

Effects of Racial and Sexual Harassment on Work and the Psychological Well-Being of African American Women

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Research on workplace harassment has typically examined either racial or sexual harassment, without studying both simultaneously. As a result, it remains unknown whether the co-occurrence of racial and sexual harassment or their interactive effects account for unique variance in work and psychological well-being. In this study, hierarchical linear regression analyses were used to explore the influence of racial and sexual harassment on these outcomes among 91 African American women involved in a sexual harassment employment lawsuit. Results indicated that both sexual and racial harassment contributed significantly to the women's occupational and psychological outcomes. Moreover, their interaction was statistically significant when predicting supervisor satisfaction and perceived organizational tolerance of harassment. Using a sample of African American women employed in an organizational setting where harassment was known to have occurred and examining sexual and racial harassment concomitantly makes this study unique. As such, it provides novel insights and an important contribution to an emerging body of research and underscores the importance of assessing multiple forms of harassment when examining organizational stressors, particularly among women of color.

Keywords: work, psychological well-being, Black/African American women, sexual harassment, racial harassment, double jeopardy

A growing literature asserts that the experiences of women of color in the workplace differ quantitatively as well as qualitatively from those of Caucasian women and men of color. The unique intersection of race and gender embodied by women of color increases their potential for experiencing stressors related to both (e.g., Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Buchanan, 2005b; Cortina, 2001; Defour, David, Diaz, & Thompkins, 2003; Levin, Sinclair, Veniegas, & Taylor, 2002; Teixeira, 2002). There is also evidence of the negative impact resulting from racial harassment (RH; e.g., Harrell, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003) and sexual harassment (SH; e.g., Avina & O'Donohue, 2002; Schneider, Swan, & Fitzgerald, 1997). In addition, research on the effects of multiple and repeated

trauma exposure demonstrates that increased trauma frequency, interpersonal trauma, and the presence of other types of trauma are associated with increased psychological harm (Green et al., 2000; Krupnick et al., 2004). Therefore, experiencing both RH and SH is likely to further exacerbate these negative consequences.

Since the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, organizations have devoted considerable attention to policy and research related to workplace discrimination, of which harassment is an example. However, most empirical investigations of SH focus on the negative consequences for women without considering the potential effects of race. Likewise, research exploring RH in the workplace has traditionally ignored how gender might influence these experiences. Thus, although facing increased exposure to both sex- and race-related workplace stressors, women of color and their harassment experiences have, until very recently, been absent from the research literature. As a result, little is known about the effects of experiencing multiple forms of harassment or their joint contributions to psychological and occupational outcomes.

Accordingly, the purpose of the present investigation is to explore the relationships between RH and SH and examine their concomitant influence on outcomes (e.g., supervisor satisfaction, work with-

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We thank Mindy E. Bergman, Rebecca M. Campbell, Carole B. Corcoran, Zaje A. Harrell, Cheryl Kaiser, Alytia Levendosky, Alayne J. Ormerod, Ann Marie Ryan, Isis H. Settles, and Cris Sullivan for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this article.

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drawal, and posttraumatic stress [PTS] symptoms). Using a sample of 91 African American women, we assessed SH, RH, and their potential moderating effects on work and psychological well-being. We demonstrate empirically that both SH and RH are important factors in understanding these outcomes among African American women experiencing workplace harassment. As such, this work contributes to emerging multidimensional theories of harassment.

Definitions, Prevalence, and Outcomes Associated With SH and RH

SH is defined as unwanted sex-based behavior that is used as a condition of employment or creates a hostile work environment for targets (those toward whom harassment is directed; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1980; Fitzgerald, 1996). SH includes gender harassment (nonsexual gender-based experiences, such as comments that women are incompetent), unwanted sexual attention (unsolicited sex-based comments, gestures, or attempts at physical contact), and sexual coercion (quid pro quo; job-related threats or benefits used to compel sexual cooperation; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1988). RH refers to race-based differential treatment that may create a pervasive hostile environment for targets (Harrick & Sullivan, 1995), commonly in the form of verbal race-based harassment (e.g., racial slurs, ethnic jokes, and derogatory race-based comments) and exclusion because of race (e.g., being excluded from work-related activities and social interactions; Schneider, Hitlan, & Radhakrishnan, 2000). SH and RH remain pervasive throughout the workplace, with one half of female employees reporting at least one unwanted sex-related behavior (Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993) and 40% to 76% of ethnic minority employees experiencing at least one unwanted race-based behavior within a 12- to 24-month period (Harrell, 2000; Schneider et al., 2000).

Two separately developed areas of research have established that both SH and RH have deleterious effects on the psychological well-being, physical health, and job satisfaction of targets. SH has been associated with increased rates of work withdrawal and intentions to quit, decreased productivity, and increased rates of depression, PTS, and general clinical symptomatology (Avina & O'Donohue, 2002; Fitzgerald, Buchanan, Collinsworth, Magley, & Ramos, 1999; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997; Langhout et al., 2005; O'Connell & Korabik, 2000). Similarly, racist events have been

associated with increased work withdrawal, psychological and traumatic stress symptoms, decreased life satisfaction, and elevated incidence of chronic health conditions (e.g., heart disease or cancer; Harrell, 2000; Schneider et al., 2000; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald, & Bylsma, 2003; Williams et al., 2003). It is important to note, however, that with the exception of Schneider et al. (2000), very little research has addressed outcomes related specifically to workplace RH.

