



Causation and Demographics of Sexual Harassment in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Sexual harassment has become a synonym for describing Obafemi Awolowo University in light of frequent occurrence of the problem in most recent time. This study investigated the causes of sexual harassment and the demography of harassers and their victims. The study went further to investigate the attitude of respondents (female undergraduate students) to efforts put in place by the university authority to rein in on sexual harassers. The study employed a quantitative research method and the instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The study identified multiple factors that facilitate sexual harassment. Female students in their final year are most prone to sexual harassment. Female students who lust for undeserving marks constitute another category most vulnerable to sexual harassment. Indecent dressing among female students was identified as a factor that exposes them to sexual harassment. In spite of zero tolerance of the university management to sexual harassment, respondents did not have confidence in measures put in place by the authorities to rein on sexual harassment. Respondents argued that sexual harassment is underreported for sundry reasons relating to policy, procedures, institutional measures and stereotypes. They suggest that extant policies orchestrated at containing sexual harassment are not inclusive of stakeholders in the university; and that the approach of the university to address the problem seems more impulsive than preventive. Conclusively, there is no consensus on the definition of the problem or how best to respond to it.

Key words: Sexual harassment; University authority; Violence; Rape; Policy

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment has become a huge social problem that has excited academic interest (Koss, 1992; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; WHO, 2005; World Bank, 2018); and has assumed a frightening proportion in citadels of higher learning in Nigeria. It is usually a hidden grievous act perpetuated more against women by men, regardless of their status and class. In less than a year, three academics have been dismissed by authorities of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, for reasons that are related to sexual offending behaviour against female students. The recurrence of this act conveys a picture of the magnitude and intensity of sexual offending behaviour in the university. Alluding to the prevalence of the problem, the World Bank (2018) reported that 70 percent of female graduates from Nigeria's tertiary institutions had, from a sample, reported to have been sexually harassed by either their classmates or lecturers during their undergraduate programmes.

The term "sexual harassment" emerged from North America in the mid-1970s as a result of the pioneering works of some scholars who brought the problem to recognition (Gutek, 1985; Farley, 1978; Mackinnon, 1979). In spite of efforts to contain sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning, it seems to have burgeoned in practice and with little success recorded in curbing the despicable act or understanding the underlying motives.

Admittedly, the shameful act has gained more recognition in terms of appreciating it as a problem that

needs to be addressed: a lot of campaigns and punitive legislations have been fashioned to serve as deterrence to those who indulge in it. In spite of the fact that sexual harassment in universities constitutes act that demeans and humiliates the female student, prevent her from achieving academic fulfilment and possibly destroying the merit award system of the university, it appears there is little effort that has been made to enable a good understanding of the problem, especially in citadels of higher learning where the problem appears to be on the increase, and has consequently gained societal attention. For example, little or nothing has been done to understand contextual causes of sexual harassment on campuses, the demography of those who are either perpetrators or victims and how best to respond to sexual harassment issues.

Unarguably, sexual harassment has become a festering sore in both public and private spaces in Nigeria. In the state of literature, it has been appreciated as a problem for more than three decades (Pina, Ganon & Sanders, 2009). Yet, little success has been recorded to contain the problem for reasons relating to the fact that such a violent act is generally considered a sensitive issue that is universally underreported (UNFPA, 2007). The implication of this is that most women have had to cope in silence with violence that accompanies the act and its consequences (WHO, 2005). Nonetheless, a number of studies have documented the magnitude of such violence against women (Willness, Steel & Lee, 2007; World Bank, 2018). It is pertinent to suggest why some women who are victims of sexual harassment cope in silence is associated with stigma and negative profiling of the victims.

In the context of this study, sexual harassment is defined as the wilful act to intend or have sexual relationship with a female student against her wish in circumstances that are overwhelmingly against the victim, and in which she has little or no option to resist such unwholesome and unsolicited gestures. It could also involve the intimidation of a female student to concede to having sex in a way she would not have done if she were free to exercise her discretion. Sexual harassment is assumed to be most prevalent between male lecturers and female students in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria; and conjures a picture of an asymmetrical power relations that makes sexual violence against women by men to be seen as a normal act. Thus, sexual harassment could be considered as the mobilization of masculinity in a way that cause harm to women, even when it is not the motive of the harasser (Martin 2001). Unarguably, the most pervasive form of violence against women include: rape, sexual coercion, intimate partner violence, sexual abuse by non-intimate partners, trafficking, forced prostitution and exploitation of labour (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; Koss, 1992; Crowell & Burgess, 1996).

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Sexual harassment has become a very serious problem in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife. However, there is little understanding of the causes of the problem and the demography of sexual harassers and their victims. In addressing the problem, the university authorities have often given a reactive disposition through the setting up of investigation panels and trials that often punish those who were accused. There is little to suggest the university authority is proactive in engaging the problem. Rather, the university authorities usually display an impulsive punitive reaction to the problem. Moreover, there is little effort at having a collective stance on the strategies of engaging the problem. In addition, there is no evidence of research fertility on sexual harassment incidences in the institution to interrogate the problem in a systematic manner that enables understanding to see beyond the lens of those who leverage on the power structure within the university. Admittedly, a scrutiny of the reactive actions of the university authority convokes an impulsive attitude of political correctness to a festering problem that rather demands a perceptive interrogation.

