



Gender Responsive Management of Sexual Maturation and Harassment in Technical Education Programmes of Plateau State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated gender responsive management of sexual maturation and harassment in technical education programmes of Plateau State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in three institutions that offer technical education programmes in Plateau State. A total of 150 respondents consisting of 5 Head of Departments (HOD), 40 Lecturers and 105 Students were sample using simple random sampling. 32 items structured questionnaire developed from the literature reviewed were subjected to validation by 3 experts. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined through Cronbach's Alpha correlation coefficient and the result of the reliability was 0.89 for the entire items. The 150 copies of questionnaires were administered to the respondents with the help of 3 research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variances (ANOVA). the state of gender responsive management of sexual maturation in technical education programmes in Plateau State is at moderate extent and the state of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in technical education programmes in Plateau State is also at moderate extent. It was recommended among others that the school management should engage parents, guardians and community leaders to advocate for girl's education in technical fields and address misconceptions and cultural norms that discourage girls from pursuing technical education. This will significantly improve the rate of gender enrollment in technical education programmes in Plateau State.

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seeks to 'achieve gender equality and women empowerment.' One of the targets is to eliminate any form of discrimination. Women are critical to the economic development of the society. They contribute greatly to the socioeconomic sustainability of rural communities in Nigeria (Ekpenyong *et al*, 2020). According to Ananga (2021), there is a significant body of evidence demonstrating that addressing inequalities in girls' education is an effective strategy for breaking the cycle of intergenerational

poverty and for lifting girls and their families out of positions of marginalization. Education is critical for women for the simple reason that women contribute significantly to the quality of the younger generation.

In many Nigerian communities and ethnic groups, the female is obviously and unequivocally a second-class citizen (Eyang and Edung 2017). Marriage practice and inheritance custom clearly undermine the female. It is common in Nigeria to attribute certain negative characteristics to women. For example, a man is likely to be cautioned not to cry like a woman.

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Gossips are almost always believed to be women. Those who practice witchcraft, the bad in-law and the person who maltreats the house help are frequently depicted in stories and in Nigerian movies as women. In advertisements the person who does the laundry is the women, the cook is the women.

Despite the governments and development partner's efforts to enhance teaching careers and improve teaching as well as alleviate gender disparity through comprehensive pre-service and in-service teacher training, the level of awareness and effective implementation of gender responsive pedagogy among teaching staff in technical education programmes in Plateau State is not certain. Hence the need for this study, which aims to address the knowledge gap by analysing the implementation of gender responsive pedagogy in technical education programmes in plateau state.

Gender issues, such as bias, stereotyping, inequality, gaps, bullying, and discrimination, have directly affected society's workforce, business, and education. In academia it is known that gender is a significant factor within schools worldwide (Nishimura, 2017). Since education is often said to cause a change in behaviour, a shift in gender attitude may have to start from the school. As noted by (Ananga, 2021), Using teaching strategies that promote the inclusion of gender positively affects students' development. Ananga (2021) and Lee (2021) stated that, Gender related issues include the disparity among the teachers and their teaching strategies, the context of schools' policies, and curricula and effects of gender on students' performance.

Gender responsive management of sexual maturation is another aspect of gender responsive pedagogy. Moeller, (2018) noted that one major setback related to girls' access to education involves issues around girls' school enrolment (age of entry), retention, and completion. Abraha *et al* (2021) also noted that teachers lack gender-responsive sexual maturation management skills. Sexual Maturation is a normal process of growing up, characterized by physical and emotional changes. This rapid

body changes that accompany maturation in both boys and girls may interfere with learning. Both girls and boys become self-conscious of their bodies and this has an impact on their self-esteem.

Gender based violence and sexual harassment is an aspect of gender responsive pedagogy. USAID (2019) noted that girls still encounter numerous barriers to education. One often mentioned, but possibly less well known, factor influencing kids', particularly girls', participation in elementary school is safety in the classroom. However, addressing gender-based violence in schools cannot be restricted to females alone. Boys can be violent both as victims and as offenders. In addition to being welcoming to girls, a safe school enables males to reject harmful gender stereotypes and engage in healthier, gender-equitable activities with their peers in a nurturing setting. It is the duty of male educators to shield young girls rather than take advantage of them.

