



TASTE THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT AND DIE: A QUALITATIVE X-RAY OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN SELECTED IVORY TOWERS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Although many studies on sexual harassment in the universities have been conducted in Nigeria, only a few of them have focused on what people considered as sexual harassment. This study examined participants' views of what constitute sexual harassment, its causes, consequences as well as measures to be put in place to curtail sexual harassment in three purposively selected Universities in South Western Nigeria. The study is purely qualitative. Using explorative research design, the study employed In-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions methods to elicit information from participants in the selected Universities. In all, 40 in-depth interviews comprising female and male students (undergraduates and postgraduates); academic staff (males and females) and non-academic staff (males and females) were conducted. In addition, eight FGDs were conducted in each of the selected universities totally 24 FGDs each with female undergraduate students; female postgraduate students; male postgraduate students; female academic staff; male academic staff; male non academic staff and female non-academic staff. The results showed that many of the participants do not know what constitutes sexual harassment. The identified consequences include psychological trauma on the part of the victims, parents' disinclination in sending their children to the affected university turning out of unqualified graduates and damaging the university's image before international community. Some of the suggestions are that the Universities should have a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual harassment, regular enlightenment campaigns/education, appropriate punishment, summary dismissal, institution of legal action and implementation of anti-sexual harassment policy among others.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, female students, lecturers, universities, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is a global issue. It has been in existence for centuries since men and women walked the earth (Nathan, 2014). The earliest example of sexual harassment ever known to man was the one involving Joseph and his master's wife who was said to have cast her eyes upon him and said, 'lie with me' (Genesis 39:7). Another early and ruthless case occurred in the United States of America where slave owners freely assaulted African American women slaves, without any legal recourse accessible to them. It is also a common practice in public spaces, private home, mass transportation, online, religious space, health care facility, workplace, and learning environments. For instance, a study conducted by girls' rights charity Plan International United Kingdom "found that 66 per cent of girls in the United Kingdom have at one time or the other experienced unwanted sexual attention or physical

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contact in a public place (Plan International UK, 2018). Of the 1,004 girls in the study aged 14-21, 38 per cent reported that they had experienced verbal harassment like catcalling, wolf whistling and sexual comments at least once a month, while 15 per cent had been touched, groped or grabbed every month. Almost 1 in 10 (9 per cent) of them reported experiencing up-skirting where someone took a photograph up their skirt without their permission (Plan International UK, 2018).

Like every public space, universities are not immune from sexual harassment as studies have shown that sexual harassment in public and private universities are at epidemic levels ((Smit & Plessis, 2011; Batty, Weale & Bannock, 2017). For instance, in a study carried out by a Charles University research team revealed that “over three quarters of students in Czech University have, at some point, been victims of sexual harassment” (Borufka, 2010). In the United Kingdom, the University of Oxford recorded the highest number of allegations of sexual harassment made against staff in 2017. This was followed by Nottingham (10), Edinburgh (9), University of East Anglia and Essex (7) and Cambridge (6)” (Telegraph, 2017). Sexual harassment and a “lad culture” was also reported to be in existence on University campuses in the United Kingdom in 2014, where “over one-third of women stated they were subjected to unwelcome advances in the form of touching, including inappropriate groping” (Weale, 2014). In the Middle East Lynch (2013) found that “sexual harassment was not only widespread on the streets in Egypt but was conspicuous on university campuses”. Norman, Aikins and Binka (2012) also established that various kinds of sexual harassment are prevalent in public universities in Ghana. Dhlomo et al., (2012) further affirmed that in Zimbabwe, many university female students are sexually exploited by lecturers. Sexual harassment is so rampant in Tanzania that the university had to integrate sexual harassment into curriculum on Gender, Power and Sex to address the challenge of male lecturers demanding sex from female students in exchange for grades as a right (Internews, 2018).

