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DATING POTENTIAL AS A FACTOR INFLUENCING THE TOLERANCE OF  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT

by  
Kara Fetter

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
at  
Rowan University  
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Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. DJ Angelone

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## ABSTRACT

Kara Fetter

### DATING POTENTIAL AS A FACTOR INFLUENCING THE TOLERANCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

2006/07

Dr. DJ Angelone

Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling and Applied Psychology

Seventy-nine undergraduate females participated in a laboratory analogue developed to investigate a variable labeled as “Dating Potential,” defined as the combination of a man’s physical attractiveness and status. Researchers attempted to determine if dating potential could influence a young woman’s tolerance of peer sexual harassment. Using an instant-message type interaction, participants were exposed via computer to one of four conditions consisting of a picture and profile of a potential male dating candidate. While a man’s status did not influence the participant’s tolerance, results indicate that women exposed to an attractive male were more likely to tolerate sexually harassing responses.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Approximately 60% of women in the United States have been victims of sexual harassment in their lifetime (Barak, Fisher, & Houston, 1992). Fifty three percent of women report experiencing sexual harassment at work (Gutek, 1985), while 70% of female college students report experiencing sexually harassing behaviors perpetrated by male students (Hughes & Sandler, 1988; Shepela & Levesque, 1998). Furthermore, fifty-two percent of academic psychologists noted evidence of a colleague violating sexual boundaries between faculty and students (Gibbs, 1993). In addition, nearly 90% of all victims who have been sexually harassed have experienced varying degrees of psychological and/or physical symptoms (Charney & Russell, 1994).

Given the pervasiveness and negative consequences, sexual harassment has gained increasing focus and recognition by researchers. To date, however, there is no single universal definition of sexual harassment to guide researchers (Golden, Johnson, & Lopez, 2001). Some entities have chosen to define sexual harassment as sexual conduct that is unwelcome, that creates a hostile workplace environment, or would be considered abusive by any reasonable person in the environmental context (APA, 1992). Other entities have also identified specific behaviors as part of their definition (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1980). These behaviors can include requests for sexual favors and other verbal behaviors (e.g., sexually oriented jokes, insults, taunts, and

pictorial communications) or physical conduct (e.g., obscene gestures, embracing, and inappropriate touching). Along these lines, peer sexual harassment has been defined as sexually harassing behaviors that occur between people in a particular context who do not have an overt power relationship (Mitchell, Hirschman, Angelone, & Lilly, 2004) and usually includes behaviors such as sexual joke telling, sexually offensive comments, teasing, sexual looks, sexual innuendoes, obscenities, and unwanted touching or kissing (Hughes & Sandler, 1988; Mazer & Percival, 1989; Sandler, 1997).

Given the broad approach that has been utilized to define sexual harassment, researchers continue to search for more clear and concise definitions. Without such definitions, victims may be hesitant to report an offensive behavior due to uncertainty that others will also view it as harassment. In addition, there may be a lack of consensus regarding whether or not a person accused of sexual harassment did engage in a behavior that can be labeled as offensive (Colarielli & Haaland, 2002). The more specific a definition of sexual harassment, the more ease for researchers integrating findings for enhanced prediction and understanding of this pervasive and consequential problem. For example, victims may better recognize when and how to seek help for the problems associated with sexual harassment.

One possible reason for the difficulty in defining sexual harassment is that unwanted, sexually inappropriate behaviors may represent a continuum of ambiguity. In fact, an analysis of the open-ended responses of female college students indicates that



there may be five different categories of sexual harassment (Till, 1980). These categories have been labeled as gender harassment, seductive behavior, sexual bribery, sexual coercion, and sexual imposition. While the latter categories are more specific, the first two categories appear to contain behaviors that are more ambiguous, such as offensive remarks or jokes. These behaviors may be interpreted as sexual harassment by some persons but not others. One reason for the different interpretations can be the different personal or situational influences affecting the victim and her decision-making (Pryor & Day, 1988). These ambiguous behaviors commonly occur during peer sexually harassing situations between college-aged students and will be the focal point of this study.