Research Examining the Concomitant Effects of SH and RH

Double jeopardy (Beal, 1970; D. K. King, 1988) proposes that members of multiple minority groups, such as women of color, will be at increased risk for harassment. This perspective emphasizes that simultaneously experienced racism and sexism necessitates consideration of their concomitant effects. Yet, extant research has rarely addressed harassment related to both race and gender together or how African American women may be targeted as a result of these marginalized identities (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Settles, 2006; St. Jean & Feagin, 1997; Thomas, 2004). Nevertheless, studies have supported double jeopardy predictions that ethnic minority women have elevated rates of harassment (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Bergman & Drasgow, 2003; Cortina, Swan, Fitzgerald, & Waldo, 1998; Hughes & Dodge, 1997; Mecca & Rubin, 1999; Nelson & Probst, 2004; Wyatt & Riederle, 1995).

Beyond the additive effects of increased exposure, double jeopardy posits that the co-occurrence of racism and sexism produces unique experiences with interactive effects for women of color. Thus, harassment can reflect gender and race bias concurrently. Mecca and Rubin (1999) found that African American women's examples of SH infused racial stereotypes, particularly those based on their physical features. Among professional African American working women, Buchanan (2005b) and Buchanan and Ormerod (2002) found that harassment experiences reflected sexualized images of Black women and frequently combined race and gender. Similar findings have been found for African American female firefighters (Yoder & Aniakudo, 1995, 1996, 1997) and police officers (Martin, 1994; Teixeira, 2002).

Exposure to multiple forms of trauma is associated with increased distress compared with experiencing a single type of trauma, and multiple interpersonal traumas create the greatest distress (Green et al.,

2000; Krupnick et al., 2004). Similarly, harassment related to both gender and race may create a multiple traumatization effect in which work and psychological outcomes are further worsened as a result of the multiple forms of harassment experienced. For example, college students who endorsed both SH and RH reported increased schoolwork avoidance, less satisfaction with teachers and the institution, increased psychological distress and PTS symptoms, and poorer self-esteem compared with those who experienced a single form of harassment (Buchanan, Bergman, Bruce, & Lichty, 2008). In another study, African American female firefighters reported that harassment not only targeted them on the basis of their race and gender, but that it had added deleterious effects on their work lives. As a result of being excluded from occupational opportunities and social activities, they experienced increased marginalization at work, which was doubly difficult to overcome because they were women of color (Yoder & Aniakudo, 1997).

Recently, research that focuses on women of color and their perceptions of both gender- and race-related experiences has begun to appear. Thus far, findings are preliminary and based on widely divergent samples, participant selection procedures, methods, and survey instruments. For example, in their study of 133 African American women (primarily university students), Moradi and Subich (2003) found that the frequency of both sexist and racist events predicted psychological distress. However, when examined simultaneously, the majority of the unique variance was attributed to sexist events without moderation by racist events. Although their results did not support the multiplicative effects they hypothesized, the authors speculated that multiplicative effects may be found with other outcome variables and populations. In their study of workplace double jeopardy among Canadian men and women, Berdahl and Moore (2006) found evidence for additive, but not multiplicative, effects. However, the failure to find multiplicative effects may have been the result of a number of confounds. Specifically, they aggregated the experiences of very different minority groups (28% were Asian and 10% were Caribbean) from very different employment settings (e.g., male-dominated manufacturing plants and female-dominated community service centers overseen by city government). It is possible that their sample lacked the specificity needed for interactive effects to emerge. Taken together, these findings demonstrate that there is no clear consensus on the detrimental interplay of RH and SH. Therefore, further research that focuses on the work

and psychological sequelae of multiple stressors due to race and gender is needed to understand the harm they pose.

This body of research suggests that the harassment experiences of African American women may have confluent gender- and race-related outcomes worthy of direct examination and may provide a foundation on which future research can build. Several studies were primarily qualitative (Buchanan, 2005b; Buchanan & Ormerod, 2002; Yoder & Aniakudo, 1995, 1996, 1997), which fostered an exploration of various themes related to SH and RH; however, qualitative analyses are less conducive to the systematic investigation of the relationships between harassment and its consequences. Although these studies discussed the interplay of gender and race, few measured experiences of both racist and sexist events (exceptions include Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Buchanan et al., 2006; Moradi & Subich, 2003). Theorists have also suggested that emic (within-group) research designs are necessary to understand how current theories extend to underexamined populations (Sue, 1999; Russo & Vas, 2001). More specifically, Thomas (2004) and Landrine (1995) have argued for methodologies and theory that reflect the multiple identities and lived experiences of African American women as both people of color and women.

