

**PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AMONGST UNIVERSITY STUDENTS:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY ACADEMY**

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**Assignment presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master in  
Philosophy at the University of Stellenbosch**

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**December 2002**

## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

## **ABSTRACT**

Tertiary institutions worldwide as well as locally have investigated sexual harassment on their campuses. This was done partly because of the negative consequences of sexual harassment on students and staff, particularly their work performance. Incidents of sexual harassment reported at universities range from rape and sexual assault to threats and sexist remarks by lecturers. When researching this phenomenon, difficulty is normally encountered partly due to the uncertainty that surrounds this activity. This is because perceptions differ as to what kind of conduct constitutes sexual harassment. Research further indicates that there are gender and racial differences in the assessment of sexual harassment. The current study investigates the uncertainty, gender and racial differences that exist regarding sexual harassment at a specific university campus. By means of a survey the perceptions of students regarding these three issues were determined at the Faculty of Military Science, a satellite campus of the University of Stellenbosch. With the utilisation of statistical packages, frequencies and statistical differences amongst the various sub-groups at the campus were determined. This was done in order to compare these findings with those of other universities who conducted similar sexual harassment surveys on their campuses in South Africa. It was found that no clear idea of what constitutes sexual harassment exist amongst these students. In particular women in the survey consistently viewed more incidents as contributing to sexual harassment than men. As oppose to other findings, Blacks registered a more conservative attitude when assessing whether certain incidents can be viewed as sexual harassment. The above was found notwithstanding the differing social context, especially the socialisation process and the fairly rigid codes of conduct, that students at the Military Academy are exposed to.

## OPSOMMING

Verskeie tersiêre instellings, wêreldwyd sowel as plaaslik, het seksuele teistering op hul kampusse ondersoek. Dit was deels gedoen as gevolg van die negatiewe gevolge wat hierdie aktiwiteit op studente en personeellede het, veral op hul werksprestasie. Gerapporteerde insidente by universiteite wissel vanaf verkragting en seksuele aanvalle tot dreigemente en seksistiese opmerkings deur dosente. Probleme is ondervind tydens navorsing oor die verskynsel wat deels toegeskryf kan word aan die onsekerheid wat hierdie aktiwiteit omhul. Dit hou verband met persepsies wat verskil ten opsigte van die soort gedrag wat seksuele teistering teenwoordig. Navorsing wys verder daarop dat geslags- en rasverskille bestaan by die assesering van seksuele teistering. Die huidige studie ondersoek die onsekerheid, geslags- en rasverskille ten opsigte van seksuele teistering by 'n spesifieke universiteitskampus. Deur middel van 'n opname word die persepsies van studente rakende die drie kwessies bepaal by die Fakulteit Krygskunde, 'n satelietkampus van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch. Met behulp van statistiese pakkette, word frekwensies en statistiese verskille tussen die verskillende subgroepe op die kampus bepaal. Dit was gedoen ten einde in staat te wees om die bevindinge te vergelyk met die van ander Suid-Afrikaanse universiteite wat seksuele teistering opnames op hul kampusse gedoen het. Daar word bevind dat geen duidelike idee van wat seksuele teistering behels bestaan onder die studente nie. In besonder word bevind dat vroue in die opname deurlopend meer insidente aanslaan as seksuele teistering, as mans. In teenstelling met ander bevindinge, registreer swart persone 'n meer konserwatiewe houding wanneer bepaal word of sekere insidente seksueel teisterend van aard is, al dan nie. Bogenoemde was bevind desondanks die eiesoortige sosiale konteks waarin studente hulself bevind, veral die sosialiseringproses en die redelike streng gedragskodes, waaraan studente van die Militêre Akademie onderwerp word.

## **Acknowledgement**

Prof A Kritzinger, Prof D.G. Nel and Mr. W.F. van Aswegen for guidance and patience.

Liz for always being there.

Lucille for just being yourself.

Family and friends for support.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1. Introduction

Sexual harassment is an issue that has developed into one of the most controversial, complex and perhaps most widespread human resource problems in the workplace. The USA was the first to recognise it as a distinct form of prohibited activity in the mid-1970's. Highly publicised cases included the President and a Supreme Court Judge being accused of sexual harassment, illustrating its occurrence even in these echelons of society. Although sexual harassment has been defined in various ways, it should be noted that it has also been characterised as a trade union issue, a civil liberties issue, an equal opportunity issue and, in Canada, as a human rights issue. Sexual harassment is not restricted to the traditional workplace, but is also prevalent in higher education institutions, where it has become an issue of increasing concern on campuses worldwide.

Extensive research has been conducted in various countries and the evidence suggests that sexual harassment is widespread at universities. Barring varying definitions, samples and measures, it is suggested that between 15 – 35 percent of women students have been victims of sexual harassment, while the majority of instances actually went unreported (Rubin & Borgers and Scholzman in Braine, *et al* 1995). It is reported that 13 percent of the women students in one survey indicated that they avoided taking a class or working with certain professors because of the risk of being subjected to sexual advances (Adams *et al* 1983 in Paludi 1990:3). An illustration of the effect that these advances can have on a student, is evident in the remarks of a University of Witwatersrand's (WITS) medical student:

*"I am so angry. I do not think I did anything wrong but here I was going to extreme measures to avoid this man and feeling on edge and stressed all the time whenever he was near... I am furious because he abused the power he had in the situation"*  
(Faculty of Health Sciences 1998).

Gouws and Kritzinger (1995: 1) remark that it is now generally acknowledged that university authorities – like all employers – have a responsibility for creating an academic environment free of gender discrimination for their staff and students. They refer to Sutherland who argued that: "[T]he existence of sexual harassment undermines both the educational and employment process of any institution and ... it remains a university's

*responsibility to provide a safe environment for all members of its community to reach their full educational and work potential. Sexual harassment prevents this from happening.*" Further negative influences include students changing majors, forfeiting research opportunities, low morale, absenteeism, anxiety, anger, shame, fear, depression, insomnia, headaches, helplessness and stress (Zlotnick 1993). These negative influences dictate that the management of institutions of higher learning pay attention to this phenomenon.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

"A growing body of literature has demonstrated the widespread existence of sexual harassment in academe" (Zlotnick 1993:1). Added to this is the finding that difficulty is encountered with the definitional aspects of this activity. Although many allude to it being unwelcome or unsolicited, sexual in nature and deliberate, everybody does not always agree about the types of behaviour that constitute sexual harassment. This is problematic since any effective policy should be able to clearly describe the issue at hand. The purpose of a definition is *inter alia* to steer policy and inform the relevant stakeholders of the issues involved. Crocker (in Zlotnick 1993) argues that it is extremely difficult to find a definition of sexual harassment that captures its complexity and suggests that a definition should be flexible, and be designed from the victim's perspective with the problem placed in a *social context*.

Part of the reason that ambiguity is encountered is because what some perceive as sexual harassment, is not viewed as such by others (Gouws & Kritzing 1995:5). The point is stressed that certain behaviours are being experienced in varying ways by different people - particularly in a culturally diverse context such as South Africa. Mayekiso & Bhana's (1997:233) findings point to men not knowing what women find offensive. A lack of clarity is likely to affect not only incidence figures but also the rate of reporting (Braine *et al* 1995:140). This leads to difficulty in addressing the issue especially since differences in perceptions may lead to diverse actions and reactions. This is exacerbated by the fact that significant gender differences in the perception of sexual harassment have been found in studies. Fitzgerald & Ormerod (in Gouws and Kritzing 1995:8) go so far as to state that gender is one of the 'most robust criterion to date, having been reported in almost every investigation so far completed' and that 'women are consistently more likely to view such behaviours as harassment'.

To determine whether there is uncertainty regarding the kind of conduct that constitutes sexual harassment and whether gender differences exist at the Faculty of Military Science<sup>1</sup> (University of Stellenbosch), a survey was conducted amongst students. This was done because it was assumed that this population is unique and differs from students at other tertiary campuses in South Africa. One of the main reasons for this assumption is that the students are full time military career officers, who are socialised in the expected military conduct becoming officers. They have undergone initial military training and have been in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) for at least one year. All of them have done their formative training that *inter alia* includes a specific module on expected officer conduct. They utilise a manual namely *The Officer as a gentleman* (SA Army 1979), which was later replaced by the *Service Manual for Officers*. Both these underscore the desired behaviour and conduct expected of officers.

Examples of the expected conduct of officers are also found in the *Service Guide for newcomers* (SANDF 1996). It refers to codes of personal conduct which military institutions the world over prescribe to. The code of personal conduct is viewed as a set of principles to which all members of the SANDF must aim for, both in their official duties and private lives.

*“The need for such codes of personal conduct is to ensure operational effectiveness.... as well as to gain and maintain the respect and moral support of the very society which the military represents and must defend. Members must at all times display personal integrity and behave in a manner that is beyond reproach of society”* (SANDF 1996:3-4).

Subparagraph (13) (b) draws the attention of members to social misconduct which will in the event of this conduct continuing, elicit disciplinary action. It refers specifically to sexual harassment and notes that there is no simple definition for this activity.

*“It is not confined to the male harassing the female, although this is the most common form to be found within and outside the military. It can range from constant use of bad language in front of women, to direct advances for sexual favours. In its worst form it could be a threat from a senior that failure to accept advances could result in a poor merit assessment which could be detrimental to her career. Women*

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<sup>1</sup> Commonly referred to as the Military Academy which is situated at Saldanha, along the West Coast of the Western Province in South Africa.

*can harass men by flaunting their femininity to receive favours or preferential treatment”.*

Important to note is the possible sanction for improper conduct which is prejudicial to good order and military discipline which is an offence in terms of the Military Disciplinary Code. Furthermore, “[T]he action taken against officers is more severe than for other ranks. An officer may also be charged with scandalous behaviour or conduct unbecoming an officer” (SANDF 1996).

### **1.1.1 Sexual harassment in the military**

The above should be read against the background that incidents of sexual harassment were also reported in the SANDF. Heinecken (1998:11) for instance refers to 17 cases in 1996 and 38 in 1997. Furthermore, a survey conducted by the SA Medical Health Service (SAMHS) Directorate Psychology in 1997 showed that 48 percent of civilian and military women in the DoD claimed that they had experienced some form of sexual harassment, the highest being among the senior non-commissioned officer ranks.

According to Heinecken (2000), the military remains one of the most pro-typically masculine of all social institutions. According to her the prevailing patriarchal culture will tend to stay largely unchallenged. Against this background it is to be expected that sexual harassment will be an issue in such a typical male dominated institution. The United State’s military has been at the forefront of researching sexual harassment in the military - especially with surveys. The special issue of the Military Psychology Journal (Issue 11 No. 3 of 1999) is solely devoted to this contentious issue, and depicts the prominence given to this phenomenon in the US Armed Forces.

Chema (1993:1) notes that over the years the United State’s military has been rocked by allegations not only that pervasive sexual misconduct against women exists in the ranks, but also that the leadership condones or ignores various sexual abuses. He quotes the Tailhook<sup>2</sup> incident where sexual abuse and harassment took place which resulted in investigations and well-publicised details of Tailhook activities coming to the fore. This generated commentaries on the Defence Force’s sexual harassment prevention efforts.

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<sup>2</sup> In Naval aviation, a tailhook is the grappling device used to help stop a fixed-wing aircraft landing on an aircraft carrier.

Activities during this incident included various women being made to walk 'gauntlet'<sup>3</sup>, indecent exposure by both men and women, the viewing of pornographic movies, the public shaving of women's legs and pubic areas, and the drinking of alcohol from dispensers that resembled phallic devices. Reference is also made to the rape of female soldiers during Dessert Shield and Dessert Storm (Chema 1993:16).

Another high profile case involved General Kennedy, the US Army's highest-ranking woman, who laid a charge against another Army general four years after the incident. This was upon learning that he had been appointed Deputy Inspector General of the Army, a position that included investigating sexual harassment. *"Now, instead of being remembered as the first woman to earn three stars in the Army, she is going to be remembered as that woman with the sex complaint"* (Becker 2000). The financial impact that sexual harassment can have on the military is portrayed by Firestone & Harris (1999:13), when they remark of the US Army: *"The Army could have purchased seventy-eight Black Hawk helicopters with the direct and indirect financial resources expended on sexual harassment in 1994."*

In the Department of Defence (DoD) in South Africa, no high profile cases have been documented, but it is a problem as acknowledged by Major-General Jackie Sedibe. She reported that 49 percent of women in civilian and military defence jobs said that their male colleagues had subjected them to sexist remarks or verbal insults (Sedibe 2000). In 1997 a total of 35 cases of sexual harassment were reported in the SANDF, according to a report by the previous Minister of Defence, Joe Modise (Laufer 1997). Sexual harassment is briefly covered in the DoD's policy on Equal Opportunities and Affirmative Action. It details a definition stating that: *"Sexual harassment refers to a form of unlawful sexual discrimination that involves unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances, request for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature"*. A draft policy on the prevention of sexual harassment is currently being circulated internally for comment (Motumi 2000:38).

The preceding discussion is an indication of the conduct and behaviour expected of officers to enhance the good standing of the military. Important is the sanction that accompanies misconduct, which should serve as a deterrent. The social context of these

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<sup>3</sup> Where drunken male aviators lined the hotel corridor and women who were unfortunate to enter, would be pushed through while their buttocks, breasts and crotches would be grapped at.

students is thus viewed as being different from other tertiary institutions in the country. It is against this background that the questionnaire was compiled and administered to determine whether there are indeed differences in the perceptions of these students regarding sexual harassment.

## 1.2 Methodology

The methodology utilised in this study can be viewed as quantitative in nature. It entails a survey which Fowler (in Cresswell 1994), describes as follows: "*A survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of some fraction of the population - the sample - through the data collection process of asking questions of people*". The research project is a case study as it relates to a specific population in a specific context. Lee (1989:119) refers to case studies as the intensive study of a single case that consists of the entire configuration of individuals, groups, and social structure in the setting of an organisation.

## 1.3 Procedures and participants

The survey was conducted over the period 8 to 14 November 2001, with the assistance of an honours student and the student captain<sup>4</sup>. The questionnaire was explained to the students and it was stressed that participation is voluntary and that the information supplied is confidential. Due to various reasons, such as class commitments, military obligations, not all students were present. Those present included the Preparatory Certificate for Military Studies (PCMS<sup>5</sup>) course students (n = 29), the first (n = 59) and the second year students (n = 54). The third year students (n=54) completed the questionnaires later under the supervision of the student captain. The post graduate students (n =24) who were available over the period 8 to 14 November 2001, were asked to complete the questionnaire. Tables 1 and 2 present outlines of the population under discussion. It should be noted that for every female there is more than three males (a ratio of 1: 3.2). The same gender representation was found in the sample, and although weighting was considered, it was decided against, as the representation of the sample was a reflection of the specific population. Table 1 refers to gender and Table 2 to the racial breakdown.

