

## WORK-RELATED BIAS AGAINST HOMOSEXUALS

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### ABSTRACT

This research examines work-related bias against homosexuals. We reasoned that if there is a predisposition to discriminate against gays and lesbians, then a situation involving disciplinary action may be one of the ways to tap that predisposition. Moreover, it appeared reasonable that sex-related research scenarios would invoke any existing bias against gays and lesbians. We expected to find bias against homosexuals. We did not, and, in fact, found little evidence of willingness to treat sexual harassment involving homosexuals differently from any other form of sexual harassment involving heterosexuals. If it develops that our findings of no adverse impact based on sexual preferences hold across a wide range of work-related decisions and samples, such results would challenge the assumption of widespread *workplace* discrimination against gays and lesbians in the United States. As a consequence, the argument for the United States Congress extending special protection to gays and lesbians through civil rights legislation could be significantly weakened.

Federal civil rights legislation to protect homosexuals continues to be a hotly debated issue in the United States (e.g., [1-4]). Polls indicate that while many people in the United States favor protecting homosexuals from discrimination [2, 5], they also view homosexuality as a socially unacceptable lifestyle [2]. Because of negative perceptions about the homosexual lifestyle, theorists have speculated that the enacting of civil rights legislation to protect gays and lesbians

may be inconceivable for heterosexuals [2]. On the other side of the debate, some question the assumption that homosexuals are victims of widespread discrimination [4, 6]. In this research, we consider an underlying issue related to this debate: is there evidence that, in the workplace, employees will report they are willing to afford different treatment in a discipline situation to homosexuals than to heterosexuals? Note that we are not denying that prejudice against homosexuals exists. Our question involves whether any existing prejudice is translated into a willingness to act in an adverse manner toward homosexuals in the workplace.

What is known about discrimination based on sexual preference? Unlike previous debates in the United States to provide civil rights protection for traditional victims of work-related discrimination (minorities, women, the elderly, the disabled, et al.), there are no "good" statistics to demonstrate homosexuals are victims of widespread discrimination. The relevant research studies tend to be based on biased samples and inappropriate statistical comparisons [7].

Some of the problem relates directly to the nature of the groups studied. Documenting adverse impact in the workplace against other protected classes is relatively straightforward. For example, a simple analysis of the utilization of males versus the utilization of females in the labor force can provide some indication of the extent of discrimination against females. However, a majority of gays and lesbians keep their sexual identity hidden at work (e.g., [8]), and, as a result, we have no way to determine the extent of utilization of homosexuals in the workplace.

Beyond the problems of accurately identifying the sample, however, objectivity is suspect in many of the results that have been reported [6]. Most of the studies are based on the opinions of homosexuals [9], and, as research subjects, homosexuals may overstate the extent of discrimination [10-12].

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There is an extensive body of commentary supporting the supposition of job-related discrimination against homosexuals (e.g., [9, 11, 13-23]). Much of what is offered as research has been conducted by gay and lesbian activist groups [24], and virtually all of the available studies involve opinion research based on self-reported discrimination by gays and lesbians [25].

Complicating the issue of self-reported discrimination is evidence that gays and lesbians may be somewhat *more* likely to report incidents as discriminatory in situations where others would not perceive discrimination (e.g., [10-12]). Empirical research in organizations or of organizational decision makers is practically nonexistent (e.g., [8, 11, 24-26]). Academic management research has yet to include sexual orientation as an explanatory variable for work-related issues [9].

A few studies use methods other than self-reported discrimination. Badgett [7] found some wage effects based on sexual orientation (see also [27]). Using data from the General Social Survey, Badgett reported behavioral gay and bisexual

male workers earn from 11 to 27 percent less than otherwise identical behavioral heterosexual male workers [7]. However, there were no statistically significant wage effects for behaviorally lesbian/bisexual women [7].

