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Influence of Perceived Sexual Harassment on Female Students' Academic Performance in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of perceived sexual harassment on female students' academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. With two specific objectives, guided by two research questions and tested against two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance, the study adopts an ex-post-facto research design, the area of the study was in Bauchi state. The population comprised of 23,096 female students in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state, the sample size was determined using research advisor (2006) table of sample size determinant, where 378 respondents were selected using multi-stage and proportionate sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire adapted and Students' Academic Performance collected from the sample institutions, the data collection for this study was achieved using three trained research assistants, the instrument was validated by three experts in the Department of Educational Foundation, ATBU. The reliability of the instrument was determined through Cronbach alpha, pilot test the reliability of .92 was obtained. The data collected was analysed using mean and standard deviation, simple linear regression analysis. Some of the findings of the study revealed that (i) Perceived sexual assault significantly influence female students' Academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. (ii)Perceived sexual touching significantly influence female students' Academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. It was concluded that the aforementioned variable had significant influence on female students' Academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. This study therefore, recommend that Trauma-informed Counselling Services: Campus counselling centers must be modernized and decentralized away from main administrative blocks to ensure students anonymity. Staff should be trained in trauma-informed care to provide immediate psychological first aid, cognitive mechanism for victims dealing with anxiety or depression. Mandatory Peer-led Sensitization and Support Networks: student affairs divisions should institutionalize and fund female-led peer support networks. Regular, mandatory orientation workshops should be organized for both fresh and returning students to create awareness regarding personal boundaries consent.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years, women and girls have garnered worldwide attention for violence, which has been a severe socioeconomic and human rights problem impacting practically all cultures. Abuses against women can manifest itself in a

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variety of ways including sexual harassment and domestic violence. Tertiary institutions campuses are increasingly becoming infamously hazardous and unfriendly environments, rather than providing a secure setting in which students may acquire information create healthy life-long mutual friendships in a respected environment. This is owing to the fact that in any open social organization where there are boys, girls, men, and women, there is bound to be interaction, which can be beneficial or harmful. Sexual harassment might thus be a result of such unpleasant contact among boys, girls, men, and women, with far-reaching consequences for individuals and the nation as a whole.

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. 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, 2023). Sexual harassment is more or less a global phenomenon. It is an act that deviates from accepted standard of sexual behaviour. It is common occurrence in social organizations, this social problem affects a significant number of people in our tertiary institutions today.

Sexual harassment can be defined as all forms of tendencies by a person aimed at making somebody from the opposite sex succumb to his/her sexual approaches or desires. This can be expressed through signs, blinking of the eyes, verbal communications, innuendoes, physical assaults, unofficial directives, whistling, offer of gifts and /or money, intimidations, unwanted labelling, cracking of sex-related jokes, teasing, unapproved sexual relationship, other aspects of body language, etc. sexual harassment as any abnormal sexual overtures, proposals, approaches, or moves by any individuals occupying a superior, inferior, advantaged, disadvantaged position to seek sexual favour (either overtly or covertly) which makes submission or rejection explicitly or implicitly a basis for the enhancement of academic performance.

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). Perceived sexual harassment is annoying, offensive, upsetting, embarrassing and frightening (Langer,2021). Sexual harassment dehumanizes and dis-empowers its target mentally, emotionally and physically. The stress related mental and physical illnesses, includes post-traumatic stress disorder may result to depression (Buchanana, Settles, Hall & O' connor, 2020).

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, 2021) 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. (kulima, bello, mohammed, mairiga & bukar, 2020) Hence, for a meaningful sustainable development to be achieved in Nigerian education sector, harassment of female students must be approach with all seriousness.

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Education is one of the most important aspects of human resource development. The students' performance plays an important role in producing best quality graduates who will become great leaders and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country' s economic and social development. Academic performance is one of the major factors considered by employers in hiring workers especially for the fresh graduates. Thus, students have to put the greatest effort in their study to obtain good grades and to prepare themselves for future opportunities in their career at the same time to fulfil the employer's demand.

There is an international concern on academic performance of students. Globally and Nigeria in particular, improving the quality of education and investment on educational and human resources are regarded as effective factors paving the way for a country's pervasive development. Improvement of students' academic performance is also among the basic goals of educational planning. And it is through academic performance that students can fully actualize their talents and capabilities in line with educational goals. Notably, academic performance is considered as one important criteria of educational quality.

The world is becoming more and more competitive. Quality of performance has become the key factor for personal progress. Parents desire that their children climb the ladder of performance to as high a level as possible. This desire for high level of performance puts a lot of pressure on students, teachers, parents and schools and in general the education system itself. In fact, it appears as if the whole system of education revolves round the academic performance of students, though various other outcomes are also expected from the system. Thus, a lot of time and effort of the schools are used for helping students to achieve better in their scholastic endeavours.

