

## University Faculty Males' Experiences of Sexual Harassment from Female Students

*FAYANKINNU, Emmanuel Abiodun (PhD)*  
*Department of Sociology, Adekunle Ajasin University*  
*P.M.B.001, Akungba Akoko Ondo State, Nigeria.*  
*+2348059134347, +2348137480406*  
[yahdammy@yahoo.com](mailto:yahdammy@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

This paper focused on faculty males' perception of acts considered as sexual harassment (SH), experiences of SH from female students and consequences on faculty males' economic, social and psychological well-being. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used in this study. Results showed that faculty males experienced more symbolic SH than verbal SH, electronic SH, and physical SH. Though, junior faculty males reported more experiences of SH ( $M=17.620$ ,  $SD=4.8157$ ) from female students compared to senior faculty males ( $M=15.0000$ ,  $SD=5.7203$ ), the t-test was not significant. Faculty males' educational qualification [ $r(124) = -.154$  at  $P<0.01$ ] and job status [ $r(124) = -.231$  at  $P<0.01$ ] significantly correlates with experiences of SH from female students while other demographic characteristics of the respondents (e.g., age, religion and marital status) showed no significant correlation. The FGDs revealed that SH could reduce job satisfaction and job commitment, lead to low social well-being, and destroy self identity. The study concludes with some recommendations.

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, job commitment, experience of SH, perception of SH

## 1. Introduction

This paper examines faculty males' experiences of sexual harassment (FMESH) within the Nigerian University system, using the Adekunle Ajasin University as a case study. The focus on FMESH in this study is necessitated by the fact that sexual harassment (SH) constitutes one out of the numerous social problems ravaging the university system, with implications for both the male and the female gender (Mcfadden, 2001; Machen and DeSouza, 2000).

Previous studies have investigated women experiences of sexual harassment (WESH) in workplace, academia, business, government, and the military (Fayankinnu, 2010; Pereira, 2004; Nnorom, 2004; Mcfadden, 2001; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, and Magley, 1997; Fitzgerald, Shullman, Bailey, Richar, Swecker, Gold, Ormerod and Weitzman, 1988). These studies suggest an increase in WESH and perceive men as often the perpetrators of SH given that men usually possess higher organizational power over women, who often are the victims. This view is capable of underestimating the actual number of men who are likely to be victims of SH globally; and, in particular, Faculty-males in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

However, little is known about FMESH for reasons associated with lack of reporting by male victims, lack of detection, lack of a legal frame-work, and the increased focus on SH against women in the gender-based violent (GBV) community (Carpenter, 2006; Graham, 2006; Sivakumaran, 2007; King and Megan, 2005; Oosterhoff *et al.*, 2004; Del Zotto and Jones, 2002, EEOC, 2000). Besides, these studies are limited to advanced developed countries (ADCs) and suggest that the incidence of MESH is on the increase and impacts negatively on a substantial part of the workforce.

Studies show that some perpetrators of SH may not necessarily hold organizational power before harassment occurs (McKinney, 1994, 1992, 1990; Benson, 1984; Rospendo, Richman, & Nawyn, 1998). For example, McKinney (1990) reported that both male and female faculty members (holders of higher organizational power) constitute targets of SH from students (holders of less organizational power). In other words, faculty males may experience SH from female students just as faculty females do from male students (Fayankinnu, 2004a, 2004b; Nnorom, 2004). Benson (1984) refers to such harassment as 'contra power' sexual harassment (CPSH) – defined as 'occurring when the victim has formal power over the abuser'.

Studies conducted on CPSH indicate that its prevalence is on the increase. In a survey conducted among 113 male professors and 29 female professors, Carol and Ellis (1989) found that 30% and 24% of male and female professors, respectively, constitute targets of unwanted sexual comments from students as frequent as four times during an average month. The study also revealed that 27% of the male professors and 10% of the female professors received sexually suggestive looks from students.

In another study, involving 188 male and female academics, Mckinney (1990) observed that male academics experience significantly more body language, physical advances, and explicit sexual propositions from students compared to female academics. Similarly, Machen and DeSouza (2000), reported that 53% male professors experienced at least one sexually harassing behaviour from female students.

