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# A Study of Role of Perceived Organizational Support among Sexual Harassment and Employees' Attitudes\*

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## Abstract

Researchers generally argue that sexual harassment influence poor female employee organizational attitudes. However, these relationships have been not always observed. Depending on the organizational support theory, this study extended the content domain of sexual harassment research by examining the role of perceived organizational support, on these relationships. For this, this study used a survey method and multiple regression analyses with Korean 285 female employees. As results, first, the more unwanted sexual attention employees perceived, they were less likely to show their organizational citizenship behavior. Second, the more sexual coercion employees perceived, they were more likely to have their work-family conflict. Third, the negative relationship between unwanted sexual attention and their organizational citizenship behavior are stronger for employees low rather than high in perceived organizational support. Finally, the positive relationship between sexual coercion and work-family conflict are stronger for employees low rather than high in perceived organizational support. The findings suggest the adaptive function of perceived organizational support employees hold in organizational behavior. This is the first study to examine the interaction between perceived organizational support and sexual harassment of female workers with organizational citizenship behavior and work-family conflict. This study also provides guidance for administrative managerial practices.

**Keywords:** Sexual Harassment, Perceived Organizational Support, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Work-Family Conflict, Conservation of Resources Model

**JEL Classification Code :** C12, C83, M12, M14.

## 1. Introduction

The names of sexual harassment (SH) and disciplinary action at work in the legal jurisdictions of the world are important in SH voice. On an international level, SH has been recognized by the International Labor Organization, the International Free Trade Union, the United Nations Commission and the European Union on Women's Discrimination Abduction. To address this issue, organizations have established regulations for policy and collective agreements, issued compliance guidelines, provided training, and introduced SH complaint procedures (McCann, 2005). Recently, there is no doubt that the organizational environment is important. What was once

considered acceptable for work is regarded as an occurrence that can have a greater impact on organizations, organizations, and people directly involved. Of course, any single SH event for the organization can have importantly financial, legal, and psychological influences throughout the organization.

However, in order to better understand the influence of an SH on an organization, SH should not be regarded as a separate negative organizational behavior, but as a nonproductive activity involved in a task. SH is one of a range of violent or unproductive workplace behaviors, and it has a core hierarchical power relationship. These actions include general SH, violence, racial discrimination and SH (e.g. language isolation, abuse, and gender-specific quarantine or exclusion) (Zippel, 2006) and unlike harassment based on race or disability It is distinguished in that it can be considered to be welcomed (Samuels, 2003).

The psychological outcomes included in SH's integrated model of Fitzgerald, Swan, and Magley's (1997) include responses to individual life satisfaction (i.e., subjective health) and stressful situations. If the latter focuses on people's behavioral and emotional responses to negative

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occurrences, SH-related experiences will be more closely related to stress-related reactions than global assessments of life. In this paper I suggest that SH is a stressor, and that intra-organization occurrence is often a symptom of an organization's other problems that could be reflected in other stressors. However, one of the major limitations of understanding SH and other stressors events is the shortage of development of theory, especially in the area of motivation (Diefen, 2007). This section verifies resource conservation as the fundamental motivation for SH and other stress factor accidents. Understanding SH as a function of resource retention can help you better understand SH events as well as other stressors in your organization.

## 2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

### 2.1. Conservation of Resource Theory

The resource of conservation (COR) model contains several stress theories (Hobfoll, 1989). The COR model suggests that individuals try to procure and hold resources. Stress is regarded as a response to a situation where is a loss of resources, loss of real resources, or threat of an expected lack of benefits for a resource. Resources include things, conditions, personal characteristics, and energy. What is particularly relevant to this organization are the last three categories. Marriages and terms of life are examples of valuable and sought family and career resources. Personal characteristics are resources that act as a buffer against stress. Pride is considered such a resource (Rosenberg, 1979). Energy includes resources such as time, money, and knowledge to free up other resources. The risk of such a loss or loss of resources can cause a stress experience.

