



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Sexual Harassment on Campus: A Case Study of Federal College of Education, Obudu, Cross River State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Sexual harassment is a serious issue plaguing Nigerian Institutions, particularly in the tertiary institutions such as the Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Universities, etc. Studies suggest a staggering prevalence, with up to 70% of female graduates reporting experiences of harassment. This paper examines sexual harassment on campuses with particular interest in the Federal College of Education, Obudu, in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study seek inter alia; to obtain baseline data on the forms and prevalence of campus-based sexual harassment in Federal College of Education (FCE), Obudu Campus and to ascertain the level of awareness and knowledge of sexual harassment among undergraduates in the College as it relates to campus-based sexual harassment. Literature review was carried out covering the concept of sexual harassment in Institutions of learning and its consequences. The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design and a total of 1408 students participated in the Campus Climate Survey on sexual harassment drawn from 8 Departments in the Campus. Data collected with the use of a well-structured Campus Climate Survey questionnaire were subjected to analysis using means and simple percentages descriptive statistics. The findings confirmed the existence of sexual harassment in FCE Obudu campus, though reported not to be on a rampant scale. Also, the behavior elements that indicate features of a hostile-environment harassment were reported with most likely occurrence on the campus. The policy implications of the findings were highlighted and recommendations were made towards the prevention of Sexual Harassment and victimization on the College Campus.

**Keywords:** Sexual Harassment; females; Tertiary Institutions; Campus; Nigeria.

### 1. Introduction

The issue of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions is an undeniable reality with laudable evidences on quotidian basis. The issue has been in history over the years with low or little attention for various reasons and factors. But in recent time, there has been an increasing concern about this problem of sexual harassment of students on campuses. Indeed, the evidence suggest that campuses are becoming notoriously unsafe and hostile ground, rather than provide protected environment where students would acquire knowledge and develop healthy life-long mutual friendship in a respectful atmosphere. There is abundance of studies in several countries that identified sexual harassment (as a common form of gender-based discrimination routinely encountered by students (in particular, women/females) in their everyday lives on campus. For example, a nationwide survey of female students' experience of violence in UK campuses found that one in four respondents had experienced unwanted sexual behavior (Biden, 2010).

Similar reports were expressed by (Taylor & Hardin, 2017) in USA; (Steinkamp, 2010) in South Africa; (Norman, Aikins, & Binka, 2013) in Ghana; (Mamaru,, Getachew, & Mohammed, 2015) in Ethiopia; and (Nwagbara, 2011) in Nigeria. Both boys and girls are victims of sexual misconduct, though in many instances, experience of sexual victimization are more

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common among women than men (Mitchell, Ybarra, & Korchmaros, 2014). There are reported cases of male staff taking advantage of their superior position, or their economic superiority to lure, coerce or sexually intimidate girls. In some instances, male students are found to sexually intimidate fellow female students (Kheswa, 2014).

However, data on the prevalence of campus-based sexual harassment has remained circumscribed because of under-reporting of cases. Rather than reporting, victims would maintain silence or avoid the harasser out of fear or embarrassment (Cortina & Wasti, 2005). According to Dziech & Weiner (in the book *Lecherous Professor* cited in (Smith and Plessis, 2011):

Sexual harassment by university professors of their female students is a fact of campus life and that the silencing thereof is part of the reason for the historical invisibility of the problem: silence, promoted by the fear that somehow they (the victims) are responsible for the sexual harassment in one way or the other, and/or the fact that students know they are subordinate to faculty staff and administrators.

As a way to maintain a safe and healthy educational environment, responsible institutions have developed policy measures, and in some cases criminalize sexual harassment behaviours. From the international scenes, this issue of sexual harassment on campus(es) is not devoid of most of the tertiary institutions, if not all. In other words, sexual harassment on campuses is not peculiar to Nigerian institutions, it is a global issue with its peculiarities. In USA for instance, sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination prohibited in schools by Title IX, a Federal law in the US establishing civil rights in education (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2001). University of Vermont 2015 Policy document on sexual harassment and misconduct strictly prohibit sexual misconduct including “sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking based on sex or gender... Sanction may include suspension or dismissal from University, termination from employment, prosecution under the law ...” A similar effort to address the problem at the University of Ibadan culminated in the Sexual Harassment Policy document approved by Senate in 2012 (<http://www.ui.edu.ng/news/sexual-harassment-policy>)...any person found liable of perpetrating sexual harassment, falsely accusing any person or instigating the occurrence of false accusation shall be subject to penalty.

Suffice to mention is the truism that campus sexual harassment is not newly occurring in Nigeria. This has been in existence for long, although not given due prominence. There was a groundswell of interest to explore issues of sexual harassment in Nigeria higher education in the early 2000 when the system suffered the crisis of unprecedented moral collapse for many reasons. Studies that were conducted on campuses across the country confirmed the high prevalence of different forms of sexual misconduct. Unfortunately, despite the findings from the studies, not many Tertiary institutions used the cues to frontally address the problem and develop policy measures to regulate, and/or sanction the behaviour. Consequently, it has remained a serious but insufficiently addressed problem, and will continue to be if more stringent measures are not put in place.