Aims and Objectives

The study investigated gender responsive management of sexual maturation and harassment in technical education programmes of Plateau State Specifically, the study investigated;

1. Gender responsive management of sexual maturation in technical education programmes in Plateau State.
2. Gender based violence and sexual harassment in technical education programmes in Plateau State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions;

1. What is the state of gender responsive management of sexual maturation in technical education programmes in Plateau State?
2. What is the state of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in technical education programmes in Plateau State?

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Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of student, teachers and head of departments on the gender responsive management of sexual maturation technical education programmes in Plateau State.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of student, teachers and head of departments on the gender-based violence and sexual harassment in technical education programmes in Plateau State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey research design. Specifically, a descriptive survey research design. This research design was considered suitable for this study because, it enables the researchers to investigated gender responsive management of sexual maturation and harassment in technical education programmes of Plateau State, Nigeria.

The population of this study is 522, comprises of 5 HODs, 40 Lecturers and 468 students cut across higher institution offering technical education in Plateau State. The researchers used simple random sampling to sample the respondents that is; 5 HODS, 40 lecturers and 105 students from Higher institutions that offer technical education in Plateau State. No sampling was done among the HODs and Lecturers because the population is not too large. The total respondents sampled are 150. 32 items structured questionnaire developed from the

literature reviewed were subjected to validation by 3 experts from Industrial and Technology Education department and General Studies Unit, Federal University of Technology Minna. The instrument was subjected to reliability test in School of Technical Education, Niger State College of Education Minna. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined through Crombach's Alpha correlation coefficient and the result of the reliability was 0.89 for the entire items.

The instrument to be used for data collection is a questionnaire titled: Gender Responsive management questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered to students, lecturers and HODs of technical education programmes in Plateau State to gather quantitative data on the Gender Responsive Pedagogy. The questionnaire is structured and provides answers to the research questions. The instrument is designed on a five-point structured scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Moderate Extent (ME), Low Extent (LE) and Undecided (UD) with numeric values of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

RESULTS

Research Question One

What is the state of gender responsive management of sexual maturation in technical education programmes in Plateau State?

Table 1: Mean responses and standard deviation of Student, Lecturers and Head of Department on the state of gender responsive management of sexual maturation in technical education programmes in Plateau State
N1=105, N2=40, N3=5 Total N=150

S/N	Item	M	SD	R
1	Many teachers do not take into account the specific gender needs of girls and boys.	3.82	0.86	ME
2	The rapid body changes that accompany maturation in both boys and girls may interfere with learning and are put in consideration.	3.34	0.97	LE
3	The school does not have adequate sanitary facilities.	3.49	1.09	LE
4	Physical changes in boys and girls can be very disturbing and can impact negatively on their classroom participation	4.07	1.01	ME
5	Teachers are sensitive and offer appropriate counsel to students both girls and boys concerning maturation.	4.19	0.85	ME

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S/N	Item	M	SD	R
6	Seminars are organized for teachers on how to manage maturation amongst boys and girls	3.34	0.96	LE
7	Sexual maturation is carefully examined within the context of teaching and learning.	4.13	0.84	ME
8	Teachers are sensitive and offer appropriate counsel to students both girls and boys.	4.07	0.85	ME
9	Boys' and girls' toilets are too close together and may not provide adequate privacy for girls.	3.56	1.06	ME
10	Schools do not give enough priority to provision of water, which is a big hindrance to personal hygiene particularly for girls for their menstrual hygiene.	4.11	0.84	ME
11	The school does not have adequate sanitation for example enough water, sanitary bins, or emergency sanitary wear	3.96	0.83	ME
12	School management systems do not provide rules and regulations that cater for girls who miss schools for genuine reasons such as menstruation-related causes.	2.89	1.10	LE
13	Teachers take remedial measures to assist girls that were absent due to menstruation to catch up with their classmate.	3.84	0.85	ME
14	The sanitary facilities are not appropriate	3.36	0.95	LE
15	Physical changes make both boys and girls self-conscious and they too become affected in class	3.41	0.99	LE
16	Most girls from poor background come to school inadequately equipped with sanitary towels.	4.13	0.84	ME
	Average Mean	3.54	0.93	ME

KEY: M=Mean average, SD=Standard deviation average, LE=Low extent, ME=Moderate extent

Based on Table 1, which presents responses from Students, Lecturers, and Heads of Departments on the gender responsive management of sexual maturation in technical education programmes in Plateau State, several keys in sights emerged. The mean value of (3.54) was obtained from the respondents which revealed that they understood gender responsive pedagogy at moderate extent. The standard

deviation of the respondent of the 16 items ranges from 0.83-1.09 which less than 1.96, this shows that the respondent was not too far from the mean and were close to one another in their responses.