Sexual harassment has been dominant in academic discourses (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; Koss, 1992; UNFPA, 2007). Yet, it has become a serious social problem in citadels of higher learning in the country; despite the effort of university authorities to rein in on sexual harassers. Though, considerable reactive efforts have been made to rein in on sexual harassers and policies have been framed to address the problem; however, there is little to suggest that the university is doing well at preventing sexual harassment. For example, it is unclear if much has been done to understand the causes of sexual harassment on the university campuses, its patterns and the demography of the harassers and their victims. Also, it appears that policies designed to contain sexual harassment appear strong on paper but not rooted in the consciousness of both staff and students. Aside the fact that there is no sustained publicity on sexual harassment policies, the policies are not readily accessible to both staff and students. Another issue around the extant policy on sexual harassment is the fact that it is not dynamic and responsive, and seem not to reflect the aggregate input of stakeholders in the institution. How the policies were designed appear to reflect the reasoning of those who leverage on the power structure within the institution. The anti-sexual harassment policies usually come alive when investigative panels are constituted to investigate reported cases. Further, less research has focused on why victims become a prey to their harassers. Importantly, the voices, narratives and experiences of the victims have been overly neglected in the effort to address the problem.

Admittedly, sexual harassment has excited serious academic disagreement among scholars. The process of defining it has become problematic as the nature of

the problem. In addition, there is little to suggest there is collective ownership of the methodology to address the problem as well as the process of defining it. The degree to which the controversy around the definition of the problem impacts on the success at containing the problem leaves room for further academic investigation. Unarguably, scholars have not also agreed on the definition of the problem (Pina, Ganon & Sanders, 2009). One of the core reasons for the disagreement on the definition of the problem is that boundaries would be set for the term to distinguish it from an expression of sexual interest (Guttek, 1985). Despite the disagreement over the definition of the problem, some studies have settled for the fact that sexual harassment constitutes rape behavior (Pryor, 1987).

In literature on the problem, an array of reasons has been offered for why it has been difficult to achieve a universal definition of the problem. These reasons are explained and couched in three key factors: 1) the specific behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment (that is, can non-verbal behaviour constitute sexual harassment?); (2) is the negative effect of sexual harassment restricted and exclusive to the victim (in this case, are other female students, members of the university community and the university itself not affected by the incidence of sexual harassment?) and (3) can we agree that sexism represents one of the many methods of sexually harassing behaviour (Pina, Ganon & Sanders, 2009). It would be tenuous to conclude that the reaction of OAU authorities have been guided by these salient questions in either providing insight into the incidence of sexual harassment in the citadel of learning or in how policies have been articulated.

Undeniably, sexual harassment is the act of removing the consent of a weaker gender to consent to sex or the attempt to procure sex without the discretion of the weaker gender. Unfortunately, little has been done to get the narratives of female students on what accounts for sexual harassment on the campus nor has the narrative of the staff been an integral element of appreciation of the problem. It is obvious that there is less that has also been done to identify the demography of the harasser and the harassed, and circumstances under which the heinous act takes place as well as the motivating objectives. The reactive nature of the university authority to set up investigative panel usually provides little insight into the problem. Rather than a holistic and preventive approach to the problem, the usual pattern that appears to have been cultivated by the university management to allegations made against staff and students for sexual offending behaviour has been wholly reactive, and essentially punitive in character and goals. In our view, actions of the university authority could best be described as an episodic instance of political correctness of a moral misdemeanour among staff and the students. It does not reflect a conscious systematic effort at understanding the problem.

In this paper, we had to pay critical attention to contextual issues in sexual harassment in one of Nigeria's foremost citadel of learning, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, where the issue has become so recurring and assumed some notoriety in the public and media spaces. In less than a year, three academics have been dismissed for reasons associated with grievous acts of sexual offending behaviour and another senior academic is on suspension. In spite of the punitive action of the university authorities to rein in on staff and students who indulge in sexual offending behaviour, the subculture continues to persist.

There is no doubt sexual harassment exist in the university. However, there is paucity of evidence to provoke a conclusion that the problem has been sufficiently interrogated to determine the magnitude of the problem. This study is not limited only to identifying the factors that promote sexual harassment but includes the attempt to identify the demography of sexual harassers and their victims in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, where sexual harassment problem convokes a picture that much is not been achieved to address the problem.

THE STATE OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) adopted by the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 prodded governments, civil society and the international community to initiate strategic action in twelve major areas that must include issues of violence against women and prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace (McGolgan, 2004).

Sexual harassment constitutes violence against women and makes the victim to conjure a negative profile of men and sometimes herself through self-guilt. This could have provided the reason for the conclusion in some studies that sexual harassment is a practice of discrimination on the basis of sex that violates the principle of equality of sexes between men and women (Numhauser-Henning & Laulom, 2012). A scrutiny of sexual offending literature suggests that victims of sexual harassment are usually females and that sexual harassers are most likely to be males (Pryor, 1995; Menard, Hall, Phung, Ghebrial & Martin, 2003 & European Commission, 1998; World Bank, 2018); and perpetrators of sexual harassment are likely married, older, more educated and hierarchically more superior to their victims (Guttek, 1985; Fitzgerald & Weitzman, 1990).

In spite of reported cases of sexual harassment prevalence in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, what accounts for sexual harassment in our higher institutions of higher learning remains largely unanswered. Importantly, there is less study on the demography of sexual harassers and their victims. Thus, our overarching

concern in this study is to identify the motivating causes of sexual harassment, and to ascertain the demographic characteristics of the harasser and the harassed. Therefore, a description and classification of the characteristics of sexual harassers and those sexually harassed would provide critical insights into the problem on our campuses, and how policies could best be framed to respond to such problems. Our review of literature reveals that the key indicators in sexual harassment are gender, power and culture.

