



## Relationship Between Sexual Harassment and Academic Adjustment Among Undergraduates of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki

### KEYWORDS

Counseling, Special education, Disabilities, Socio-economic status

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### ABSTRACT

The study determined the relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment of undergraduates in Ebonyi State University. Three research questions and a hypothesis tested at 0.05 significance level guided the study. A correlation survey research was the design of the study and a multistage sampling procedure adopted to compose a sample of 614 undergraduates made up of 314 males and 300 females among 100 and 400 levels. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Mean scores and Pearson product moment correlation ( $r$ ) were used to analysis research questions, while linear regression was used too analyze the only hypothesis that guided the study at 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that level of sexual harassment and academic adjustment among the students were moderate and low respectively. The relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment was found to be negative. Based on the finding conclusion were drawn recommendation made, limitations pointed out and suggestions for further research put forward accordingly.

### INTRODUCTION

The desire to achieve or actualize academic goals and purposes are the primary target of any serious minded university undergraduate. These purposes and goal could be met through a good academic adjustment. Academic adjustment could be defined as the establishment of satisfactory harmonies with a students' academic environment. Academic adjustment according to Feldman (1989) is a central issues pertaining to how and why students respond to frustrating school experiences such as entering and being in school. Relatively, Borich and Tomhari (1995) described academic adjustment as the possession of social and cognitive skills needed by students to positively get along in a particular academic environment. It is believed that a good academic adjustment would bring about the zeal and the motivation a student requires to attain a high academic standing compared to others.

Some experts opined that students are less adjustments when some of these needs and expectations of their schools are unmet. Osarenren (2002) as well as Ndukwu and Ikeji-aku (2007) observed that when needs and expectations of students are not met, emotional problems such as frustration and anxiety set in and emotion arises. Apart from needs and expectations, another factor that could threaten sound academic adjustment among undergraduate is sexual harassment. Research findings attest that some of the adjustment problems students face are as a result of sexual harassment. Ladebo (2003) reports a case of a male lecturer who harassed a female student over a period of town academic sessions but the girl refused to succumb. However as a result the students failed the particular course. Okolo (2008) reported a case of a lady who was raped by her fellow students at age 17 years and as a result the lady was mad for many years.

Sexual harassment in the context of this study could include behaviours such as pinching, arm on one's body against his wish. Ogunbameru (2006) stated that sexual harassment involves indecent proposition backed by sexual threats or forced sexual relations which occurs in variety of places. Many authors revealed the resultant affect of sexual harassment to students' academic and emotional adjustment. Ike (2007) and Anyenze-chukwu (2003) carried out studies on secondary school students' academic adjustment problems and revealed nervousness lack of seriousness to studies, lack of

trusts for members of the school communities among other related adjustment problems.

Inferring from the above research reports, what it may imply is that incidence of sexual harassment among students threaten their comportment and the speculation that sexual harassment may relate with academic adjustment of students. Some of the available research works centered on influence of sexual harassment nature of sexual harassment and prevalent of sexual harassment in schools and among students. Moreso, most of work, focused on adjustment of secondary school adolescent students with none on university students. These are also empirical gap to be filled by this study because little or none of the available work pointed out factors like pears, gender sexual harassment among others without dealing on their relationship with students academic adjustment. Thus the question, what is the relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment of university undergraduates.

### Research Question

1. What is the level of sexual harassment of undergraduate students in Ebonyi State University Abakaliki?
2. What is the level of academic adjustment among undergraduate of Ebonyi State university?
3. What is the relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment of students of Ebonyi State University.

### Hypothesis

A hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

$H_{01}$ : There will be no significant relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment of among undergraduate of Ebonyi State University

### Method

The design of the study was correlational survey research. The study was carried out among undergraduates students of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki. The population were all registered 12,616 undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki as at 2011 academic session. Sample was 614 students selected through multi-stage sampling. These were sampled among 100 and 300 level students. The instrument

was questionnaire consisting of 41 structured items structured on a five point likert rating scale responses format and into two sections. Section A sought information from the respondents on sexual harassment while section B sought for information on academic adjustment. The face validity of the instrument was decided by submitting draft copies to three experts in the department of educational foundations Ebonyi State, University Abakaliki. These include an expert in guidance and counseling and two experts in educational psychology.

The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering it to selected 20 students of UNN. Reliability coefficient was established for the two sections using Cronbach Alpha method. This gave an average reliability coefficient of 0.64. Copies of the instrument were distributed to the respondents personally by the researchers with the help of research assistants. Mean scores and standard deviation was used to analyze research questions 1 and 2, while research question three was analysed using Pearson product moment correlation ( $r$ ). The only hypothesis that guided the study was analyzed using linear segregation analysis statistical test. A benchmark of many response of 2.50 and above was used for research questions 1 and 2 while a score below 2.50 is regarded as unacceptable accept the items.

## Results

Table 1: Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) rating and Standard Deviation (SD) of the Level of Sexual Harassment of Students in Ebonyi State University.