In Nigerian Universities, sexual harassment allegation involving female students and male lecturers had been one of the most discussed topics in 2018. For many years now, it has become a serious problem confronting a proportion of female students at all educational levels including those in elementary schools, secondary schools and vocational training as well as apprenticeship programmes (Equal Rights Advocates, 2003). However, because of the lack of reliable statistics, this issue have not received adequate attention in most universities. Additionally, some institutions tolerate it because most of the victims engage in transactional sex with male professors because of the economic pressure to afford University fees (Beninger, 2013). Studies by Owoaje and Olusola-Taiwo (2009) found that the majority of female respondents (69.8%) had been sexually harassed by male classmates and lecturers in several tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Since April 2018, some Nigerian universities have been in the spotlight, after their lecturers got immersed in sexual harassment scandals. These scandals followed actions of female students who opened up on abusive conducts of male lecturers. For instance, in one of the State Universities in Southwest Nigeria, the Governing Council approved the dismissal of three male lecturers for sexual harassment and misconduct at its 119th Statutory meeting held on Thursday, October 4, 2018. Earlier in the same year, precisely in May 2018, the Creative Arts students of the University staged a protest over the alleged sexual harassment of female students in the department by their lecturers. The female students of the department accused the lecturers of making life excruciating and hard for them by demanding sexual intercourse before they can pass their examinations. In another University in South-South Nigeria, a Twitter user was reported to have tweeted about the most shocking accusation on sexual harassment in the University in April, 2018. The Twitter user who is a graduate of the University tweeted thus:

In my University, lecturers don't just ask to sleep with you, they also demand threesome and you must pay for the hotel room and they still end up giving you E (WuzupNaija, 2018).

The most notorious of the alleged sexual allegations against lecturers occurred in April, 2018 when a Professor in one of the Universities in the Southern region of the country found himself in the middle of a sex-for-mark scandal. A leaked audio conversation between the lecturer and a female student, leaked on the Internet on Monday, April 9, 2018. In the viral audio, the Professor was heard asking a female postgraduate student in his department to have sex with him "five times" before he could increase her examination score from 33 to a pass mark (Vanguard, 2018; Tribune, 2018). After two months of investigation, the Professor in question was dismissed from the University service on June 20, 2018, after which he was investigated by Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and later jailed for two years for trying to "taste the forbidden fruit".

Most often, sexual harassment takes place in a climate where an influential figure (mostly male) in a position of authority maliciously takes advantage of a victim (principally female) by making unwanted sexual advances towards them. The above indicates that the reinforcement of male dominance and heterosexuality are often the cause of sexual harassment of female students at the institutions of higher learning across Africa. In most cases, such advances are based on an unfair and selfish advantage, and a refusal to yield to such advances may result to persecution and oppression of the victim. Explaining how a powerful figure in a position of authority spitefully takes advantage of a victim, Okpewho (1973) in his novel, entitled "*The Last Duty*" narrated the dismal demand for sex in exchange for money and various items of survival in a war situation. In the narrative, Okpewho (1973) showed how Toje the arrogant and selfish Urukpe Chief used the circumstances of war to his own advantage and implicated his business rival (Oshevire) by conniving with rebel soldiers. While Oshevire was in detention leaving his wife (Aku) and their only son (Oghenovo) behind, Toje took advantage of Oshevire's absence, offered Aku food and money in exchange for sexual gratification. Confronted with lack of food and hunger, Aku gave in easily to Toje's sexual demand and committed a taboo. In his novel "*Violence*", Festus Iyayi also showed how Adisa, Idemudia's wife yielded to Obofun's sexual demands in order to raise money to pay her husband's hospital bills. The above shows the level of iniquity that resides in a man's heart and the profundity of sexual immorality which contemporary society including the university is immersed.

Recent studies have shown that female students who are physically and nonverbally harassed suffered from psychological distress which may have negative psychological effect on their health and academic performance (Mamaru, Getachew & Mohammed, 2015). The victims of sexual harassment may also suffer psychological trauma, depression, anxiety, and loss of trust and are most likely to contract HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (Kheswa (2014). Quaicoe-Duco (2010) and Taiwo, Omole & Omole (2014) also found that victims of sexual harassment suffer from fear and trauma that may have a devastating impact on their academic performance as they find it very difficult to concentrate on their academic work. It also results to changes in the lifestyles of the victims including non-attendance of classes as well as cancellation of courses. Thus, sexual harassment makes universities a dangerous place to be for female students. The above information is worrisome, judging by the fact that many female students are being sexually harassed on daily basis has no place to go and report as many of the universities are ill-equipped to deal with the situation. Thus, in spite of the continuous increase of sexual harassment in the ivory towers, many universities lacked an "effective mechanism" with which to prevent lecturers from pressuring students into sexual relationships. Unfortunately, most of the female

students do not know what constitute sexual harassment. Therefore, the questions this study attempts to address are: (1) what is sexual harassment or what constitutes sexual harassment? (2) What are the causes of sexual harassment in Nigerian universities? (3) What are its consequences and; (4) what measures can be put in place to check sexual harassment in Nigerian universities?

