

Sexual Harassment and Peace Building in Colleges of Education in Delta State

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Abstract

This study investigated the prevalence of sexual harassment and peace building among female students in Colleges of Education in Delta State. To guide the study, two research questions were raised while two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study covered all the three Federal and State Colleges of Education in Delta State. The descriptive survey design was adopted. Two thousand (2000) students were used as the population of the study. Three hundred (15%) respondents were sampled out of the population. Questionnaire was the instrument used to obtain responses from the respondents. The instrument was validated by experts and the reliability coefficient through P(r) was 0.85. The data collected were analyzed, using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The findings of the study revealed that the prevalence of sexual harassment of female students was high. This is a risk to the existence of peace and a hindrance to peace building efforts of college administrators. It was therefore recommended, among others, that school authorities should give appropriate orientation to the students on sexual harassment upon their admission into schools; and school authorities, in conjunction with government, should take up the mantle to the mass media for public education with emphasis on peace building in tertiary institutions.

Key Words: Sexual harassment; Female students, Peace building, Colleges of Education, Tertiary institutions

Introduction

In the present time and in the time past, Nigeria educational system has been bedeviled with the problem of moral decadence and its consequent effect on student/lecturer interactions, especially in area of sexual relationship. Cecil and Matson (2006) stressed that identifying an incident as an instance of sexual harassment may

require some special combination of variables because people differ in their perceptions of the concept. Sexual harassment is defined as an attempt made by a lecturer/student to coerce an unwilling lecturer/female student into a sexual relationship or to subject such a student to unwanted sexual attacks or to punish a refusal to comply. Sexual attack, sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual assault, sexual violation are used interchangeably because they have the potential of causing emotional, physical and psychological harm and capable of truncating peace building efforts in tertiary institutions.

Due to the extensive prevalence of sexual violence permeating present day Nigeria society, the social relevance of a study of the prevalence of sexual attack among tertiary education students cannot be overestimated. The existence of sexual attack undermines the educational process of any institution and it remains an institution's responsibility to provide a peaceful, safe or conducive environment in order that students might reach their full potentials. The phenomenon of sexual attack has wide and serious consequences for victims and the institution in which it occurs (Gouws & Kritzing, 1995). Individual and collective peace in tertiary institutions is usually endangered as a result of the prevalence of sexual attack.

Sexual attack in tertiary institutions has been prominently featured in newspapers, magazines and the electronic media. The rate seems to be alarming in universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. Government, parents and other stake-holders in the education industry seem at a loss as to the best way of eradicating this menace in tertiary institutions. The school authority seems to be expressing defeat in the effective handling of sexual attack challenges.

In the view of Bennett (2002) sexual attack is regarded as the spectrum of different forms of sexual violence. Sexual attack is an unwanted and unwelcome sexual behaviour. It is an unwanted conduct of sexual nature that could be viewed as harassing and/or abusive and has been grouped under the collective umbrella name of "sexual violence" e.g., rape, stalking, attempted rape, unwanted kissing, flirting, unwanted touching etc (Nwaogwugwu, 2007). The Association of American University Women (AAUW) (2001) associated sexual harassment with unwanted and unwelcome sexual behaviour that interferes with your life. Prinslo (2006: 23) defines

sexual harassment as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. The unwanted nature of the sexual harassment distinguishes it from behaviours that are welcome and mutually acceptable. He further explained that sexual attention becomes sexual attack if:

(a) the behaviour is persistent (although a single incident of harassment can constitute sexual harassment)

(b) the recipient has made it clear that the behaviour is considered offensive; and/or

(c) the perpetrator should have known the behaviour is regarded as unacceptable.

Melay and Gothard (1995) gave a vivid illustration of percentages of college students who have been sexually attacked or know someone personally that has been sexually attacked. They examined 2,086 respondents made up of 1,096 female and 940 male college students age 18-24. They found that 62% experienced sexual harassment themselves while 66 % knew someone who experienced sexual harassment. They also found that 53% received sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks while 51% knew someone who received sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks. According to the American Association of University Women (AAUW) (2001), girls experience more forms and higher frequency than boys. In their 2002 survey on 2064 students in 8th through 11th grade, the AAUW reports that 83% of girls had been sexually harassed.

In a report by Odu, Falana and Olotu (2014), females were found to be targets of sexual attack, "women are disproportionately negatively affected". It was also found that 77% of females were reported having been sexually harassed by males. Felix and McMahon (2006) undertook a research on gender and multiple forms of peer victimization and the influence on adolescent psychological adjustment. They found that sexual harassment by school personnel appeared to be more disturbing and caused more psychosomatic health problems than peer harassment. Till (1990) carried out a study on sexual harassment of students and found that 39% of female students experienced sexual harassment on university campuses. They also observe that the perpetrators in school differ markedly in the case of undergraduates where fellow students are the main culprits, where for the graduate students, male faculty members are the main offenders.

