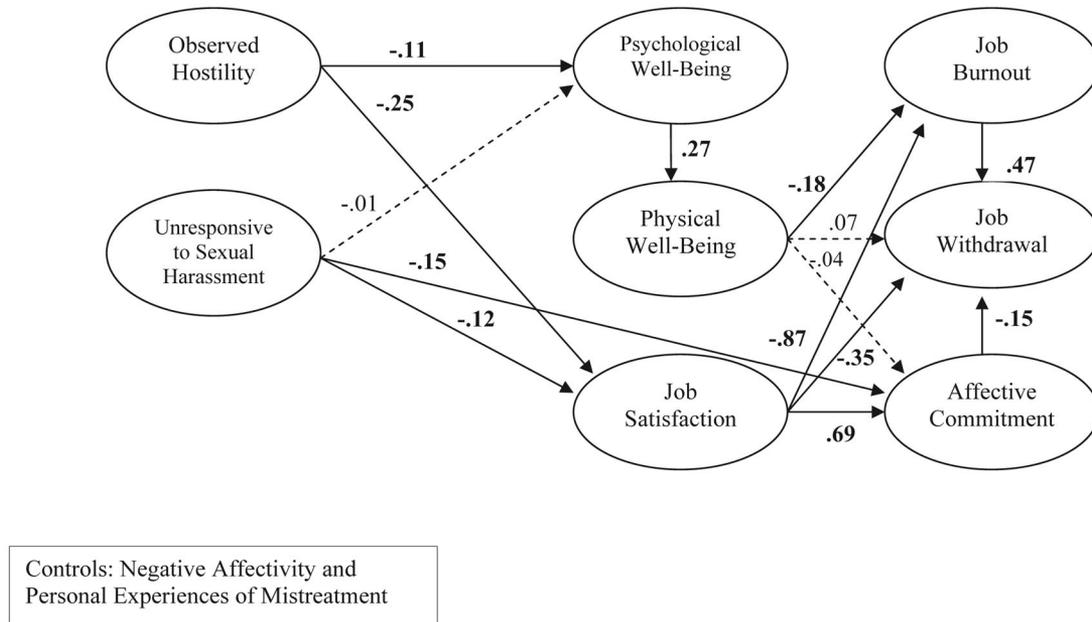


Figure 2. Standardized path coefficients for the revised structural model for women. Dashed lines indicate nonsignificant paths, and significant coefficients are shown in boldface. Not shown are paths from the control variables, negative affectivity and personal experiences of mistreatment, to proximal outcomes: psychological well-being ($-.43$ and $-.24$, respectively, $ps < .01$) and job satisfaction ($-.31$ and $-.20$, respectively, $ps < .01$).

predicted more job withdrawal ($\beta = -.15$ and $.47$, respectively). These effect sizes ranged from moderate to quite large (J. Cohen, 1988).

Modeling results for men. As with the model for women, we first estimated the parameters of the measurement model for men, which was identical to that for women. As indicated from the goodness-of-fit indices in Table 2, this model also provided a satisfactory fit to the men's data. Standardized loadings for the multi-item factors ranged from $.40$ to $.91$, with a mean of $.75$. Hence, as was the case for the women, the items were strongly related to their corresponding latent variables. We then proceeded to test the structural model for men.

As shown in Table 2, the fit indices suggested an overall good fit of the structural model to the men's data. However, modification indices again revealed that the model could be substantially improved by the addition of a direct path from organizational unresponsiveness to sexual harassment to organizational commitment, similar to the findings for women. This revision significantly improved model fit ($\Delta\chi^2 = 10.71$, $\Delta df = 1$). Other fit indices for the revised model appear in Table 2. Figure 3 depicts the coefficients for the final revised model for men.

The results for men were identical to those for women. Similar to the women, men were negatively affected the more they observed uncivil and harassing behavior directed toward women and the more they perceived the university as lax about sexual harassment. Moreover, the strength of these relationships was very similar to those for women.

