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Determinant of Sexual Coercion among University Female Students in South-West Nigeria

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Abstract
This study examined sexual coercion among University female students in South-West Nigeria. The sample consisted of 1,200 sexually coerced female students, selected from nine Universities drawn from South West using purposive sampling technique, simple random and stratified random sampling techniques. An instrument titled 'Sexual Coercion Questionnaire was used. The result showed that different forms of sexual coercion occurred among University female students and the level of occurrence was moderate. Findings revealed that age range and marital status of female students do not significantly influence their experience of sexual coercion among University female students. Based on the findings, it was recommended those young University females that are at greater risk of sexual coercion due to their physical features and some acts that are peculiar to them should be careful in dealing with the opposite sex. University female students (married and unmarried) should desist from congenial attitudes that could predispose them to sexual coercion. Counsellors in universities should organize seminars on female health argue for effective security in Nigeria Universities to curb sexually coercive behaviours. Provision of well secured accommodation for university female students and design effective programme on sexually acceptable behaviour that would enhance a change of behaviour among University female students. The importance of conducting this research is that it provides information on prevalence of sexual coercion, factors responsible for sexual coercion and effects of sexual coercion on female university students. It also provides baseline information for prospective researchers on causes, effects and consequences of sexual coercion.

Keywords: sexual coercion, age, marital status, behaviour, university, females.

INTRODUCTION

Sexual coercion refers to any unwanted sexual activity or forceful sexual contact which could interferes with one's life. It is an interaction in which someone is forced to engage in sexual act against his or her will. It could be regarded as an act of compelling a person to involuntarily engage in sexual acts by the use of threats, violence, intimidation, deception, alcohol, drugs or some other forms of pressure or force, which may typically involve the infliction of physical and psychological harm. This act may lie on the continuum of sexual aggressiveness and harmful behaviour, ranging from unwanted touch, verbal intimidation, harassment, attempted rape, to forceful sex, referred to as rape.

Sexual coercion has been defined by different researchers (Koss, 2000; Tanzman, 2009) as sexual activities with one or more persons, with greater power due to age, physique, status, position or knowledge without the other party's mutual consent. This implies that age, physique, status, position, wealth can be used atimes as a driving force for sexual coercion and usually fear, weakness, lack of understanding and helplessness may be involved in such situations.

Sexual coercive activities are unwanted sexual touch such as slapping the buttocks of the opposite sex, touching the breast, scratching or parting an opposite sex's back, grabbing of their waists. Sexual coercive activities also include being tricked into having sex, attempted rape, and actual rape, fondling of opposite sex's partners sexual organs, unwanted sexual jokes, comments, talks and gestures. Also included are non-contact abuse and other sexual acts such as molestation, harassment, forced viewing of pornography, repeated request for dates, threatening text messages, arousal gesture, indecent exposure. Other forms are intimidation and verbal pressure. According to Omoteso (2006), sexual coercion can be categorized into different ways that by reference to the situation in which it occurs by the identity or characteristics of the perpetrators. These categories are referred to as types of sexual coercion such as date acquaintance sexual coercion, marital or spousal sexual coercion, gang sexual coercion, sexual coercion of children, statutory sexual coercion, prison sexual coercion, war and transactional sexual coercion.

Sexual coercion of females is not a recent development, some of the evidences were revealed. A foremost expression of this was the biblical account

of sexual coercion as recorded in Genesis 34 verses 1-2, the account of Dinah who was raped by Shechem and was highly depressed due to the loss of her virginity. A similar case was reported by West (2001) about the rape of a noble woman, Lucrecta, who lost her virginity and thus affected her bride price, and finally committed suicide. Forum for African Women Educationist (FAWE) (2000) revealed that 13.5% University students reported one or more acts of sexual coercion in the previous 12 months.

