ATTITUDES TOWARD SEXUAL HARASSMENT: A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF THREE STUDENT POPULATIONS

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ABSTRACT

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With the help of social movements and media coverage, people are increasingly aware of the scope and harm of sexual harassment. To help both the public and the academia better understand the issue, this current study aims to examine the effects of neutralization techniques on attitude toward sexual harassment. Using an original dataset of 2,150 college students in both China and the U.S., the present research finds sex to be the most important factor in predicting people's tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors. Student internationality also shows evident effect, where Chinese international students hold significantly higher level of acceptance of sexual harassment behaviors compared to all others. Further analyses suggest that some techniques of neutralization, such as denial of victim and appeal to higher loyalties, hold significant influences on people's attitudes toward sexual harassment behaviors, and can be more closely associated with sexual harassment than other techniques. However, whether one has participated in relevant training programs does not significantly change how much they think sexual harassment is socially acceptable. Practical implications, study limitations, and future directions are discussed.

Dedicated to my parents.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

What is sexual harassment? According to the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment includes verbal and physical behaviors that insinuate sexual favors, unwelcome sexual advances, and other purposes of a sexual nature, or any behavior that is rooted in gender and sex bias (EEOC, 2016). The definition is not shared across the world. For example, the *Chinese Law of Protecting Women's Rights* (中华人民共和国妇女权益保障法) and its regional modifications define sexual harassment as verbal, graphic, physical, and other conducts that are against women's will. In academia, Gelfand, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow (1995) identified three most prevalent types of sexual harassment, including gender harassment (i.e., hostility and discrimination), unwanted sexual attention (e.g., physical contact), and sexual coercion (i.e., manipulative and coercive acts for sexual cooperation).

Experience with sexual harassment has also found to lead to negative consequences. According to O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998), victims of sexual harassment often reported physical, emotional, and professional damages. For example, Gutek and Koss (1993) suggested that workplace sexual harassment decreased women's job commitment and increased their stress level at work; another study (Morrow, McElroy, & Phillips, 1994) found positive relationships between sexual harassment experiences and negative attitudes such as stress and role conflict. The same findings were present in other cultures as well. For example, Chan and colleagues (1999) found that workplace sexual harassment lowered women's job or study satisfaction; for service and frontline workers, sexual harassment by customers largely influenced their job performance (Liu, Kwan, & Chiu, 2014). Although research have shown that work-related attitude changes often occurred in occupations with strong interpersonal and interactional requirements (McIlwee, 1982). Research concerning peer sexual harassment in adolescents and young adults suggested that sexual

harassment experiences promoted embarrassment and further drop in academic performance and the damage could continue into future relationships (Hill & Silva, 2005; McMaster, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2002). Specifically, in college and higher education, 27% of the harassed women (11% for male victims) reported avoiding particular buildings where harassment occurred and 9% (4% for male) reported dropping or skipping a class in order to avoid the harasser (Hill & Silva, 2005). However, these actions in the hope to protect themselves and avoid further harassment would often lead to more disruptions and damages to students' academic and educational life (Hill & Silva, 2005; Huberta, Cortina, Pang, Torges, & Magley, 2006). Apart from victims' work life and career satisfaction, sexual harassment has also been found to lead to lower self-esteem and overall life satisfaction (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982). Like other forms of violence against women, sexual harassment also increased the likelihood of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Dansky & Kilpatrick, 1997). As a response, female victims of sexual harassment reported significantly higher prescription drug use, and both male and female victims showed significantly higher tendency of drinking to intoxication behaviors (Richman et al., 1999). Other physical health issues raised by sexual harassment included sleeplessness, weight loss, and disordered eating habits (Shinsako, Richman, & Rospenda, 2001; Street, Gradus, Stafford, & Kelly, 2007).

The issue of sexual harassment has drawn increased attention since the #MeToo movement, where women (and men alike) from various backgrounds came forward with their experiences with sexual harassment and sexual assault in various settings. The society is divided on the topic (Mayerson & Taylor, 1987; Page, 2008; Spohn & Horney, 1993). While many were empathetic, joining parades and campaigns to show support and encouragement, negative attitudes throve too. A common thread found online claimed that women were reporting sexual harassment and rape because they did not want to be shamed for infidelity or promiscuity, under the commonly found

"virgin-whore binary" and the "just world" phenomenon (Stubbs-Richardson et al., 2018). Aided with recent news about false rape accusations (e.g., the Laura Hood case and the Catherine Reddington case; BBC News, 2019; Crane, 2018), the trend of victim blaming only grew, although the event was incredibly rare and ranged from as low as 2% to 10% in all sexual assault cases (Lisak, Gardinier, Nicksa, & Cote, 2010; Spohn, White, & Tellis, 2014; Ward, 1995).

Another factor aiding the growing phenomenon was the lack of consequences of sexual harassment behaviors (DuMont, Miller, Myhr, 2003; Spohn & Horney, 1993). While the term was often linked with sexual assault and rape, most did not consider mere sexual harassment serious enough (Fitzgerald, 1993). In fact, certain behaviors such as verbal sexual harassment were normalized in many cultures (Tang, Yik, Cheung, Choi, & Au, 1995), especially ones with high patriarchal structures and stale gender expectations. Other cultures, such as in India, have developed vocabulary such as "eve-teasing" to trivialize the sexual harassment behaviors of males (Nalla, 2020). In addition, unlike rape and sexual assault by force, sexual indecencies toward minors, prostitution, and other types of sex crimes, sexual harassment does not usually carry serious consequences or are punishable by law, however organizational code of conduct and moral beliefs often favor male harassers significantly (Riger, 1991). For example, the *Chinese Law of Protecting Women's Rights* writes that it is prohibited to sexually harass women, or else victims can file complaints toward relevant organizations and government branches (Article 6, Section 40); comparatively, the minimum sentence for rape is three to ten years in prison, and can go as high as death penalty (see the *Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China* Article II, Section 236 for details). In India, penalties for sexual harassment range from one to three years in prison with potential fine (*Nirbhaya Act,* 2013 Section 354A), while committing rape leads to imprisonment of at least seven years (*Indian Penal Code* Section 376).

Although many have published on the topic, most research focused on the harm of sexual harassment (Buchanan & Fitzgerald, 2008; Chan, Tang, & Chan, 1999; Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Morrow et al., 1994; O'Hare & O'Donohue, 1998; Shinsako et al., 2001), victimization (Berdahl, 2007; Fitzgerald et al., 1995), and descriptives of the phenomenon (Hill & Silva, 2005). As for inter-group differences in how people perceive and handle the issue, race (Lui, 2016) and gender (McMaster et al., 2002; Richman et al., 1999) came up most often. Some have considered the importance of migration experiences (Cortina & Wasti, 2005) and cultural identities (Barak, 1997; Lenton, Smith, Fox, & Morra, 1999), but much is unknown about different attitudes toward sexual harassment from different countries.

Thus, this thesis seeks to fill the gap in the literatures by exploring the cross-national differences in tolerance of sexual harassment among three distinct groups: American students studying in the U.S., Chinese students studying abroad, and Chinese students studying at a Chinese university. The current study hypothesizes that students vary in their use of neutralization techniques, based on their nationality, can hold significant impact on how they view the issue of sexual harassment. This study also aims to explore the role of sex, age, academic backgrounds, as well as their participation in sexual harassment training programs on students' tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research tried to explain sexual harassment using different theoretical frameworks and concepts. For example, some have examined the role of gender images and power relations. While most assumed that sexual harassment took place due to biological desire for sex (Franke, 1997; Schultz, 1998), it was found that people were sexually harassed because they offended the societal gender norms and ideals (Berdahl, 2007; Dall'Ara & Maass, 1999). These gender roles, or desirable personalities, suggested that men must be masculine (e.g., dominant and independent) while women ought to be feminine (e.g., modest and warm). Thus, if one, especially a female, does not perform such characteristics, they should be "slapped down" (Berdhal, 2007; Fiske & Stevens, 1993; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Similarly, male perpetrators are more likely to harass when their masculinity is challenged or threatened (Maass, Cadjnu, Guarnieri, & Grasselli, 2003). The research (Maass et al., 2003) also claimed that the pattern is more prominent in highly identified males, or that hypermasculinity increase the likelihood of gender harassment.

In addition, research examining situational factors have found that sexual harassment could occur in all settings and environments, such as in school or at work (Barling, Rogers, & Kelloway, 2001; Fineran & Bennett, 1999; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Richman et al., 1999; Stein, 1981), in military (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999), in public (Ceccato & Paz, 2017; Lichty & Campbell, 2012; Macmillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000; Madan & Nalla, 2016; Nalla, 2020; Tang et al., 1995), and in cyberspace (Barak, 2005; Barnes, 2001). For example, an American Association of University Women survey (1993) found that 87% of high school girls and 71% surveyed boys had experienced sexual harassment by peers. Macmillan and colleagues (2000) found that incidents of sexual harassment against women was not uncommon in Canada, where 26.3% of the surveyed women said that a man they knew made inappropriate comments about

their body or sex life, and 66% said they had received obscene phone calls before. Research also observed high occurrence of sexual harassment incidents in developing countries. In India, Madan and Nalla (2016) found that 57.6% of women had been subject to sexual harassment, and over 90% of both males and females had heard about a woman being harassed in public. A study in China (Chan et al., 1999) found that 40.5% of the students in their sample have experienced dirty language, 27.4% said that they had been called sexist remarks personally, and 52.4% had heard stories of other female students being physically harassed.

Techniques of Neutralization

While there are many possible explanations for sexual harassment, the focus of this thesis is on the techniques of neutralization. First suggested by Sykes and Matza (1957), the techniques of neutralization tried to make sense of why people offend by analyzing how offenders normalize and neutralize certain criminal behaviors and criminal intentions. The theory suggested five methods commonly used by offenders to justify their deviance (Sykes & Matza, 1957): *denial of responsibility*, that the act is a result of circumstantial factors or force; *denial of injury*, that the act itself does little or no harm; *denial of victim*, that there is no direct victim of the act or the victim deserves the harm; *condemnation of condemners*, where the offender shifts the focus onto the rejectors of their deviance; *appeal to higher loyalties*, that the act is done to please or fulfil an organizational, holistic, or other mission. Research (Mitchell & Dodder, 1983) has also found that there could be a hierarchical arrangement of the five techniques, that denial of victim was most accepted and appeal to higher loyalties might not be as important. Further, Scott and Lyman (1968), suggested that there were two basic forms of neutralization: *justification*, when the offender accepted the responsibility by deny that it was wrong; and *excuses*, when the offender accepted that it was wrong but denied the responsibility of the act. Moreover, modern updates to the

techniques of neutralization suggested that *denial of risk* could be prevalent as well (Peretti-Watel, 2003), covering scapegoating, self-confidence, and comparison of risks. Scapegoating, for instance, reduces the notion of risk by provoking other riskier behaviors because the "other" behavior is more stigmatized and blameworthy (Douglas, 1992; Peretti-Watel, 2003).