In contrast, Fok, Crow, and Hartman found no gay and lesbian effects in their study [28]. When asked to judge the severity of sexual harassment in various situations where the full range of sexual orientation was explored (i.e., males harassing males, males harassing females, females harassing females, and females harassing males), research subjects made no distinctions [28].

### **DETERMINING WHAT CONSTITUTES SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Evidence suggests perceptions about what constitutes sexual harassment are influenced by social-sexual behavior expectations. Most previous research has been directed toward male/female differences. There have been consistent findings that social-sexual behavior is inherently "gendered," and that men and women have different experiences because there are specified roles for men and women in social-sexual behavior [29-30]. Men and women are expected to behave in a manner consistent with established gender roles and those expectations are likely to carry over into their work role, a phenomenon Gutek and her colleagues [30, 31] called sex-role spillover. In sexual behavior, men are expected to initiate and women are expected to respond [32]. The result may be that in-role behavior is sanctioned, while out-of-role behavior warrants punishment.

There has been some study of male/female differences in tolerance for homosexuality. In attitudes related to homosexuals, females have generally been found to be more tolerant than males [33-34]. In a recent Gallup poll, 56 percent of women and 35 percent of men agree with extending civil-rights protection to gays [5]. Another indication of differences in tolerance by gender is that males who report being the target of sexual harassment are more likely to report the incident involved homosexual harassment [35]. Note, however, that there has been one study which found no significant differences between males and females in tolerance of homosexuals [36].

There has also been some consideration of a related question, attitude differences toward gays vs. lesbians. Harris suggested the stereotype of a homosexual male is often less threatening to society than that of a lesbian [9]. In contrast, however, D'Augelli [24] found gay men are more often victimized (harassment, discrimination, and violence) than lesbian women. As mentioned, Badgett [7] reported gay/bisexual men face greater pay discrimination than lesbian/bisexual women. Moreover, there are reports males are more likely to experience the consequences of negative attitudes toward homosexuality than are females [37-40]. There is also evidence that female homosexual behavior is labeled erotic while male homosexual behavior is seen as repugnant [39]. Taken as a whole, this body of research suggests at least some gender-related differences in tolerance

toward homosexuality, with women being more tolerant, but gays are judged more negatively than lesbians, regardless of the gender of the individual doing the rating.

While there has been considerable research in these areas, other than our first study, there has been no research about the relationship between sexual preference and perceptions about what constitutes sexual harassment. Instead, the bulk of the sexual harassment research has dealt with the traditional relationships in sexual harassment—male aggressor and female victim.

## THE STUDY

In this study, we considered whether research subjects would express differences in how they would *act toward* homosexuals and heterosexuals in a discipline situation. We presented an incident and used the full range of gender and sexual preference combinations—male aggressor, female victim; female aggressor, male victim; male aggressor, male victim; female aggressor, female victim—to detect both heterosexual and homosexual effects and to tease out relationships. We also considered differences between male and female judges and included age as a variable of interest. We felt justified in using age as a variable since age effects are consistently examined in research studies related to sexual harassment and homosexuals [28, 39, 41-44].

Clearly, there has been little direct investigation of the issues we raise in this study. As a result, we stated our purpose as a research question with three associated hypotheses:

*Research Question*—What homosexual and heterosexual effects are detected when male and female subjects (referred to as *judges* in our subsequent discussion) are presented with a full range of hypothetical situations of sexual harassment?

*Hypothesis 1:* Judges, regardless of their gender, will make disciplinary decisions that will be more severe in situations of sexual harassment involving homosexuals than in situations of sexual harassment involving heterosexuals.

*Hypothesis 2:* Female judges will make disciplinary decisions that are more lenient than disciplinary decisions made by male judges in situations of sexual harassment involving homosexuals.

*Hypothesis 3:* Female judges will make disciplinary decisions that are more severe than disciplinary decisions made by male judges when dealing with sexual harassment aggressors.