Multigroup Analyses of Gender as a Moderator

We examined gender as a moderator of this model using multigroup structural equation modeling. We first simultaneously es-

timated the fit for men and women, with each path constrained to be invariant across groups (Test 1). As shown in Table 3, the fully invariant model provided a satisfactory fit to the data. Nevertheless, we sought to determine whether the form of the proposed model and/or strength of relations among some of the variables in the model were different for men and women.

As a first step, we permitted the measurement errors of the indicators to differ between the groups (Test 2). Allowing the measurement errors to differ resulted in a significant improvement in model fit, as indicated by a significant change in chi-square ($\Delta\chi^2 = 941.02$, $\Delta df = 25$). Other fit indices for Test 2 appear in Table 3, showing a satisfactory fit.

We next examined whether any specific parameters of the model differed enough between men and women to warrant further modification. To determine where possible differences between the groups were located, we examined the strength, direction, and significance of the path coefficients in the separate models for men and women (see Figures 2 and 3). Because we were particularly interested in whether and how gender moderates the impact of the two vicarious climate variables, we focused on the path coefficients from these constructs to their proximal outcomes. This process suggested that four paths might differ for men and women: paths between (a) observed hostility and psychological well-being (standardized coefficients: $-.11$ for women, $-.22$ for men), (b) observed hostility toward women and job satisfaction ($-.25$ for women, $-.24$ for men), (c) perceived organizational unresponsiveness to sexual harassment and organizational affective commitment ($-.15$ for women, $-.13$ for men), and (d) perceived organizational unresponsiveness to sexual harassment and job satisfaction ($-.12$ for women, $-.16$ for men).

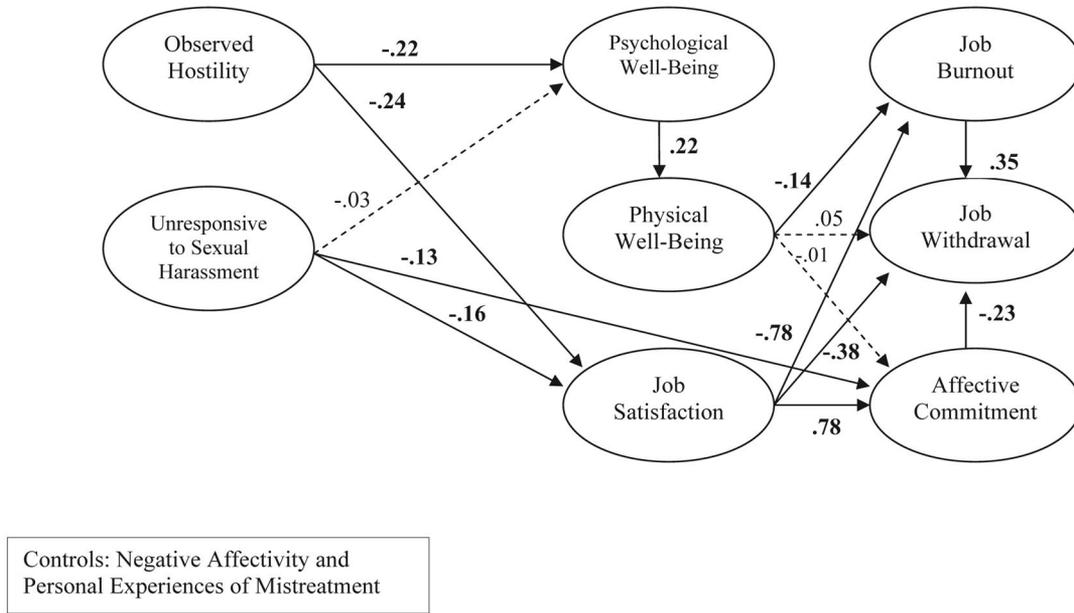


Figure 3. Standardized path coefficients for the revised structural model for men. Dashed lines indicate nonsignificant paths, and significant coefficients are shown in boldface. Not shown are paths from the control variables, negative affectivity and personal experiences of mistreatment, to proximal outcomes: psychological well-being ($-0.48, p < .01$, and $-0.09, p < .05$, respectively) and job satisfaction ($-0.44, p < .01$, and $-0.06, ns$, respectively).

