



Relationship between Perceived Sexual Harassment and Female Students' Social Adjustment in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between perceived sexual harassment and female students' social adjustment in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. To accomplish this, two specific objectives and two research Hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted correlational research design. The area of the study was Bauchi state of Nigeria. The population comprised of 22,382 female students in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state, the sample size was determined using research advisor table of sample size determination, where 378 respondents were selected purposively homogenous sample. The instrument for data collection was two different questionnaires. The data collection was analysed by using Pearson product moment correlation. The findings of the study revealed that there was a positive relationship between perceived sexual assault and female students' social adjustment in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state and there was a positive relationship between perceived sexual touching and female students' social adjustment in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. The study recommended that government should put in place legal frame work to check all forms of sexual harassment while tertiary institutions should come up with zero tolerance policies for instance, tertiary institutions should have a clear policy that defines and explain the concept, different forms as well as sanctions for offenders and counselling units to be reawakened on this issue and to be trained to deal with it mounting of enlightenment campaign on sexual harassment, female students' must learn to dress properly and avoid approaching their male counterparts in a seductive manner.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of indigenous Nigerian society hinges mainly on values, norms and laws among others, while issues related to sex were regarded as restrained matters because they are hardly discussed openly. However, in the contemporary Nigerian society, issues related to sex are now widely discussed without much restraint due to the fact that the relationship between men and women have taken different dimensions especially in places of work, worship centers, hospitals and educational institutions. These days, sexual harassment is prevalent in

educational institutions also Beninger (2013). Sexual harassment is a social phenomenon that is no longer confined to western countries but Africa as a continent and Nigeria as country inclusive. In Nigeria, sexual harassment has become a contemporary issue and prevalent in the Nigerian tertiary institutions and it cuts across all cultures and faiths (Mohammed, 2017).

Sexual harassment has become order of the day in Nigerian tertiary institutions as a result of its level of occurrences and complaints received from victims and news in dailies. Oduwale, Femi-oyewo & Erinoshio (2021), also

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observed that, the recent stories of sexual harassment coming out from the Nigerian tertiary institutions known as fortress of academic and moral excellence is not encouraging and highly disturbing due to the high rate of reported cases of sexual harassment among female students that is detrimental to the development of the Nigerian educational system politically, socially, morally and economically (Obiozor & Osuala, 2018).

Sexual harassment is any form of unwelcome sexual behaviour that is offensive, humiliating, or intimidating. Sexual harassment is against the law, this experience affects people in different ways. From a psychological perspective, sexual harassment matters because it frequently causes pain and suffering to victims (target). Perceive sexual harassment is annoying, offensive, upsetting, embarrassing, and frightening (Langer, 2007). Sexual harassment dehumanizes and disempowers its target mentally, emotionally and physically. The stress related mental and physical illnesses, includes posttraumatic stress disorder may result to depression (Buchanana, Settles, Hall & O'connor 2014). Sexual harassment occurs when people are target of unwanted sexual comment, gestures, actions, sexual assault, or actual rape because of their actual perceived gender, gender expression or sexual orientation. Filtzgerald, Swan and Magley (2011), in the widely accepted tripartite model of sexual harassment identified three (3) behavior dimensions; gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion. These three sub-types show stability across time, culture and occupational section.

Gender harassment refers to a rude sexual verbal and non-verbal behaviour conveying insulting, hostile and degrading attitude about one's gender, gender identity or sexual orientation. Obscene sexual gesture, flashing, displaying sexual images or object and emails or texting sexual image to a peer. Sexiest or heterosexist language jokes, comment also falls under this heading.

Sexual assault is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual advances or otherwise directed against a persons' sexually using coercion by any person regardless

of their relationship to the victim. However, sexual touching is the act of unwanted pinching, grabbing, grope, pitting, pressing or physical touching the person's clothing, hair or body, hugging, kissing, patting or stroking. Sexual touching is an attitude of rubbing oneself sexually around another person or standing close or brushing up against another person body, giving massage around the neck or shoulder and or touching buttocks, breast or any part of the body sexually (Beninger, 2013).

Sexual harassment also occurs on public transportations and the public places, in educational settings, homes and athletics settings, at social gathering, and in online group. It may be conveyed in many ways including face to face interaction, via phone calls, text, social media or emails through the display or materials or objects. Sexual harassment can also be deliberately or unintentionally interfered with performance and career aspiration by creating and intimidating, hostiles, abusive or offensive environment that erodes target confidence and make it harder to achieve (Jacobson & Eaton, 2018).

