

Prevalence and Forms of Sexual Harassment of Girls by Male Students of Secondary Schools in Ohafia LGA, Abia State

Pamella Chima Uduma¹, Effiong S. Samuel¹, Olaoluwa Samson Agbaje^{2,*}

¹Department of Health and Physical Education, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State

²Department of Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Madonna University Elele, Rivers State, Nigeria

Email address:

pamellauduma@yahoo.com (P. C. Uduma), dreffiongsamuel@yahoo.com (E. S. Samuel), agbajesam@yahoo.com (O. S. Agbaje)

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Abstract: The study investigated prevalence and forms of sexual harassment of girls by male students of secondary schools in Ohafia Local Government Area-LGA, Abia State. Five specific objectives with corresponding research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The cross-sectional survey research design was used for the study. The multi-stage sampling procedure was used to draw a sample of 600 out of 2,400 girls who enrolled in secondary schools during 2011/2012 academic session. Two instruments were used for data collection: A researcher-designed instrument titled Questionnaire on Prevalence and Forms of Sexual Harassment of Girls (QPFSHG) and Sexual Harassment of Girls Focus Group Discussion Guide (SHGF GDG). Split-half method was used to determine the reliability of the entire instrument (QPFSHG) using Spearman-Brown correction formula statistic. Also, Kuder-Richardson-20 formula was used to establish the inter-item reliability co-efficient of the subscale which had nominal data. The reliability co-efficient obtained for the subscale was .77. The data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentage. The hypotheses were tested using Chi-square (χ^2) statistic at .05 level of significance. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended among others that the school authority should establish an office for reporting cases of sexual harassment where confidentiality should be entrenched to encourage victims to lodge complaints and also, there is need to educate girls about sexuality, and human rights. Furthermore, commensurate punitive actions should be taken against sexual harassment offenders when convicted to serve as deterrence to other male students.

Keywords: Sexuality, Harassment, Advocacy, Vulnerability, Sexual Coercion

1. Introduction

One of the fundamental human rights, according to the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization-UNESCO is the right to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation (1). United Nations Children Emergency Fund-UNICEF reiterated that its mission is to advocate for the protection of children's rights, especially children under the age of 18 years, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potentials. These rights among others include the right to protect children from sexual harassment and abuse, and right to be educated (2).

Sexual harassment is a major public health crisis that significantly hinders development and education of the girl-child, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria

where the practice is high (3). Perhaps the most vulnerable sub-groups in African societies today are the girl-children and women, largely because they are victims of practices which are embedded in traditional institutions (patriarchy and female genital mutilation-FGM) and of the negative consequences (overcrowding and child labour) inherent in urbanization and industrialization (3).

In consonance with the above assertion, the special circumstances in which girl-children find themselves expose them to possible risk of physical, psychological, and sexual harassment, which in turn increases their vulnerability to early pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS (4). This assertion was supported by evidence from studies conducted in other parts of the world which

suggests that female survivors of sexual violence including sexual harassment may experience similar mental health, behavioural and social consequences (5, 6, 7). However, girls and women bear the overwhelming burden of injury and disease from sexual violence and coercion (5), not only because they comprise the vast majority of victims but also because they are vulnerable to sexual and reproductive health consequences such as unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion and a higher risk of sexually transmitted infections, including from HIV, during vaginal intercourse (8).

This horrendous situation when allowed to foster in secondary schools (Ohafia LGA Secondary schools inclusive) may impinge devastating consequences on the girl-child's education and further place attainment of educational goals specified in the post-primary education curriculum in jeopardy.

Nigerian educational institution (secondary school inclusive) was established with the aim of giving any student who enrolls, a very sound and qualitative education, to be able to function effectively in any environment in which he/she may find him/herself; so as to become more productive, self-fulfilling and attain self-actualization (9). Perpetration of sexual harassment in schools including secondary schools by any group (teachers or students inclusive) undermines the attainment of this vital goal.

Harassment has been conceptualized as any unwelcome comment, conduct or gesture directed towards an individual or group of individuals, which is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, malicious, degrading or offensive, and is either repeated or of such significant nature, that adversely affect someone's performance, contribution or sport and educational environment (10). Harassment as used in this study refers to any unwanted or unwelcome behaviour directed to a female student which is insulting, intimidating, malicious, degrading or offensive and is either repeated or of such significant nature that adversely impairs the adolescent girl's capacity to learn at school. It has been further observed that harassment can take many forms namely; physical, verbal, sexual, or emotional and most often involves a combination of these elements. This study, however, delineated its scope to sexual harassment. The rationale for this restriction is justified by the assertion that sexual harassment is a major public health crisis that significantly hinders development and education of the girl-child in Nigeria where the practice is prevalent (3).

Sexual harassment also refers to as any physical, visual, or sexual act experienced by a person from another person at the time or later, which asserts a person's sexual identity as a person and makes him or her feel embarrassed, frightened, hurt, uncomfortable, degraded, humiliated, compromised and as well diminishes a person's power and confidence (11). In the same view, sexual harassment in education is an unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that interferes with a student's ability to learn, study, work or participate in school activities (12). As noted in previous study, sexual harassment is a violation of human rights (13). In this study, sexual harassment refers to a persistent unwelcome sexual

behaviour or advance directed at the adolescent girl that may potentially hamper or compromise her capacities to learn, study, work or actively participate in academic activities in school.