There is no doubt that campus-based sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct deserve serious attention, not just for the offensive nature of the behaviour, but more importantly because of the social and psychological consequences on the victim(s). Moreover, the consequence of sexual harassment limits the right to receive an equal educational opportunity, and could constitute drawback for the victim, (in particular girls) towards realization of their academic attainment as well as personal development.

### **1.1. Statement of Problem**

The reality of the Federal College of Education (FCE), Obudu Campus, Cross River State, Nigeria shows clearly the high risk environment under which students learn. It is largely nonresidential campus, whereby students live together in shared apartments, having to negotiate relationships with the opposite sex, including male staff/students and significant others within the community. There are insinuations that the harsh economic and social realities predispose students to sexual harassment by unethical lecturers who tried to exploit the situation. It is against the magnitude of the anecdotal reports on Sexual Harassment (SH) and the absence of empirical evidence on its extent that this study is concerned with ascertaining the seriousness of sexual harassment in FCE, Obudu campus from the perception of students. The study attempted to identify its veracity, the different forms, and how they play out against students with a view to providing the Institution with empirical data for development of Policy on Sexual Harassment and initiating institutional support system for victims.

## 1.2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- Obtain baseline data on the forms and prevalence of campus-based sexual harassment in FCE, Obudu Campus;
- Ascertain the level of awareness and knowledge of SH among undergraduates in FCE as it relates to campus-based sexual harassment.

## 1.3. Research Questions

Two major questions guided the study:

- What are the forms and prevalence of Sexual Harassment that are commonly experienced by students in COE, Obudu campus?
- What are the perception of students to situations involving sexual harassment behaviour in terms of occurrence and awareness of Sexual Harassment behaviour in the research area?

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## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Definitions of Sexual Harassment

Despite the growing interest in the study of Sexual Harassment over the years, the fact that no single definition of the phenomenon has evolved continue to pose limitation towards addressing the problem. The literature is inundated with different conception of sexual harassment, covering a broad spectrum of behaviour encompassing simple jokes about looks or touching to more serious sexual assault/rape. The various definitions of sexual harassment have focused on wide variety of specific behaviors according to how it is presented to the victim(s) and the context that it occurred, (Gruber, & Fineran, 2000), (Pina, Gannon, & Saunders, 2009), (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2016) and (Herrera & Expósito, 2017).

For example, Till (1990) identified five classifications as:

- General harassment - behavior that convey insulting, degrading or sexist attitude;
- Seductive behavior - inappropriate and offensive sexual advances;
- Sexual bribery - solicitation of sexual activity and other sex-related behavior by promise or reward;
- Sexual coercion – sexual activity by threat or punishment;
- Sexual imposition or assault – sexual crimes and misdemeanor including rape and assault.

(Sandler & Shoop, 1997), condensed this behavior types to three, including any request for sexual favours that;

- Submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of academic achievement,
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for academic decisions, and
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a person's academic performance or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment.

(Kastil & Kleiner, 2001) and (Bauemeister, 2001) further condensed the behavior into two broad areas as: quid pro quo – exchange of one thing for another, e.g., sex for reward or threat; and hostile working and learning environment. A quid pro quo harassment usually takes place in educational settings “when a school employee explicitly or implicitly conditions a student's participation in an education program or activity on educational decision on the student's submission to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature e.g when a student is coerced into having sexual relationship with a lecturer under the threat of failing a course or promise of pre-knowledge of examination questions or rewards for favourable grades. A fellow student could also harass his/her peer under the same condition. On the other hand, a hostile learning environment is one in which a female/male student is subjected to repeated offensive and denigrating sexual comments and behaviour which can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of sexual nature by lecturer, another student, or a third party that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an education program (Willness, 2007). Studies showed that, in school settings and particularly between students, allegations of hostile-environment harassment are more common place than allegations of quid pro quo harassment (Stein, 2000).

Other classifications suggested three forms of sexual harassment: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion (Schneider, Pryor, & Fitzgerald, 2010) and (Buchanan et al., 2013). Gender harassment comprises verbal and non-verbal gender-based hostile/derogatory communication or gender related name-calling that convey insulting, hostile and degrading attitudes about the individual; unwelcome sexual attention includes any sexual behaviour, propositions, invitations, etc, which are distasteful and unwelcome to the target and perceived as offensive; while sexual coercion includes actual sexual assault and any behaviour that connotes extortion of sexual cooperation in return for promises/benefits or threats, e.g., a lecturer withholding students' examination results or threatening to fail as precondition for sexual activity. Unwanted sexual attention includes any bodily behaviour and gestures that are deliberately used to arouse sexual attention in an offensive way.