In a study conducted among University students in Ibadan by Ajuwon, Olaleye, Faromoju, Ladipo and Akin-Jimoh, (2001a) on the sexual coercion of University students, 15% of the students reported forced sexual penetration, 27% reported attempts at forced sex and 44% reported the experience of unwanted sexual activities , the reports shows the enormity of sexual coercion among females in the Universities. These revelation shows that females are the victims of sexual coercion and, leave them with serious traumatic experience such as health, emotional, psychological and social consequence (Heise, Moore and Tobia). It could damage the emotional and academic well- being of students, provoke damage student's reputation and exacerbate conflicts among students which could contribute to a hostile learning environment.

Bandura (2005) opined that both young and old female students could be sexually coerced due to some characters that are common with female university student generally such as indecent dressing, how they engage in friendly gestures like parting others buttock, pecking of cheeks, embracing each other and other sexual acts. Fergusson, Horwood and Lynskey (2007) observed that coercers are within the same age range with the victim, he however stressed that there are some cases of older males who indulge in sexual coercion of younger females. Humper (2008) asserts that young female students in their teens and early twenties are highly overrepresented among sexual coercion victims around the word and they are target for older males especially those in intimate relationship, they usually obtain sex through force and deception. Others in this category are their boyfriends, co-students, lecturers, administrative officers, cultists and men in authority who are found of forcing young female students into unwanted sexual encounters as found by the researcher. Omorodion and Olusanya (2008) reported that in their study carried out on violence against females that young females are mostly victims of sexual coercion around the world and that certain forms of sexual coercion are very closely associated with younger females trafficking and exploitation which are also forms of sexual coercion. Watts (2008) opined that older females are always cautious of their relationship with the opposite sex, and thus experience less sexual victimization from men.

As observed, males are physically stronger than the females in terms of physical strength and power. Females at this age range may lack the power to respond forcefully to prevent violence situations which usually resulted to sexual coercion. Fawole, Osungbade and Faweya (2008) opined that violence asserts power; he affirmed that the use of physical force by males after other actions gives male the advantage to sexually coerce younger female students. Females due to their inherent nature to be passive, submissive and tender as a result of gender inequality usually caused male to believe that females could be controlled and traumatized by dominating them using sex. Researchers, such as Omorodion and Olusanya (2008) found in their study on violence against females that most of the younger females usually find it difficult to be firm in their decision about sexual matters which usually lured them to the risk of sexual coercion.

Although Akinlolu (2009) have shown that University females that are sexually coerced fall largely into those who are unmarried than married, the unmarried are not tagged and therefore they are free to exhibit any kind of sexual behavior with anyone. Osakinle (2003) indicated in her study that a significant difference exists in sexual coercion of married and unmarried female students, the fact that a female student is unmarried makes the males relate freely with her than married female student, this usually predispose unmarried female students to be more exposed to sexual coercion than the married female students.

Akinlolu (2009) noticed that some female students that have had boyfriends in the University and later got married to another man while still in the same University may experience one form of sexual coercion or the other from the former boyfriends. Lavinger (2008) reported that single female University students are likely to experience partner's violence more than married females from an intimate relationship. Unmarried female students that experience sexual coercion may have fewer options than married female students because married female students will enjoy marital legal protection more than the unmarried. In Nigerian culture, wives are jealously guided, the husband of the women that is sexually coerced could take the case of the coercion up legally and such action could cause the coercer to lose his job if he is a worker. If the coercer is a student, he may be expelled out of the school. It was concluded that any female could be sexually coerced irrespective of their marital status, base on the attitudes that are peculiar with University female students.

There has been substantial amount of public disapproval and comments about the prevalence of sexual coercion among University students. Radio

listeners, newspaper readers and common day-by-day participants in social discussion often comment about sexual coercion in the society. The newspapers and the electronic media regularly report cases of sexual coercion. Some of the reports claimed that the cause and motive for sexual coercion remain poorly understood. However, the Commission on the Review of Higher Education in Nigeria (CRHEN) (1991) reported that the phenomenon of sexual coercion is gradually assuming critical dimensions in Nigerian's Higher Education institutions.