Different typologies of sexual harassment have been proposed. Fitzgerald, Gelfand and Drasgow's categorization of sexual harassment is composed of three related but conceptually distinct dimensions, which are gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention; and sexual coercion (14). Timmerman and Bajema categorized sexual harassment into verbal harassment, non-verbal harassment, and physical harassment (15) while Witkowska and Menckel identified verbal behaviour, non-verbal displays and sexual assault behaviours as the categories of sexual harassment (16). For the purpose of this study, the empirically tested typology of sexual harassment by Gelfand, Fitzgerald and Drasgow namely: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion were adopted as forms of sexual harassment.

Gender harassment involves unwelcome verbal or visual comments and remarks that insult individuals because of their gender and can include such things as posting pornographic pictures in public places, telling jokes and making gender-related degrading remarks while unwanted sexual attention refers to uninvited behaviours that explicitly communicate sexual desires or intentions toward another person such as staring at someone's breasts or making comments that insinuate sexual activities (17-18).

Sexual coercion among youth encompasses a range of experiences, ranging from non-contact forms such as verbal sexual abuse and forced viewing of pornography, as well as unwanted contact in the form of touching, fondling, attempted rape, forced penetrative sex (vaginal, oral, or anal), trafficking, and forced prostitution. It also includes sex obtained as a result of physical force, intimidation, pressure, blackmail, deception, forced alcohol and drug use, and threats of abandonment or of withholding economic support. Transactional sex through money, gifts, or other economic incentives (especially in the context of extreme poverty) often has a coercive aspect as well (17-18).

Questions have been asked as to which behaviour constitutes sexual harassment and who decides whether behaviour constitutes sexual harassment or not. In an attempt to answer these questions, finding of an earlier study posited that sexual harassment is subjective (19). Explaining further, the report emphasized that it is the person who receives the offensive behaviour that decides if it is harassment or not. It can be deduced from the above statement that the harasser may not see his or her behaviour as sexual harassment while the harassee may see such behaviour as sexual harassment. The harasser may be completely unaware that his or her behaviour is offensive or constitutes sexual harassment or may be completely unaware that his or her actions could be unlawful. This implies that anyone can be the harasser or victim of sexual harassment. This situation calls for the establishment of existence of sexual harassment of girls by male in secondary schools especially in Ohafia LGA of Abia State. Establishing existence of sexual harassment of girls by

the harassers (male students) in secondary schools in Ohafia LGA, Abia State, significantly depends on considerable number of occurrence or prevalence of sexual harassment among adolescent girls in their respective secondary schools.

It has been noted that the phenomenon of sexual harassment is complex, not always unidirectional, played down by all concerned, unreported and considered a serious moral and social problem in Nigerian university campuses and other institutions of learning in Nigeria including secondary schools in Ohafia LGA, Abia State where the study was conducted (20). Moreover, sexual harassment and violations in Nigerian educational institutions including secondary schools take six main forms: male lecturers to female students, male students to female students, male lecturers to female non-academic staff, male non-academic staff to female students, male lecturers to female academic staff and male non-academic staff to female non-academic staff (21).

The male teaching staff is likely to be the main perpetrators but other males—students and non-teaching staff who oversee admission; registration, record-keeping, examination registration and students' disciplinary committees are all possible perpetrators of sexual harassment in secondary schools. Although, there exists six forms of sexual harassment in Nigerian higher educational institutions have been identified in earlier studies (21), however, this study restricted its scope to forms of sexual harassment that are perpetrated by male students (male students to female students). These male students possess certain characteristics, which may affect degree of harassment.

Theories and models help explain behaviour, as well as suggest how to develop more effective ways to influence and change behaviour (22, 23). Theory provides a bridge from findings in one study to another. Using well-defined constructs allows researchers to compare findings across studies to identify active ingredients. Using well-developed constructs can help to identify when findings from one population are likely to generalize to another population. A growing body of evidence suggests that interventions developed with an explicit theoretical foundation or foundations are more effective than those lacking a theoretical base and that some strategies that combine multiple theories and concepts have larger effects (24, 25). If studies and interventions are designed without theory, it will be more difficult to generalize findings to other populations, settings and times. Interventions informed by well-developed and tested theories also may be more effective in changing behaviour than those not based on theory (22, 23). The assertion forms the basis for the adoption of several theories to explain prevalence and forms of sexual harassment of girls by male students.

In this study, four models, which have been proposed to explain the causes of sexual harassment were adopted. These are the natural/biological model, the organizational model, the sociocultural model and the sex-role spillover model. Each of these models puts forward a different explanation. The natural/biological model assumes that sexual harassment

in the workplace is an extension of human sexuality. It is based on the idea of the natural attraction between men and women. Men's stronger sex drives and natural propensity for sexual aggression may cause them to aggressively approach women with sexual comments and intentions (26, 27). According to the organizational model, the hierarchical structures in an organization as well as the inherent opportunities and positions of power and authority may give rise to a working environment that facilitates sexual aggression. This means certain individuals could exploit their power to extort sexual gratification from others. The sociocultural model, on the other hand, attributes sexual harassment to the dominant position of men over women in terms of economic and political power. Women are in fact degraded to mere vulnerable sexual objects while the traditional inequitable power relationship between both sexes prevails. Thus, women who typically have less power and control are more likely to be harassed.

The sex-role spillover model emphasizes the effects of sex-role expectations in the organization. Certain behaviours are expected of workers of both genders, as men are stereotyped to be asexual and women as sexual. This sex-role spillover is even more likely to occur if women are perceived as sex objects and their sex roles take precedence over their work roles. Hence women's behaviour would be interpreted as sexual even though it is not actually intended to be so. This means the sex-role spillover model suggests that harassment is more likely in organizations with skewed sex ratios, with women outnumbering men or vice versa (27, 28).