To address these theoretical and methodological concerns, the current study used an emic design for within-group analysis to determine the effects of SH and RH on work-related indicators (i.e., supervisor and coworker satisfaction, work withdrawal, perceived organizational tolerance for sexual harassment [OTSH]), and psychological outcomes (i.e., PTS symptoms and life satisfaction). Ninety-one African American women involved in a SH class-action lawsuit against their employer, a large financial institution, were included. Each woman was assessed and determined to have experienced SH before joining the class, and their SH and RH experiences were independently evaluated in a later survey. Given that the women in this study all experienced SH, warranting their inclusion in the lawsuit, we expected that their SH experiences would account for a significant proportion of explained variance in outcomes. However, because of the multiple jeopardy experiences expected for sexually harassed African American female employees, we hypothesized that RH experiences would explain considerable additional variance, above and beyond SH, despite the fact that RH was not included in the lawsuit. Finally, consistent as well with double jeopardy predictions, we hypothe-

sized that the interaction of SH and RH would add predictive value over and above their individual main effects. Specifically, we hypothesized that those with higher levels of SH and RH would have poorer outcomes.

Method

Participants

Survey data were collected from 91 African American women involved in a SH class-action lawsuit against their employer. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 66 years ($M = 36.78$, $SD = 9.30$). Most reported being single ($n = 41$; 45.05%), but 27 were married (29.67%), and 21 were divorced or separated (23.08%) or widowed ($n = 2$; 2.20%). Most had some college education ($n = 39$; 42.9%) or had graduated from college ($n = 21$; 23.1%), and there were equal numbers of those attaining graduate or professional degrees and those completing high school or a GED (for each $n = 12$; 13.2%). A small number reported having some graduate school education, although they had not completed an advanced degree ($n = 6$; 6.6%). One participant did not respond to this item. At the time of the survey, 86.8% ($n = 79$) were no longer employed with the company, and 12.1% ($n = 11$) remained employed there. Across the entire sample, participants reported working for the company an average of 9 years, ranging from less than 1 year to 21 years. The majority of respondents were employed as sales assistants ($n = 52$; 57.1%), with a small number employed as brokers ($n = 4$; 4.4%) or as branch administrators ($n = 3$; 3.3%). The positions of both operations manager and sales director were underrepresented in this sample, with only 1 respondent endorsing each (1.1%). Thirty women (33.0%) chose not to respond to this item. At the time of the survey, 54.9% ($n = 50$) reported that they had settled their claim, and 41.8% ($n = 38$) had not (3 participants did not respond to this item).

Procedures

The survey was conducted as an independent evaluation of the nature and extent of harassment at the workplace to inform the mediation process and class-action suit. Louise F. Fitzgerald was retained by the plaintiffs' attorneys to examine the facts of the case and provide a summary of the claims of the class as a whole. Following an introductory letter from the plaintiffs' attorneys, surveys were mailed to partici-

pants with a cover letter explaining their rights as research participants, the confidentiality of their responses, and contact information for the primary investigator and the institution's research review board for human subjects. The letter informed participants that the survey was being conducted to assess their work environment and would include questions regarding their health, mood, general well-being, and workplace experiences. They were also informed that they would have full access to the final report from the survey. Approximately 2 weeks later, a follow-up letter was mailed to those who had not yet returned the survey. The final response rate for the overall sample was 67%, which is considerably higher than typical response rates. Complete data were available for 91 African American women. On completion of the study, the final report was posted on a secure Web site reserved for class members and their attorneys. Participants also received newsletters reporting study findings and publications.

Measures

The survey was designed to assess respondents' harassment experiences and related outcomes and to minimize response bias and demand effects. Thus, the questionnaire began with questions on innocuous information (gender, age, and education) and was followed by questions related to four broad categories: (a) work, psychological, and health status; (b) unwanted sex-related experiences at work; (c) perceptions of the work climate; and (d) additional unwanted work experiences, such as RH. Outcome measures, such as work withdrawal and clinical symptoms, were assessed before the questions related to harassment to avoid biasing participants' outcome responses. The measures were self-report and therefore represent the respondents' perceptions of events. However, to avoid redundancy, we have omitted phrases such as "individual reports of" or "perceived frequency of" when referring to these variables. Unless stated otherwise, scale items were summed to create a total score such that higher scores on a measure indicate a greater endorsement of the construct. Also unless stated otherwise, participants responded to the scales with regard to their period of employment at the organization where the harassment occurred. Means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and correlations are reported in Table 1.

Frequency of sexual harassment. Participants answered a 32-item version of the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ; Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1988) containing multiple items

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Coefficients, and Correlations for Predictor and Outcome Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Sexual harassment	.95									
2. Racial harassment	.39**	.95								
3. Generalized job stress	.46**	.33**	.86							
4. Supervisor satisfaction	-.43**	-.43**	-.41**	.89						
5. Coworker satisfaction	-.35**	-.28**	-.19	.15	.84					
6. Work withdrawal	.25*	.09	.27*	-.09	-.32**	.83				
7. Job withdrawal	.22*	.19	.36**	-.16	-.17	.35**	.87			
8. OTSH	.45**	.44**	.35**	-.47**	-.31**	.13	.20	.92		
9. PTS	.54**	.49**	.42**	-.35**	-.32**	.25*	.26*	.49**	.95	
10. Life satisfaction	-.28*	-.23*	-.23*	.14	.01	-.02	-.10	-.13	-.42**	.90
<i>M</i>	45.16	22.12	20.94	10.13	16.75	8.23	7.81	26.57	21.32	21.29
<i>SD</i>	26.83	16.49	5.92	9.20	8.12	6.90	3.90	7.90	16.82	7.84