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<sup>4</sup> The student captain can be equated to the chair of a Student Representative Council, which is called the Student Management Organisation at the Military Academy.

<sup>5</sup> The PCMS is a six months course that is presented at the Military Academy and serves as a kind of bridging course for students who do not adhere in full to the entry requirements stipulated by the University of Stellenbosch.

TABLE 1:

## GENDER OF THE STUDENT POPULATION

| YEAR GROUP            | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|-----------------------|------|--------|-------|
| PCMS                  | 23   | 6      | 29    |
| 1 <sup>ST</sup> YEARS | 53   | 6      | 59    |
| 2 <sup>ND</sup> YEARS | 38   | 11     | 49    |
| 3 <sup>RD</sup> YEARS | 30   | 24     | 54    |
| POST-GRADUATES        | 19   | 5      | 24    |
| TOTAL                 | 163  | 52     | 215   |

TABLE 2

## RACIAL BREAKDOWN OF STUDENT GROUP

| BLACK <sup>6</sup> | COLOURED | INDIAN | WHITE | TOTAL |
|--------------------|----------|--------|-------|-------|
| 20                 | 0        | 5      | 4     | 29    |
| 14                 | 10       | 3      | 32    | 59    |
| 19                 | 5        | 0      | 25    | 49    |
| 11                 | 7        | 0      | 36    | 54    |
| 1                  | 1        | 0      | 22    | 24    |
| 65                 | 23       | 8      | 119   | 215   |

## 1.4 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into three sections and 40 questions were coded, captured and analysed. Section A dealt with the biographical information of the respondents. This is required in order to distinguish between the different subgroups in the sample. Section B covered a Sexual Harassment Questionnaire and was chosen because it provides specific and clear categories of behaviour that may constitute sexual harassment. This questionnaire was used in a survey by Gouws & Kritzinger (1995) and is viewed as useful to determine which specific incidents students view as sexual harassment (Mayekiso & Bhana 1997:231, Braine *et al* 1995: 144). Responses to these questions allowed comparison with other similar South African studies. Section C dealt with general perceptions of and attitudes towards sexual harassment. It contains specific statements to which the student had five possible answers ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It is based on a questionnaire developed by Du Plessis (2000), but has been adapted for the purpose of this study.

## 1.5 Structure

Chapter 2 will cover a general overview of literature on sexual harassment with specific reference to definitional aspects, the forms, categories and explanatory models of sexual harassment. Chapter 3 will concentrate on investigations regarding sexual harassment at universities in general and as well as those done at South African universities. This will enable the identification of some of the salient issues of this activity - especially locally. The findings of the survey will be discussed in Chapter 4. It will conclude with Chapter 5 dealing with a discussion of the findings, followed by some concluding comments.

<sup>6</sup> Reference is only made to these previously statutorily defined groups to determine whether there is any agreement or congruence with other universities regarding the findings of their investigations.



## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL ANALYSIS:

*"Most clear is that the victim experiences the most adverse effect ....., and in almost no case does sexual harassment have beneficial outcomes"* (Tangri, Burt & Johnson 1982:34).

### 2. Introduction

The term sexual harassment is of recent origin, but it describes behaviours that are centuries old. The framing of these behaviours emerged in the 1970's in North America and several authors on the subject dedicate its phrasing to Catherine MacKinnon's book: *Sexual harassment of working women* (Leitch 1999; Eyre 2000, Zlotnick 1993:1). Attention to this activity has been brought about by women who identified a form of male behaviour which '*required a name and sexual harassment seemed to come about as close to symbolising the problem as the language would permit*' (Thomas & Kitzinger 1997:2). MacKinnon stated that since there was a lack of a term to express it, this phenomenon was literally unspeakable, which made a generalised, shared, and social definition of it inaccessible. She maintained that women were naming an experience they had endured in silence for many years. Once the problem was named, women could at last speak out and mobilise to tackle it (Thomas & Kitzinger 1997:3).

#### 2.1 Feminism and subsequent backlash

Thomas & Kitzinger (1997:5) are of the opinion that sexual harassment is a feminist success story. The term was invented as part of women's renaming of the world, which reflected and constructed women's experiences. It labeled a form of behaviour recognised as something which women need not passively endure, but can actively protest and resist. However, a backlash was encountered in the form of anti-feminists, where codes of conduct designed to protect women have been attacked as being inspired by 'feminazis' who are enemies of free speech. In one case, students burned copies of a sexual harassment booklet, slamming it as 'a total abrogation of free speech'. Some even branded sexual harassment codes as 'censorship' or as violations of the right to freedom of speech. Cox (2001) for instance refers to backlashing by a professor who had been accused of sexual harassment, and who instituted a complaint of his own: "*My opinion was that the charging of sexual harassment was just retaliation for the grade.*" He proceeded to charge his accuser with sexual harassment himself. "*By accusing him of creating an environment hostile to her, she created an environment hostile to him*".

Thomas & Kitzinger (1997:6) further suggest that the authors of these 'attacks' are often men, but media preference is for female spokespersons, especially if they claim to be speaking as 'feminists'. They often seek to define women's experiences of sexual harassment as 'personal' and as 'just part of everyday life'. Thomas & Kitzinger (1997:5) quote Roiphe and others as being opposed to the extension of sexual harassment legislation, policies and codes of conduct to cover what they see as 'trivial' cases relating to the 'ordinary', 'everyday', 'natural', interactions between men and women. Roiphe, for instance, singles out 'leering and ogling, whistling, sexual innuendo, and other suggestive or offensive or derogatory comments, humour and jokes about sex. She claimed that women should be able to handle such things at a personal level, arguing that such ordinary, mundane, and humdrum instances are not appropriate targets of policy or legislation. The counter argument, however, is that these 'small', mundane behaviours accumulate and permeate women's lives. In this sense it is important to name the 'dripping tap' behaviours, events and situations as sexual harassment.

As will be discussed later, problems abound with the reporting of sexual harassment cases. Part of it involves the link between sexual harassment and feminism. Some victims prefer not to identify their experiences as sexual harassment because they are reluctant to identify themselves with a feminist issue. This is for no other reason than the fear of becoming targets for further abuse by anti-feminists. This can partly be ascribed to strong feminist sentiments such as: "[S]treet harassment is part of a system of sexual terrorism that reminds young women of their vulnerability to more extreme forms of abuse" (Larkin in Thomas & Kitzinger 1997:13).

## 2.2 Ambiguity

The following quote depicts the problem with defining this activity:

*"We have highlighted the fact that many women who identify their experiences as sexual harassment are unwilling to utilise the policies designed to combat it, and that such unwillingness is exacerbated both by the disagreements and uncertainties about the 'proper' definition of sexual harassment, and by the negative connotations now taken on by any issue associated with feminism" (Thomas & Kitzinger 1997:15, See also Leitch 1999).*

Often both men and women fail to recognise sexual harassment when it occurs. This is illustrated by the difference in willingness to label such behaviour as harassing. When interviewed, women frequently would not label sexual harassment incidents as such, but will be more likely to brand it as unwanted sexual attention. Also, women as a group consistently define more experiences as sexual harassment than men do. The term sexual harassment is thus subject to different interpretations - both within and across the sexes (Thomas & Kitzinger 1997:9).

Based on these disagreements and uncertainties, it is hardly surprising that the codes of conduct and policies designed to prevent the behaviour so labeled are less effective than had been hoped for. Furthermore, although people would brand certain behaviours as such, many are unwilling to take action against their employers or to use the policies designed to ameliorate their situation. One survey indicated that a mere 6 percent of those who reported experiencing sexual harassment had taken any formal action. There is a repeated finding that actual victims behave quite differently from how research participants or the general public say they would behave, especially regarding the reporting of incidents (Thomas & Kitzinger 1997:9-15). This implies that although they might initially have indicated that they would report the matter, they did not do so. Notwithstanding the ambiguity, the next section will deal with efforts to delineate this activity.

### **2.3 Definitional Aspects**

Sexual harassment is difficult to define, as what is viewed by one as sexual harassment, may not be viewed as such by another. This can lead to members unwittingly transgressing since they are not aware of that such conduct can be viewed as sexual harassment. It is, however, important to draw specific attention to the sexual nature of sexual harassment. For harassment to be based on sex there must be something of a sexual nature in the conduct (Carrell *et al* 1998:59). Usually this test is met when a person is propositioned, comments or jokes are made about the person's anatomy, or pictures of people nude and/or in sexual suggestive poses are displayed.

The importance of defining this activity properly is illustrated by Collier (1995:35) who refers to a survey conducted in the UK. Respondents were asked whether they had suffered sexual harassment in general, eliciting a response that indicated that its occurrence was low. But when asked if they have experienced certain types of behaviour

and found them offensive, the positive responses were much higher. A difference from one in six to one in three arose because not all people in the survey understood what sexual harassment meant. A lack of clarity will tend to affect not only incidence figures but also the rate of reporting. This is in line with what Braine *et al* (1995:140) refer to as recipients being often unsure, even unaware that they have been subjected to sexual harassment.

In 1980 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in the US presented a working definition which was adopted by many analysts (For example Hay & Elig 1997: 234 and Barr 1993: 460). The EEOC defined sexual harassment as:

**“Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:**

- i. Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- ii. Submission or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual; and
- iii. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interference with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

The above definition contains two distinct forms of sexual harassment namely *quid pro quo*<sup>6</sup> and hostile environment.

### 2.3.1 Quid Pro Quo

Points 1 and 2 of the EEOC guidelines above describe the types of harassment as *quid pro quo*: sex in exchange for favours and/or to avoid adverse actions (Carrell *et al* 1998:59 - 60). It occurs when acceptance of sexual or offensive behaviours is made either implicitly or explicitly a condition of employment (Firestone & Harris 1999:613). Examples include promotions, pay increases and passing university courses - issues that are of particular importance in any organisation for the advancement of careers or studies. These incentives can assist members to improve their financial position and to progress to a higher level.

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<sup>6</sup> Quid pro quo in this sense simply means "this for that". If you do this for me then I will do that for you.

### **2.3.2 Hostile Environment**

Point 3 of the guidelines describes a type of harassment that results in a hostile work environment. It is defined as verbal or physical conduct that unreasonably interferes with one's work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment (Firestone & Harris 1999:613). It should be noted that one incident of harassment cannot establish a hostile work environment. The offensive conduct should be frequent, repetitive and part of an overall pattern that cannot be explained by coincidence. Hostile environmental harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favours, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature and actions that alter the conditions of the victim's employment and create an abusive working environment. The US courts, for instance, have determined that a hostile environment is created when:

- (a) the actions are unwelcome;
- (b) serious actions are repeated; and
- (c) the actions are so severe as to alter the conditions of employment (Aaron & Isaksen 1993:66).

Some refer to this as being the most common type of sexual harassment. This is one form of sexual harassment that can be applied directly to the tertiary sphere. Instances where lecturers, staff members and students try intimidating women - or men for that matter - to share sexual favours, serve as examples. Regardless of which type of harassment is involved, the same criterion applies; the conduct, whether physical or verbal, must be both unwelcome and of a sexual nature. Harassing conduct that interferes with an individual's work performance can come from anyone in the workplace: supervisors, co-workers and outsiders such as visitors or customers (Carrell 1998:59 - 60). It is therefore incumbent on managers and staff at all levels of an institution to be aware of these forms of sexual harassment. This will enable them to judge whether an offence has been committed or not. These two broad forms lead to the more specific kinds of behaviour that can be interpreted as the different categories of this phenomenon.

## **2.4 Categories of sexual harassment**

It is important to denote the different categories of sexual harassment, as it is an indication of the possible offences that might be experienced or be committed. The categories of

sexual harassment can be viewed as important because sexual harassment does not mean the same thing to everyone. By viewing each act as a point on a continuum, people will be able to understand the seriousness of all acts better, as well as how some minor actions may lead to more serious ones or become part of a hostile environment. The desired outcome is that some unintentional harassment may be stopped. Figure 1 gives an indication of the different categories of sexual harassment. Of late, offensive e-mail by employees and online pornography are new hazards brought to the workplace by the Internet.

**FIGURE 1**  
**SEXUAL HARASSMENT: A SPECTRUM OF BEHAVIOURAL PATTERNS**

| <b>VISUAL</b>             | <b>VERBAL</b>                 | <b>WRITTEN</b>                   | <b>TOUCHING</b> | <b>POWER</b>                               | <b>THREATS</b>    | <b>FORCE</b>     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|--|-------------------|------------------|
| Ogling                    | Requests for dates            | Love poems                       | Violating space | Relationships                              | Quid pro quo      | Rape             |
| Staring                   | Questions about personal life | Love letters                     | Patting         | Using position to request dates, sex, etc. | Demands           | Physical assault |
| Posters                   | Dirty / sexual jokes          | Obscene poems, letters and cards | Grabbling       |  | Loss of job       |                  |
| Magazines                 |                               |                                  | Pinching        |  | Selection process |                  |
| Flyers                    | Whistling                     |                                  | Caressing       |  |                   |                  |
| <b>Online pornography</b> |                               | <b>Offensive e-mail</b>          | Kissing         |  |                   |                  |

**OFFENSIVE CONDUCT  
(MAY BE ILLEGAL)**

- Individual perceptions and reaction determine harassment
- Behaviours unwanted by recipients are harassment
- Behaviours may not be intended to harass, but this is often the result
- Illegal if the result is perceived as harassment

**DEMANDS  
(ILLEGAL IN ALL CASES)**

Behaviours are intentional; goal is to intimidate, harass or hurt another person.

(Source: General Electric Corporation's Sexual Harassment Manual in Carrell *et al* 1998: 64.)

## 2.5 Failure to report

*“One of the most confounding and frustrating experiences for individuals working to reduce sexual harassment is victims’ reluctance to report their experiences of victimisation. The dilemma, of course, is that if victims do not report, the harassment and/or violence is likely to go unchecked and is implicitly condoned”* (Grauerholz 1999).

This is one of the salient issues regarding this activity and it is well worth visiting the reasons for failing to report such incidents. A low reporting rate may give managers a false sense of the prevalence of sexual harassment in their organisations. One reason for the continued existence of harassment may be the problems associated with reporting incidents as well as the reporting procedures. Grauerholz (1999) states that at the heart of many victims’ reason for not reporting is concern about their safety. This is corroborated by Schneider (in Zlotnick 1993:11) who states that one deterrent against reporting is the fear of retaliation. Zlotnick (1993:11) further maintains that women do not aggressively pursue an incident of sexual harassment because it would violate the culturally approved norms of male-female relationships.

