

EUN HYE JANG\* *Younhwa Middle School*

MIYOUNG LEE\*\* *Inha University*

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## Korean High School Student's Perceptions of Sexual Harassment: The Effects of Victim's Clothing, Behavior, and Respondent's Gender<sup>†</sup>

*This study investigates Korean high school student's perception of sexual harassment and relative effects of victim's clothing, dating behavior and respondent's gender on perceptions of alleged sexual harassment cases. A quasi-experimental method was applied using a 2 × 2 × 2 between-subjects factorial design that manipulated three variables (clothing exposure, dating behavior, and gender). Questionnaires were distributed to a convenience sample of 540 high school students and 530 questionnaires were used for the data analysis. The results indicate that the victim's clothing and dating behavior had a significant main effect on the responsibility for sexual harassment. The respondent put less responsibility on the assailant when the victim wore revealing clothing and when her dating behavior was provocative. The significant interaction effect between the respondents' gender and the victim's dating behavior indicated that when the victim's behavior was provocative, female respondents held more responsible to victim than male respondents did. The results also indicate that victim's clothing, dating behavior, and respondent's gender had significant main effect on the justification of sexual harassment. The respondents indicated that assailant's*

*behavior is unjustifiable; however, when victim more revealing clothing, they indicated that the behavior is more justifiable.*

### INTRODUCTION

People generally get information on their counterparts from a personal appearance including the clothing they wear; subsequently, they make assumptions and analyze the information they receive to make personal judgments. Impression are human cognition based on the information from others related to character, desire, emotion, will, thinking and all the rest of the perceptive facts. The clues used in this process of formation of impressions include physical appearance and non-verbal communication. The physical appearance shows that body shape, body size, face, and health play important roles in social cognition; in addition, clothing, cosmetics, glasses, and body odor also influenced first impressions. Another factor that influences first impressions is formed by the interactions of many other non-verbal clues. These clues are collectively called 'non-verbal communication' that includes paralanguage, gestures, and stares (Kaiser, 1996).

In recent years, the attitudes on revealing clothing have changed from what they used to be, and it has now become easier to see people wearing revealing clothing in Korea. Such revealing clothing

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\*First author, Teacher, Younhwa Middle School, Incheon, Korea (eh7732@naver.com).

\*\*Corresponding author, Professor, Department of Fashion Design and Textiles, Inha University, Incheon, Korea (mylee@inha.ac.kr)

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is sometimes viewed negatively; some even blame it as the cause for sexual harassment or sexual assault. The event of the “SlutWalk” recently held in Canada, was triggered by Const. Michael Sanguinetti at the safety forum at York University who said, “Women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized” (Rush, 2011). In the “SlutWalk” event, young female participants marched down the street wearing slut-like clothing, protesting against views that justify sexual assault based on the appearance of victimized women. This event became a global phenomenon and included in event held in Seoul, Korea (Kim, 2011). The event was to dispel the wrongful view where victimized women are perceived as having “asked for it” by wearing sexually appealing clothing. Such a reprehensible view is sometimes used as a defense by sexual offenders during trials who argue that the revealing clothing or provocative attitude of the female provoked the offensive behavior of the perpetrators (Lennon, *et al.*, 1992-1993).

During the teenage period, adolescents go through critical stages of physical, mental, and social of development where they learn the social functions necessary to become an adult. Adolescence form moral values and internal sets of standards for their behavior. Subsequently, adolescent perceptions (when going through such a critical period) might be a meaningful indicator of future attitudes and behavior (Steinberg, 2008). Sexual harassment is common among students at school and a survey of more than 2,000 U.S. public school students in grades 8 through 12 found that 81% of the students had experienced some form of sexual harassment at some time during school (American Association of University Women, 2001). A study on students from 23 Canadian high schools showed that sexual harassment victimization was common among both boys (42.4%) and girls (44.1%) in grade 9 (Chiodo *et al.*, 2009). There are no an official statistics on juvenile sexual harassment; however, 24.2% of middle school & high school student participants experienced sexual harassment according to research on the sexual harassment of juveniles (Kim *et al.*, 2001). Previous studies in other countries investigated the relationship between a victim’s appearance or clothing and sexual harassment/assault (Johnson & Lee, 1999; Johnson &

Workman, 1992, 1994; Lennon *et al.*, 1992-1993; Watley, 1995; Workman & Johnson, 1991). However, studies on adolescence and the relation to these topics have not been researched in Korea. Recent statistics shows there has been a notable increase in the reporting of sexual assault cases in Korea. The reporting of sexual assault (including sexual abuse and sexual harassment) increased more than four times between 2006-2011 among school-elementary, middle, and high- students (Park, 2011).