Note. Reliability coefficients are provided in italics along the diagonal. OTSH = organizational tolerance for sexual harassment; PTS = posttraumatic stress.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

assessing participants' experiences of specific behaviors that constitute SH (e.g., "told suggestive stories or offensive jokes," "continued to ask you out for dates, drinks, dinner, etc., even though you had said 'no,'" and "made unwanted attempts to stroke or fondle you"). The SEQ is the most widely used measure of SH, with strong psychometric properties and high internal consistency. It is generally regarded as the most comprehensive paper-and-pencil instrument available for assessing sexually harassing experiences (Arvey & Cavanaugh, 1995). Items were summed to create a total score, using a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*many times*), which indicated how often the participants experienced the behaviors during their employment at this organization. Fitzgerald, Drasgow, and colleagues (1999) reported the SEQ reliability coefficient to be .94. In organizational (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Harned, Ormerod, Palmieri, Collinsworth, & Reed, 2002) and educational settings (e.g., Harned, 2004), SEQ mean scores are generally low and are not normally distributed. Although the current sample has an elevated mean score ($M = 45.16$, $SD = 26.83$), it has greater variability and less skew (skewness = .68, SE of skew = .27) than is commonly found in studies of SH. Therefore, using a litigant sample did not significantly restrict the range of SEQ scores.

Frequency of racial harassment. Fifteen items from the Racial Experiences Questionnaire (REQ;

Ormerod, 1999) were used to explore the frequency of RH. The REQ is a behavioral measure assessing behaviors and statements that degrade or insult ethnic or racial minority group members (e.g., "excluded you from work-related social events because of your race" and "made negative comments about your race"). Respondents indicated how often they experienced such behaviors during their employment at this organization, using a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*very often*); responses ranged from 0 to 56. The REQ appeared near the end of the survey after assessments of psychological outcomes and SH.

Supervisor and coworker satisfaction. Satisfaction with one's supervisor and coworkers at the organization was measured with two subscales (9 items each) from the Job Descriptive Index (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969; Roznowski, 1989). Respondents were asked what their supervisor or coworkers were like most of the time (e.g., hard to please or responsible). As recommended by the scale's creators and subsequent studies (e.g., Hanisch, 1992; Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim, & Carson, 2002), the response scale was recoded such that *no* = 0, *? = 1*, and *yes* = 3.

General job stress. General job stress was assessed using the Job in General Scale (Smith, Sademan, & McCrary, 1992). Respondents were asked to rate what their job at the organization was like the majority of the time on nine descriptive items (e.g., hectic, tense,

and pressured) using the same response format as the supervisor and coworker subscales.

Organizational withdrawal. Work Withdrawal (10 items) measures one dimension of organizational withdrawal characterized by absenteeism, tardiness, and other ways employees may try to avoid their work environment and tasks (e.g., "spent time on nonwork activities," "made excuses to miss meetings," and "wanted to leave work early"; Hanisch & Hulin, 1990, 1991). Job Withdrawal (3 items) measures a dimension of work organizational avoidance typified by employees' attempts to leave the organization (e.g., "tried to find another job"; Hanisch & Hulin, 1990, 1991). For both scales, respondents reported how often they engaged in specific behaviors during their employment period at the organization using a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*many times*).

Organizational tolerance of sexual harassment. The Organizational Tolerance of Sexual Harassment scale (OTSH; Hulin, 1993; Hulin, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1996) uses nine items to assess an organization's SH climate. Respondents were presented with three hypothetical scenarios depicting gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, or sexual coercion (e.g., "A male broker or manager in your office talks a lot about his sex life and tries to get the women in the office to tell him about theirs") and were asked to consider what would have happened if the interaction had occurred in their company. Using a 5-point scale, respondents answered three questions after each scenario assessing (a) the risk if the woman made a formal complaint (1 = *no risk*, 5 = *extremely risky*), (b) the likelihood she would be taken seriously if she filed a complaint (1 = *very good chance*, 5 = *almost no chance*), and (c) the outcome if she made a formal complaint (1 = *very serious punishment*, 5 = *probably nothing would be done*).

Trauma-related symptoms. The PTSD Checklist (PCL; Weathers, Litz, Herman, Huska, & Keane, 1993) is a 17-item self-report measure of posttraumatic stress symptoms as defined by the current *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). The 5-point response scale ranged from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*extremely*), assessing such examples as "suddenly acting or feeling as if the stressful experience were happening again" and "having physical reactions (e.g., heart pounding, difficulty breathing, sweating) when something reminded you of these experiences." The PCL has excellent reliability, test-retest reliability, and convergent validity with other measures of posttraumatic stress disorder (Weathers & Ford,

1996). Scale instructions were modified slightly to inquire specifically about participants' reactions to harassment experienced within this organization.

Life satisfaction. The Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) is a 5-item scale measuring current perceptions of one's general satisfaction with life (e.g., "I am satisfied with my life" and "If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing"). Respondents rated each item using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Diener and colleagues (1985) reported high internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$) and a 2-month test-retest correlation coefficient of .82.