The COR model describes the stress results for stress in roles and for role stress (Choi, 2018). For example, an employee with a job role conflict may feel that he or she cannot perform the task successfully. As a result, they may have to invest more resources in the role of work out of fear of losing their jobs. This possible or real loss of resources leads to negative presence that may include dissatisfaction, depression, anxiety, or physiological tension. Replacing or protecting a threatened resource requires some types of behavior, such as giving up the action role. If this type of behavior is not taken, the resource may run out and cause combustion (Hobfoll & Shirom, 1993; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

Individual difference variables are included as components of COR model. Depending on COR, personal differences can be regarded as a resource. Differences in

these resource levels can affect an individual's response to stress (or loss of resources). Some people may have better skills to minimize losses. For example, people with high self-esteem can have a preliminary of confidence and confidence to pull themselves off when they're in trouble. Therefore, people having high level of self-esteem cannot be troubled by possible loss of energy and time for they are able to manage those losses. Finally, COR's emphasis on threatening resources suggests that any significant event is also a source of stress. In particular, events that cause resource loss are expected to generate stress and strain results. For example, Holfoll (1989) highlights that the most severe item is a loss event, while stating that it is a loss. Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend (1974) argues that the change itself is not the cause of stress, but the change that causes the loss of valuable resources is the most problematic. Quality data explaining special events in the lives of people may represent such losses.

### 2.2. Sexual Harassment and Female Employees' Attitudes

Women may face more stressors in the workplace such as SH, the glass ceiling, and a lack of mentors (Cooper & Davidson, 1982; Gutek & Koss, 1993; Ha & Park, 2018). In particular, female workers who experienced SH were found to cause stress-related symptoms such as loss of self-esteem and increased depression (Glomb, Munson, Hulin, Bergman, & Drasgow, 1999; Harned & Fitzgerald, 2002). The model of the trauma experience assumes that an individual experiences various psychological symptoms after the trauma (Hobfoll, 1991). SH generally occurs unexpectedly and violates his belief in a supportive, non-violent working environment, so victims who might have been bullied are similar to those experiencing trauma. (Fitzgerald et al., 1997).

**Table 1:** Precedent researches on sexual harassment

Researches	Contents
Cooper & Davidson (1982)	Stressor
Glomb et al. (1999)	Loss of self-esteem
Harned & Fitzgerald (2002)	Increased depression
Hobfoll (1991)	Trauma
Fitzgerald et al. (1997)	Violation of belief in a supportive, non-violent working environment

From a stress perspective, SH can be seen as an interpersonal stress factor, causing strain reactions in the load staff. COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) suggests stress occurs when there are threats to valuable resources, losses of real resources, or insufficient benefits from resource investments. This study conceptualizes SH as a stressor in a domestic environment. SH has a negative impact by

threatening a pool of human resources, and resources are defined as the energy condition or condition of the individual because they value their rights or act as a pathway to their achievement. Protection of valuable resources (Hobbold, 2001). I suggest that the loss of resources due to SH's experience can lead to workshops that directly affect the attitude of female workers.

First, the resource loss experience may degrade other aspects of performance outside of the employee's prescribed business. This aspect includes organizational civil consciousness behavior (OCBs) or voluntary and altruistic behavior performed at work (Horton & Johnson, 1993; Dong & Phuong, 2018; Lee, 2019; Oh, 2014; Seong, Park, & Moon, 2016; Eom, 2014). It is rationale to expect that an employee depleted of cognitive and emotional resources by SH is most likely to utilize ready resources to satisfy the needs of the role. This can significantly reduce the amount of resources available to perform additional role actions. This potential is consistent with the COR theory's principle of resource conservation, and individuals are basically motivated to conserve and reclaim lost resources, thus avoiding actions that could result in more resources. Women may also dedicate themselves to activities that help them cope with SH induced injuries, even if they have surplus resources. For example, instead of spending time helping colleagues or volunteering for the OCB, employees who experience SH can devote time and effort to treatment or take legal action against their partners. It is economically sensible to sacrifice the OCB for dealing with SH concerns. Not doing so is generally not punished by the organization (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). Based on the above arguments, I propose that:

**H1:** SH perceived by a female employee is negatively related to her OCB.

Second, based on the COR model, it can be argued that older people have valuable work resources such as seniority, length of service, and status. To support such assumptions, the study found a high correlation between age and tenure (Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992). Using more resources reduces the stress on your workplace that interferes with your family (Mustapa, Noor, & Mutalib, 2018; Jung, 2017). Sex is also related to your resources. In one study, women had significantly lower occupational sources and salary levels than men (Parasuraman et al., 1992). These are two resources depending on the COR model. Studies have shown that the gender relates to the perception of family conflicts (Du urury & Higgins, 1991; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991; Parasuraman et al., 1992; Purhoit **No Reference**). Women who experience SH are more likely to report the WFC. According to the COR model, when more conflicts occur in specific area, there are

fewer resources usable to perform their roles in the other. High levels of conflict at work can reduce available resources and reduce the resources required for family needs. In this way, SH may relate to how work interferes with family needs. Depending on the arguments, I suggest that:

**H2:** SH perceived by a female employee is negatively related to her WFC.

### 2.3. Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support

COR theory predicts that people will reduce net loss of resources by investing in other resources they can own or access in their environment. In the refinement of COR theory, Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) added to their One workplace resource that has been found to be a buffer between work experience, stress-strain relationship is recognized organization support (POS). The Organization Support Theory (OST) suggests that employees form support expectations based on the degree to which employees value employee contribution and show interest in welfare (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986).

Depending on OST, I expect to buffer negative relationships between the SH and the results at POS. A collaborative work environment is a valuable member of the organization that can lead to the accumulation of resources (by increasing the positive impact of employees on their own values and their basic human desires). Helps prevent resource demand for employee SH locations. Based on the above arguments, I propose that:

**H3:** The negative relationship between SH perceived by a female employee and her OCB is moderated by her POS, such that this relationship becomes stronger for low as contrary to high level of her POS.

**H4:** The negative relationship between SH perceived by a female employee and her WFC is moderated by her POS, such that this relationship becomes stronger for low as contrary to high level of her POS.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Data Collection and Sample

The purpose of the study is to verify behavioral factors related to sexual harassment by an empirical test. The variables of organizational behaviors can be measured by female employees' perceptions in the workplace situations. I have adopted an online survey method that uses

convenience sampling for data collection. This is very useful for collecting data from a large number of individuals at a higher cost in a relatively short period of time.

**Table 2:** Sample Profile

Variables	Items	Percentages
Age	20's	24.6
	30's	27.4
	40's	22.4
	50's	25.6
Industry of their company	Manufacturing	28.8
	Construction	10.2
	Service	32.2
	Public agency	5.6
	Wholesale/retail	8.1
	Etc.	15.1
Number of Employee in their company	Less than 10	20.7
	11~50	29.8
	51~300	29.5
	301~1000	7.1
	More than 1001	12.9
Tenure	Less than 5 years	53.3
	6~9 years	23.5
	10~14 years	12.3
	15~19 years	4.2
	More than 20 years	6.7
Level of their education	Middle school	0.7
	High school	15.8
	Community college	20.8
	Undergraduate school	52.9
	Graduate school	9.8
Position	Staff	44.6
	Assistant manager	18.2
	Manager	15.4
	Senior manager	13.3
	Director	6.3
	Etc.	2.1
Marital Status	Married	54.7
	Single	45.3

In order to verify the hypothesis of this study, self-written questionnaires were given to female workers (aged 20 ~ 59 years) in Korea. All participants received an e-mail asking for this online survey with an e-mail attached that confidentially explains the purpose of the survey and emphasizes voluntary participation. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire.

The survey questionnaire consists of three parts. In the first part of the questionnaire, participants were instructed

to read the purpose of the questionnaire. The second part of the survey included respondents' perceptions of sexual harassment, power intervals, organizational commitment, and intent to leave. The third part uses the nominal scale and consists of basic information about the company profile and the characteristics of the respondent (e.g., demographic variables, the industry of their companies, the number of employee, tenure, etc.)

Finally, I collected 285 complete responses from online surveys. The characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 2. (e.g., age, the industry of their companies, the number of employees in their companies, tenure, the level of their education, the marital status).

### 3.2. Measurement

Table 3 suggests the measurements of variables in this study.