What is sexual harassment and what constitutes sexual harassment?

Like most social constructs, sexual harassment is not easy to define. In other words, there are many definitions of the subject as there are people who are trying to define it to suit their purpose. Our discussion with some female students in Southern part of the country indicated that many of them including staff members do not know what constitute sexual harassment. Thus, any discussion of sexual harassment depends on the situation or perspective of the interpreter. For example, in recent in-depth interviews involving academic staff (males and females), students (males and females) and non academic staff (males and females) in some of the purposively selected Universities a female non academic staff whose daughter was raped by a school mate defined sexual harassment as “a man forcefully having sex with a girl or a woman without consent” (from our in-depth interview, 2018). The above “definition” reveals what goes on in the minds people when they hear about sexual harassment as if it only happens when there is a case of rape, sexual molestation or coercing a girl or woman into sex relation. Thus, sexual harassment may be interpreted based on the interviewee’s own perception or understanding of the term. However, sexual harassment is not only about rape as it often leads to rape, sexual molestation and coercion. In other words, rape is the final stage of sexual harassment. If rape is the final stage of sexual harassment, what then is sexual harassment?

Farley (1978: 14) affirmed that “sexual harassment is ... “unsolicited non-reciprocal male behaviour that asserts a woman’s sex role over her function as worker”. Crocker (1983) identified different definitions of sexual harassment in academia. Most of these definitions include but not limited to the following features: “unsolicited, unwelcome and unreciprocated sexual overture from a person to elicit unwanted sexual relations from another person”. It also includes “any inappropriate sexual overture, subtle and unsubtle persistent behaviours, assault and actual sexual abuse” (Crocker, 1983). Sexual harassment takes place when “the offender has power over the victim”; “the behaviour is unwanted as perceived by the victim”; and “there is negative harm or outcome such as distress or interference with activities” (Farley, 1978:14). It could also be verbal which may include comments about girl’s body, spreading sexual rumours, sexual remarks or accusations, dirty jokes or stories. The physical aspect can be grabbing, rubbing, flashing or mooning, touching, pinching in a sexual way, sexual assault. It could also be visual constituting display of naked pictures or sex-related objects, obscene gestures (Leach, 2013). Within the academia, Till (1980) defines sexual harassment in educational institutions as “the use of authority to emphasize the sexuality or sexual identity of a student in a manner which prevents or impairs that student’s full enjoyment of educational benefits, climate or opportunities” (p. 7). For Sharma (2013) “sexual harassment in education includes: inappropriate sexualized comments or gestures; unwanted physical contact such as touching, pinching or groping through to threats of exam failure; or sexual assault and rape.” It could also include sexual favours in exchange for good grades or preferential treatment in class” (Sharma, 2013). The perpetrators of sexual harassment in the universities can be students, lecturers, teachers or administrative staff. The study by Leach (2013), reveals that sexual harassment in education is higher in countries with weak educational systems, low levels of accountability, high levels of poverty, and gender inequality. “It is more prevalent in institutions where educators are poorly trained, underpaid, and severely under sourced” (Beninger, 2013).

Theoretical Explanations of Sexual Harassment in the Universities

Sexual harassment in the universities can be explained by a combination of theories. However, in this paper Organizational Theory, Feminist Theories and Social Exchange Theory are utilized.