Negative affectivity. Negative affectivity was included as a control variable because of its association with both work and psychological outcomes. Participants reported how they generally feel, using a 5-point response scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*almost always*) to answer 10 items measuring negative affectivity from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Sample items include "distressed" and "irritable."

Results

SH and RH were significant and positively correlated ($r = .39$, $p < .01$) such that women who reported more frequent sexual harassment also reported more frequent racial harassment (see Table 1). The relationships between outcomes and predictor variables were in the predicted directions and indicated that as RH or SH increased, satisfaction with supervisors and coworkers decreased and general work-related stress, OTSH, and psychological distress increased. To examine potential bias in harassment reporting, t tests were conducted to determine whether differences in outcomes existed between those participants who had already settled their legal claim versus those who had not. The analyses revealed no significant differences on seven of the outcome variables that might reasonably be expected to reflect elevated reports of harassment-related distress (i.e., generalized stress, supervisor and coworker satisfaction, work and job withdrawal, PTS symptoms, and life satisfaction). The sole difference between the two groups on outcome variables was a statistically significant difference on their mean scores on OTSH (for those who had settled, $M = 24.24$; for those who had not, $M = 29.16$), $t(80) = 2.98$, $p < .01$, which indicated that those who had not settled perceived the organization as being more tolerant of harassment. Similarities between respon-

dents who had settled and those who had not suggest that the data were not unduly biased by individuals overstating their distress to influence the settlement proceedings.

A series of hierarchical regressions was used to examine the individual, incremental, and interactive effects of SH and RH (see Table 2).¹ Negative affectivity was entered as a control variable in the first step, followed by the SH total score in the second step, RH total score in the third step, and their centered multiplicative interaction in the final step (Aiken & West, 1991). As evidenced by the change in R^2 , SH made a significant contribution to each of the outcomes, except work and job withdrawal, which were predicted exclusively by negative affectivity (the control variable). The addition of RH was significant for five of the eight outcome variables (generalized job stress, supervisor and coworker satisfaction, OTSH, and PTS symptoms) and accounted for an additional 4%–9% of the predicted variance. In each of these cases, worsened outcomes were associated with increased SH, and the negative effects were exacerbated when RH was added to the model. Thus, for five of the outcomes measured in this study, the results supported our hypothesis; namely, that the concomitant examination of participants' SH and RH experiences would significantly improve the prediction of work and psychological outcomes above and beyond SH alone.

The last step in the series of hierarchical regressions tested the final hypothesis that the centered multiplicative interaction between SH and RH would significantly contribute to the prediction of work and psychological outcomes such that those with higher levels of SH and RH would have the worst outcomes. Contrary to our hypothesis, the interaction term was not significant for the psychological outcomes. However, it was significant for two of the organizational variables, supervisor satisfaction and OTSH. The interaction effects were plotted to graphically depict their form on the basis of the multivariate models in Table 2 (Figures 1 and 2). The simple slope analyses (see Table 3) were conducted using conditional values for RH that were calculated to be 1 standard deviation above and 1 standard deviation below the mean (Aiken & West, 1991). For supervisor satisfaction and OTSH, the simple slope analyses indicated that the slope of SH was significant when RH was low but not significant when RH was high. Specifically, for those with higher levels of RH, their level of SH was unrelated to supervisor satisfaction and OTSH. Among those with lower RH, as SH increased, supervisor satisfaction decreased and their

perception of the organization as tolerant of harassment increased. Furthermore, those with low SH and low RH reported the highest levels of supervisor satisfaction and the lowest perceptions of OTSH. However, the mean scores of the remaining three groups (high SH–low RH, low SH–high RH, and high SH–high RH) were similar for supervisor satisfaction and OTSH. When participants experienced high levels of RH (regardless of the amount of SH) or low levels of RH combined with high levels of SH, dissatisfaction with one's supervisor and perceptions of the organization as being tolerant of harassment were on average greater.

Discussion

This study contributes to the SH literature by examining the additive and interactive effects of workplace SH and RH on the occupational and psychological outcomes of African American women. After accounting for the variance attributed to SH, RH accounted for additional variance in participants' general job stress, satisfaction with their supervisor and coworkers, OTSH, and PTS symptoms. Work withdrawal and life satisfaction were the only variables associated with SH alone. We also found an interaction effect of SH and RH for a subset of occupational outcomes: supervisor satisfaction and OTSH. Thus, both RH and SH appear to be crucial determinants, with substantial influences on occupational and psychological outcomes.

As expected, SH and RH were positively correlated, supporting literature from double jeopardy theory, suggesting that African American women are at increased risk for multiple forms of harassment because of their multiple minority status. Although it is not certain whether the women in this study experienced multiple forms of harassment separately or whether they experienced events that fused characteristics of both, it does indicate that if African American women are harassed at all, they are likely to experience multiple forms of harassment. The positive relationship between SH and RH is also consistent with previous findings that when one form of harassment is present in an organization, multiple

¹ To test for the possibility of a curvilinear relationship, quadratic terms were entered into all multiple regression equations because their omission can result in spurious interaction effects (Ganzach, 1997; McClelland & Judd, 1993). Including the quadratic terms had no impact on the estimation of the interaction terms, and therefore the more parsimonious model was retained.