**Table 3:** The measurements

Variables	Sub-factor	Items	References
Sexual harassment	Gender Harassment	5	Fitzgerald, et al.(1995)
	Unwanted Sexual Attention	7	
	Sexual Coercion	6	
OCB	-	20	Moorman and Niehoff(1993)
WFC	-	6	Robert(1996)
POS	-	9	Wayne, et al. (1997)

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Verification of Validity and Reliability

The validity of the variables is verified through factor analysis using the main component method and varimax method. The criteria for determining the number of factors are defined as 1.0 unique. Factor was applied only if factor loading was greater than 0.5 (factor loading indicates correlation between factor and other variables). The reliability of the variables is determined by internal consistency calculated by Cronbach's alpha. I used the survey to think of Cronbach as one measure only when its alpha value was 0.7 or higher.

### 4.2. Relationship between Variables

Table 4 shows the results of Pearson correlation test among variables and reports the degree of multi-collinearity between independent variables. The minimum tolerance of .730 and the maximum variation coefficient of 1.369

indicate that the statistical significance of the data analysis has not been compromised by multicollinearity.

**Table 4:** Variables' correlation coefficient and other statistics

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Gender Harassment</b>	1				
<b>Unwanted Sexual Attention</b>	-.011	1			
<b>Sexual Coercion</b>	.005	.007	1		
<b>OCB</b>	.034	-.015**	.024	1	
<b>WFC</b>	.013	.022	.012**	.042	1
<b>POS</b>	.105	.019	.016	.126**	-.021**

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

### 4.3. Hypothesis Test

I used three steps hierarchical multiple regression analyses to verify the hypotheses empirically. For the first step, demographic variables were controlled. And, the sub-factors of sexual harassment were included in the second step. For the final step, the multiplicative interaction terms between the sub-factors of sexual harassment and POS were included to empirically verify the hypothesis related to the moderating effect. Regarding OCB, results are presented in Table 5.

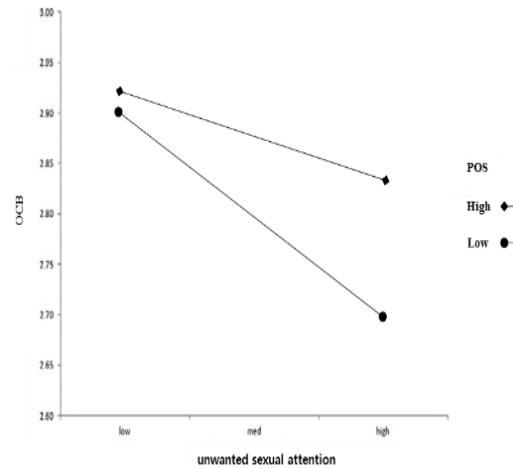
**Table 5:** Analysis 1

	OCB		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	.021	.034	.051
Educational level	-.021	-.018	-.011
Gender Harassment (GH)		-.120	-.101
Unwanted Sexual Attention (USA)		-.021**	-.016**
Sexual Coercion (SC)		-.119	-.028
POS			.027**
GH*POS			-.104
USA*POS			.013*
SC*POS			.007
Adj. $R^2$	.006	.129	.135
$F$	1.337	12.025**	16.156**

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Hierarchical regression analysis showed that unwanted sexual attention ( $b = -.021$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was negatively related

to OCB, meaning that the more unwanted sexual attention employees perceived, they were less likely to show OCB. Therefore, H1 was supported. Table 5 also shows that POS significantly moderated the relationships between unwanted sexual attention and OCB in the predicted direction ( $b = .013$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This result demonstrated that the negative relationship between unwanted sexual attention and OCB are stronger for employees low rather than high in POS (see Figure 1). Therefore, H3 was supported.



**Figure 1:** Interaction between unwanted sexual attention and POS on OCB

**Table 6:** Analysis 2

	WFC		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	.058	.105	.101
Educational level	.010*	.031*	.021*
Gender Harassment (GH)		.003	.086
Unwanted Sexual Attention (USA)		.063	.077
Sexual Coercion (SC)		.101**	.110**
POS			-.073**
GH*POS			-.011
USA*POS			-.026
SC*POS			-.102*
Adj. $R^2$	.007	.132	.145
$F$	1.592	12.779**	17.130**

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Regarding WFC, results are presented in Table 6. Hierarchical regression analysis showed that sexual

coercion ( $b = .101, p < .01$ ) was positively related to turnover intention, meaning that the more sexual coercion employees perceived, they were more likely to have WFC. Therefore, H2 was supported. Table 6 also demonstrated that power distance orientation significantly plays the moderating role on the relationships between sexual coercion and turnover intention in the predicted direction ( $b = -.102, p < .05$ ). This result demonstrated that the positive relationship between sexual coercion and WFC are stronger for employees low rather than high in POS (see Figure 2). Therefore, H4 was supported.