It is against this background of a reluctance to report incidences of sexual harassment, that some view those cases where it has been reported, as the tip of the iceberg. As mentioned before, part of the reason for non-reporting might also be ascribed to the link between this activity and feminism. According to a survey conducted by Carrell *et al* (1998:59) there are numerous reasons for not reporting sexual harassment. These include:

- Fear of losing one’s job,
- The need for a future job reference,
- The possibility of being considered a troublemaker,
- The assumption that nothing would change if harassment was reported,
- Concern about being accused of inviting the harassment,
- A reluctance to draw public attention to private lives, and
- The prospect of emotional stress for filing a lawsuit and undergoing long, costly legal procedures.

## 2.6 Explanatory Models

In discussing sexual harassment issues, one inevitably has to address the origin and reasons for this phenomenon. Numerous ways and routes exist that one can take to explain the incidences and presence of sexual harassment. From a psychological perspective, for example, one can look at the profiles of offenders and victims and whether the harassers themselves, had been harassed. These might help to explain some kinds of behaviour, but overall it will contribute little with explicating this activity. This is partly due to the understanding that certain forms of sexual harassment is widespread, implying that it is viewed as “normal” behaviour by many. In this sense psychological profiling of people displaying deviant behaviour will not assist much.

Explanations refer to three main models<sup>7</sup> namely the biological, organisational and socio-cultural (Tangri & Hayes in Firestone & Harris 1999:614; Slabbert 1994:15; Tangri et al 1982:34 and Gouws & Kritzinger 1995:4). The models are derived from the literature, court cases, and legal defenses (Tangri et al 1982:34). The latter conducted a study in the USA involving a stratified random sample of 20 083 members of the federal workforce to determine the applicability of these models.

### 2.6.1 The Biological Model

This model posits that sexual harassment is the logical outcome of the natural attraction between men and women. It has two versions. One maintains that sexually harassing behaviour is not meant as such, but is merely a natural expression of men’s stronger sex drive. In this case it is believed that men’s sex drive is stronger, leading them by biological propensity to aggress sexually against women, but without discriminatory intent. That they do this in work settings is neither surprising nor grounds for court action. The other version posits no unequal sex drive, but stresses that any individual may be attracted to any other individual, and may pursue that attraction without intent to harass (Tangri et al 1982:34 - 35). One would then typically expect that men will be prone to this behaviour when young, and women in their middle years, as these are the periods that their sexual drives are at their highest.

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<sup>7</sup> Tangri et al (1982:34) prefer this term for want of a better one. One can also refer to positions, preferences for interpreting sexually harassing behaviour.



It further states that men harass more frequently because their reproductive strategy is to maximise the number of potential offspring. Women, however, have a much higher investment in reproduction and therefore would be less likely to be sexually aggressive. From this perspective a situation becomes harassment only when a woman is not receptive to a male's advances (Firestone & Harris 1999:614). For apparent reasons this model is not a favourable one to explain sexual harassment, as it dictates that men are primarily motivated by their primitive instincts. Its crudeness and simplicity does not take other relevant factors into account. However, Tangri et al 1982:34) remind us that we should not discard this perspective easily, as:

*"[T]his model has been most vehemently argued in court by corporations seeking to avoid charges of sex discrimination for allowing harassment to exist, and has been the primary interpretation in need of change in the effort to bring sexual harassment under the purview of sex discrimination statutes".*

## **2.6.2 The Organisational Model**

*"Some sexual harassment may indeed be clumsy or insensitive expression of attraction, while some is the classic abuse of organisation power" (Tangri et al 1982:34).*

This model focuses on power in an organisation, where formal power is vested in the individual through the hierarchical structure of the organisation. The institution may thus provide the individual with an opportunity structure that makes sexual harassment possible. Individuals can use their power and position to extort sexual gratification from their subordinates. This will usually be females who will tend to be employed in occupations subordinate to men. This asymmetrical relation between superordinate (male) and subordinate (female) deprives subordinates of the material independence and security necessary to resist sexual harassment, and leaves them vulnerable to its economic, psychological, physical and social consequences. In short, this model presupposes that sexual harassment is a way to intimidate and control subordinates by using organisational authority to extort sexual favours. The use of such organisational authority should be seen in the loss of occupational mobility as the price of resisting such demands (Tangri et al 1982:34).

One can utilise the example of the military, where rank and seniority goes hand in hand with the perceived power of a specific position. The relationship between a general and a private will clearly indicate who holds the most power and who determines the nature of

the relationship. At university level this situation can be equated to a highly respected professor and a first year student. In this case it will be clear that power derived from the organisational hierarchy and the individual's position and standing, will assist in this behavior coming to the fore, if the relevant individual is prone to sexual harassment. Mayekiso & Bhana (1997:233) for instance, allude to the 'disturbing' fact that sexual harassment was also perceived to have occurred in the offices of academic staff at UNITRA. *"Sexual harassment of students by academic staff is viewed as a misuse of institutional power in the lecturer-student relationship. It is seen as exploitative as well as psychologically and academically damaging"* (Mayekiso & Bhana 1997:233).

Mayekiso & Bhana (1997:234) conclude that:

*"Males, senior students, academic staff, student leaders, popular students and good looking students were commonly cited as perpetrators of sexual harassment. It becomes evident from these findings that sexual harassment is about individual (personal) power and institutional power. The harassers are men who are likely to be in positions of authority at the university, but quite independently of their roles at UNITRA, men have power because of their position in society"*.

### **2.6.3 The Socio-cultural Model**

*"Sociologists note that gender differences are shaped by the sex role socialisation process that occurs as a result of the dual influences of the school environment and societal expectations"* (Leitch 1999).

This model asserts that sexual harassment result from different sex role socialisation of men and women (Slabbert 1994:15). Accordingly, the male sex role encourages dominance and aggressiveness, while that of the female encourages subordination and submissiveness. Sexual harassment may then be seen as an extension of a socialisation process that vests greater power in males and creates an atmosphere in which harassment is consistent with the socially defined male sex role (Tangri et al 1982:34). This is seen as the manifestation of the larger patriarchal system in which men rule and social beliefs legitimise their rule.

It is believed that society rewards males for aggressive and domineering sexual behaviors and females for passivity and acquiescence. According to this model, the function of sexual harassment is to manage ongoing male-female interactions. This is done according to accepted sex status norms to maintain male dominance occupationally and

therefore economically, by intimidating, discouraging, or precipitating the removal of women from work (Tangri et al 1982:40). Gouws & Kritzinger (1995:4) refer to this model as lending itself to a variety of applications in the study of sexual harassment, such as gender-role attitudes and beliefs and sex-role spillover.

- Gender-role attitudes and beliefs are viewed by some as central for accounting for sexual harassment and as having a greater effect on perceptions of sexual harassment than does the sex of the individual.
- Sex role spill over refers to the carry over of gender role expectations of behaviour into the workplace and sexual harassment is seen as a function of this spillover when one sex is predominant in a particular occupation. When men predominate, women are seen as role deviants. When women dominate, the work-role take on aspects of the sex-role. Women in these circumstances are likely to consider social-sexual behaviours as part of their jobs and not to view sexual harassment as a problem.
- The sex discrimination or gender inequality version postulates that sexual harassment – like rape – can best be understood within the context of the domination that men have over women within the patriarchal society. Thus, the prime objective of sexual harassing behaviour is the domination and belittling of women and not sexual gratification. Sexual harassment is seen to function as a mechanism of social control employed by men in patriarchal societies (Gouws & Kritzinger 1995:3-4).

This model seems to enjoy general acceptability and popularity among analysts in this field. Gouws & Kritzinger (1995:4) and UCT (1991) apply this model when they observe that the single greatest problem that needs to be addressed is community tolerance for sexually harassing behaviour. They argue that it is not so much the workplace that determines incidences, but the way people are socialised (See also Braine *et al* 1995:142). The communities in which students are socialised and recruited from reflect the attitudes of the communities. Gouws & Kritzinger (1995:4) rightly refer to the occurrence of sexual harassment as part of the institutional culture of universities. This is because on societal level male dominant values, are reflected and transferred to the university milieu where women are socialised to internalise such values, which also find expression in the curriculum. It is important to note that an institutional culture cannot survive in an enclave, as it can safely be assumed that it is a reflection of the recruitment community from where the students hail.

Eyre (2000) puts it forcefully that what constitutes sexual harassment, is not a given. She believes that it is the social power afforded to men, rather than organisational power, which gives men the real advantage over women. Female staff will thus experience challenges to their authority, harassment from students and hostility from male staff. She stresses that harassing behaviours, whether conscious or unconscious, are believed by many researchers to be an attempt by men to reinforce their existing power over women.

## 2.7 Summary

This chapter first paid attention to the origin of the term sexual harassment and the role that feminists played in bringing this activity to the fore. The ambiguity surrounding this phenomenon was highlighted and attention was paid to the two forms of sexual harassment namely *quid pro quo* and hostile environment. This was followed by the seven different categories of sexual harassment. It illustrated that one can depict the different behaviours perceived as sexual harassment on a continuum, which can range from the visual, verbal, written and touching, to power, threats and actual force. A brief discussion on failure to report incidents of sexual harassment followed. This was done to indicate that the real possibility exists that stigmas or other negative results might follow when people report such incidents. This is important as it is indicated that few 'victims' report these incidents, leading to some believing that reported cases are only the 'tip of the iceberg'.

The explanatory models started with the Biological model that posits that sexual harassment is the logical outcome of the natural attraction between men and women. The Organisational model dealt with the power that individuals wield in an organisation due to the position that they hold and argues that asymmetrical relations leave subordinates vulnerable. The Socio-cultural model asserted that the different sex role socialisation of men and women results in sexual harassment. This is mainly due to the socialisation process which vests greater power in males and creates an atmosphere in which harassment is consistent with the socially defined male sex role.

## CHAPTER 3: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT UNIVERSITIES

### 3. Introduction

One of the first studies to examine the incidence of sexual harassment on campus was conducted at the University of California, Berkeley, where 30 percent of women reported having received unwanted sexual attention from at least one instructor during their four years of college (Zlotnick 1993:6). Research on sexual harassment has especially been done in the USA and literature from this quarter abounds. This is not the case with every quarter, as little is for instance known about how sexual harassment is viewed at British universities and "what we don't know about sexual harassment far exceeds what we do know" (Lengnick-Hall in Wilson 2000). There seems to be little published journal-based research on harassment in British higher education, and it might possibly be concluded that there is indeed a 'booming silence'. As sexual harassment presents a problem for students and staff, it also affects the organisation both directly and indirectly and, when it is not dealt with effectively, legal costs incurred can be substantial.

Although universities are charged with the safeguarding of its faculty, staff and students, the university must carefully balance both the rights of the alleged victim and perpetrator while investigating complaints. Complications often arise due to the traditions of academic freedom, faculty tenure and the forms of mentoring that take place in academia. Gordon and Truax in Leitich (1999) for instance conclude that as many as 40 percent of undergraduate women have experienced some form of sexual harassment. Yet, the crux of the problem may be in gender differentiation in the interpretation of social-sexual behaviour. Leitich (1999) further states that universities are coming under attack for failing to eliminate a climate conducive to sexual harassment of especially female students at their institutions. The impression is gained that further studies are hampered as a higher incidence of sexual harassment has for instance been reported among graduate women. They are deemed to be vulnerable to sexual harassment as they depend on professors who can grant not only grades but financial and research opportunities (Zlotnick 1993:8).

Regarding perceptions of sexual harassment at universities, Fitzgerald and Ormerod (in Leitich 1999) support the view that considerable differences exist in the individual perceptions and definitions of sexual harassment between men and women. "*Put simply, women judge specific interactions more harassing than do men*". This is important as the

ability to denote sexual harassment as such or not, will determine the actions and reactions of those involved, as well as influencing the reporting of such incidences.

One of the more recent initiatives in Southern Africa, is the Sexual Harassment Quantitative report by the African Gender Institute situated at UCT. They conducted a survey amongst tertiary institutions throughout Southern Africa to take stock of all the available resources in the Network of Southern Africa in Tertiary Institutions challenging Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence (Muthien & van Zyl 2001). The Network was institutionalised in Botswana in 1997 with the mission to contribute to the elimination of sexual harassment and sexual violence in all Southern African institutions of education. The study is an attempt to document some of the work being done at tertiary institutions throughout the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on gender based violence generally, and sexual harassment specifically. A strategic planning workshop was held in Johannesburg in February 2001, attended by more than 500 members of the Network. The study is contextualised by reference to their view that gender-based violence is endemic to patriarchal societies, where gender inequality is historical and systematic, and maintained through ideological consent, coercion and repression (van Zyl in Muthien & van Zyl 2001).

Muthien & van Zyl (2001) refer to the difficulty in defining sexual harassment due to different perceptions of behaviour, depending on cultural contexts.

*“Therefore, campuses have developed different definitions of sexual harassment, but most accept the broad concept that when an otherwise non-sexual relationship is inappropriately sexualised, it becomes sexual harassment (Gouws & Kritzinger 1995).*

Although general references are made to what the different institutions are doing about sexual harassment, this is another indication of the seriousness with which sexual harassment is being perceived.

### **3.1 Investigations at South African Universities**

Various investigations have been done at South African universities as they became more aware of the negative impact this phenomenon can have on institutions of higher learning.

To highlight the South African context of these studies, a statement by Braine *et al* (1995:149) seems to suffice:

*“There is no doubt that sexual harassment needs to be seen as a serious and prevalent problem, and although universities have perhaps ‘inherited’ problems inherent in the wide South African society, they often find themselves perpetuating the problem”.*

They also stress that the whole university community by accepting responsibility and developing and implementing policy and procedures, can set an invaluable example to society at large, and through it contribute to address the issue of sexual harassment in the broader community.

### **3.1.1 University of Cape Town**

One of the first studies done in South Africa at a university campus was the one conducted at UCT in 1991, and it is from this ground breaking research that other universities in South Africa followed suit. A Committee of Enquiry into Sexual harassment was established to determine the attitudes, traditions and accepted behaviour in the student body and the university as a whole. In particular it had to concern itself with the situation in residences, especially regarding fears on the part of women in residences, their security and exposure to sexual harassment and sexual molestation. It took this step despite the risk of being the first institution in Southern Africa to sponsor research into the nature and extent of sexual harassment in the workplace.