CPSH may be a product of informal power acquired through anonymity. In this regard, Benson (1984) argued that anonymity constitutes one among other means through which students hold power in a relationship whereas, other things being equal, they would have none. For example, students may pass sexist remarks on teaching evaluation forms knowing that teachers' promotions are partly tied to the evaluation, which generates a reversal of power (Rospendo, Richman, & Nawyn, 1998). Given that such students go scot free renders the lecturer vulnerable from preventing a re-occurrence.

Thus, it appears that CPSH tends to reinforce the gender status of males and increases the power of organizational subordinates (female students), who often go unpunished for their acts (McKinney, 1994, 1990; Rospendo, Richman, & Nawyn, 1998).

In Nigeria, there is dearth of data on CPSH, particularly as it relates to male staff in Nigerian universities thereby making it difficult to ascertain the actual number of men who may be victims within the university system (Fayankinnu, 2007, 2004a; Nnorom, 2004). These studies (Fayankinnu, 2007, 2004a; Nnorom, 2004) suggest a steady increase in CPSH towards male staff by female students in Nigerian universities. A likely reason for the steady increase in CPSH towards faculty males may be that some female students want undue advantage over other students which is not possible formally, and because of that they might result to subtle way of getting that by sexually harassing the faculty males who they perceive more vulnerable. These general trends are not without implications for male staff in the workplace, as would be argued below.

CPSH may reduce productivity, produce less job satisfaction and job commitment (Fayankinnu, 2004a, 2003a, 2003b; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2003; Ayoko, Callan & Hartel, 2003), feelings of loss of control over the body, overwhelming shame/humiliation, recurrent feelings of anger/fear/powerlessness, destruction of gender identity and confusion over sexual orientation (Hardy, 2002; Van, 1993), and potentially influencing their intention to quit the job (Djurkovic, McCormack & Casimir, 2004).

The foregoing reactions pose tremendous problems that render all victims of CPSH vulnerable in the workplace. This paper is interested in faculty males' perception and experiences of CPSH from female students in the Nigerian University system. Additionally, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- i. Junior faculty males' will report more experiences of SH from female students than senior faculty males.
- ii. There is no significant correlation between age, marital status, religion, educational qualification, job status and faculty males' experiences of SH from female students.

## **2.0 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 The Theory of Patriarchy**

Feminists have used the concept of patriarchy to explain how SH has become reified and 'untouchable' such that it is an instrument men use to maintain continuous control over women (McFadden, 2001). While this may be true, it is argue that patriarchy may have created invisible social gaps that accord women the reverse privilege to sexually victimize men unnoticed. It appears that feminists have ignored such invisible gaps in their analysis; thus, leaving unnoticed the number of men who are victims of CPSH.

Patriarchy is that ideological mode which defines the system of male domination and female subjugation in any society (Mitchell, 1971). In other words, patriarchy is explained in terms of sexist supremacy ideology because it perceives men as leaders and superior to women and this can be observed in the way males behave (McFadden, 2001). Hence, SH is situated within the framework of sexism-supremacist ideology and this exists in all patriarchal relationships. As such, sexism is hinged on gender differences to facilitate male privilege which, in turn, empowers men to harass women.

Men's privileges over women may create an avenue that reinforces women power to harass men. In order to understand this assertion, we may ask, what privilege do men have over women? How is this privilege maintained by men? What is the significance of this privilege for men? And how does the absence of this privilege for women aid in the harassment of men?

Male privilege over female arrogates power to men and places them in vantage positions in all spheres of life – workplace, church, family etc – enabling men to sexually harass women. This privilege is derived from the culture instituted by the society, which assumes that men are superior to women; and, passed from one generation to another through socialization. Socialization commences from birth: the male child is socialized to live a certain way of life, wear certain clothes, have certain hair styles, and participate in certain activities that assert his position as the superior. Socialization is equally extended to the female child that eventually results in gender differentiation. Thus, the male child internalizes the norms and perceives himself as superior to the female child while the latter is socialized to an inferior status. This, in turn, leads to the ‘sexualization’ of the female and mystification of SH, which reinforces the normalization of SH in the society. There is the need to emphasize that the myth surrounding SH is strongly linked to culture. For instance, there are cultural behaviours that are SH-tilted but not considered problematic because they have always been considered as part of culture.