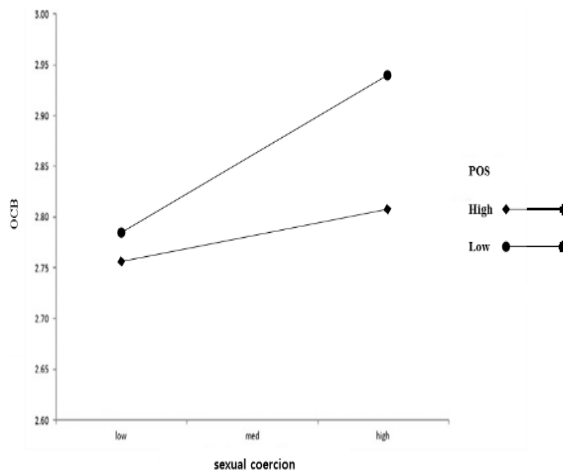


Figure 2: Interaction between sexual coercion and POS on WFC

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to develop the study of sexual harassment in the past by investigating the extent to which POS has eased the relationship of sexual harassment with employees OCB and WFC. This study verifies that there is a weak relationship between employee OCB and WFC and their sexual harassment with the POS by showing the arbitration effects of POS. The results provide evidence to support claims that women workers with lower POS (not men) are more disposed to be influenced by sexual harassment, which in turn affects OCB and WFC more.

### 5.2. Contributions and Implications

This study contributes several things to existing literature. First, this study looked at how a female employee's POS will neutral the effect of sexual harassment on the OCB and WFC. This is the first study to examine the interaction between POS and sexual harassment of female workers

with OCB and WFC. This study expands the content area of the sexual harassment study by showing the arbitration effects of POS. The results suggest that considering the underlying value of employees in future research will provide some contribution to better understand the impact of sexual harassment. Second, these results give a new perspective that POS provides adaptive capabilities to help female workers commit sexual harassment. My knowledge is that we investigated the adaptation function of sexual harassment elasticity first. Third, sexual harassment is considered a poor business globally, but employees are able to develop a certain type of POS as a recognition strategy that describes the situations they have encountered to reduce the negative impact of sexual harassment and maintain an organizational attitude.

Current research also provides guidance for administrative managerial practices. While the WFC of an employee is a kind of cost in the workplace, the OCB is closely related to performance and maintenance. The study found that POS can absorb the negative effects of sexual harassment and ease the pain of OCB and WFC. So this study gives two practical implications for the results. First, because sexual harassment is linked to OCB and WFC of female employees, the organization must do its best to reduce the occurrence of sexual harassment. For example, leaders can take business management practice to grasp the proper way to deal with and interact with female employees. Organizations can provide and encourage leaders with leadership development programs aimed at correcting and modifying abnormal behavior so that leaders can perform appropriate management practices. The second implication is that when female workers are sexually harassed, they should carefully monitor sexual harassment against low-power female workers, especially in order to reduce damage to their organizational behavior. Organizations can use surveys to obtain information about POS assessment from employees. Sexual harassment in an organization can reduce psychological tension by intervening in such stressful situations, especially those with low POS.

### 5.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

According to the results of this study, they may have some insight into the relationship between leaders' sexual harassment and the organizational behavior of subordinates. However, the study should acknowledge the following limitations. First, the study collected responses from employees working in South Korean businesses. National cultural issues in the organizational context should be considered. Second, this study was measured as a variable at the same time, but we are not sure that the relationship is consistent. Although the survey questions are arranged in reverse order of the analytical model, causal problems

between variables may exist. Future research should examine other types of impact of dark leadership such as workplace bullying and organizational politics on employee organizational behavior.

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