Education institutions provided more explicit variety of specific behaviours that constitute sexual harassment. For example, The American Association of University Women (AAUW) identified sexual harassment in a school setting to include the following unwanted or unwelcome behaviors from other students or adult school personnel: sexual comments, jokes, gestures, rumors or looks; showing of sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations; written sexual messages, notes or graffiti on bathroom walls or locker rooms; being called gay or lesbian in a malicious manner; spied on while dressing or showering at school; 'flashed' or 'mooned' by someone; touched, grabbed, or pinched in a sexual way; clothing pulled off or down in a sexual way; intentionally brushed up against by someone in a sexual way; blocked or cornered in a sexual way; and, forced to kiss someone, or experience some other unwelcome sexual behavior other than kissing (AAUW, 2001). Similarly, the University of Massachusetts defined sexual harassment in its regulations as follows:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic work,
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such individual, or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment.

According to (Harvard Law School Policy, 2014), gender-based harassment includes:

... verbal, nonverbal, graphic, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostile conduct based on sex, sex-stereotyping, sexual orientation or gender identity, but not involving conduct of a sexual nature, when such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that interfere with or limits a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the University's education or work programs or activities.

The University of Ibadan Policy on Sexual Harassment document listed sexual harassment behaviours as:

Unwanted sexually motivated conduct, comments, touching and expressions capable of prejudicing or undermining a person's freedom, rights and privileges. Such acts could include but are not limited to outright demands, ogling, indecent comments and unnecessary bodily contact which could lead to psychological or physical unsolicited sexual relationships;

Unwanted suggestive looks, phone calls or use of other multimedia format and comments intended to lure a person into a sexual relationship;

Spousal abuse where one or both partners are members of the University community.

Irrespective of the different ways of describing Sexual Harassment, researchers agreed that the phenomenon encompasses any form of unwanted sexual behavior that is offensive or injurious to the victim, which may be one-time or persistent. It covers a range of activities, some of which are criminal (such as rape or sexual assault, battery), physically abusive behaviours ( e.g., threats, fondling ), verbal (e.g., making derogatory comments, spreading rumours, demanding for sexual favours in exchange for rewards etc.), non- verbal (e.g. unwelcome touching, hugging, kissing, caressing, blocking the way in sexual manner), non-touching actions (such as dirty jokes, leering, repeatedly asking for a date etc.), visual (e.g., sending unwholesome pictures, pornography, seduction with indecent dressing). In all cases of SH, the action is unwanted, offensive, non-consensual and delimiting for the victim, may be from a superior to a

subordinate or vice versa or among peers. It can be direct or indirect (including procuring or attempting to offer a person to another for sexual activity); and may involve persons of the same or opposite sex.

## 2.2. Consequences of Sexual Harassment

The consequences of sexual harassment are far-reaching:

- Psychological impact: Victims can experience anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- Academic Performance: Students may struggle to concentrate, miss classes, and see their grades decline.
- Erosion of Trust: The academic environment, meant to be a place of learning and growth, becomes tainted by fear and distrust.

As an addendum, sexual harassment behaviour usually is a manifestation of power play, with the perpetrator taking advantage of their superior position, or their economic superiority to lure, coerce or sexually intimidate victims (Kheswa, 2014) and may involve persons of the same or opposite sex (Pina, Gannon, & Saunders, 2009). It presents a psychological experience that is offensive, devaluing and threatening (Topa, Morales, & Depolo, 2008) and (Pina et al., 2009), perceived to negatively impact on the victims ability to participate in and benefit from educational programme, and create a hostile and offensive work/school environment (Gruber & Fineran, 2007) and (Pina et al., 2009) as well as presents traumatizing experience for those who are victimized (Fineran & Bolen, 2006). Sexual harassment can damage students' well-being, provoke and exacerbate conflict among students, contribute to a hostile learning environment and negatively influence schoolwork and performance (Hill & Silva, 2005; ([www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org) 2-3).

Without exaggeration, sexual harassment is a pervasive issue in tertiary institutions round the world, creating a hostile learning environment and impacting the academic success and wellbeing of students and staff. This problem manifests in various forms, as mentioned above. Other forms include:

- Favouritism and Coercion: Students may be pressured to submit to sexual advances in exchange for better grade, opportunities, or to avoid failing a course.
- Creating a hostile Environment: Sexualized jokes, innuendo and inappropriate behavior can create a climate of fear and intimidation. It should be stated here that the severity of the problem lies in several key areas such as:
- Underreporting: Many incidents or cases of sexual harassment go unreported due to fear of retaliation, shame, or lack of awareness about reporting mechanisms.
- Power Dynamics: Students, especially those depending on faculty for grades and recommendations, are often reluctant to report harassment from faculty, department or staff.
- Inadequate Policies: Some institutions lack clear and comprehensive sexual harassment policies, or fail to enforce them effectively.

## 2.3. Cases of Sexual Harassment in Institutions of Learning

Sexual harassment in the education sector is increasingly reported as an issue of major concern among both students and staff on campuses and schools (Hill and Silva, 2005), (Hill & Kearn, 2011), (Smit & Plessis, 2011), (Vega-Gea, Ortega-Ruiz, Clave & Sánchez, 2015) and (Harding, 2017)). The AAUW (2001) survey of 2063 American public school students in grades 8 to 11 reported the increasing rates of different forms of sexual harassment. The findings reported 81% had experienced sexual harassment at school; 83 per cent for girls and 79 per cent for boys reporting harassment; over 50% of male and female students experienced sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks while over 30% of boys and girls experienced being touched, grabbed, pinched or brushed up against in a sexual way from schoolmates. Additionally, the AAUW survey in 2010-2011 school year found that about 48% of U.S. students nationwide in grades 7–12 reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment while in school.