Given the aforementioned continuum model, researchers have attempted to understand the different factors that may affect people's perceptions of the various categories of sexual harassment behaviors. One area of study has been the age of the victim. From a biological perspective, the age of the female may be an influencing factor because younger women are in their prime reproductive years and may be more receptive to sexual attention. In fact, younger women perceive sexually toned behaviors (i.e., the behaviors identified by Till's first two categories) as less harassing than older women (Colarelli & Haaland, 2002). In addition, harassment ratings were found to increase regularly with age for women when they were judging sexually ambiguous behaviors.

Another area of study concerning the factors that may affect perceptions of sexual harassment has been the physical attractiveness of the harasser. It is believed that

situational information may play an important role in the identification of a behavior as potentially harassing (Trope, 1986). Physical attractiveness may act as a situational cue to initiate a stereotype that can include inferences about how attractive people have little need to or do not engage in harassing behaviors (Golden, Johnson, & Lopez, 2001). Similarly, people tend to link attractive people with having a variety of positive traits (Dion et al., 1972). In either circumstance, an ambiguous behavior may be interpreted in a way that is consistent with the stereotype or assumption (Golden et al., 2001). In fact, female college students are less likely to accuse single, attractive men as being sexually harassing (Sheets & Braver, 1994). However, ambiguous behaviors are more likely to be perceived as sexual harassment when the harasser is less attractive (Golden et al., 2001). Further, in a study simulating jury deliberation, mock jurors were more likely to convict an unattractive defendant of committing a crime when compared to more attractive defendants (Castellow et al., 1990).

A third area of study concerning the factors that may affect perceptions of sexual harassment has been the status of the harasser. Taking an evolutionary psychological perspective, women may have a tendency to regard high status men as desirable because of the association between status and resource acquisition (Low, 2000). When evaluating high and low status men, higher status men (when there was not a power relationship involved) were less likely to be perceived as engaging in harassing behaviors (Bourgeois & Perkins, 2003). Women also reported being least upset when they imagined being

harassed by a successful rock star or premedical student and most upset when being harassed by a garbage collector or cleaning person (Buss, 1994). Furthermore, female flight attendants reported that they would feel more embarrassed, nervous, and intimidated by unwanted sexual attention from cleaning agents when compared with pilots (Littler-Bishop, Seidler-Feller, & Opulach, 1982).

It appears that the current dating trends in our society may further add to the confusion associated with perceptions of sexual harassment. When initiating a relationship, some men tend to use subtle suggestions, at times sexually toned, as a means to gauge whether or not a woman is interested. However, as discussed, if a woman responds positively and perceives these behaviors as flirtations, the man may continue to pursue an intimate relationship. Given the ambiguous nature of these behaviors, some women may perceive them as harassing. The determinants of these perceptions appear to be moderated by certain situational components (age, attractiveness, and status).

According to Cognitive Theory, a person's thoughts are linked to his or her feelings. The way a person feels about his or herself, the world, and the future is also believed to influence his or her behaviors. With this theory in mind, it seems plausible to assume a linkage between a woman's perception of sexual harassment and her likelihood to tolerate sexually harassing behaviors depending on her perceptions. Thus, decision-making that is linked to a woman's perceptions during dating rituals may ultimately influence a woman's tolerance of sexually harassing behaviors. Tolerance, in this study,

refers to the amount of sexually harassing behaviors a woman is willing or able to accept before she is offended. If a woman is interested in pursuing a relationship with a man, she may be unaware of or more willing to tolerate potentially harassing behaviors.