Though Sykes and Matza developed the techniques of neutralization to explain juvenile delinquency in 1957, the theory continues to be popular in contemporary criminology. McQuillan and Zito (2011) argued that three techniques of neutralization, denial of responsibility, condemnation of condemners, and appealing to higher loyalties, were commonly adopted by middle school students to neutralize unethical acts such as cheating. Although using the techniques to explain juvenile delinquency is still popular, more research has been devoted to other types of crimes and across different age groups. Johnston and Kilty (2016) studied violence against psychiatric patients by security guards (males of age 23-30) and found that the security guards often employed denial of injury, that their acts were to benefit the patients and was "for their own good". The theory has also been extended to cybercrime research (Harris & Dumas, 2009; Hinduja, 2007), where it was found that some elements of the neutralization theory, such as denial of injury, appeal to higher loyalties, and denial of negative intent, were positively related to software piracy and the distribution of pirated materials. In some cases, the techniques of neutralization were also used to explain genocide and war crimes, namely the causation of the Holocaust (Alvarez, 1997).

The theory has also been used extensively in gender violence and sex offending research (Boyle & Walker, 2016; Miller & Schwartz, 1995; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999; Stubbs-Richardson, Rader, & Cosby, 2018). Miller and Schwartz (1995), for instance, interviewed sixteen women held at the local county jail for prostitution-related charges about their experience with violence. They argued that myths such as "prostitutes deserved to be beaten or raped" or that

"prostitutes were unrapable", could explain the vast amounts of rape and violence prostitutes (and women in general) may experience. While the authors did not mention the techniques of neutralization in specific, it was apparent that these myths represent denial of victim and denial of injury. Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald (1999) suggested seven main categories of rape myths, such as "she asked for it", "it wasn't really rape", and "she liked it", all classic representations of the techniques of neutralization and especially denial of victim. Sexual assault and rape in college populations also revealed that subscription to rape stereotypes and acknowledgement of rape and sexual assault were negatively correlated (Boyle & Walker, 2016). Similar findings were evident in domestic violence research. It was found that large portions of domestic abusers attributed their violence to the victim, that their intimate partner provoked their assault (Dutton, 1986; Henderson & Hewstone, 1984). Beside rapists and domestic abusers, sex traffickers and madams were also frequent users of neutralization techniques (Antonopoulos & Winterdyk, 2005; Copley, 2014; Kara, 2009). They often emphasized the parents' role (that parents gave consent or directly sold the girls to them; Kara, 2009), or that they were only small figures in the actual trafficking (Antinopoulos & Winterdyk, 2005). In other cases, they condemn the government and socio-economic environment for sex trafficking, that institutions were corrupt and failed to intervene (Copley, 2014; Kara, 2009).

While the traditional model of neutralization theory only targeted the perspective of offenders, many have taken the theory to explain the victimization experiences as well. It was found that victims of sexual violence employed the techniques of neutralization to justify not reporting their experiences to authorities (Weiss, 2011), including denial of responsibility (that the offender did not intend to), denial of injury (that the harm was minimal or unimportant), etc. Moreover, in research discussing battered women and their victimization experiences (Ferraro &

Johnson, 1983), scholars discovered that these women, when encountering domestic violence, blamed themselves and external forces for the events and believed that their suffrage was in fact nurturance for their troubled husbands.

The neutralization theory is not without critiques. One of the most prominent criticisms was that the theory lacked clear operationalization of the concepts. For example, Austin (1977) and Minor (1980, 1981) argued that research using neutralization theory failed to distinguish the neutralization techniques from unconventional commitment and moral agreement. In addition, some argued that neutralization could be limited only to where the victim was alien to the offender (Landsheer, Hart, & Kox, 1994), as well as that the offender's acceptance to conventional norms was not a prerequisite for effective neutralization (Fritsche, 2005). Topalli (2005) also discovered that "hardcore, active, noninstitutionalized" street offenders often rejected the conventional moral code, or neutralized "good" behaviors, in order to maintain a self-image consistent with the code of the street.

In sum, the techniques of neutralization have been employed in research on various types of offenses and in different populations. The current research would like to contribute to the abundance of empirical tests of the neutralization theory as well as research on sexual harassment and gender violence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Differences between China and the U.S.

Bush and Qiang (2000) summarized that the Chinese traditional culture is characterized by its authoritarian, collectivist, socialist, morale-centered, and patriarchal nature. China, being one of the longest-standing cultures in the world, is dependent on Confucianist ideology (Cleverley, 1991) and subsequently worships traditional values and the passage of traditions to younger generations (Bush & Qiang, 2000; Wang & Mao, 1996). For example, under the traditional culture, women's rights are extremely oppressed, and their self-identities are often restricted to carriers of children; furthermore, in a traditional Chinese family, only sons are valued, since bearing daughters bring shame to the family and raising them is a wasted effort in the family value system (Leung, 2003; Wolf, 1985).

Guanxi, loosely translated to personal relationships and social capital, is another prevalent cultural phenomenon in China (Gold, Guthrie, & Wank, 2004; Lin, 2004). While personal connections and the importance of social networks are hardly a culture-specific term, *guanxi* is unique to the Chinese as it takes root in the historical and social circumstances of China, and thus differs from how interpersonal connections work in the rest of the world, resulting in the Chinese society being characterized as relation- and interaction-based (Gold et al., 2004; King, 1985). Admittedly, *guanxi* is in every sphere of the Chinese society and exists on both individual and organizational levels (Bian, 2004; Gold et al., 2004; Keister, 2004). For example, in a study conducted by Bian (2004) on labor market entries, it is found that *guanxi* plays a significant role in finding and securing jobs, that a considerable amount of interviewees in the study find jobs through strong *guanxi* ties across different types of businesses, domestic and foreign, private and public alike. Apart from personal favors and gifts, on an organizational level, firm-to-firm *guanxi*

help form the foundation of Chinese economic system, that it stimulates lending and trade relations among business groups; that is, firms lean towards other firms they have *guanxi* with, especially when the circumstantial condition is uncertain (Keister, 2004).

Comparatively, the American culture is characterized by its individualistic and materialistic ideologies (Du Bois, 1955; Hsu, 1981; Spindler & Spindler, 1983). Du Bois (1955) suggests that there are three focal points in the American value system: *effort-optimism*, achieving through conventional means (i.e., work); *material well-being*, also known as the "money equals success" ideology; and *conformity*, the notion of equality and cooperation. Notably, the capitalistic and materialistic ideology where monetary gain defines one's success is widely accepted and used, such as in Robert Merton's theory of structural strain (1967). Regarding individualism, while Hsu's argument that individualism (1981) bears all evil deeds carry less popularity and validity in scholars' eyes, the idea that the American society and culture is based on individualistic ideology stands. For example, in Hofstede's analysis of 50 countries and three regions (1986), the United States is characterized by high individualism and small power distance, indicating that the American culture has lower acceptance of inequalities and that the American people pursue their own interest more often.

In conclusion, collectivism and individualism have differential powers on how people view the society. The current research would like to explore how attitude toward sexual harassment varies in Chinese and American populations. Moreover, the current research explores how these two ideologies collectively influence one's view, using international students.

The Chinese International Students

The history of Chinese international students in the United States and other western countries could date back to the early nineteenth century and further, where the Qing government and the Republic of China administration encouraged Chinese students to study in other countries for knowledge and technology. The trend continued to grow in the contemporary society, where increasingly more Chinese people have studied abroad in countries such as the United States, Canada, England, and Australia, in the hope of better personal development and future career for the children, as well as potential immigration opportunities. On the other hand, these destination countries have established policies and strategies to attract more international students for the educational and economic contributions foreign students may bring, including convenient visa and university applications, scholarship and funding, and outreach programs (Andrade, 2006). Chinese governments and universities were also encouraging students to have some experiences abroad. Governmental policies included compensations for international students returning to China as high as one million yuan (Zhao & Luo, 2019); and in higher education, those who have studied and worked abroad often were tenured faster than those who have not (Pang, Wang, & Hu, 2019).

Apart from governmental and educational support, obstacles in the adjustment process for international students remained inevitable. Studies found that there were two primary issues for foreign students' adjustment and acculturation, language barrier and cultural differences (Andrade, 2006; Ramsay, Barker, & Jones, 1999). For example, it was found that international students from non-English-speaking countries often had difficulties understanding lectures because of vocabulary issues and instructors' rapid speech (Ramsay et al., 1999; Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000). Other studies also confirmed that social and psychological problems occurred more often for international students, that they were more likely to struggle with finding social

support (Hechanova-Awlampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Horn, 2002) and to feel anxious and lonely about their life abroad (Lewthwaite, 1996; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002). Besides, research have also identified a more severe lack of confidence in international students, that they feared making mistakes and felt insecure about language abilities (Jacob & Greggo, 2001; Hellsten & Prescott, 2004; Lewthwaite, 1996; Robertson et al., 2000), which could result in further problems in the adjustment process.

International students, upon meeting these obstacles and stressors, start their acculturation process to form a hybrid identity consist of both their home and host cultures (Marginson, 2014). A commonly accepted model (Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Berry, 1997) suggested that the main purpose of acculturation was to find balance between maintenance of one's original cultural identity and contact with the outside/ host culture. The model also distinguished four acculturation strategies people demonstrate: *integration*, a healthy balance between the two goals; *assimilation*, where one overemphasizes on the importance of contact and neglect cultural maintenance; *separation*, where one only focuses on cultural maintenance and overlooks contact; and *marginalization*, a state of alienizing oneself from both cultural maintenance and contact. To reach the best outcome (i.e., integration), Berry (1991, 1997) argued that a mutual accommodation consist of an open and inclusive host culture and a willing subject was required. Ergo, in the case of Chinese international students studying abroad, successful acculturation refers to the state where one adapts to the local mainstream norms while maintaining learnt Chinese values in the meantime.

Many have researched on the struggles and outcomes of international students in foreign lands. However, how international students differ from non-migrants remains rarely discussed. To fill the gap in existing research, the current research compares international students with their

peers in home and host countries and discusses how being an international student may affect one's attitude toward sexual harassment and societal gender relations.

The Sexual Harassment Phenomenon

Sexual harassment is hardly a new topic in the contemporary world, and the issue has received extensive research interests. Scholars from various academic backgrounds, whether sociological, criminological, educational, legal, or medical, have put in efforts in explaining the phenomenon of sexual harassment. A shared finding is that most victims of sexual harassment are found to be female and most offenders male (Fineran & Bennett, 1999; Hand & Sanchez, 2000; Macmillan et al., 2000; McMaster et al., 2002; Paludi & Paludi, 2003; Pina, Gannon, & Saunders, 2009), even though same-sex sexual harassment and female perpetrators of sexual harassment do exist, however usually for different reasons.

Gendered Opinions about Sexual Harassment

Most previous studies found that men generally perceived sexual harassment as less serious or were less capable of recognizing sexual harassment in ambiguous situations (Bursik, 1992; LaRocca & Kromrey, 1999; Stockdale, 1993; Tata, 1993). For example, while it was found that men and women were both affected by the power positions between the perpetrator and the victim in a scenario, female respondents rated all situations as more harassing than men did in Tata's research on power relations and perceptions on sexual harassment (1993). In a research on media influences on people's attitudes toward sexual harassment (Dill et al., 2008), scholars found that males exposed to stereotypical female images had the highest tolerance of sexual harassment, followed by males viewing professional images of women, while women in the experimental group, who viewed images of stereotypical womanhood and gender roles, rated sexual harassment

as least tolerable. Past research in college (Lott, Reilly, & Howard, 1982; Beauvais, 1986) also found that female students agreed with statements such as "Uninvited sexual attention by men to women students or employees helps to keep women in their place" or "One of the problems with sexual harassment is that some women just can't take a joke" and less than did males.