Organizational Theory: According to this theory, “one of the central concepts that help to explain sexual harassment is power” (Cleveland & Kurst, 1993). The theory argues that “sexual harassment results from the opportunities presented by power and authority relations which are derived from hierarchical structures of organizations” (Gruber, 1992). It further establishes that structural and environmental conditions found at the workplace provide opportunities for harassment or implicitly encourage harassment on the basis of workplace norms, gender bias, and imbedded power relations between men and women. Men have traditionally held the organizational power inherent in management and supervisory positions, whereas women are likely to be employed in subordinate positions. It argues that since work organizations are characterized by vertical stratification, individuals can use their power and position to extort sexual gratification from their subordinates, thus relating sexual harassment to aspects of structure of the workplace that provide asymmetrical relations between supervisors and subordinates. Therefore, this perspective emphasizes that the structure of organizational hierarchy invests power in certain individuals over others that can lead to abuse. thus for Organizational Theory, “sexual harassment is all about expression of male power over women that sustain patriarchal relations”.

Feminist Theory: Feminist theory situates sexual harassment within broader models of discrimination, power, and privilege. The theory connects sexual harassment to sex-based inequality that exists in human society (MacKinnon 1979). The theory emerged as a reaction against male dominance in patriarchal society and has its origins in the early works of influential feminist scholars (Brownmiller, 1975; Jagger, 1988; MacKinnon, 1989b; Smart, 1989; Walby, 1994). The basic argument of feminist theories is that sexual harassment is a product of a gender system sustained by a dominant, normative form of masculinity (Uggen & Blackstone, 2012).

Kritzinger (1995) affirms that “sexual harassment can best be understood within the context of the domination that men have over women within patriarchal society”. Linking sexual harassment to sexist male ideology of male dominance and male superiority, Matchen & DeSouza, 2000) & Stockdale (1993) argue that “sexual harassment exists because of the views of women as inferior sex and that sexual harassment serves to maintain the already existing gender stratification by emphasizing sex role expectation” See also, Gutek (1985) and Malovich & Stake (1990). MacKinnon (1979) maintained that women’s inferior position in the university and society in general, is not only a consequence, but also a cause of sexual harassment. For him, gender and sexuality are similarly identified as systems of power and domination, with adult men wielding sexual power to assert and maintain dominance over women. The extension of male dominance to the universities may mean that it is therefore not surprising that male harassers or perpetrators see their female victims as sexual objects who they commonly refer to as “bush meat” that need to be tasted and eaten free of charge. ,where the phenomenon is thriving (Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979). Sexual harassment, hence, is viewed as an inevitable consequence of cultural experiences; therefore, it would apply to many different settings including the workplace. The main strength of feminist theory is the valid synthesis of gender issues, patriarchy and dominance towards an explanation of sexual harassment. That is, that there is some evidence of unifying power. Furthermore, feminists focus on gender inequality in the workplace has often been credited with bringing the issue of sexual harassment to light. With feminist theories, it

could be affirmed that the connection between masculinity and sexual harassment in the universities stems from the perception that men, as a group have power over women and that the very definitions of manhood sustain this conception.

Social Exchange Theory: This theory was propounded by social psychologists, Kelly and Thibaut in 1959. The basic tenet of the theory is that human actions are in essence exchange in which individuals look for opportunities with the best gains or compensations (Ohia, 2008). According to Zafiroviski (2003), “people create social relationships because they expect them to be rewarding”. Put differently, the major reason why people engage in social relationships is to pursue that which is gratifying and rewarding. According to this theory, a dull female student allows a male lecturer or her supervisor who is old enough to be her father to sexually harass her because of what she stands to gain from the lecturer or supervisor. That is, having her thesis written for her or obtaining good grades in exchange for her action benefits her more. Citing Imasojie (2002), Ohia (2008) notes that female students felt that they would benefit more if they yielded to male lecturer's unwelcome request for sexual favours if they wished to succeed academically. In this respect, Professor Osayin argues that although lecturers seek sexual favours but our girls' hands are also not clean (Vanguard Newspaper, April 15, 2018).