In the educational parlance, Performance is the ability of a student to complete a task. The task completion results could be positive or negative. Academic performance in universities is undulating between first and third classes, rare in universities. If the result is positive, it indicates that the student performs brilliantly or excellently, but on the other hand, if it is negative, it indicates woeful performance. Student performance is an outcome of a rigorous evaluation through examination or other assessment methods. Students have the capability for extraordinary academic performance in a learning environment. This proposition diver among different students. Down-to-the-earth accomplishments happen in day-to-day practice in university settings. At the beginning of the semester, the teachers and administrators take a turn to inspire the students to pursue their dreams to come out with flying colours at the end of their study. Since accomplishments are a shared vision of the entire academic community, a theory of performance is applicable in many learning contexts. The students' performance plays an important role in producing best quality graduates who will become great leaders and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country'

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent times, cases of sexual harassment of female students have been a reoccurring- activity in tertiary institutions. A reader of newspapers can after some few days or month come across a reported cases of sexual harassment in one institution or another. Due to its frequent occurrence, Psychologists, Counsellors, parents, teachers and general public have become worried over what tertiary institutions have become these days of deviating from their primary responsibility of imparting knowledge and character, instead continually be more concerned with the morality of the students. This led to research 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 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.

Sexual harassment has become a pervasive issue within tertiary institutions, affecting female students' sense of safety, dignity, and overall academic experience. In Bauchi State, anecdotal evidence and media reports suggest

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that many female students' experience different forms of sexual harassment-from verbal abuse and unwelcome advances to coercion and intimidation by peers, lecturers, and non-academic staff. Economic and social development. It is against this background that this research work sough to examine the influence of perceived sexual harassment on female students' psychological well-being and academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the Influence of perceived sexual harassment on female students' academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. Specifically, the research was aimed to achieved the following objectives:

1. To determine the influence of perceived Sexual Assault on female students' Academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.
2. To determine the influence of perceived Sexual touching on female students' Academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

Research Questions

The following research Questions are raised to guide the study;

1. To what extent does perceive sexual assault influence female students' Academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state?
2. To what extent does perceive sexual touching influence female students' Academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated and was tested to achieved the objectives of this study at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho_1; Perceived sexual assault does not significantly influence female students' Academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

Ho_2; Perceived sexual touching does not significantly influence female students' academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

Theoretical Framework

The Theory was developed by Psychologist Leu Vygotsky (1930s). The theory posit that Socio-Cultural theories examine the wider social and political context in which sexual harassment is created and occurs, at a time when psychologists were intent on developing simple explanations of human behavior. According to this perspective, sexual harassment is a logical consequence of the gender inequality and sexism that already exists in society (Gutek, 2019). This theory asserts that women's lesser status in the larger society is reflected structures and culture; consequently, male dominance continues to be the rule.

Historically cultures and societal norms have socialized men into roles of sexual assertion, leadership, and persistence whereas women are socialized to be passive, submissive and gatekeepers. Theory of Academic Performance (ToP) was developed by Don Elger (2007). The of performance challenge educators to improve their performance through empowerment to help others learn effectively and grow. This type of learning will foster quick success and produce knowledge that will influence society. Performance indicates learning-for-understanding. Higher academic performance produces result that led to an increase in academic quality.

METHODOLOGY

The design for this study was ex post factor research design. An ex post facto research design is a research design to examine the relationship between variables after the events have taken place. The researcher observes existing differences and analyzes their possible effects without controlling or manipulating the variables. Ex post facto research design is a non-experimental research design in which the researcher investigates the possible relationship between an existing independent and a dependent variable without manipulating the

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independent variable, since the events or conditions have already occurred (Polit & Beek, 2009). The ex post facto research design was considered appropriate for this study because it seeks to examine the influence of perceived sexual harassment on academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state without manipulating the independent variable. Perceived sexual harassment is an event or experience that has already occurred and cannot be deliberately induced or controlled by the researcher due to ethical and practical considerations.

The study was carried out in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. The population of the study was Comprise all female students in tertiary institutions of Bauchi State (23, 096) female students. The sample for this study consisted of 378 female students' out of 23,096 of tertiary institution in Bauchi State. Using research Advisors (2006) Table. The instrument for data collection were Questionnaire, titled Perceived Sexual Harassment Experiences questionnaire (PSHEQPW) on female students in tertiary institutions and Academic Performance of female students collected from the sample of institutions. The researcher used descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to answer research questions, for decision making 2.50 was used as the criterion mean while inferential statistics linear regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant.

RESULTS

Research Question one

To what extent perceived sexual assault influence female students' Academic Performance in tertiary institution of Bauchi state?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Score of Perceived Sexual Assault Influence on Academic Performance of female Student's

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	Std.D	Remark
1.	Continued to ask you for date, drinks, dinner.	378	2.76	.829	Agree
2.	Unwelcome soliciting or pressure for dates.	378	2.74	.906	Agree
3.	Made unwanted attempts to have sex with you that resulted in your pleading, crying.	378	2.72	.999	Agree
4.	Treated you badly for refusing to have sex.	378	2.84	.935	Agree
5.	Someone made sexual motions to me, such as grabbing their crotch, pretending to masturbate or imitating oral sex	378	2.88	.901	Agree

Source: field report 2026

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation score on perceived sexual assault influence academic performance. The result reveal means ranging from 2.88 to 2.72, with standard deviation between .901 and .999, agreed with all the item statements on perceived sexual assault influence academic performance of female students.