Sexual Harassment around the World

The issue of sexual harassment is a global and universal phenomenon, although cultural and socio-political impacts may alter the appearances, victim responses, and the effects of sexual harassment significantly (Barak, 1997, 2005; Lenton et al., 1999; Tang, 1994). First off, in different cultures and communities, sexual harassment takes various forms. For example, in China, physical contact such as fondling and unwanted hugging are most common type (Tang et al., 1995). McIlwee (1982) and Riemer (1979) found that verbal harassment (e.g., ridicule and sabotage) were the most widely seen in American blue-collar industries. McMaster and colleagues (2002) also proposed that same- and cross-gender sexual harassment could be different, that same-sex harassment leaned more toward gender harassment such as homophobic jokes and insults (as well as hazing behaviors), whereas cross-gender harassment involved more elements of unwanted sexual attention and coercion.

Women in traditionally patriarchal societies and cultures reported sexual harassment and other sexual violence less frequently, for reasons such as fear of trouble and blame, gender roles and ideal womanhood, fear of losing face, etc. (Chan et al., 1999; Dussich, 2001; Tang et al., 1995). Comparatively, Fitzgerald and colleagues (Fitzgerald, Swan, & Fischer, 1995) indicated that while some victims did not report sexual harassment incidents, they did it out of fear of causing trouble to harassers and the worry that nothing could be done. In a study comparing immigrant Americans and Anglo-Americans (Cortina & Wasti, 2005), a drastic gap between how women of different

backgrounds coped with sexual harassment was found. It was found that Hispanic and Turkish American women relied more on social support, reported more avoidance and denial in coping with sexual harassment, and were less confrontational when negotiating with the offenders, while Anglo-American women tended to seek advocacy and be more aggressive in confrontations (Cortina & Wasti, 2005), possibly due to cultural traditions such as patriarchy and collectivism. In studies concerning Asian women's experiences with sexual harassment (Lui, 2016), liberal sex attitude was shown to be statistically significant and possesses a positive and direct effect on occurrence of sexual harassment, in addition to risk factors such as youthfulness and economic independence. Kennedy and Gorzalka (2002) provided a valid reason behind the phenomenon, that Asians were more conservative on sexual behaviors and more accepting of sexual harassment, thus the society may neutralize sexual harassment when the victim challenged the traditional moral attitudes, which was in line with Berdahl's findings (2007) where women who were deviant by societal standards experienced sexual harassment most often. In addition, when asked about reactions and responsive behaviors toward sexual harassment, Chinese women often utilized avoidance and "let him get away with it", because face and traditional gender roles dominated their rationality (Tang, 1994).

Compared to research on the appearances of and responses to sexual harassment, there were scarce literatures on how the effects differentiated by culture. For example, per Buchanan and Fitzgerald (2008), African American women's exposure to sexual harassment significantly and negatively correlated with their work experience, even more so than racial harassment. The same finding, that women's job performance and satisfaction rate decreased as they were exposed to sexual harassment, was shared in research in different lines of work, except those that required minimum or no informal connections with others (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; McIlwee, 1982). The

tokenism Kanter (1977) suggested also stated that in highly masculine or highly nonminority organizations, "tokens" (i.e., the minorities in these settings) could express a greater degree of stress when given a certain stimulus, such as comparisons and self-evaluations. In addition, although there were work on differences between immigrants and non-immigrants (Cortina & Wasti, 2005), the role of migration and acculturation and the sojourners population were nearly untouched in research on sexual harassment. Acknowledging this gap of knowledge, this article seeks to make sense of how culture, migration, and education affect individual perceptions of sexual harassment both separately and collaboratively.

Sexual Harassment Policy and Education

Due to the pervasive and harmful nature of sexual harassment (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2003; Schneider, Swan, & Fitzgerald, 1997), many social institutes and businesses have created trainings and education programs and implemented policies to prevent sexual harassment behaviors within the organizations. For example, in a study of federal government employees, Antecol and Cobb-Clark (2003) found that over 75% of the surveyed individuals had participated in sexual harassment trainings in their work. Although few programs were evaluated and those evaluated programs existed primarily in college settings (Beauvais, 1986; Bingham & Scherer, 2001; Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993), the effect of said implementations was shown to be positively related to an increased awareness of sexual harassment (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2003). It was found that 55.4% of female and 62.7% male participants in federal offices believed that organizational sexual harassment training helped prevent such behaviors at work (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2003); and in college populations, sexual harassment trainings increased students' sensitivity and knowledge on the issue (Beauvais, 1986). Particularly, Beauvais (1986) found in her experiment at University of Michigan that male students' perception of victim responsive

behaviors had significantly changed ($\alpha<.0001$) after participating in training workshops. Further, trainings helped balance the definitions of sexual harassment across genders as well, as presented by Blakely, Blakely, and Moorman (1998), that after viewing educational films on sexual harassment, the ambiguity of definition in both female (3.26) and male (2.50) participants changed to a more equilateral level (female=3.02; male=2.95).

Sexual harassment policies, according to researchers and governmental offices, should adhere to five standards. First off, these policies need to have clear definitions of what sexual harassment is and to express a strict, zero-tolerance attitude; in addition, there should be frequent reminders of the policies (Paludi & Paludi, 2003). Secondly, a successful sexual harassment policy should demonstrate the organization and its leadership's dedication in formal and written format (Williams, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1999). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 2016) also stated that organizations should establish comprehensive and efficient investigative procedures to handle complaints and corrective measures on offenders.

In an article by Schneider (1987), it was stated that more universities and educational institutes were picking up sexual harassment policies in response to the *Alexander v. Yale* case (the first use of Title IX policy against an educational institute), including both principal statements and detailed guidelines. Today, most universities have implemented some sort of sexual harassment policies in the western world, while recent news about sexual harassment in higher education still indicated a lack of adequate acknowledgement and proper policy establishment in Chinese colleges (Wang, Yang, Zhang, & Ma, 2019; Yan, Yang, & Yang, 2018).

Neutralization and Sexual Harassment

The techniques of neutralization have been used extensively in research on gender violence and sex crimes, as the previous chapter discussed. However, the majority of research focused on more serious offenses, such as rape and sexual assault (Boyle & Walker, 2016; Miller & Schwartz, 1995; Payne et al., 1999), intimate partner violence (Dutton, 1986; Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Henderson & Hewstone, 1984), pedophilia (De Young, 1988), sex trafficking (Antonopoulos & Winterdyk, 2005; Copley, 2014; Kara, 2009). Although as one of the less serious sex offenses, the use of neutralization on sexual harassment was not as common, a number of studies have shown relevance of neutralization in sexual harassment incidents. Shakeshaft and colleagues (Shakeshaft, Mandel, & Johnson, 1997), for instance, reported that youths used *denial of injury*, by suggesting that sexual harassment was "a way of life". Other studies have also argued that people often neutralized sexual harassment as a normal experience or a part of everyday culture (Hinze, 2004; Hlavka, 2014; Huebner, 2008; Robinson, 2005; Rolfe & Schroeder, 2017).

Regarding other techniques, Tinkler, Gremillion, and Arthurs (2015) have depicted the use of *condemning the condemners* in sexual harassment trainings, where they wrote that male trainers in sexual harassment education programs often enforced the idea that laws were unfairly targeting men. In addition, Summers and Myklebust (1992) discovered that investigators might overlook sexual harassment incidents if the two parties had prior romantic relationships, thus employing denial of victim. Moreover, research on sexual harassment in sport industry (Fejgin & Hanegby, 2001; Hall, 1996; Hargreaves, 1994) demonstrated that male athletes and coaches tended to legitimize their harassment against female athletes with the idea of "natural" superiority and male dominance in the industry, a branch of *appealing to higher loyalties*.

THE CURRENT STUDY

Methodology

Context and Hypotheses

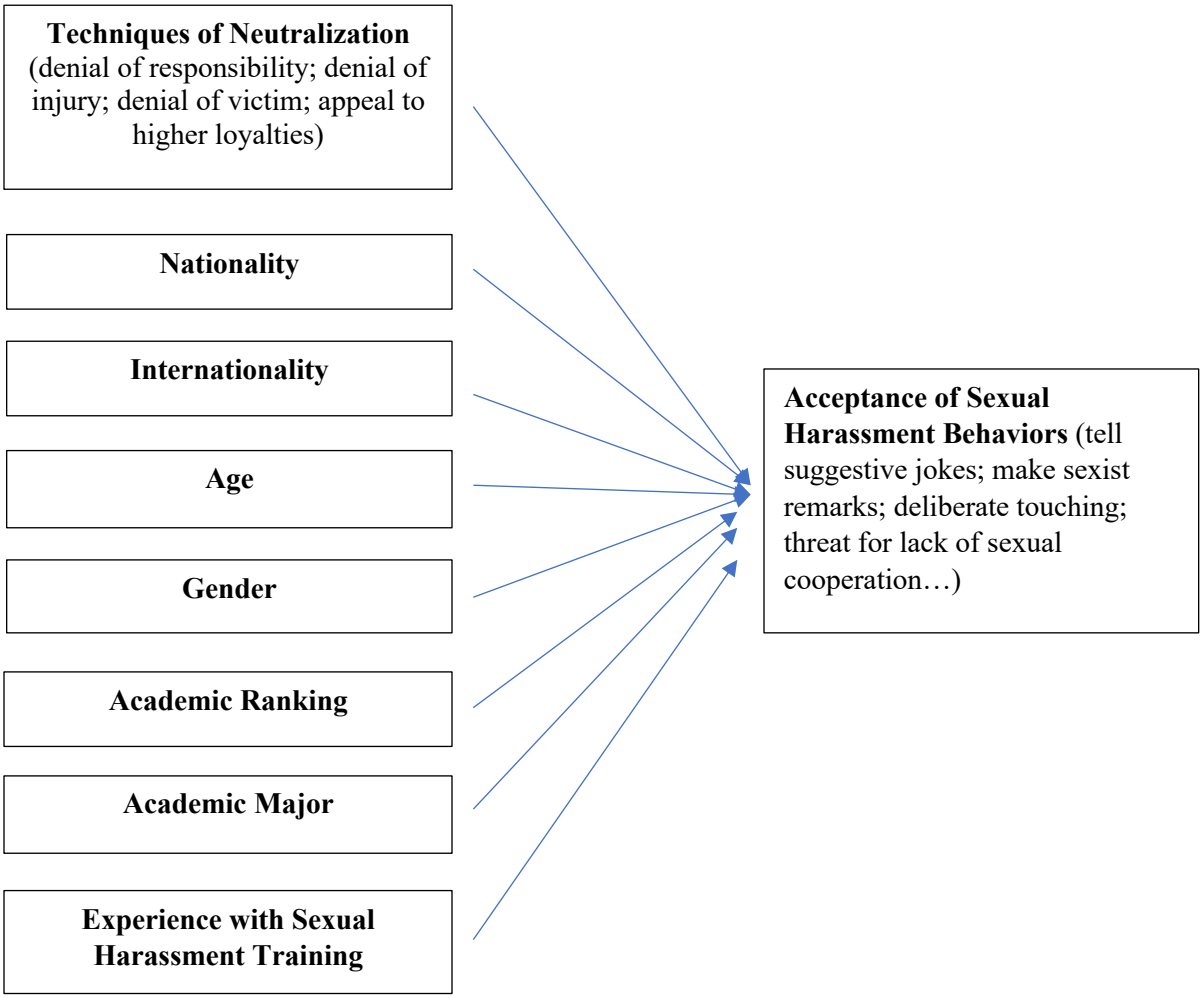
Culture has a significant impact on human behaviors (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993), and the variation in cultural beliefs and values often prevent scholars' effort to generalize findings to cross-cultural settings (Pepitone & Triandis, 1987). Namely, China and the U.S. possess cultural differences in multiple aspects that often lead to difficulties in researching the "how" and "why" of social phenomena, such as that the U.S. tends more toward individualism while the Chinese highly value collectivism. However, culture is a complex concept, and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to assess the effect of cultural identities on attitudes toward sexual harassment. Using nationality and internationality as frameworks, the current study seeks to examine attitudes toward sexual harassment in different student groups, drawing samples from three distinct populations: Chinese students studying in China, Chinese international students, and American students studying in the U.S. The current research proposes the following research question:

> *Do Chinese and American students differ in their attitude toward sexual harassment? If so, how and why do they differ?*

In light of the research question, a series of hypotheses are thus generated. Firstly, the techniques of neutralization should have a significant and positive relationship with acceptance of sexual harassment behaviors, that the more one uses the techniques, the more likely they are to score higher on the acceptance scale (Hypothesis 1). Secondly, it is hypothesized that nationality and internationality impact people's tolerance of sexual harassment, where Chinese citizens and Chinese international students should perceive sexual harassment as more tolerable than the rest

(Hypothesis 2-3). Moreover, acceptance of sexual harassment should also differ by variables such as respondent's age, gender, academic ranking, academic major, and experience with sexual harassment training (Hypothesis 4-8).

Figure I. Hypotheses and Relationships between Variables



Sampling and Data Collection

A convenience sampling technique was adopted in the survey distribution. An online survey link generated on Qualtrics was created and posted onto social media platforms such as QQ groups whose majority of members are Chinese college students in China, WeChat public accounts and groups catering toward American universities' existing and incoming Chinese students, Weibo (through reposts and shares), Facebook pages and groups that require student identification (e.g., "Michigan State University Class of 2021" and "Ohio State University Class of 2020"). People reached via these means were also asked to share the survey link with their friends and on their social media platforms.

Additionally, college professors and course instructors were contacted and asked to distribute the survey link to students on course portals and via email lists. A random sample of 10 professors and lecturers at Michigan State University's School of Criminal Justice was selected first. Department heads of six sociology and criminology programs in the mid-west were also randomly selected and contacted. Later, the researcher employed a stratified sampling technique and categorized all undergraduate majors at the university into five groups based on information found online: Natural Sciences, Engineering, Business, Arts and Humanities, and Social Sciences. Two departments and three professors in which departments were randomly selected and asked to distribute the survey on D2L and to their graduate students. A total of 30 individuals were contacted through this means. A similar method was used to contact course instructors, where two instructors from each of Michigan State University's undergraduate integrative subjects were chosen. And a total of 18 presidents of different student organizations, including Greek organizations, sport clubs, religious groups, and ethnic student associations, were asked to share the survey with members.

Survey Construction

The survey included all questions mentioned in the previous sections and offered two languages (in Chinese and English) to ease the data collection process in all three populations. The survey was first created in English and was later translated to Simplified Chinese (mainland China's official reading and writing language) by the author of the paper. Afterwards, a copy of the version in Chinese was sent to a group of five bilingual individuals outside the social science field, whom were asked to translate the Chinese version back to English with a small amount of incentive of ¥120 (around $17 as of December 1st, 2019). These five back-translation copies were used to identify whether the Chinese survey matched what the English survey asked about, and that respondents using different languages would be answering the same items for a smoother analysis.

The surveys translated by individual non-professional translators were compared with the original survey in English. After careful comparisons and discussions with the five bilingual individuals, some minor changes were made. Changes included terms and misleading phrases such as "kissing sounds", "repeated calling", and "propositioned you", that were not normally used in or hard to translate to the Chinese language. However, most of the translations matched the original survey, and provided enough validations to the multilingual research tool, despite wording differences such as "pornographic/dirty jokes" instead of "suggestive stories" and "complaint process" instead of "grievance procedure".

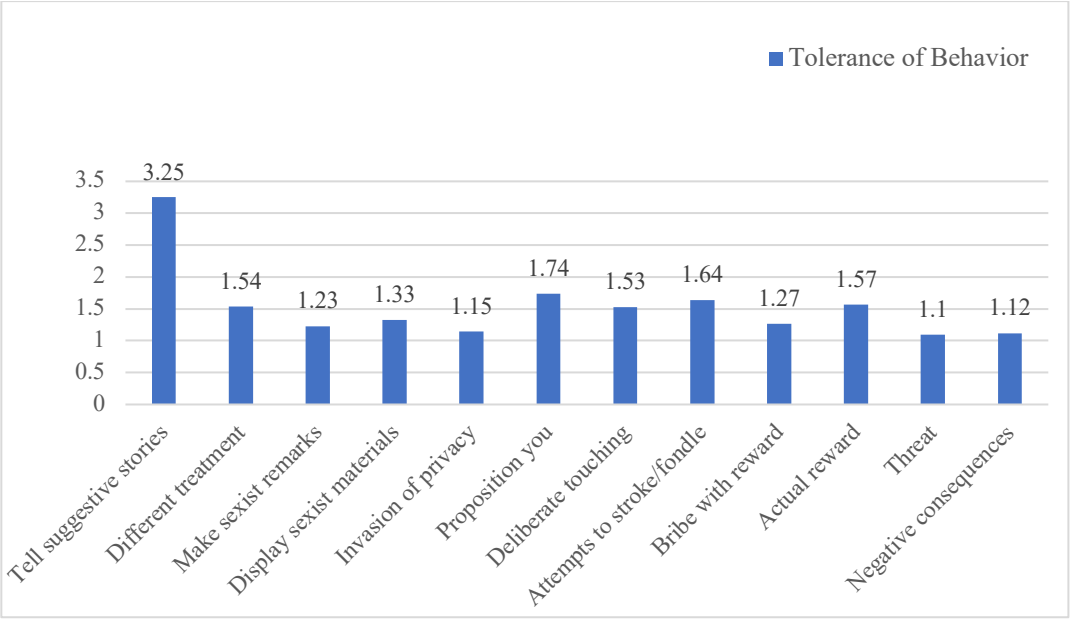
Measurements

Dependent Variable

Different from previous research where attitude toward sexual harassment was defined as people's subscription to myths and attitude toward victimization and victim behaviors, the current study operationalized "attitude" as respondents' acceptance of certain sexual harassment behaviors. It was assumed that a higher score on the questionnaire would represent a higher acceptance rate of sexual harassment behaviors, or a more lenient attitude toward sexual harassment in general.

The *Sexual Experience Questionnaire* (*SEQ*) designed by Fitzgerald and colleagues (Fitzgerald et al., 1988) and its revised version (*SEQ-R*; Gelfand et al., 1995) were employed here to identify specific sexual harassment behaviors. The current research compared this questionnaire with another research measuring sexual harassment attitudes (Madan & Nalla, 2016), and identified a total of 12 items that were present or similar in both studies. Respondents were provided a five-point Likert scale from 1 being "strongly unacceptable" to 5 being "strongly acceptable" and were asked to respond with their level of agreement with each item in the questionnaire (Cronbach's α=.791, see Appendix II for factor analysis). Beside only one item (i.e., "Do you think they [sexual harassment behaviors] are acceptable? Tell suggestive stories."), all items constructing the tolerance of sexual harassment scale met desirable standards (Factor Loading>.450). However, as telling suggestive stories was a key element in the original *Sexual Experience Questionnaire* (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Gelfand et al., 1995), the item was kept in the current study despite that its factor loading was lower than the desired level.

Figure II. Mean Scores of Acceptability of Specific Sexual Harassment Behaviors



Independent Variables

Two sets of independent variables were included in the current study: 1) the use of neutralization techniques, and 2) nationality and internationality of students.

The use of neutralization techniques was further broken down to four sub-variables according to Sykes and Matza's typology (1957). Results of the factor analysis of all neutralization variables were presented in Appendix III. In *denial of responsibility*, the offender asserted that their actions were due to external forces beyond their control, such as drug use, delinquent peers, and neighborhood disorganization (Agnew & Peters, 1986; Sykes & Matza, 1957). For example, Agnew and Peters (1986) used whether the respondent's friends pressured them to cheat in their study on cheating. In addition, prior research (Boyle & Walker, 2016) used "If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally" as a measure for this technique. Recent research on sexual harassment in public spaces also found that male offenders often perpetrated while other male companions were present (Nalla, 2020). This research measured denial of responsibility with the

question “In your opinion, a person is likely to sexually harass under what circumstances?” Two items were picked from the string of dichotomous questions, “under influence/ sober” and “friend’s encouragement/ independent decision”. These two items represented circumstantial, or external forces that could be beyond control of the potential offender, thus rejecting the offender’s responsibility in the incident.

Denial of injury represented “whether or not anyone has clearly been hurt by his deviance” (Sykes & Matza, 1957), and the goal was to lessen the seriousness and the consequences of the deviant behavior (Harris & Dumas, 2009; Maruna & Copes, 2005). For instance, offenders may claim that while there was harm, the acts were merely mischief (Byers, Crider, & Biggers, 1999), or in other words, the harm or act was not serious. In the current study, respondents were asked to rank four types of sexual harassment (verbal, non-verbal, less serious physical, more serious physical; Madan & Nalla, 2016) based on their seriousness. Prior research (Dutton, 1986) had compared wife assaulters’ description of injuries to official reports to measure how much the offender minimized the effects of domestic violence. In this research, while official reports were unavailable, respondents’ rating of different types of sexual harassment was compared to the norm, that physical harassment such as rubbing breasts with hands and poking with penis was more rated more serious than verbal harassment such as whistling, making kissing sounds, and asking about sexual life (Madan & Nalla, 2016). The current study thus compared how respondents ranked these two types of harassments, and computed a new variable representing such comparison (rank of verbal harassment minus rank of serious physical harassment). If verbal was ranked more serious than physical harassment (score of formula < 0, coded “1=Verbal is more serious”), it was suggested that the respondent utilized denial of injury.