Given the literature discussed thus far, it seems as though a woman's likelihood to date a man will affect her tolerance of peer sexually harassing behaviors. A woman may expect these behaviors and perceive them as sexually flattering if she recognizes an interest to date that person (Cook, 1995). In previous research, the physical attractiveness of the perpetrator was found to be a significant factor affecting the participant's perception only when the perpetrator was the opposite gender of the participant (LaRocca & Kromrey, 1999). In addition, it was found that married and divorced individuals perceive sexually harassing events as more harassing than single individuals (Hendrix, 2000). Taken together, these findings may support dating potential as an influence on perceptions of sexual harassment. That is, individuals that may have heterosexual dating interest, such as a younger non-married individual of the opposite sex, are more likely to perceive ambiguous sexual behaviors as appropriate. On the other hand, those individuals not looking for a dating partner (such as married persons or divorced individuals with a history of unpleasant past relationships) may be less influenced by aforementioned factors.

The present study used a laboratory analogue to investigate the influence of dating potential on perceptions of sexual harassment. Dating potential can be defined as the

likelihood of a woman to date a man based on how she views his physical appearance and status (i.e., education, employment, and hobbies). As discussed, dating potential may influence a young, single, heterosexual woman's perceptions and thus tolerance of ambiguous sexually harassing behaviors. College-aged females were the focal population, since 18-24 year old females are a good representation of those who are likely to be engaged in the dating process. Noteworthy, these women are also more likely than older women to be victims of peer sexual harassment.

The use of a laboratory analogue as a means to examine tolerance of sexual harassment may be preferred over other research methodology. Unlike surveys and questionnaires, laboratory analogues allow researchers to examine "real world" behaviors in the moment while maximizing internal validity (Mitchell et. al., 2004). Specifically, the current study involved the use of computers as a means to realistically simulate an online speed-dating program. That is, after responding to several "personality" questionnaires, participants were led to believe that they were connected with a potential dating candidate using an instant message type interaction.

Given what is known about the potential influencing factors affecting a woman's perception of sexually ambiguous behaviors, it was believed that "Dating Potential" would influence a woman's tolerance of sexual harassment. Specifically, there were three hypotheses: 1) women ostensibly exposed to a physically attractive man would be more tolerant of sexually harassing responses than women exposed to a non-physically

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHOD

#### *Participants*

Eighty-nine female, undergraduate students from Rowan University participated in the study as one of several options for research credit. Data from ten participants were excluded for various reasons. First, it was believed that some participants did not have a full understanding of the procedure. Second, some responses to the manipulation check indicated an understanding of the true purpose of the study or that the participant was less than engaged. Only data from the remaining 79 participants were used for analysis. Participants ranged in age from 18-25 ( $M=19.25$ ) years. The self-identified ethnic breakdown of the sample was 62% White/Non-Hispanic, 15% African American/Black, 10% Hispanic/Latino/Latina, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% Native American/American Indian, 7% other.

#### *Analogue Stimuli*

*Sexually Harassing Responses.* The sexually harassing stimulus consisted of a total of 9 responses to 9 different questions. Two additional questions with neutral responses were included as a means to ease participants into the conversation (see Appendix A). The list of sexually harassing responses was created from pilot studies in which participants evaluated responses chosen by the experimenters. Participants were asked to rate the level of sexual harassment on a 10-point Likert-type scale that ranged from “not sexually harassing” (a rating of 1) to “extremely sexually harassing” (a rating

of 10). Using a face valid approach, the existing responses were modified as a means to further ensure that the responses were equally harassing.

*Face Ratings.* Pilot research was also conducted as a means to rate male faces so that two could be chosen and used as part of the dating candidate's profile. First, written consent was obtained from 8 young men (between 20-30 years of age) who agreed to allow their face to be used for research. Next, male and female undergraduate and graduate students were provided with a questionnaire containing pictures of the 8 faces. They were asked to rate each individual's physical attractiveness based on their opinion of the faces provided. A 7-point Likert-type scale was used and ranged from "extremely unattractive" (a rating of 1) to "extremely attractive" (a rating of 7). The face with the highest rating and the face with the lowest rating were chosen in order to maximize the potential perceived attractiveness of the candidates. A T-test revealed that the attractive face ( $M = 4.91$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ), was rated as significantly more attractive than the unattractive face ( $M = 2.12$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ),  $t(33) = 14.52$ ,  $p < .001$ .

