



Sexual Harassment and Female Undergraduates' Academic Posture in Oyo State, Nigeria

¹Ajibade, I. O. and ²Okeyinka, A. O.

¹Department of Social Studies and Civic Education, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo

²Department of Educational Management, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo

Corresponding author: i.oyebanji123@gmail.com

Abstract

Sexual harassment stands as one of the most widespread manifestations of gender-based violence confronting female students within Nigerian tertiary institutions. This study investigates the prevalence of sexual harassment among female students at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo, with the aim of identifying both the underlying causes and the resulting effects on students' academic performance. Two research questions guided the investigation, which employed a descriptive survey research design. A total sample of 120 students, drawn randomly at a rate of 24 per faculty, participated in the study. Data were gathered using a self-developed questionnaire, the Sexual Harassment of Female Students in Tertiary Institutions Questionnaire (SHOFSOTIQ), and subsequently analyzed through simple descriptive statistical methods. The results show that sexual harassment is primarily driven by factors such as students' dressing and appearance, insufficient parental supervision and care, and the pursuit of academic assistance from lecturers, while its effects manifest as diminished self-esteem and self-efficacy, depression and related health complications, declining academic performance, and impaired memory function. Based on these findings, the study recommends that governments at all levels across Nigeria fully develop and enforce policies aimed at preventing sexual harassment, with a view to minimizing its occurrence within tertiary institutions nationwide and in Oyo State in particular.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, Academic posture, Cause-effect, Female students, Tertiary institutions

1. Introduction

Educational institutions occupy an indispensable position in resolving problems confronting society. Nigerian tertiary institutions, widely regarded as centres of learning and moral development, have made significant strides over the years in shaping leaders and scholars who have contributed meaningfully to national growth and to the global community. Nevertheless, despite being academic settings designed to tackle a wide range of societal challenges, tertiary institutions themselves grapple with certain social ills, among them indecent dressing and sexual harassment. The rise in incidents of sexual harassment within Nigerian tertiary institutions is an undeniable reality. This problem is neither new nor unique to Nigeria's higher education system; rather, it is a global phenomenon. Research indicates that sexual harassment within academic environments is widespread across numerous nations, including the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Taiwan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Turkey, and Ecuador, among others (Quick & Mcfadyen, 2017; Idris, Adaja, Audu & Aye, 2016).

Likewise, within present-day Nigerian society, matters concerning sexuality are now openly discussed with far

less reticence than before, largely because interactions between men and women have evolved in various settings, such as workplaces, places of worship, hospitals, and educational institutions. Sexual harassment has grown into a pressing concern within Nigerian tertiary institutions, cutting across cultural and religious boundaries. Several distinct forms of sexual harassment exist in this context, occurring from lecturer to student, student to lecturer, and among students themselves. Of these, student-to-student harassment is the most widespread, manifesting in verbal, non-verbal, physical, and written forms. According to Boyle (2017), Anderson (2016), and Okeyo (2014), sexual harassment has become commonplace in Nigerian tertiary institutions, as evidenced by the growing number of reported incidents and victim complaints. The phenomenon was first documented in schools, colleges, and universities during the early 1980s, and reports of such cases have risen steadily since then. The prevalence of sexual harassment among female students in Nigerian tertiary institutions is deeply troubling and poses a serious threat to the advancement of the nation's educational system.