It has been observed that failures in the Nigerian educational system promote sexual harassment in the universities (21). For example, it was suggested that malpractices that repeatedly accompany the Senior Secondary School Examinations (SSCE) and the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) conducted by Joint Admissions Matriculation Board-JAMB expose applicants to Nigerian universities especially female applicants (and their parents or guardians) to exploitation in their desperate bid to gain admission. He further noted that female applicants in search of 'favours' sometimes initiate or succumb to sexual relationships with males who have assisted them in various ways. This gory situation may be a significant factor implicated in the prevalence of sexual harassment among schooling adolescent girls of secondary schools in Ohafia LGA. However, it is important to state that factors such as personal, familial or economic factors may constitute significant markers in schooling adolescent girls' vulnerability to sexual harassment by male students.

Despite awareness of the frequency of sexual harassment, there is little available research in Abia State and Ohafia LGA in particular on the forms of harassment experienced by adolescent girls or how prevalent this undesirable behaviour is among schooling adolescent girls of secondary schools in Ohafia LGA. Thus, in this study, researchers sought to ascertain prevalence and forms of sexual harassment of girls by male students in Ohafia LGA.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine prevalence and forms of sexual harassment of girls by male students of secondary schools in Ohafia LGA. Specifically, this study attempted to determine:

1. prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students;
2. types of sexual harassment prevalent among girls;
3. prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on girls' age;
4. prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on class of girls;
5. prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on school location;

2.1. Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research objectives were formulated to guide the study.

1. What is the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students?
2. What are the types of sexual harassment prevalent among girls?
3. What is the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on girls' age?
4. What is the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on class of girls?
5. What is the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on school location?

2.2. Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students according to age.
2. There is no significant difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students according to class.
3. There is no significant difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students according to school location.

3. Methods and Materials

This study was conducted in Ohafia Local Government Area, Abia State. Ohafia LGA is situated in Abia North Senatorial District. Ohafia LGA shared geographical boundaries with Isiukwuato LGA on the southern region, Arochuku LGA on the eastern part, Bende LGA on the western section and bordered on the northern region by Afikpo-South LGA of Ebonyi State. Ohafia LGA is made up of three administrative districts namely: Abiriba, Nkporo and Ohafia. It is imperative to stress that all the government-owned secondary schools are situated within these administrative districts (SEMB, 2012). This study used all government-owned secondary schools in the LGAs mentioned above with the exemption of Girls' and Boys' Secondary Schools. Descriptive survey research design was

adopted for the study. The population of this study consisted of 2,400 girls registered in co-educational secondary schools in Ohafia LGA during 2011/2012 academic session (Abia State Secondary Education Management Board, 2012). A comprehensive list of the secondary schools is presented in Appendix A.

A sample of 600 girls was used for the study. This constituted 25% of the entire population of secondary school girls in Ohafia LGA. Due to the absence of similar study on specific population of secondary school girls with sexual harassment experience in Ohafia LGA, thus, there was no reasonable estimate for the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students; the researchers, therefore, assumed that 50% of the secondary schools girls would have at least had one experience of sexual harassment at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The sample size, n was calculated using the Taro Tamane formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

(n = is the sample sought; N = total population; e = a constant which is level of significance 5% or 0.05. Hence, a minimum sample of 400 was obtained. However, 600 students were eventually included in the study to make up for attrition and non-response. This decision is supported by Gorard's recommendation that in a survey, due to factors such as non-response, attrition and respondents' mortality, that is, some participants will fail to return copies of questionnaires, abandon research, return incomplete or spoiled copies of the questionnaire, it is advisable to overestimate the sample required, to build in redundancy (40). All these factors were taken into cognizance during sample size determination for this study. The sample was selected through the use of multi-stage sampling procedure. The first stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement to select six secondary schools out of 12 secondary schools from Ohafia Administrative district, one from Abiriba Administrative District while three secondary schools were selected from Nkporo Administrative District. Non-uniformity of school distribution across the administrative districts justifies the use of this sampling technique. At the end of this stage, 10 secondary schools were selected for the study.

The second stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement to draw 20 girls each from each of the senior secondary school (SS) classes (i.e., SS 1, SS 2 & SS 3) giving a total of 60 female students for each of the selected schools. The rationale for restriction of sample selection to senior secondary school girls is justified by the fact that incidence of sexual harassment was more prevalent among these categories of girls. Selection of girls from SS 3 class is necessitated by substantial information that could be generated from this category of students due to their length of stay in school and pressures to excel in West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO) and Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) conducted exams

that may compel them to seek assistance from male students in return for sexual gratification or pleasure. The last stage involved the adoption of simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement to select 10 girls in each of the streams (e.g. SS 2A & SS 2B) of the sampled classes in all the 10 selected secondary schools. It is expedient to emphasize that some secondary schools in Ohafia LGA have two streams per class (ASSEMB, 2012). At the end of the sampling procedures, 600 girls were drawn and used for the study.

4. Research Instruments and Data Collection

Two different instruments were used for data collection in this study. A structured Questionnaire on Prevalence and Forms of Sexual Harassment of Girls by male Students, hereafter referred to as QPFSHG, was adapted from Fitzgerald, Gelfand and Drasgow's (1995) Sexual Experiences Questionnaire-Specific Events (SEQ-SE) and modified to generate quantitative data. The modifications could be viewed whereby in Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) questionnaire, the questions on sexual harassment were clustered into four sections or subscales (sexist hostility, sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion) while the response option was a Likert-type response options on a five-point scale of 'very often' (5 points); 'often' (4 points); 'occasionally' (3 points); 'rarely' (2 points) and 'never' (1 point) but for this study, another section (prevalence of sexual harassment-occurrence of behaviours considered as sexual harassment) was incorporated to elicit information from girls. In addition, the response options combined both 'Yes' or 'No' and a Likert-type response options on a four-point scale of 'always' (4 points); 'sometimes' (3 points); 'occasionally' (2 points) and 'never' (1 point). The modifications were incorporated to facilitate in-depth comprehension and girls' response to questionnaire items.