### *Measures*

*Demographic Questionnaire.* This questionnaire was developed by the current researcher. Questions included gender, age, ethnicity, academic rank, sexual orientation, and current dating status (see Appendix B). These questions were asked via the computer as soon as the participants began the study.

*Control Questionnaire.* The control questionnaire was developed by the current researcher and was used as a means to control for the variability that is likely to be seen

regarding participant's personal opinions of the candidate's picture and profile. Using a 7-point Likert-type scale, the participants were asked to rate the candidate's physical attractiveness, status, and how likely she would date the candidate (see Appendix C). The participant was prompted to respond to these questions immediately after viewing the candidate's profile (before interaction). This served as an attempt to understand her initial reactions to the male candidate as a manipulation check.

*The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS).* The SDS is a true/false measure that consists of 33-items used to assess an individual's tendency to present his or her self in a socially desirable manner (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). This scale was included as a means to control for the effects of participants' tendencies to act in ways consistent to how they think others want them to act (see Appendix D). Higher scores on the scale indicate greater socially desirable responding (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). The internal consistency of the SDS is .88. The test-retest correlation after a period of one month is .89. The SDS also has significant positive correlations with the Edwards Social Desirability Scale demonstrating moderate convergent validity (Cook, 2002; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

### *Procedure*

Female participants signed up for this study labeled as "Beta Testing Online Speed Dating." Upon their arrival, the computers in the laboratory were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions (high attractiveness/high status, high attractiveness/low status, low attractiveness/high status, low attractiveness/low status).



Participants were greeted by a female experimenter and provided a copy of the informed consent (see Appendix E). The participants were then told that they would be helping the experimenter to beta test new online speed dating software for college students. After being prompted by the computer to respond to a variety of questions related to their demographics, personality, and attitudes toward men and dating, they were informed that the computer would automatically connect them to three potential dating candidates. In actuality, there were no male participants rather each female was exposed to a “false” profile (see Appendix F) and picture representing one of the four conditions.

Before viewing the profile, each participant was given instructions via the computer. The participant was told that she would be testing the “Gold” membership of the new online dating service while the potential male candidate was testing the “Bronze” membership. She was informed that by having Gold status, she would be able to view a picture and profile of each male candidate. The experimenters controlled the duration that this page was displayed so it would be exposed to each candidate for the same amount of time. After viewing the picture and profile, the participant was asked to rate the male candidate by filling out the control questionnaire. As a means to get her presumably unbiased opinion of the male, the participant was told that the candidate would not be able to view her responses. At completion of these three questions, the computer screen indicated that it was “connecting” to the first candidate.

The participants were also informed that, due to the nature of our beta testing, both she and the male candidate would not be able to ask each other questions. Instead,

they would both be given the same questions that would be randomly chosen from a list of top online speed dating questions. She was informed that they both would be simultaneously responding to the same question using an instant messaging type interaction. She was also told that they had the ability to view each other's responses. After the first sexually harassing response, the participant was given the choice to either end the conversation or to continue based on how she felt the interaction was going. As soon as she chose to end, the participant was informed that she had finished that portion of the study. She was then prompted to respond to the same control questionnaire as a means to see how her opinion of the candidate may have changed. At this time, she was also asked to report her opinion as to what she thought was the true purpose of this study.

After being prompted to respond to additional questions specifically related to sexual harassment tolerance, each participant was debriefed (see Appendix G) via the computer screen. She was then prompted to let the experimenter know that she was finished. At this point she was handed a paper copy of the debriefing and was given the opportunity to address any questions or concerns with the second experimenter who was waiting outside the computer lab door.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESULTS

#### *Descriptives*

Table 1 shows the overall frequencies and percent of responses that each participant tolerated. Despite condition, most participants were not willing to stay for more than 3 sexually harassing responses. In fact, about 87% of the participants did not tolerate more than the first 3 harassing responses. A total of four participants did tolerate all 9 sexually harassing responses. The median number of sexually harassing responses tolerated was 2.