Also in the USA, (Petersen & Hyde, 2009) reported an increase in sexual harassment victimization as the adolescents grew older of girls (boys) in 5th grade 35% (55%), in the seventh grade 55% (68%), and in the 9th grade 65% (78%) had experienced any of the elicited nine sexually harassing behaviours during the past year. Similar findings were reported by (Espekhage & Holt, 2007) in a study among middle and high school students. The findings indicate that 81% of students experienced some form of sexual harassment during their school lives; 6 out of 10 experienced it occasionally, and a quarter of them dealt with sexual victimization most of the time. (McMaster et al., 2002) in Canada likewise reported experience of sexual harassment in 38% of girls and in 42% of boys in elementary/middle school, with increasing victimization in higher grades. Other studies reported findings of increased subjection to sexual harassment in school (Witkowska & Menckel, 2005) in Sweden; (Dhlomo et al., 2012) in Zimbabwe.

There is growing evidence of sexual harassment on campuses. (Bannar-Kidd, 2010) reported that in USA about 300,000 women are raped and 3.7 million are confronted with unwanted sexual activity annually. Also, (Biden, 2010) reported in a nationwide survey of female students' experiences of violence in UK that one in four had experienced unwanted sexual behavior in their stay on campuses. At Jimma University in Ethiopia, violence, harassment and lack of security were cited as the most common problems women students faced. In the study of 385 women at the University, (Mamaru, Getachew & Mohammed, 2015) found that 78.2% of the respondents had experienced different forms of harassment.

At the University of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, female students were reportedly being tortured by a secret group of members of the University, presenting them in sexually derogatory manner or publicized rudely after being raped to the extent that some of the cases committed suicide (FAWE News, 2000). A study by (Twinama, 2008) in Uganda informed that sexual harassment is prevalent, majorly perpetuated by male Lecturers against female students and often referred to as "carpet grades" to signify the place of sexual transaction.

Other studies in South Africa (Dastile, 2004), (Steenkamp, 2010); in Zimbabwe (Dhlomo et al., 2012); Tunisia (Lynch, 2013), in Ghana (Norman, Alkins & Binta, 2013), all confirmed the prevalence of sexual harassment, and almost non-existent interventions to address the problem. Of noteworthy is the report of (Dastile, 2004) on University of Venda in South Africa, citing the case of a "female student class representative who was sexually harassed by the Lecturer when she went to call the Lecturer for a lecture...the Lecturer reportedly touched, hugged and kissed her in his office and this happened more than once".

Several other recent studies also confirmed the prevalence of sexual harassment in Nigeria tertiary institutions (Nwagbara, 2011), (Imonikhe, Aluede, & Idogho, 2012), (Omonijo et al., 2013) and (Taiwo, Omole & Omole, 2014). Omonijo focused on three faith-based private Universities and found that apart from the high scale of sexual harassment, many students did not report to authorities.

Additionally, media reports on several cases of Management Sciences 19.2%, Law 8.7%; Arts 13.0%; Medicine/Pharmacy, 8.7%; Sciences, 12.0%; Agricultural Sciences, 8.5%; and Engineering 3.6%. The majority of respondents are females (71.8%), aged between 16-25 years (90%), entered the university after 2014/15 session (69.8%), single (88.4%) and living in rented apartment (95.6). A subsample of 302 students answered questions on hypothetical scenarios involving forms of SH to ascertain their sexual misconduct suggest that the problem is perception of SH and their anticipated responses to such spreading in schools and tertiary institutions. For example, situation in 2016, the Management at the Federal Polytechnic Bida, Data collection instruments consisted of The Bida reportedly suspended a Lecturer in the Campus Climate Survey questionnaire and the Scenario Department of Public Administration for perception questionnaire.

The climate survey questionnaire allegedly raping an ND1 student in the Department. (<http://www.pulse.ng/communities/student/bida-polylecturer-suspended-for-raping-student-id5001958.html>), a Lecturer at the University of Lagos, (UNILAG) was reported to have raped an 18-year-old female admission seeker (apparently her father's friend) in a classroom under the guise of helping her secure admission into the University; a Dean of Law at the University of Calabar allegedly raped a 21-year-old 400 level Law student of the Institution. Worthy to mention is the sensational scandal case at Queens College, Lagos where a parent of a JSS2 girl claimed that "one of the male teachers in the school had allegedly molested her daughter on a few occasions, after the teacher had been around the hostel at night, while he was drunk."

In the backdrop of the wave of complaints and accusations, a Bill on Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Education was presented at the floor of National Assembly to be passed into law criminalizing sexual misconduct involving Lecturers and students...prescribing 5-year jail term for offenders.