Akua and Anokye (2006) conducted a research and the aim was to investigate into the issue of sexual harassment against female students in Senior High Schools in Kumasi Metropolis, in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the participants. A total of 540 female students were selected from six co-educational Senior High Schools. The main instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The results showed that majority of the participants knew about the issue of sexual harassment of female students in schools. The respondents also identified the media and friends as their main source of information. It was also found that verbal sexual harassment was the most common form of sexual harassment, while female boarding students reported a higher level of sexual harassment than the female day students. Male students and male teachers were the worst perpetrators of sexual harassment in the schools.

On the whole, it was found that the prevalence of sexual harassment against female students in the senior high schools in the Kumasi Metropolis was widespread and a real problem to the female students. Young, Gray and Boyd (2009) conducted a study of violent forms of sexual harassment, such as rape, attempted rape and sexual assault. For most of the respondents, several forms rather than one form of behaviour could be described as sexual harassment. It was also observed that sexual harassment was defined to include indecent sexy dressing by 78% of males and 22% of females, thus indicating sharper differences between the sexes in relation to more subtle forms of harassment such as *see-through* dresses.

The expressed difficulty in abating this menace may stem from the involvement of peers, lecturers, non-academic staff and even male visitors to campuses of tertiary institutions (Pappoe & Ardayio, 2008). Even worse, is the sexual attack from secret cult groups. Past and present efforts of management of tertiary institutions seem not to be yielding results as the rate of sexual attack does not seem to be reducing (Nwaogwugwu, 2007). Worse still, is the effect of sexual attack on academic quality and peace on campuses. Those who are sexually harassed have academic performance challenges. In fact, Honreld (2006) had discovered that 80% of female students in higher institutions reported sexual harassment as their greatest challenge in successful completion of

Scope of the Study

The study focused on prevalence of sexual harassment of female students, differences in the prevalence of sexual attack in Federal and State Colleges of Education excluding other tertiary institutions such as Universities and Polytechnics in Delta State. Only the third year students are focused on in this study. Their long stay in the Colleges of Education may have fully exposed them to sexual attack.

Research Methods

This study was based on the descriptive survey design because the study seeks to elicit the opinions and perceptions of students in order to test hypotheses on the prevalence of sexual attack among female students in Colleges of Education in Delta State. The population of the study consisted of two thousand (2000) final year female students from the four Colleges of Education in Delta State. See Table 1. The sample size for this study was 300. The sampling technique used was the simple random sampling technique. This was chosen to enable the researcher randomly select 15% respondents from the chosen population of each institution. The breakdown is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Population and Sample of Subjects

S/N	Institution	Population	Sample (15%)
1	Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba.	800	120
2	College of Education, Agbor	400	60
3	College of Education, Warri	500	75
4	College of Physical and Health Education, Mosogar	300	45
	Total	2000	300

Source: Academic Divisions in the Colleges of Education, Delta State

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Prevalence of Sexual Attack '(POSA)'. It was structured based on the research questions and consisted of two sections (A and B). Section A consists of information on respondents 'bio data' while section 'B' consists of two parts structured in four point Likert type rating scale. Part 1 measured the prevalence of sexual attack among female students which requires the respondents to respond with the

response scores as follows: 'Very High' (VH) - 5, 'High' (H) - 4, 'Moderate' (M) - 3, 'Low' (L) - 2 and 'Very Low' (VL) - 1. A mean score of below 2.5 was regarded as low; 2.5 - 3.0 was regarded as moderate and above 3.0 was regarded as high. The research instrument was subjected to scrutiny by three experts from Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma for content and construct validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test-retest method. The instrument was administered on a sample of 30 students in College of Education Igueben in Edo State that was not part of the study at two different times, within an interval of two weeks between the first and second administration. The results were correlated with Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula. A reliability co-efficient of 0.76 was obtained.

The data collected was analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test at alpha level of 0.05. The research questions were analysed using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were analyzed with t-test. The decision mean of 2.50 was used as the average mean since the questionnaire was structured on a four point rating scale. Any mean value from 2.50 and above was the bench mark for acceptance while below 2.50 was rejected.

Analysis and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of sexual attack of female students in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Responses on the Prevalence of Sexual Attack.