## METHOD

We collected responses from three different groups in a metropolitan Southern city. The first group was a sample of 458 undergraduate business students. The second and third groups totaled 890 full-time employees in samples drawn from a

health-care group and a diverse work group. We believed these groups were distinct enough to examine the effects in isolation. While some research indicates the response of nontraditional students closely correlates with the responses of the general population and employees in the business world [45-46], we took a conservative approach and did not lump them into the employee samples. In addition, since the two employee groups were quite different in terms of the occupation fields—health care vs. diverse field—we examined each group in isolation.

### **Student Group**

These 215 males and 243 females were predominantly “nontraditional” students. Nontraditional students are unlike the traditional young college students who are supported by affluent parents. Nontraditional students tend to be older than their traditional counterparts and are independent of parental control and support. Nontraditional students tend to either work part- or full-time to support themselves and their education.

Most of the respondents were white (350); 108 were nonwhites. The average age of the respondents was 21.81, ranging from seventeen years to sixty-four years. The number of years in the workplace ranged from less than one to twenty-one, with an average of 2.37. The number of years of education ranged from twelve to twenty-three, with an average of 13.71. Fifty-one were married; 407 were not. Forty-seven were either managers or professionals; 411 were in other occupational categories. Note that we included this sample primarily to show its relationship to our working samples.

### **Health-Care Group**

The second group consisted of 194 employees (48 males and 146 females) in the health-care field. Most of the respondents were white (170); twenty-four were nonwhites. The average age of the respondents was 40.88, ranging from twenty-three years to sixty-seven years. The number of years in the workplace ranged from less than one to forty-one, with an average of 15.27. The number of years of education ranged from twelve to twenty-six, with an average of 16.58. One hundred forty-four were married; fifty were not. The subjects were either managers or professionals.

### **Diverse Group**

The third group consisted of 696 employees (401 males and 295 females) from a variety of work settings. Most of the respondents were white (594); 102 were nonwhites. The average age of the respondents was 38.66, ranging from nineteen years to seventy-three years. The number of years in the workplace ranged from less than one to forty-seven, with an average of 12.08. The number of years of education ranged from one to twenty-eight, with an average of 15.8. Four hundred

ninety-eight were married; 198 were not. Five hundred forty-six were either managers or professionals; 150 were in other occupational categories.

## Measures

To examine the differences in the treatment of homosexuals, we developed a case study (Appendix A) with four versions: 1) male aggressor, female victim; 2) female aggressor, male victim; 3) male aggressor, male victim; 4) female aggressor, female victim. Versions 1 and 2 are heterosexual cases where the aggressor and the victim are of opposite gender, and versions 3 and 4 are homosexual cases where the aggressor and the victim are of the same gender. In the scenario, the aggressor (supervisor) and the victim (subordinate) are employees of the same company. For some time, they had been involved in a sexual affair, in violation of the company's fraternization policy. The subordinate decides to end the affair. The supervisor continues to pursue the subordinate to the extent of sexual harassment, a violation of the company's sexual harassment policy. The research subjects (judges) take the role of a personnel director who must make decisions about appropriate disciplinary actions against the supervisor (for fraternization and sexual harassment) and the subordinate (for fraternization). We found this scenario to be potentially useful in that it provided an opportunity to evaluate judges' reactions not only toward the supervisor but also toward the subordinate.

A  $4 \times 2$  (from the four case scenarios—male supervisor, female subordinate; male supervisor, male subordinate; female supervisor, male subordinate; female supervisor, female subordinate and male vs. female judges) research design was required. As noted above, age may be a factor in how people view the issues. Therefore, we included age as a control variable.

We created four items to measure each judge's recommended disciplinary actions. Each item was measured on a 5-point scale, with 1 representing the least severe disciplinary action and 5 representing the most severe. The four items were:

Item 1—disciplinary action against the aggressor for fraternization.

Item 2—disciplinary action against the aggressor for sexual harassment.

Item 3—disciplinary action against the aggressor for fraternization and sexual harassment.

Item 4—disciplinary action against the victim for fraternization.