The Bill reportedly received strong support from members of the Nigerian Female Students Association as they stormed the National Assembly (Senate) Abuja, to show their unflinching support to the Bill for a law prescribing five-year jail term for lecturers sexually harassing female students. President of the association...expressed great delight that the Bill has passed through second reading in the floor of Senate... added that a lot of female students have requested to assist in recording marks, asked to collect dropped out of school, end up with low grades registration forms for the class. While some fail course... the growing abuse of female students is orchestrated by lack of consistent "I like you, be my good girl, jokingly said "you are and clear policy by school governing bodies and beautiful", tells her I like your red bra, invite her for school authorities concerning sexual harassment (<http://www.pulse.ng/communities/student/sexual-harassment-female-students-storm-nigeriansenate-id5093183.html>).

### 3. Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. A total of 1408 students participated in the Campus Climate Survey on sexual harassment drawn from 8 Departments in the FCE, Obudu Campus: The majority of respondents are females (71.8%), aged between 16-25 years (90%), entered the College after 2020/2021 session (69.8%), single (88.4%) and living in a rented apartment (95.6%). A subsample of 302 students answered questions on hypothetical scenarios involving forms of sexual harassment to ascertain their perception of sexual harassment and their anticipated responses to such situation.

Data collection instruments consisted of *The Campus Climate Survey* questionnaire and the scenario perception questionnaire. The climate survey questionnaire provided students with a 16-item list of Sexual Harassment behavior and asked students to indicate how often they had experienced each of the acts since joining the University on a format of 3-point scale (often =3, sometimes=2, never=1). The perception questionnaire administered to a sub sample of the students consists of 10-item hypothetical scenarios to debrief the students on their perception of the likelihood of action in the scenarios occurring in FCE and the prevalence of occurrence of such behavior on a format scale of most likely, maybe, not at all.

For the perception questionnaire, each respondent was presented with descriptions of scenarios that connote possibility of sexual harassment between Lecturer and student or student-student. Each of the descriptions presented for judgment had specific elements of SH put together to construct a potential action initiated by someone in authority or superior position, either lecturer to student or student to student. The focus of the harassment descriptions is on students. Eight constructs were formed from all the descriptions and each construct has elements of sexual harassment contained in the descriptions. The constructs are:

- Construct 1: Setting – indicating where the action was initiated e.g., office, hostel, and classroom.
- Construct 2: Status indicating gender and level of study or professional status.
- Construct 3: Initial Actions, indicating the victim's initial response e.g., shocked, ignored, played it down.
- Construct 4: Baits, indicating the initial actions taken to attract the victim, e.g., raised issue about assignment, requested to assist in recording marks, asked to collect dropped out of school, end up with low grades registration forms for the class.
- Construct 5: Verbal Behaviors, indicating spoken actions e.g., "I like you, be my good girl, jokingly said you are beautiful", tell her I like your red bra, and invite her for lunch.
- Construct 6: Physical Actions, indicating responses and stimuli that are physical and non-verbal e.g., locked the door, moved close towards her, grabbed her dress and send love texts persistently.
- Construct 7: Threats/Reward, indicating the actions taken as enticement/force for SH, e.g., promise to help with project, threaten to blackmail if he says it out, promise her "A" if she would allow him feel her body, she told him the boys are waiting outside to deal with you.
- Construct 8: Response/Action taken, indicating what the victim did, e.g., conceded the request, cried, avoided class, kept to herself.

The instruments were administered as in-class activity by research assistants. Students were targeted with the permission of course Lecturers in compulsory courses cutting across the different levels. Random sample of students, mostly those that willingly volunteered to participate after explaining the objectives of the study to them, were involved in the completion of the questionnaire. The students were informed that their responses to the questionnaires would remain anonymous and did not have to divulge their identity. Both sets of the questionnaire were randomly distributed for completion. The data were subjected to descriptive analyses using SPSS tools and quantified using percentages and mean.

#### 3.1. Category of Staff that tend to Harass Female Students

The category of staff that tend to harass female students on the Federal College of Education, Obudu Campus are the Lecturers who adopt different ways of harassing the female students on Campus. The survey reveals that though male admin officers working in the students' affairs office, admission office, data base office, etc also possesses the tendency of harassing female students, but that of the Lecturers is very high. The respondents confirm this fact from the finding of the survey.

## 4. Results

A total of 849 respondents (60.1%) are of the opinion that there is sexual harassment in Obudu campus of College of Education, out of which 27.4% described the behavior as very rampant and 32.6% felt it is existing but not as bad. As many as a quarter among the sampled students (25.8%) are not sure that it is existing while 10.4% claimed not to have heard about it. A high percentage of the students claimed to have formed their opinion more from what they heard people talk (55.8%), what they see others experienced (19.5%) and least from personal experience (11.1%).