Furthermore, victims of sexual harassment often suffer severe consequences, including diminished self-esteem and compromised health and well-being. According to Hejase (2015), sexual harassment leaves victims feeling deeply uncomfortable, erodes the integrity of the academic space, and hinders both victims and their

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peers from reaching their full potential. Muhonen (2016) supports this view, noting that the hostile and intimidating atmosphere resulting from sexual harassment can hinder victims from performing at their best, owing to persistent fear and anxiety. Given the gravity of this situation, this study sets out to examine sexual harassment and its relationship to the academic performance of female undergraduates in tertiary institutions, with particular focus on Oyo State and broader relevance to Nigeria as a whole.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Nigerian tertiary institutions, once celebrated as ivory towers of learning, appear to have undergone a striking transformation, now increasingly associated with sexual harassment. There was a time when academic merit stood as the guiding principle within these institutions. In recent years, however, this emphasis on merit seems to have steadily declined. Notably, sexual harassment has become a routine occurrence in Nigerian tertiary institutions and represents a significant threat to the growth of the nation's educational system. It has fostered a learning environment that is neither safe nor conducive, particularly for female students. This raises an important question: what factors have contributed to the decline of academic merit within Nigeria's tertiary institutions? Rather than functioning as hubs of academic distinction, these institutions have, in many respects, deteriorated into settings where sexual harassment thrives. This shift may be linked to the widespread poverty currently affecting the country. It could also stem from provocative dress choices among some female students, as well as a lack of diligence on the part of certain students in preparing adequately for their examinations. Ayanwumi (2022) contends that sexual harassment can no longer be regarded as a novel social issue within Nigerian tertiary institutions, having instead become an entrenched deviant practice across many of these institutions. In a related study, Awe (2020) found that sexual harassment in education tends to be more pronounced in countries characterized by weak educational structures, limited accountability, widespread poverty, and gender inequality, and is especially prevalent in institutions where teaching staff are inadequately trained, poorly compensated, and severely lacking in resources. Framed as a research problem, this study therefore asks: what relationship exists between sexual harassment and the academic performance of female undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Oyo State?

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the causes and effects of sexual harassment among female undergraduate students of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo and its relationship with their academic posture.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- I. What are the factors responsible for sexual harassment among female undergraduates of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo?
- II. What are the effects of sexual harassment on female undergraduate students of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo?

1.2 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: Sexual harassment has no significant relationship with female undergraduates' academic posture of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Clarification: The Concept of Sexual Harassment

Like many social concepts, sexual harassment resists a single, fixed definition and does not manifest through a consistent pattern of behaviour. Its meaning shifts depending on the context in which it occurs. According to Anna (2019), sexual harassment refers to unwelcome, unsolicited, and one-sided sexual advances made by one individual toward another with the aim of eliciting sexual relations that are not desired. Awe (2020), by contrast, characterizes sexual harassment as an unacceptable act involving aggression directed at another person's body or psychological well-being, with sex used as an instrument of harm. Young and Hegarty (2019) frame sexual harassment as encompassing unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and physical, verbal, or non-verbal behaviour that pressures the recipient whether explicitly or implicitly through means such as threats, intimidation, taunting, and unwanted touching or kissing, among other acts. Such behaviour can take place across various settings, including the home, school, and workplace.

Bondestam and Lundqvist (2020) identified several factors contributing to the high prevalence of sexual harassment, as outlined;

Indecent Dressing: While perceptions of what constitutes indecent dressing may vary from person to person, clothing that is considered revealing can generally prompt the opposite sex to initiate social contact that may eventually escalate into sexual harassment (Adigun, Ogunboyo & Ilesanmi, 2019). Skimpy or transparent attire, in particular, may stir sexual arousal that ultimately leads to harassment.

Exposure to Sexual Materials: Students are frequently drawn to sexually explicit content readily available through internet access, which stimulates sexual arousal and may foster a desire to act on such impulses toward classmates. Among the risks associated with information and communication technology is the emergence of "e-sexual harassment," involving the use of digital platforms to circulate explicit images, sexually charged messages, and other forms of inappropriate sexual conduct (Chu, Vu & Thanh, 2021).

Use of Illicit Drugs: Research has established a link between drug use and the commission of sexual harassment, in addition to the broader negative impact substance use has on students' personalities (Skoog & Ozdemir, 2016). Additionally, the widespread consumption of alcohol among students in Nigerian tertiary institutions has been identified as a contributing factor to incidents of sexual harassment (Klein & Martin, 2019).