In addition, due to introduction of new judicial system (“Judicial Citizens’ Participation Trial”), there is a need to investigate the effects of victim’s or perpetrator’s appearance on the perception of a sexual assault cases. The findings of previous study suggested that physical appearance (e.g., attractiveness and clothing) could play an important role in judgments made of people involved in sexual harassment charges (Castellow *et al.*, 1990; Jacobson, 1981; Watley, 1995). Most studies that look at the effect of appearance or clothing on the perception of sexual assault cases have been done in the U.S.; however, there is a need to research this topic in Korea. This study investigated the effect of victim’s clothing, behavior and the respondent’s gender on the perception of sexual harassment by high school students.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Sexual Harassment*

Sexual harassment is defined as the unlawful harassment of a person (a job applicant or an employee) based on gender. It includes “sexual harassment or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature” (EEOC, 2011). In Korea, sexual harassment is defined as, “employer, public officers, or workers using their authority or other sexual behaviors and utterances to make the victims feel sexually offended or ashamed, or giving bad treatment because of non-compliance with the sexual demands” in the “*Framework Act on Women’s Development*” (2011). The fundamental elements of sexual harassment are forced, unwanted sexual interest or sexual behavior, regardless of the intent of

the victims. It is also understood that sexual harassment is about visual, verbal, and physical behavior of a sexual nature without regard to the intent of the victims. It is also understood that offenders who have positions power over victims show that uninvited sexual behavior creates a hostile environment and causes the acceptance of such behavior to negatively influence the recruitment or promotion of the victims.

There are prejudices and beliefs that exist in our society that create a culture of sexual violence against woman (Raja, 2011). Many people think that sexual harassment is the fault of the victim or that sexual harassment is a simple "misunderstanding" between the victim and perpetrator or in "over reaction" by the victim. One of the most prevalent sexual violence myths is that sexual harassment is the fault of the victim with an underlying theme that victims somehow contribute to sexual assault incident or that perpetrators are not fully responsible for their actions (Johnson *et al.*, 1997). When victims wear revealing clothing, women are judged more harshly and more promiscuous than women who are dressed in less revealing clothing. Such biased views unfairly transfer the responsibility of sexual harassment to victim.

#### *Clothing and Sexual Harassment*

Previous studies examine the relationship between clothing, sexual assault/harassments and responsibility. Lewis and Johnson (1989-1990) studied the causal responsibility of a sexual assault case with male and female college student subjects based on the attribution theory. The results indicate that people who internally attributed the cause of the case were thought to be influenced by appearance (i.e., the clothing and cosmetics they were wearing). Additionally, these people would attribute more responsibility to victims than those with external responsibility.

Johnson and Workman (1992) studied the effect of provocative clothing and the sex of the subject on the responsibility concerning the provocation of sexual harassment. Results revealed that subjects rated the provocative clothing model more likely to provoke sexual harassment than a model wearing

nonprovocative clothing. In the study, to test the effect of the victim's clothing, the just-world belief, and the gender of the subject on the responsibility concerning sexual harassment. Johnson & Workman (1994) found that subjects believed that a victim appearing in provocative clothing (as opposed to the victim wearing non-provocative clothing) could have prevented the incident, provoked the advances, and brought about the advance. More female subjects indicated that male supervisors were more likely to engage in sexual harassment. This study found that females appearing in provocative clothing were more likely to be considered the recipient of sexual harassment compared to a female in non-provocative clothing.

The amount of cosmetics worn is another factor related to the attribution of provoking sexual harassment. A model with heavy cosmetics was rated more likely to provoke sexual harassment than when she wore moderate cosmetics. Women with heavy or moderate cosmetics were rated as more likely to provoke sexual harassment than when not wearing cosmetics. The result reflects the misinterpretation of make-up cosmetic usage as a cue of sexual interest. They also found that males would rate the model more likely to provoke sexual harassment and be harassed than female subjects (Workman & Johnson, 1991).

Whatley (1995) found that the revealingness of victim's clothing and character significantly influenced the tendency to blame the victim using meta-analysis from previous research. He found that a sexual assault victim that wore revealing clothing is held more responsible than a victim dressed otherwise and a less "respectable" sexual assault victim is held more responsible than a victim of "good" character. He also found that the physical attractiveness of the victim and victim acquaintance has an influence on victim blame; however, the results did not support to clarify the inconsistencies in the previous research.