Denial of victim, as Sykes and Matza (1957) pointed out, could be a form of "rightful retaliation or punishment" inflicted upon transgressors who broke societal norms. For example, prior research found that most domestic assaulters attributed victimization to the victims' disloyalty and disobedience (Cavannagh, Dobash, Dobash, & Lewis, 2001; Presser, 2003). In addition, it was found that traditional gender norms (i.e., physical appearance) could largely explain why college men "hogged" (Galley & Prohaska, 2006); a study on honor crimes (van Baak, Hayes, Freilich, & Chermak, 2018) also suggested that "offender killed his daughter because she wanted to divorce her husband from an arranged marriage" and being "unhappy with his daughter's style of dress and her resistance to his rules" were uses of denial of victim as the victim's behavior violated cultural standards. Moreover, a qualitative study on hate violence suggested that denial of victim could also involve dehumanization of the group where the victim belonged (Byers et al., 1999), where a respondent commented "…we can pick on them because they are so different" and that "…they are below us. I guess relative below us…and they were like almost not even anything to me. I guess we just picked on them." A total of nine statements regarding women's rights and roles, in other words, victim's deviation from the traditional gender roles and respondent's denial of equal rights, in the *Attitude toward Women Scale* (*AWS*; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973) were used in the current study to measure this technique of neutralization. Responses range from 1 being "totally disagree" and 5 being "totally agree". Statements measuring women's rights were thus reverse coded to 1 being "totally agree" and 5 being "totally disagree" to match statements measuring agreement with gender discrimination.

Condemnation of condemners, according to Sykes and Matza (1957), essentially meant attacking others, especially those who disapproved of the offenders' deviant behaviors. For example, sexual traffickers often complained of police corruption and lack of intervention (Copley,

2014; Kara, 2009; Raphael & Myers-Powell, 2010); students often justified their cheating behaviors by blaming teachers for their lack of competence and commitment (Koch, 2000; McCabe, 2001; Murdock, Hale, & Weber, 2001). Since there must be a condemner if this technique of neutralization was used, and that the survey did not depict anything related to societal responses to sexual harassment and external condemnation for those who actually engaged in this behavior, the current study therefore considered it unnecessary to measure respondents' use of condemnation of condemners. In addition, various research did not measure the use of this technique or found little to no relationship between condemning the condemners and delinquency (Hinduja, 2007; Minor, 1980; van Baak et al., 2018), the current study chose not to include this technique as a justification for pro-sexual-harassment attitudes.

Sykes and Matza (1957), as well as Maruna and Copes (2005), suggested that the *appeal to higher loyalties* were used when offenders claimed their actions were consistent with subculture moral obligations or to achieve higher goals. Prior research (Ulsperger, Hodges, & Paul, 2010) found that people who downloaded music illegally often referred to God as an appeal to higher loyalties; in addition, they argued that protecting one's own property from things they believe is illegal could be another form of this technique of neutralization. Appealing to the masculinity and power was also not uncommon (van Baak et al., 2018; Ljubicic, Ignjatovic, & Ilic, 2018). For example, van Baak and colleagues (2018) wrote that the culture (e.g., "He culturally believed he had the right to hit his wife and discipline his wife") and code of honor (e.g., violations of family honor) were common themes of appeals to higher loyalties. Research on hogging (Gailey & Prohaska, 2006) also suggested that some men reasoned hogging as a means to maintain friendship with other men or earn status within peer groups, and as a result affirmed their masculinity and reinforced male superiority (Prohaska & Gailey, 2010). Drawing from these research, we measured

appeal to higher loyalties with two statements on respondents' agreement with men's role in the society from the *AWS* (Spence et al., 1973), including whether fathers should have more authority in bringing up of children and if sons should be more encouraged to attend college than should daughters. Responses ranged from 1 being "totally disagree" and 5 being "totally agree", a higher score represented more support with masculinity and male honor.

The second set of independent variables included students' nationality and internationality. Nationality was assessed by the question "What's your nationality by birth?". After excluding those who answered "Other", American citizens were coded 0 and those identified as Chinese were coded 1. In addition, identification as international student was included and determined by the question "Are you currently studying in the United States?" Only those who answered "Yes" or "No, but I am studying abroad in another country" and identified as Chinese citizens were included in this variable (0=All other students, 1=Chinese international students).

Control Variables

Control variables were included in the current study to assess if the effect of independent variables varied by populations and students' experience with sexual harassment training.

Sex was computed into a binary variable with only males and females (0=Male, 1=Female). Because few respondents identified as other genders in the survey, it was difficult to make conclusions if non-binary individuals perceived the issue differently. Age, college ranking, and academic major were also included as demographic variables. Due to the research design and the small numbers of respondents, those under 18 years old were excluded from the analyses. The rest of the responses were categorized into three groups, including "18-22 years old" (1), "23-26 years old" (2), and "27 years or older" (3). Academic ranking was also computed into three groups,

including 1= “early in college” (i.e., freshmen and sophomores), 2= “later in college” (i.e., juniors and seniors”, and 3= “graduate students” (i.e., Master’s and doctoral students). Academic discipline was measured with respondent’s answer to the question “What’s your major?” Five options were given: 1=STEM and Medicine, 2=Arts and Humanities, 3=Social Sciences, 4=Business, and 5=Other.

The last control variable, students’ experience with sexual harassment education, was measured with the question “Have you ever participated in any sexual harassment training?”. Those who had participated in some sort of training were coded 1, and those who had never experienced any sexual harassment education were coded 0.

Analysis Plan

To measure the effect of techniques of neutralization, the current study employed linear regression models to determine whether each of the techniques has any significant relationship with acceptance of sexual harassment behaviors. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests and independent sample t-tests were used to determine whether demographic variables and experience with sexual harassment training had major effect on the differences in respondents’ acceptance rates. Multiple regressions were employed to assess if participation of training programs mediates techniques of neutralization in how people view sexual harassment.

RESULTS

Demographic Information

A total of 2,150 responses from currently enrolled college students were collected as of April 2nd, 2020. Table I displays the demographic information of the sample, as well as their usage of neutralization techniques, experience with sexual harassment training, and their tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors. 81.6% of the sample were in their early adulthood (18-22 years old), with only 1.9% of the sample of 27 years or older. Additionally, there was a large gap between the numbers of male (12.5%) and female (87.5%) respondents, and between the numbers of respondents who identified as Chinese (96.5%) and U.S. (3.5%) citizens. Most of the Chinese respondents were domestic students (those studying in China), and about 12.2% of the entire sample identified as Chinese international students studying in a foreign country.

Other demographic variables were more equally distributed. According to the statistics of U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2019), an estimate of 16.9 million students would be enrolled in college in 2020, and roughly 3 million would be in graduate school. Statistics retrieved from the Chinese Ministry of Education (2018) suggested that roughly 2.7 million students were enrolled in graduate school, and about 17 million were in four-year colleges. In our sample, most respondents were undergraduate students, with 42.4% in their first two years of college and 41.5% in their last two. 16.1% of the sample identified as graduate students pursuing either a master's or doctoral degree at the time. Regarding academic majors, 35.1% of the respondents were in STEM or Medicine, followed by 26.7% of Arts and Humanities major, 19.2% in Social Sciences, 12.5% in Business, and 6.4% in other majors (including Law and majors that could not be categorized into any of the items above).

One third (36.1%) of participants reported that they have participated in a sexual harassment training program previous to answering the survey (Mean=.36, SD=.48). The mean levels of use of denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victim, and appeal to higher loyalties were .92 (SD=.73), .12 (SD=.32), 12.29 (SD=3.88), and 3.44 (SD=1.52), all remaining on the lower end of the scale. The average degree of acceptance of sexual harassment behaviors was 18.45 (SD=4.45), with a median score of 17.00 and a mode of 15.00, suggesting that the overall dataset skewed towards the right.

Table I. Descriptive Statistics (N=2,150)

Variable	Description	N	%	Mean (SD)	Min.	Max.
Demographic Characteristics						
Age						
	1=18-22	1347	81.6			
	2=23-26	272	16.5			
	3=27 and older	31	1.9			
Gender						
	0=Male	220	12.5			
	1=Female	1547	87.5			
Academic Rank						
	1=Early in College	903	42.4			
	2=Later in College	883	41.5			
	3=Graduate Students	342	16.1			
Academic Major						
	1=STEM/Medicine	632	35.1			
	2=Arts & Humanities	480	26.7			
	3=Social Sciences	346	19.2			
	4=Business	225	12.5			
	5=Other	116	6.4			
Experience with SH Training						
	0=No	723	63.9			
	1=Yes	1279	36.1			
Independent Variables						
Techniques of Neutralization						
	Denial of Responsibility	1792		.92 (.73)	0	2
	Denial of Injury	1697		.12 (.32)	0	1
	Denial of Victim	2017		12.29 (3.88)	5	41
	Appeal to Higher Loyalties	2016		3.44 (1.52)	1	10
Nationality						
	0=American	62	3.5			
	1=Chinese	1728	96.5			
Internationality						
	0=All Others	1558	87.8			
	1=Chinese International	216	12.2			
Dependent Variable						
Acceptance of Sexual Harassment		1861		18.45 (4.45)	4	38

Preliminary Analysis: Effect of Neutralization

The first goal of the current study was to examine the effect of neutralization theory on students' tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors. It was hypothesized that the usage of neutralization techniques should change how much students tolerated sexual harassment. Table II presented the multiple regression test assessing the effect of each technique included in the study. Results revealed that denial of responsibility and denial of injury did not significantly impact students' acceptance of sexual harassment; whereas denial of victim (B=.390) and appeal to higher loyalties (B=.262) were both found to be significant predictors at p<.001 level. Consequently, whether students blamed external forces such as friends and alcohol or if they minimized the seriousness of sexual harassment were found insignificant; rather, students' agreement with traditional gender roles and male authority did influence how they perceive sexual harassment behaviors. In addition, the techniques alone showed a moderate effect size on acceptance of sexual harassment, where they explained 14.3% of the variability of the sample (R^2=.143). The study was able to reject the null hypothesis partially and summarize that some of the techniques of neutralization held significant power over acceptability of sexual harassment behaviors to college students.

Table II. Regression Results of Neutralization Techniques on Tolerance of Sexual Harassment Behaviors

Variable	B	S.E.
Denial of Responsibility	-.102	.138
Denial of Injury	.421	.315
Denial of Victim	.390***	.030
Appeal to Higher Loyalties	.262***	.073
R^2	.143	
F	44.382***	

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Effect of Nationality and Internationality

A second goal of the study was to assess whether acceptance of sexual harassment behaviors differed across nationality and internationality groups. It was hypothesized that Chinese citizens and Chinese international students should perceive sexual harassment as more tolerable than the rest of the sample. Tables III presented the independent sample t-test run to determine the mean differences between those who identified as Chinese and Americans.