To determine whether allowing these relationships to differ between men and women would result in significant improvements in model fit, we systematically allowed each of these parameters to be freely estimated (i.e., removing the gender invariance constraint). Table 3 shows the results of this process. Whereas Test 1 examined the fully invariant model, and Test 2 permitted different measurement errors by gender, Test 3 allowed both measurement errors and the path between observed hostility and psychological

well-being to differ for men and women. This change did not result in a significant improvement in model fit, compared with Test 2 ($\Delta\chi^2 = 2.26, \Delta df = 1$). In Test 4, we removed the gender-invariance constraint on the path between observed hostility and job satisfaction; this did not lead to a significant improvement in model fit ($\Delta\chi^2 = 1.20, \Delta df = 1$). In Test 5, after removing the invariance constraint on the path between organizational unresponsiveness and organizational commitment, we again found no sig-

Table 3
Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the Multigroup Model by Gender

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	NNFI	Significant $\Delta\chi^2$?
Test 1: Fully invariant by gender	3,297.94*	573	.08	.91	.89	.91	—
Test 2: Gender-invariance constraint released on measurement errors	2,356.92*	548	.07	.94	.92	.94	Yes
Test 3: Gender-invariance constraint released on measurement errors and observed hostility → psychological well-being path	2,354.66*	547	.07	.94	.92	.94	No
Test 4: Gender-invariance constraint released on measurement errors and observed hostility → job satisfaction path	2,355.72*	547	.07	.94	.92	.94	No
Test 5: Gender-invariance constraint released on measurement errors and organizational unresponsiveness → organizational commitment path	2,356.75*	547	.07	.94	.92	.94	No
Test 6: Gender-invariance constraint released on measurement errors and organizational unresponsiveness → job satisfaction path	2,356.78*	547	.07	.94	.92	.94	No

Note. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; NFI = normed fit index; NNFI = non-normed fit index. * $p < .01$.

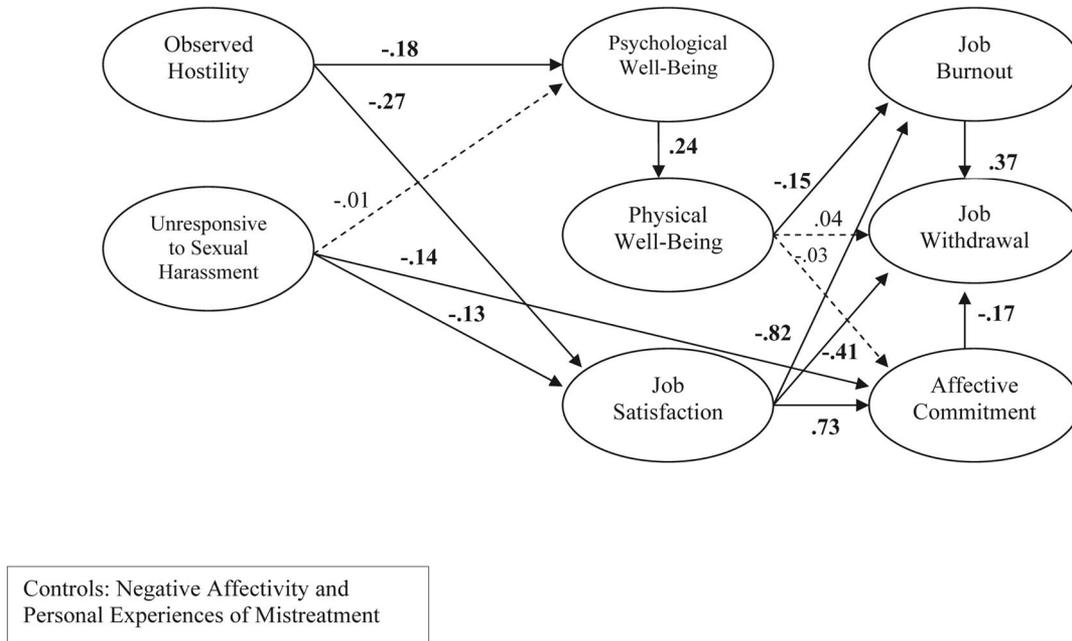


Figure 4. Standardized path coefficients for the multigroup model, constrained to be invariant by gender. Dashed lines indicate nonsignificant paths, and significant coefficients are shown in boldface. Not shown are paths from the control variables, negative affectivity and personal experiences of mistreatment, to proximal outcomes: psychological well-being ($-.46$ and $-.14$, respectively, $ps < .01$) and job satisfaction ($-.38$ and $-.11$, respectively, $ps < .01$).