Table 2
Standardized Regression Coefficients From Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Work and Psychological Outcomes

	Generalized job stress				Supervisor satisfaction				Coworker satisfaction			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Negative affectivity	.39**	.31**	.26**	.26**	-.11	-.04	.02	.01	-.19†	-.13	-.09	-.08
Sexual harassment (SH)		.37**	.28**	.23*		-.43**	-.31**	-.23*		-.36**	-.27*	-.30**
Racial harassment (RH)			.25**	.31**			-.34**	-.42**			-.25*	-.22†
SH × RH				-.19†				.30**				-.11
Adjusted R ²	.14	.26	.30	.32	.00	.17	.26	.33	.02	.14	.18	.18
ΔR ²	.15**	.13**	.05*	.03†	.01	.18**	.09**	.08**	.04†	.12**	.05*	.01
ΔF	12.05**	12.1**	5.07**	3.18†	.99	16.50**	9.61**	9.00**	2.86†	10.69**	4.44*	1.07
Work withdrawal												
Job withdrawal												
OTSH												
Negative affectivity	.34**	.31**	.32**	.32**	.38**	.35**	.35**	.35**	.20†	.12	.06	.07
SH		.20†	.22†	.24*		.17	.17	.17		.43**	.33**	.29**
RH			-.08	-.10			.01	.00			.31**	.37**
SH × RH				.002				.03				-.20*
Adjusted R ²	.11	.13	.13	.12	.14	.15	.14	.13	.03	.20	.27	.30
ΔR ²	.12**	.04*	.00	.00	.15*	.03	.00	.00	.04†	.18**	.08**	.04*
ΔF	10.11**	3.12†	.50	.55	3.12†	.03	.00	.00	3.12†	16.13**	7.94**	3.80*
PTS symptoms												
Life satisfaction												
Negative affectivity	.59**	.49**	.49**	.44**	.44**	.44**	.44**	.44**	-.58**	-.57**	-.57**	-.57**
SH		.45**	.45**	.38**		.39**	.39**	.39**	-.27**	-.25*	-.27**	-.27**
RH				.22**		.22**	.22**	.22**		-.03		-.02
SH × RH				.03		.03	.03	.03				-.10
Adjusted R ²	.33	.53	.53	.56	.56	.56	.56	.56	.17	.26	.26	.33
ΔR ²	.34**	.20**	.20**	.04**	.04**	.04**	.04**	.04**	.18**	.09**	.09**	.08**
ΔF	37.05**	29.92**	29.92**	7.01**	7.01**	7.01**	7.01**	7.01**	8.9**	45.27**	45.27**	1.23

Note. OTSH = organizational tolerance for sexual harassment; PTS = posttraumatic stress disorder.
† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

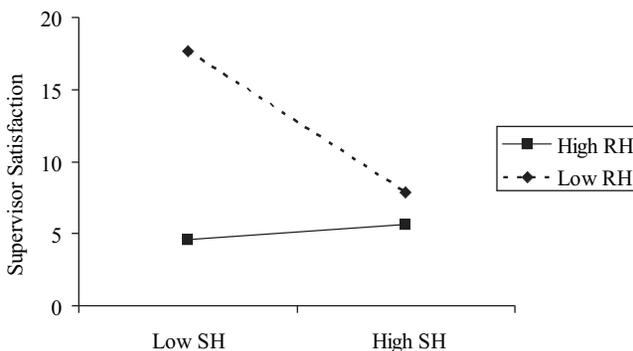


Figure 1. Supervisor satisfaction as a function of level of sexual harassment (SH) and racial harassment (RH).

forms of harassment are likely to be present as well (Cortina, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 2002). Thus, those hoping to understand SH must consider more nuanced perceptions of the many ways in which a particular population is harassed. Given the relationships of both forms of harassment to the occupational and psychological outcomes studied here, it is likely that inattention to both SH and RH among African American women distorts and minimizes their harassment experiences and thereby limits our understanding of their impact.

These findings also support research on repeated and multiple trauma. Repeated trauma, indicated by higher rates of SH, was associated with worsened occupational and psychological well-being (generalized job stress, supervisor and coworker satisfaction, work withdrawal, OTSH, PTS symptoms, and life satisfaction), which also supports past literature on

the cumulative harm of SH (e.g., Avina & O'Donohue, 2002; Fitzgerald et al., 1997). Interestingly, job withdrawal was solely associated with negative affectivity, although past research has found a relationship between SH and job withdrawal. This suggests that previous findings may have been confounded by individual differences in negative affectivity.