S/N	Item Description	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Receives calls of sexual requests from mates	3.67	1.38	H
2.	Fails courses for declining sexual requests from lecturers.	3.79	1.27	H
3.	Being confronted by rapists	3.63	1.31	H
4.	Being confronted with idle talks of sexual natures	3.24	1.33	M
5.	Lured to sexual intercourse through gifts	3.32	1.36	M
6.	Unwelcome sexual jokes about body shapes	3.15	1.33	M
7.	Unwelcome touching of intimate body parts by others.	3.40	1.31	M
8.	Physical threats for declining sexual requests	3.27	1.33	M
9.	Tricked of going to parties centred on sexist behaviour	3.47	1.36	M
10.	Threatened of failing exams by lecturers for not complying to sexual demands.	3.49	1.43	M
11.	Being embarrassed by sexual looks	3.48	1.48	M
12.	Spreading sexual rumours about me	3.26	1.38	M
13.	Not lured to sexual intercourse through pornographic shows	3.37	1.28	M
14.	Not embarrassed with texts of sexual requests	3.31	1.30	M
15.	Not confronted by rapists	3.44	1.40	M
16.	Not lured to sexual inter-course with promise of marks by lecturers	3.54	1.35	H
17.	Not lured into sexual intercourse through unwelcome discussion of condoms	3.47	1.30	M
18.	Not threatened for declining sexual requests	3.36	1.30	M
19.	Not failing courses for declining sexual requests	3.31	1.40	M
	Cluster (Total) Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	3.42	0.51	M

Data as in Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the level of sexual harassment among the students in state universities in Enugu and Ebonyi States. The overall mean score of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 0.51 implies that students experienced moderate level of sexual harassment. Indications on the Table show that apart from items 1, 2, 3 and 16 with high level scores of 3.67, 3.79, 3.63 and 3.54 respectively; all other items were rated moderately with none at low level. These are items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18 and 19 with their mean scores as 3.24, 3.32, 3.15, 3.40, 3.27, 3.47, 3.49, 3.48, 3.26, 3.37, 3.31, 3.44, 3.47, 3.36 and 3.31 respectively. This shows that students feel sexually harassed highly when calls of sexual requests are sent to them, fail courses for declining sexual requests, confronted by rapists and lured to sexual intercourse through promises of marks by lecturers. However they feel moderately harassed when they are confronted with idle talks of sexual nature, tricked to attend parties centred on sexual behaviours, unwelcome sexual looks about body shape, spreading sexual rumour about them among other items as shown on the Table. This implies that with a cluster mean of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 0.51, students' level of sexual harassment is moderate.

Table 2: Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) Rating and Standard Deviation (SD) of the Level of Academic Adjustment of Students in Ebonyi State University

S/N	Item Description	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
42.	Maintaining steady study standard no matter the circumstance.	1.94	1.31	L
43.	Cope easily with insufficient learning materials	2.15	1.56	L
44.	Have high morale about school and its activities.	1.95	1.30	L
45.	Reads ahead of time before tests and examinations	1.89	1.27	L
46.	Hardly tense up while writing tests and examinations	2.10	1.42	L
47.	Hates leaving academic project work unfinished	2.14	1.50	L
48.	Hardly worried if scores low in tests or examinations	2.56	1.56	L
49.	Have confidence to succeed academically	1.97	1.42	L
50.	Not doing school assignments under pressure	2.14	1.47	L
51.	Hardly keep to academic problem till it is finished.	2.11	1.98	L
52.	Relies solely on others for school works	2.82	1.55	L
53.	Hardly stays long studying without distractions	2.24	1.49	L
54.	Takes long time to plan on improving ones studies	3.20	1.38	M
55.	Doing school work under pressure.	2.96	1.56	M
56.	Cannot bear the mental agony of studying	2.92	1.62	M
57.	Loss of confidence to succeed academically	2.90	1.61	M
58.	Hardly remains focused in school works	2.83	1.57	M
59.	Hardly prepare for tests and examinations in advance	3.22	1.41	M
60.	Hardly attend lectures even when in school	2.95	1.64	L
	Cluster (Total Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ))	2.47	0.88	L

Research question three above was posed to guide examination of the level of academic adjustment of university undergraduates in state universities in Enugu and Ebonyi states. Analysis shows that the respondents' levels of academic adjustment are both low and moderate, though more at the

lower moderate level. Items 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59 and 60 with their mean scores as 2.82, 3.20, 2.96, 2.92, 2.90, 2.83 and 3.22 respectively showed moderate level of academic adjustment among the students. Meaning that for items like relying on others for schools works, taking long time to improve on ones studies, doing school work under pressure, inability to bear the mental agony of studying, loose of confidence to succeed academically and inability to prepare for tests/examinations in advance, students agreed to the item statements implying that their level of academic adjustment are moderate.

However items 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, and 60 with means 1.94, 2.15, 1.95, 1.89, 2.10, 2.14, 2.56, 1.97, 2.14, 2.11, 2.24 and 2.59 respectively indicated disagreement with the item statements implying low level of academic adjustment among the students. This means that when matters of coping easily with insufficient learning materials, having high morale about school and it's activities and keeping to academic problem until it is completed among others as on the Table 3 are raised, students experience little difficulty in coping academically. The cluster mean of 2.47 and standard deviation (SD) of 0.88 indicated little differences in the variability of scores showing homogeneity of respondents' responses on item statements on academic adjustment which stands at low level.