nificant improvement ($\Delta\chi^2 = 0.17$, $\Delta df = 1$). Finally, in Test 6, we allowed the path between organizational unresponsiveness and job satisfaction to be freely estimated for men and women but again found no significant improvement in model fit ($\Delta\chi^2 = 0.14$, $\Delta df = 1$).

The results of the multigroup modeling process suggest that Test 2 (allowing measurement errors to be freely estimated across genders) provided the best fit to the data. The standardized invariant coefficients for the final multigroup model appear in Figure 4. These results indicate that the revised structural model is applicable to both men and women, suggesting gender similarities in outcomes of vicarious exposure to hostility toward women.

An Alternative Explanation

An alternative explanation for the present findings is that the results stem from a generally unsupportive, hostile climate for all employees.⁵ To address this possibility, we conducted a series of regression analyses including observed hostility (i.e., incivility and sexual harassment) toward men as a covariate. We also included gender as a moderator in these analyses. The results followed a similar pattern to those reported earlier. For example, after controlling for observed hostility toward men, we found that observed hostility toward women remained a significant predictor of psychological well-being ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .001$, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p < .001$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .001$, $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $p < .001$). In addition, perceived unresponsiveness to sexual harassment remained a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .001$, $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $p < .001$) and organizational affective commitment ($\beta = -.25$, $p < .001$, $\Delta R^2 = .06$, $p < .001$) after controlling

for observed hostility toward men. Consistent with the structural equation modeling results, gender did not moderate any of these relationships. These post hoc analyses suggest that witnessing the mistreatment of female colleagues, specifically, is distressing for employees in this organization.

Discussion

Most research to date on hostility toward women in the workplace has examined the negative consequences for direct targets of such behavior. A few studies (i.e., Glomb et al., 1997; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004; Richman-Hirsch & Glomb, 2002; K. T. Schneider, 1996) also suggest that negative outcomes emerge even when employees merely observe or perceive mistreatment targeted at female colleagues. The purpose of the present work was to expand this line of inquiry by examining two indicators of a hostile interpersonal climate for women—observed hostility toward women and perceived organizational unresponsiveness to sexual harassment—and how they jointly related to employee well-being and withdrawal. Note that our observed hostility measure goes beyond past research by including not only sexual harassment but also incivility toward women—an understudied form of gendered hostility. We also systematically examined gender as a moderator of the relationship between vicarious exposure to the mistreatment of women and outcomes. Thus, our research assessed the effects

⁵ We thank the anonymous reviewers for suggesting that we rule out this possibility.

for male and female employees of observing–perceiving the mistreatment of female coworkers in their work organization.

Results of a structural equation analysis showed that, consistent with hypotheses, the more that both male and female employees observed uncivil and sexually harassing behavior directed toward female coworkers, the lower their psychological well-being and job satisfaction. Declines in psychological well-being, in turn, related to lower physical well-being, higher job burnout, and more thoughts about quitting. Lower job satisfaction was also linked with higher burnout, lower affective organizational commitment, and greater turnover intention. Partially supporting hypotheses, perceived organizational unresponsiveness to sexual harassment was related to lower job satisfaction (and, in turn, to increased withdrawal behaviors) and lower organizational commitment for employees. Of importance, these negative outcomes of vicarious mistreatment cannot be attributed to employees' personal experiences of mistreatment, negative affective dispositions, or observed hostility toward men, which were controlled for in analyses. These findings extend past research (e.g., Glomb et al., 1997; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004) on vicarious exposure to the interpersonal mistreatment of women.