We also hypothesized that RH would aid in the prediction of outcomes, which was supported for five of the eight variables studied here (generalized job stress, supervisor and coworker satisfaction, OTSH, and PTS symptoms). This implies that the addition of RH further exacerbated harm, over and above the impact of SH alone. This finding is consistent with research findings that multiple forms of trauma, particularly those of an interpersonal nature, exacerbate the psychological distress from a single type (Green

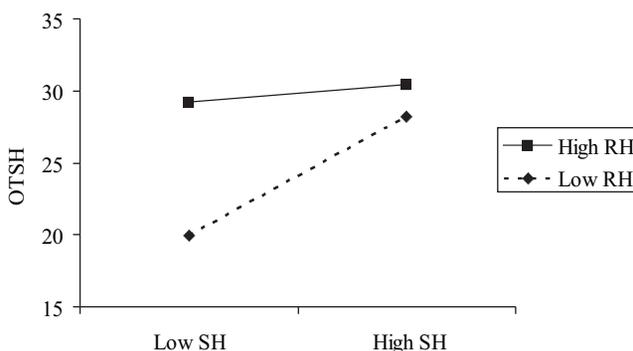


Figure 2. Organizational tolerance of sexual harassment (OTSH) as a function of level of sexual harassment (SH) and racial harassment (RH).

Table 3
Simple Slope Analyses of Sexual and Racial Harassment Interactions for Supervisor Satisfaction and Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment (OTSH)

Racial harassment	Supervisor satisfaction		OTSH	
	<i>B</i> (β)	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i> (β)	<i>SE</i>
High	0.09 (0.03)	.06	0.08 (0.02)	.05
Low	-0.54 (-0.18)**	.04	0.49 (0.15)**	.04

et al., 2000; Krupnick et al., 2004). Specifically, generalized job stress, supervisor and coworker satisfaction, OTSH, and PTS may be particularly vulnerable to these additive negative effects.

Finally, we also hypothesized that the interaction of SH and RH would uniquely predict outcomes over and above their individual and additive contributions. This was supported for two outcomes, supervisor satisfaction and OTSH. Not surprisingly, supervisor satisfaction was greatest and OTSH was lowest when SH and RH were both low. Unexpectedly, SH rates were related to supervisor satisfaction and OTSH only when RH was low. When RH was high, participants reported lower levels of satisfaction with their supervisor and increased levels of OTSH, regardless of the amount of SH experienced. Furthermore, although we hypothesized that those with high levels of both SH and RH would have the worst outcomes, participants with high RH, whether SH was high or low, and participants with low RH combined with high SH reported similarly poor outcomes on these variables. These findings run counter to theories that SH and RH result in steadily increasing harm as they both increase. Instead, these findings suggest that their negative associations with supervisor satisfaction and OTSH are buffered only for those with low levels of both. Once either form of harassment becomes frequent, perceptions of the organizational leadership reflect more negative attitudes. This implies that for these two variables, the harmful effects are not incremental, but rather may reflect a threshold that, once crossed, is associated with a steep decline. The finding that the interaction effect occurs for organizational, not psychological, variables implies that this multiplicative effect may have a greater association with work outcomes than with psychological outcomes; however, this has not been sufficiently explored in the extant literature.

Despite assertions that the combination of SH and RH is uniquely harmful (e.g., Buchanan & Ormerod,

2002; Texeira, 2002; Yoder & Aniakudo, 1997), this study is, to our knowledge, the first to find a significant SH and RH interaction effect for outcomes, possibly because past research has focused on slightly different variables and contexts. For example, past studies have not found this effect for psychological outcomes, which was also the case in this study. Furthermore, past studies have focused primarily on college samples (e.g., Buchanan et al., 2008; Moradi & Subich, 2003) and on general sexist and racist events occurring in a variety of settings, such as classrooms, stores, and casual gatherings. If the experiences occurred in locations where accountability was not clearly linked to an institution, many organizational variables (e.g., OTSH) would not be affected. It is also possible that participants with relatively little employment experience and fewer economic burdens, as is frequently the case with university students, will experience the negative consequences from the combination of work-related SH and RH differently than adult employed women. The current investigation only included adult working women and narrowly defined the domain from which their reported experiences should be drawn (at a single organization). In a single workplace, the organization is accountable when harassment occurs; therefore, the effects on variables related to the organization's leadership and tolerance for harassment may manifest themselves. Indeed, the lack of interaction effects in past studies may reflect insufficient external validity because of an overreliance on results from student samples and a lack of organizational variables; as a result, these studies could not have detected this effect.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

As with all research, the current study has some limitations to consider. First, correlational data limit our ability to make assumptions about causal relationships among the variables. Second, these data are based on retrospective self-report measures, which can be subject to common method bias. Correlations among outcome and predictor variables and the differential functioning of SH and RH across outcomes indicate that the variables were sufficiently independent and that monomethod bias was not responsible for these results (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Furthermore, retrospective reports are robust to recall bias when the measures have adequate reliability and validity, as is the case for those used in this study (Miller, Cardinal, & Glick, 1997). No process can completely eliminate bias

from this type of research; however, because the measures are psychometrically sound and have been well established in previous research on SH (e.g., Bergman & Drasgow, 2003; Lim & Cortina, 2005) and a relevant individual difference dimension (i.e., negative affectivity) has been controlled for statistically, we believe that the results of this study accurately represent African American working women's experience of SH and RH.