#### *Apriori Analysis*

With physical attractiveness and status as the independent variables and the number of responses tolerated as the dependant variable, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted. The Social Desirability Scale (SDS) served as the covariate acting as a step to control for the potential tendency of participants to respond in a socially desirable way. Table 2 shows the mean number of tolerated responses by condition. Consistent with hypothesis #1, there was a main effect for attractiveness,  $F(1, 74) = 16.38, p < .001, \eta^2 = .181$ . Inconsistent with hypothesis #2, there was not a main effect for status  $F(1, 74) = .29, p = .59, \eta^2 = .004$ . Results were also inconsistent with hypothesis #3 for there was no interaction effect between attractiveness and status,  $F(1, 74) = 1.28, p = .26, \eta^2 = .017$ .

#### *Posthoc Analysis*

Independent Samples T-tests were also conducted as a means to identify the effectiveness of the manipulation as measured by the control questionnaire. Consistent with what was expected, most women viewed the high attractive candidate as attractive ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ) and the low attractive candidate as unattractive ( $M = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ),  $t(77) = 8.01$ ,  $p < .001$ . Also, participants agreed that the high status profile represented high status ( $M = 4.8$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ),  $t(77) = 5.32$ ,  $p < .001$ .

An ANOVA was also conducted as a means to address whether the participant would be likely to date the candidate based on both his physical attractiveness and status. Again, consistent with what was expected, the participants with the high attractive and high status candidate rated this question significantly higher than those who did not receive that condition,  $F(3, 75) = 21.74$ ,  $p < .001$ .

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DISCUSSION

There are very few studies reported in the literature that use a laboratory analogue to look at real world, in the moment, perceptions associated with sexual harassment. Furthermore, there are even fewer, if any studies specifically looking at a woman's behaviors that are likely to be influenced by her perceptions. This study looked specifically at tolerance of sexual harassment based on perceptions regarding different attributes of the harasser. It is believed that a greater understanding of a woman's perceptions and tolerance will contribute to the literature in regard to the difficulty in defining sexual harassment. Within this paradigm, there was an integration of the Internet by simulating an online speed-dating program. It seems that harassment that exists in conventional communication and in society more generally is also found in online communities (Khoo & Senn, 2004). In this study, a computer program was created as a means to examine the possible influences that affect women's tolerance of sexual harassment. Real-world stimuli in the form of sexually toned comments were used to examine a typical Internet experience faced by college students.

Consistent with hypothesis #1, the physical attractiveness of the perpetrator plays a considerable role in a woman's tolerance of sexually ambiguous behaviors. The results of this study further support the profound influence that attractiveness seems to have over the opinions of others regarding many social situations. While other factors have been

supported in the literature, physical attractiveness seemed to be the most influential factor.

Contrary to the outcome of hypothesis #1, both hypothesis #2 and hypothesis #3 were not supported. Status was not a significant factor influencing a woman's tolerance of sexual harassment in this online dating situation. In fact, there was such a low effect size ( $\alpha = .004$ ) that the combination of status and attractiveness did not result in a statistically significant finding.

There are many possible reasons to why hypothesis #2 and #3 were not supported. One reason for this could be that the participants just did not care about the status of the candidate. Though past literature seems to support status as an influence, physical appearance is extremely important in our current society and perhaps college-aged females focus most on looks when first meeting a potential dating candidate.

Consistent with this idea is that perhaps young women, especially college students, feel a high level of self-sufficiency and/or independence. Because these women are pursuing a higher education, they may feel as though his status is not as important due to thinking that they themselves will be able to provide for themselves in the future. This may be especially true in our current society where women comprise about 46% of those employed (U.S. Department of Labor, 2006). This possible explanation counteracts the evolutionary stance for these women may not be looking to date a man on account of the possible resources he may provide for her.

Another possibility to why status was not found to significant in this study is that perhaps the way status was defined in this study did not fit best with the target population. Maybe female college-aged students are more interested in different candidate attributes than the ones used. Future research should address this possibility. Another study could be carried out using a different definition of status that may be more applicable to females around the age of 19.