The Questionnaire on Prevalence and Forms of Sexual Harassment of Girls-QPFSHG comprised five sections: A, B, C, D, E and F. Section A generated information on socio-demographic variables (age, class, and school location) of girls. Section B generated information on sexually harassing behaviours of male students which were experienced by girls in the schools in the past 12 months. This section composed of five structured questions with a dichotomous response option of "Yes" or "No". The respondents were requested to tick (✓) as many as applied to them in reference to their experiences. Sections C, D, E, and F comprised items that elicited information from the girls on Sexist Hostility, Sexual Hostility, Unwanted Sexual Attention, and Sexual Coercion. Each section comprised five structured questions with a four-point Likert-type scale response options of 'Always' (AL), 'Sometimes' (SM), 'Occasionally' (OC), and 'Never' (NE). The subjects were requested to tick (✓) as many as apply to them in reference to their experiences.

The focus group discussion guide otherwise known as Sexual Harassment of Girls Focus Group Discussion Guide (SHGFGDG) was used to generate qualitative data for this study. The guide contained seven open-ended questions. Qualitative data were used to complement the quantitative data. The research instruments received face validity through the judgment of three experts in the Departments of Health and Physical Education and two in the Department of Psychology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts were given copies of the drafted QPCSHG and SHGFGDG.

The reliability of the instrument was established the Kuder-Richardson-20 formula and Cronbach Alpha statistics. The QPCSHG was administered on 30 adolescent girls of secondary schools in Arochuku LGA, Abia State who were not part of the study. The reliability (internal consistency) index of cluster B of the instrument was determined using Kuder-Richardson-20 formula statistic. Kuder-Richardson-20 formula is used to estimate the internal consistency of instruments developed by individual researcher and composed of dichotomously-scored items. The reliability co-efficient of this section of the instrument was 0.70. Also, the correlation co-efficient of clusters C, D, E, and F of the QPFSHG was established using Cronbach alpha statistic. The reliability co-efficient of this section of the instrument was 0.77.

Data collection was carried out through the administration of QPFSHG on the respondents. Considered the sensitive nature of the study, three female research assistants were used for administration and retrieval of the instruments from the respondents. The researchers and three female research assistants visited all the sampled secondary schools and administered the questionnaire on the respondents. This is to ensure conducive and friendly atmosphere, anonymity and avoid the influence the presence of male teachers and heads of departments of may have on the responses of the girls. The investigators and the research assistants went round to offer explanations to any confused respondent seeking clarifications. This was strictly conducted without coercion but based on respondents' volition. Girls were requested to drop completed copies of questionnaire into the collection bags. This assisted in ensuring anonymity of the responses. The copies of the questionnaire were collected on the spot to ensure increase return rate.

The qualitative data were sourced with SHGFGDG. The focus group discussion was organised among two focus groups of girls in each of the sampled schools by the researchers and three research assistants. The focus group comprised six to eight girls in each group. At the end, the qualitative data were generated from 64 girls of eight different focus groups, with two focus groups from each of the two selected schools. However, participation was on voluntary basis. In each focus group, one out of the three research assistants served as a facilitator and the other two persons served as documenters. The facilitator led the discussion which transcended the individual's direct experiences of sexually harassing behaviours to touch the ones directed to other girls in her presence during

interactions with male teachers, activities and so on. The documenters recorded both verbal and non-verbal response of the participants. At the end, the documenters note was compared. Related observations were considered and the difference between the two documenters were discussed and resolved. The responses were later transcribed, organised and presented via thematic framework.

Furthermore, responses from FGDs were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were analyzed into themes. After familiarization with the transcripts, a thematic framework was developed with themes organized into six broad areas.

1. Unwanted/offensive sexual behaviours commonly experienced by girls from male students
2. Forms of sexual harassment prevalent in schools
3. Categories of girls that are commonly harassed in school based on age and class
4. Factors that promote sexual harassment of girls by male students
5. Category of male students that usually perpetrate sexual harassment
6. Suggestions on ways to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment of schooling adolescent girls

The discussion was carried out openly among the girls as there was room for expression of views. Every participant was given an opportunity to respond to the questions and air her views to the best of her understanding.

Frequency and percentage statistic were used to analyze the data that were generated from sections B since they were nominal data. Cluster percentage was calculated and used in taking decision. The response options for sections C, D, E, and F were weighed as 'always' (4 points), 'sometimes' (3 points), 'Occasionally' (2 points), and 'Never' (1 Point). Mean statistic was utilized to analyze the data since the data were interval data. The limit of numbers was used to interpret

the data. This implies that ranges (lower and upper limits) were created for the interpretation of mean scores as follows: 3.50-4.00 = Always (AL), 2.50-3.49 = Sometimes (SM), 2.00-2.49 = Occasionally (OC) and 1.00-1.99 = Never (NE). The item and cluster mean scores were interpreted on this basis. Chi-square statistic was employed to analyze the null hypotheses. The three null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

5. Ethical Considerations

Before collecting data, the researchers sought for permission from the Principal of sampled schools, which was granted. In addition, the researchers also asked for informed consent from all the participants. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants and allowed them to ask questions about the research before asking them to complete the questionnaire. Participants were assured of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity of information provided. It was explained to the participants that the confidentiality of information provided in the questionnaire would be guaranteed and treated as confidential and private. It was also made clear to the participants that took part in the study that participation was voluntary, and that those who chose to participate were free to withdraw their participation at any stage if they so wished. The form/class teachers were available during the administration of copies of questionnaire in order to provide assistance where necessary and follow-up in the event of any student showing emotional distress.