## RESULTS

Analysis of variance (ANOVAs) were used to test the effects of the two treatment variables (version of the case and gender of the judges) on the four dependent variables (the four disciplinary decisions) with age as the control variable (covariate). The ANOVA results for the student, health care, and diverse samples are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of ANOVA Results for Student, Health Care, and Diverse Samples

Effect	Student		Health Care		Diverse	
	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i> -Value	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i> -Value	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i> -Value
Discipline Against the Aggressor for Fraternization						
COVARIATE						
Age of Judges	1.428	.233	.515	.474	.618	.432
MAIN EFFECT						
Version of Case	.366	.778	.984	.401	3.656	.012*
Gender of Judges	.002	.961	.711	.400	.896	.344
INTERACTION						
Version by Gender	.428	.733	1.279	.283	.988	.398
Discipline Against the Aggressor for Sexual Harassment						
COVARIATE						
Age of Judges	.953	.329	1.410	.237	7.598	.006*
MAIN EFFECT						
Version of Case	.852	.466	.397	.755	1.985	.115
Gender of Judges	17.680	.000*	.060	.807	5.767	.017*
INTERACTION						
Version by Gender	.029	.993	.779	.507	1.317	.268
Discipline Against the Aggressor for Fraternization and Sexual Harassment						
COVARIATE						
Age of Judges	7.900	.005*	1.175	.280	1.504	.221
MAIN EFFECT						
Version of Case	.499	.683	1.565	.199	2.617	.050*
Gender of Judges	13.271	.000*	.341	.560	8.281	.004*
INTERACTION						
Version by Gender	.935	.424	1.852	.139	2.418	.065
Discipline Against the Victim for Fraternization						
COVARIATE						
Age of Judges	.076	.783	.010	.920	.073	.788
MAIN EFFECT						
Version of Case	.187	.905	2.638	.050*	1.939	.122
Gender of Judges	.919	.338	1.328	.251	1.758	.185
INTERACTION						
Version by Gender	.961	.411	1.031	.380	.505	.679

\*Significant at the .05 level.

### Student Group

Contrary to our prediction in Hypothesis 1 (that judges will impose harsher penalties upon homosexuals in a disciplinary situation), decisions by the student group did *not* adversely affect homosexuals. Students disciplined employees who violated rules relative to fraternization and sexual harassment without respect to the employees' sexual preferences. In addition, we found no support for Hypothesis 2 (that female judges will be more lenient). Females were *not* more lenient than males when disciplining homosexuals.

There was partial support for Hypothesis 3 (that female judges would discipline sexual harassment aggressors more severely than would males). Females were more severe than males when taking disciplinary action against aggressors for sexual harassment and when taking disciplinary action against aggressors for fraternization and sexual harassment. However, there were no gender effects when judges took disciplinary action against the aggressor for fraternization.

Finally, we found age effects in one of the disciplinary situations. Younger judges impose more severe penalties against aggressors for fraternization and sexual harassment than do older judges.

### Health-Care Group

With this group, there was no support for any of the hypotheses. We did find an effect with respect to the version of the case (sexual preference and gender of the aggressor) but the effect is puzzling and does not appear to support Hypothesis 1 (more severe penalties for homosexuals). The effect involved only one of the four disciplinary situations and that situation related to discipline against the *victim* for *fraternization*. The multiple comparison procedure indicates that in the scenarios of male aggressor/female victim and male aggressor/male victim, the victim was punished more severely than the victim in the scenario of female aggressor/male victim. Since a logical case cannot be made that this finding indicates adverse impact against homosexuals, we regard these results as anomalous and note the effect barely made significance at the .05 level. Perhaps the effect may be more a result of sample size than anything else.

### Diverse Group

With this group, we found no strong support for Hypothesis 1 (harsher discipline for homosexuals) and, similar to the findings for the health-care group, it is difficult to interpret what the judges were really saying. Accordingly, we are reluctant to suggest we have found sufficient evidence of adverse impact against homosexuals.