Results also suggested that gender does not moderate relationships between the vicarious exposure variables and the well-being variables, corroborating past research (Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004). Instead, we found that observing–perceiving the mistreatment of women in the workplace affects men and women similarly. The results of this research, then, suggest that the negative consequences of antifemale workplace climates are far-reaching, having adverse effects for all individuals in the organization—not just women and targeted employees.

The direct effects of observed hostility toward women and perceived unresponsiveness to sexual harassment on the outcome variables ranged from small to moderate (J. Cohen, 1988). However, these paths emerged as significant over and above the influences of personal experiences of mistreatment and dispositional negative affectivity. In other words, the effects of the vicarious exposure variables are not large, but they are impressive considering that they compete for variance with two important control variables (Prentice & Miller, 1992).

What Drives the Harms of Vicarious Exposure to Misogyny?

The present study, along with a few others (e.g., Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004; Glomb et al., 1997), has documented the consequences of observing or perceiving the mistreatment of women at work. What might be driving these consequences? We theorize that two mechanisms may underlie this process: injustice perceptions and affective reactions.

First, perceptions of justice (or injustice) and fairness (or unfairness) in the workplace might represent a key pathway through which vicarious experiences of mistreatment influence employee outcomes. Research shows that employees look to the treatment of their coworkers for cues and information about organizational norms regarding fairness and justice (Lamertz, 2002; Van de Bos & Lind, 2001). According to fairness theory (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001), people judge whether an injustice has occurred through a decision-making process. In this process, individuals cognitively assess how just and fair an incident or action is by

looking for signs of regard, respect, social inclusion, and dignity (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001; Tyler & Lind, 1992). Individuals conclude that the incident or action is unjust when they perceive it as disrespectful, inconsiderate, rude, or humiliating (Bies, 2001; Bies & Moag, 1986; Tyler & Lind, 1992). The conclusion that injustice has occurred is theorized to then have important negative consequences for the perceiver. When employees observe the mistreatment of women in their workplace, they may conclude that the organization treats some employees unfairly, and they may perceive the organization as unjust. As a result, observers' well-being may suffer, and they may withdraw from the organization. We see perceptions of *interactional injustice*, which refers to perceptions regarding interpersonal treatment (Bies, 2001; Bies & Moag, 1986), as especially related to how employees might interpret rude, discourteous behavior directed toward female coworkers.

Second, affective responses might also explain the vicarious mistreatment–outcome relationship. On the basis of the work of Barling (1996), we theorize that one consequence of vicarious exposure to the mistreatment of women is fear. For example, when employees are exposed to the mistreatment of a female coworker, they may fear that they will be the next targets of mistreatment, especially if they are female. These feelings of fear in turn could result in well-being detriments. Empathy may also be an affective response to vicarious mistreatment. When employees witness or hear about a female coworker being treated rudely, they may experience feelings of empathy, which in turn lead to negative personal consequences, such as lowered well-being. In summary, perceptions of interpersonal injustice and affective reactions could offer theoretical explanations for the negative outcomes of observing hostility toward women; future research should empirically test the fruitfulness of these possibilities.

How can the gender similarities documented in this study be explained? It seems relatively straightforward why women might be negatively affected by working in a negative interpersonal climate for women, for reasons cited earlier (e.g., homophily, empathy, fear of being next). Theoretical explanations for why men may be negatively affected by working in a hostile climate for women are less apparent. Some have suggested that men may show declines in well-being when they observe the mistreatment of women because they are afraid of being personally blamed or perceived as offensive or harassing (Berndahl, Magley, & Waldo, 1996; Richman-Hirsch & Glomb, 2002). It is equally possible that men are negatively affected out of concern for female coworkers, rather than self-interest. For example, men may feel empathy or compassion when they observe or hear about the mistreatment of a close female colleague. In many organizations men and women work closely as partners or team members, likely developing deep emotional connections and friendships. Perhaps men also fear that they too will be targeted for mistreatment, especially when it takes nonsexual forms such as incivility. Clearly, more work is needed to understand why men too can suffer from working in a negative environment for female employees.