Activities in Secluded Environments: Evidence suggests that within school settings, sexual harassment is more likely to occur when activities take place in isolated or secluded locations, as opposed to those conducted in groups or open, visible spaces (Obiozor & Osuala, 2018).

The effects of sexual harassment on the victims include the following:

- i. **Psychological Effect:** Individuals who experience sexual harassment can suffer a range of psychological consequences, spanning irritation and frustration to anxiety, stress, and trauma. Sexual harassment is frequently intertwined with assault, bullying, coercion, discrimination, favoritism, exploitation, and intimidation elements that surface within the encounter and leave victims grappling with lasting pain that severely undermines their psychological well-being. Earlier research has shown that female students face heightened vulnerability to sexual harassment, often encountering it during their time in school, which in turn tends to negatively affect their academic performance (Tano & Kitula, 2022). Existing literature further demonstrates that sexual harassment inflicts considerable damage on the psychological, physical, and emotional well-being of those affected. Such incidents also play a significant role in eroding victims' self-confidence and self-esteem, and, more seriously, compromise their overall psychological well-being (Philips, Webber, Imbeau, Quaipe, Hagan, Maar & Abourbih, 2019).

- ii. **Health Effect:** Among the most consequential psychological impacts of sexual harassment is its toll on the victim's health. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is frequently observed among individuals who have experienced sexual victimization or assault (Latcheva, 2017). Victims may also face increased risk of contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). In addition, physical attempts by victims to resist harassment can result in bodily injury (Okodugha & Adewole, 2021). Depression is another psychological disturbance commonly linked to victims of sexual harassment, and in many cases, such individuals exhibit suicidal

tendencies that call for both legal and medical intervention (Kapila, 2017). Ultimately, the combined psychosomatic and physical toll of sexual harassment can contribute to declining academic performance and grades (Suleiman, 2017).

2.2 Empirical Studies

A study examining sexual harassment was carried out across both private and public secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur to assess how widespread the issue was within the selected institutions, drawing on responses from 50 teachers and administrative staff alongside more than 200 students. The results showed that only a small number of teachers and administrative personnel recognized the gravity of the problem and took deliberate action to address it within their schools. More than half of the surveyed students had experienced sexual harassment, and many of them reported difficulty sleeping, reluctance to attend school, and avoidance of school-related activities or sporting events.

Sexual harassment is likewise a widespread concern among university students. A separate study drew on eighty (80) participants enrolled in Master's and PhD programmes at selected Malaysian universities. Interview findings revealed that these students were not only familiar with the concept of sexual harassment but also aware that it occurred within the Malaysian higher education context. Most of those interviewed acknowledged that incidents of sexual harassment were on the rise in both public and private Malaysian universities. A considerable number of respondents believed female students were the primary victims due to their greater vulnerability, while others maintained that both male and female students were affected. Some participants attributed the problem to the Malaysian education system's heavy reliance on a Western-oriented curriculum and its comparatively minimal focus on religious instruction, suggesting that this exposure may have played a role in fostering the issue. A contrasting perspective held that the education system itself was not to blame, and that broader societal and environmental influences were the primary drivers of sexual harassment. Most students, however, felt that inappropriate dressing on the part of students themselves contributed to inviting such harassment.

Within the Nigerian context, Odu and Babalola (2009) examined the sexual harassment of female students across several tertiary institutions in Ekiti and Ondo States, surveying eight hundred (800) female students to determine both the presence of the problem and the categories of individuals responsible for it. Their findings confirmed that sexual harassment of female students was indeed present within tertiary institutions in these two states, a fact corroborated by all 800 female participants. The study revealed that male lecturers across the four institutions frequently used favourable grades as an inducement to pursue sexual relationships with female students, while 83.3% of university administrators in these institutions were

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Level		
100	31	25.83
200	36	30.00
300	33	27.50
400	20	16.67
Total	120	100.00
Religion		
Christian	57	47.50
Islam	53	44.17
Others	10	08.33
Total	120	100.00