*“Such research could easily be interpreted as an indicator that the University was the only place where these practices occurred, rather than a place where these issues were being addressed. The enormous number of requests for assistance we have had from a wide range of universities, community organisations, trade unions and individuals who have heard about the UCT study, is an indicator of the widespread nature of the problem of sexual harassment and the recognition accorded to our initiative in facing up to the challenges of this problem” (UCT 1991:3).*

The Summary of the Report refers to seven major observations namely that :

- A variety of forms of sexual harassment and sexual violence exist at UCT.

- Experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence are affected by race, class and gender.
- The single greatest problem that needs to be addressed is community tolerance for sexually harassing behaviour.
- An increasing number of women students and staff members feel alienated and unsafe on campus.
- The current university disciplinary policy and procedures are inadequate and do not meet the needs of the university community.
- The quality of education and life at the university is devalued by sexual harassment.
- These issues can be successfully addressed.

The Report alludes to it being 'extremely difficult to quantify the nature and extent of sexual harassment at the university'. This is partly due to the absence of consensus amongst students about what constitutes sexually harassing behaviour (UCT 1991:12). In line with similar studies it found that statements that involved the use of unwanted physical contact (rape, sexual assault and touching) elicited a high degree of consensus. Sexual or sexist comments or jokes, repeated propositions and leering elicited the least consensus.

Based on the research conducted into sexual harassment on the campus, the Report concluded with seven recommendations namely:

- To challenge and/or prevent behavior that is discriminatory and offensive on campus, particularly in the residences.
- To develop an understanding of the issues addressed by the Committee within the university community.
- To challenge and change the prevailing culture, most apparent in the residence system, with regard to tolerance for, and encouragement of, sexual harassment and sexism.
- To encourage the use of non-sexist language in the teaching process at the university.
- To contribute to the examination of current disciplinary procedures of the university.
- To develop amongst staff and students the ability to deal effectively with harassing, and potentially violent, behaviour.
- To further the understanding of the nature of sexual harassment, sexual violence and peer harassment at the university, and to develop and improve programmes and policies to eliminate these behaviours.



One of the more disturbing findings from the Report is the justification of sexual harassment on cultural grounds. The following quotes serve as examples:

*"It was argued in the discussion group that African culture traditionally gave men control over women.... [and ] that this control could include using physical force if necessary".*

*"I'd just like to note, from the background that we come from, ... back home you know you'll find the one family ... the husband actually hitting his wife, sometimes even using very big sticks ... it's looked upon as something natural that if the woman offends, she should just be grapped like that ... [he's] putting her in the right place. Now it's a pity that its being looked [at] from another culture".*

*"One participant felt that the rules pertaining to sexual harassment have a serious impact on the lives of black students because what is termed sexual harassment at UCT is not an issue in the townships".*

These assumptions were however contested, as not all African men on the campus subscribed to these ideas. Furthermore, abusive relationships can be found in any culture, and as such, the exceptions should not be made the rule. However, note should be taken of these views, as it can be used as justification afterwards. A further burden for UCT at that stage was that it was very sensitive not be seen as racist, a label that could easily be attached to any action being taken against Blacks, especially since they were by far the minority at the university. This view is highlighted by the following quote: " [A]t this university ... the racial issue is very, very prevalent and very sensitive, so if you do anything that could even possibly look related to race you are going to be ostracised about the whole thing" (UCT 1991: 27).

### **3.1.2 University of Stellenbosch**

The University of Stellenbosch (US) conducted a survey that dealt with students' perception of a range of incidents that constitute sexual harassment (Gouws & Kritzinger 1995:5). The sample consisted of 1500 students who were randomly selected. To contextualise such conduct at the relevant campus, student practices that are institutionalised were included in the list presented to respondents, such as the raiding of residences, streaking and the grading of women students according to appearance by

fellow students. It found that activities with an explicit sexual content and which could be classified as 'student pranks' were perceived by a relatively small percentage of respondents to constitute sexual harassment. A relatively higher percentage of students perceived incidents like sexist jokes/remarks and unwelcome invitations for a date as sexual harassment. In the case of more extreme activities – *quid pro quo* behaviour, sexual assault and rape - a very high percentage of students perceived them to be sexual harassment. According to the authors this supports other research findings, that is, the more serious the incident, the greater the likelihood that a higher percentage of respondents will interpret such behaviour as sexual harassment.

A degree of ambiguity was noted on the part of students regarding their perceptions of behaviour such as sexist language, jokes and comments as well as repeated unwelcome invitations for dates as sexual harassing behaviour. In the case of these behaviours, sexual expectations are not clearly spelled out. It would appear that while forced *quid pro quo* behaviour, sexual assault and rape are viewed as sexual harassment by the majority of respondents, gender harassment and seductive behaviour do not necessarily qualify as sexual harassment for these students. These categories thus elicited less agreement.

The authors confirm the significance of gender in perceptions of sexual harassment as one of the 'most robust of all that have been examined to date, having been reported in almost every investigation so far completed' and 'women are consistently more likely to view such behaviours as harassment' (Fitzgerald & Ormerod in Gouws and Kritzinger 1995:8). With the exception of one item (repeated unwelcome invitations), it appears that a higher percentage of women students perceive the various forms/types of behaviour as sexual harassment than men. They quote Fitzgerald & Ormerod who found that the most salient factors in judgements of whether a particular incident constitutes harassment appear to be the severity or explicitness of the incident and the gender of the perceiver.

The interpretation of various forms of behaviour as incidents of sexual harassment is clearly determined by the social context in which they take place. They based this finding on the fact that no statistically significant differences were found to exist between men and women students regarding such items as grading, raiding, wolf whistling and repeated unwelcome invitations. Coupled with this is the relatively small percentage of men and women students who perceived these behaviours as sexual harassment, which is indicative of the campus culture of the specific university.

*“To an important degree, these practices have become institutionalised as student ‘fun’ or ‘pranks’. If one is to assume that these behaviours are more often directed at women rather than men students, this finding highlights the ‘acceptability’ of such forms of behaviour by the student community” (Gouws and Kritzinger 1995:9).*

The authors maintain that regarding student culture at Stellenbosch, there is the added burden of orientation practices, which contribute to the unregulated discrimination against women in the form of sexual harassment, especially on a peer level. These practices are considered as part of a tradition that is transferred from one generation to the next and which creates a ‘macho’ culture amongst students. Through these practices an institutional culture is created among students, which condones sexual harassment.

### **3.1.3 University of Natal – Pietermaritzburg campus**

Braine *et al* (1995) conducted an investigation at the above-mentioned campus, focusing on definitions, incidences, perceptions and reactions to sexual harassment. In line with the other South African university studies, they found gender and cultural differences in the perception of sexual harassment and its incidence. They allude to the lack of clarity on what constitutes sexual harassment and state that it affects not only incidences but also the rate of reporting.

The vast majority of the respondents (79 percent) and significantly more women (82 percent) than men (73 percent), considered sexual harassment comprising of the following four categories: Rape and date rape, sexual assault/physical abuse, intimidation and social pressure, unsolicited and unwelcome touching and fondling. Fifty-two percent of the respondents felt that ‘wolf whistling, embarrassing whistling or howling’ were sexual harassment, while staring (14 percent) and streaking (14 percent) were not seen as sexual harassment (Braine, *et al* 1995:143).

It was noted that significant differences between the responses of male and female students existed, with women respondents as a whole being more sensitive to the various behaviours. The behaviour considered as the most representative of sexual harassment is ‘unsolicited and unwelcome touching or fondling’ (81 percent of overall responses). A significant difference was found between the responses of Africans and other groups

regarding certain behaviours (rape and date rape, sexual assault /physical abuse, intimidation and social pressure, unsolicited and unwelcome touching and fondling) as constituting sexual harassment. For example, while 89 percent of the white students and 73 percent of the Indian students considered 'unsolicited and unwelcome touching or fondling' as part of sexual harassment, only 37 percent of the sample of African students agreed with this definition.

A possible explanation for this is related to African students, in general, tending to acknowledge the existence of sexual harassment far less than other groups.

*"It is suggested that the relative leniency of African students and their reluctance to expel harassers could be explained by the sense of solidarity for students who might be underprivileged, who have had great difficulties in joining the university and whose future might be destroyed if they are expelled"* (Braine, et al 1995:143, See also UCT 1991:34).

This argument seems spurious, as those who get the opportunity to study, especially against the backdrop of their underprivileged status, would be expected to take extra care not to get involved in issues that might jeopardise their chances of completing their studies.

#### **3.1.4 University of Transkei (UNITRA)**

A study conducted by Mayekiso & Bhana (1997) at UNITRA, investigated students' perceptions and experiences of sexual harassment. They obtained data from a sample of 827 students and found that students need more clarity on what constitutes sexual harassment. Gender related differences were found in the perceptions and experiences of sexual harassment. They modified and adapted a questionnaire by Braine *et al* (1995) for use at UNITRA. They asked students their perceptions on:

- Unwelcome touching and fondling
- Sexually directed remarks about clothing, body sexual activities
- Rape and date rape
- Unwanted sexual remarks/jokes
- Unwanted sexual advances
- Staring, suggestive looks at parts of the body

- Pressure for dates and sexual favours despite refusal
- Sexually loaded noises, gestures or comments
- Derogatory remarks about women
- Unwanted letters, phone calls or materials of a sexual nature
- Wolf whistling, embarrassing whistling, howling.

They found consensus in the responses on unwelcome touching and fondling, rape and date rape, and unwanted sexual advances (Mayekiso & Bhana 1997:233). Females identified more categories as forms of sexual harassment than males. However, they point out that their results allude to students at UNITRA tending to be more tolerant and accepting of behaviour that would otherwise have been considered as sexual harassment. Examples include wolf whistling, embarrassing whistling, howling, unwanted letters, phone calls, or materials of a sexual nature, sexually loaded noises, gestures or comments. The majority of men did not consider derogatory remarks about women to constitute sexual harassment.

They confirm that their findings are consistent with that of Braine *et al* (1995) that African students tend to acknowledge the existence of sexual harassment far less than other groups. Reference is made to Malovich & Stake (in Braine *et al* 1995) who observed that individuals who endorse traditional sex-role orientation are more tolerant and less likely to label behaviour as sexual harassing. It is maintained that where sexual harassment is considered culturally acceptable, women may feel undermined and embarrassed by the harassment, but are conditioned to believe that men do not intend any harm and then dismiss the actions and do not seek redress (Mayekiso & Bhana 1997:233). The significant gender differences found in the study, led the authors to suggest that men do not know what women find offensive.

They also suggest that their results indicate that females, first year students, very shy students, students who find themselves alone, individuals under the influence of alcohol and individuals who are dressed revealingly, are seen to be particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment. *“Associating sexual harassment with dressing revealingly seems to shift the blame from the harasser to the victim. It is as if the victims have provoked the sexual harassment”* (Mayekiso & Bhana 1997:234).

### 3.1.5 University of Witwatersrand (WITS)

WITS conducted a survey on sexual and racial abuse in their Faculty of Health Sciences from September to October 1996. A sample of 1083 students was surveyed to examine their experiences and perceptions of sexual and racial harassment and discrimination during undergraduate training. They had a response rate of 58.7 percent and their sample consisted of dental students, medics, nurses, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. Sixty five percent were female and the majority was white (65.1 percent), with 26.4 percent Indians, 8.1 percent Blacks. Nearly 68 percent reported that they had experienced some form of sexual harassment or discrimination and 52.6 percent reported experiencing racial abuse. For all types of sexual harassment, proportionally more females than males reported having experienced abuse. Significant differences between ethnic groups for all forms of racial abuse were found, with Asian and black students reporting by far the greater experience.

When students were asked how they felt about sexual abuse incidents both at the time of occurrence and at present, it was noted that time had a healing effect, as the responses indicated that incidents that happened a long time ago did not elicit as strong reactions as those that occurred recently. When asked how they attempted to deal with sexual abuse, some responded that they did nothing and told no one, while the majority told friends and family. On the question of how the university should respond to the problem, some replied that an awareness campaign is required, others wanted a counselling service with "outside" professionals, while the majority wanted a reporting service for identifying and disciplining perpetrators. They also suggest that: *"Given the known reluctance of students to report or even talk about sexual harassment, the abuse reported is probably a conservative estimate of what is actually experienced."*

The responses of students experiencing sexual harassment from lecturers, colleagues and patients, are evident in the study, and range from comments on unwelcome staring as: *"To put it bluntly I wanted to say 'piss off and leave me alone! Or I wanted to point out to the doctor that I have a brain which sits at a higher level than my breasts"* to enraged uncertainty: *"Angry but did not realise it was harassment; I guess one part of me also felt flattered and one other sickened"*.

In the main the Working group found that a substantial number of students perceived that they have experienced some form of sexual and racial abuse. Of specific concern to students is the perception that evaluation (tests, examination and practical work) is on occasion biased by gender and race. In particular unwelcome sexual behaviour is linked to evaluation. Important also is the reference to the distress caused by sexual harassment, as they believe that this is not only limited to sexual assault, as all forms of unwanted sexual behaviour has the potential to cause stress (Faculty of Health Sciences 1998:56).

### **3.2 Summary**

Continuous efforts are being made to study the occurrence and its consequent effects of sexual harassment, as shown by the African Gender Institute. The seminal research done by UCT set the tone for other South African universities regarding research in this field. The survey of the University of Stellenbosch illustrates that student practices that are institutionalised contribute to the frequency and occurrence of this activity. As corroborated by other studies, it also found that the more physical, the more serious the conduct (rape, physical assault, fondling), the more likely it will be viewed as sexual harassment by both sexes and *visa versa* regarding issues such as sexist jokes, sexist language and comments. Gender differences in perceptions of sexual harassment have been confirmed by these studies as one of the most robust criteria. A sensitive issue that arose from the research was the one of cultural differences, which many do not accept as a justification for sexually harassing behaviour. Culture plays a role in the occurrence of this activity, and this is especially noted with the studies at the University of Natal, UNITRA and WITS. One explanation relates to leniency because of a reluctance to see fellow students being expelled, as there is a sense of solidarity amongst students who might be underprivileged. Braine *et al* (1995) refer to the traditional sex-role orientation, that might explain the higher tolerance of sexual harassment amongst Blacks.