Most studies investigate the effect of female appearance on the perception of a sexual harassment case. Johnson & Lee (1999) investigated the effect of the victim's clothing, behavior, and the respondent's gender upon the perceptions of alleged "date rape". In this study, the victim's clothing was not

significantly related to the perceptions of date rape; however, provocative behavior and respondent's gender were statistically influential on the respondents' perceptions toward date rape. They argued that clothing was presented in the context of other independent variables that provides information about the alleged victim that may dissipate the impact of clothing. In addition, this study was different from previous studies that used only stimulations in the pictures of different clothing that makes clothing more salient to participants and magnifies its impact. Johnson & Lee (1999) used vignettes of different behaviors and situations for their stimulus; subsequently, they explained that the influence of clothing was not as significant.

#### *The Gender Difference in the Perception of Sexual Harassment*

Previous studies revealed that men tended to interpret behaviors that the women thought of as an expression of friendship to be of a sexual meaning (Johnson, *et al.*, 1991; Saal, Johnson & Weber, 1989). Abbey (1982) presented in a study on the college students that men tended to misinterpret female kindness in a sexual context.

Previous studies show a significant difference by men and women on the perceptions of sexual harassment. Women are more likely to perceive a certain behavior as sexual harassment than men (Gutek, *et al.*, 1983; Koenig & Ryan, 1986; Lored, *et al.*, 1995; Padgitt & Padgitt, 1986; Powell, 1986). However, men tended to criticize female victims more, and simply appeared to believe that those behaviors were natural parts of communication between men and women in some cases of alleged sexual harassment (Lott, *et al.*, 1982; Reilly, *et al.*, 1986). The meta-analysis studies on gender difference in the perceptions of harassment indicate that women view a greater range of behavior as sexual harassment compared to men (Blumerthal, 1998; Rotundo, *et al.*, 2001).

Weisz & Earls (1995) found that males were more accepting of interpersonal violence and rape myths, more attracted to sexual aggression, less sympathetic towards rape trial victims, and less likely to judge the defendant as guilty of rape. Grubba and Harrower

(2009) found that male participants blamed the victim more than female participants did in a study of attitudes towards sexual assault victims in different types of sexual assault scenarios; in addition, participants consistently attributed most blame to the victim in the seduction sexual assault scenario. Blumberg and Lester (1991) surveyed both high school and college students and found that males are high on sexual assault myth and victim blame scales in a study that investigated the relationship between agreement with the sexual assault myth and the tendency to blame the victim. They found that high school males believed more strongly in the rape myth and blamed the victims of rape more than high school females and college males; in addition, they suggested that increased education and life experiences may be responsible for the changing attitudes of college students. In a survey on Australian high school students, Davis & Lee (1996) found that males were significantly more likely to endorse sexual assault myths, agree that forced sex was acceptable in some situations, and to hold false stereotypes about sexual assault than female students. Kim, *et al.*, (2006) surveyed 318 Korean college students and found significant gender differences on sexual harassment myths and sex role related attitudes. Male undergraduates were more likely to regard sexual harassment as behavior caused by misunderstandings and excessive responses. Johnson and Lee (1999) also found statistical respondent's gender differences on perceptions of alleged date rape, because of the low estimated mega squared valued for respondent's gender; however, they noted the need to be cautious about suggestions that there were meaningful differences in men's and women's perceptions.

## METHODS

### *Research Questions*

This study investigated the effects of clothing and behavior on the responsibility and justification of sexual harassment by male and female high school students. The detailed research questions included:

- 1-1) What are high school students' perceptions of cause in relation to alleged sexual

harassment?

- 1-2) Are there gender differences on high school students' perceptions of responsibility in relation to alleged sexual harassment?
- 2) Are there differences on the responsibility and justification of alleged sexual harassment by:
  - 2-1) the level of exposure of the victim's clothing?
  - 2-2) the level of provocativeness of the victim's dating behavior?
  - 2-3) the gender of the respondent?

*Preliminary Study*

Preliminary research with ten high school students was conducted to identify the variables used to design the experimental stimuli (vignettes in this study). We asked questions in relation to what kind of clothing they usually wear to understand what they perceive as revealing clothing. It turned out that they usually wear tight (skinny) jeans, basic t-shirts, shirts, hooded t-shirts, and training outfits. Men chose miniskirts, t-shirts with deep cleavage, tops, hot pants, and t-shirts that reveal the belly button as answers to questions on what constituted revealing clothing. They indicated that holding hands, leaning over, putting hands on the shoulder or waist, kissing, and going places where people are not around were provocative dating behavior. For questions on what they thought constituted sexual harassment, they said that they did not think skinship with someone as sexual harassment; however, in terms of forced kisses and body rubbing, doing skinship when they do not want to do it is definitely sexual harassment.