6. Summary of Results

Table 1 shows that overall, 47.6 per cent of secondary school girls reported sexual harassment by male students.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Prevalence of Sexual Harassment by Male Students among Secondary School Girls ($n = 600$).

Items	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Male students pulled clothing in a sexual manner	228	38.0	372	62.0
2. Attempted to establish romantic relationship with you (a male student attempted to caress or stroke your body)	352	58.7	248	41.3
3. Made forceful attempts to kiss, hug, fondle your breasts or touch your buttocks	316	52.7	284	47.3
4. Attempted rape or forceful sexual intercourse with you	166	27.7	434	72.3
5. Male students sent sexually offensive text messages and/or calls to you	364	60.7	236	39.3
% Average		47.6		52.4

Table 2. Mean Scores on Forms of Sexual Harassment of Girls by Male Students ($n = 600$).

Items	\bar{X}	SD	Dec.
Sexist Hostility (SEH) over a 12-month Period			
1. Has a male student treated you differently because of your sex in the past 12 months?	2.89	1.68	SM
2. Has a male student displayed or distributed sexist materials to you in the past 12 months?	2.44	1.35	OC
3. Has a male student made offensive sexist remarks about you in the past 12 months?	2.56	1.42	SM
4. Has a male student scored you poorly or victimized you for not cooperating sexually in the past 12 months?	2.54	1.51	SM
5. Has a male student condescended to you because of your sex in the past 12 months?	2.39	1.56	OC
Cluster \bar{X}	2.56	1.50	SM
Sexual Hostility (SXH)			
6. Has a male student whistled called, or hooted at you in a sexual way?	3.12	1.61	SM
7. Has a male student made unwelcome attempt to draw you into a discussion on sexual matters?	2.75	1.43	SM
8. Has a male student made crude and offensive sexual remarks either publicly or privately to you?	2.30	1.35	OC

Items	\bar{X}	SD	Dec.
9. Has a male student made offensive remarks about your appearance on sexual matters?	2.63	1.49	SM
10. Has a male student made gestures or used body languages of a sexual nature (which embarrassed or offended) you?	3.11	1.59	SM
Cluster \bar{X}	2.78	1.49	SM
Unwanted Sexual Attention (USA)			
11. Has a male student displayed used or given you sexist material?	2.33	1.64	OC
12. Has a male student made attempts to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage him?	2.81	1.47	SM
13. Has a male student continued to ask you for dates, drinks, dinner etc. even though you refused?	2.80	1.47	SM
14. Has a male student touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable?	2.84	1.53	SM
15. Has a male student attempted to have sex with you without your consent (against your will, but was unsuccessful)	2.26	1.52	OC
Cluster \bar{X}	2.61	1.53	SM
Sexual Coercion (SEC)			
16. Has a male student made you feel like you were being bribed with some sort of reward or special behaviour?	2.71	1.65	SM
17. Has a male student threatened you with some sort of retaliation for not being sexually co-operative?	2.48	1.47	OC
18. Has a male student implied faster promotions or better treatment if you were sexually co-operative?	2.61	1.54	SM
19. Has a male student treated you badly for refusing to have sex?	2.71	1.54	SM
20. Administration of punishment for lack of cooperation to have sex	2.42	1.59	OC
Cluster \bar{X}	2.57	1.56	SM
Grand \bar{X}	2.63	1.52	SM

Key

*3.50-4.00 = Always (AL) *2.00-2.49 = Occasionally (OC)

*2.50-3.49 = Sometimes (SM) *1.00-1.99 = Never (NE)

Data in Table 2 show the cluster mean responses on forms of sexual harassment (SH) carried out by male students on girls as follows: sexual hostility (\bar{X} = 2.78; SD = 1.49), unwanted sexual attention (\bar{X} = 2.60; SD = 1.53), sexual coercion (\bar{X} = 2.57; SD = 1.56), and sexist hostility (\bar{X} = 2.56; SD = 1.50). This implies that male students sometimes perpetuated sexual hostility and occasionally perpetuated sexual coercion, unwanted sexual attention and sexist hostility on girls.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage of Prevalence of Sexual Harassment of Girls by Male Students (n = 600).

Items	Age							
	11-14 years				15-18 years			
	(n = 153)				(n = 447)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. Male students pulled your clothing in a sexual manner	41	26.8	112	73.2	187	41.8	260	58.2
2. Student attempted to establish romantic relationship with you (a male student attempted to caress or stroke your body)	73	47.7	80	52.3	279	62.4	168	37.6
3. Made forceful attempts to kiss, hug, fondle your breasts, or touch your buttocks	60	39.2	93	60.8	256	57.5	191	42.7
4. Attempted rape or forceful sexual intercourse with you	42	27.5	111	72.5	124	27.7	323	78.3
5. Male students sent sexually offensive text messages and/or calls to you	77	50.3	76	49.7	287	64.2	160	35.8
% Average		38.3		61.7		50.7		49.3

Table 3 shows that a higher proportion of girls aged 15-18 years than those aged 11-14 years reported that male students sexually harassed them (15-18 years = 50.7% > 11-14 years = 38.3%).