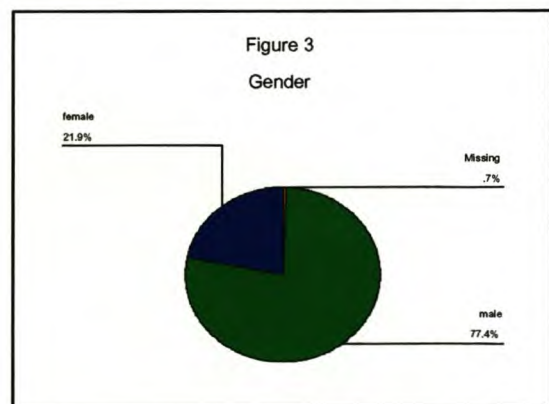
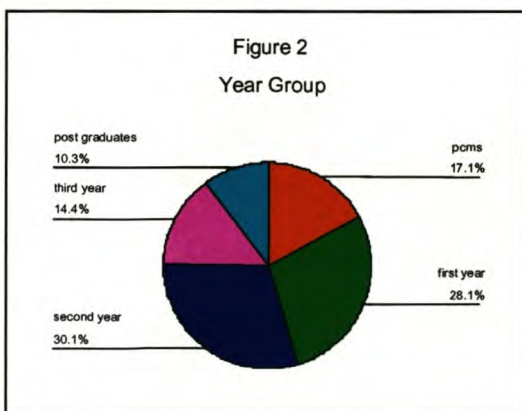
## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

### 4. Introduction

This chapter details the findings of the survey that was conducted amongst the students of the Military Academy. The biographical details of the respondents are presented to enable the delineation of the different subgroups (Section A of the questionnaire). Specific incidents of sexual harassment (Section B) are discussed by paying attention to the gender and population group differences and the underlying dimensions of the responses. It concludes with general perceptions (Section C) by adhering to the same sequence as in the foregoing section, namely gender and population groups differences.

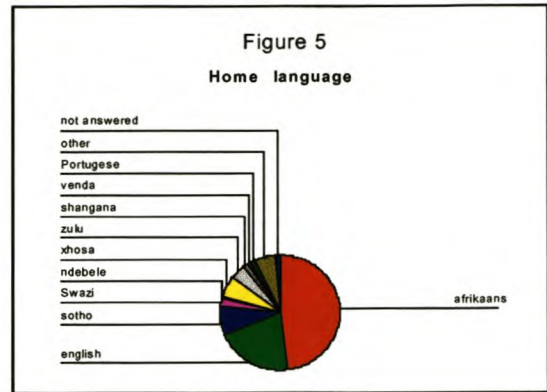
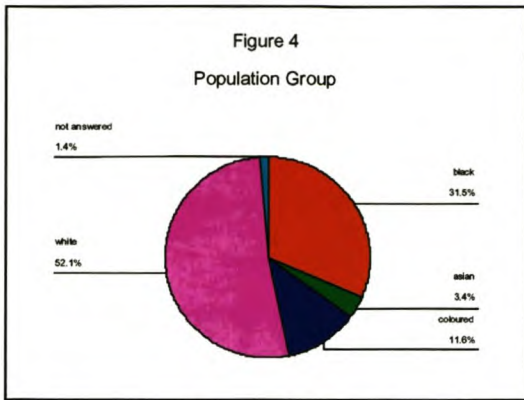
#### 4.1 Biographical Information (Section A)

The response rate was 68 percent with the majority of the respondents being second year (30 percent) followed by the first years (28 percent), PCMS (17 percent), third years (14 percent) and the postgraduate students (10 percent) (Figure 2). Gender wise males dominate with 77,4 percent ( $n = 116$  males,  $n = 32$  females - a ratio of 1: 2.6) (Figure 3).

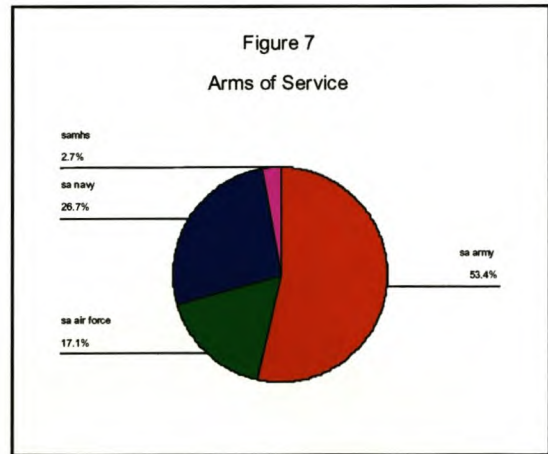
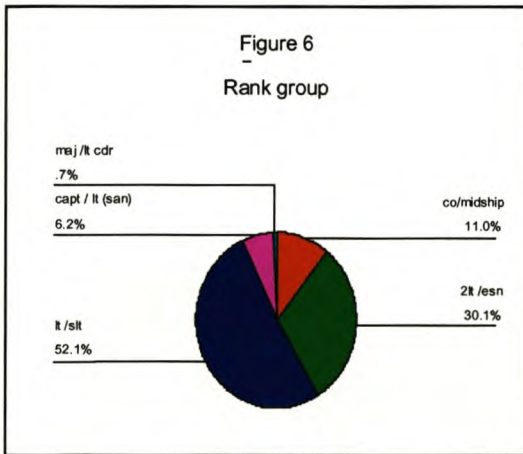


The majority of the respondents are White ( $n = 119$ , 52 percent) followed by Blacks ( $n = 65$ , 32 percent), so called Coloureds ( $n = 23$ , 12 percent), and Asians ( $n = 8$ , 3 percent) (Figure 4). The majority of the respondents have Afrikaans as their home language (48 percent) with English being the home language of 21 percent, while the rest is made up of African languages (23 percent), which range from Sotho (8 percent), Swazi (2 percent), Ndebele (1 percent), Xhosa (6 percent), Zulu (4 percent), Shangana (1 percent), to Venda (1 percent). Two members have Portuguese as their home language (Figure 5).

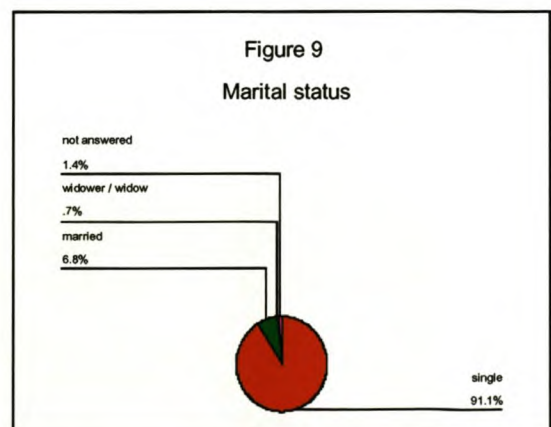
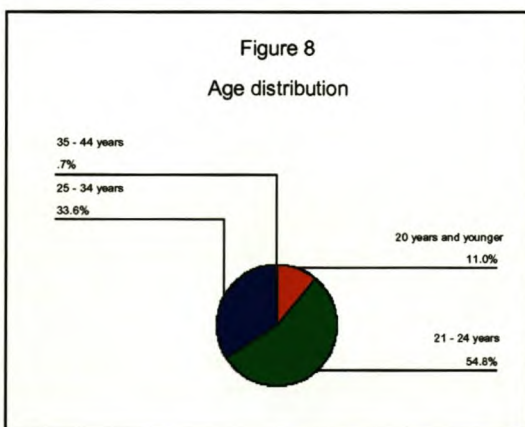




The subgroup lieutenant/sub lieutenant is in the majority with 52 percent, followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant /ensign with 30 percent, candidate officers/midshipman with 11 percent, with the higher ranks of captain to major making up the rest (Figure 6). The respondents represent the Arms of Services as follows: SA Army 53 percent, SA Air Force 17 percent, SA Navy 27 percent and the SA Military Health Services (SAMHS) 3 percent (Figure 7).



The age distribution is as follows: 20 years and younger 11 percent, 21 to 24 years 55 percent, 25 to 34 years 34 percent and 35 and older 1 percent (Figure 8). The majority of the respondents are single (91 percent) with few being married (7 percent). One is widowed and two did not answer this question (Figure 9).



## 4.2 Sexual harassment: Specific Incidents (Section B)

In Section B of the questionnaire the respondents reacted to statements concerning their perception whether certain types of behaviour should be considered as incidents of sexual harassment. Twelve specific incidents were detailed and respondents had to select an answer on a scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

### 4.2.1 Overall basic frequencies

The following is a basic frequency display of responses as to whether specific incidents of constitute sexual harassment. It details the results in terms of percentage distribution.

**TABLE 3**  
**FREQUENCY DISPLAY OF SPECIFIC INCIDENTS**

| Type of incident                          | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Grading according to appearance           | 17                | 27       | 30      | 16    | 8              |
| Repeated unwelcome invitations for a date | 11                | 21       | 26      | 31    | 10             |
| Sexists jokes / comments                  | 8                 | 21       | 30      | 33    | 8              |
| Wolf whistling                            | 9                 | 18       | 30      | 31    | 10             |
| Promise/threat by lecturer                | 9                 | 8        | 16      | 30    | 36             |
| Sexual favours by students                | 3                 | 3        | 9       | 23    | 61             |
| Sexual assault                            | 6                 | 1        | 7       | 12    | 73             |
| Rape                                      | 8                 | 2        | 3       | 7     | 80             |
| Streaking                                 | 12                | 17       | 29      | 16    | 26             |
| Flashing                                  | 9                 | 7        | 17      | 32    | 36             |
| Fondling                                  | 5                 | 3        | 6       | 28    | 58             |
| Leering                                   | 10                | 10       | 28      | 32    | 19             |

Table 3 indicates that with regards to especially promise/threats by lecturers, sexual favours by students, sexual assault, rape flashing fondling and leering, that a very high percentage of students agree (50 – 70%) and strongly agree (71 – 86%) that these behaviours constitute sexual harassment. This indicates that direct and physical sexual overtures are the behaviours that elicit the strongest agreement that it is harassing in nature.

### 4.2.2 Gender differences regarding specific incidents

In order to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between the perceptions of males and females regarding the 12 statements listed, a Fisher's exact test was used ( $p < .05$ ). This is a contingency statistic as the data is categorical (qualitative in nature). The results are summarised in Table 4.

**TABLE 4**  
**GENDER DIFFERENCES REGARDING SPECIFIC INCIDENTS**

| Type of incident                          | Gender | N   | Mean <sup>8</sup> | Chi square | P-value | Fisher's Exact Test |
|---|--------|-----|-------------------|------------|---------|---------------------|
| Grading according to appearance           | Male   | 110 | 2.65              | 2.4690     | .6502   | .6748               |
|   | Female | 32  | 2.84              |            |         |                     |
| Repeated unwelcome invitations for a date | Male   | 112 | 2.98              | 2.7800     | .5953   | .6327               |
|   | Female | 32  | 3.44              |            |         |                     |
| Sexists jokes / comments                  | Male   | 113 | 3.06              | 6.3394     | .1752   | .1706               |
|   | Female | 32  | 3.34              |            |         |                     |
| Wolf whistling                            | Male   | 111 | 3.03              | 10.4193    | .0339   | .0347               |
|   | Female | 31  | 3.68              |            |         |                     |
| Promise/threat by lecturer                | Male   | 111 | 3.76              | 2.4772     | .6487   | .6600               |
|   | Female | 32  | 3.84              |            |         |                     |
| Sexual favours by students                | Male   | 112 | 4.34              | 1.6284     | .8037   | 1.000               |
|   | Female | 30  | 4.60              |            |         |                     |
| Sexual assault                            | Male   | 113 | 4.42              | 2.5435     | .6369   | .7702               |
|   | Female | 32  | 4.56              |            |         |                     |
| Rape                                      | Male   | 111 | 4.53              | 4.3134     | .3653   | .5232               |
|   | Female | 32  | 4.41              |            |         |                     |
| Streaking                                 | Male   | 112 | 3.18              | 3.9489     | .4130   | .4433               |
|   | Female | 32  | 3.63              |            |         |                     |
| Flashing                                  | Male   | 113 | 3.65              | 11.3428    | .0230   | .0116               |
|   | Female | 32  | 4.25              |            |         |                     |
| Fondling                                  | Male   | 111 | 4.23              | 4.5590     | .3356   | .3427               |
|   | Female | 32  | 4.66              |            |         |                     |
| Leering                                   | Male   | 112 | 3.34              | 4.5282     | .3392   | .3958               |
|   | Female | 32  | 3.66              |            |         |                     |

From Table 4 it is clear that only in two cases with statistically significant differences were found between men and women, namely wolf whistling and flashing ( $p = .0339$  and  $.0230$  respectively). If attention is paid to the respective means of these incidents it indicates that for wolf whistling females have a stronger view that this constitutes sexual harassment. The same trend is found regarding flashing, where the difference in the respective means is  $.60$ . Overall the table shows that there are to a large extent agreement between the two sexes about what constitutes sexual harassment.

#### 4.2.3 Population group differences regarding specific incidents

A comparison of the mean scores of the three population groups<sup>9</sup> as to whether particular incidents constitute sexual harassment is detailed below. Pearson's chi square test used was used to test for significant population group differences ( $p = .05$ ). Table 5 shows the results.

<sup>8</sup> The mean is the most common measure of central tendency, and the scores above are out of a possible 5 (Howell 1995:51).