The challenge of sexual harassment in the universities could also be located in Marxists analysis of power which sees power as being concentrated the hands of a few in a society who in turn use it to further their interests (Ohia, 2008). Citing Nnoroni (2004), Ohia (2008) further to explained that “the academic staff commands power by virtues of their position in the academia because of their role in determining the future of their students”. According to her, “a female students' future may be jeopardized if she resists the pressure or a lecturer whose course must be passed before graduation”. Thus, social exchange theory becomes very vital in the study of sexual harassment in the universities “because the female student who is being harassed may have to calculate the expected reward if she gives in or the losses if he or she rejects the advances (Ohia, 2008). If the harassed student gives in, she will get better grades and if not, she has to repeat the course (ibid). In that case both the harasser and harassed use what they have to get what they want.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was basically qualitative. Data were collected through In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs). These methods enabled the researchers to obtain firsthand and detailed information on what constitutes sexual harassment, the causes of sexual harassment, its consequences and measures that have been put in place to check sexual harassment in each of the selected universities. In-depth interviews were conducted among male and female undergraduate students; male and female postgraduate students; male and female academic staff and male and female non academic staff in three purposively selected universities in south-western Nigeria. For ethical consideration, the Universities would remain anonymous and their actual names would not be used in this study. The Universities were tagged as University X, Y and Z. In addition, the actual names of the interviewees and participants were not be presented. The choice of these universities was based on the fact that they were in the spotlight, after some of their lecturers got engrossed in sexual harassment accusations. They also had most reported cases of sexual harassment issues in 2018. In all, 40 in-depth interviews (i.e. 10 in each group: 5 males and 5 females) were conducted. Furthermore, eight FGDs were conducted in each of the selected universities totally 24 FGDs. The breakdown of the FGDs in each of the selected universities was as follows – one with male undergraduate students; one with female undergraduate students; one with female postgraduate students; one with male postgraduate students; one with female academic staff; one with male academic staff; one

with male non academic staff and one with female non academic staff. Each group consisted of 8-12 participants all of whom possessed similar socio-demographic characteristics. That is, participants in each of the focus group were of the same sex (male and female); age cohort (for undergraduate and postgraduate students), educational background and occupational statuses of participants were stratified according to ranks. There was no rigid sampling process. Interviews were conducted as the participants were found and consented to participating in the study. However, to make relationship with interviewees easy, the assistance of colleagues in the selected universities with whom we have lasting research collaboration were enlisted. All interviews were conducted with the aid of a guide. Every bit of information was tape recorded, transcribed and content analyzed.

RESULTS

Knowledge about sexual harassment

Knowing what constitutes sexual harassment can go a long way towards making university environment safer. Many female students (including female employees) do not take action to stop sexual harassment because they do not actually know what sexual harassment is. It is therefore not surprising that during data collection, some of the participants who were asked to define sexual harassment or to explain what they think constitutes sexual harassment could not define it rightly. Thus, the responses received from some of these interviewees and FGD participants revealed that majority of them did not actually know what constitute sexual harassment. The understanding of sexual harassment among the participants seems to be limited to the act of rape or forced sexual relation. For instance, in University X, an interviewee shared her view of the meaning of sexual harassment as follows:

Sexual harassment is an act of compelling a girl or women into sexual intercourse. It is a situation where a male forcefully have sexual intercourse with a female. It could be young girls or women who are adults. In this University, girls or women who refuse sexual demands from their lecturers or boss are either failed or denied promotion (FGD, Female undergraduate, 22).

At University Z, a Participant also opined:

Sexual harassment occurs when one is being pushed into sexual activity. It occurs when a lady is raped or when for instance a male lecturer or boss force his female student or subordinate into sexual relations against her will for fear of failing her exams or being denied promotion (FGD, Part four female Engineering student, 25)

The above definitions indicate that for many people, it is only when a girl or a woman is raped that she can be said to be sexually harassed. Raped is an advanced form of sexual harassment. In other words, before a lady is raped, other form of sexual harassment such as unwelcome remarks on one's body, touching among others must have taken place. However, at University Y, one of the participants brought another dimension to the discussion about his knowledge of sexual harassment. He asked:

Who is harassing who? If you ask me, I would say it is the girls that are harassing the men. Sexual harassment is when girls are purposely going about showing the most sensitive parts of their body to seduce their male counterparts. In other words, they are the ones sexually harassing men when they move about half naked showing three quarter of their breast. They say "body no be wood." Not all men can

resist that temptation. While I am not trying to justify sexual harassment in the Universities, the truth is that the girls too are guilty of it (FGD, Male lecturer, 52).