Even though the numbers in Table 1 indicate that the majority never experienced the eighteen SH actions that were presented, those who reported SH victimization experiences are significant enough for consideration. Using the reported frequency of occurrence of the SH behaviour, the most frequently experienced items were “make annoying jokes about looks” ( $x=1.46$ ). Other noteworthy victimization items with high occurrence are “touch intimate body part in disrespectful way” ( $x=1.40$ ), “pass comment about look that is sexual” ( $x=1.31$ ) and ask for outing and you say no” ( $x=1.26$ ). The behavior that fewer students reported to have experienced were: “send embarrassing phonographic photos” ( $x=0.97$ ), deceive to unsafe place for sex ( $x=1.05$ ), forced to intimate relationship against will ( $x=1.07$ ) and Circulate false sexual rumors about you ( $x=1.85$ ).

**Table 1** Mean scores to Sexual Harassment victimization experience by lecturers

S/NO.:	Has any Lecturer:	Often	Sometimes	Never	<i>n</i>	$\bar{x}$
1	Touched your intimate body in disrespected way?	128	186	804	1118	1.40
2	Pecked/kissed you in embarrassing way?	53	69	1024	1146	1.15
3	Made annoying jokes about look?	202	140	830	1172	1.46
4	Made overtures for sexual affair?	84	128	954	1166	1.25
5	Blocked you to touch your body to your annoyance?	20	43	1053	1116	1.17
6	Deceived you to unsafe place for sex?	8	43	1068	1119	1.05
7.	Offered you grade or money reward for date?	93	107	876	1076	1.27
8.	Forced you to intimate relationship against will?	14	55	1076	1145	1.07
9	Asked you for love advances? when you say NO;	106	60	958	1124	1.24
10	Threaten to have sex or fail a course?	41	63	1072	1176	1.13
11	Demanded sexual relationship for grade?	32	73	1025	1130	1.12
12	Circulated false sexual rumors about you?	28	36	1072	1136	1.08
13	Sent annoying romantic texts on phone?	54	78	1024	1156	1.16
14	Sent embarrassing phonographic photos?	11	17	1080	1108	0.97
15	Passed comments about your look that is sexual?	105	134	861	1100	1.31
16	Sent disturbing texts and emails?	84	79	989	1152	1.22
17	Asked for outing and when you say no?	58	166	950	1174	1.34
18	Threaten for refusing relationship?	22	52	1001	1075	1.15

The variation in the sample size *n* is due to the respondents' non response to some of the question items.

### 4.1. Responses to Hypothetical Scenarios

Table 2 shows how students perceived the hypothetical scenarios on possibilities of occurrence of the SH descriptions on the campus. Scenarios 4 and 8 involving male student victimizing female student to concede to sexual-related intimacy were perceived by a high percentage with most likelihood of happening (71.5%, 54.6%) although not labelled as Sexual Harassment (20.9%, 39.1%). Scenarios 2 and 10 involving females as the perpetrator are perceived least likelihood to happen (27% and 21%) and labelled least as Sexual Harassment. Descriptions involving male Lecturers against female students as victims stood out with definitive response of high likelihood of occurrence and labelled by a high percentage as Sexual Harassment behaviour. Scenario 1, 5 and 9 containing SH elements with promises of mark



reward or access to questions are perceived with high likelihood of occurrences (53%; 47.7%; 38.4%) and labelled as Sexual Harassment behaviour by a high percentage of respondents (73.8%; 62.9%; 66.2%) respectively. Additionally, scenario 6 involving deliberately failing a student in return for turning down sexual request is considered to have high likelihood of occurrence (51%) and perceived as SH behavior by a high percentage of respondents (66%).

**Table 2** % Responses to Scenarios on Sexual Harassment Behaviour

Scenarios	Likelihood it will happen in COE			Have you experienced similar situation		Know anyone experienced similar situation		Is it Sexual Harassment?	
	Most likely %	Maybe %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
Section 1	53.0	37.7	7.0	12.3	86.4	65.3	34.7	73.8	10.3
Section 2	15.9	34.1	27.8	3.0	95.4	6.0	91.4	65.9	12.9
Section 3	44.7	14.7	10.3	4.3	92.1	45.6	50.8	75.2	8.6
Section 4	20.7	71.5	5.3	29.8	67.5	51.0	46.0	20.9	53.6
Section 5	47.7	41.1	6.6	5.6	90.1	49.5	50.2	62.9	13.9
Section 6	36.8	51.3	7.3	6.5	89.4	43.8	56.2	66.2	12.9
Section 7	26.5	47.7	20.2	9.6	84.4	11.6	81.8	41.7	26.5
Section 8	31.1	54.6	7.6	13.2	79.5	25.5	67.5	39.1	32.8
Section 9	38.5	43.7	10.6	7.6	84.4	68.5	31.5	66.2	10.6
Section 10	37.1	45.5	10.6	6.3	86.4	15.6	77.2	54.3	14.2

Furthermore, Table 2 shows that students generally claimed not to have had direct personal experiences of the behaviors as described in the scenarios, although a high percentage indicated to know persons that experienced similar situations. For example scenarios 1, 5 and 9 (indicated as most likelihood of occurrence) are reported to have been experienced by more student victims that they know.