The participants in this study were litigants in a SH class-action lawsuit, and as such their responses may have limited generalizability to harassed women who do not pursue legal redress. It seems likely that those who had not settled their case would be most motivated to exaggerate their symptoms. However, we failed to find any significant differences by settlement status on outcomes that might affect their settlement (i.e., generalized stress, supervisor and coworker satisfaction, work and job withdrawal, PTS symptoms, and life satisfaction). As such, we believe that these data are accurate representations of the degree of distress participants were experiencing. In addition, the litigation process can act as a third victimization for targets, resulting in additional psychological detriment to the claimants (Lawson, 2005; Morgan, 1999). Our measures were unable to separate the outcomes of harassment from the effects of the litigation process; therefore, this study cannot eliminate the possibility that some of the findings reflect the stress of litigation itself.

Despite these limitations, our use of this sample remains a strength of this study. The sample afforded us a unique real-life opportunity to study employed women of color in an organizational setting in which SH has been documented. This enhances the external validity of these results and provides additional data on an often overlooked population, African American working women. As research in this emerging area develops, the extent to which these results generalize to other types of participants and organizational settings will become clear.

The institution in which the participants were employed was unique in the extent and severity of harassment, creating a ceiling effect for the range of SH experiences. However, the range and distribution of participants' scores on the SEQ reflected a near normal distribution, and thus there was no evidence of a restricted range of variance or a ceiling effect in SH scores. It is possible, however, that the SH and RH interaction effects found in this study were the result of this unique sample consisting of same-race employees with shared SH experiences in a similar employment setting. Conversely, interaction effects

may be diluted when studies aggregate groups of varying ethnicities, workplaces, and experiences, as most previous studies have done. Future studies are needed to validate these results with nonlitigant samples and women from various ethnic groups.

In addition, future studies would be strengthened by including assessments of both SH and RH, as our results show they are frequently experienced concurrently. Studies should also address the many other ways in which race and ethnicity influence the nature and experience of harassment. For example, attributions regarding the cause of the harassment (K. R. King, 2003) and the perpetrator's race (Buchanan, Settles, & Langhout, in press; Shelton & Chavous, 1999; Woods & Buchanan, 2007) influence the subjective experience of harassment and outcomes. Furthermore, an examination of a fused form of SH and RH called *racialized sexual harassment* (Buchanan, 2005b; Buchanan & Ormerod, 2002; Texeira, 2002), in which both SH and RH are present and not easily distinguished (e.g., comments about one's "big, Black behind" or being called a sexualized ethnic name, such *geisha*) may prove useful in future studies. Recently, theorists have emphasized the importance of examining such an intersected type of harassment, especially for women of color (Collins, 2000; Russo & Vaz, 2001; Thomas, 2004). It has also been noted that the field has been slow to identify methodological strategies that conceptualize intersecting identities effectively, particularly for quantitative analyses (Buchanan, 2005a). Until then, research may only approximate actual experiences, but these efforts will also lay a foundation on which future research can build. Furthermore, harassment can target a multitude of factors besides gender and race, such as social class, sexual orientation, or disability status. It is important for research to include such variations and to continue to develop comprehensive theory about how individuals who are harassed on the basis of multiple intersected identities experience and respond to the harassment (Bowleg, Huang, Brooks, Black, & Burkholder, 2003; Defour et al., 2003; Settles, 2006; Wasti & Cortina, 2002).

The finding that supervisor satisfaction and OTSH are negatively affected when high rates of SH or RH are present also has implications for organizational policy. An organization's tolerance for harassment is strongly related to employees' SH attitudes and behaviors (Hulin et al., 1996). Conveying that harassment is unacceptable reduces harassment and is predictive of an individual's responses and likelihood to report harassment should it occur (Bell, Cycyota, & Quick, 2002; Gruber, 1998; Gruber & Smith, 1995).

Employees are less likely to use official means of reporting harassment if they perceive the organization as tolerant of, and their supervisor as ineffective in stopping, harassment (Firestone & Harris, 2003). This may cause employees to seek redress outside of the organization. Thus, because higher rates of SH and RH, separately or combined, are associated with increased criticism of the organization and its leadership, continued harassment may not only increase employee turnover but may also increase the likelihood that an employee will initiate litigation procedures. This finding should provide an even greater incentive for organizations to work aggressively to end any form of harassment.

Conclusion

To date, research on harassment has focused on either SH or RH but has rarely examined the concomitant effects of both within the same study. As such, this study represents one of only a few studies that have measured participants' experiences of SH and RH in relation to occupational and psychological outcomes. Our results demonstrated that both SH and RH experiences were important factors affecting occupational and psychological outcomes. Despite participants being selected because of their SH experiences, RH emerged as an influential variable, and the intersection of SH and RH also had an important influence on two work-related outcomes, supervisor satisfaction and perceptions of the organization as tolerant of harassment. These findings challenge research paradigms that treat SH and RH as separate and unrelated phenomena. The integration of multiple forms of harassment proved to be essential to understanding the outcomes of African American women experiencing harassment. As such, future research with women of color must begin to actively incorporate RH into theories of SH and vice versa. Such an approach will ground research in the lived experiences of participants and more accurately reflect the racial and gendered context of their lives.

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Received July 19, 2005

Revision received May 1, 2007

Accepted June 4, 2007 ■