The fact that the conversation occurred via the Internet could have also influenced the results. Though it was meant to simulate dating, an online dating service is different from real face-to-face contact. The Internet allows people to interact but on less of a personal level. Perhaps having the actual opportunity to meet with a candidate and getting to know his mannerisms may have influenced her perception.

A possible limitation of the study could be that some participants may not have viewed the responses as sexually harassing. In fact, qualitative data suggests that some participants completed the study without feeling uncomfortable or harassed. This may cause complications for some of the data may not fully represent the construct in which we set out to measure. This seems, however, inevitable due to the ambiguous nature of these harassing behaviors. Opinions of the participants may be different depending on her personal experiences. One reason a woman might not view the comments as harassing is because this simulation may not conform to her definition of harassment (Magley, Hulin, Fitzgerald, and DeNardo, 1999).

Another limitation has to do with the fact that only white, Caucasian males were used for the pictures that were included in the profile. Results may have been skewed especially due to the spread of ethnic backgrounds. In this study, only 62% reported being Caucasian/Non-Hispanic. The remaining 38% of the participants were rating a male that is of a different ethnicity/race. Future research should look to include a greater variety of ethnicity regarding the pictures included with the profiles as a means to better represent our diverse society.

In conclusion, results of the present study seem to support the literature regarding peer sexual harassment. A new laboratory analogue was produced as a means to gauge the factors that may influence a young, college-aged woman's tolerance of peer sexual harassment. It seems as though college-aged women do not see a man's status as being important when looking to initially date him. On the other hand, very consistent with sexual harassment literature, a man's physical attractiveness is very influential. This study shows that physically attractive men seem to have a lesser chance of being accused of peer sexual harassment. This finding is important for many may not be aware that physical attractiveness can influence a person's opinion of sexual harassment.

Further validation and research using this paradigm is necessary. This is especially important due to the increasing use and abuse of online communication methods. The more that is known about peer sexual harassment, in addition to where and how it is likely to occur, the better we can educate both the victims and the harassers.



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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Questions and Responses (as written in the study)

What is your favorite type of movie?

Anything that can make me laugh!

What is your favorite type of food?

Im a college kid...so I live off pizza and fast food.

What would your past g/friends say is your best quality?

I think they would say that I'm a loyal friend...there 24/7...and willing to please and attend to ALL of their needs...

Tell me about the book you are reading now, or the one you just finished:

Right now I'm readin the DaVinci Code. If you read it already...dont tell me how it ends. I am locked in and cant put it down. I wish I read books more often. I do have various subscriptions to magazines. I get Blender...Maxim...and hustler so I can get tips on how to please my women...

What's your idea of a night out with your friends?

We dont all get together often but when we do we go all out...We usually drive to the city...grab some cheese steaks...catch a game...then hit the clubs. By the end of the night we have pooled our money and stopped by the strip club for lap dances and shots of tequila. Youd be surprised what u can get for \$100.

What are you looking for in a partner?

Compatibility. Someone who can laugh...who is not uptight...and will go wherever their feelings may lead. Someone who is sexually adventurous and open to try ANYTHING...

What's your idea of a good first date?

Depends on the time of day...Afternoon- I'm ok w/something outdoors like a hike, rollerblading, or hangin on the beach. Evening- I like to start w/dinner...I like good food...good conversation...and think that eating is very sensual. Later, hopefully there will be dancin...drinks...and hopefully whipped cream and strawberries back at my place.

What's your dream job?

If I didnt have to think about money...it would be to be a personal trainer...U get paid to stay in shape...hang out in the gym...watch women who are in peak physical condition and help them out when needed... ;)

What would your past g/friends say is your worst quality?

I have been told that I can come on pretty strong...Thats me! I have a big personality...big heart...and a big...

What's the most interesting vacation you've taken?

2 yrs ago I went to Mardi Gras in New Orleans. That was def interestin...Women pulling up their shirts in exchange for beads...Now that is my idea of how free trade should work...