Similarly, during focus group discussions with male non-academic staff at University Y, a participant also supported the above view when he said:

Sexual harassment in the University occurs when a female student dresses indecently with an intention of seducing a male lecturer or superior. When some of the male lecturers who cannot resist them fall into the trap, they are accused of sexually harassing female students, whereas, it is the female students that started it all (FGD, Male lecturer, 56).

, At University X, an interview defined sexual harassment as:

Unwanted visits of female students to male lecturers' offices and homes at odd hours also constitute sexual harassment. (IDI, Male lecturer, 51).

Yet, at University Z, an interviewee affirmed:

There is harassment when a female student dresses indecently, exposed what is supposed to be covered (such as breasts, thigh and other parts). What does she want? Do you keep goat and yam together? They wear mini skirt, expose their breasts and go to lecturer's office. Haba! That is harassment (IDI, Male non-academic staff, 58).

At University Z, results from the focus group, the following definitions came up:

"Unsolicited, unwelcome, unreciprocated sexual overtures of a verbal or physical nature". (FGD, Female lecturer, 62).

Sexual discrimination of females or males in some cases, sending nude pictures or sexually suggestive materials to opposite sex constitutes sexual harassment (FGD, Female lecturer, 65).

Sexual harassment implies unnecessary remark(s) about a female's body; demand for sexual favours, unsolicited gifts for sexual kindness or gratification, and unwanted sexual offensive jokes. (FGD, Female lecturer, 64).

Causes of sexual harassment in Nigerian universities

Furthermore, participants were asked to identify the underlying causes of sexual harassment in their universities. According to one of interviewees at University Y:

Sexual harassment in the university is a demonstration of power relations. Just like the wider society, women and girls are much more likely to be victims of sexual harassment because they lack power. Because women socialized to suffer in silence, they are more vulnerable compared to their male counterparts. It will therefore not be surprising that they do not have confidence to report any act of sexual

harassment against them because the society in which we live has socialized to suffer in silence. This is also one of its causes. That does not mean female too do not harass their male counterparts whether students or lecturers, teaching and non teaching staff. There was a case of a female Professor in one of the Faculties here (I don't want to mention the Department) who was interested in male postgraduate student but the male subtly turned down the offer. But during students post field seminar she went there deliberately "destroyed" his work and left. The student had to go back to the field before he could graduate. That is power! What I am trying to say is that sexual harassment is not only about male lecturers harassing female students. Some female lecturers are also guilty of it. If you ask me, I would say sexual harassment is an exploitation of unequal power relations and it has nothing to do with men alone but both sexes. (IDI, Female Professor, 63).

Similarly, at University Z, an FGD participant asserted:

A major cause of sexual harassment in the university is that girls who have nothing to offer academically may be subject to sexual harassment. Some male lecturers capitalize on academic weakness of these students who readily make themselves available because they know without seducing male lectures they cannot pass. If a female student knows her rights, reads her books, does the right thing by writing her exams well, I see no reason why these randy lecturers will have any excuse to say nonsense to her. What I am saying is that these lecturers will take advantage of you when you have nothing to offer and when you make yourself cheap to them (IDI, Female lecturer, 58)

Supporting this assertion, another participant asserted:

Female students are guilty just as their male lecturers or students in this matter. Sexual harassment these days is not only against female students. All kinds of sexual pervasion do exist nowadays – male lecturers harassing female students and female lecturers harass young and handsome male students or lecturers. I don't think the male lecturers should be blamed alone. It is because many a time, female students make themselves susceptible to being harassed, by going to seek for academic favours from their lecturers which the lecturers tend to exploit (IDI, Female lecturer, 56)

During the Focus group discussion at University Z, a participant said:

Both male lecturers and female students should share the blame for sexual harassment in tertiary institutions. Whereas randy male lecturers always try to use their positions to harass their female students, lazy female students who do not want to study for examinations also try to offer their bodies to their male lecturers in exchange for marks. What I am saying is that lecturers seek sexual favours but our girls' hands are also not clean. (FGD, Female undergraduate, 25).