It is interesting to note what behaviours the students labelled as SH victimization. Scenario 4, 7, 10 involving actions between students, even though perceived by many students with high likelihood of occurrence, were least labelled as SH. On the other hand, behaviours involving lecturers are labelled as SH by a high percentage of which scenarios 1 and 3 (Table 3) top the list (see Table 3).

**Table 3** SH elements in scenarios 1 and 3.

Scenario 1	Scenario 3
<p><u>Status:</u> Male lecturer-female student</p> <p><u>Setting:</u> Office</p> <p><u>Bait</u> – raised issue about assignment</p> <p>Kept her waiting</p> <p><u>Verbal actions:</u> He commented ‘I like you’</p> <p>Asked her out for a drink</p> <p>Asked her to see him</p> <p>Be my good girl</p> <p><u>Physical action:</u> got close</p> <p>Touched her body</p> <p><u>Initial reaction:</u> She tried to play it down</p>	<p><u>Status:</u> Male lecturer- female student</p> <p><u>Setting:</u> Office area</p> <p><u>Bait</u> – requested her to collect all the forms</p> <p>Made her class rep.</p> <p><u>Verbal action:</u> Thanked her for a great job</p> <p>Asked her jokingly ‘You are beautiful’</p> <p>He said jokingly ‘I like your red bra’</p> <p><u>Physical action:</u> smiled at her</p> <p>Gave her a peck on the palm</p> <p>Closed office door against her</p> <p>Kissed her and squeezed her breast</p>

<p><u>Student response</u>; tried to avoid him <u>Reward</u>; promise “A grade”</p>	<p><u>Initial reaction</u>: she tried to dismiss the remarks. She was worried <u>Threat</u>: Told her not to say it out, otherwise he will make a case against her with the authority.</p>
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Respondents were asked to indicate what they would do in similar situations as described in the scenario. Two strategies stood out in almost all the cases involving lecturers - prayer and telling friends/pastor. On the other hand, for the cases involving students, they indicated avoiding the situation or telling friends. No one mentioned reporting to the authority as a way of getting around the victimization cases.

#### 4.2. Methods/Types of Harassment

Sexual harassment in institutions of learning/campuses has taken several methods/types.

Sexual harassment in institutions can be assiduous and take many forms. Here are some of the methods/type to be aware of are:

**Verbal:** This includes sexual comments, jokes, innuendo, threats, pressure for dates, and unwelcome questions about a person’s sex life. Other verbal forms of sexual harassment include referring to an adult as a girl, hunk, doll, babe, or honey; Whistling at someone, cat calls; Making sexual comments about a person's body; Making sexual comments or innuendos; Turning work discussions to sexual topics; Telling sexual jokes or stories; Asking about sexual fantasies, preferences, or history; Asking personal questions about social or sexual life; Making kissing sounds, howling, and smacking lips; Making sexual comments about a person's clothing, anatomy, or looks; Repeatedly asking out a person who is not interested; Telling lies or spreading rumors about a person's personal sex life, etc.

**Non-Verbal:** This can involve leering, whistling, sexual gestures, and unwelcome physical closeness. Others forms of non-verbal include: Looking a person up and down (Elevator eyes); Staring at someone; Blocking a person's path; Following the person; Giving personal gifts; Displaying sexually suggestive visuals; Making sexual gestures with hands or through body movements; Making facial expressions such as winking, throwing kisses, or licking lips, etc.

**Physical:** This ranges from unwanted touching, groping, and kissing to sexual assault. Giving a massage around the neck or shoulders; Touching the person's clothing, hair, or body; Hugging, kissing, patting, or stroking; touching or rubbing oneself sexually around another person; Standing close or brushing up against another person, etc.

**Online:** This can include sexually suggestive emails, texts, or messages on social media, as well as sharing explicit content without consent.

**Quid Pro Quo:** This involves offering educational benefits (grades, recommendations) in exchange for sexual favours.

**Creating a Hostile Environment:** This can involve repeated unwanted comments or advances, even if not explicitly sexual, that make someone feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Some more others include: Actual or attempted rape or sexual assault, Unwanted pressure for sexual favours; Unwanted deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching; Unwanted sexual looks or gestures; Unwanted letters, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature; Unwanted pressure for dates; Unwanted sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions; Referring to an adult as a girl, hunk, doll, babe, or honey; Whistling at someone; Cat calls; Sexual comments; Turning work discussions to sexual topics. ; Sexual innuendos or stories; Asking about sexual fantasies, preferences, or history; Personal questions about social or sexual life; Sexual comments about a person's clothing, anatomy, or looks; Kissing sounds, howling, and smacking lips; Telling lies or spreading rumors about a person's personal sex life; Neck massage; Touching an employee's clothing, hair, or body; Giving personal gifts; Hanging around a person; Hugging, kissing, patting, or stroking; Touching or rubbing oneself sexually around another person. ; Standing close or brushing up against a person; Looking a person up and down (elevator eyes); Staring at someone; Sexually suggestive signals; Facial expressions, winking, throwing kisses, or licking lips; Making sexual gestures with hands or through body movements.