Table III. Mean Differences on Acceptance of Sexual Harassment Behaviors and Neutralization Techniques between American and Chinese Students

Variable	Description	American		Chinese		
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t-test
Acceptance of Sexual Harassment		18.56	5.15	18.40	4.35	.24*
Techniques of Neutralization						
	Denial of Responsibility	1.43	.62	.90	.73	5.53
	Denial of Injury	0	0	.12	.33	-14.69***
	Denial of Victim	12.82	4.26	12.16	3.72	1.38
	Appeal to Higher Loyalties	3.15	1.58	3.41	1.49	-1.38
Experience with SH Training		.89	.32	.31	.46	13.79***

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Statistically significant differences were found in students' use of denial of injury (t=-14.69, p<.001), experience with sexual harassment training (t=13.79, p<.001), and their tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors (t=.24, p<.05). On average, those who identified as Chinese citizens reported significantly higher usage of denial of injury, where they rated verbal harassment (e.g., whistling, making kissing sound) as more serious than physical harassment (e.g., poking with penis, rubbing breasts) more often. U.S. students reported significantly higher participation rate in sexual harassment training programs, but they also reported higher tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors, as the analysis showed. Chinese and American students showed no statistically significant differences in their use of other techniques of neutralization; however, there was a

considerable difference between their use of denial of responsibility, suggesting that American students tended to blame alcohol or friends' encouragement more for sexual harassment incidents compared to Chinese students. From the results shown, the current study successfully rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that Hypothesis 2, that nationality was a significant contributor to tolerance of sexual harassment, was supported.

Table IV. Mean Differences on Acceptance of Sexual Harassment Behaviors and Neutralization Techniques between Chinese International Students and All Others

Variable Description	All Others		International		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t-test
Acceptance of Sexual Harassment	18.32	4.33	18.88	4.64	-1.73
Techniques of Neutralization					
Denial of Responsibility	.92	.73	.92	.75	.13
Denial of Injury	.12	32	.12	.32	-.10
Denial of Victim	12.28	3.82	11.38	3.03	3.96***
Appeal to Higher Loyalties	3.41	1.49	3.29	1.47	1.16
Experience with SH Training	.30	.32	.56	.50	-7.72***

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Next, the current study explored how internationality, or whether the student identified as a Chinese international student, shifted how they viewed sexual harassment. Results of an independent sample t-test was shown in Table IV. Statistically significant differences were only found in students' use of denial of victim ($t=3.96$, $p<.001$) and their experience with sexual harassment training ($t=-7.72$, $p<.001$). Primarily, Chinese international students used denial of victim significantly less than all other students combined, and they had significantly higher participation in relevant training comparatively. However, whether the respondent identified as a Chinese international student did not affect how they perceive sexual harassment behavior, thus failing to reject the null hypothesis. The current study concluded that student internationality alone was not a sufficient predictor of attitudes toward sexual harassment.

Effect of Control Variables

A second goal of this thesis tested the effect of demographic backgrounds and experience with sexual harassment education on students' acceptance of sexual harassment behaviors. Firstly, respondents were categorized into three age groups, from early adulthood (age 18-22), mid-20s (age 23-36), to late 20s (age 27 or more). Due to the nature of the variables, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was run to determine whether there were any differences across age groups. Results of the ANOVA test could be found in Table V below. Whereas no statistically significant difference was found in students' attitudes toward sexual harassment behaviors, analyses showed that respondents did have differential usage of denial of injury and denial of victim, as well as their experience with sexual harassment training, all statistically significant at $p<.05$ level. Those in their early adulthood reported significantly lower usage of denial of injury, compared to those in their mid-20s (I-J=0.-6). People in their late 20s had the highest participation rate in sexual harassment training programs, and they used denial of victim significantly more than both other groups. Unfortunately, the null hypothesis that age was not a significant predictor of students' tolerance of sexual harassment could not be rejected, thus failing to support Hypothesis 4.

Table V. Mean Differences on Acceptance of Sexual Harassment Behaviors and Neutralization Techniques among Respondent Age Groups

Variable Description	18-22		23-26		27+		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	F
Acceptance of Sexual Harassment	18.29	4.19	18.60	4.73	18.10	5.26	.63
Techniques of Neutralization							
Denial of Responsibility	.90	.73	.99	.73	1.10	.76	2.56
Denial of Injury	.10	31	.17	.37	.08	.27	4.28*
Denial of Victim	12.00	3.57	12.43	4.03	13.52	4.40	3.93*
Appeal to Higher Loyalties	3.37	1.48	3.51	1.53	3.87	1.86	2.64
Experience with SH Training	.33	.47	.32	.47	.55	.51	3.40*

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table VI displayed the results of an independent sample t-test run to determine the effect of sex/gender, and whether male and female respondents differed in their use of neutralization, participation in training, and their attitudes toward sexual harassment. Namely, males used denial of responsibility ($t=4.45$, $p<.01$) and denial of victim ($t=16.15$, $p<.001$) significantly more than females did, suggesting that they were more likely to shift blame onto external influences, and to reject women's victim identity in sexual harassment incidents. Not surprisingly, males also reported considerably and significantly higher acceptance of sexual harassment behaviors ($t=11.17$, $p<.001$). However, it was unusual to see that women utilized denial of injury more often than did males ($t=-2.14$, $p<.001$), or that women were more likely to agree that verbal harassment was more serious than physical harassment. Overall, the hypothesis (Hypothesis 5) that sex was a significant determinant of attitudes toward sexual harassment was adequately supported.

Table VI. Mean Differences on Acceptance of Sexual Harassment Behaviors and Neutralization Techniques between Male and Female Students

Variable	Description	Male		Female		
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t-test
Acceptance of Sexual Harassment		22.13	5.42	17.89	3.97	11.17***
Techniques of Neutralization						
	Denial of Responsibility	1.12	.66	.90	.74	4.45**
	Denial of Injury	.07	.26	.12	.32	-2.14***
	Denial of Victim	17.28	5.20	11.50	2.87	16.15***
	Appeal to Higher Loyalties	4.10	1.65	3.32	1.46	7.30
Experience with SH Training		.32	.47	.33	.47	-.30

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

Results from the ANOVA test on the effect of academic rank was presented in Table VII. In our analysis, we found that whether the student identified as freshman or sophomore, junior or senior, or in graduate programs had a significant impact on how much they used denial of injury ($F=3.22$, $p<.05$), that as one's academic rank increases, they became more likely to rate verbal

harassment as more serious than physical harassment. In addition, there was a significant difference among the three groups on their experience with sexual harassment training ($F=3.41$, $p<.05$), with those in their junior or senior years in college having the lowest participation rate. While there were differences on how students of different ranks perceived sexual harassment behaviors and that first- and second-year college students had the highest tolerance of sexual harassment, the ANVOA test reported no statistical significance. It was concluded that Hypothesis 6 could not be supported, and academic rank was not a predictor of student attitudes.

Table VII. Mean Differences on Acceptance of Sexual Harassment Behaviors and Neutralization Techniques among Respondent Academic Ranks

Variable Description	Fr & Sp		Jr & Sr		Graduate		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	F
Acceptance of Sexual Harassment	18.49	4.27	18.48	4.50	18.26	4.75	.33
Techniques of Neutralization							
Denial of Responsibility	.91	.73	.90	.75	.99	.73	1.65
Denial of Injury	.11	.32	.10	.32	.17	.37	3.22*
Denial of Victim	12.28	3.90	12.33	3.97	12.21	3.61	.12
Appeal to Higher Loyalties	3.38	1.45	3.46	1.47	3.50	1.53	.92
Experience with SH Training	.39	.49	.33	.50	.38	.49	3.41*

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

Last but not the least, the current research looked at the effect of academic majors on students' attitudes toward sexual harassment and their usage of neutralization techniques. It was hypothesized that those in some fields, such as social sciences and arts and humanities, should be less likely to use neutralization techniques and have lower tolerance level of sexual harassment behaviors, while those in business and STEM majors should be the opposite. Results of the ANOVA test was available in Table VIII, where STEM and Medicine majors did report the highest tolerance level, but no statistically significant difference was found regarding how different majors perceived sexual harassment behaviors overall, thus failing to support

Table VIII. Mean Differences on Acceptance of Sexual Harassment Behavior and Neutralization Techniques among Respondent Academic Majors

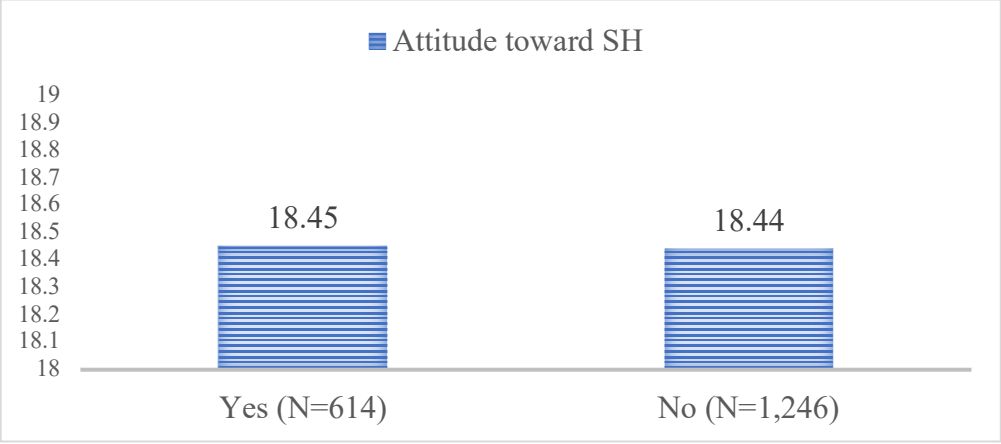
Variables	Description	STEM & Medicine		Arts & Humanities		Social Sciences		Business		Other		
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	F
Acceptance of Sexual Harassment		18.69	4.67	18.29	4.16	18.26	4.24	18.30	4.39	17.98	4.30	1.15
Techniques of Neutralization												
	Denial of Responsibility	.95	.74	.85	.71	.99	.73	.91	.71	.92	.80	2.33
	Denial of Injury	.10	.29	.15	.36	.11	.31	.12	.32	.11	.31	1.95
	Denial of Victim	12.97	4.46	11.70	2.99	12.05	3.47	11.43	3.32	12.03	3.71	11.41***
	Appeal to Higher Loyalties	3.50	1.51	3.31	1.43	3.40	1.52	3.37	1.53	3.38	1.52	1.16
Experience with SH Training		.32	.47	.33	.47	.39	.49	.31	.46	.24	.43	2.54*

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Hypothesis 7. Fortunately, some significant results were found in the tests. For example, students in STEM and Medicine majors used the denial of victim significantly more than all other majors ($F=11.41$, $p<.001$), and students in "other" majors reported the lowest participation rate in sexual harassment training programs ($F=2.54$, $p<.05$).

Lastly, the study expected that participation in sexual harassment training programs should increase students' awareness of the social problem, and as a result lead to a lower tolerance level of behaviors constructing sexual harassment. Figure III reported the independent sample t-test used to analyze the differences between those who had never participated in relevant training and those who had had some experience. Results from the test indicated that there was no significant between-group difference ($t=-.06$, $p>.1$). Unexpectedly, those who had experience with sexual harassment training reported marginally higher tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors than those who never participated in any programs or workshops (I-J=.01). In conclusion, the current research failed to find support for Hypothesis 8. Based on the results, whether one participated in relevant training programs had no impact on how acceptable sexual harassment behaviors were to the individual.