S/N	Prevalence of Sexual Attack Among Female Students	Mean \bar{X}	SD	Remarks on prevalence
1.	Experienced of sexual advances like touching, pinching, grabbing, cornering	3.58	.667	High (Accepted)
2.	Experienced of unwanted sexual pressure like letter, phone calls, request for date, exchange of sex for good grade, materials, receiving of pornographic/offensive sexual display	3.31	.699	High (Accepted)

3. Encounter of repeated/unwanted verbal sexual advances like whistling, cat-calling, teasing, sexual derogatory statement/remark	3.26	.836	High (Accepted)
4. Experience of rape	2.93	.900	Moderate [Accepted]
5. Experience of attempted rape	3.91	.938	High (Accepted)

Source: Field work by the researchers (2014)

The analysis in Table 2 shows that mean of all the items were above the average mean of 2.50. On the experience of sexual advance, unwanted sexual pressure and attempted rape, their prevalence rate were high, with mean value of 3.58, 3.31 and 3.91 respectively; while the prevalence on encounter of repeated/unwanted verbal sexual advances and experience of case of rape was moderate with mean values of 3.26 and 2.93 respectively.

Research Question 2: Is there a difference in the prevalence of sexual attack of female students in conventional and specialized Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation response on the difference in the prevalence of sexual attack of female students in conventional and specialized Colleges of Education in Delta State.

SN	Difference in Prevalence	Type of College of Education	Mean \bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Experience of sexual advances like touching, pinching, grabbing cornering	Conventional	3.63	.697	Accepted
		Specialized	3.54	.710	
2	Experience of unwanted sexual pressure like letter, phone calls, request for date, exchange of sex for good grade, materials, receiving of pornography/offensive sexual display	Conventional	3.35	.698	Accepted
		Specialized	3.28	.702	
3	Encounter of repeated/unwanted verbal sexual advances like whistling, cat-calling, teasing, sexual derogatory statement/remark	Conventional	3.36	.844	Accepted
		Specialized	3.10	.823	
4	Experience of rape	Conventional	3.28	.716	Accepted
		Specialized	3.69	.963	
5	Experience of attempted rape	Conventional	3.17	.743	Accepted
		Specialized	2.71	1.029	

Source: Field work by the researchers (2014)

The presentation in Table 3 shows that there was no difference in the prevalence of sexual attack of female students in conventional and specialized Colleges of Education in Delta State but experience of attempted rape, showed a significant difference between conventional and specialized Colleges of Education in Delta State.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference in the prevalence of sexual attack of female students in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Delta State.

Table 4: The t-test of prevalence of sexual attack of female students in federal and state Colleges of Education in Delta State.

SN	Item statement on prevalence	Ownership	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-val	t-crit	Decision
1	Experience of sexual advances like touching, pinching, grabbing, cornering.	Federal	121	1.53	.742	208	-1.163	.264	Not Significant
		State	179	1.62	.610				
2	Experience of unwanted sexual pressure like letter, phone calls, request for date, exchange of sex for good grade, materials, receiving of pornography/offensive sexual display.	Federal	121	1.18	.719	208	-2.637	.009	Significant
		State	179	1.40	.674				
3	Encounter of repeated/unwanted verbal sexual advances like whistling, cat-calling, teasing, sexual derogatory statements/remarks.	Federal	120	1.12	.865	207	-2.377	.018	Significant
		State	179	1.36	.804				
4	Experience of the use of rape.	Federal	116	2.41	.932	201	-8.643	.000	Significant
		State	177	1.28	.689				
5	Experience of attempted rape.	Federal	116	2.41	.975	201	-7.914	.000	Significant
		State	177	1.25	.743				
6	X of N of Federal X of N of State	Federal		14.05					Not Significant
	Cal t of Federal and State	State		16.91			22.74	.201	

Source: Field work by the researchers (2014)

Table 4 shows the t-test comparisons of respondents from Federal and State Colleges of Education. The calculated t-value for item 1 was -1.163 while the critical value was .264. On experience of sexual advances like touching, pinching, grabbing and cornering, there was no significant difference in the mean responses of students in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Delta State. The table also shows that the calculated t-value for item 2 was -2.637, while the critical t-value was .009. The table equally shows that the calculated t-value for item 3 was -2.377 while critical t-value was

their academic careers. The victims suffer psychological trauma, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy, increased alcoholic consumption, smoking and dependence on drugs which have affected their performance in their various academic fields (Davidson & Fiedlden, 1999). All these reports are potentially capable of endangering the much desired individual and collective peace on campus. It is against this background that this study investigates the prevalence of sexual attack among female students in Colleges of Education in Delta State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study was to examine the prevalence of sexual harassment and peace building among female students in Colleges of Education in Delta State. Specifically, the study examined

- (i) the prevalence of sexual harassment of female students across Colleges of Education in Delta State, and
- (ii) the significant differences in the prevalence of sexual harassment among female students with regards to ownership and type of Colleges of Education in Delta State as they relate to peace building.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the prevalence of sexual harassment of female students in Colleges of Education in Delta State?
2. Is there a difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment of female students in Conventional and Specialized Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment of female students in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Delta State.
2. There is no significant difference in conventional and specialized Colleges of Education in Delta State on sexual harassment of female students.