*Quasi-experimental Study*

*Development of stimuli* A quasi-experimental method

was applied using a 2 × 2 × 2 between-subjects factorial design. For the independent variables, victim's clothing, dating behavior, and respondent's gender were included. Pictures have been for stimuli in previous studies and researchers have observed reactions from interviewees as the perceptions of sexual harassment issues changed. Lewis and Johnson (1989-1990) as well as Workman and Orr (1996) showed pictures in which the clothing that the women wore in the pictures was manipulated, and observed the subjects' perceptions of sexual harassment. There were no other factors in the study to influence perceptions other than the clothing. Johnson and Lee (1999) proved in a previous study that the use of vignettes may have a positive effect in delivering variables and the situations compared to cases where only pictures are used. We replicated Johnson and Lee (1999)'s study on the effect of clothing on the perception of sexual harassment by using vignettes to deliver the situation effectively to respondents among adolescents in Korea in order to have a connection between past research in order to integrate existing and new knowledge. We believe that it is important to examine if there has been any changes since 1990s. Researchers could confirm or raise other questions previously been produced by revisiting earlier assumptions or conclusions.

The vignettes used in this study were developed by the variables found in the preliminary study. Table 1 shows four vignettes developed with two manipulated variables that include clothing type (revealing versus non-revealing) and dating behavior (provocative versus non-provocative); in addition, these four vignettes were distributed to male and female high school students (non-manipulated variable-sex of the interviewee).

The vignettes used in the survey, as an example

Table 1. *Development of Vignettes using Two Manipulated (Clothing, Dating Behavior) Variables*

Items	Revealing clothing	Non-revealing clothing
Provocative behavior	Scenario 1 - the girl (Eunhee) is wearing a mini skirt and a t-shirt with deep cleavage. The girl leans on the shoulder of the man (Minsoo) and closes her eyes	Scenario 2 - the girl is wearing skinny jeans and a hooded t-shirts. On a dark part of the bench, the girl leans on the man's shoulder and closes her eyes.
Non-provocative	Scenario 3- the girl is wearing a mini skirt and a t-shirt with deep cleavage. She holds the hand of the man in a large shopping mall.	Scenario 4 - the girl is wearing skinny jeans and a hooded t-shirts, and she holds the hand of the man in a large shopping mall.

manipulated with the “revealing clothing” and the “provocative behavior” may have looked like as follows (manipulated parts are underlined);

*Minsoo and Eunhee, who are both in their second year in high school, have known each other as friends for the last three months. They cannot see each other because of studying during the weekdays, but they occasionally meet each other for dates on the weekends. Last Saturday, they met as they promised, to pay a visit to an amusement park. Minsoo was waiting for his girlfriend at the promised location. Eunhee was wearing short miniskirt and a t-shirt with deep cleavage. After having fun in the park and having dinner together, Eunhee suggested that they go to a park bench and sit there, talking to each other. While they were talking, Eunhee leaned over on the shoulder of Minsoo and closed her eyes. Minsoo, after seeing her doing this, tried to kiss her and rub her chest. Then, Eunhee screamed and slapped him in the face. Then, she took off for home. When Eunhee came back to school, Eunhee told her friend what had happened and she was crying as she described the event, saying that Minsoo tried to sexually harass her against her will.*

*Measurement* The questions measuring the responsibility and justification of sexual harassment were organized based on previous research related to clothing and sexual harassment or date rape (Johnson & Lee, 1999; Johnson & Workman, 1992; Kim, *et al.*, 2006; Lewis & Johnson, 1989-1990). The perceptions of sexual harassment were measured with six statements (e.g., If the victim was behaving like a find lady, sexual harassment would have never occurred, the media’s distorted presentation of sexual issue is the cause of sexual harassment) using five-point scales (1 = not very likely, 5 = very likely). Responsibility of sexual harassment were measured with two statements asking Minsoo’s and Eunhees responsibility (e.g., Do you think Minsoo is responsible for this case? Do you think Eunhee is responsible for this case?) using five-point scales (1 = not very likely, 5 = very likely), and one statement asking the responsibility for the event (e.g., how would you find both of these two persons responsible for the

outcome of the event?) using a seven-point scale (-3 = Minsoo’s fault, 3 = Eunhee’s fault). The justification of sexual harassment was measured with two statements (e.g., Do you find the behavior of Minsoo on Eunhee justifiable? Do you think Minsoo behaved that way because he was interested in Eunhee and wanted some skinship?) using five-point scales (1 = not very likely, 5 = very likely).