Patriarchy cannot be explained in isolation of power. It appears that the concept of ‘patriarchy’ connotes power but at two levels – overt power and covert power. Patriarchy, from the overt perspective, explains power within the context of results that can be observed and assessed physically. Such power is characterized by force, aggression, meanness, brutality, etc. The efficacy of overt power is evident in its instant ability to produce desired results – patriarchy confers overt power on men such that when utilized, the result are usually obvious – overt in nature (Akinbulumo, 2003; Fayankinnu, 2003<sup>a</sup>, 2003<sup>b</sup>; Gelles, 1993). It is the overt nature of such power that creates fear and trauma in the victim as well as awareness in the society.

In contrast, when patriarchy is viewed from the covert perspective, it recognizes the existence of power with little or no importance (this reduces the awareness of covert power) since power that emanates from such source is assumed to be located among women. In this sense, covert power becomes invisible and characterized by subtleness, serenity, quietness, and calmness. Implied in these characteristics is that covert power is ‘weak’ and cannot be productive as overt power hence, women who mostly constitute the holder of covert power cannot harass men. Embedded in this erroneous belief women seem to have taken the advantage to innovate and build upon the covert power patriarchy accord them by converting it into informal power and internalizing it as ‘*Agbara Inu*’ (Fayankinnu, 2003<sup>a</sup>, 2003<sup>b</sup>). Literarily, ‘*agbara inu*’ means inner power. It entails being aware and conscious of the presence of an abstract power in one’s possession as well as having the will and ability to make use of this power to produce desired results irrespective of the strength inherent in the nature of that power. Given that ‘*agbara inu*’ is an ‘inner consciousness’, its manifestations are subtle, crafty, and potent. Since patriarchy is quiet about these manifestations, female students seem to have equally capitalized on the same manifestations to sexually harass Faculty-males, unnoticed. For example, such manifestations are most reflected in the type of violence women direct at men. Studies show that men experience more of verbal/psychological and sexual violence from females compared to women who experience more of physical violence from men ((Vissing, Straus, Gelles, and Harrop, 1991; Steinmetz, 1978).

From the foregoing, subtle, verbal/psychological harassment and SH when perpetrated by women against men may be difficult to establish particularly as it often leaves no injury on the victim. This form of harassment is silent and could be damaging to the psyche of men. Yet, it appears researchers have ignored this aspect of harassment targeted at men. Thus, researchers may be hidden under the shield of culture (patriarchy) to shy away from the fact that, as men are powerful, men are also powerless.

### **3.0 Method**

#### **3.1 Participant**

The study population comprised of faculty males in the Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State of South-western Nigeria. The simple random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and fifty faculty males from whom quantitative data were collected for the study. However, one hundred and twenty-four (124) faculty males consisting of 87 junior academics and 37 senior academics returned the questionnaire. The choice to make the sample all male was purposive given that the study focused on faculty males' experiences of SH from female students within the university. The respondents' ages ranged between 25 and 63 years. Specifically, 13.7% of the respondents were aged between 25-34 years, 46.8% were aged between 35 and 44, and 39.5% were aged 45 or above. The age distribution suggests that the respondents are in their productive years. The marital status of the respondents show that 84.7% are married compared to 15.3% who are single. Analysis on the respondents' religious affiliation showed that more Christians (79%) than Moslems (19.4%) participated in the study. The wide gap in the religious affiliation of the respondents may be linked with the fact that the study area is Christian dominated. Those who practised African Traditional Religion (ATR) constitute only 1.6%. More than half (51.6%) of the total respondents had spent between 1 to 9 years in service, 36.3% had served between 10 to 19 years in service, while 12.1% have put in more than 20 years (see Table I)