In spite of the surfeit of sexual offending literature on the aetiology of sexual harassment, there is neither a single cause of sexual harassment nor is there a theoretical explanation that best explains sexual harassment (Skaine, 1996). As a result of this, five major strands of theory have been used to explain sexual harassment, namely, socio-cultural (Tangri & Hayes, 1997; Farley, 1978); organizational (Gruber, 1992; Tangri et al., 1982); Sexrole spillover (Tangri & Hayes, 1997; Gutek & Morasch, 1982); natural-biological (Tangri et al., 1982) and four-factor theory (O'Hare & O' Donohue, 1998). Incidentally, there is need to further interrogate sexual harassment from specific context.

The socio-cultural explanations have been largely shaped by feminist orientation that speaks to the wider social and political context in which sexual harassment takes place. Within the university setting- a usually male dominated setting- male lecturers are more inclined to harass female students and younger female colleagues and subordinates, and male students are inclined to harass female students. The socio-cultural theory explains incidences of sexual harassment in the context of the dominance of men over women, pointing at the gender inequality that exists in the society (Gutek, 1985; Thomas & Kitzinger, 1997). In the context of power relations, women are generally seen as a weaker sex and are often the victims of sexual harassment that is rooted in a sexist male ideology that promotes male superiority over women (Matchen & Desouza, 2000; Stockdale, 1993); and which make men to consider their sexual offending actions justifiable, and for women to blame themselves for being victims (Vaux, 1993).

For feminist scholarship, sexual harassment is a consequence of a macho ideology that profiles women as an inferior sex with a view to reinforcing an existing gender stratification that legitimizes sex role expectations (Gutek, 1985; Malovich & Stake, 1990) in the context of a patriarchal system that promotes masculinity over femininity. In other words, male-female relations are situated in the context of culturally acceptable sex status norms that legitimizes male dominance in a way that makes sexual harassment the consequence of cultural experiences ((Whaley & Tucker, 1998). Thus, men are socialized into stereotyped interactions that make them think they are aggressive and dominant and women are passive and consenting (Gruber & Bjorn, 1986). Nonetheless, it is pertinent to state that explanations of

feminist theories in explaining sexual harassment has been described to be too simplistic because of its lack of explanatory depth (Pina et al. 2009); even though, it has the strength in hybridizing patriarchy, gender and power as key instruments in explaining sexual harassment.

Furthermore, women who are victims of sexual harassment often find it difficult to report crime against them because society tends to blame them for the assault against them. For this reason, feminist theorists contend that men justify their sexual harassing behaviour and women blame themselves for being a victim of sexual offending behaviour (Vaux, 1993). In terms of empirical adequacy, prevalence studies suggest that majority of perpetrators of sexual harassment are males. Since the teaching profession is largely a male dominated profession, the likelihood for male lecturers to be more prone to harassing female students is assumed to be real. Conclusively, existing studies have reinforced that sexual harassment is more prevalent in male dominated workforces (Gruber, 1992; Niebuhr & Boyles, 1991).

The organizational theory explains sexual harassment in the context of power relations and status inequalities within an organisation. In the context of a university setting, lecturers occupy a higher pedestal above students within the hierarchical structuring of authorities within the school setting. Also, governance structure in the university is almost a male dominated affair. This enables the suffocation of the voices of women in their marginalisation/exclusion from discussions and policies that are designed to address the problem. The assumption of organizational theorists is that male lecturers use their position, authority and closeness to sexually exploit female students as a result of power and status inequalities within the school system. However, the gap in this theoretical standpoint is the failure to explain the circumstances under which sexual exploitation and harassment takes place. For example, is it correct to ascribe sexual harassment to negotiated and consensual sex between a male teacher and a female student? Would it be correct to construe sex that is driven by gratification and compensation to sexual harassment? Would sex orchestrated by a female student be construed to mean sexual harassment? These are salient questions that organisational theorists have failed to answer. However, organizational theorists reinforce feminist theorists that power differentials is important to the process of explaining how sexual harassment takes place. Indeed, organizational theorists emphasise that power is a key concept in explaining sexual harassment (Cleveland & Kerst, 1993).

Even though proponents of organizational theory averred a spectrum of organizational-related issues that include power and status inequalities that are assumed to have strong links with the likelihood of sexual harassment (Gruber, 1992; Tangri et al., 1982); it must, however, be emphasised that it is not only power inequalities that account for sexual harassment, other

factors such as gendered occupations, permissiveness of the organizational climate in which harassment takes place, organizational policies that affect the likelihood of the occurrence of sexual offending behaviour (Dekker & Barling, 1998; Willnes et al., 2007) are equally strong predictors. Therefore, the immediate context in which sexual harassment takes place is different from the policies that are designed to curb it.

In spite of the relevance of power as a key instrument in understanding sexual harassment, organizational theorists espouse that both male and female could use power to sexually harass their victims. In specific terms, organizational theorists are not gender specific on the issue of who either becomes the harasser or the victim. By this logic, therefore, it is not unlikely for a female lecturer to use her position to harass either a male student or male subordinate. To this end, organisational theory offers a more expansive framework than the feminists for understanding the dynamics of sexual offending behaviour.

Organizational theorists further espouse that sexual harassment would be more prevalent in institutions where there is no extant sexual harassment policy and explicit protective complaint mechanisms for victims than in institutions where there are clear institutional laws and mechanisms against sexual harassment. This assertion seems too generalized because sexual harassment has been reported in institutions with explicit laws and complaint mechanism against sexual offending behaviour. For example, Obafemi Awolowo University has extant laws that frown at sexual offending behaviour and an enabling complaint mechanism for reporting sexual harassment; yet, it remains one of the universities in South West Nigeria in which sexual harassment is seen to be too frequent. This might suggest that deterrent laws against sexual offending behaviour in its own do not provide an elixir to the problem. Other structural properties of the institution such as the inclusiveness of the law and procedures, perception of the policy and mechanisms for investigation in terms of its efficacy and impartiality, the protection of the complainant, the non-political nature of reporting sexual harassment as well as fairness to the accused are as significant as the policy to curb the menace.