Source: Field work, (2026)

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Responses of Factors Responsible for Sexual Harassment among Female Students (n=120)

S/N	Factors	SA(%)	A(%)	D(%)	SD(%)	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Decision
1	Mode of dressing or appearance of female student prompted sexual harassment within and outside the campus	30 (25.0)	67 (55.8)	14 (11.7)	09 (7.5)	2.94	0.58	Accepted
2	Unnecessary closeness with the opposite sex common among female students triggers sexual harassment	45 (37.5)	53 (44.2)	15 (12.5)	07 (5.8)	3.07	0.62	Accepted
3	Inadequate provision of security on part of institutions' management lead to sexual harassment	36 (30.0)	54 (45.0)	20 (16.7)	10 (8.3)	2.88	0.55	Accepted
4	Poor or lack of proper parental monitoring and care especially female students associated with sexual harassment	39 (32.5)	61 (50.8)	11 (9.2)	09 (7.5)	3.07	0.60	Accepted
5	Seeking for undeserved mark or grade from lecturers propels sexual harassment	43 (35.8)	68 (56.7)	07 (5.8)	2 (6.4)	3.23	0.65	Accepted
6	Campus riots among cultists is connected to sexual harassment among female students.	39 (32.5)	63 (52.5)	11 (9.2)	7 (5.8)	3.08	0.57	Accepted
7	Sexual harassment can happen as way to avenge for female misbehaviour to opposite sex on campus	33 (27.5)	68 (56.7)	12 (10.0)	7 (5.8)	3.02	0.54	Accepted
8	Peer pressure, belongingness and the behaviour of groups can influence sexual harassment.	30 (25.0)	57 (47.5)	20 (16.7)	13 (10.8)	2.81	0.61	Accepted
9	Gender stereotypes and traditional views of masculinity and femininity may influence behaviour and contribute to environments where harassment is normalized or excused	47 (39.2)	50 (41.7)	14 (11.7)	9 (7.5)	3.08	0.59	Accepted
10	The rise of digital communication has introduced new avenues for sexual harassment.	35 (29.2)	67 (55.8)	15 (12.5)	3 (2.5)	3.02	0.56	Accepted

Source: Field work compiled, (2026)

found to leverage their positions of authority to coerce female students into sexual relationships. Male academic staff constituted the largest group of harassers at 96%, followed by university administrators at 3% and

male non-academic staff at 1%.

Taiwo, Omole, and Omole (2014) explored the psychological effects and patterns of sexual harassment

among students attending higher education institutions in Osun State, Nigeria, surveying 2,500 students to establish the nature, trends, causes, and psychological toll of the experience on victims. Their findings showed that the most frequently observed form of harassment involved male lecturers targeting female students, often driven by provocative dressing and sexual gestures, accounting for 98.8% of cases. Additional patterns identified included female students harassing male lecturers (62%), male students harassing female students (79%), and male lecturers harassing female lecturers (55.6%). Overall, the findings indicated that female students bore the greatest exposure to sexual harassment.

3. Theoretical Framework

Feminism Theory

This study is grounded in Feminist Theory, given the patriarchal nature of Nigeria's socio-political structure, within which male dominance over women remains a pervasive and undeniable reality. Bunwaree (2010) and Mama (2011) argue that feminism, as a theoretical framework, advocates for equality, political rights, and natural justice, among other principles, as necessary conditions for women to compete on equal footing with men in public life. Feminism represents both a belief system and a theoretical framework concerned with the nature and mechanisms of women's oppression, exploitation, marginalization, and subjugation within society. At its core, feminism reflects an awareness that women are subordinated and sidelined, and that something fundamentally wrong underlies how they are treated something present yet not always easy to articulate. Applied to this study, feminist theory suggests that sexual harassment persists within Nigerian tertiary institutions because women continue to be viewed through traditional and cultural lenses that position them as objects of exploitation. In other words, much of what unfolds within these institutions can be traced back to the patriarchal social framework that underpins Nigerian society more broadly.

4. Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A random sample of 120 respondents (24 per faculty) across six (5) faculties were used as the population sample. The instrument used for the collection of data is "Sexual Harassment of Female Students of Tertiary Institutions Questionnaire (SHOFSOTIQ). It contained ten (10) items of Strongly Agree (SA), 4 points, Agree (A), 3 points, Disagree (D), 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD), 1 point. The instrument has content validity as well as reliability coefficients of 0.86. The data collected through instrument were subjected to simple descriptive statistical analysis using simple percentage and mean. The criterion mean is set at 2.50. Any mean greater than 2.50 is accepted while any mean less than 2.50 is not accepted.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows that 31 (25.83%); 36 (30.00%); 33 (27.50%) and 20 (16.67%) of the respondents were 100,

200, 300 and 400 level respectively. While 57(47.50%), 53 (44.17%) and 10 (08.33%) of the respondents were Christians, Muslims and other religions participated in the study respectively.

Research Question 1: What are the factors responsible for sexual harassment among female students of Emmanuel Alayande University?

Table 2 reveals that items 1-10 have a mean ($\bar{X}$) value of 2.94 (SD = 0.58); 3.07 (SD = 0.62); 2.88 (SD = 0.55); 3.07 (SD = 0.60); 3.23 (SD = 0.65); 3.08 (SD = 0.57); 3.02 (SD = 0.54); 2.81 (SD = 0.61); 3.08 (SD = 0.59) and 3.02 (SD = 0.56) respectively which are all greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. Table 2 also reveals that, higher percentage (majority) of the respondents agreed with the itemized factors responsible for sexual harassment among female undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Oyo State. This implies that the itemized factors such as student mode of dressing, unnecessary closeness with the opposite sex, inadequate provision of security on the part of institution, management, lack of proper parental monitoring and care, seeking for underserved mark from the lecturers, campus riots among others are factors responsible for sexual harassment among female undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Oyo State and particularly in Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo.

Research Question 2: What are the effects of Sexual Harassment on Female Undergraduate Students of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo?

Table 3 shows that items 1-10 have a mean ($\bar{X}$) value of 2.94 (SD = 0.58); 3.02 (SD = 0.63); 2.88 (SD = 0.52); 3.08 (SD = 0.60); 3.07 (SD = 0.55); 2.81 (SD = 0.64); 3.15 (SD = 0.66); 3.07 (SD = 0.61); 3.08 (SD = 0.59); and 3.02 (SD = 0.56) respectively which are all greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. Table 3 also shows that, higher percentage (majority) of the respondents agreed with the itemized effects of sexual harassment among female undergraduate in tertiary institutions in Oyo State. This means that the itemized effects such as depression and health disorder, psychological and emotional stress or distress, mental trauma, high level of anxiety, low self-esteem and self-worth, missing classes, strain relationships, diminished sense of personal value and confidence, decline in academic performance among others are possible effects of sexual harassment on female undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Oyo State and particularly in Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo.

Hypothesis

Ho1: Sexual Harassment has no significant relationship with female undergraduates' academic pasture in Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Responses of the Effects of Sexual Harassment on Female Undergraduate Students (n=120)