**Table I. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Per cent
Sex	Male	124	100
Age	23-34	17	13.7
	35-44	58	46.8
	45 +	49	35.9
Marital Status	Single	19	15.3
	Married	105	84.7
Religion	Christianity	98	79
	Islam	24	19.4
	Traditional religion	2	1.6
Job Tenure	1-9 years	64	51.6
	10-19 years	45	36.3
	20 years +	15	12.1

*Source: from Author's survey questionnaire.*

### **3.2 Instrument**

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) constitute the instruments for the collection of qualitative data. Four FGDs were conducted among junior and senior faculty males. The participants ranged between 6 and 10

in each group (in all, 32 participants engaged in the FGDs). The FGD guide contained questions relating to faculty males' experiences of SH from female students; the implication of SH on faculty males' job-satisfaction, intent to quit the job (labour turnover), and social well-being (self-fulfilment). A plausible justification for method is to complement information that the quantitative instrument may not capture.

The quantitative data was collected, via the Questionnaire Schedule. The questionnaire was divided into four (4) sections and contained both open-ended and close-ended questions. The first section of the questionnaire assessed the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while the second, third, and fourth sections measured perception about SH, experiences of SH from female students, and, the consequences of SH.

### 3.3 Measures

**3.3.1. Perception of Sexual Harassment (PSH):** This is an eight (8) items scale that measures perception of acts/behaviours considered as SH. The respondents were asked to indicate the acts/behaviours they perceive as sexually harassing on the following response format: Disagree (D) = 1, Not Sure (NS) = 2, and, Agree (A) = 3. Examples of sexually harassing acts/behaviours in the questionnaire include 'dressing that exposes sensitive parts of female students' body', 'taunting Faculty-males about their sexual prowesses, 'suggestive text messages from female students', etc. The scale had a Cron-bach Alpha reliability of .77 – an indication that the items in the scale are indeed measuring the construct of perception of SH.

**3.3.2. Experiences of Sexual Harassment (ESH):** This is an eight (8) items scale that measures experiences of acts/behaviours considered as SH. The respondents were asked to indicate the acts/behaviours they experienced as sexually harassing on the following response format: Disagree (D) = 1, Not Sure (NS) = 2, and, Agree (A) = 3. Examples of sexually harassing acts/behaviours in the questionnaire include 'dressing that exposes sensitive parts of female students' body', 'taunting Faculty-males about their sexual prowesses, 'suggestive text messages from female students', etc. The scale had a Cron-bach Alpha reliability of .77 – an indication that the items in the scale are indeed measuring the construct of experiences of sexual harassment.

### 3.4. Analysis

Data collected from the FGDs were sorted, transcribed, and reported verbatim while data from the questionnaire were analyzed, using simple frequency and percentage distributions. The first hypothesis was tested with the t-test while the second hypothesis was tested with the Pearson Correlation.

## 4. Results

### 4.0. Faculty Males' Perception of Sexual Harassment (PSH) and Experience of Sexual Harassment (ESH)

To investigate PSH and ESH from female students, the respondents were provided with a scale that contained eight items that seek to know what faculty males perceive as sexually harassing as well as their experiences of the acts perceived as sexually harassing. The idea behind this process is to enable a comparison between the respondents' perception and experiences of acts/behaviours that are sexually harassing. In other words, if a respondent perceives an act as harassing and reports same as experienced, then, a case of sexual harassment may be ascertained.

**Table II. Percentage distribution of respondents by perception of sexual behaviour from female students**

<b>Acts/Behaviours</b>	<b>Agreed F %</b>	<b>Not Sure F %</b>	<b>Disagree F %</b>
Female students dressing in a way that exposes sensitive parts of their body. <b>(Symbolic SH)</b>	111(89.5)	3(2.4)	10(8.1)
Suggestive text messages from female students. <b>(Electronic SH)</b>	89(71.8)	13(10.5)	22(17.7)
Suggestive phone calls from female students. <b>(Verbal SH)</b>	66(53.2)	25(20.2)	33(26.6)
Visit of female students to faculty males' office at odd times <b>(Symbolic SH)</b>	82(66.1)	15(12.1)	27(21.8)
Unwanted touch on faculty males' body from female students <b>(Physical SH)</b>	82(66.1)	13(10.5)	29(23.4)
Taunting faculty males about his sexual prowess <b>(Verbal SH)</b>	63(50.8)	15(12.1)	46(37.1)
Passing pleasant sexual remarks about faculty males <b>(Verbal SH)</b>	62(50)	21(16.9)	41(33.1)
Suggestive Gifts from female students <b>(Symbolic SH)</b>	54(43.5)	17(13.7)	53(42.7)