*Selection of the samples* The survey was conducted with students at male or female high schools and in co-ed high schools in the capital area. A total of 540 students from 6 high schools participated and the questionnaires were distributed by the home room teachers. All of the 540 questionnaires were collected, and 530 questionnaires (male-254; female-276) were used for statistical analysis after data cleaning. Of the 530 samples, 254 of the samples were male (47.9%) and 276 (52.1%) were female students. A total of 62% were from male or female high schools and 38% were from co-ed high schools. About 60% of the total samples were freshmen, 25% were sophomore and 14% were seniors. Of the samples, 45.7% ( $n = 242$ ) of the students answered that they have had a boyfriend or girlfriend. For sexual behavior experiences, 43.8% answered that they had light skinship (43.8%), followed by kissing (19.6%), caressing (4.9%), and sex (3.6%). About 4.5% said that they had experienced unwanted sexual advances.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Perceptions on the Cause of Sexual Harassment*

Respondents indicated that perceptions and behavior based on gender roles, sexual culture, and distorted sexuality (due to mass media) were causes of sexual harassment (Table 2). Male and females both agreed that the stereotyped gender image, sexuality culture and distorted sexuality conveyed by mass media were the causes of sexual harassment. In addition, they also disagreed with two statements, “Those who get sexually harassed behaved in a way that provided the reasons for it.” and “If the victim was behaving modestly, sexual harassment would have never occurred.” The results showed that Korean high

Table 2. Respondents Perceptions on the Cause of Sexual Harassment (N = 530)

Questions	Gender M (SD)		Mean Difference	t
	Male (n = 254)	Female (n = 276)		
The reason that sexual harassment happens is because the victims were in exposing clothes and acting suggestively.	2.64 <sup>a</sup> (1.08)	2.87 (1.08)	-.224	-2.39*
Those who get sexually harassed behaved in a way that provided the reasons for it.	2.08 (0.96)	2.28 (0.99)	-.196	-2.32*
If the victim was behaving modestly, sexual harassment would have never occurred.	2.29 (1.05)	2.23 (1.07)	.063	.683
The cause of sexual harassment is the deep rooted difference in the perceptions of gender roles and sexual issues, as well as behaviors on sexual issues between men and women in Korea.	2.92 (1.08)	2.84 (1.02)	.077	.842
More openness toward sexuality culture is changing the perceptions on the sexual harassment.	3.17 (1.02)	3.22 (0.89)	-.052	-.627
The media's distorted presentation of sexual issues is an attributable cause of sexual harassment.	3.90 (1.03)	3.94 (0.89)	-.041	-.486

Note <sup>a</sup> 1 = not very likely, 5 = very likely  
 \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

school students perceived higher on external attribution than the internal attribution related to sexual harassment.

In order to find any differences over the awareness of the causes of sexual harassment based on respondent's gender, *t*-tests were conducted. There were significant gender differences on two items: Female ( $M = 2.87$ ) respondents tend to agree with, "The reason that sexual harassment happens is because the victims were in exposing clothes and acting suggestively" statements compared to males ( $M = 2.64$ ). Females ( $M = 2.28$ ) also agreed more with the statement of "If the victim behaved modestly, sexual harassment would have never occurred" compared to the males ( $M = 2.08$ ). This result showed that the female students were more likely to think that the causes of sexual harassment were attributable to what the victim was wearing and how she acted compared to the male students. This result is very different from previous studies that suggested that one of the most salient factors that determines the perceptions of sexual harassment is the gender of the perceiver; in addition, males were significantly more likely to endorse sexual assault myths and hold false stereotypes about sexual assault than females (Blumberg & Lester, 1991; Davis & Lee, 1996; Weisz & Earls, 1995). This also did not support the study that surveyed Korea college students (Kim

*et al.*, 2006) that found that male college students were more likely to regard sexual harassment as behavior caused by a misunderstanding, excessive responses, and misbehavior by the victim.

#### Responsibility of Sexual Harassment

Table 4 shows the three items used to measure the responsibility for sexual harassment. We chose multivariate tests for the analyses due to the correlations of the dependent variables. MANOVA revealed a significant main effect for the types of victim's clothing, Pillai's trace = 0.037,  $F(3,520) = 6.674$ ,  $p < .001$ , and victims' behavior, Pillai's trace = 0.035,  $F(3,520) = 6.283$ ,  $p < .001$ . In addition, there was a significant interaction effect between the victim's behavior and respondent's gender, Pillai's trace = 0.036,  $F(3,520) = 6.432$ ,  $p < .001$ . For the gender of the respondents, Pillai's trace showed a significance probability of .063 and showed that gender did not have any influence on the perceptions of the responsibility for sexual harassment. A series of uni-variate analysis of variance were conducted on each of the dependent variables to determine which contributed to the overall effect (Table 3).