Research Question Two

What is the state of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in technical education programmes in Plateau State?

Table 2: Mean responses and standard deviation of Student, Lecturers and Head Of Department on the state of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in technical education programmes in Plateau State N1=105, N2=40, N3=5 Total N=150

S/N	Item	M	SD	R
1	Teacher uses languages in teaching which is friendly to both male and female students to take different roles in the society.	4.07	0.85	ME
2	Mechanisms to assist boys and girls deal with pressure to engage in sexual practices are provided.	3.56	1.06	ME
3	The education system does not adequately address the issue of sexual harassment in teacher training.	4.11	0.84	ME

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S/N	Item	M	SD	R
4	Sexual harassment is unfortunately viewed as part of normal practice and is therefore tolerated.	3.96	0.83	ME
5	Teachers create a conducive classroom environment which is free from all forms of sexual harassment.	2.89	1.10	LE
6	Sexual harassment has far reached implications for teaching and learning process.	3.84	0.85	ME
7	Students are free to discuss disturbing issues with their teachers	3.36	0.95	LE
8	Teachers do not have the necessary skills to detect and handle sexual harassment in the classroom as well as its impact on teaching and learning.	4.14	0.91	ME
9	School rules and regulations are not gender responsive and cause inconveniences, which impact negatively on teaching and learning processes.	4.07	1.01	ME
10	The services of the guidance and counselling teacher ease the stigma on affected students.	4.19	0.85	ME
11	The presence of perpetrator on sexual harassment in school environment will bring fear that may hinder learning	3.34	0.96	LE
12	Teachers are sensitive and offer appropriate counsel to students both girls and boys	4.13	0.81	ME
13	Boys sometimes get pressured to engage in sexual practices in order to prove their manhood.	4.13	0.81	ME
14	Sexual harassment harms both boys and girls socially, psychologically and emotionally.	3.82	0.86	ME
15	Teachers carry the values and attitudes of their society into the classroom.	3.34	0.97	LE
16	Teachers see themselves as guardians and remember that they are responsible for the students' safety, welfare and well-being	3.49	1.09	LE
	Average Mean	3.73	0.94	ME

KEY: M=Mean average, SD=Standard deviation average, LE=Low extent, ME=Moderate extent

Table 2, revealed the responses of respondents on the state which of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in technical education programmes in Plateau State, several keys in sights emerged. The average mean of the respondents revealed that they understood gender responsive pedagogy at moderate extent (3.73). The standard deviation of the respondent of the 16 items ranges from 0.81-1.09 which less than 1.96, this shows that the respondent was not

too far from theme and were close to one another in their responses.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of students, lecturers, and heads of department on Gender Responsive management of sexual maturation technical education program in Plateau State.

Table 3: Summary of ANOVA Analysis for Mean Responses on gender Responsive management of sexual maturation technical education program in Plateau State.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	F-value	p-value (Sig. 2-tailed)	Alpha Level	Decision
Students	105	3.15	0.80			0.574	0.05	Accepted
Lecturers	40	3.30	0.89	147	2.434		0.05	
Heads of Department	5	3.50	0.75					

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* Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Key: p-value= probability value calculated by the computer

From Table 3, since the p-value, Sig (2-tailed) (0.574) is greater than 0.05, it implies that There is no significant difference among the mean responses of students, lecturers, and heads of department on gender responsive management of sexual maturation technical education program in Plateau State. Therefore, the null hypothesis is upheld.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of students, lecturers, and heads of department on Gender based violence and sexual harassment in technical education program in Plateau State.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA Analysis for Mean Responses on Gender based violence and sexual harassment in technical education program in Plateau State.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	F-value	p-value (Sig. 2-tailed)	Alpha Level	Decision
Students	105	2.95	0.70	147	3.132	0.645	0.05	Accepted
Lecturers	40	3.10	0.85					
Heads of Department	5	3.60	0.78					

* Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Key: p-value= probability value calculated by the computer

From Table 4 since the p-value, Sig (2-tailed) (0.645) is greater than 0.05, it implies that there is be no significant difference between the mean responses of students, lecturers, and heads of department on Gender based violence and sexual harassment in technical education program in Plateau State. Therefore, the null hypotheses regarding the mean responses of the respondents were upheld (accepted).