Source: from Authors survey questionnaire.

Results from Table II, revealed that faculty males perceive the following acts, from female students, as sexually harassing – indecent dressing by female students that exposes sensitive parts of their body (89.5%), forwarding suggestive text messages to faculty males (71.8%), female students visiting faculty males' offices at odd times (66.1%), unwanted touch on faculty males' body by female

students (66.1%), taunting faculty males about their sexual prowess (50.8%), often passing pleasant sexual remarks about faculty males (50%), making frequent phone calls to faculty males (53.2%), and, presenting gifts such as under wears to faculty males (43.5%).

A careful observation of the foregoing reveals that all, but the last two sexual acts/behaviours were perceived as sexually harassing by 50% of the respondents and above. This suggests that CPSH exists and faculty males are likely to be victims.

**Table III. Percentage distribution of respondents by experiences of sexual harassment from female students**

<b>Acts/Behaviours</b>	<b>Agreed F %</b>	<b>Not Sure F %</b>	<b>Disagree F %</b>
Female students dressing in a way that exposes sensitive parts of their body. <b>(Symbolic SH)</b>	98(79.0)	4(3.2)	22(17.7)
Suggestive text messages from female students. <b>(Electronic SH)</b>	68(54.8)	9(7.3)	47(37.9)
Suggestive phone calls from female students. <b>(Verbal SH)</b>	65(52.4)	8(6.5)	51(41.1)
Visit of female students to faculty males' office at odd times <b>(Symbolic SH)</b>	58(46.8)	15(12.1)	51(41.1)
Unwanted touch on faculty males' body from female students <b>(Physical SH)</b>	53(42.7)	13(10.5)	58(46.8)
Taunting faculty males about his sexual prowess <b>(Verbal SH)</b>	25(20.2)	10(8.1)	89(71.8)
Passing pleasant sexual remarks about faculty males <b>(Verbal SH)</b>	91(73.4)	10(8.1)	23(18.5)
Suggestive gifts from female students	51(41.1)	9(7.3)	64(51.6)

(Symbolic SH)			
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Source: *from Author's survey questionnaire.*

When the respondents were asked to indicate the acts they have experienced from female students, 79% of faculty males reported that they have been in, at least, a situation with female student(s) whose dressing exposes sensitive parts of their body. Similarly, all the participants (32) in the four FGDs conducted with the faculty males revealed that a good number of female students intentionally dress provocatively to school, leaving vital parts of their body uncovered, with the intention to seduce faculty males. For example, an excerpt from one of the FGDs conducted with senior faculty males is as follows:

Female students purposefully dress seductively to the classrooms. They wear skimpy and transparent clothes that show their thighs, curves, cleavages, breasts, nipples, pants, pubic hair, and buttocks. As a 'complete' (potent) man, when you see these sensitive parts of our female students, you get disorganized and find it difficult to concentrate. This, we find offensive.

54.8% of the respondents reported that they received text messages that are suggestive from female students, while 52.4% affirmed that they have received frequent phone calls, with sexual undertones, from female students. Additionally, in the FGDs, faculty males reported the following as suggestive text messages they received.

I was born shy, living shy, and may die shy, but for once, I will be bold, be my Valentine. I will do anything to have you; you bring out the wild side of me; please treat me gentle; when should I come for the text book in your house.

46.8% of the respondents indicate that female students visited them in their offices at odd times, while 42.8% said they have experienced unwanted touch on their bodies from female students.