METHODOLOGY

It has been observed that sexual coercion is one of the prevailing social problems in Nigeria that questions the trust people place on Nigerian female University graduates. The rate of occurrence of sexual coercion continues to increase daily without check cutting across every stratum of female students irrespective of age and their marital status. Though sexual coercion appears mild to some people in the society, its consequences are enormous. It encompasses fear, anxiety, depression, poor academic performance, withdrawal from school, acquisition of sexually transmitted diseases and others. This calls for thorough and comprehensive investigation on the prevalence, mode, and etiological factors behind sexual coercion in Nigeria Universities. The question that guides this study is:

1. Does sexual coercion exist among university female students

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of age on the university female students' experience of sexual coercion. It also sought to find out if variable such as marital status influence their experience. In dealing with the problem of the study, and to achieve the purpose of the study, the following hypotheses were raised to pilot the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the rate of sexual coercion experienced by different age groups of university female students.
2. Marital status of female undergraduates would not significantly influence their experience of sexual coercion.

The study employed the descriptive research of the survey type. This design was considered appropriate because it focused on existing characteristics of a particular group in order to satisfy the curiosity and the desire for better understanding of the sexual coercion of University female students. It also involves the distribution of large copies of the instrument used. The population for this study consisted of all University female students both single and married, in the various Federal, State and Privately owned Universities in the South-West, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 1,200 University female students selected from nine Universities drawn from the South West using multistage sampling technique.

A research instrument titled 'Sexual Coercion Questionnaire (SCQ)' was used. The instrument was in four sections, the first section sought information on the Female students bio-data such as age, marital status and so on, section two contains items on the occurrence of sexual coercion experienced by University female students, section three consisted of items which are meant to measure the factors that could influence female students' sexual coercion, while section D contains items measuring the effects of sexual coercion on University female students. Test re-test method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. The administration of the instrument was done by the principal investigator and assisted by some research assistants. The data generated were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency counts and percentages were used to ensure the general question while t-test was used for the two hypotheses generated

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Question 1

Table 1: Frequency Counts and Percentages showing University Female Students Experience of Sexual Coercion

S/N	Forms of Sexual Coercion	Total		Never Experience		Experience		Low		Moderate		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1.	Unwanted sexual touch	1200	100	16	1.3	1184	98.7	44	3.7	118	10.0	1011	84.3
2.	Unwanted sexual talks	1200	100	27	2.25	1173	97.8	62	5.3	693	57.8	429	35.8
3.	Unwanted sexual gesture	1200	100	238	19.8	962	80.1	175	18.2	621	64.6	166	17.3
4.	Pornographic display	1200	100	517	43.1	683	56.9	306	44.8	231	33.8	146	21.4
5.	Sexual harassment	1200	100	166	13.8	1034	86.2	524	50.7	312	30.2	198	19.1
6.	Rape	1200	100	901	75.1	299	24.9	215	71.9	72	24.1	12	4.0

Female students that experienced unwanted sexual talks fell into the moderate level. 27 (2.25%) of the female students never experience unwanted sexual talks.

One hundred and sixty-six (17.3%) of the University female students experienced high level of unwanted sexual gesture, majority of the University female students that experienced unwanted sexual gesture fell into moderate level 621 (64.6%) while 175 (18.2%) of the female students' experienced low level of unwanted sexual gesture. 238 (19.8%) of the female students never experience unwanted sexual gesture.

Among the University female students that experienced pornographic display, 146 (21.4) fell into high level. Two hundred and thirty-one (33.8%) experienced moderate level of pornographic display, while 306 (44.8%) experienced low level of pornographic display. Five hundred and seventeen (forty three point one percent) of the female students never experience pornographic display.

One ninety eighty (19.1%) of the female students experienced high level of sexual harassment. Three hundred and twelve (30.2%) experienced moderate level of sexual harassment while majority of the female students that experienced sexual harassment fell into low level 524 (50.7%). Only few of the female students 12 (4.0%) fell into high level of rape, 72 (24.1%) of the students experienced moderate level of rape while 215 (71.9%) experienced low level of rape. Majority of the female students 901 (75.1%) never experience rape while 299 (24.9%) of the female students experienced rape.