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage of Prevalence of Sexual Harassment of Girls by Male Students according to Class (n = 600).

Items	Class					
	SS 1		SS 2		SS 3	
	(n = 199)		(n = 210)		(n = 191)	
	Yes		Yes		Yes	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1. Male students pulled your clothing in a sexual manner	24.6	75.4	38.1	61.9	51.8	48.2
2. Attempted to establish romantic relationship with you (a male student attempted to caress or stroke your body)	45.2	54.8	60.5	39.5	70.7	29.3
3. Forceful attempts to kiss, hug, fondle your breasts, or touch your buttocks	38.2	61.8	56.7	43.3	63.4	36.6
4. Attempted rape or forceful sexual intercourse with you	28.1	71.9	20.0	80.0	35.6	58.2
5. Male students sent sexually offensive text messages and/or calls to you	50.8	49.2	73.8	26.0	56.6	43.5
% Average	37.4	62.6	49.8	50.1	55.6	44.4

Data in Table 4 show that a higher proportion of girls in SS 3 class than those in SS 2 and SS 1 classes experienced sexual harassment by male students (SS 3 = 55.6% > SS 2 = 49.8% > SS 1 = 37.4%).

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage of Prevalence of Sexual Harassment of Girls by Male Students according to School Location (n = 600).

Items	School Location							
	Urban School				Rural School			
	(n = 362)				(n = 238)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. Male students pulled your clothing in a sexual manner	140	38.7	222	61.3	88	37.0	150	63.0
2. Attempted to establish romantic relationship with you (a male student attempted to caress or stroke your body)	21	58.6	150	41.4	140	58.8	98	41.2
3. Made forceful attempts to kiss, hug, fondle your breasts, or touch your buttocks	187	51.7	175	48.3	129	54.2	109	45.8
4. Attempted rape or forceful sexual intercourse with you	86	23.8	276	76.2	80	33.6	158	66.4
5. Sent sexually offensive text messages and/or calls to you	212	58.6	150	41.4	152	63.9	86	35.8
Overall % Cluster		46.2		53.8		49.5		50.5

Table 5 shows that overall, 49.5 per cent of rural girls and 46.2 per cent of girls in urban schools indicated that they were sexually harassed by male students. This implies that girls in rural schools experienced sexual harassment more than girls in urban schools by male students.

Table 6. Summary of Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis of No Significant Difference in the prevalence of Sexual harassment of girls by Male Students based on Age (n = 600).

Variable	N	χ^2 -cal. value	df	χ^2 -Crit. value
Age				
11-14 years	153	9.042	1	3.841
15-18 years	447			

* Significant at p < .05

Table 6 shows that χ^2 -cal value of test of hypothesis of no significant difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on age ($\chi^2 = 9.042 > 3.841$, df = 1, p < .05) is greater than the critical χ^2 -value. Thus, the hypothesis is, therefore, rejected.

Table 7 indicates that χ^2 -cal. value of test of hypothesis of no significant difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on class ($\chi^2 = 24.176 > 5.991$, df = 2, p < .05) is greater than the critical χ^2 -cal value. Thus, the hypothesis is, therefore, rejected.

Table 7. Summary of Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis of No Significant Difference in the Prevalence of Sexual Harassment of girls by Male Students based on Class (n = 600).

Variable	N	χ^2 -cal. value	df	χ^2 -Crit value
Class				
SS 1	199	24.176	2	5.991
SS 2	210			
SS 3	191			

* Significant at p < .05

Table 8. Summary of Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis of No Significant Difference in the prevalence of Sexual harassment of girls by Male Students based on School Location (n = 600)

Variable	N	χ^2 -cal. value	df	χ^2 -Crit value
School Location				
Urban school	236	1.843	1	3.841
Rural school	238			

* Significant at p < .05

Table 8 shows that χ^2 -cal value of test of hypothesis of no significant difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on school location ($\chi^2 = 1.843 < 3.841$, df = 1, p < .05) is less than the critical χ^2 -value. The hypothesis is, therefore, accepted. This implies that sexual harassment of girls by male students did not differ according to school location.

FGD Results

S/N	Themes	Responses
1.	Unwanted/offensive sexual behaviours commonly experienced by girls from male students	Some of the participants stated that “boys engaged in name calling, pulling of skirts or clothing, forceful attempts made at hugging, pecking or kissing, touching of breasts or buttocks, frequent teasing or jeering to compel girls into a relationship, text messages with sexual undertones, unwanted embraces, verbal threats and making sexual gestures”
2.	Forms of sexual harassment prevalent in schools	Girls reported that “boys usually pulled their shirts/skirts, sometimes attempted or lured girls into secluded places for coerced sexual relationships”, sometimes grabbed girls in a sexual way, made degrading comments and stared at their breasts.
3.	Categories of girls that are commonly harassed in school based on age and class	Some participants indicated that “older girls with apparent matured sexual characteristics in SS 2 & SS 3 are commonly harassed by male students”
4.	Factors that promote sexual harassment of girls by male students	Participants mentioned that “indiscipline in the school, poor supervision by school management, poor academic performance, substance abuse by male students, poverty and desire for material gains by girls

S/N	Themes	Responses
5.	Category of male students that usually perpetrate sexual harassment	Some participants stated that “senior male students are the main culprits”
6.	Suggestions on ways to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment of schooling adolescent girls	Some participants suggested “imposition of punitive measures on harassers such as suspension from school, development of programme and policy to fight against sexual harassment of girls in schools, health education programme on effects of sexual harassment on girls”