S/N	-	SA(%)	A(%)	D(%)	SD(%)	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Decision
1	Depression and health disorder	30 (25.0)	67 (55.8)	14 (11.7)	09 (7.5)	2.94	0.58	Accepted
2	Psychological and emotional well-being of the victim is affected	45 (37.5)	53 (44.2)	15 (12.5)	07 (5.8)	3.07	0.63	Accepted
3	The trauma from harassment can lead to long-term mental health issues and low academic performance	36 (30.0)	54 (45.0)	20 (16.7)	10 (8.3)	2.88	0.52	Accepted
4	Alteration and impairment of memory capacity	39 (32.5)	63 (52.5)	11 (9.2)	7 (5.8)	3.08	0.60	Accepted
5	Victims often experience heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and emotional distress.	33 (27.5)	68 (56.7)	12 (10.0)	7 (5.8)	3.02	0.55	Accepted
6	Experiencing harassment can negatively affect self-esteem and self-worth, leading to a diminished sense of personal value and confidence	30 (25.0)	57 (47.5)	20 (16.7)	13 (10.8)	2.81	0.64	Accepted
7	The stress and trauma from harassment can affect a student's ability to concentrate, participate in classes, and maintain motivation, potentially leading to a decline in academic performance.	40 (33.3)	67 (55.8)	09 (7.5)	4 (3.3)	3.15	0.66	Accepted
8	Victims may miss classes or other academic obligations due to emotional distress or avoidance of the environment where harassment occurred	45 (37.5)	53 (44.2)	15 (12.5)	07 (5.8)	3.07	0.61	Accepted
9	Harassment can strain relationships with peers, family, and friends, either due to the victim's withdrawal or because of misunderstandings about their experiences.	47 (39.2)	50 (41.7)	14 (11.7)	9 (7.5)	3.08	0.59	Accepted
10	The effects of harassment may influence a student's future academic and career aspirations, potentially leading them to reconsider their chosen field of study or career path due to the trauma experienced.	25 (20.8)	77 (64.2)	13 (10.8)	5 (4.2)	3.02	0.56	Accepted

Source: Field work, (2026)

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the Relationship between Sexual Harassment and Academic Posture

Source	Sum of Squares (SS)	Df	Mean square (MS)	F	Sig.
Regression	18.42	1	18.42	68.12	0.000
Residual	21.35	118	0.18		
Total	39.77	119			

The table 4 shows that the regression model produced an F-value of 68.12 with a corresponding significance level (P-value) of 0.000. Since the P-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance ($P < 0.05$), the regression model is statistically significant. This implies that sexual harassment significantly predicts academic posture among female undergraduates. Since $P = 0.000 < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a statistically significant relationship between sexual harassment and female undergraduates' academic posture in Oyo State, Nigeria.

6. Discussion of Results

The results of this study identify several contributing

factors to sexual harassment among female students at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo. These factors include the manner in which students dress and present themselves, insufficient parental oversight and guidance, seeking academic support from lecturers, unnecessary familiarity with members of the opposite sex, inadequate security measures on the part of institutional management, and peer influence, among other issues. This pattern may be attributed, in part, to the tendency of victims to withhold reports of such incidents from relevant authorities. This finding aligns with that of Odu and Babalola (2009), who documented the existence of female sexual harassment within tertiary institutions in Ekiti and Ondo States,

noting that male lecturers often use favourable grades as a means of enticing female students into sexual relationships. Similarly, Bondestam and Lundqvist (2020) identified several causes of sexual harassment among female undergraduates, including indecent dressing, exposure to sexually explicit material, illicit drug use, and involvement in activities within secluded settings.

Furthermore, the study's findings point to diminished self-esteem and self-efficacy, depression, and related health complications, decline in academic performance, impaired memory function, psychological and emotional disturbances, trauma, and heightened anxiety as key consequences of sexual harassment. This finding is consistent with the observations of Hejase (2015), who noted that sexual harassment leaves victims feeling uncomfortable, compromises the integrity of the academic environment, and prevents both victims and their peers from reaching their full potential. These findings also align with the perspective of Philips, Webber, Imbeau, Quaife, Hagan, Maar, and Abourbih (2019), who argued that sexual harassment substantially contributes to diminished self-confidence and self-esteem, and, more damagingly, negatively affects victims' psychological well-being. In a similar vein, Okodugha and Adewole (2021) contend that students exposed to sexual harassment may also face heightened risk of contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Suleiman (2017) likewise maintains that the combined psychosomatic and physical toll of sexual harassment can lead to declining academic performance and grades among affected students.