Another theory that aims at explaining sexual harassment is the natural/biological theory (Barak et al., 1995; Browne, 1997; Tangri & Hayes, 1997). This theory espouses that sexual harassment is an extension of mate selection evolutionary theory. The theory contends that men naturally display sexual aggression to find a mate, and that the higher display of sexual aggression by men sometimes result to sexual aggressive behaviour at work (Tangri & Hayes, 1997). However, some studies have contended that the desire of men to express their sexual behaviour should not be construed as sexual harassment (Barak et al., 1995). This implies that it is not all sexual desires that can be correctly described as sexual

harassment. However, sexual expressions studies have concluded men instrumentally deploy power to obtain sex (Brown, 1997). One of the failures of this theory is that it does not explain the cause of sexual harassment on campuses beyond the fact that men usually display higher sexual desires than women. How does one explain the situation of some men who do not sexually harass women? Thus, the theory is deterministic in its assumption that all men display sexual aggression, and fails to account for why all men do not display sexual aggression. Another limitation is that it ignores the roles of stiff laws against sexual harassment and ignores the constraining structural properties of environment in which sexual offending behaviour takes place. Nonetheless, the strength of the theory is that it takes into consideration the innate human instinct that possibly drives sexually offending behaviour (Pina et al., 2009). Conclusively, the theory is weak and provides no strategy for sexual harassment prevention. Also, there are no empirical studies supporting the core assumptions of the natural/biological theory of sexual harassment (Pina et al., 2009).

In other to further enhance explanatory and empirical understanding of sexual harassment, the sex-role spill over theory has been proposed. The central tenet of this theory is that men and women have pre-existing beliefs and gender-based expectations which they take to their work environment. For example, some sexual harassers' may have the belief that gender overrides norms like equality in the work environment (Sbraga & O'Donohue, 2000) and may see no wrong in sexually harassing women. Hence, it is not unlikely for conflict to ensue between sex-role stereotypes of sexual harassers and work ethics that emphasise equality of sexes. Gutek and Morasch (1982) argues that sex-role spillover theory appears to provide the most convincing explanatory frame for explaining sexual harassment in light of its holistic orientation. However, the strength of the theory lies in the fact that it offers some replications in studies that have documented the experiences of women in male-dominated workplaces (Pina et al., 2009). Its limitation is that it provides little explanation on the characteristics of sexual harassers and other organizational variables (O'Hare & O'Donohue, 1998). Generally, a greater refinement of the theory is needed to strengthen empirical testing (Gutek and Done, 2001).

Objective

The broad objective of this paper is to investigate sexual harassment in the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

Inferring from the broad objective are the specific objectives:

- 1) To identify the factors that encourage sexual harassment; and
- 2) To ascertain the demographic characteristics of the harassed and the harasser.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was designed for and filled by female undergraduate students from year two to five/final year. The questionnaire was self-administered in English and took approximately 30-35 minutes. The questionnaires were anonymous and analyzed in confidentiality to protect respondents, and were given out to female students regardless of their religion, ethnicity, courses, age, and level. However, first year students were deliberately excluded from the study because of the assumption that they would not be knowledgeable to discuss the problems the study intends to investigate.

Research Design

The core objective was to investigate sexual harassment incidence in the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. This study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design to investigate the problem of sexual harassment in the institution.

Study Area and Population

The study was carried out among the female undergraduate students of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. The population of students in the institution is put above 30,000 from her population of 244 in 1962/63 (<https://oauife.edu.ng/about-oau/history>). The choice of Obafemi Awolowo University was informed by the occurrences of sexual harassment cases that have filtered into the public and media spaces. Yet, there is paucity of studies that have been done to interrogate the problem.

Sampling Technique

In the selection of respondents, the study adopted purposive sampling method through self-selection sampling processes which allowed the researcher to select respondents from a pool of willing and knowledgeable population of female students. With this sampling technique, a total of 150 female students (respondents) were engaged purposively for the study across the thirteen (13) faculties in the university community. There were scientific criteria that guided the number of respondents selected from each of the faculties. For example, faculties that have four year duration courses usually have a larger population of students than those with more than four year duration. For this reason, faculties such as Administration, Arts, Education, Sciences, and Social Sciences, were purposively allocated fourteen (14) students (respondents) each respectively. From these five faculties, seventy (70) respondents were randomly selected for the study. For other faculties with more than four year duration courses such as Agriculture, Basic Medical Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Dentistry, Environmental and Design Management, Law, Pharmacy, and Technology, were purposively allocated 10 female students (respondents) each respectively. From these eight faculties, eighty (80) respondents were randomly selected. The target

population captured those willing and knowledgeable female students from part two to part four/five/final year. The part one students were deliberately excluded from the study because of the assumption that they would not have the experiences and knowledge to discuss the problems the research intends to interrogate. Questionnaires were self-administered randomly to students after classes in their various faculties. These questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents immediately they were through with the questionnaire. It took an average of 30-35 minutes for each of the respondents to complete the questionnaires, and returned to the researcher. The researcher also ensured that each of the respondents filled the questionnaires independent of other respondents to ensure that responses were unique to reflect their understanding of the problem based on their individual experiences.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument for the data collection was an open ended and close ended questionnaire, containing relevant items that provided information and insight into the objectives of the study. The questionnaires were self-administered to the respondents.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics which included frequency distributions, simple percentages, and measures of central tendency with the aid of Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Statistical deductions were made from the data analysis to inform and report the findings in line with the stated objectives of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality of respondents were ensured to protect their identity.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1
Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	16-19 years	17	11.3
	20-23 years	71	47.3
	24-27 years	62	41.3
	Total	150	100.0
Gender	Female	150	100.0
	Total	150	100.0
Education level	First year	0	0
	Second year	41	27.3
	Third year	47	31.3
	Fourth year	40	26.7
	Fifth/beyond	22	14.7
	Total	150	100.0
Religion	Christian	97	64.7
	Muslim	53	35.3
	Total	150	100.0