Therefore, sexual harassment can be understood from the point of view of rejection and protest from the affected person or victim. In related development, sexual harassment of female students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and Bauchi State in particular may not be over emphasized due to its negative consequences on the victims such as psychological pain, melancholy, stigma among others. Sojo, Wood, & Genat (2016) equally reconnoitered the effect of sexual harassment on female students as a serious psychological effect on the academic performance of the female students. It also has negative effects on health of the victims leading to fear, trauma, depression, anxiety and loss of trust. Therefore, since the social phenomenon of sexual harassment is on the increase in most of our tertiary institutions in Nigeria and Bauchi State inclusive.

It is worth noting that sexual harassment is one of the challenges to sustainable economic, social and political development of the nation called Nigeria. Hence, for a meaningful sustainable development to be achieved in



Nigerian education sector, harassment of female students must be approach with all seriousness. It is imperative therefore to equip female students in tertiary institutions with abundant information which would help them protect themselves against sexual harassment. Thus, this research intends to investigate the relationship between perceived sexual harassment and female students' social adjustment in tertiary institutions of Bauchi State.

When students join an educational institution, they come from different background with their own norms and values, whilst the norms and values of the institutes reflect the institution vision, mission and core values. Given that, to be fit in the educational institution setup, students then would require moulding their behaviour and values to fit with those of the institution (Ahmad, Nadeem and Khan, 2017). Adjustment is used to highlight the struggles of an individual that he or she made to survive in the physical or social environment (Mohanta, 2023).

Adjustment is a process of dealing with the tensions, stress and conflicts to meet the individual's needs. In this process the individual tries to develop and maintain a smooth relationship with the environment (Mohanta, 2023). The social adjustment of female students can be defined in terms of how much students participate in social activities and how much they are satisfied with the social aspect of the institution's environment. Social adjustment is necessary for everyone, but is of great importance for female students as they are passing through the individualization process, social support has been identified the most significant factor in minimizing the depression, loneliness and anxiety of female students (Crede & Niehorster, 2012).

Humans use the psychological process of adjustment to cope with or handle the pressure and issues of daily life. It is centred on how a person adjust to their surroundings and daily needs has the connotation of conformity. Psychological adjustment helps the body handle its internal, external needs, tensions, and desires as well as external expectation and demands (saha, 2012). Lastly, women who had been the target of the most egregious and violent manifestations of male preeminence.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent times, cases of sexual harassment of female students have been a reoccurring decimal activity in tertiary institutions. A reader of newspapers can after some few days or month come across a reported case of sexual harassment in one institution or another. Due to its frequent occurrence, parents and general public have become worried over what tertiary institutions have become these days of u-turning from their primary responsibilities of imparting knowledge and character, instead continually be more concerned with the morality of the students. This led to researches about sexual harassment. But, then due to the secret nature of sex and the shame attached to it. Sexual harassment is no more a new social phenomenon in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It has become a common deviant practice in most of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Tertiary institutions are ivory towers where academic and moral excellences are expected to be promoted. However, it is imperative as a matter of urgency and national interest, to arrest the problem of sexual harassment of female students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and Bauchi State in particular.

Sexual harassment occurs when people are targeted of unwanted sexual comments, rape, sexual assault, sexual gesture, sexual action, personal gifts because of their actual or perceive gender, gender express or sexual orientation. Accurate statistics regarding sexual harassment are notoriously difficult to obtain. The suggest complication is that most victims choose not to report it.

Whatever the reason for a victim silences the effect is that sexual harassment goes grossly underreported in many countries. it is estimated that approximately (35%) of women worldwide have experienced sexual harassment in their life time. However, in most countries with data available on sexual harassment (including the United State of America) fewer than (40%) of those women seek help and fewer than (10%) seek assistance from law enforcement and as a result, most perpetrators escape punishment (United Nation survey of crime trends and

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operations of criminal justice systems, 2018). Furthermore, in 2018, the average prevalence of sexual harassment in Nigeria was of (9%), in Gombe the incidence was the highest in the country. According to the survey, (45%) of women living in that state had experiences sexual harassment in their life. Bauchi is the second highest (21.1%) after Gombe (Statista,2018).

Psychosocial adjustment refers to people capacity to adapt to the environment. Social adjustment has to do with the impact of sexual harassment on the behavior and social life of the victims, that is how it affects the female student's relationship with others as well as her feeling about herself. It is against this background that this research work sought to determine the relationship between perceived tertiary institutions based sexual harassment and female students' social adjustment in Bauchi state.

Research Questions

1. Does perceived sexual assault relate to female students' social adjustment in tertiary institutions of Bauchi State?
2. Does perceived sexual touching relate to female students' social adjustment in tertiary institutions of Bauchi State?