Debunking the idea that good students never get harassed, a female interviewee at University X argued:

A brilliant student can also be harassed. The only thing is that they have a better case because they can defend themselves with the quality of their works. If such students are sexually harassed, they can always call for their papers if they are failed. They are no go area for randy male lecturers. Unfortunately, most girls do not want to work hard. Such girls are the one being harassed because male lecturers know they are academically weak (IDI, Female lecturer, 46).

Correspondingly, another interviewee from the same University affirmed:

Most of the female students who seduce their male lecturers do so in anticipation of academic favours. Some of these female students can go to the extent of offering to pay for hotel rooms for their male lecturers to have sex with them in exchange for good grades. It is not only male lecturers that are involved in this act. Our female students are also culprits. I know of some lecturers who are being harassed by their female students. When they refuse their advances, the same students blackmail them (IDI, Female lecturer, 42).

In the same way, another interviewee from University Z stated:

The major cause is indecent dress. You will be amazed and ashamed if you see what some female students wear to school. Many of them wear provocative dresses which they cannot wear at home before their parents. If I am a man and I am constantly being offered such things such as free breasts, and naked bodies, will I not go for it? Sexual harassment occurs in our Ivory Towers only when shameless students present the opportunity to male lecturers (IDI, Female Professor, 58).

A student interviewed in University Y said:

One of the causes of sexual harassment on our campuses is fear on the part of the harassed. Most victims of sexual harassment do not report their harassment mainly they fear they could be victimized or stigmatized. Also, some universities make it mandatory for the victims to supply their names, phone number, department, hostel and other particulars to create fear in them to report sexual harassment as they do not trust the university management to keep such information in confidence. Also, the fact that the perpetrators are not disciplined for sexual harassment make many people to indulge in it. Also, sexual harassment thrives in our universities because some victims are reluctant to report the perpetrators to the relevant authorities (IDI, Female postgraduate student, 30).

Similarly, a participant from University X had this to say:

A major cause of sexual harassment in the universities, whether private or public universities is lack of discipline on the part of harasser. Many of these harassers can be attracted by anything in skirt. Even if you put a skirt on she goat, they can be unduly attracted to it. Another cause of sexual harassment is greed. Most of the harassers have wives at home but they are not satisfied with them.

There was a case when two male lecturers in one of the Departments were quarrelling over one female student who they both claimed was their girl friend. That is greed (FGD, Female lecturer, 36).

Also, at University Y, a male interviewee asked:

Who is harassing who? The girls are the ones harassing us. They are one harassing the male lecturers too. There is a saying that those who detest ants should avoid bringing firewood full of ants to the house. These girls are harassed because of the way they indecently dressed. Our Pastor also used to tell us that the way you dress determines the way you are addressed. It is true that some men can still harass you even if you are in purdah. All the same, the girls should be advised to dress well to avoid being a victim of these predators (IDI, Male non-academic staff, 45).

Participants at University X also stated:

The major cause of sexual harassment is that most people that are sexually harassed do not even know what constitute sexual harassment. Some of them think it is only when you are raped that you are harassed. That is why when a male lecturer touches the boobs, buttocks or make unnecessary remarks about their bodies, they simply laugh over it because they are ignorant of what sexual harassment entails. That is why sexual harassment continues in most universities because most of us do not know when an act is considered sexual harassment (FGD, Female lecturer, 42).

Sexual harassment prevails in the universities because some of the female students want to be living big. They want to live like their friends and sometimes, they are influenced by their friends. These set of students always make themselves available and may not even see anything wrong when they are being harassed by male lecturer or superior (FGD, Female Administrative Officer, 48).

Consequences of sexual harassment

There were diverse views from the interviewees and participants about the consequences of sexual harassment in the three selected Universities. For instance, an interviewee at University Y had this to say:

The consequences of sexual harassment in the universities are severe. The bible says "Pleasures of sin are sweet but the consequences are grievous". Sexual harassment may lead to dismissal of harasser from the university. Also, if not handle well, it may put the name of the university at disrepute nationally and internationally. In addition, parents will not like to send their wards to the affected university (IDI, Male Professor, 63).