Table 1 presented data collected on some of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. The table showed that majority (47.3%) of respondents were within the age bracket of 20-23 years old while another (41.3%) fell within 24-27 years' age bracket. (11.3%) are within 16-19 years of age. For the gender distribution of respondents, the study focused exclusively on the undergraduate female students' population of OAU. The table also showed the distribution of respondents based on

their educational level. Second-year students had 27.3%, third year students had 31.3%, and fourth-year students (26.7%) and those in their fifth year or graduating class had 14.7%. For distribution of respondents by religion, the table showed that majority (64.7%) of respondents were Christians while 35.3% were Muslims.

Objective 1: Factors promoting sexual harassment on OAU campus

Table 2
Respondents' responses on factors promoting sexual harassment

S/N	Item	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely	MWA
1	Indecent dressing on campus (n=150)	4 (2.7%)	8 (5.3%)	44 (29.3%)	94 (62.7%)	4
2	Substance use (n=150)	4 (2.7%)	12 (8.0%)	48 (32.0%)	86 (57.3%)	4
3	Alcohol (n=150)	4 (2.7%)	-	68 (45.3%)	78 (52.0%)	4
4	Legal and social deterrents of victims reporting rape (n=150)	4 (2.7%)	24 (16.0%)	40 (26.7%)	82 (54.7%)	4
5	Slack university policy on sexual abuse prevention (n=150)	4 (2.7%)	16 (10.7%)	56 (37.3%)	74 (49.3%)	3
6	Inadequate institutional framework that fight sexual abuse on campus and where victims can report cases (n=150)	-	8 (5.3%)	56 (37.3%)	86 (57.3%)	4
7	Some students' desperation for good grades (n=150)	-	-	64 (42.7%)	86 (57.3%)	4
8	Inappropriate attitude of lecturers with female students (n=150)	-	16 (10.7%)	52 (34.7%)	82 (54.7%)	4
9	Indiscipline amongst male students who sexually assault their female colleagues (n=150)	-	12 (8.0%)	48 (32.0%)	90 (60.0%)	4

Keys: MWA-Mean Weighted Average; 1-Very unlikely; 2-Unlikely; 3-Likely; 4-Very likely

Table 2 above presented factors that promote sexual harassment on OAU campus in a range of nine items from which respondents picked their responses from. All the items were assigned a mean weighted average of 1-4 from very unlikely to very likely from which respondents picked from. Having stated this, the table above presented factors that contributed significantly to sexual harassment on OAU campus: indecent dressing on campus (mwa = 4-very likely), substance use (mwa = 4-very likely), alcohol (mwa = 4-very likely), legal and social deterrents of victims reporting rape (mwa = 4-very likely), slack university policy on sexual abuse prevention (mwa = 3-likely), inadequate institutional framework that prevent sexual harassment on campus and where victims can report cases (mwa = 4-very likely), some students' desperation to have undeserving good scores/grades (mwa = 4-very likely), inappropriate attitude of lecturers with female students (mwa = 4-very likely), and indiscipline amongst male students who sexually assault their female colleagues (mwa = 4-very likely). Instructively, all the respondents agreed to all items in Table 2 above except for item 5 with a mean weighted average of 4 (very likely) as factors that promote sexual harassment in the institution.

Table 2 showed respondents' opinions on factors that promote sexual harassment in the institution. Significantly, 62.7% of respondents believe indecent dressing among some female students on campus has a direct link to sexual harassment. 57.3% of respondents related use of substance (hard drugs) especially among male students to sexual harassment. 54.7% of respondents argued that weak legal and social deterrents to sexual harassment discourage victims from reporting rape or sexual harassment. Another 49.3% of respondents argued that sexual harassment is facilitated by a slack university policy on sexual harassment. 57.3% of the respondents said there is no concrete information on where victims can promptly report cases. Incidentally, 57.3% of respondents attributed sexual harassment to the desperation of some female students for undeserving grades from lecturers. Instructively, 54.7% of respondents identified inappropriate attitude of lecturers with female students as a factor in sexual harassment and 60.0% of respondents identified indiscipline amongst male students to be another cause of sexual harassment.

Table 3
Respondents’ responses on susceptibility of female students’ to sexual harassment

S/ N	Item	Str. Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Str. Disagree	MWA
1	Those who are sexually harassed had failed a course(s) that could extend their years of graduation from the university (n=150)	25 (16.7%)	57 (38.0%)	56 (37.3%)	12 (8.0%)	-	2
2	Those who are sexually harassed could not have avoided it because they want to have underserving scores that would make them have a grade they should not have (n=150)	29 (19.3%)	28 (18.7%)	65 (43.3%)	20 (13.3%)	8 (5.3%)	3
3	Students with lower grades are more prone to sexual harassment than those with high grades (n=150)	86 (57.3%)	32 (21.3%)	8 (5.3%)	24 (16.0%)	-	1
4	A final year student who failed a course is more prone to sexual harassment than one who did not fail (n=150)	73 (48.7%)	20 (13.3%)	45 (30.0%)	12 (8.0%)	-	2
5	Students who visit lecturers’ offices for no serious purposes are more prone to sexual harassment than those who are rarely seen in their departments (n=150)	82 (54.7%)	28 (18.7%)	16 (10.7%)	24 (16.0%)	-	1

Keys: MWA-Mean Weighted Average; 1-Str. Agree; 2-Agree; 3-Not sure; 4-Disagree; 5-Str. Disagree.