Findings of the Study

1. The respondents understood the following at a moderate extent; teachers are sensitive and offer appropriate counsel to both boys and girls, physical changes in boys and girls can be very disturbing and can impact negatively on their classroom participation. They also understood the following at low extent; the school does not have adequate sanitation for example enough water, sanitary bins or emergency sanitary wear and school management systems do not provide rules and regulations that cater for girl who miss school for genuine reasons such as menstruation related causes. There is no

significant difference between the mean responses of students, lecturers, and heads of department on the management of sexual maturation.

2. The respondents understood the following at a moderate extent; teachers use languages that are friendly to both male and female students to take different roles in the society, the service of guidance and counselling teacher ease the stigma on affected students. They also understood the following at a low extent; teachers create a conducive classroom environment which is free from all forms of sexual harassment and teachers do not have the necessary skills to detect and handle sexual harassment in the classroom as well as its impact on teaching and learning. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of students, lecturers, and heads of department on gender-based violence and sexual harassment.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The respondents understood the following at a moderate extent; teachers are sensitive and offer appropriate counsel to both

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boys and girls, physical changes in boys and girls can be very disturbing and can impact negatively on their classroom participation. They also understood the following at low extent; the school does not have adequate sanitation for example enough water, sanitary bins or emergency sanitary wear and school management systems do not provide rules and regulations that cater for girl who miss school for genuine reasons such as menstruation related causes. The moderate extent of gender-responsive management of sexual maturation aligns with research in Sub-Saharan Africa, which indicates that while schools recognize the importance of addressing sexual maturation, implementation comprehensive strategies often fall short due to systemic challenges (Abraha *et al* 2019).

The moderate extent on teachers is sensitive and offer appropriate counsel to students; both boys and girls concerning maturation is a significant strength. Counseling plays a critical role in supporting students as they navigate the physical and emotional changes associated with sexual maturation. Research in Uganda highlights that counseling services can help students cope with the psychological impacts of puberty, such as anxiety and low self-esteem, which can affect their academic performance (Mori, 2024). Similarly, the Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) model emphasizes the importance of counseling in creating a supportive environment for students, particularly girls, who may face additional challenges such as menstrual stigma and harassment (FAWE, 2018).

The moderate extent on physical changes in boys and girls can be very disturbing and can impact negatively on their classroom participation indicates that teachers are making efforts to support students during puberty. This is consistent with the GRP model, which trains teachers to recognize and address the physical changes that boys and girls experience, such as growth spurts and hormonal fluctuations (FAWETZ, 2023). However, the moderate overall score suggests that these efforts are not always comprehensive. For example, while teachers may address physical changes, they may lack the resources to provide practical support, such as

sanitary products or private facilities for girls (Rarieya *et al* 2024).

The low extent on the school does not have adequate sanitary facilities is a significant gap in Plateau State's technical education programmes. Berecha (2022) highlights that many schools lack basic sanitary facilities, such as clean toilets and running water, which are essential for managing menstrual hygiene. A study in Tanzania found that the absence of adequate sanitary facilities often forces girls to miss school during their menstrual periods, leading to significant academic setbacks (Mhewa *et al* 2021). Addressing this gap requires targeted investments in infrastructure, as well as policies to ensure that schools provide the necessary facilities and resources for menstrual hygiene management (FAWETZ 2025).

The low extent on; school management systems do not provide rules and regulations that cater for girls who miss schools for genuine reasons such as menstruation related causes is another critical gap. Global research shows that menstrual-related absences are often overlooked in educational policies and practices (FAWE 2018). For example, a study in Uganda found that many schools lack policies to support girls who miss school due to menstruation, such as flexible attendance policies or remedial classes to help them catch up on missed work FAWE (2018). The GRP model emphasizes the importance of addressing menstrual-related absences through policies that promote re-entry and support for girls, such as providing sanitary products and creating a stigma-free environment (FAWE 2018).

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of students, lecturers, and heads of department on the management of sexual maturation. This implies that all groups have a shared perception. The consensus among respondents reflects a shared awareness of the challenges associated with managing sexual maturation, such as providing counseling and addressing physical changes. However, the low provision of adequate sanitary facilities and low consideration of menstrual-related absences highlight significant gaps. Research has shown that inadequate sanitary

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facilities often force girls to miss school during menstruation, leading to academic setbacks. This aligns with the findings in Plateau State, where respondents recognize the challenges but lack the resources and policies to address them effectively.