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

Goin to college. I am the first in my fam to do so. I am also very "accomplished" in the bedroom...I'll save those stories for u when we meet...

## APPENDIX B

### Demographic Questionnaire

What is your gender? Please circle the response that corresponds to your gender.

- 1 Male                      2 Female

What is your age?

What is your race or ethnicity? Please circle the response that corresponds to your race or ethnicity.

- |   |                                 |   |                             |
|---|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | African-American/Black          | 2 | Hispanic/Latino/Latina      |
| 3 | White/Non-Hispanic              | 4 | Asian/Pacific Islander      |
| 5 | Native American/American Indian | 6 | Mixed Race (please specify) |
| 7 | Other (please specify)          |   |                             |

What is your academic rank? Please circle the response that corresponds to your academic rank.

- |   |                                   |   |                               |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Freshman                          | 2 | Sophomore                     |
| 3 | Junior                            | 4 | Senior                        |
| 5 | Non-Matriculated Graduate Student | 6 | Matriculated Graduate Student |
| 7 | Other (please explain)            |   |                               |

On a scale from 1, heterosexual/straight, to 7, homosexual/gay, please rate your sexual orientation.

- |              |   |   |          |   |   |            |
|--------------|---|---|----------|---|---|------------|
| 1            | 2 | 3 | 4        | 5 | 6 | 7          |
| Heterosexual |   |   | Bisexual |   |   | Homosexual |

What is your current dating status? Please circle the response that corresponds to your current dating status.

- 1 Single and not currently dating   2 Single and currently dating various partners  
3 Single and currently dating one partner   4 Single but involved in a serious relationship  
5 Married   6 Divorced and not dating   7 Divorced and dating   8 Other (please explain)



## APPENDIX C

### Control Questionnaire

Based on the picture in the profile you received, please rate the individual's physical attractiveness. Circle the number that best represents your opinion.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unattractive			Average			Extremely Attractive

Based on the profile of the individual you received, please rate the individual's overall status. "Status" refers to a combination of his educational background, job status and hobbies. Circle the number that best represents your opinion.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unimpressive			Average			Extremely Impressive

Based on what you know of the individual, what is the likelihood that you would date this person if given the chance? Please circle the number that best represents your opinion.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Would Never Date			Maybe			Would Definitely Date

## APPENDIX D

### Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (True or False)

1. Before voting, I thoroughly investigate the qualities of all the candidates.
2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.
3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
4. I have never intensely disliked anyone.
5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.
6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
7. I am always careful about my manner of dress.
8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.
9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.
10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
11. I like to gossip at times.
12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.
14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.
15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.
16. I am always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.
17. I always try to practice what I preach.

18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people.
19. I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget.
20. When I don't know something, I don't at all mind admitting it.
21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.
23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.
24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.
25. I never resent being asked to return a favor.
26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.
28. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.
30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.
31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause.
32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune, they only got what they deserved.
33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

## APPENDIX E

### Informed Consent

I agree to participate in a study being conducted by Kara Fetter, a graduate student in the MA Program in Mental Health Counseling and Applied Psychology at Rowan University. The study will fulfill the requirements for her Master's thesis project. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a new online dating service. This research is being supervised by Dr. D.J. Angelone of the Department of Psychology at Rowan University.

I understand that my responses will be anonymous, and that all data will be recorded in a data set that does not contain any identifying information that links me to the data that is collected during my participation. I understand that it is my right to choose not to participate in this study without penalty. In addition, I understand that I may withdraw from the study once I begin if I start to feel uncomfortable; again, without penalty.

I understand that I will be required to communicate using a computer with a male subject over an instant message conversation. I understand that I will also be required to complete a questionnaire that assesses my opinion of the potential dating candidate, a social-desirability scale, and also a brief demographic questionnaire. In addition, I understand that my participation in this study should not exceed one hour.

I understand that there are no physical risks involved in participating in this study. I have been provided with the phone number of the Rowan University Counseling Center (#856.256.4222) where I can seek professional psychological assistance should the need arise.