Faculty males also reported that female students joked about the size of their genital organs (20.2%), passed pleasant sexual remarks about them (73.4%), and gave them gifts that are suggestive (41.1%). Additionally, findings from FGDs revealed that female students tickled the palms of faculty males, winked at them, and stroked their breasts while speaking to them.

#### **4.2. Consequences of Sexual Harassment on Faculty males**

The respondents' response rate to the question on consequences of SH on faculty males was less than 4% and inadequate for analysis. The reason for the low response is unclear. However, the FGDs conducted with the respondents appear to save the situation given that the respondents answered questions relating to consequences of SH on faculty males. The FGD guide contained questions that 'measured'

consequences of SH on faculty males in relation to job satisfaction, intent to quit job (labour turnover), social well-being (self-fulfilment), and health status (psychological health).

Twenty-three out of the thirty-two participants in the four FGDs said that they experienced SH from female students and are dissatisfied with their jobs. For example, in one of the FGDs, a senior faculty male reported thus:

I am fed up with this type of job, because you hardly can move freely without female students seducing you in one way or the other. Yet, Management has not proffered any tangible solution to this problem.

However, nine respondents disagree that faculty males' experience of SH from female students cannot induce job dissatisfaction. The excerpt from the FGD reads thus;

It is not new that female students sexually harass faculty males in various manners. But, this is not enough to make faculty males not satisfied with their jobs. After all, 'shit happens'; you throw the experience behind and continue life.

This may suggest two things. First, those faculty males less bothered about sexual harassment from female students feel they can handle the problem themselves. Second, throwing experiences of SH from female students behind may suggest a strategy faculty males employ as means of coping. By implication, both inferences are capable of hampering the rate at which faculty males report cases of SH experienced from female students.

Additionally, the findings from the FGDs revealed that faculty males who are sexually harassed by female students may not be committed to their work. For instance, an excerpt reads thus;

If everyone (respondents) here will be sincere, you will all agree with me that many of us (except if you are not a man) lose concentration when we see sensitive parts (such as the nipples, breasts, hips,) etc. of female students in the class. When this happens repeatedly, the shock lingers and affects one's commitment to the job.

Although, the majority of the respondents in the FGDs affirmed that they experienced SH of all sorts from female students, they disagree that such experiences can propel faculty males' intent to quit their jobs. This is in contrast with the findings of Djurkovic, McCormack & Casimir, (2004), who reported that CPSH is capable of influencing faculty males' intention to quit their jobs. A likely reason for the variance in findings may be hinged on the fact that Djurkovic et al. (2004) studied Europeans as samples compared to this study that focused on African samples. Thus, there is the probability that differences in culture, perceptions, and work opportunities may have informed the current finding.

An overwhelming twenty-nine faculty males complained that they suffered low social well-being as a result of SH from female students. A plausible reason that may account for why faculty males suffer low social well-being is because they seldom report cases of SH to the appropriate quarters; rather, they choose to handle it on their own. The low report rate may have worked in favour of the female students as it reinforces the confidence in them to victimize faculty males.

### *Result of Hypotheses*

Table IV. *T-test showing the difference in Mean scores of the two groups*

job status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.(2tailed)
Experiences sexual harasment junior	87	17.6207	4.81577	2.618	.010
senior	37	15.0000	5.72033		

The first hypothesis was tested in the direction that junior faculty males will report more experiences of SH from female students than senior faculty males. Though the mean score for the group showed that junior faculty males reported more experiences (M=17.6207, SD=4.8157) of SH than the senior faculty males (M=15.0000, SD=5.7203), the t-test was not statistically significant. The interpretation of this result is that both the junior and senior faculty males constitute targets of sexual harassment from female students.