Research Question two

Does perceived sexual touching influence female students' Academic Performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Score of Perceived sexual touching Influence on Academic Performance of female Student's

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	Std. D	Remark
1.	Made unwanted and uncomfortable attempts to touch, stroke, or fondle you (touching you arm or hand, striking your leg or neck).	378	2.59	.815	Agree
2.	Unwelcome inadvertent brushing or touching.	378	2.75	.897	Agree

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3.Unwelcome bodily contacts, such as grabbing or fondling in general.	378	2.89	.903	Agree
4.Attempted rape.	378	2.60	.958	Agree
5.Exprienced sexual harassment (SH).	378	2.69	1.00	Agree

Source: field report 2026

Table 2 presents mean and standard deviation score on perceived sexual touching influence academic performance. The result reveal means ranging from 2.89 to 2.59, with standard deviation between .903 and .815, agreed with all the item statements on perceived sexual touching influence academic performance of female students.

Test of null hypotheses One

Perceived sexual assault does not significantly influence female students' Academic Performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

Table 3: Regression analysis on the influence of perceived sexual assault on female students' Academic Performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

Model	N	R	R2	F	Beta	t-value	P-value	Decision
1	378	.278	.077	7.809	-.157	-2.817	.005	rejected

Source: field report 2026

The statistical evidence presented in table 3 reveals that perceived sexual assault significantly influence female students' academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. The result of the multiple regression shows that perceived sexual assault .077% of variance in academic performance (R^2 =.077). The standardized coefficient (β= -.157; t= -2.817; P= .005). This result leads to the rejection of null hypotheses five, which stated that perceived sexual assault does not significantly influence female student academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. The findings imply that perceived sexual assault significantly influence female students' academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

Test of null hypotheses Two

Perceived sexual touching does not significantly influence female students' Academic Performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

Table 4: Regression analysis on the influence of perceived sexual touching on female students' Academic Performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

Model	N	R	R2	F	Beta	t-value	P-value	Decision
1	378	.278	.077	7.809	.172	3.362	.001	rejected

Source: field report 2026

The statistical evidence presented in table 4 reveals that perceived sexual touching significantly influence female students' academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. The result of the multiple regression shows that sexual touching .077% of variance in academic performance (R^2 =.077). The standardized coefficient (β= .172; t= 3.362; P= .001). This result leads to the rejection of null hypotheses six, which stated that perceived sexual touching does not significantly influence female student academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. The findings imply that perceived sexual touching significantly influence female students' academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state.

CONCLUSION

The study provides empirical evidence of the significantly influence of perceived sexual harassment on female students' academic performance in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state. The study establishes that exposure to hostile educational environments, quit pro quo advances,

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and peer to peer harassment creates a compounding cycle of psychological trauma. This trauma directly manifests as heightened anxiety, emotional withdrawal, and diminished self-esteem, among female students. Furthermore, this study concludes that the psychological toll inflicted by sexual harassment has an immediate, destructive spillover effect on female students' academic performance. Academic decline is not merely a product of disinterest, but rather a direct consequence of institutional unsafety.

When female students' faces persistent harassment, their motivation to attend lectures declines, their concentration during assessment is disrupted, and their academic engagement is replaced by survival mechanisms. Consequently, this leads to measurable drop in cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and decreases retention. Ultimately, the findings underscore that sexual harassment is not an isolated interpersonal issue, but a systematic structured crisis. The persistence of these behaviours across Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges in Bauchi State reflects a historical in enforceable, student-centered protection frameworks. Without rigorous, independent reporting channel and swift disciplinary accountability, tertiary institutions cannot fully achieve their mandate of producing balanced, high-achieving female graduates. Therefore, addressing sexual harassment is an absolute pre-requisite for safeguarding both the mental well-being and academic excellence of female students in the state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Implementation of Academic Remediation Frameworks: Academic boards must create formal "academic amnesty" or remediation policies for verified victims. If a student academic performance (CGPA) declines significantly due to documented psychological trauma from harassment, she should be granted retake without penalty, extended deadlines, or temporary academic leave without losing her admission status.
2. Integration of CCTV Monitoring and Open-door Office Policies: To eliminate closed-door predatory environments, institutions must enforce strict architectural and administrative accountability. This includes implementing an "open-door" or transparent glass-panel policy for staff offices during student visitations and installing functional CCTV cameras along faculty corridors and lectures hall perimeters.
3. Decentralized, Trauma-informed Counselling Services: Campus counselling centers must be modernized and decentralized away from main administrative blocks to ensure students anonymity. Staff should be trained in trauma-informed care to provide immediate psychological first aid, cognitive mechanism for victims dealing with anxiety or depression.

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