Limitations

Like any research, the present study is not without limitations. An obvious limitation is the reliance on single-source self-report data, which could give rise to common-method bias (Doty &

Glick, 1998; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However one suggested technique for reducing this bias is to control for negative affect (Podsakoff et al., 2003) as we have done in the current study. Moreover, despite the shortcomings of the perceptual nature of our data, our research questions seemed best addressed by each individual's perspective on her or his own work environment and outcomes. Others have argued for the importance of subjective perceptions of the workplace environment for behavioral and emotional outcomes, regardless of the accuracy of these perceptions (Seibert et al., 2004). Still, it will be interesting for future research to undertake multilevel operationalizations of climate to understand the outcomes of work group and organizational climates of hostility toward women.

We should also acknowledge that the Observed Hostility Toward Women Scale, Organizational Unresponsiveness to Sexual Harassment Scale, and Personal Experiences of Mistreatment Scale included items that were created or adapted for the present study. These measures, however, all demonstrated good psychometric properties. It is possible that some measures or items functioned differently for women and men. For example, men in this study reported slightly more gender harassment experiences (a component of the Personal Experiences of Mistreatment Scale) than women. Gender harassment items assessed the degree to which the participant observed a colleague tell "sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes" and make "crude and offensive sexual remarks, either publicly or privately." Gender differences on these items could reflect men's likelihood to be in situations where sexual stories, jokes, and remarks about women are told. Thus, there could be some confound between our measures of personal mistreatment and observed hostility toward women, at least for some participants.

We have undertaken analyses to rule out the possibility that effects of observing hostility toward women simply reflect the impact of working in an environment that is hostile toward all, including men. However, these data do not indicate whether or not women are being "singled out" for mistreatment. We do know from past research that women are more likely than men to report personal experiences of incivility (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001) and sexual harassment (e.g., Magley et al., 1999), especially if one only includes experiences that are subjectively appraised as offensive or upsetting (Berdahl, 2007). We have no reason to expect a different pattern of hostility in the organization under study here. Moreover, because women are by far the most common victims of sexual harassment, our organizational-unresponsiveness-toward-sexual-harassment construct is particularly relevant to them. Even if an organization is not explicitly intending hostility toward women, failing to prevent or correct sexual harassment implicitly condones and contributes to a misogynistic climate.

The cross-sectional nature of the present study renders causal inferences tentative until supported in future experimental or longitudinal research. Thus, we cannot say definitively that observing-perceiving the mistreatment of women at work causes declines in well-being. Even so, research on longitudinal models of sexual harassment suggests that these outcomes follow from personal experiences of mistreatment (Glomb et al., 1999); it seems plausible that they might also follow from vicarious exposure to mistreatment.

Finally, because our findings are based on the experiences of employees from a university, the generalizability of findings is

limited to organizations with similar characteristics. Our findings are likely most applicable to employment contexts with similar power structures, gender ratios, and norms of interpersonal respect. Thus, extrapolating our results to other types of organizations should be done with caution.

Future Research

There are some interesting possibilities for future research in this area. First and foremost are the effects of additional workplace factors that could be perceived as indicators of the workplace climate for women. In the present study, we focused on the interpersonal climate for women. Other workplace factors that could also be assessed include perceptions of family friendliness (i.e., availability of flextime, attitudes toward maternity leave, access to on-site day care), gender integration, and the presence of women in the upper echelons of the organization. Employees may look to these factors to diagnose the social values of an organization, including a commitment to equality, respect, and support for all employees.

In addition, variables that intervene in the climate-outcome relationship also deserve empirical attention. For example, we theorized earlier that working in a hostile interpersonal climate may foster affective responses—such as fear and empathy—that can then lead to lower well-being and greater organizational withdrawal. Future research should empirically test for this possibility. It may also be that the impact of observing hostility toward women varies, depending on who is instigating the hostility (e.g., the observers' supervisors vs. coworkers vs. subordinates, men vs. women, etc.). Future work might also focus on potential moderators of the relationship between antifemale climates and outcomes, such as social support and sensitivity to inequity. For example, individuals who are socially supported, both in and outside the workplace, may be less negatively affected when they work in a hostile climate for women. In contrast, effects may be exacerbated for employees who are highly sensitive to inequity. Another possible moderator of the climate-outcome relationship is *climate strength*, operationalized as the degree of within-group consensus about the organization's climate (B. Schneider, Salvaggio, & Subirats, 2002). It seems likely that organizations with a "strong" climate for women (i.e., low within-group variation in perceptions of how women are treated) will show enhanced effects compared with organizations with a "weak" climate.