Specifically, we did find an effect involving disciplinary action taken against the aggressor for fraternization and sexual harassment. The aggressor in the male aggressor/male victim scenario received significantly more punishment than



the aggressor in the female aggressor/male victim scenario. Was the finding a homosexual effect or a gender effect? Were the judges overreacting to a homosexual situation or discounting the significance of a woman sexually harassing a man? We do not know for sure. However, based on other results, we believe the evidence favors a gender effect. Where disciplinary action is taken against the aggressor for fraternization, and the situation involves a female aggressor and a male victim, the female aggressor will be punished less severely than the aggressor in *any* of the other three situations. Moreover, we are troubled by the fact that the significance level is .05 in a situation where the large sample size (696) may account for the effect.

The results were also contrary to our predictions in Hypotheses 2 and 3. We expected female judges to be more lenient than males with respect to discipline administered to homosexuals and female judges to be less severe than male judges only in cases involving male aggressors and female victims. However, this group of female judges was intolerant of sexual harassment aggressors in all situations. In discipline against the aggressor for sexual harassment and in discipline against the aggressor for fraternization and sexual harassment, female judges were more severe than male judges *regardless* of the aggressor's gender or sexual preference.

There was also one age effect in this group. Younger judges tended to punish the aggressor for sexual harassment more severely than older judges did.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary objective of this study was to examine the extent of work-related bias against homosexuals. We reasoned that if a predisposition to discriminate against gays and lesbians exists, disciplinary action may be one of the ways to tap that predisposition. We expected to find bias against homosexuals. We did not. In the forthcoming discussion, we try to account for our finding of no bias against homosexuals in disciplinary scenarios and to consider the implications of our findings.

### Group Differences

The health-care group sample seems to be relatively impartial. With this group, we detected only one effect, whereas there were three effects in the student group and five effects in the diverse group. The large sample sizes of the student and diverse groups and the relatively small sample size of the health-care group may account for the differences. However, if the health-care group is relatively impartial, this finding could be related to any number of factors. For example, people drawn to the health-care field may, by nature, be more altruistic, tolerant, and unbiased. In a similar vein, the relative impartiality may be the result of training or a working culture that emphasizes respect for human life and similar

values. If this is the case, these results point to the ability of training and the effects of culture to overcome deeply rooted biases and stereotypes.

### **Age Effects**

While none of our hypotheses specified an age effect—primarily because this effect was not a central interest in this study—we did control for age. We found some, albeit small, age effects in the student group and the diverse group. In the student group, younger judges imposed more severe penalties against aggressors for fraternization and sexual harassment than did older judges. In the diverse group, younger judges punished the aggressor for sexual harassment more severely than older judges did.

We tend to discount the significance of the findings of age effects. Age effects occurred in only two of the three research groups and in only two of the twelve occasions for decision making. Moreover, the large sample sizes of the two groups may have been a factor contributing to the effects. Therefore, we can only speculate about the findings. It may be that younger people, more so than older people, are sensitized to the harm of sexual harassment and are prone to deal with it severely. On the other hand, because they have more experience with persons who break rules and because of their own transgressions, older people may be more tolerant and forgiving.

### **Gender Effects**

We did detect some gender effects related to disciplining sexual-harassment aggressors. In considering effects related to the gender of the judge, we found that female judges gave harsher punishment to the aggressor than male judges did. Gender effects occurred in two of the three research groups and in four of the six occasions for taking disciplinary action against the sexual-harassment aggressor. Apparently, females were less tolerant of sexual-harassment aggressors in any form—whether the aggressor was male or female, heterosexual or homosexual.

### **Homosexual Effects**

Considering our findings in the study as a whole, what is striking is the *lack* of bias against gays and lesbians in terms of what is carried over into descriptions of *actions* in the workplace situation. Obviously, we have no way to determine whether our three samples hold negative attitudes toward homosexuals. Even if they do, however, there is almost no evidence of a reported willingness to treat sexual harassment involving homosexuals differently from any other form of sexual harassment.