**TABLE 5**  
**POPULATION GROUP DIFFERENCES REGARDING SPECIFIC INCIDENTS**

| Type of incident             | N  | Mean | Standard deviation | Chi square | P-value |
|------------------------------|----|------|--------------------|------------|---------|
| Grading ito. of appearance   |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 45 | 2.69 | 1.28               | 5.71441    | .929783 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 21 | 2.43 | 1.12               |            |         |
| White                        | 75 | 2.77 | 1.12               |            |         |
| Repeat unwelcome invitations |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 45 | 3.02 | 1.37               | 15.4727    | .216618 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 22 | 2.91 | 1.02               |            |         |
| White                        | 76 | 3.17 | 1.11               |            |         |
| Sexist jokes                 |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 46 | 3.20 | 1.22               | 11.3335    | .500579 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 22 | 2.64 | 1.05               |            |         |
| White                        | 76 | 3.18 | 1.00               |            |         |
| Wolf whistling               |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 45 | 3.38 | 1.13               | 10.6846    | .556125 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 22 | 2.77 | 1.02               |            |         |
| White                        | 74 | 3.14 | 1.11               |            |         |
| Promise/threat by lecturer   |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 46 | 3.63 | 1.37               | 7.02538    | .855925 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 22 | 3.82 | 1.26               |            |         |
| White                        | 74 | 3.84 | 1.22               |            |         |
| Sexual favours by students   |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 43 | 4.16 | 1.07               | 8.13607    | .774403 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 22 | 4.41 | 1.10               |            |         |
| White                        | 76 | 4.54 | .81                |            |         |
| Sexual assault               |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 46 | 4.28 | 1.29               | 11.3335    | .500570 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 22 | 4.64 | 0.95               |            |         |
| White                        | 76 | 4.53 | 0.99               |            |         |
| Rape                         |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 45 | 4.56 | 1.06               | 26.7900    | .008289 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 22 | 4.14 | 1.64               |            |         |
| White                        | 75 | 4.63 | 0.98               |            |         |
| Streaking (running naked)    |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 46 | 3.89 | 1.37               | 32.7965    | .001043 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 21 | 2.81 | 1.25               |            |         |
| White                        | 76 | 3.05 | 1.23               |            |         |
| Flashing                     |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 46 | 4.00 | 1.30               | 23.6474    | .022718 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 22 | 3.59 | 1.37               |            |         |
| White                        | 76 | 3.72 | 1.18               |            |         |
| Fondling                     |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 45 | 4.13 | 1.22               | 6.86812    | .866197 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 22 | 4.45 | 1.01               |            |         |
| White                        | 75 | 4.43 | .90                |            |         |
| Leering                      |    |      |                    |            |         |
| Black                        | 45 | 3.24 | 1.40               | 9.24721    | .681680 |
| Asian/Coloured               | 22 | 3.00 | 1.31               |            |         |
| White                        | 76 | 3.62 | 1.02               |            |         |

Three statistically significant differences were found between racial groups. These relate to rape ( $p = .008289$ ), streaking ( $p = .001043$ ) and flashing ( $p = .022718$ ). If attention is paid

<sup>9</sup> Only 5 Asians participated in the study compared to 46 blacks, 17 coloureds and 76 whites. Because of this very small number of Asian respondents, relative to the other groups, they were combined with the coloured respondents in the statistical analysis.

to the respective means, it indicates that all three groups to a large extent agree that these incidents sexual harassment.

#### 4.2.4 Underlying dimensions of specific incidents

In order to investigate the pattern of correlations among the responses to the 12 items as a whole, a principal component analysis was performed, with a varimax rotation. The purpose of a principal component analysis is to find the dimensions underlying a set of statements (the assumption is that items correlate because of having certain components or dimensions in common). This resulted in 3 components being extracted, explaining about 65 percent of the variance in the statement responses. The factor loadings are given below (Table 6). Given the need for loadings that are both practically and statistically significant, only loadings of 0.50 and greater were considered. Three components underlying the 12 items were found, namely Punitive offences, Unwelcome physical attention and Verbal harassment.

**TABLE 6**  
**UNDERLYING DIMENSIONS OF SPECIFIC INCIDENTS**

| <b>Behaviour</b>                            | <b>Punitive offences</b> | <b>Unwelcome physical attention</b> | <b>Verbal harassment</b> |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sexual assault                              | 0.878                    |                                     |                          |
| Sexual favours in exchange for higher marks | 0.815                    |                                     |                          |
| Rape  | 0.767                    |                                     |                          |
| Unwanted fondling / touching                | 0.686                    |                                     |                          |
| Promise / threat made by lecturer for marks | 0.646                    |                                     |                          |
| Flashing (revealing private body parts)     |                          | 0.797                               |                          |
| Streaking (running naked)                   |                          | 0.774                               |                          |
| Leering (look slyly / lasciviously)         |                          | 0.755                               |                          |
| Sexists jokes / comments                    |                          |                                     | 0.801                    |
| Grading according to appearance             |                          |                                     | 0.710                    |
| Wolf whistling                              |                          |                                     | 0.597                    |
| Repeated unwelcome invitations for a date   |                          |                                     | 0.595                    |

An index was created for each of the three components by:

- summing the scores of the items that load on a particular component (thus each respondent will have three new scores – one for each component).
- making the scores uniform by converting it to percentages<sup>10</sup> by dividing each score by its potential maximum and multiplying the fraction by 100, all scores are expressed out of 100.

<sup>10</sup> The total scores for Punitive offences range between 1 and 25, those for Unwelcome physical attention between 1 and 15 and those for Verbal harassment between 1 and 20.

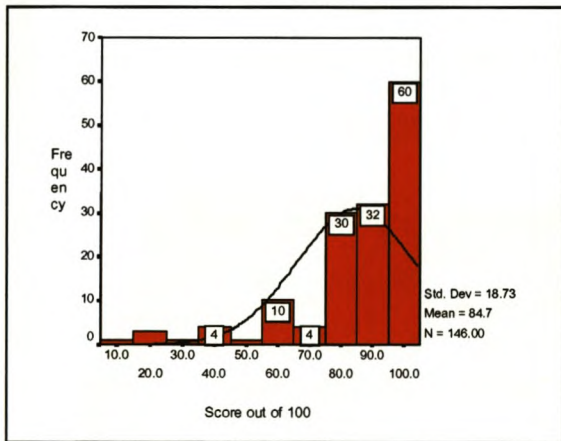
The descriptive statistics for the three new indices are depicted below in Table 7.

**TABLE 7**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE INDICES**

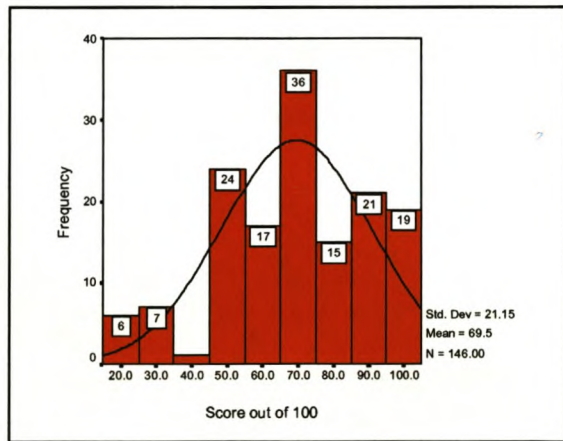
|                |         | F1 - Type (%) | F2 - Type (%) | F3 - Type (%) |
|----------------|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| N              | Valid   | 146           | 146           | 146           |
|                | Missing | 0             | 0             | 0             |
| Mean           |         | 84.71         | 69.45         | 59.52         |
| Median         |         | 90.00         | 66.67         | 60.00         |
| Std. Deviation |         | 18.73         | 21.15         | 17.22         |
| Variance       |         | 350.83        | 447.36        | 296.67        |
| Minimum        |         | 12            | 20            | 15            |
| Maximum        |         | 100           | 100           | 100           |

The distributions of the indices in graphic display with histograms are as follow:

**Figure 10**  
**Punitive offences**



**Figure 11**  
**Unwelcome physical attention**



**Figure 10**  
**Verbal harassment**

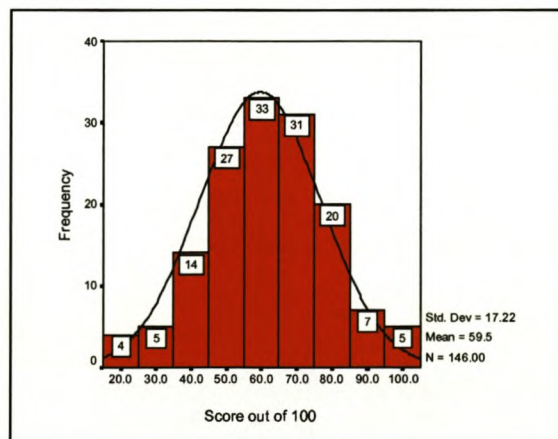


Figure 10 is negatively skewed and trails off to the left, indicating that more than 90 percent of the respondents agreed with the Punitive offences statements, as constituting sexual harassment. Figure 11 is slightly negatively skewed and 66.67 percent of the responses are above the median (Howell 1995:40)<sup>11</sup>. Figure 12 is a normal distribution, indicating that the responses are concentrated around the median (neutral answers).

#### 4.2.5 Gender and population group differences regarding specific incidents of the underlying dimensions

Gender and population group differences on each of these three indices were investigated (Table 8 and 9) to determine whether there are any significant differences regarding these two variables.

**TABLE 8**  
**GENDER DIFFERENCES OF THE UNDERLYING DIMENSIONS**

| Component                    | Gender | N   | Mean  | Standard deviation | t      | p    |
|------------------------------|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|--------|------|
| Punitive offences            | Male   | 113 | 84.07 | 19.91              | -0.811 | .419 |
|                              | Female | 32  | 87.13 | 14.18              |        |      |
| Unwelcome physical attention | Male   | 113 | 67.43 | 21.98              | -2.254 | .026 |
|                              | Female | 32  | 76.88 | 16.50              |        |      |
| Verbal harassment            | Male   | 113 | 57.88 | 16.87              | -2.377 | .019 |
|                              | Female | 32  | 65.94 | 17.15              |        |      |

Table 8 shows that the mean values for the total group varied between 57.88 and 87.13. This suggests that the majority of the respondents fluctuated between a perception of neutrality to a very strong perception that specific types of behaviour can be classified as sexual harassment. The perceptions of males and females differed significantly regarding two of the dimensions namely, unwelcome physical attention and verbal harassment. Women felt stronger than men that unwelcome physical attention dimension should be considered as sexual harassment ( $t = 0.811$ ,  $p = .026$ ). They also agreed that verbal harassment constitutes harassing behaviour ( $t = 2.377$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ). Gender-wise, respondents did not differ significantly regarding the punitive offences, but females tended to agree more strongly with this dimension as constituting sexual harassment.

<sup>11</sup> The skewness of the graphs depict the degree to which a distribution is asymmetrical (Howell 1995:40)

**TABLE 9**  
**POPULATION GROUP DIFFERENCES OF THE UNDERLYING DIMENSIONS**

| <b>Component</b>                    | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Standard deviation</b> | <b>F</b> | <b>P</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|
| <b>Punitive offences</b>            |          |             |                           |          |          |
| Black                               | 46       | 81.22       | 22.48                     | 1.432    | .242     |
| Asian/Coloured                      | 22       | 85.82       | 18.13                     |          |          |
| White                               | 76       | 86.95       | 15.34                     |          |          |
| <b>Unwelcome physical attention</b> |          |             |                           |          |          |
| Black                               | 46       | 73.77       | 23.66                     | 2.424    | .092     |
| Asian/Coloured                      | 22       | 61.82       | 19.97                     |          |          |
| White                               | 76       | 69.30       | 19.54                     |          |          |
| <b>Verbal harassment</b>            |          |             |                           |          |          |
| Black                               | 46       | 60.43       | 21.08                     | 1.739    | .180     |
| Asian/Coloured                      | 22       | 53.18       | 13.93                     |          |          |
| White                               | 76       | 60.72       | 15.40                     |          |          |

\*No Bonferroni test required because no significant population group differences has been found.

No statistically significant differences were found regarding the different population groups on the three dimensions. The respective means ( 81.22, 85.82 and 86.95) indicate that with regards to Punitive offences, all three groups are in agreement that these incidents constitute sexual harassment. A high level of agreement is also found with Unwelcome physical attention, where the means range from 73.77 to 61.82. Verbal harassment seemed to elicit less agreement with the means varying from 60.72 for Whites to 53.18 for Asian/ Coloured. Overall it stresses the findings of other studies namely the more physical the act, the more likely it is be perceived as sexual harassment.

### **4.3 General perceptions of sexual harassment (Section C)**

#### **4.3.1 Overall basic frequencies**

The following is a basic frequency display of the perceptions of respondents of sexual harassment. It details the results in terms of percentage distribution (Table 10).



**TABLE 10**  
**FREQUENCY DISPLAY OF GENERAL PERCEPTIONS**

| <b>Perception</b>   | <b>Strongly disagree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Strongly agree</b> |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Only men are guilty of sexual harassment  | <b>61</b>                | <b>32</b>       | 6              | 1            | 1                     |
| Sexual harassment of women by men is a natural expression of men's stronger drive | <b>36</b>                | <b>30</b>       | 20             | 12           | 3                     |
| Men are conditioned from a young age to compliment women                          | 7                        | 14              | 25             | <b>41</b>    | <b>12</b>             |
| Racial/ ethnic affiliation determines attitude towards sexual harassment          | 20                       | 23              | 17             | 30           | 10                    |
| Educational level plays a role  | 13                       | 20              | 14             | <b>40</b>    | <b>14</b>             |
| Both sexes can display sexual harassment  | 2                        | 2               | 6              | <b>43</b>    | <b>47</b>             |
| Provocative dress invites sexual harassment                                       | 19                       | 26              | 19             | 26           | 10                    |
| Highly qualified not harassed   | <b>51</b>                | <b>38</b>       | 6              | 1            | 3                     |
| Sexual harassers colour blind   | <b>35</b>                | <b>20</b>       | 14             | 19           | 10                    |
| Sexual harassment only in certain races   | <b>62</b>                | <b>32</b>       | 5              | 1            | 1                     |
| Normally men are harassers  | 25                       | 24              | 15             | 30           | 6                     |
| Physical appearance entice sexual harassment                                      | 11                       | 14              | 18             | <b>47</b>    | <b>10</b>             |
| Male/female composition of a group determine sexual material acceptable           | 12                       | 14              | 38             | 33           | 3                     |
| Objective of sexual harassment is domination                                      | 10                       | 30              | 27             | 30           | 3                     |
| Younger persons normally victims of sexual harassment                             | 6                        | 22              | 25             | 36           | 8                     |
| Newcomers tend to be harassed   | 7                        | 15              | 27             | 43           | 6                     |
| Undesired sex attention have a negative influence                                 | 4                        | 8               | 16             | <b>51</b>    | <b>20</b>             |
| Position of a person influence sexual conduct                                     | 8                        | 19              | 25             | 38           | 10                    |
| Women are socialised to be attractive to men                                      | 17                       | 26              | 26             | 25           | 5                     |
| Older people tend to be harassers   | 11                       | 29              | 32             | 20           | 8                     |

Table 10 shows that with five statements the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that these statements could be perceived as general attitudes towards sexual harassment<sup>12</sup>. These relevant statements are:

- ◆ Only men are guilty of sexual harassment ( 93%),
- ◆ Sexual harassment of women by men is a natural expression of men's stronger sexual drive (66%),
- ◆ Highly qualified people are not harassed (89%),
- ◆ Sexual harassers are colour blind (55%), and

- ◆ Sexual harassment occurs only in certain races (94%).

The respondents indicated that they agree and strongly agree with the following statements as constituting sexual harassment:

- ◆ Men are conditioned to compliment women (53%),
- ◆ Educational level plays a role in sexual harassment (54%),
- ◆ Both sexes can display sexual harassment (90%),
- ◆ Physical appearance entice sexual harassment (57%), and
- ◆ Undesired sexual attention has a negative influence on work performance (71%).