In Table 3 above, five items were put on a mean weighted average of a range of options 1-5 for respondents to choose from. The options were from strongly agree to strongly disagree. What we did is to add the percentage of concurrence options in terms of strongly agree and agree to have a total percentage of respondents that identified the demography of female students that are most susceptible/prone to sexual harassment. 54.7% of respondents argued that those who failed a course or courses that could extend their years in the university are prone to sexual harassment. 62.0% of respondents argued that students in their final year are most prone and vulnerable to sexual harassment. Further, 78.6% of respondents identified students with either low or poor grades to be more prone to sexual harassment than those with either high or good grades. Incidentally, 73.4% of respondents reported that female students who regularly visit lecturers’ offices for no serious purposes are more prone to sexual harassment than those who are rarely seen in their departments. Interestingly, 43.3% of respondents claimed they are not too sure those who are sexually harassed could have avoided it because they want underserving scores they did not work for.

Objective 2: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Harasser and Harassed

Table 4
Respondents’ responses on the status and relationship of the harasser

Variable	Category	Recurring frequency	% of total
Status of those that sexually harass female students on OAU campus	Student (n=150)	126	84.0
	Lecturer (n=150)	130	86.7
	Faculty instructor (n=150)	79	52.7
	Coach or trainer (n=150)	28	18.7
	Other person affiliated with university program (n=150)	31	20.7
	Perpetrator not affiliated with OAU (n=150)	12	8.0
	Don’t know association of perpetrator to OAU (n=150)	24	16.0

Variable	Category	Recurring frequency	% of total
Status of the relationship between the harassed and the harasser in OAU	At the time, it was someone the victim was intimate with (n=150)	12	8.0
	Teacher/lecturer or advisor (n=150)	118	78.7
	Co-worker, boss or supervisor (n=150)	86	57.3
	Friend/student colleague or acquaintance (n=150)	82	54.7
	Stranger (n=150)	12	8.0

Table 4 above presented some information about the socio-demographic characteristics of harassers and the harassed. The data reveals the status of the harasser and the nature of the relationship with the harassed. Respondents reacted to each of the items and categories in the questionnaire. 86.7% of respondents identified the status of those who indulge in sexually harassing them to be their male lecturers. 84% of respondents said their male colleagues (students) also sexually harass them; and 52.7% of respondents said faculty instructors also sexually harass them. In other words, the study revealed three major categories of people that are identified by female students to be mostly involved in committing sexual harassment, namely, lecturers, students, and faculty instructors. In terms of the relationship that sexual harassers have with the harassed, 78.7% of respondents said their harassers are lecturers and 57.3% said either their supervisors or those who exercise some forms of power and authority over them such as the Heads of Department/Deans of Faculties/Faculty Officers also sexually harass them. Furthermore, 57.3% of respondents said their male friends, colleagues and acquaintance also sexually harass them.

Table 5
Respondents' responses on socio-demographic characteristics of the harassed

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	0	0
	Female	150	100
	Total	150	150
Class	Second year	16	10.7
	Third year	42	28.0
	Fourth year	64	42.7
	Fifth year/beyond	28	18.7
	Total	150	100.0
Religion	Christian	113	75.3
	Muslim	37	24.7
	Total	150	100.0
Age	18 & below	16	10.7
	19-25 years	106	70.7
	26-30 years	24	16.0
	Above 30	4	2.7
	Total	150	100.0
Residence	Off-campus	114	76.0
	On-campus	36	24.0
	Total	150	100.0

Table 5 presented information on some socio-demographic characteristics of those prone to sexual harassment as identified by respondents. The table showed that 64 (42.7%) of respondents argued that female students in their fourth (final) year are most prone to sexual harassment. Also, 42(28.0%) of respondents reported that female students in their third year experience sexual harassment; and 28(18.7%) of respondents said female students in their fifth/final year experience sexual harassment. In addition, 16(10.7%) of respondents reported that female students in their second year experience sexual harassment. In terms of age structure of those who are most prone to sexual harassment, 106(70.7%) of respondents identified female students within the age group of 19-25 years old to be most prone to sexual harassment and 4(2.7%) of respondents identified female students over 30 to be the least prone to sexual harassment. In addition, 114(76%) of respondents argued that female students who live off-campus are more prone to sexual harassment than those who stay on-campus.

Table 6
Respondents responses on status and demography of harassers and willingness to report sexual harassment

S/N	Item	Agree	Str. Agree	Str. Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	MWA
1	Old lecturers indulge in sexual harassment more than new lecturers (n=150)	25 (16.7%)	89 (59.3%)	12 (8.0%)	4 (2.7%)	20 (13.3%)	2
2	Professors/Senior lecturers indulge in sexual harassment more than junior lecturers (n=150)	33 (22.0%)	81 (54.0%)	8 (5.3%)	4 (2.7%)	24 (16.0%)	2
3	Married lecturers indulge in sexual harassment than unmarried lecturers (n=150)	45 (30.0%)	73 (48.7%)	12 (8.0%)	4 (2.7%)	16 (10.7%)	2
4	Lecturers who teach a course indulge in sexual harassment more than those who are involved in the conference teaching of courses (n=150)	48 (32.0%)	74 (49.3%)	12 (8.0%)	4 (2.7%)	12 (8.0%)	2
5	Lecturers who are central to result preparation for students in the dept. indulge more in sexual harassment than not central to it (n=150)	41 (27.3%)	85 (56.7%)	-	8 (5.3%)	16 (10.7%)	2
6	Lecturers who either exercise political power or have access to university authority are more involved in sexual harassment than lecturers who do not (n=150)	56 (37.3%)	74 (49.3%)	-	8 (5.3%)	12 (8.0%)	2
7	Lecturers who teach compulsory course(s) indulge in sexual harassment more than lecturers who teach non-compulsory courses (n=150)	48 (32.0%)	65 (43%)	-	16 (10.7%)	21 (8.0%)	2
8	It is more difficult to report lecturers with political power than those with no access to power (n=150)	52 (34.7%)	90 (60.0%)	-	-	8 (5.3%)	2