It’s important to that sexual harassment can be perpetrated by anyone- Faculty, Department, staff, students or even guests on campus.

If you or someone you know experiences sexual harassment, there are available resources to help facilitating the process. Many universities have reporting procedures and support services in place.

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## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study provide further evidence on the existence of sexual harassment victimization in education settings. The results are consistent with other studies in Nigeria (Omonijo et al., 2013) and (Taiwo, Omole & Omole, 2014) and other countries, thus affirming the global nature of the problem. However, the gratifying finding of the present study is the fact that students perceived that sexual harassment behavior, though existing, is not rampant in its scale of occurrence in FCE, Obudu Campus. This finding is noteworthy, and may not be unconnected with the fact that the University Management took strategic actions to sanitize the system and restore a reasonable level of professionalism in the recent past. However, the fact that there still exist occurrences of sexual harassment should not be ignored. This is because every case of sexual harassment creates social and psychological impediment for the victim to access a protected learning environment.

Experiences of sexual harassment in schools has been associated with avoidant behaviours, low self-esteem, feeling unsafe at school and low life satisfaction (Gruber & Fineran, 2007). Moreover, it negatively impact on the victims ability to participate in and benefit from the educational programme, creates a hostile and offensive work/school environment (Gruber & Fineran, 2007), (Pina et al., 2009) as well as presents traumatizing experience for those who are victimized (Fineran & Bolen, 2006).

The majority of respondents in this study indicated that they formed their opinion from what they heard people talk about or what they saw others experienced rather than direct personal experience. Even with the scenarios that were described, the majority of students indicated that they had no direct experience but knew of someone that had similar experience. This further confirms the findings in previous studies that victims do not like to divulge direct experience of sexual harassment or report their victimization because of “lack of trust, lukewarm action on the part of the authority, and possibility of shifting blame on the offended, (Leach, 2013).

Other reasons that victims are reluctant to open up are humiliation, embarrassment, anger, fear and guilt. The students indicated that they would rather confide in religious leaders or friends or pray rather than report to University authority if in similar situations as described in the scenario. No wonder it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable evidence on the scale of campus-based Sexual Harassment, and would require that other innovative reporting procedure that protects identity of victims are adopted. More likely to be the object of sexual jokes, remarks, or gestures (Hill & Silva, 2005) and are more likely to be upset, feel embarrassed, angry, less confident, afraid, or worried by sexual assault (Hill & Silva, 2005). However, it is gratifying that quid pro quo harassment or sexual cohesion was least frequent in Table 1 as shown by the low mean values (e.g., threaten to blackmail for refusing relationship).

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## 6. Conclusion

The results of this study have important implications for the College of Education, Obudu Campus to foster an equitable and safe learning environment for all students by preventing sexual harassment victimization through anti-harassment policy, continued sensitization and training as well as grievance/reporting mechanisms, rather than managing the unethical behaviour. This study is exploratory and entails therefore certain limitations which future research can consider. For example, though using perception questionnaire and scenarios provided some useful information, nevertheless, applying direct interview technique and asking the participants to write their own real life story might have provided more credible evaluation of the campus climate. Combining quantitative and qualitative data would enhance the validity of a study of this nature and can provide a broader perspective of sexual harassment behavior on the campus.

- Explicit sanctions/punitive measures for perpetrators in the policy, and this should be well publicized to send signals to the community that perpetrators of unethical sexual acts will incur penalty.
- Establish formal reporting/monitoring mechanisms: This is an attempt to establish grievance procedure and label sexual harassment (and other sexual misconduct) as offence of institutional concern.
- Set up University support system: This is with a view to raising confidence level of students that the University cares for them and providing safety nets for all students.
- Provide continued sensitization programme: This would help to build a community of staff and students with high level of awareness of sexual harassment as inequity issue and the wrong in acceptance of these unethical behaviours. More importantly, it will help quite a number of new and inexperienced lecturers that were

employed in recent years without orientation or retreat trainings on the essence of professionalism and responsibility in relationships with students.

### **6.1 Recommendations**

Following are a few recommendations that can help deal with the issue of sexual harassment in College of Education, Obudu Campus and by implications other tertiary institutions: Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Universities in Nigeria.

The implementation of sexual harassment Prohibition Act on campuses is a top measure to stemming cases of sexual harassment on campuses.

Whistle blowing/reporting of cases of sexual harassment can go a long way to bring these nefarious acts to the open for treatment.

Prompt response to mechanism to address the injuries of victims of sexual harassment should be put in place in Nigerian Institutions of higher learning. In this way, their fears, shame and embarrassment will be assuaged. Again, the hurdles most victims of sexual harassment go through to receive attention should be taken away.

The government should establish rehabilitation centers for rapist before reintegrating them back into the society.

The efforts of women in Nigeria to attain education at all levels and be part of the development of their society should be complemented by eliminating all gender based violence. Thus, paving the way for women to fully utilize opportunities that higher education affords.

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### **Compliance with ethical standards**

#### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

#### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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