7. Discussion

Sexual harassment is prevalent among schooling adolescent girls (47.6%) in this study. This study extends previous studies on sexual harassment in a numerous ways. Traditionally, sexual harassment victimization has been viewed as a form of violence experienced primarily by girls, with significantly more negative outcomes for girls than boys (30). It also corroborates forms of sexual harassment prevalent among girls as reported in Nigeria and other countries (4-7, 17, 30, 35). The finding is consistent with the finding of study conducted by American Association of University Women which revealed that boys who admitted to harassing girls said they did so because they wanted a date with the person (12). The finding corroborates finding of a previous study, which reported a high prevalence of sexual coercion in public institutions in Nigeria, according to these researchers sexual harassment is a common form of sexual exploitation occurring in virtually every place, among children and adolescents in school and outside the school system. Findings from FGDG complement the fact that girls are often sexually harassed by male students. The agreement between the finding of this study and earlier studies may be attributed to subjects' composition and settings of the studies (17).

Data in Table 2 show the cluster mean responses on forms of sexual harassment (SH) perpetrated by male students on girls as follows: sexual hostility (\bar{X} = 2.78; SD = 1.49), unwanted sexual attention (\bar{X} = 2.60; SD = 1.53), sexual coercion (\bar{X} = 2.57 ; SD = 1.56), and sexist hostility (\bar{X} = 2.56; SD = 1.50). This implies that male students sometimes perpetuated sexual hostility and occasionally perpetuated sexual coercion, unwanted sexual attention and sexist hostility on girls. The finding is consistent with the findings of previous studies which reported that adolescent girls experienced diverse forms of sexual harassment from their male counterparts (12, 14, 17, 22, 38). Findings from FGDG complement the fact that girls are often sexually harassed by male students. Girls reported that “boys usually pulled shirts/skirts, sometimes attempted or lured girls into secluded places for coerced sexual relationships”. Also, boys sometimes grabbed girls in a sexual way, made degrading comments and stared at their breasts”. This agreement can be attributed to the fact that considerable proportion of earlier studies were conducted in academic settings among students of higher institutions and high schools, which have similar features with the settings of this study, though geographical and sociocultural settings differed. Thus, the consonance was valid.

Data in Table 3 show that a higher proportion of girls aged

15-18 years than those aged 11-14 years reported that male students sexually harassed them (15-18 years = 50.7% > 11-14 years = 38.3%). The result was expected and not surprising. The finding is consistent with the finding of previous studies which reported that older girls reported more experiences of sexual harassment than younger girls (17, 24). The finding of FGD revealed that both older and younger girls experienced sexual harassment by male students. However, this result was in contrast with the findings of previous studies which noted that younger girls were likely to experience sexual harassment than older girls and that there was no age differential in sexual coercion experiences of girls in Yoruba land (32, 33).

Data in Table 4 show that a higher proportion of girls in SS 3 class than those in SS 2 and SS 1 classes experienced sexual harassment by male students (SS 3 = 55.6% > SS 2 = 49.8% > SS 1 = 37.4%). The result was expected and not a surprise because SS 3 female students especially academically weak students usually seek assistance from male students in order to excel in their certificate exams (SSCE). As a result, they are vulnerable to sexual harassment from their benefactors who demand sexual gratification in return for the assistance rendered during examinations. The finding corroborates the findings of studies that reported alarmingly high rates of sexual harassment and assault among middle and high school female adolescents (34, 38). Finding of an earlier study showed that approximately two thirds of the female respondents reported having been sexually harassed by their peers, and half of the female respondents also reported having been sexually assaulted by their peers (34). The finding of FGD revealed that older girls more than younger girls experienced sexual harassment by male students.

Results in Table 5 show that overall, 49.5 per cent of rural girls and 46.2 per cent of girls in urban schools indicated that they were sexually harassed by male students. This finding was unexpected and therefore a surprise. Evidence from earlier studies (4, 12, 14, 17, 33, 35-37) reported prevalence of sexual harassment among urban urban women, female students in higher institutions and high schools respectively. Although, several school-based studies have been conducted in Nigeria especially in urban areas, nevertheless, a few studies have reported the influence of location in their investigations (36, 37). Not surprisingly, there are no known studies that were conducted in Abia State particularly in among secondary school students in Ohafia LGA, against which the finding from this study can be compared. It therefore remains difficult to explain why girls in rural secondary schools were at a greater risk of experiencing sexual harassment by male students. In this study, it could not be confirmed whether boys in rural schools more than boys

in urban schools were more likely to be impish by engaging in sexual harassment of girls in their unsafe school environments, devoid of adequate monitoring and supervision and laxity of disciplinary actions when such unwholesome behaviour is exhibited.

Data in Table 6 show that there was a significant difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on age ($\chi^2 = 9.042 > 3.841$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$). This implies that female students differed in their experience of sexual harassment by boys in terms of age. The finding is consistent with the findings of previous studies which reported that older girls reported more experiences of sexual harassment than younger girls (17, 24). In contrast, the finding contradicts finding from a study conducted in South-West, Nigeria, which reported that there was no significant difference in sexual coercion experiences of girls in terms of age (33).

Data in Table 7 show that there was a significant difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on class ($\chi^2 = 24.176 > 5.991$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$). This denotes that female students differed in their experience of sexual harassment by boys based on academic class. However, this finding is inconsistent with the finding of a study which reported that no significant correlation exists between education level and incidence of sexual harassment. In other words, women who are highly qualified are as likely to be sexually harassed as women who are less educated (35).