I understand participation in this research is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw my participation at any time without penalty. I understand that my participation does not imply employment with the state of New Jersey, Rowan University, the principal investigator, or any other project facilitator. In addition, I understand that none of the information collected in the process of this research may be used against me in any way by the state of New Jersey, Rowan University, the principal investigator, or any other project facilitator.

If I have any questions or problems concerning my participation in this study, I may contact Dr. DJ Angelone at 856-256-4500, ext. 3780. In addition, I may contact the chairperson of the Department of Psychology at 856-256-4870.

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(Signature of Participant)

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(Date)

---

(Signature of Investigator)

---

(Date)

## APPENDIX F

### Profiles

Age: 22

(picture)

**Current Occupation:** I am currently an intern at a major national bank (MBNA). After I graduate, I will begin full-time as a credit analyst.

**Income:** I should be starting around 50,000 a year with benefits, but money isn't everything to me.

**Education:** I will soon have a B.A. in Economics. I also minored in History. I will graduate Phi Bet Kappa from Widener University. I also played on the soccer team all four years in college.

**Hobbies:** My outdoor hobbies are mountain biking, skiing, and soccer. I currently play soccer in a local league once a week.

Age: 22

(picture)

**Current Occupations:** I am a sales clerk at blockbuster video. I like this job a lot better than my last job as a telemarketer.

**Income:** I make less money now, but money isn't everything to me. I also get free rentals whenever I want.

**Education:** I am working on my 3<sup>rd</sup> year at Salem County College for automotive technology. I should be finished in the next year or two.

**Hobbies:** I really like to watch movies and play video games on my X-box. I recently joined a Wednesday night bowling league.

## APPENDIX G

### Debriefing Form

Dear Participant:

Thank you for participating in this research project. The objective of this research project is to investigate whether or not a woman's tolerance of sexual harassment is influenced by her potential to date a man. Specifically, we want to see if a woman's likelihood to date a person affects her opinion of what is appropriate in regard to sexually toned behaviors. The goal is to gain a better understanding of why there are different opinions and perceptions of sexual harassment especially when dealing with sexually ambiguous behaviors.

In order to get an accurate measure of dating potential, deception was necessary. As you know, this study was not a study of an online dating service. We wanted the subjects to naturally react to and judge the sexually offensive comments based only on what they know about the potential dating candidate. We also felt it was necessary to not involve male participants. If male participants were used, we would have no way of controlling for variability that would exist between the male subjects. Every participant, in turn received the same response depending on the questions that she was randomly assigned. The profile you received was completely made up and was no way a reflection of the individual in the photograph. We also chose to tell participants that they were interacting with various guys in order to help make our online dating service seem more realistic. Hopefully, this gave us a better representation of how they felt about the candidate assigned to her.

In the event that your participation in this research study has caused psychological distress, please call the Rowan University Counseling Center at #856.256.4222. Additionally, if you have questions about this research project or would like to obtain a copy of the results of this study, please contact Dr. DJ Angelone at Angeloned@rowan.edu. Dr. Angelone is the faculty member who is supervising this project.

Please know that the information given by you is completely confidential. The data you supplied as well as your signed informed consent form will be kept in a locked office in the Psychology Department. Without your participation, this research project would not have been possible.

Once again, thank you for your time and effort!

## APPENDIX H

### Sexually Harassing Responses Tolerated

# Tolerated	Frequency	Percent
1	22	27.8
2	25	31.6
3	21	26.6
4	3	3.8
5	2	2.5
6	0	0.0
7	1	1.3
8	1	1.3
9	4	5.1
Total	79	100

# APPENDIX I

## Mean Number of Tolerated Responses By Condition

	Attractive			Unattractive			Total		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
High Status	5.8	2.7	22	3.7	.75	18	4.85	2.27	40
Low Status	5.0	1.9	19	3.85	.93	20	4.41	1.57	39
Total	5.4*	2.3	41	3.8*	.84	38			

Means differ at  $p < .001$