Table V. **Pearson correlation showing the correlation between age, marital status, religion, edu qualifcatn, job status, and experiences of sexual harassment.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. age	1					
marital status	.401(**)	1				
religion	-.001	.033	1			
educational qualification	.238(**)	.153(*)	.020	1		
job status	-.289(**)	-.212(**)	-.060	-.083	1	
expsharasment	-.012	.077	.075	-.154(*)	-.231(**)	1

The second hypothesis was tested with the Pearson correlation. The result from table V indicates that faculty males' educational qualification [ $r(124) = -.154$  at  $P < 0.01$ ] and job status [ $r(124) = -.231$  at

P<0.01] significantly correlates negatively with their experiences of SH from female students while other demographic characteristics of the respondents (e.g., age, religion and marital status) showed no significant correlation. The interpretation of this result is that the lower the academic qualifications of faculty males, the more their experiences of SH from female students compared to colleagues with higher qualifications. Similarly, junior faculty males would experience more sexual harassment from female students than senior colleagues. A likely reason for this could be because junior faculty males are often young, and attractive to female students compared to senior colleagues who may be married, and more occupied with other activities.

## 5. Discussion

The study investigated faculty males' perception and experiences of CPSH from female students in a tertiary institution. The finding establishes that faculty males perceived and experienced four patterns of SH from female students; namely, 'symbolic', verbal, electronic, and physical SH.

Faculty males experience a high incidence of 'symbolic SH' from female students compared to the other three patterns of SH. This corroborates the findings of McKinney (1990), Matchen and DeSouza (2000) who found that faculty males experienced body language of a sexual nature each month. Female students' preference for 'symbolic SH' [e.g., dressing to expose sensitive parts of their body (79%), female students' visit to faculty males' offices at odd times (46.8%), and giving gifts to faculty males by female students (41.2%)] may be associated with the power relation that exists between them as holder of informal power, on the one hand, and faculty males, as holder of formal power, on the other. The latter form of power confers on faculty males a superior status over female students (subordinates) in institutions of higher learning. Thus, not being able to harass faculty males for reasons associated with cultural stereotype, beliefs, and fear of being punished, it appears that female students have innovated and built upon this 'subordinate-superior relations by developing their *'agbara inu'* and utilizing the exposure of sensitive parts of their body as informal methods (informal power) to harass and challenge faculty males' gender identity and organizational positions, unnoticed. This is capable of rendering faculty males vulnerable to CPSH particularly as this pattern of SH (i.e., symbolic), adopted by most female students, makes it difficult to hold them as culprits.

In the FGDs conducted with faculty males, they defined female students' visits to their offices at odd times as visits after working hours (4.00pm). According to them, when such visits are made by female students they are often with undertones. For example, an excerpt from a faculty male reads thus:

Many a times female students do visit our offices after work hours, dressed seductively to captivate and hypnotize us. They come with different types of gifts such as pants, singlets, boxers, perfumes, etc. Their motive is to get you enticed with these items and have their way.

The foregoing suggests that the three sexual acts, categorized as symbolic SH in this study, seem to be interwoven and leave a slim chance of the offender being detected. However, one may ask that if female students visit faculty males' offices at odd times, could their not be other possible reasons contrary to the motive of SH informing their visits? For example, in the institution under study, both female and male students receive lectures till six o' clock (6.00pm) in the evenings. Should the need arise for female students to visit faculty males in their offices at this time, could the intent behind their visits not have been misinterpreted? When faculty males receive gifts they perceive as sexually harassing from female

students, could they still be considered harassed? These questions constitute grey areas begging for urgent answers, presumably from further studies.

The second pattern of SH faculty males experienced most is 'verbal SH' [i.e., received sexually suggestive phone calls from female students (52.4%), received sexually pleasant remarks from female students (73.4%), taunting faculty males on their sexual prowess (20.2%)]. This finding is consistent with researches on CPSH reported by DeSouza and Fansler (2003), and Carroll and Ellis (1989) who reported that more of faculty males compared to faculty females were the targets of uninvited sexual comments (e.g., jokes or teasing). However, two out of the three verbal sexual acts/behaviours [received sexually pleasant remarks from female students (73.4%), taunting faculty males on their sexual prowess (20.2%)] used in this study needs careful interpretation.