Result in Table 8 indicate that no significant difference was found in the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls by male students based on school location ($\chi^2 = 1.843 < 3.841$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$). This finding was a surprise because proof of evidence from earlier studies indicated high prevalence of sexual harassment among women especially women at workplace, street girls, female students in higher educational settings and secondary (high) schools respectively. Thus, there should have been a marked difference in prevalence of sexual harassment of girls in urban and rural school settings. Nonetheless, irrespective of school location, girls are more prone to sexual harassment than their male counterparts (4, 7, 8, 12, 14, 16-17, 38). Regrettably, there are no known studies that were conducted in Abia State particularly in among secondary school students in Ohafia LGA, against which the finding from this study can be compared. It therefore remains difficult to explain why there was no significant difference in the sexual harassment experience of girls in rural and urban secondary schools.

8. Study Limitations

In spite of the methodological strengths of this study, a few important limitations should be noted.

In a similar manner like one of the earlier study (16), this study employed a very broad theoretical and operational definition of sexual harassment. Formulation of items in a questionnaire that would both yield results comparable with other studies and advancing knowledge in a relatively

unexplored area is a difficult task. Lack of questions establishing contextual factors of the incidents may be considered a weakness. However, this study asked about specific behaviours so that sexual harassment was operationalized very specifically.

In addition, generalizations should be constrained, because the sample was drawn from secondary schools in one Local Government Area (LGA) and the survey relied on the self-report of students. Moreover, students who participated in this study were more likely to be boarding female students, when contrasted with students from other schools in other LGAs in Abia State who did not take part in the study. Also, impact of students with poor school attendance were likely to be understated in this sample, because the administration of the copies of the questionnaire took place during school and active consent was required for participation. Thus, findings from this study need to be replicated with other student populations. We were unable to inquire more about sexual harassment experiences, such as whether multiple perpetrators were involved in the sexual harassment. Future research should address these limitations and also consider the impact of other factors such as substance abuse, school characteristics, history of sexual harassment, familiar factors/characteristics that could impact prevalence of sexual harassment and characteristics of sexual harassment victims.

9. Conclusion

Sexual harassment is prevalent among schooling adolescent girls in this study. This study extends previous studies on sexual harassment in a numerous ways. Variables of interest such as age, class, school location were investigated with view to ascertaining the impact on prevalence and forms of SH among girls. Results revealed that girls differed according to age and class in their experience of forms of sexual harassment. Also, drastic measures should be implemented by government, school authorities, NGOs and advocacy groups to combat the menace of sexual harassment especially among girls in our schools.

Recommendations

Prevention of sexual harassment is a clarion call to all stakeholders in the Nigerian education sector. Concerted efforts must be intensified on a continual basis to combat the scourge of sexual harassment in our secondary schools. Training that occurs over time, across settings, and includes the entire staff, and administrative personnel will be more effective than a one-time session of training for the teachers. Classes covering civil rights, diversity, or tolerance can include the topic of sexual harassment, and provide opportunities for ongoing discussion about respectful behavior. In addition to integrating this topic with existing coursework, specific materials about sexual harassment should be available for classroom use. Schools should also formulate policy aimed at eliminating sexual harassment in

schools. Each school policy must be made public. The policy should define sexual harassment, clearly state that it is inappropriate, and then identify a procedure for investigating complaints (20). In addition, proper investigation should be carried out on any reported case of sexual harassment before an offender is convicted. Where an offender is found guilty, commensurate sanctions or punishments should be imposed on the perpetrators. Furthermore, Nigerian Government should formulate law to prohibit sexual harassment in school-settings.

Authors' Contributions

Prof. Effiong Samuel participated in the supervision, conception of the methodology, design of sampling procedures, validation of instrument, interpretation of results; Uduma Pamella participated in the article writing, formulation of questionnaire items, questionnaire administration and retrieval of filled copies of the questionnaire from female students while Dr. Samson Agbaje participated in the article writing, conducted the statistical analysis and edited the manuscript.

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Appendix A

Distribution List of Secondary Schools in Ohafia LGA

S/N	Name of School
1	Amuma community Secondary School
2	Amibe community Secondary School
3	Ohafia High School
4	Nkporo Secondary Commercial School
5	Onarubi Secondary Technical School
6	Etititama High School
7	Akanu Ohafia Secondary School
8	Army Day Secondary School
9	Amangwu Secondary Technical School
10	Isiama Comprehensive Secondary School
11	Amaedo Community Secondary School
12	Amurie Secondary Technical School
13	Okamu Secondary Commercial School
14	Ndibe community Secondary School
15	Nkporo Comprehensive Secondary School
16	Eziafor Commercial Secondary School
17	Collins Memorial College
18	Isiugwu Ohafia Commercial School
19	Abia Ohafia Commercial Secondary School
20	Nkwebi Community Secondary School
21	Ufiele Aku Community Secondary School

Appendix B

List of Sampled Secondary Schools according to Ohafia Administrative Districts

S/N	Name of School	Administrative District	Sampled Size
Ohafia			
1.	Okamu Secondary Commercial School	Ohafia	60
2.	Ohafia High School		60
3.	Collins Memorial College		60
4.	Army Day Secondary School		60
5.	Akanu Ohafia Secondary School		60
6.	Isiama Comprehensive Secondary School		60
7.	Onarubi Secondary School (Technical)	Abiriba	60
Nkporo			
8.	Amurie Secondary School (Technical)	Nkporo	60
9.	Etititama High School		60
10.	Nkporo Comprehensive Secondary School		60
Total		3	600

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