The respondents understood the following at a moderate extent; teachers use languages that are friendly to both male and female students to take different roles in the society, the service of guidance and counselling teacher ease the stigma on affected students. They also understood the following at a low extent; teachers create a conducive classroom environment which is free from all forms of sexual harassment and teachers do not have the necessary skills to detect and handle sexual harassment in the classroom as well as its impact on teaching and learning.

The moderate level in teachers uses languages in teaching which is friendly to both male and female students to take different roles in the society indicates that teachers are making efforts to create a supportive environment for students. Osuna-Rodriguez et al (2020) revealed that inclusive language can reduce gender stereotypes and encourage equal participation in technical fields. However, the use of friendly language alone is insufficient to address the root causes of gender-based violence and sexual harassment. For example, studies in Tanzania and Ethiopia highlight that while teachers may use inclusive language, they often lack the skills to address underlying power dynamics that perpetuate harassment (Abraha *et al* 2023).

The moderate level on; the service of the guidance and counselling teacher ease the stigma on affected students. Counseling services play a critical role in supporting survivors of GBV and sexual harassment, as they provide emotional and psychological support (Mori 2024). Research in South Africa emphasizes the importance of counseling in helping survivors cope with trauma and continue their education (Deane 2024). However, counseling alone cannot prevent GBV. Blindow *et al* (2024) stated that effective prevention requires a holistic approach, including

policy reforms, awareness campaigns, and training for teachers and students.

The low extent on teachers creates a conducive classroom environment which is free from all forms of sexual harassment is a significant gap in Plateau State's technical education programmes. Research shows that many institutions fail to create safe spaces for students, particularly in male-dominated fields (Mori 2024). For example, a study in Germany found that female students in technical and scientific fields often face higher risks of harassment due to the male-dominated culture (center of excellence, women and science) CEW (2024). Similarly, research in South Africa highlights that institutional cultures often perpetuate GBV, with policies that reinforce victim-blaming and protect perpetrators (Deane 2024). To address this gap, institutions must prioritize the creation of safe and inclusive environments (Mori, 2024)

The low level in; teachers do not have the necessary skills to detect and handle harassment is another critical gap. This finding aligns with research showing that many teachers lack the necessary skills to identify and address gender-based violence and sexual harassment (CEWS 2024). For instance, a study in the United States found that teachers often fail to recognize subtle forms of harassment, such as verbal abuse and micro aggressions, which can have significant psychological impacts on students (SHW 2018). Similarly, Deane (2024) revealed in research in South Africa that, teachers often lack the confidence and training to intervene effectively in cases of harassment.

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of students, lecturers, and heads of department on gender-based violence and sexual harassment. This suggests a shared concern about the prevalence of harassment and the need for better intervention strategies. The shared concern among respondents reflects a recognition of the prevalence of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in technical education programs. However, the low level on creating harassment-free environments and low skills in detecting and handling harassment highlight significant gaps.

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Research has shown that institutional cultures often perpetuate gender-based violence, with policies that reinforce victim-blaming and protect perpetrators. This aligns with the findings in Plateau State, where respondents recognize the need for intervention but lack the skills and resources to address harassment effectively

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that while there is a shared understanding of the importance of gender-responsive pedagogy among the respondents in Plateau State's technical education programmes significant gaps remain in its practical implementation. These gaps are largely due to systemic challenges, such as inadequate training, resources, and institutional support. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address these challenges and create more inclusive and supportive learning environments for all students, regardless of gender. The implementation of gender-responsive management in Plateau State's technical education programmes is a critical step toward achieving gender equality and inclusivity in education. While the study reveals moderate levels of implementation, significant gaps remain in practical application due to systemic challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Workshop and seminars should be organized regularly to enlighten and educate teachers and the school management on how to be sensitive to gender diversity and adolescent needs as well as to ensure that the schools have proper sanitation facilities for menstrual hygiene. This will significantly help them of gender responsive management of sexual maturation.
2. Workshops and seminars should be organized for students on gender-based violence and sexual harassment. This will help them have adequate knowledge on issues related to gender-

based violence and harassment. School authority should provide enabling environment to report any forms of sexual harassment.

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