What then accounts for our results, which appear to oppose the conventional wisdom about work-related discrimination against homosexuals? Not easily dismissed is the possibility that our findings are correct, that most people do not

discriminate against homosexuals and that the presumed antipathy toward gays and lesbians in the workplace may need reexamination. More specifically, it may be possible that the general public may disapprove of the *act* of homosexuality but not the individual homosexual to the extent that there will be substantial work-related retaliation against gays and lesbians. Many people in the United States may feel trapped in an ethical dilemma when considering the right thing to do in issues involving homosexuality. Moral and ethical traditions appear to pit the sanctity of human privacy and dignity against beliefs that homosexuality is “wrong”—a violation of divine order [47].

It may be that what people in the United States find intolerable is not equal opportunity for homosexuals but affirmation of the homosexual lifestyle. Farney suggested:

[There is] a yawning gap between passive tolerance [of homosexuals] and active affirmation. . . . many working middle-class anglo voters apparently draw a line between positive toleration and active support. . . . two core values are conflicting. Americans value tolerance and want to see themselves as tolerant. By a 55 to 39% margin they favor legal safeguards against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. . . . [however] 56 to 39% [of those surveyed] said no to the poll question—Should homosexuality be considered a socially permissible lifestyle? [2, pp. A2, A6].

Such attitudes, if held by significant numbers of people in the United States, could encourage a “hate the sin but not the sinner” mentality which, in turn, could act to *discourage* workplace discrimination.

In the 1960s and 1970s, discrimination in the workplace against minorities and females seemed obvious. It was a statistical fact that females and minorities in the workplace were generally underutilized across most job categories and specifically denied access to the more prestigious and higher-paying managerial and professional job categories. What’s more, there was increasing social, economic, and political support for equal opportunities to the extent that laws at all levels of government (federal, state, and municipal) were passed with relative ease to protect females and minorities from work-related discrimination. In addition, there was substantial anecdotal evidence of discrimination and an enormous number of individual and class-action discrimination cases being settled in favor of plaintiffs. In short, it is probably safe to say that anyone in the 1960s and 1970s willing to think about it objectively would accept the notion that minorities and females were victims of widespread, work-related discrimination.

Nevertheless, some studies at the time yielded findings contrary to the widely held view that blacks were victims of discrimination. Wexley and Nemeroff [48] and Rand and Wexley [49], for example, found *no* adverse effects against blacks with respect to job application evaluations. Later studies continued to challenge the widely held view of widespread discrimination. For example, McIntyre,

Moberg, and Posner [50] and Mullins [51] found black applicants to be evaluated *more* favorably than white applicants. However, most of the research then and now supports what seems to be obvious—that minorities and females are at risk of work-related discrimination (e.g., [52-53]).

We are realistic about the limitations of the study. Our approach—like that of Wexley and Nemeroff [48], Rand and Wexley [49], McIntyre, Moberg, and Posner [50], Mullins [51], Parsons and Liden [52], Buttram et al. [53], and the bulk of all other studies of work-related discrimination—involves laboratory investigations, and such research designs share a common flaw, inattention to relevant aspects of organizational contexts [53]. Without attention to organizational contexts, a researcher can never be confident about the validity of findings taken from laboratory contexts [54]. Also, we used “paper” scenarios: a method widely criticized for failing to capture the richness of the related contexts [55-56].

Additional research is needed, particularly in organizational settings and where organizational contexts are considered. For example, research like that of Buttram et al. [53], where hierarchical authority relations are examined to determine the effects of compliance with orders to discriminate, may be appropriate.

However, if it develops that our finding of no adverse impact based on sexual preferences holds across a wide range of work-related decisions and samples, such results would seriously challenge the assumption of widespread *workplace* discrimination against gays and lesbians and significantly weaken the subsequent argument for extending special protection to gays and lesbians through civil-rights legislation.