#### **4.3.2 Gender differences regarding general perceptions**

In order to determine the gender differences, a series of M-L Chi-square tests were performed. From Table 11 it can be deduced that only two incidents were found to be statistically significant different between men and women. These are that educational level plays a role in sexual harassment ( $p = .00980$ ) and that women are socialised to be attractive to men ( $p = .03635$ ).

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<sup>12</sup> Only those items scoring more than 50 were extracted.

**TABLE 11**  
**GENDER DIFFERENCES REGARDING GENERAL PERCEPTIONS**

| Perception  | Gender | N   | Mean | M-L Chi square | p      |
|---|--------|-----|------|----------------|--------|
| Only men are guilty of sexual harassment              | Male   | 113 | 1.42 | 3.145055       | .36980 |
|   | Female | 32  | 1.69 |                |        |
| Sexual harassment natural expression                  | Male   | 113 | 2.10 | 1.723398       | .78646 |
|   | Female | 32  | 2.31 |                |        |
| Men are conditioned to compliment                     | Male   | 113 | 3.48 | 5.603334       | .23080 |
|   | Female | 32  | 2.97 |                |        |
| Racial/ ethnic affiliation                            | Male   | 113 | 2.88 | .7201871       | .94882 |
|   | Female | 32  | 2.75 |                |        |
| Educational level play a role                         | Male   | 113 | 3.30 | 13.32332       | .00980 |
|   | Female | 32  | 2.84 |                |        |
| Both sexes can display sexual harassment              | Male   | 113 | 4.39 | 4.094602       | .39336 |
|   | Female | 32  | 3.97 |                |        |
| Provocative dress invite sexual harassment            | Male   | 113 | 2.96 | 4.459374       | .34740 |
|   | Female | 32  | 2.31 |                |        |
| Highly qualified not harassed                         | Male   | 113 | 1.64 | 4.278223       | .23295 |
|   | Female | 32  | 1.72 |                |        |
| Sexual harassers colour blind                         | Male   | 110 | 2.45 | 1.662212       | .79757 |
|   | Female | 32  | 2.56 |                |        |
| Sexual harassment only in certain races               | Male   | 113 | 1.48 | 2.232749       | .52553 |
|   | Female | 32  | 1.41 |                |        |
| Normally men are harassers                            | Male   | 113 | 2.61 | 5.099883       | .27721 |
|   | Female | 32  | 2.94 |                |        |
| Physical appearance entice sexual harassment          | Male   | 113 | 3.37 | 6.129982       | .18966 |
|   | Female | 32  | 3.09 |                |        |
| Male/female composition determine sexual material     | Male   | 113 | 3.04 | 4.706322       | .31879 |
|   | Female | 32  | 2.94 |                |        |
| Objective of sexual harassment is domination          | Male   | 113 | 2.76 | 8.331586       | .08017 |
|   | Female | 32  | 3.28 |                |        |
| Younger persons normally victims of sexual harassment | Male   | 111 | 3.20 | 3.289923       | .51053 |
|   | Female | 31  | 3.13 |                |        |
| Newcomers tend to be harassed                         | Male   | 111 | 3.29 | 2.425889       | .65795 |
|   | Female | 32  | 3.19 |                |        |
| Undesired sex attention have a negative influence     | Male   | 111 | 3.70 | 3.075364       | .54530 |
|   | Female | 32  | 3.94 |                |        |
| Position of a person influence sexual conduct         | Male   | 112 | 3.26 | .9146622       | .92245 |
|   | Female | 32  | 3.09 |                |        |
| Women are socialised to be attractive to men          | Male   | 112 | 2.93 | 10.25501       | .03635 |
|   | Female | 32  | 2.09 |                |        |
| Older people tend to be harassers                     | Male   | 112 | 2.92 | 6.765264       | .14883 |
|   | Female | 32  | 2.59 |                |        |

The respective means indicate that with regards to educational level, more men agreed with this statement as oppose to the women (means (3.30 and 2.84 respectively). On the question of women being socialised to be attractive to men, the mean indicate that men agree more strongly (2.93) than women (2.09) that this is in fact the case.

#### 4.3.3 Population group differences of general perceptions

This section of the questionnaire that deals with the population groups have been divided into two sections namely Role-players and Contributing factors (Table 12 and Table 13). Role players are broadly defined as those who could be viewed to be likely to perpetrate such actions or those who can be viewed to be likely victims of such actions. Contributing

factors are viewed as actions, behaviours, attitudes, experiences/skills and positions that can contribute to sexual harassment. This will ease the analysis and depiction of the twenty statements in Section C. In order to determine the population group differences, a series of M-L Chi square tests were performed ( $p < .05$ ).

**TABLE 12**  
**POPULATION GROUP DIFFERENCES OF GENERAL PERCEPTIONS - ROLE-PLAYERS**

| <b>Perception</b>  | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Standard deviation</b> | <b>M-L Chi square</b> | <b>p</b> |
|--|----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Only men are guilty of sexual harassment                 |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 1.35        | .74                       | 8.83630<br>6          | .45253   |
| Asian/Coloured   | 22       | 1.36        | .49                       |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 1.59        | .72                       |                       |          |
| Men are conditioned from a young age to compliment women |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 3.13        | 1.31                      | 12.6541<br>7          | .39468   |
| Asian/Coloured   | 22       | 3.23        | 1.23                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 3.57        | .87                       |                       |          |
| Highly qualified people are not harassed                 |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 1.50        | .91                       | 14.2038<br>4          | .11527   |
| Asian/Coloured   | 22       | 1.55        | .91                       |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 1.79        | .84                       |                       |          |
| Sexual harassment only in certain races                  |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 1.24        | .48                       | 17.5011<br>6          | .04143   |
| Asian/Coloured   | 22       | 1.50        | .74                       |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 1.62        | .80                       |                       |          |
| Normally men harassers                                   |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 2.65        | 1.55                      | 22.9685<br>8          | .02801   |
| Asian/Coloured   | 22       | 2.18        | .96                       |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 2.86        | 1.20                      |                       |          |
| Male/female composition determine material               |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 2.87        | 1.09                      | 14.8011<br>1          | .25251   |
| Asian/Coloured   | 22       | 3.00        | 1.15                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 3.09        | 1.01                      |                       |          |
| Younger persons tend to be victims                       |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 44       | 3.36        | 1.22                      | 13.3374<br>5          | .034501  |
| Asian/Coloured   | 21       | 3.33        | 1.06                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 3.07        | .98                       |                       |          |
| Newcomers tend to be harassed                            |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 45       | 3.33        | 1.13                      | 15.0314<br>0          | .23974   |
| Asian/Coloured   | 22       | 3.23        | 1.07                      |                       |          |
| White  | 75       | 3.24        | .97                       |                       |          |
| Women are socialised to be attractive                    |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 45       | 2.64        | 1.25                      | 14.3981<br>3          | .27603   |
| Asian/Coloured   | 22       | 2.55        | 1.26                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 2.88        | 1.08                      |                       |          |
| Older people tend to be harassers                        |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 45       | 2.91        | 1.29                      | 11.8187<br>7          | .46035   |
| Asian/Coloured   | 22       | 2.73        | .98                       |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 2.83        | 1.04                      |                       |          |

Regarding the Role-players in sexual harassment, statistically significant differences were found in the case of the following statements:

- ◆ Sexual harassment only occurs in specific race/ethnic groups affiliation ( $p = .04143$ ). Although the mean scores are low relative to the variations that have been observed, the differences are statistically significant. The means indicate that the Black group (1.24) is least in agreement with this statement, followed by the Asian/ Coloured group (1.50) and the White group (1.62).
- Normally men are harassers ( $p = .02801$ ). The respective means indicate that Whites (2.86), and Black (2.65) agree more than the Asian/ Coloured group (2.18) that men are normally harassers.
- Younger people tend to be victims ( $p = .034501$ ). The means indicate that the more agreement with this statement is found amongst the Black group (3.36) with the Asian/ Coloured group (3.33) following closely, while the White group differ significantly with a mean of 3.07.

**TABLE 13**  
**POPULATION GROUP DIFFERENCES REGARDING GENERAL PERCEPTIONS**  
**CONTRIBUTING FACTORS**

| <b>Perception</b>                                  | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Standard deviation</b> | <b>M-L Chi square</b> | <b>P</b> |
|--|----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Sexual harassment natural expression               |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 2.04        | 1.09                      | 9.80905<br>5          | .63271   |
| Asian/Coloured                                     | 22       | 2.18        | 1.30                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 2.21        | 1.11                      |                       |          |
| Racial/ethnic affiliation                          |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 2.37        | 1.45                      | 25.3920<br>4          | .01308   |
| Asian/Coloured                                     | 22       | 2.64        | 1.33                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 3.25        | 1.10                      |                       |          |
| Educational level play a role                      |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 2.93        | 1.42                      | 13.7697<br>9          | .31567   |
| Asian/Coloured                                     | 22       | 2.95        | 1.40                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 3.45        | 1.12                      |                       |          |
| Both sexes can display sexual harassment           |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 4.33        | .99                       | 15.4605<br>9          | .21723   |
| Asian/Coloured                                     | 22       | 4.27        | 1.08                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 4.29        | .67                       |                       |          |
| Provocative dress invitation to sexual harassment  |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 3.07        | 1.34                      | 26.4718               | .00918   |
| Asian/Coloured                                     | 22       | 2.23        | 1.38                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 2.87        | 1.19                      |                       |          |
| Sexual harassers colour blind                      |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 44       | 2.68        | 1.55                      | 8.03372<br>1          | .78248   |
| Asian/Coloured                                     | 22       | 2.82        | 1.40                      |                       |          |
| White  | 75       | 2.24        | 1.28                      |                       |          |
| Physical appearance entice sexual harassment       |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 45       | 3.02        | 1.29                      | 22.8883<br>1          | .02870   |
| Asian/Coloured                                     | 22       | 3.05        | 1.36                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 3.57        | .97                       |                       |          |
| Objective of sexual harassment is domination       |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 46       | 2.85        | 1.15                      | 12.4269<br>8          | .41204   |
| Asian/Coloured                                     | 22       | 2.91        | 1.02                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 2.87        | 1.01                      |                       |          |
| Undesired sexual attention have negative influence |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 45       | 3.69        | 1.08                      | 7.78605<br>4          | .80161   |
| Asian/Coloured                                     | 21       | 3.95        | 1.02                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 3.74        | .96                       |                       |          |
| Position of a person influence sexual conduct      |          |             |                           |                       |          |
| Black  | 45       | 3.42        | 1.08                      | 8.89882<br>2          | .71154   |
| Asian/Coloured                                     | 22       | 2.68        | 1.17                      |                       |          |
| White  | 76       | 3.29        | 1.07                      |                       |          |

As indicated in Table 13 statistically significant differences were found with racial/ethnic affiliation ( $p = .01308$ ), provocative dress ( $p = .00918$ ) and physical appearance ( $p = .02870$ ). The means of the first perception indicate that Whites (3.25) agreed significantly more than Blacks (2.37) and Asian/ Coloured (2.64) that racial affiliation plays a role in

sexual harassment. On the other hand, Blacks (3.07) were more in agreement than Whites (2.87) and Asian/ Coloured (2.23) that a provocative dress is an invitation to sexual harassment. The same trend as in racial affiliation is found regarding physical appearance, where more Whites (3.57) are in agreement that it could lead to sexual harassment, as oppose to Blacks (3.02) and Asian/ Coloureds (3.05).

It would have been ideal to reduce these twenty statements to a manageable number of components that could have been used in further analyses, as was done with Section B (paragraph 4.2.5). But the results of the principal component analysis doesn't justify the creation of indices (simply because they make no apparent sense and too few items will load on each component).

#### **4.4 Summary**

The biographical socio-demographic profile of the respondents was discussed displayed, followed by a presentation of the different subgroups. The findings of Section B were presented in overall frequencies, followed by the gender and population group differences. The underlying dimensions in Section B were determined by means of a principal component analysis, which resulted in three components being extracted. An index was created for each and the distributions were displayed in histograms. Consequently the gender and population group differences were investigated for these indices to determine whether there are significant differences. Section C dealt with the overall frequencies of the twenty items. Gender and population group differences were determined by means of Pearson chi square and M-L Chi square tests. The tables for the population group differences were split into Role-players and Contributing factors to ease analysis and presentation of the twenty items. It was found that three items differ significantly between certain groups in both the two categories. The chapter concluded that results of the principal component analysis did not justify the creation of indices as in Section B, because they did not make any sense and too few items loaded on each component.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5. Discussion

Sutherland (Gouws and Kritzinger 1995:1) highlighted that sexual harassment undermines both the educational and employment process. Added to these are negative influences such as students changing majors, forfeiture of research opportunities, low morale, absenteeism, anxiety, anger, shame fear, depression, insomnia, headaches, helplessness and stress (Zlotnick 1993). It is against this background that it can be stated that sexual harassment should not be tolerated or condoned in whatever way by authorities of institutions of higher learning. Roscoe *et al* (Braine *et al* 1995:149) however caution, that sexual harassment on campuses will not be eliminated until it is viewed as an insult to another's human dignity and a serious impediment to the education process.

The problem statement referred to the unique socialisation process that officers in the SANDF undergo during their training. Students at the Military Academy are career officers and expected to adhere to highest standards of discipline and professional conduct. This is *inter alia* entrenched in Codes of Conduct and other regulatory provisions. These stipulations are not necessarily found at other institutions of higher learning in South Africa. Students are generally socialised in the relevant university's student culture mainly by their peers. It is this institutional culture that Gouws and Kritzinger (1995:1) found to be one of the critical variables in interpreting sexual harassment. The aim of the study was to determine whether the institutional variable would elicit the same kind of response to selected statements on sexual harassment. Three issues were identified to compare the results of the survey with those of other South African studies. The first of these issues involves the ambiguity that surrounds the perception of what constitutes sexual harassment. The second issue deals with gender differences, while the third issue focuses on the differences in the perceptions of sexual harassment by the three population groups.

#### 5.1 Definitional aspects and Ambiguity

Braine *et al* (1995:140) state that one of the major difficulties underlying research on sexual harassment is the lack of a clear, precise and widely accepted definition. This uncertainty have an impact on *inter alia* the planning, implementation and evaluation of actions to combat sexual harassment. One of the biggest drawbacks of this uncertainty



pertains to the failure to report these incidents. This is partly because of a lack of clarity, which is likely to affect not only incidence figures but also the rate of reporting, as discussed earlier (Braine et al 1995:140). As such, various authors support the contention that what is reported is only a fraction of what is really taking place (Grauerholz 1999 and Wilson 2000).