In addition, a senior staff at University Y affirmed:

Apart from the trauma that the victims might be subjected to, the society suffers more from a system that gives mark to students in exchange for sexual gratifications. The negative consequence of this is that the Universities will not only turn out half-baked but unqualified and incompetent graduate work force in the future (IDI, Female non teaching staff, 50).

Furthermore, a student at University X established:

Sexual harassment can have a devastating impact on the education of the victims of sexual harassment. A student that is physically and emotionally harassed suffered from psychological distress. They may no longer find academic work interesting. The experience may also hurt them throughout life. The victims may also develop extreme apprehension and become miserable resulting to unreasonable manners (IDI, Female postgraduate student).

Measures to be put in place to curtail sexual harassment in Nigerian universities

Participants were asked to suggest measures to be taken to curb sexual harassment in the universities. According to an interviewee at University Y:

As a parent who has grown up daughters in this university, I would suggest that issues concerning sexual harassment should not be overlooked by the university. The School Management should make proactive efforts to stop sexual harassment. The University should also ensure that both staff and students know consequences of sexual harassment. They say prevention is better than cure. In that respect, female students should be sensitized about sexual harassment, so that they will be able prevent it from occurring. In other words, enlightenment campaigns/education should be conducted regularly. All issues regarding sexual harassment should be investigated and appropriate punishment be meted out against harassers if found guilty. For me I would recommend that if found guilty the perpetrators should be dismissed from the university. In the case of students, he should be expelled. The Universities should also encourage victims of sexual harassment to take legal action against any lecturer who harasses them, including reporting to University Disciplinary Committee (IDI, Male Administrative staff, 57)

At University Y, an interviewee proposed:

Here in my University, there is Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy. I suggest that the policy should be implemented and made available to both staff and students so that everybody will know what constitute sexual harassment (IDI, Female lecturer, 52).

A participant in the University Z recommended:

Sexual harassment is a professional misconduct. I would suggest that Nigerian Universities should have a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual harassment. In order to achieve this; the universities should put in place a clear policy that will include the legal definition of sexual harassment, the conducts that constitute sexual harassment. A high power

committee including male and female staff should be set up to investigate all cases of sexual harassment without fear or favour. Centres where victims can make report should also be established. Where someone is found culpable, such a person should be summarily dismissed. The Centre should also take into consideration statement concerning false complaints (FGD, Female postgraduate student, 32)

A male interviewee at University X also suggested:

Female students should avoid walking alone at night. They should also avoid unnecessary visits to offices and homes of unmarried male lecturers and students at odd hours. They should face their studies and know the reason why they are sent to school by their parents is to read and not to sell their bodies for marks and above all, they should cultivate appropriate habit of dressing decently (IDI, Male Professor, 63).

Conclusion

Just like the wider society or any work organization, sexual harassment in the Ivory towers is a recurring phenomenon. In Nigeria, it has been a subject of debate in schools, colleges, universities and National assembly. The main reason for the continual perpetuation of sexual harassment is that most people including staff and student do not know what constitute harassment and this provide a fertile land for it to continue unabated. Another major cause is the existence of weak mechanisms and redress in most universities in Nigeria. Another cause is the failure of some Universities to implement the Anti-sexual policies in their University. It is no doubt that sexual harassment is prevalent in the institutions sampled in this study. It was observed that sexual harassment is not only peculiar to the female students but to different categories of stakeholders on the university campuses including staff. Sexual Harassment seems to be experienced by both male and female in the tertiary institution sampled. However, it seems that more women have experienced sexual harassment than men. Therefore, more female students, academic and non-academic staff would experience more forms of sexual harassment than male students or staff.

It is evident that individuals have different meanings and orientation about what constitutes sexual harassment. Similarly, there are different opinions from people about the causal factors for sexual harassment, hence, the consequences. Differences could be identified even within sex type about the causal factors of sexual harassment. Even within the female folks, marked differences occur in their perception of the factors prompting sexual harassment on campuses. The study suggests that:

- anti-sexual policies should be formulated and implemented in all the Universities;
- policy against indecent dressing should be formulated and implemented;
- Universities should take a holistic approach to provide permanent solution to the challenges of sexual harassment. In this regard, the University administration, and all stakeholders in the universities should be involved in this drive.

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