To further determine whether sexual harassment as a predictor variable significantly predicated psychological adjustment, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted as shown in Table 5. The calculated F-value of 40.67 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance indicates that sexual harassment significantly predicts psychological adjustment of university undergraduates. This also indicates a significant relationship between sexual harassment and psychological adjustment.

Data on Table 5 also indicates that the calculated t-value of 23.96 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance, thus, indicating a significant relationship between sexual harassment and psychological adjustment of undergraduates. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between sexual harassment and psychological adjustment of undergraduates in state universities in Enugu and Ebonyi states is rejected and alternative hypothesis of a significant relationship accepted.

**Table 3: Result of the Pearson Correlation Analysis of the Relationship Between sexual Harassment and Academic Adjustment of Undergraduates.**

		Sexual Harassment	Psychological Adjustment
Sexual harassment	Pearson correlation Sign. (2-tailed) N	1 614	-.28 .000 614
Academic adjustment	Pearson correlation Sign (2-tailed) N	-.28 .000 614	1 614

Research question five sought to ascertain the relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment of undergraduates in state universities in Enugu and Ebonyi states. The result of the data analysis on Table 6 above shows that sexual harassment relates negatively with academic adjustment of undergraduates. This is shown by the calculated r-value of -.28 which indicates a negative relationship. This implies that the higher the level of sexual harassment among undergraduates, the less they become academically adjusted.

**Table 4 Step wise Linear Regression Analysis on the Relationship between Sexual Harassment and Academic Adjustment of Undergraduates.**

Model	R	R square	Adjustment square	Std. error of the estimate
1	-.282	.080	.078	.39004

**Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

Model		Sum of Square	df	Mean of square	F	Sign.
1	Regression	8.051	1	8.051	52.92	.000
	Residual	92.950	611	.152		
	Total	101.001	612			

**Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		standardized coefficients		
		B	Std. error	Beta	T	Sign.
1	(Constant)	2.448	.107		22.95	.000
	Harassment	.224	.031	-.28	7.28	.000

Data presented on Table 7 above shows that there is negative relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment of undergraduates in state universities in Enugu and Ebonyi States. This is indicated by the calculated r value of -.28. The data also shows that the calculated r square is .08. The calculated r square indicates that 8% of the change observed in academic adjustment of undergraduates is as a result of sexual harassment.

To address further whether sexual harassment as a predictor variable significantly predicts academic adjustment, an analysis of variance was also conducted as shown on Table 7. The calculated F-value of 52.92 which is significant at 0.05 level of probability indicates that sexual harassment significantly predicts academic adjustment of university undergraduates. This as well signifies a significant relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment.

Data presented on Table 7 also indicates that the calculated t-value of 22.95 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance is indicating a significant relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment. Thus the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment of undergraduates in state Universities in Enugu and Ebonyi states is rejected leading to acceptance of alternative hypothesis of a significant relationship between the two factors.

**Discussion**

The study was guided by three research questions and one hypothesis which focused on the level of sexual harassment among university undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, their level of academic adjustment and the relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment among undergraduates. The result show that the level of sexual harassment among the respondents was moderate according to the cluster mean of 3.42. This implies that behaviours that show sexual harassment varies and may include any exist behaviour that is insulting and belting to the victim. This result is in consonance was the result of Ogunbamerru (2006) which revealed that sexual harassment may not involve only teaching but could just be spoken words, actions

and gestures.

The result also showed that the level of academic adjustment among the respondents was low. This implies that the students experiences little difficulties in adjusting to academic challenges their face in school. Also the result of the finding indicated a negative relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment. This result supports the earlier work of Juvonen, Nishina and Graham (2000) which revealed that perception of sexual harassment predicts academic adjustment of students which includes attendance to lectures, feeling safe at school, grade point average scores and other school functioning. Finally the hypothesis of no significant relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment among the students was rejected, leading to acceptance of alternative hypothesis of a significant relationship between the two variables.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The result of the findings showed the respondents to be moderate, the level of academic adjustment among them to be low and the relationship between sexual harassment and academic adjustment to be negatively significant. This implies that sexual harassment predicate academic adjustment of the respondent. By implication too the best legacy to be bestowed to future generations and since a negative correlation is related among sexual harassment and academic adjustment, effort showed be made to chekmate any force that many undermine the sound education of our youths. In the light of this it is recommended that government institute functional counselling at all levels of education in Nigeria. Through these medium students adjustment problems resulting from sexual harassment and other related school experiences can be redressed. Subsequently due to the importance attached to education, strict penalties should be mapped out to cheek sexual harassment in our school. Also due to the issue of faking which is suspected to be a limitation to this study, it is suggested that this work be replicated by other researchers in other states and universities in the country for more generalization

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