.018. On Item 4, the calculated t-value was -8.643 while t-critical was .000. Item 5 shows a calculated t-value of -7.914 while the critical t-value was .000. This implies that on experience of unwanted sexual pressure, encounter of repeated/unwanted sexual advances, experience of attempted rape and case of rape there was a significant difference in the mean responses of the students in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Delta State.

Discussion

Prevalence of Sexual Attack of female students in Colleges of Education in Delta State

The finding on prevalence on sexual attack among female students reveals that the rate of its occurrence in Delta State colleges of education was high. This finding corroborate that of Honreld (2006) who found that 80% of female students in higher institutions report sexual harassment as their greatest challenges in successful completion of their academic careers. The victims of the attacks suffer psychological trauma, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy, increased alcoholic consumption, smoking and dependence on drugs which has affected their effectiveness in their various academic fields.

Numerous experiences have been reported of sexual advances like touching and grabbing while others have experienced cases of rape and attempted rape. Several others have encountered repeated and unwanted sexual advances and sexual pressures. This is in agreement with Pappoe and Ardayfio (2008) who had found that sexual harassment was prevalent among female students in Senior High Schools in Kumasi Metropolis. He even found that this was more prevalent among boarding students than day students. It also agrees with the finding of Young, Gray and Boyd (2009) that violent form of sexual harassment such as rape and attempted rape was prevalent among female students.

Difference in Sexual Attack of Female Students in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Delta State

The finding on difference in prevalence of sexual harassment among female students in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Delta State shows that there is no difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment among female students. This

finding is in agreement with the research carried out by Odu, Falana and Olotu (2014) and found that in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, sexual harassment is an 'open secret'. This finding is also in consonance with the work of Cecil and Matson (2006) that the prevalence of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions across the countries is a real challenge to the female students.

On physical sexual advance such as touching, pinching, cornering, grabbing and unwanted pressure such as letters, phone calls, material, and pornographic /offensive sexual display have no significant difference. In essence, it shows that on these two items, there is no significant difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment among female students between Federal and State Colleges of Education in Delta State. On repeated/unwanted verbal sexual advances like whistling, cat-calling, teasing, sexually derogatory statement/remarks, attempted rape and rape by an opposite sex shows that there is significant difference in the dimensions of sexual harassment among female students between Federal and State Colleges of Education in Delta State.

Difference in prevalence of sexual attack of Female Students in conventional and specialized Colleges of Education in Delta State

The finding on difference in prevalence of sexual attack among female students in conventional and specialized Colleges of Education in Delta State shows that there is no difference in the prevalence of sexual attack among female students. This finding is also in consonance with the work of Cecil and Matson (2006) that the prevalence of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions across the countries is a real challenge to the female students. On physical sexual advance such as touching, pinching, cornering, grabbing and unwanted pressure, letters, phone calls, and pornographic /offensive sexual display, there was no significant difference. In essence, it shows that on these two items, there is no significant difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment among female students in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Delta State. On repeated/unwanted verbal sexual advances like whistling, cat-calling, teasing, sexually derogatory statement/remarks, attempted rape and rape by an opposite sex, there was significant difference in the prevalence of sexual attack among female students between Federal and State Colleges of Education in Delta State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that sexual attack prevalence among female students in Colleges of Education in Delta State is high and that difference exists in prevalence of sexual attack between female students in specialized and conventional Colleges of Education. The occurrence is higher in conventional Colleges of Education in Delta State and the occurrence of repeated unwanted verbal sexual advances, unwanted sexual pressure, attempted rape and case of rape among female students is higher in conventional Colleges of Education in the State.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings it was recommended that:

1. College management should make the issue of sexual harassment against female students part of the issues discussed with new students during their orientation period. Since all students are supposed to attend such programme, they will all be adequately informed about the issues.
2. College management should create and promote a female friendly classroom environment where female students will feel confident and comfortable to report to the school authorities, or school counselling coordinator, incidence of sexual attack against them.
3. School authority in conjunction with the government should engage the mass media on public education, on sexual attack, aggression, violence and crime. Peace education should be a regular feature and both male and female students and staff should regularly feature in these public education programmes.

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