Keys: MWA-Mean Weighted Average; 1-Agree; 2-Str. Agree; 3-Str. Disagree; 4-Disagree; 5-Not sure.

In Table 6 above, all the items in the table were given a mean weighted average of 1-5 that ranged from agree to not sure. Instructively, most of the respondents agreed to 2 which indicated strongly agree, that is, a strong concurrence to all the items raised in the table.

Respondents in Table 6 above identified the status and demography of those who mostly indulge in sexual harassment as follows: 76.0% of respondents argued that old lecturers are more involved than young lecturers and 76.0% of respondents identified professors/senior lecturers' cadres to be more involved in sexually harassing female students than other cadres. These data have

implications for reporting sexual harassment and policy formulation to address the problem. This is because this cadre is empowered to frame policy directive for the university, and this might affect the willingness to report harassment against them. Indeed, 86.6% of respondents said it is more difficult to report lecturers who leverage on political decision within the university. This is also another issue that speaks to power as a crucial indicator to understanding sexual harassment. In addition, 78.7% of respondents identified lecturers who are married to be more involved than those who are single. Furthermore, 75.0% of respondents said lecturers who teach

compulsory courses are more prone to sexually harassing female students than those who teach elective courses. Importantly, 80.0% of respondents said lecturers whose responsibilities are central to result processing are more prone to sexual harassment than those who do not have such responsibilities. Significantly, 81.3% of respondents said those who singlehandedly teach a course are more involved in sexual harassment practice than those who are involved in conference teaching of courses.

However, this study could not validate the responses of respondents on the status of those who are claimed to be mostly involved in sexual harassment. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that the experiences of respondents would have informed their responses. Conclusively, future research should interrogate the assessment of the respondents to determine its validity.

DISCUSSION

The findings in this paper are guided by respondents' identification of major factors that cause sexual harassment in the institution, and the attempt to identify the demography of the harassers and the harassed. Despite extant policies on sexual harassment in the university, 54.7% of respondents think the policies are weak and do not serve as effective deterrents. Another 49.3% averred sexual harassment is largely encouraged by the slack anti-sexual harassment policy. Respondents' low confidence in extant instruments and the ambiguity of the policy designed to contain sexual harassment suggest that rape and sexual harassment would be underreported in a cultural context that is rooted in a sexist male ideology that promotes male superiority over women (Matchen & Desouza, 2000; Stockdale, 1993). Beyond the scope of law and policy on sexual harassment, the structural properties of the environment are conducive to promote sexual harassment. For example, 57.3% of respondents said there is no concrete information on where victims can promptly report cases. This points to the gaps in institutional measures to rein in on sexual harassment, especially in the area of prevention and treatment strategies.

Significantly, 59.3% of respondents had reported that old lecturers indulge more in sexual harassment than young lecturers and 54% of respondents identified professors/senior lecturers to indulge more in sexual harassment than other cadres of lecturers. This data would have implications for the willingness of respondents to report when they are sexually harassed. 86.6% of respondents hold the belief it may be fruitless to report lecturers who exercise clout over the policy direction of the university, and might therefore not be safe for them to report such cream of lecturers in order not to end up blaming themselves for being a victim of sexual offending behaviour (Vaux, 1993). In identifying those prone to sexual harassment, 42.7% of respondents said final year

female students are most prone to sexual harassment. Beyond the issue of their eagerness to graduate at the normal duration allotted to their course, future research should provide insight on why final year female students are most prone to sexual harassment. Incidentally, 57.3% of respondents attributed sexual harassment to the desperation of some female students for undeserving grades from lecturers. Future research should provide insight into the transactional nature of sexual harassment as an act sometimes negotiated between the harassed and the harasser especially given that 54.7% of respondents implicated the inappropriate attitude of lecturers as a factor that lead to sexual harassment. Thus, the need to strengthen extant guiding rules on code of conduct becomes very relevant.

Instructively, 62.7% of respondents believe indecent dressing among some female students on campus has a direct link to sexual harassment. It would be interesting if future studies would demonstrate the relationship between indecent dressing among female students and the conclusion of sexual expressions studies that men instrumentally deploy power to obtain sex (Brown, 1997). Though, the university has extant dressing codes for the students, it is obvious much more needs to be done in the areas of enforcement, punishment and discipline. Incidentally, 57.3% of respondents' related use of substance (hard drugs) especially among male students to sexual harassment and 60.0% of respondents argued that indiscipline amongst male students is a major cause for sexual harassment. This suggest that the university authority should strengthen its enforcement to ensure compliance with its laws.