Fitzgerald & Ormerod (in Gouws & Kritzinger 1995:9) maintain that the most salient factors in judgements of whether a particular incident constitutes harassment, appear to be the severity or explicitness of the incident and the gender of the perceiver. The behaviour considered as the most representative of sexual harassment in this study, was found to be rape (87 percent), followed by fondling (86 percent), sexual assault (85 percent), and sexual favours by students (84 percent) (Table 3). This is in line with the findings of UCT (UCT 1991:12) the University of Stellenbosch (Gouws and Kritzinger 1995:5), and the University of Natal (Braine, *et al* 1995:143). It corroborates the findings of Mayekiso & Bhana (1997:231), who in the main found that students had agreed that touching and fondling, rape and date rape, constitute sexual harassment. Braine *et al* (1995:141) also quote Rubin & Borgers (1990) that behaviours that are extreme were readily identified as sexual harassment. The high level of agreement with the first component of the underlying dimensions namely Punitive Offences (Table 8), further bears this finding out.

However, the mean scores decreased substantially when the focus moved to unwelcome physical attention (Table 8: 67 percent and 77 percent respectively for males and females). Verbal harassment was viewed even more leniently by both groups, where males scored a mean value of 58 percent and females 66 percent. The sentiments of Crocker (Zlotnick 1993) that it is extremely difficult to find a definition of sexual harassment that captures its complexity, is thus underscored by these results. Note should be taken of her view that a definition should be flexible, and in line with the social context in which such incidents takes place.

On the other hand, it is clear from Table 3 that high levels of uncertainty exists regarding grading, repeated unwelcome invitations, sexist jokes, wolf whistling, streaking and leering. In line with Gouws and Kritzinger (1995:5), grading, sexist jokes, wolf whistling and streaking can typically be equated with student "pranks and fun". Women in the study especially took exception to incidents such as leering, streaking and repeated unwelcome invitations. Although these actions are non-physical in nature, the results hold certain

implications. While some men might view streaking and leering as attempts to amuse or as a joke, or to compliment, women obviously feel strongly that they are being harassed in the process. Mayekiso & Bhana's (1997:233) findings that men do not know what women find offensive, seems in this case to be corroborated. It is clear that consensus existed amongst the respondents that the more physical and explicit the action, the more likely it is that it will be viewed as sexual harassment. However, the more non-physical the action, the more uncertainty and thus the least consensus were found among the respondents that these actions constitute sexual harassment.

## 5.2 Gender differences

Various studies refer to the gender differences in perception of sexual harassment as being one of the 'most robust criteria' (Gouws and Kritzing 1995:8) in the perceptions of sexual harassment. Table 4 showed that the perceptions of males and females differed statistically significantly on two items namely wolf whistling and flashing. In both these cases, females felt stronger that these should be considered as harassing in nature. In both these cases, females felt stronger than men that these should be viewed as harassing in nature. With the exception of rape (mean for males 4.53 and females 4.41) no other significant difference was detected with the other statements, and females tended to agree more strongly than males that the other acts should be considered as sexual harassment.

The underlying dimensions regarding Specific Incidents (Table 8) showed that males and females differed statistically significantly on two dimensions namely unwelcome physical attention and verbal harassment. This implies that regarding the third dimension – punitive offences - that the two groups are more or less in agreement that conduct resorting under this dimension, represents sexual harassment. With unwelcome physical attention and verbal harassment females tended to agree more than men that these acts can be viewed as sexual harassment. This supports the contention that females are more likely to view certain acts as sexual harassment than men. It also bore out the finding that the less physical and less direct the conduct become, the lesser the agreement will be that it constitutes sexual harassment. If attention is paid to Table 10, it shows that only two responses differed statistically significantly. These are that educational level plays a role in sexual harassment, and that women are socialised to be attractive to men. In both cases men were more likely to agree with the statements than women.

### 5.3 Population group differences

Braine *et al* (1995:148) found in their study that Africans in general tend to acknowledge the existence of sexual harassment far less than other groups. Table 5 shows that statistically significant differences were found with regards to rape, streaking and flashing. Regarding rape, Asian/Coloureds were the least likely to view it as sexual harassment, while Whites and Blacks were more likely to view it as such. With streaking and flashing, it is the Black group that is most likely to view it as sexual harassment, with Asian/Coloureds the least likely to do so, followed closely by Whites. This might be explained by the fact that Asian/Coloureds and Whites view the latter two more as “student pranks and fun” and were more exposed to it than the other group.

Table 9 shows that regarding Punitive Offences, the means are high for all three groups (Blacks 81 percent, Coloureds/Asians 86 percent and Whites 87 percent) and that no statistically significant differences between the groups were found. This means that although Whites scored the highest mean, a very high level of agreement was found that this cluster constitutes sexual harassment. Blacks scored the highest mean with unwelcome physical attention, followed by Whites and Coloureds/Asians. This indicates that Blacks (74 percent) agreed more than the other two groups that actions under this dimension constitute sexual harassment. With verbal harassment, Whites had an average mean of 60.72 percent, with Blacks following closely with 60.43 percent and Coloureds/Asians with 53.18 percent. These results overall show that in contrast with other findings in this regard, Blacks tend to be just as strict when assessing whether a specific action constitutes sexual harassment. This is especially so with regards to unwelcome physical attention.

The section on General Perceptions: Role-players, showed three statistically significant differences, namely that sexual harassment only occurs within certain race/ethnic groups, that men are normally the harassers, and that younger persons tend to be victims (Table 12). Whites agreed the strongest with the first item, while Blacks were the least likely to do so. With the second item, Whites also agreed the strongest, while Asian/Coloureds were the least likely to do so. The third item indicates that Blacks are more likely than the other two groups to agree with this statement, followed by Asian/ Coloureds and Whites.

The section on Contributing factors found three statements that differ significantly. These are statements on the racial affiliation of the persons involved, provocative dresses, and physical appearances. Regarding racial affiliation and physical appearance, Whites tended to agree more than the other two groups that these contribute to sexual harassment, followed by Asian/Coloureds and Blacks. On the other hand, provocative dresses elicited the response that Blacks agreed more than the other two groups, that this is a contributing factor.

## **5.4 CONCLUSION**

As stated by Gouws & Kritzinger (1995:20), it is important that sexual harassment survey results be contextualised in order to draw out the salient issues that apply to specific circumstances. As shown in this study, the student population of the Military Academy is diverse in racial, gender, language, age and rank terms. As such, the results of this study can only be compared with others along broad lines such as the definitional aspects, gender and population group differences. Furthermore, the institutional character of an organisation is of paramount importance, as some practices, even though they are sexist in nature, might be condoned. Caution has thus to be taken to ensure that not too specific comparisons are being made.

In line with other studies, it was found that no clear, precise, and widely accepted definition exists regarding sexual harassment amongst students at the Military Academy. The ambiguity surrounding this activity implies that the respondents perceive the more physical actions, to be more closely linked to sexual harassment. On the other hand, those actions that are non-physical, non-coercive and indirect seem to bear the highest degree of uncertainty amongst respondents. In this sense, this study corroborates the findings of other studies that ambiguity surrounds the definition of this phenomenon.

Regarding the gender differences, it was pointed out that females in the study, with the exception of rape, tend to consistently assess more incidents as constituting sexual harassment than males. Support was thus found in this study for the contention that females are more likely than males to view specific acts as sexual harassment. This was further corroborated in the discussion on the underlying dimension of the specific incidents, especially those pertaining to unwelcome physical attention and verbal harassment. In the discussion on population group differences, it was found that Blacks

in the study, in contrast with other studies, are not as lenient in assessing whether certain behaviours are sexual harassment. Indeed, Blacks were harsher in assessing certain actions as sexual harassment than Whites on three of the items namely sexist jokes, wolf whistling, streaking and flashing. Especially the last two can be viewed as typical behaviours that are not common or condoned in the Black community. This high level agreement amongst Blacks was also evidenced in Unwelcome physical attention, which include flashing, streaking and leering. Blacks were also high in their condemnation of Verbal harassment, which include sexist jokes, grading and wolf whistling.

The overall results of the survey indicate that although students at the Military Academy, undergo a specific socialisation process, their responses generally tend to be in line with those of students at other universities. It was found to a high degree that ambiguity surrounds the definitional aspects of sexual harassment. Clear gender differences were found, which indicate that females are more likely than men to view certain kinds of acts as sexual harassment. A notable exception with other studies is the more conservative assessment that Blacks in the survey have of behaviours that can be viewed as constituting sexual harassment. These include behaviours that have to do with unwelcome physical attention like flashing, streaking and leering.

Against the preceding, it can be stated that the results indicate that there is little difference between the perceptions of MA students and those of students at other universities in South Africa. This excludes the result that Blacks in the survey have a more conservative attitude towards certain kinds of behaviour. Since the other studies were done at various universities throughout the country, this difference might be contributed to the socialisation process of these MA students. Even if this is the case, the military would be well advised to continue with their sensitivity training in this regard. Attention should especially be paid to those kinds of conduct that can be viewed as sexually harassing to clear any misunderstanding regarding this activity. The differences in perceptions of the different sexes should also be stressed, as well as the rights of those who are at the receiving end of this behaviour. This is stated because although few cases of sexual harassment are reported in the SANDF, this should not be construed that the organisation is doing well in this regard, as history has shown that a "soft " approach to sexual harassment, can have many negative results.

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| What is your perception of sexual harassment ?  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 21. Only men are guilty of sexual harassment.   |                   |          | /       |       |                |
| 22. Sexual harassment of women by men is a natural expression of men's stronger sex drive.  | /                 |          |         |       |                |
| 23. Men are conditioned from a young age to compliment women.   |                   |          | /       |       |                |
| 24. The racial /ethnic affiliation of a person will determine his/her attitude towards sexual harassment.                               |                   | /        |         |       |                |
| 25. The educational level of both the perpetrator and the "victim" play a role in the occurrence of sexual harassment.                  |                   | /        |         |       |                |
| 26. Both males and females can display sexually harassing behaviour.  |                   |          |         |       |                |
| 27. A provocative dress is an invitation to sexual interaction.   | /                 |          |         |       |                |
| 28. Highly qualified people are not sexually harassed.  | /                 |          |         |       |                |
| 29. Sexual harassers are colour blind.  |                   |          |         | /     |                |
| 30. Sexual harassment only occurs within a specific race/ethnic group.  | /                 |          |         |       |                |
| 31. Men are usually the harassers.  |                   |          |         |       | /              |
| 32. The physical appearance of a person may entice sexual harassment.   |                   |          |         | /     |                |
| 33. The male/female composition of a group dictates which sexual material is acceptable.  | /                 |          |         |       |                |
| 34. The objective of the sexual harassment of women by men is the domination and belittling of women.                                   |                   |          |         |       | /              |
| 35. Younger persons tend to be "victims" of sexual harassment.  |                   |          | /       |       |                |
| 36. Newcomers to a university campus are easier to sexually harass.   |                   |          |         | /     |                |
| 37. Undesired sexual attention has a negative influence on the academic or work performance of the recipient.                           |                   |          |         |       | /              |
| 38. The position that a person occupy in an hierarchical structure of an organisation will have an influence on his/her sexual conduct. |                   |          | /       |       |                |
| 39. Women are socialised to be sexually attractive and available to men.  |                   | /        |         |       |                |
| 40. Older people tend to be sexual harassers.   |                   | /        |         |       |                |

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student

This questionnaire will take about 7 - 10 minutes of your time. It is designed to determine the perceptions of sexual harassment amongst students at the Military Academy. It deals specifically with perceptions and not incidences and frequencies. Perceptions are important as it *inter alia* determine how people act and react to different kinds of sexual harassment experiences.

The questionnaire is **anonymous** and little biographical information is requested. The information that you supply is confidential and a concise feedback report will be made available at the end of the project.

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

### SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

#### 1. Arms of Service

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| SA Army                     | 1 |
| SA Air Force                | 2 |
| SA Navy                     | 3 |
| SA Military Health Services | 4 |

#### 2. Gender

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Male   | 1 |
| Female | 2 |

#### 3. Population group\*

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Black    | 1 |
| Asian    | 2 |
| Coloured | 3 |
| White    | 4 |

\*For statistical purposes only

#### 4. Age

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 20 years and younger | 1 |
| 21 - 24 years        | 2 |
| 25 - 34 years        | 3 |
| 35 - 44 years        | 4 |

#### 5. Rank group

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| CO/ Maj         | 1 |
| 2Lt / Esu       | 2 |
| Lt / S Lt       | 3 |
| Capt / Lt (SAN) | 4 |
| Maj / Lt Cdr    | 5 |

#### 6. Home language

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| Afrikaans              | 1  |
| English                | 2  |
| Sotho                  | 3  |
| Nguni: Swazi           | 4  |
| Ndebele                | 5  |
| Xhosa                  | 6  |
| Zulu                   | 7  |
| Shangana               | 8  |
| Venda                  | 9  |
| Portuguese             | 10 |
| Other (Please specify) | 11 |

#### 7. Year group

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| PCMS          | 1 |
| First year    | 2 |
| Second Year   | 3 |
| Third Year    | 4 |
| Post graduate | 5 |

#### 8. Marital status

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Single        | 1 |
| Married       | 2 |
| Divorced      | 3 |
| Widower/Widow | 4 |

### SECTION B: SEXUAL HARASSMENT: SPECIFIC INCIDENTS

Indicate whether you view the following incidents as sexual harassment.

| TYPES OF INCIDENT   |                   |          |         |       |                |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
|   | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 9. Grading according to appearance                          |                   |          |         | ✓     |                |
| 10. Repeated unwelcome invitations for a date               |                   |          |         |       |                |
| 11. Sexists jokes/ comments                                 |                   |          |         |       |                |
| 12. Wolf whistling  |                   |          | ✓       |       |                |
| 13. Promise / threat made by lecturer for marks             |                   | ✓        |         |       |                |
| 14. Sexual favours by students in exchange for higher marks |                   |          |         |       |                |
| 15. Sexual assault  |                   |          |         |       |                |
| 16. Rape  |                   |          |         |       |                |
| 17. Streaking (Running naked)                               |                   |          |         | ✓     |                |
| 18. Flashing (Revealing private body parts)                 |                   |          |         | ✓     |                |
| 19. Unwanted fondling / touching                            |                   |          |         |       | ✓              |
| 20. Leering (look slyly/ lasciviously)                      |                   |          |         |       | ✓              |