Research hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between perceived sexual assault and female Students social adjustment in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.
2. There is no significant relationship between perceived sexual touching and female Students social adjustment in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted correlational research design; The population of the study comprises all female students of tertiary institutions in Bauchi State. It is unbiased and also

provide the best representative of the population. The sample for this study consisted of 378 female students' out of 22,382 of tertiary institution in Bauchi State. Using research Advisors (2006) Table of sample size determinant. It is unbiased and also provide the best representative of the population.

The sample for this study consisted of 378 female students' out of 22,382 of tertiary institution in Bauchi State. Using research Advisors (2006) Table of sample size determinant. Homogeneous purposive sampling technique were used to sampled (3) tertiary institutions in Bauchi state out of the (6) tertiary institutions in Bauchi state. These institutions were selected based on being cosmopolitan by nature of institutions.

The instrument used for data collection were sexual experience questionnaire and social adjustment questionnaire using a modified Likert scale 4-point scale. The instruments were subjected to faced and content validity by two experts in Guidance and counselling from Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. Cronbach alpha statistics were used to determine the internal consistency of the instruments which yielded a reliability of 0.86 and 0.74 for the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. For this Study is going to be Correlational Design. The Researcher would use the Correlational Statistical Test to Describe and Measure the Degree of Relationship between two Variables.

Research Questions 1

Does Perceived Sexual Assault relate to Female Students' Social Adjustment in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State?

The Data Collected from the Respondents in relation to Research Question 1 above were Answered using Mean and Standard Deviation and is Presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Result of Research Questions 1

Variables	N	MEAN	SD
P.S.A	367	2.76	1.01
F.S.S.A	367	2.80	1.41

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Table 1 Showed a Lower Mean of 2.76 (SD=1.01) on Perceived Sexual Assault against the Mean of 2.80 (SD=1.41) of Female Students' Social Adjustment.

Research Question 2

Does Perceived Sexual Touching Relates to Female Students' Social adjustment in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State?

The Data Collected from the Respondents in relation to research Question 2 above were answered using Mean and Standard Deviation and was Presented in table 2.

Table 2. Result of Research Questions 2

Variables	N	MEAN	SD
P.S.T	367	2.74	1.04
F.S.S.A	367	2.83	1.46

Table 2 Showed a Lower Mean of 2.74 (SD=1.04) on Perceived Sexual Touching against the Mean of 2.83 (SD=1.46) of Female Students' Social adjustment.

Research Hypothesis 1.

There is no Significant Relationship between Perceived Sexual Assault and Female Students' Social Adjustment in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State.

Table 3. Test of Null Hypothesis One

Variables		P.S.A	F.S.S.A
P.S.A	Pearson Correlation	1	.096**
	Sig (2 tailed)		.66
	N	367	367
F.S.S.A	Pearson Correlation	.096**	1
	Sig (2 tailed)	.66	
	N	367	367

Significant at 0.05

There was a Positive Relationship between the Two Variables ($r=.096^{**}$, $n=367$, $P\leq 0.05$) with Level of Perceived Sexual Assault Associated with Level of Female Students' Social Adjustment. This Indicated that Positive Perceived Sexual Assault Influence Level of Female Students' Social Adjustment. Therefore, Null Hypothesis One was Rejected and the Alternative Hypothesis was Accepted which Said that there

was a Significant Relationship between Perceived Sexual Assault and Female Students' Social Adjustment in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State.

Research Hypothesis 2.

There is no Relationship between Perceived Sexual Touching and Female Students' Social Adjustment in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State.

Table 4. Test of Null Hypothesis Two

Variables		P.S.T	F.S.S.A
P.S.T	Pearson Correlation	1	.056**
	Sig (2 tailed)		.285
	N	367	367
F.S.S.A	Pearson Correlation	.056**	1
	Sig (2 tailed)	.285	
	N	367	367

Significant at 0.05

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There was a Positive Relationship between the Two Variables ($r=.056^{**}$, $n=367$, $P\geq 0.05$) with level Perceived Sexual Touching Associated level of Female Students' Social Adjustment. This Indicated that Positive Perceived Sexual Touching Influence level of Female Students' Social Adjustment. Therefore, Null Hypothesis Two was Rejected and the Alternative Hypothesis was Accepted which Said there was a Significant Relationship between Perceived Sexual Touching and Female Students' Social Adjustment in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State.

CONCLUSION

There was a positive relationship between perceived sexual assault and female students' social adjustment in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state and there was a positive relationship between perceived sexual touching and female student's social adjustment in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government Should Put in Place Legal Frame to Check all Forms of Sexual Harassment While Tertiary Institutions Should Come up with zero Tolerance Policies. For Instance, Tertiary Institutions Should have a Clear Policy that Defines and Explain the Concept, Different Forms as Well as Sanctions for Offenders.
2. Counselling Units to be Reawakened On this Issue and to be Trained to Deal with It (Mounting of Enlightenment Campaign on Sexual Harassment).

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