

Bystanders' reactions to sexual harassment

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Sexual harassment researchers have primarily focused on the perpetrators and victims of that offense; however, as sexual harassment potentially affects all organizational members, understanding the influence on bystanders is also important. Such was the purpose this research project. Study 1 focused on the influence of organizational culture and type of harassment influence on bystanders' preferred punishment. Results indicate the severity of the harassment reliably impacts the severity of the punishment preferred by the bystander; furthermore, these effects were moderated by the culture of diversity such that stronger punishments were preferred in proactive organizations. The focus of Study 2 was bystanders' reactions to punishment enforced by the organization. The results from the experimental study indicate congruency between the bystanders' expected and the actual punishment handed down significantly affected subsequent emotions, perceptions of justice, and perceptions of cultural congruency. Theoretical contributions and practical implications are discussed.