First, 50% of the respondents reported that they perceived verbal sexually pleasant remarks from female students as sexually harassing while 73.4% of the same respondents said they have received sexually pleasant remarks from female students. It appears that the response pattern does not reflect the motive of the acts experienced by the respondents. A likely reason for this may be that 23.4% of the 73.4% respondents who said they experienced the acts do not perceive them as sexually harassing. Another interpretation to this may be that the 23.4% respondents agreed to the acts. For example, in another FGD conducted with junior faculty males, to ascertain how often they report cases of SH experienced from female students to the appropriate quarters in the university, the following was reported:

The report rate is very low for a couple of reasons. Some faculty male consider such sexual acts as perk of the job, others are afraid of stigmatization, evidence to backup verbal sexual harassment are almost difficult to provide, and the panel set up to handle issues relating to sexual harassment in the university has not been functional.

An inference from the excerpt is that if faculty males consider verbal sexual acts as perk of the job, it is capable of informing the response (73.4%) in comparison to their perception (50%).

Second, 20.2% of the respondents reported that female students taunted them about their sexual prowess. For example, faculty males cited in the FGD some uninvited sexual comments they received from female students such as:

He goes off after the first round (*meaning: the man lacks stamina*); it is comforting when it is hefty and long (*meaning: a way of saying that the size of the penal organ of the person concerned is small*); your style is conventional.

While these comments may be sexually harassing to faculty males, the comments may also suggest the existence of an intimate relationship between both parties (faculty males and female students) to have enabled female students (subordinates) pass such uninvited sexual remarks about faculty males (superior). If the latter is true, there is the need for further investigation to ascertain why faculty males report such as sexually harassing. Faculty males are also sexually harassed 'electronically' by female

students. This medium of harassment allows the 'abuser' (female students) direct access to the 'abused' (faculty males) even when the abused declines the advances. Thus, female students could forward several sexual remarks at different times of the day. This induces restlessness on the part of faculty males, particularly when the identity of the 'harasser' (female student) is unknown to the 'harassed'. At times, such sexual remarks forwarded to faculty males induce misunderstanding between faculty males and their spouses.

'Physical SH' constitutes the least experienced by faculty males. This is not surprising given that such form of harassment allows for easy detection and, consequently, punishment. Notwithstanding, faculty males reported that they received unwanted touch on their bodies from female students. Thus, one may ask how female students, with their status (subordinates), can possibly touch faculty males. The FGD excerpt provides an answer:

When female students touch a faculty males on the body, two things may have happened. First, that there is a pre-cordial understanding no matter how minimal between the two actors (female student and faculty male). Second or that female student stylishly touches your body with the pretence of wanting to clean dirt on your cloth or face. Sometimes they brush themselves against you, tickle your hands with their fingers subtly while requesting for a text book from faculty males.

The second situation appears to me as the one faculty males considered as harassing by female students.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations.**

This study focused on FMESH from female students in Nigeria tertiary institutions, using Adekunle Ajasin University as a case study. Without doubt, the study has raised pertinent issues that call for further investigation. Further studies may employ other variables such as female respondents in their sample to compare their views with that of male respondents, as well as use inferential statistics to analyze data collected.

As demonstrated in this study, faculty males constitute the targets of SH (in its various forms) from female students in the university. These include symbolic, verbal, electronic, and physical SH. Symbolic SH constitutes the most experienced by faculty males. It is an informal method female students developed, within the purview of informal power, to contend with the privileges patriarchy confers on faculty males as power brokers in the university system.

The following are suggested as ways of reducing the incidence of SH faculty males experience from female students in institutions of higher learning.

Firstly, the school authority should enforce the dress-code regulations by ensuring that female students are decently dressed while on campus. Secondly, faculty males should be enlightened on the need to report cases of harassment from female students to the appropriate quarters in the University. Thirdly, culprits should be punished to serve as deterrence to others.

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## Brief



**Fayankinnu Emmanuel Abiodun** obtained his PhD degree and his Masters degree from the Department of Sociology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He is the current acting Head, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Adekunle Ajasin University, P.M.B. 001, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria; email: [yahdammy@yahoo.com](mailto:yahdammy@yahoo.com) . His area of interest covers Industrial Sociology, gender issues in organization, workplace violence, and occupational hazards.