The ANOVA on the dependent variable measured if Minsoo is responsible for the alleged sexual harassment case and revealed that there were significant main effects of the victim's clothing and

Table 3. Responsibility by Victim's Clothing, Behavior, and Respondent's Gender ( $N = 530$ )

Questions	Victims' Clothing <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )		<i>F</i> (1, 528)	Victim's Behavior <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )		<i>F</i> (1, 528)	Gender <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )		<i>F</i> (1, 528)
	Revealing ( <i>n</i> = 268)	Non-revealing ( <i>n</i> = 262)		Provocative ( <i>n</i> = 237)	Non-provocative ( <i>n</i> = 293)		Male ( <i>n</i> = 254)	Female ( <i>n</i> = 276)	
Do you think Minsoo is responsible for this case? <sup>a</sup>	3.51 (.060)	3.76 (.061)	8.959**	3.59 (.064)	3.66 (.057)	.482	3.73 (.062)	3.54 (.059)	5.071*
Do you think Eunhee is responsible for this case? <sup>a</sup>	3.17 (.067)	2.89 (.068)	8.874**	3.26 (.071)	2.84 (.064)	18.724***	2.973 (.069)	3.122 (.066)	2.445
How would you find both of these two persons attributable for the outcome of the event? <sup>b</sup>	-.46 (.443)	-.95 (.078)	19.951***	-.54 (.083)	-.83 (.074)	6.221*	-.760 (.081)	-.624 (.077)	1.493

Note <sup>a</sup> 1 = not very likely, 5 = very likely, <sup>b</sup> -3 = Minsoo's fault, 3 = Eunhee's fault

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

gender of the respondents. Respondents indicated that Minsoo is responsible for the case overall ( $M = 3.63$ ; 1 = not at all, 5 = absolutely); however, they also indicated that Minsoo was more responsible if Eunhee was described wearing non-revealing clothing versus described as wearing revealing clothing. Of interest was that, male participants ( $M = 3.73$ ), rated Minsoo's responsibility higher than female participants ( $M = 3.54$ ).

The ANOVA on the dependent variable measured if Eunhee was responsible for the alleged sexual harassment case and revealed that there were significant main effects for the clothing and behavior of the victims. Participants indicated that Eunhee's responsibility ( $M = 3.03$ ; 1 = not very likely, 5 = very likely) was lower than that of Minsoo's and that the mean response was close to neutral; however, participants indicated that Eunhee was more responsible if Eunhee was described as wearing revealing clothing ( $M = 3.17$ ) versus if described as wearing non-revealing clothing ( $M = 2.89$ ). In addition, participants indicated that Eunhee was more responsible when her behavior was described as provocative ( $M = 3.26$ ) than if her behavior was described as non-provocative ( $M = 2.84$ ), females rated Eunhee's responsibility higher than males (although it was not significantly different).

The ANOVA on the dependent variable measured if the two persons' responsibility for the outcome of the alleged sexual harassment case and revealed that there were significant main effects for the clothing and behavior of victims. Respondents indicated that

Minsoo's responsibility was higher ( $M = -.70$ ; -3 = Minsoo's fault, 3 = Eunhee's fault) and was higher than those of Eunhee's. Respondents indicated that Minsoo was more attributable for the alleged sexual harassment case when Eunhee was described as wearing non-revealing clothing ( $M = -.95$ ) described as wearing revealing clothing ( $M = -.46$ ). Respondents indicated that Minsoo's responsibility for the alleged sexual harassment case is higher when Eunhee's behavior was described as non-provocative ( $M = -.83$ ) her behavior was described as provocative ( $M = -.54$ ).

There were significant interaction effects between the respondent's gender and the provocativeness of the victim's dating behavior. There was no significant difference on the responsibility for this alleged sexual harassment case between genders when the behavior of Eunhee was unprovocative. However, female respondents were more likely to judge Minsoo less responsible when Eunhee's behavior was described as provocative (Figure 1–Figure 3).

#### Justifications of Sexual Harassment

The perceptions on the justification of sexual harassment based on the clothing, behavior, and the respondent's gender was examined using two questions. These questions asked if the action Minsoo taken upon Eunhee was justifiable (or not) and if Minsoo acted so because he was interested in her and he thought she wanted the skinship. MANOVA revealed significant main effects for types of victim's clothing, Pillai's trace = 0.026,  $F(3,520) = 6.864$ ,  $p < .001$ , and victims' dating behavior, Pillai's trace =

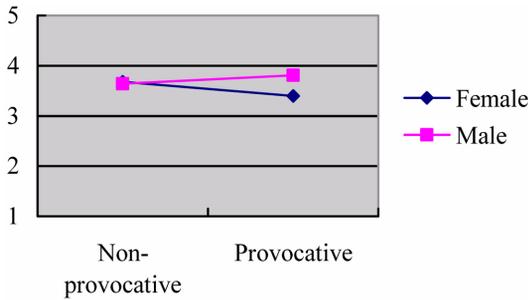


Figure 1. Interaction between Behavior and Gender on Minsoo's Responsibility.