## APPENDIX A

### A Case Study

Mark and Alice have been employed by a local company for 5 years. Alice complained to the Personnel Director that Mark has been sexually harassing her for about 3 months. The Personnel Director investigated the accusation and documented the following facts:

1. Mark is Alice’s supervisor. Mark is Director of Finance and Accounting and Alice is the Payroll Manager. They have been working together in this capacity for five years. In fact, they were both hired by the company in January 1988. They are both good employees with good work records.
2. Shortly after coming to work, Mark and Alice began a sexual affair that lasted for 4 years. They kept the affair quiet because the company fraternization policy prohibited supervisors from dating subordinates. Alice ended the relationship with Mark a year ago and has a new boyfriend—John. Mark was unhappy about Alice’s decision to end their relationship.
3. About three months ago, Mark asked Alice to resume their relationship or at least meet him from time to time for a sexual rendezvous. Alice refused and

told Mark that she was particularly incensed about his suggestion about having sex.

4. About two months ago, Mark became obsessed with resuming a relationship with Alice. What's more, on at least 7 occasions (during working hours), Mark asked Alice to meet him for sex after work. Mark has also called her at home numerous times to persuade her to either resume a full-time relationship or at least have sex occasionally. All of this has created a hostile environment for Alice.
5. Mark was completely honest during the investigation and confirmed all of Alice's allegations. Mark said he was sorry and promised to leave Alice alone. He does not want to lose his job and hopes that his good work record will offset this incident of broken romance and "fatal attraction."

The related company policies are:

**Fraternization Policy:** It is against company policy for employees who have been reporting relationships to date. For example, a supervisor should not date a subordinate nor should a subordinate date a supervisor. Violation of this policy is a serious offense and, depending on the circumstances, may result in disciplinary action of **BOTH** employees.

**Sexual Harassment Policy:** It is against company policy for any employee to sexually harass company employees, customers, clients, vendors, visitors, or any other person associated in any way with the company. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other sexual conduct that has the effect of creating a hostile working environment. Violation of this policy is a serious offense and, depending on the circumstances, may result in disciplinary action.

## DECISION ALTERNATIVES

You are the Personnel Director. You should consider all decision alternatives in dealing with Mark and Alice. Make your decisions as if these hypothetical incidents were real.

1. If Mark had violated **ONLY** the **Fraternization Policy**, what would be the right action to take against him? Check **ONE** of the following alternatives:
  - Speak to him privately and tell him to clean up his act.
  - Give him a verbal or a written reprimand.
  - Suspend him for a short period of time (for example, one week or less).
  - Suspend him for a longer period of time (for example, two weeks or more).
  - Terminate his employment (discharge him).
2. If Mark had violated **ONLY** the **Sexual Harassment Policy**, what would be the right action to take against him? Check **ONE** of the following alternatives:

- Speak to him privately and tell him to clean up his act.
  - Give him a verbal or a written reprimand.
  - Suspend him for a short period of time (for example, one week or less).
  - Suspend him for a longer period of time (for example, two weeks or more).
  - Terminate his employment (discharge him).
3. Since Mark violated **BOTH** the **Fraternization Policy** and the **Sexual Harassment Policy**, what would be the right action to take against him? Check **ONE** of the following alternatives:
- Speak to him privately and tell him to clean up his act.
  - Give him a verbal or a written reprimand.
  - Suspend him for a short period of time (for example, one week or less).
  - Suspend him for a longer period of time (for example, two weeks or more).
  - Terminate his employment (discharge him).
4. What is the right action to take against Alice for violating the **Fraternization Policy**?
- Speak to her privately and tell her to clean up her act.
  - Give her a verbal or a written reprimand.
  - Suspend her for a short period of time (for example, one week or less).
  - Suspend her for a longer period of time (for example, two weeks or more).
  - Terminate her employment (discharge her).

\* \* \*

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