Finally, future research might focus on the role that observers play in mistreatment intervention. Recently, Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly (2005) offered a comprehensive typology of observer intervention strategies, hypothesizing about what might increase the likelihood of observers' intervening in harassment incidents. They argued that observers will feel the most personal responsibility to intervene when the target of the mistreatment is similar to them in some way, such as shared gender.

Implications and Interventions for Organizations

The findings of the present research have clear implications for organizations. Results suggest that employees may suffer when they feel that women are not well-treated, respected, and valued in their workplace. That these negative consequences occur for employees even after controlling for personal experiences of mistreat-

ment and negative affectivity suggests that this is an organizational and not an individual problem (Glomb et al., 1997). Thus, hostility toward women in the workplace is relevant not only to perpetrators, victims, and women. This underscores the need for broad, proactive organizational interventions to manage workplace misogyny.

There are a number of steps that organizations can take to promote a hospitable, welcoming, and respectful workplace for all employees. For example, organizations should institute formal policies declaring their intolerance of interpersonal mistreatment, especially mistreatment targeted at particular social groups (Fitzgerald, 1993; Pearson et al., 2000). In addition, organizational leaders should communicate repeatedly and publicly the organization's commitment to eliminating interpersonal hostility (Fitzgerald, 1993; Offermann & Malamut, 2002; Neuman & Baron, 1998). Careful selection and training strategies can also promote a more hospitable work environment (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Bush & O'Shea, 1996; Pearson et al., 2000). For example, organizations could check potential employees' references and past employment to screen for problems with interpersonal behavior. Training to enhance interpersonal skills and sensitivity to coworkers would also be beneficial (Koss et al., 1994; Pearson et al., 2000).

When problems do arise, organizations should encourage employees to report hostile workplace interactions—whether experienced or observed—and have systems in place to handle such reports swiftly, thoroughly, and fairly (Bush & O'Shea, 1996; Pearson et al., 2000). The reporting mechanisms should be accessible and trustworthy (Fitzgerald, 1993). Care should also be taken to protect employees from retaliation and other negative consequences that may come from reporting hostile behavior (Bergman, Langhout, Palmieri, Cortina, & Fitzgerald, 2002; Cortina & Magley, 2003). Finally, organizations should consider instituting counseling and support programs to help these employees deal with the stresses associated with experiencing or witnessing hostile behavior at work (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Bush & O'Shea, 1996).

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Appendix

Measures Used to Assess Observed Hostility Toward Women and Organizational Unresponsiveness to Sexual Harassment

Observed Hostility Toward Women

In the past year have you *observed* any university faculty, staff, or administrator. . .

1. ignore, fail to listen to, or interrupt a female employee? (Incivility)
2. speak in a condescending or patronizing manner to a female employee? (Incivility)
3. treat in a disrespectful or discourteous manner a female employee? (Incivility)
4. make a derogatory gender-related comment to a female employee? (Sexual harassment)
5. make an offensive or embarrassing public comment on the physical appearance of a female employee? (Sexual harassment)
6. make sexually suggestive comments to a female employee? (Sexual harassment)

Organizational Unresponsiveness to Sexual Harassment

To your knowledge, does this university take any of the following actions to address discrimination or harassment *directed at staff and faculty*? To my knowledge, this university. . .

1. investigates harassment complaints no matter who does the harassment.
2. investigates harassment complaints no matter what type of harassment it is.
3. investigates harassment complaints no matter how minor the harassment may seem.
4. investigates harassment complaints no matter who files the complaint.
5. has leaders who take public action to stop obvious harassing comments (for example, offensive comments about particular individuals or groups).
6. punishes people who harass, no matter who they are.
7. has leaders who model respectful behavior toward all employees.
8. makes strong public statements about the seriousness of harassment.
9. has leaders who take quick action to stop even *subtle* harassing comments (for example, rumors, jokes).

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