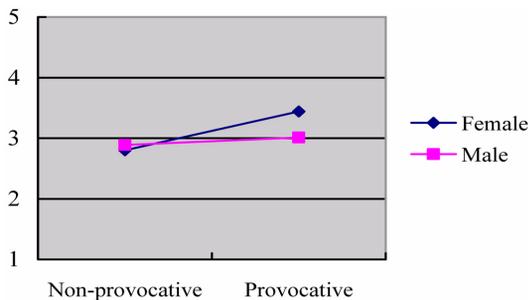


Figure 2. Interaction between Behavior and Gender on Eunhee's Responsibility.

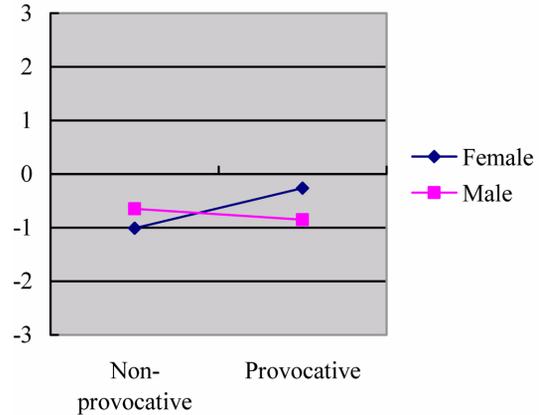


Figure 3. Interaction between Behavior and Gender on Attribution of the Alleged Sexual Harassment.

0.016,  $F(3,520) = 4.213$ ,  $p < .001$ , and respondent's gender, Pillai's trace = 0.030,  $F(3,520) = 7.933$ ,  $p < .001$ . A series of uni-variate analysis of variance were conducted on each of the dependent variables to determine which contributed to the overall effects (Table 4).

The ANOVA on the question that measured if Minsoo's behavior on Eunhee was justifiable, revealed that there were significant main effects on the

victim's clothing, dating behavior, and respondent's gender. Although, respondents indicated that Minsoo's behavior is unjustifiable overall ( $M = 2.02$ ; 1 = not very likely, 5 = very likely), respondents indicated that Minsoo's behavior was more justifiable when Eunhee was described as wearing revealing clothing ( $M = 2.16$ ) than if she was described as wearing non-revealing clothing ( $M = 1.87$ ). Respondents indicated that Minsoo's behavior was more justifiable when Eunhee's behavior was described as provocative ( $M = 2.11$ ) than if her behavior was described as non-provocative ( $M = 1.92$ ). Male respondents ( $M = 2.13$ ) rated Minsoo's behavior as more justifiable than female respondents ( $M = 1.92$ ). It appears that it is more likely that the people might think the sexual harassment actions toward Eunhee could be justified if a woman was wearing revealing clothing and acting provocatively.

Table 4. A Comparison on the Justification of the Sexual Harassment Based on the Gender of the Interviewees ( $N = 530$ )

Questions	Victims' Clothing <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )		<i>F</i> (1, 528)	Victim's Behavior <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )		<i>F</i> (1, 528)	Gender <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )		<i>F</i> (1, 528)
	Revealing ( <i>n</i> = 268)	Non-revealing ( <i>n</i> = 262)		Provocative ( <i>n</i> = 237)	Non-provocative ( <i>n</i> = 293)		Male ( <i>n</i> = 254)	Female ( <i>n</i> = 276)	
Do you find the behavior of Minsoo on Eunhee justifiable?	2.16 <sup>a</sup> (.897)	1.87 (.814)	.000***	1.92 (.743)	2.11 (.950)	.011*	2.13 (.921)	1.92 (.805)	.011**
Do you think Minsoo behaved that way because he was interested in Eunhee and wanted some skinship?	3.27 (.966)	3.25 (1.067)	.942	3.16 (.988)	3.34 (1.033)	.056	3.42 (1.005)	3.12 (1.006)	.000***

Note <sup>a</sup> 1 = not very likely, 5 = very likely  
 \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

The ANOVA on the questions that Minsoo behaved that way because he was interested in Eunhee and wanted some skinship revealed significant main effects on the respondent's gender. Participants indicated that Misoo behaved that way because he was interested in Eunhee and wanted skinship ( $M = 3.27$ ; 1 = not very likely, 5 = very likely); however, male respondents ( $M = 3.42$ ) tended to agree more with this question than female respondents ( $M = 3.12$ ). This results support previous research that indicated that men tended to interpret the friendly behavior of women's as an expression of sexual openness (Abbey, 1982; Johnson, *et al.*, 1991; Saal, *et al.*, 1989).