Significantly, 86.7% of respondents said male lecturers are most guilty of sexual harassment and 52.7% of respondents said faculty instructors also indulge in sexual harassment. Given the gender of most lecturers and faculty instructors is male, the tendency to sexually harass female students corroborates earlier studies that sexual harassment is more common in male dominated workforces (Gruber, 1992; Niebuhr & Boyles, 1991) in which men sometimes result to sexual aggressive behaviour at work (Tangri & Hayes, 1997); however, it would be tenuous to conclude that sexual harassment is a consequence of macho ideology that profiles women as an inferior sex (Gutek, 1985; Malovich & Stake, 1990). Also, 84% of respondents said male students are also prominent in the commitment of the grievous act. This seems to corroborate existing studies that established sexual harassment to be rooted in sexist male ideology that promotes male superiority over women (Matchen & Desouza, 2000; Stockdale, 1993). A perverse interaction of a male student with his female colleague in an unequal environment that is not well monitored might throw up violent action that justifies the conclusions of some studies that men think they are aggressive and dominant and women are passive and consenting (Gruber & Bjorn,

1986). Generally, sexual harassment is sometimes reinforced by existing gender stratification that legitimizes sex role expectations in which male-female relations are situated in the context of culturally acceptable sex status norms that enforces male dominance in a way that makes sexual harassment the consequence of cultural experiences ((Whaley & Tucker, 1998). Thus, sexual harassment is a consequence of a flawed notion that women are vehicles through which the sexual satisfaction of a man can be realised.

For both the lecturers and faculty instructors who occupy statutory positions, a cursory observation reveals that most of them are married and older than their female students who are sexually harassed. This is a substantiation of earlier studies that concluded perpetrators of sexual harassment are likely married, older, more educated and hierarchically more superior to their victims (Gutek, 1985; Fitzgerald & Weitzman, 1990). In terms of the relationship between the harasser and the harassed, 78.7% of respondents said the frequency of the grievous act is most common between a lecturer and a female student and 57.3% of respondents said sexual harassment is common between a female supervisee and her supervisor or a female student and a male Head of Department/Dean of Faculties. This implies that the exercise of power and authority over the weaker sex (in this case, the female student) is crucial to the commitment of sexual harassment. Further, 54.7% of respondents reported that their male friends/colleagues/acquaintances also sexually harass them, pointing at the gender inequality that exists in the society (Gutek, 1985; Thomas & Kitzinger, 1997). The attitude of the male students to sexually harass their female colleagues tend to reinforce the spurious belief that women constitute an inferior sex, anchored in an existing gender stratification that legitimizes sex role expectations (Gutek, 1985; Malovich & Stake, 1990).

Given the fact that 57.3% of respondents reported that female students who seek for underserving scores are prone to sexual harassment and 43.3% of respondents said they were not sure such female students would have avoided being sexually harassed, it connotes social exchange sometimes defines the transactional nature of sexual harassment as female students tend to lure their male lecturers into sex for underserving marks to the detriment of the system. In general, the study reveals the dynamics of sexual harassment and identified variables such as gender, gratification, and power as key indicators to the process of understanding sexual harassment in the university.

LIMITATION

This study would have been richer in terms of insights and diversity of opinions if qualitative research technique had been adopted. This would have allowed participants

to speak in an unhindered manner to issues around the problem. The quantitative method adopted for this study circumscribed respondents from offering unhindered narratives.

The study would have been more inclusive if staff and the university authorities were included in the investigation of the problem. However, the focus on the harassed was motivated by the fact that the narratives of female students are compelling and critical to providing insights into sexual harassment.

Nonetheless, the findings have significant contributions for advancing understanding of sexual harassment, and was able to achieve its objectives in terms of enabling a greater understanding of the problem.

RECOMMENDATION

The university needs to be more sensitive in its recruitment policy to ensure the work environment is made more inclusive and gender sensitive.

There is urgent need for the university to ensure policies designed to contain sexual harassment reflect and aggregate a bottom-top approach. Policies should aggregate inputs of all the stakeholders in the university. The extant policy is largely exclusive and ostensibly constrained/limited to discourage the practice.

Policies on sexual harassment should be specific and clear in intents and objectives to ensure investigation is not embroiled in calculated crude politics that could swirl conjectures and speculations around persecution that might end up in litigation.

Investigation Panels should be composed of people with specialized knowledge imbued with strong independent character to insulate the panel from political control orchestrated at reaching predetermined conclusions. The Investigation Panel should include students' union leaders since it is an issue that affects their constituency. The extant practice to exclude students from Investigation Panel on sexual harassment is unfair.

Seminars, workshops and symposia should be held regularly to sensitize staff and students on the evils and consequences of sexual harassment.

Victims of sexual harassment should be made to report to a desk saddled with explicit and specific responsibilities.

The university should set up a compact technical committee that develops preventive and inclusive strategies on how best to contain sexual harassment.

In conclusion, the university must design a web meant for giving visibility to extant anti-sexual harassment policy, report sexual harassment and periodically engage the community on what is being done to address the problem. It is also important for the code of conduct to be given more visibility and accessibility.

CONCLUSION

It is settled that sexual harassment constitutes behaviour that demeans and devalues the female victim, and reinforces the mobilization of maleness against the female gender in usually disempowering context that removes her consent from having sex. However, much more still needs to be done to understand the problem within the university. In doing this, the voices of the harassed (the female students) are critical to policy design, strategy and treatment to curb sexual harassment that is generally assumed to be underreported. It is important to make anti-sexual harassment policies more inclusive to encourage female students report when sexually harassed. The university needs to be more proactive and responsive in evolving inclusive preventive strategies to ensure female students have an enabling environment to achieve their potentials. Educational and enlightenment programmes should be stepped up to re-orientate ladies who think it is taboo to report sexual violence with a view to discouraging expressions of misogynistic orientation that are unfortunately acceptable to women. Incidentally, the university should re-orientate itself to cultivating preventive measures as most effective in either containing or eliminating sexual harassment: it is much less expensive, less distracting, avoids litigation on court cases and less damaging to the reputation of the university.

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