Figure III. Effect of Experience with Sexual Harassment Education on Acceptance of Sexual Harassment Behaviors



Further statistical analyses found significant differences across the intersection of gender and student status. Table IX presented the results of an ANOVA test and the post-hoc Tukey test, showing that male Chinese domestic students had the highest tolerance of sexual harassment (N=177, Mean=22.38), and female American domestic students had the lowest (N=41, Mean=17.73). Cumulatively, Chinese males reported significantly higher tolerance than all female respondents in the sample, while Chinese female students reported significantly lower tolerance of sexual harassment than all male students. However, no significant gender differences were reported among American domestic students and Chinese international students; in addition, students' tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors did not vary significantly by their nationality when they were of the same sex.

Table IX. Mean Differences on Acceptance of Sexual Harassment Behaviors among Respondent Gender-Internationality Groups

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1	-				
2	-2.79	-			
3	.47	3.27	-		
4	-1.87	.93	-2.34	-	
5	1.85	4.65***	1.38	3.72***	-
6	-2.75*	.05	-3.22*	-.88	-4.60***

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Variables: 1 – American Male (N=19), 2 – American Female (N=41), 3 – International Male (N=15), 4 – International Female (N=188), 5 – Chinese Male (N=177), 6 – Chinese Female (N=1,294).

To summarize, the current research found partial support that the use of neutralization techniques did predict students' tolerance level of sexual harassment behaviors. Namely, denial of victim and appeal to higher loyalties, characterized as rejection of gender equality and women's

rights, as well as support for male authority, significantly impacted how students think of sexual harassment behaviors. The more students subscribed to these ideas and used the two techniques, the more likely they were to agree that sexual harassment behaviors were acceptable. In addition, it was found that Chinese students had higher tolerance of sexual harassment compared to Americans, and females had significantly lower acceptance rate than did males.

Overall Model

Based on the statistical results in the previous sections, the current study aimed to examine the cumulative effect of all factors on students' attitudes toward sexual harassment behaviors. Due to that academic major was not hierarchical, the variable was omitted from the regression. Results of the multiple regression models were presented in Table IX. Model 1 included only the control variables. Contrary to what ANOVA tests showed before, students' their academic rank ($B=-.42$, $p<.05$) did show significant and negative effects on their tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors. Gender ($B=-4.10$, $p<.001$) remained as a significant predictor in the multiple regression analysis, however nationality was no longer one. Overall, the control variables had a considerable impact on students' tolerance level of sexual harassment ($R^2=.094$), suggesting that 9.4% of their variability was explained by students' age, sex, academic rank, academic major, and experience with sexual harassment training combined.

Model 2 was a summary of all variables and their collective effect on students' tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors. Results showed that gender ($B=-2.46$, $p<.001$) remained significant, while the effect of academic rank lost its significance ($B=-.33$, $p>.05$). The techniques of neutralization also contributed to the collective effect to some degree, that denial of victim ($B=.272$) and appeal to higher loyalties ($B=.268$) remained significant in this overall model, both at $p<.001$ level. Interestingly, internationality became a significant predictor of students' tolerance

of sexual harassment in this model (B=1.06, p<.01), and nationality lost its statistical significance. Moreover, although the effect of age was not found significant, it changed direction in Model 2. Collectively, the model was able to explain 16% of the variability in the sample, a moderate effect size respectively.

Table X. Overall Model of Demographic Variables, Neutralization Techniques, and Training Participation on Acceptance of Sexual Harassment Behaviors

Variable	Model 1 (Controls Only) B *(t)*	S.E.	Model 2 (Overall) B *(t)*	S.E.
Neutralization				
Denial of Responsibility			-.16 *(-1.10)*	.14
Denial of Injury			.17 *(.50)*	.33
Denial of Victim			.27*** *(7.60)*	.04
Appeal to Higher Loyalties			.27*** *(3.53)*	.08
Nationality (1=Chinese)			-.04 *(-.06)*	-.002
Internationality (1=Chinese International)			1.06** *(3.08)*	.08
Age	.05 *(.15)*	.33	-.16 *(-.49)*	.32
Gender (1=Female)	-4.10*** *(-11.90)*	.35	-2.46*** *(-6.35)*	.39
Academic Rank	-.42* *(-2.12)*	.20	-.33 *(-1.71)*	.19
Experience with SH Training (1=Yes)	.31 *(1.37)*	.23	.18 *(.79)*	.23
R^2	.094		.160	
F	36.993***		26.992***	

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

DISCUSSION

The current research tested the neutralization theory and found some techniques of neutralization showed considerable effects on college students' tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors. Consistent with previous research (Fejgin & Hanegby, 2001; Hall, 1996; Hargreaves, 1994), the use of appeal to higher loyalties, characterized as support for male authority and superiority, was found to significantly increase acceptance of sexual harassment behaviors. Similarly, a higher use of denial of victim also led to increased tolerance of sexual harassment, a finding that is consistent with prior literatures (Summers & Myklebust, 1992). Overall, the findings supported the idea that those who endorsed in traditional gender roles and hypermasculinity were more likely to accept or tolerate sexual harassment of women (Pryor, 1987), suggesting that sexual violence is essentially an expression of masculinity and male honor (van Baak et al., 2018; Curry, 1998; Galley & Prohaska, 2006; Sanday, 1996).

However, denial of responsibility, characterized as blaming alcohol and friend's encouragement for sexual harassment incidents, and denial of injury, operationalized as whether the respondent viewed verbal harassment as more important than physical harassment, were not found statistically significant. Statistical results in the current study did not support prior findings. For example, various research documented that people used denial of injury to justify sexual harassment (Hinze, 2004; Hlavka, 2014; Huebner, 2008; Robinson, 2005; Rolfe & Schroeder, 2017; Shakeshaft et al., 1997), indicating that this technique should hold some impact over attitudes toward sexual harassment, which was not the case in the current study. A potential reason for the mismatch could be that a lot of the research described were assessing incidents in specific settings (e.g., middle school), while the current study measured general attitudes and did not specify the circumstances of sexual harassment. As for denial of responsibility, prior studies

found that both victims and perpetrators of sexual violence often shifted the blame onto themselves or external factors to justify the incidents (Boyle & Walker, 2016; Dutton, 1986; Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Henderson & Hewstone, 1984; Nalla, 2020; Weiss, 2011). The significance was not found in the current study either, possibly due to the lack of serious consequences of sexual harassment compared to other sexual violence. Another explanation was that as this study only measured attitudes toward sexual harassment, behaviors which were only hypothetical. It was likely that few felt the need to shift the blame onto other people or factors as there was no cost to their acts anyway.

Additionally, the current research found that a number of demographic characteristics were significantly related to students' use of neutralization and their tolerance of sexual harassment. For example, we found that males were more likely to use denial of responsibility and denial of victim. Research often argued that fraternity men and athletes were more aggressive toward women and more likely to support rape myths (Bleecker & Murnen, 2005); Boswell & Spade, 1996; Boyle & Walker, 2016; Messner, 1992; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007; Nelson & Rowe, 1994). For instance, Murnen and Kohlman (2007) claimed that these college men were more likely to endorse in victim-blaming ideas and shift perpetrators' responsibility elsewhere; in other words, their meta-analysis tested the gendered differences in how people use neutralization techniques, which our research only found support for. Boyle and Walker (2016) found that fraternity and athletic team party attendance significantly increased college students' likelihood of neutralization such as denial of injury (in their text, "…are less likely to acknowledge an assault as rape") and denial of responsibility (i.e., "whether the respondent was incapacitated by alcohol and/or drugs"). While our study only found limited support for these conclusions, it was perhaps due to the differences in our targeted populations, that certain techniques of neutralization were more prevalent in

specific settings but not for the whole institute; or that some techniques could be more closely associated with specific types of delinquency (Mitchell & Dodder, 1983). This research also found that women tended to use denial of injury, defined as whether the respondent thought of verbal harassment as more serious than physical harassment, more often than males did. Previous research (Malovich & Stake, 1990; Silverman, 1976) claimed that some women, especially those with high self-esteem but traditional gender roles, would minimize the seriousness of sexual harassment, which might have caused the finding in the present study.

Like prior research, the current study also found that gender had the strongest effects on acceptance of sexual harassment behaviors in all demographic variables presented. However, the current study failed to support the role of nationality in determining students' perception of sexual harassment; rather, the research found that student internationality superseded the effect of their nationality. In a comparative analysis on college students' likelihood to sexual harass, Luthar and Luthar (2008) found that nationality had a strong and independent effect on the dependent variable. While males generally score higher on the likelihood to harass scale, Chinese and Indian males reported significantly higher likelihood than American males, and Chinese females scored significantly higher than American females too. Our results suggest that Chinese international students have significantly higher scores on the acceptability of sexual harassment behaviors than all other students, which was coherent with Luthar and Luthar (2008), as they were in fact measuring student internationality when drawing all data from an American university. But this finding was against what was discovered in other research, that residency in westernized communities decreased tolerance of sexual harassment for Asian students (Kennedy & Gorzalka, 2002). Regarding the gender difference in how students perceived sexual harassment, this current study shared similar results with various prior research, that males reported higher tolerance than

females did (Dill, Brown, & Collins, 2008; Ekore, 2012; LaRocca & Kromrey, 1999; Madan & Nalla, 2016; Reilly, Lott, & Gallogly, 1986; Tang et al., 1995).

Finally, this thesis found that participation in sexual harassment training prior to survey was not a significant predictor of their tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors, a finding that is in sharp contrast to findings from prior research (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2003; Beauvais, 1986; Blakely et al., 1998; York, Barclay, & Zajack, 1997). One possible explanation would be that the research that found trainings to work were often conducted in the western societies with more equal gender relations and higher awareness of sexual harassment, whereas the current study had a mixed sample of both Chinese and American college students. There could be other factors at play, resulting in the statistical findings this research offered. For example, this thesis found that Chinese international students had higher tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors than all other students. While trainings could increase awareness and prevent sexual harassment incidents for some, it might be less effective for international students for a few reasons. First, tthese issues may be related to language barriers and hardship associated with students settling in a foreign country. Secondly, the context of sexual harassment as a major issue in the U.S. may not dawn on international students while they are still finding a place in the American society. Finally, for Chinese citizens, it is likely that sexual harassment training did not hold any significance simply because not all universities mandate these training programs. Subsequently, findings from this research suggest that sexual harassment programs to contextualize the problem more effectively and that more cultural sensitivity and contents on gender equality are needed for contemporary sexual harassment trainings.

Limitations

The current research did find interesting results regarding college students' use of neutralization and their tolerance of sexual harassment. However, it was not without limitations, leading to that this study might not provide great reliability when generalizing the results to the general public.

First, due to how the survey was marketed, the majority of the sample were Chinese females. There were only 62 respondents (3.5% of the sample) identifying as American domestic students, among whom only 19 were male. A similar issue existed in the Chinese international student group, where only 15 respondents identified as male. It was likely that the low numbers resulted in the lack of significance in the statistical analyses. For example, in Table II and V, American students reported zero use of denial of injury, which was unlikely in real life, if not impossible. In addition, in Table VIII, there were considerable mean differences between American male and female students, international male and female students, as well as international male students and American females. However, no statistical significance was reported. In addition, while male Chinese students did report the highest tolerance of sexual harassment, because the number of female Chinese students was nearly a hundred times more than that of male ones, the overall tolerance of sexual harassment of Chinese domestic students was significantly lower than other student groups.