### SUMMARY

This study investigated Korean high school student's perception of sexual harassment and relative effect of clothing, dating behavior and respondent's gender on the perceptions of and alleged sexual harassment case. The findings show that provocative clothing on the victim resulted in an increased likelihood that respondents would attribute responsibility and justification for the assailant's behavior to the victim. The results of this study confirm those of previous findings (Johnson & Workman, 1992; Johnson & Workman, 1994; Whatley, 1995). When victims wear provocative clothing, respondents were more likely to agree that the behavior of the perpetrator was justified, the perpetrator was less responsible, and the victim was more responsible. In terms of research methods, Johnson & Lee (1999) showed through a stimulation picture of different types of clothing that made clothing salient to participants and magnified the impact. Subsequently, we used vignettes followed by Johnson & Lee (1999)'s methods. However, unlike Johnson & Lee's (1999) finding that the clothing exposure did not affect the perception of sexual harassment, the findings of this research showed that victim' clothing had a significant effect on the perception of sexual harassment among Korean adolescents. Therefore, future research using a variety of simulation presentation method (e.g. photo, vignette) should be

used to understand if the presenting method influenced the result.

The victim's dating behavior was a significant variable that affected the responsibility and justification of the alleged sexual harassment. The results indicated that victims were more responsible and that the perpetrator's behavior is more justifiable when victim were described as behaving provocatively on a date. While Johnson & Lee (1999) found that the victim's description of her behavior was key to influencing perceptions and that clothing was not a significant factor, we found that a victim's dating behavior as well as clothing were significant factors for the responsibility and justification of sexual harassment.

Both male and females agreed that the stereotyped gender image; however, the culture of sexuality and distorted sexuality conveyed by mass media were causes of sexual harassment; however, there were significant gender differences on statements that attributed the cause of sexual harassment to the victim's clothing and behavior. This showed that female high school students were more likely to think that the cause of sexual harassment was related to what the victim wore and how they acted compared to the male students. This result is different from previous research that suggested that females tended to be more generous to female victims than male respondents (Grubba & Harrowerb, 2009; Weisz & Earls, 1995). Previous researchers have suggested that one of the most salient factors that determines the perceptions of sexually harassment are the gender of the perceiver (Johnson & Lee, 1999; Grubba & Harrowerb, 2009; Loreda *et al.*, 1995; Weisz & Earls, 1995); however, gender differences were unsubstantiated in terms of responsibility of sexual harassment. We also examined the interaction effects on responsibility between respondent's gender and the provocativeness of the victim's dating behavior. When the victims' behavior was unprovocative, there was no significant difference for the responsibility attributed to the alleged sexual harassment between genders; however, female respondents were more likely to judge perpetrator less responsible when victim behaved provocatively.

This gender difference may be the result of a

traditional gender-biased perspective of woman in Korean society; subsequently, respondents were harsher when the victim was described wearing revealing clothing or behaving provocatively. Traditionally, females in Korea have been expected to be obedient and sexually abstinent (Maynes, 2011). Females are no longer a minority group in terms of equal opportunity in education compared to their male counterparts due to economic development and the expansion of public education; however, there is still a gender-biased attitude and gender inequality. Even though the traditional models for male students (e.g., to emulate the image of progress and achievement) and female students (e.g., to emulate the image of purity and endurance) have been banned by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Korean teachers perceive sex-roles as traditionally defined. Subsequently, gender-role socialization is still reinforced and maintained in Korean public education (Song, 2009). The traditional gender-role socialization may result in females having to face higher moral standards and harsher judgments. However, future research is needed to further explain whether gender differences on the perception of sexual harassment or sexual assault in Korea exist and support the result of this study since some of the findings in this research are opposite to previous studies (Grubba & Harrower, 2009; Johnson & Lee, 1999; Loredó *et al.*, 1995; Weisz & Earls, 1995).

There are limited studies that investigate the sexual harassment myth or the effect of clothing on the perception of sexual harassment or assault in Korea and this study could provide useful information to understand this topic. In addition, this study may provide some useful information to develop educational programs and efforts for adolescents to address the misconceptions and stereotypical beliefs that surround sexual harassment. There are some limitations to this study and the results of this study may not be generalized for the general adolescents in Korea since this sample is only from 6 high schools located in a metropolitan area. Further research is needed to use different clothing attributes to manipulate variables (e.g., use of suggestive slogans and clothing fittedness) or to

use other personal and situational variables (e.g., social status and alcohol intake) of the victim. In addition, future research is needed to determine the pattern of results found in this study can replicate those of different samples.

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