Taken together, these findings carry broader implications for society, including the breakdown of social structures, a rise in deviant behaviours, erosion of educational values, and lasting effects on future family life. Tackling these issues calls for comprehensive interventions built on collaboration among parents, educators, and students to reinforce shared values, establish healthy boundaries, and support well-rounded development. The consequences of sexual harassment—ranging from health complications and trauma to anxiety, diminished self-esteem, strained relationships, and academic decline—extend well beyond the individual, affecting families and the wider society. Ultimately, early intervention, robust support systems, and open channels of communication remain essential to addressing both the causes and effects of sexual harassment among female undergraduates in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

7. Conclusion

Sexual harassment persists as a recurring social issue affecting female students within Nigerian tertiary institutions. It represents a societal menace that remains largely underreported, while simultaneously eroding the integrity of educational institutions. As such, it poses a substantial barrier to the achievement of sustainable development. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that female students face heightened

vulnerability to unwanted sexual harassment from members of the opposite sex. Contributing factors include students' mode of dressing and appearance, unnecessary closeness with the opposite sex, insufficient parental monitoring and care, inadequate provision of essential school materials, and the pursuit of academic assistance from lecturers, among other issues.

The broader consequences of sexual harassment manifest through diminished self-esteem and self-efficacy, depression and associated health complications, declining academic performance, impaired memory function, rising school dropout rates, a decline in graduate skill levels, reduced productivity, aggression, and the emergence of maladjusted young adults ill-equipped to contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's socio-economic development.

Tackling these consequences calls for a holistic approach encompassing well-defined policies, effective reporting channels, accessible counseling support, and a firm commitment to cultivating a safe and respectful academic environment. It is essential that institutions such as Emmanuel Alayande University of Education take deliberate steps toward building a culture that both prevents harassment and provides meaningful support to victims.

8. Recommendations

Drawing on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to help address the problem of sexual harassment within tertiary institutions in Oyo State and across Nigeria more broadly.

Governments at every level in Nigeria, alongside other relevant stakeholders, should take decisive steps to develop and enforce policies aimed at preventing sexual harassment, with the goal of reducing its occurrence to the lowest possible extent within tertiary institutions nationwide. It is equally urgent that both academic and administrative staff receive adequate training on effectively applying sexual harassment policies within their institutions. Female students, in turn, should be equipped with sufficient information regarding existing policies and support services designed to curb the prevalence of sexual harassment on campus. Firm commitment to workplace ethics, coupled with adherence to appropriate and respectable dress standards, would substantially contribute to reducing the sexual harassment of female students across Nigerian tertiary institutions.

The Federal and State Ministries of Education should champion more assertive and sustained efforts to combat illicit drug use among young people within tertiary institutions. Behaviours constituting sexual harassment ought to be explicitly incorporated into staff conditions of service, as well as faculty and student handbooks, to foster greater awareness of the issue. Rigorous enforcement of dress code policies is

likewise essential to curbing incidents of sexual harassment within Nigerian tertiary institutions. Furthermore, awareness initiatives targeting students, lecturers, and administrative staff should be woven into academic programming as a core component of institutional efforts to effectively confront sexual harassment. There is also a pressing need to cultivate broad awareness of the issue among both students and staff, particularly during the annual orientation exercises held for incoming students.

Establishing formal mechanisms for reporting and monitoring incidents is another critical step, representing an effort to create clear grievance procedures and to formally recognize sexual harassment as a matter of institutional concern. Ongoing sensitization programmes should also be maintained, helping to cultivate a campus community—comprising both staff and students—with a heightened awareness of sexual harassment as unacceptable conduct. Ultimately, sustained institutional vigilance regarding sexual harassment, coupled with a firm commitment to protecting victims' rights, remains essential to enhancing student well-being and preventing further occurrences of this menace.

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