A second limitation of the current study was the candor of responses. Although the survey was anonymous and did not collect any identifying information, there remained the likelihood of nonresponse bias, where those who did respond to the survey already objected sexual harassment. According to previous research (Groves et al., 2006), interest in survey topic was one of the most

important reasons leading to nonresponse bias. While our survey masked its intentions, there was a high chance that some might have dropped out because of the length and topic of the study.

Third, the present study only measured four techniques of neutralization, while the original theory suggested five (Sykes & Matza, 1957). Moreover, in over 60 years of neutralization research, scholars have discovered additional methods of neutralization as well, such as *metaphor of the ledger* (Klockars, 1974; Minor, 1980), *defense of necessity* (Copes, 2003; Minor, 1981), *claim of normalcy* (Coleman, 1994), *denial of native intent*, and *claim of relative acceptability* (Henry, 1990). These newer techniques could also be influential in studying sexual harassment. For example, Henry (1990) suggested *claim of relative acceptability*, that the deviant claimed their actions were more acceptable compared to other crimes, such as murder. Since sexual harassment was not typically considered as a serious offense both morally and legally, research could find this technique more prevalent than *denial of injury*. *Metaphor of the ledger*, too, required comparisons (Klockars, 1974; Minor, 1980). For instance, an offender could defend themselves with their previous good deeds. In the current research, as results suggested that support for freedom of sex and women's rights to swear had positive and significant effects on tolerance of sexual harassment, this technique could be at work.

Future Research

Future research should continue to explore the phenomenon of sexual harassment, in college, workplace, and general public alike. Moreover, researchers should enlarge the targeted population, to assess more fully the effects of racial and gender identifications, as well as nationality and acculturation. They also need to ensure adequate sample sizes to detect if these variables hold any effect.

While numerous studies have documented optimistic effects of sexual harassment education, the current study failed to comply. Our analyses show that sexual harassment trainings help students understand the phenomenon better, but they do not change how much students tolerate sexual harassment behaviors; additionally, the study finds that the more contents are covered in the curriculum, the more students consider sexual harassment behaviors as acceptable. Future research should keep examining the aptitude of contemporary sexual harassment trainings and work with practitioners to develop a better curriculum.

Research examining a fuller model of neutralization theory are also needed, as the current research only measures denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victim, and appeal to higher loyalties. Knowing more of how people neutralize pro-sexual-harassment attitudes should teach us about the necessary practices the society can use to combat the phenomenon. For instance, if claim of relative acceptability (Henry, 1990) is indeed a significant predictor, it would support activism to legalize consequences for sexual harassment.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the current research finds that the techniques of neutralization partially explain students' tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors. It is found that denial of victim and appeal to higher loyalties, operationalized as rejection of women's rights and support for male dominance, show significant and positive effects on the acceptability of sexual harassment to college students across different backgrounds. We also find that internationality and gender may hold significant impacts on attitude toward sexual harassment, that males and Chinese international students report higher levels of tolerance toward sexual harassment. However, within the same sex, internationality does not appear to much influence on attitudes toward sexual harassment behaviors. It is suggested that future research expand their scope by assessing the differential effects of race, gender, and cultural identities on students. Finally, we should acknowledge that higher education is not a safe place from sexual harassment. Given that the current study finds no support for the role of participation in trainings on combating sexual harassment, more studies are needed to examine whether sexual harassment education works and if not, what other practices might help.

APPENDICES

Appendix I. Survey Instrument and Codebook

You're being asked to participate in a study of attitudes among college students about their daily life and experiences. Your participation consists of answering the questions in this survey honestly and to the best of your ability. You must be 18 years old to participate in this research. Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact Dr. Mahesh Nalla (655 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing, MI 48823). If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, or email irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by clicking on the arrow below to begin.

1. Are you currently enrolled in a post-secondary educational institute? (Answer "Yes" if you are on break or will return to school in 6 months)
    YES (1)
    NO (0)
2. What year are you in? (If you are graduating or on break, please select the ranking you will be entering when school starts)
    Freshman (1)
    Sophomore (2)
    Junior (3)
    Senior (4)
    Master's (5)
    PhD/Doctorate (6)

The following questions ask about your opinions toward some social phenomena and your education.

3. Do you agree with the statements below?

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Women should not swear or use obscene language.					
Women should be able to divorce their husbands if they want.					
Men should share household tasks such as doing dishes and laundry.					
Sex should not be a part of job appointment and promotion.					
Sons should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.					
Fathers should have more authority in bringing up of children.					
Girls should not engage in sexual activities before marriage.					
Women are less capable of making economic contributions than are men.					
Women should worry more about becoming good wives and mothers.					
Women's place is in the house.					
Women should have the freedom to wear clothing of their choice.					

4. Does your school provide sex and sexual harassment education?

Yes, and it is mandatory. (2)
Yes, but it is optional. (1)
No, it is not provided. (0)

5. Have you ever participated in any sexual harassment training?

YES (1)
NO (0)

6. After the training, do you feel like you're more aware of behaviors that can be considered sexual harassment?

YES (1)
NO (0)

7. What elements are included in the sexual harassment training you received?

	Included (1)	Not Included (2)	I can't remember (99)
Definition and type			
Statistics and scope			
Scenarios			
Discussion			
Victim self-defense			
Bystander behavior			
Expert trainers			
Follow-up after			
Nontolerance policy			
Grievance procedures			
Helpline and services			
Investigation process			
Legal consequences			
Required participation			

8. Among the elements in sexual harassment training in the last question, please pick 5 items that leave the greatest impressions to you.

Definition and type (1)
Statistics and scope (2)
Scenarios (3)
Discussion (4)
Victim self-defense (5)
Bystander behavior (6)
Expert trainers (7)
Follow-up after (8)
Nontolerance policy (9)
Grievance procedures (10)
Helpline and services (11)
Investigation process (12)
Legal consequences (13)
Required participation (14)

Next, we would like to know how you feel about some everyday behaviors.

9. Here are some behaviors that people have encountered or observed in their daily life. Do you think they are acceptable?

	Strongly Unacceptable (1)	Unacceptable (2)	Neutral (3)	Acceptable (4)	Strongly Acceptable (5)
Tell suggestive stories					
Treat differently because of gender					
Make sexist remarks					
Display sexist materials					
Invasion of privacy such as repeated calling					
Proposition you, such as asking you for hook-up					
Deliberate touching					
Attempts to stroke/fondle					
Bribe with reward for sexual cooperation					
Actual reward prior to sexual cooperation					
Threat for lack of sexual cooperation					
Negative consequences for refusing sex					

10. Have you ever experienced any of the behaviors listed in the question above?

Yes (1)
No (0)
I prefer not to answer. (99)

11. Below are four types of sexual harassment. Please rank them from what you think is most serious to the least.

Verbal (whistle or kissing sounds, ask about sexual life)
Non-Verbal (stalking, exposing genitals)
Physical I (deliberate/unwanted touching, pushing loosely)
Physical II (rubbing breasts, poking with penis)

We would like to know the risk factors of sexual harassment in your opinion.

12. In your opinion, where among the following places is sexual harassment most likely to occur?

At a bus stop or on public transportation. (1)
At public spaces or parks. (2)
At a bar, nightclub, house party, or populated event. (3)
Somewhere private and less crowded. (4)
On campus, such as in a classroom or dormitory. (5)

13. In your opinion, when among the following time blocks is sexual harassment most likely to occur?

During daytime. (1)
In the evening. (2)
After midnight. (3)

14. In your opinion, a person is likely to sexually harass under what circumstances?

	(1)	(2)	
Under influence			Sober
With friends			By self
With a group of friends			With one friend
Stranger			Acquaintance
Masculine-looking			Feminine looking
Attractive			Average or Unattractive
Single			In a relationship
Friend's encouragement			Independent decision
Poor lighting			Well-lit environment

At last, we would like to know more about you.

15. What is your gender?
    - Male (1)
    - Female (2)
    - Other/ I prefer not to answer. (99)
16. Are you currently studying in the United States?
    - YES (1)
    - NO (0)
    - No, but I'm studying abroad in another country. (2)
17. How long have you studied in the U.S. in total? (Including breaks and OPT)?
    - Years _____
    - Months _____
18. What's your major?
    - STEM and Medicine (1)
    - Business (2)
    - Arts and Humanities (3)
    - Social Sciences (4)
    - Other/ I'm not sure. (5)
19. What's your nationality by birth?
    - U.S. (1)
    - China (2)
    - Other (99)
20. What is your current age?
    - Under 18
    - 18
    - 19
    - 20
    - …
    - 30
    - Over 30

Appendix II. Reliability Statistics of Dependent Variable

Model Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's α	Cronbach's α based on standardized items	N of items	N of cases
.791	.811	12	1,838

Item Factor Analysis

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Factor Loading
Tell suggestive stories	1857	1	5	3.25	.864	.360
Treat different because of gender	1861	1	5	1.54	.727	.508
Make sexist remarks	1859	1	5	1.23	.485	.613
Display sexist materials	1859	1	4	1.33	.570	.562
Invasion of privacy such as repeated calling	1859	1	5	1.15	.408	.464
Proposition you, such as asking you for hook-up	1859	1	5	1.74	.906	.603
Deliberate touching	1857	1	5	1.53	.753	.641
Attempts to stroke/fondle	1854	1	5	1.64	.856	.616
Bribe with reward for sexual cooperation	1856	1	4	1.27	.586	.680
Actual reward prior to sexual cooperation	1858	1	5	1.57	.839	.594
Threat for lack of sexual cooperation	1855	1	5	1.10	.338	.607
Negative consequences for refusing sex	1852	1	4	1.12	.372	.577

Appendix III. Factor Analysis of Neutralization Variables

Denial of Responsibility

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Factor Loading
A person is likely to sexually harass under what circumstances? Under Influence/Sober	1770	0	1	.65	.479	.730
A person is likely to sexually harass under what circumstances? Friend's encouragement/ Independent decision	1727	0	1	.30	.456	.734

Denial of Victim

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Factor Loading
Women should be able to divorce their husbands if they want. *	2009	1	5	1.19	.534	.554
Sex should not be a part of job appointment and promotion. *	2009	1	5	1.32	.664	.449
Men should share household tasks such as doing dishes and laundry. *	2007	1	5	1.63	.844	.553
Women should have the freedom to wear clothing of their choice. *	2010	1	5	1.17	.448	.601
Women should not swear or use obscene language.	2015	1	5	1.68	.893	.628
Girls should not engage in sexual activities before marriage.	2012	1	5	1.45	.813	.697
Women are less capable of making economic contributions than are men.	2009	1	5	1.31	.646	.631
Women should worry more about becoming good wives and mothers.	2006	1	5	1.44	.755	.762
Women's place is in the house.	2007	1	5	1.15	.410	.716

* Reverse coded.

Appeal to Higher Loyalties

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Factor Loading
Sons should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.	2011	1	5	1.44	.772	.526
Fathers should have more authority in bringing up of children.	2012	1	5	2.00	1.069	.601

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