The result shows that most forms of sexual coercion exist among female students and the level of occurrence is moderate, except the experience of rape that was very low.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the rate of sexual coercion experienced by different ages of University female students. In order to test the hypothesis, mean scores of respondents on sexual coercion were compared among the age groups using one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. The result is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: One-Way ANOVA of Age and Sexual Coercion among Female University Students

Source	SS	df	MSS	F-cal	F-table
Between groups	3218.002	3	1031.667	2.41	2.60
Within groups	415897.4	1196	427.740		
Total	419115.4	1199			

*P< 0.05

Table 2 shows that F-cal is 2.41 and F-table is 2.60. Therefore, F-cal (2.41) is lesser than F-table (2.60). The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This shows that there is no significant difference in the rate of sexual coercion experienced by different ages of University female students.

Hypothesis 2

Marital status of female undergraduate will not significantly influence their experience of sexual coercion.

To test this hypothesis, mean scores on sexual coercion of married and unmarried subjects were compared for statistical significance using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: t-test Summary of Marital Status and Experience of Sexual Coercion

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-table
Married	311	27.06	20.30	1198	0.59	1.96
Unmarried	889	26.31	19.04			

* P<0.05

Table 3 shows that t-cal is 0.59 and t-table is 1.96. Therefore, t-cal (0.59) is lesser than t-table (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted. It implies that marital status of female undergraduate will not significantly influence their experience of sexual coercion.

DISCUSSION

The result of the study revealed that most form of sexual coercion exist among female students and the level of occurrence is moderate except the rate of unwanted sexual touching that is high. This finding was consistent with the findings made by Ajuwon, Olaleye, Faromoju, Ladipo and Akin-Jimoh, (2001a) where they reported that majority of the University female students reported different forms of sexual coercion. It was evident in the report of the Commission on the Review of Higher Education in Nigeria (CRHEN) (1991) that the phenomenon of sexual coercion is gradually assuming critical dimensions in Nigeria higher institutions. This could be as a result of their inability to be firm in their decision about sexual matters as opined by Omorodion and Olusanya (2008).

The study revealed that there is no significant difference in the rate of sexual coercion experienced by female students of different ages. The result of this study corroborate with the view of Fergusson *et al.*, (2007), they reported that female students are natural target of sexual coercion and that any female students could be a victim irrespective of the age, he believed that certain forms of sexual coercion are very closely associated with young females. The report of Humper (2008) negates the result of this study. These researchers asserted that female students in their teens

and their early twenties are highly overrepresented among sexual coercion victims around the world and they believed that female students at these ages are target for older males.

Watts (2008)'s view about female students contradicts Bandura (2009), he opined that females students that are 25 years and above due to their chronological age, experiences, maturity and responsiveness, majority of them dress normally, they are always cautious of their relationship with the opposite sex and this make a difference in their experience of sexual coercion compared with females students that are below 25 years.

The result revealed that marital status of female students will not influence their experience of sexual coercion. This implies that perpetrators of sexual coercion do not care whether a female student is married or not, it has nothing to do with their sexual desire. The result of this study was in support of Lavinger (2008), they affirmed that both married and unmarried female students in the University are not immune as regards to sexual coercion. Possible explanation is that both married and unmarried female students involve in attitudes that predispose them to sexual coercion. Such attitude could be the indecent manner of dressing, involvement in social activities within and outside the University campus coupled with the type of company kept by the female students. The report of Osakinle (2003) negate this study, she reported that a significant difference exist in the sexual coercion experienced by married and unmarried female students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that University female students were sexually coerced by different categories of people in the University Community irrespective of their age and marital status due to factors such as inadequate security, deception, alcoholic consumption, cultist activities, inability to hold onto their decisions and other permissive attitudes allowed in Nigeria Universities. This study will be of importance to scholars and readers because it provides information on the prevalence of sexual coercion, factors responsible for sexual coercion, forms of sexual coercion and effects of sexual coercion on female university students. It also provides baseline information for prospective researchers on causes, effects and consequences of sexual coercion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Young university females that are at greater risk of sexual coercion due to their physical features and some acts that are peculiar to them which predispose them to the risk of sexual coercion should be careful in dealing with the opposite sex. Counsellors should clamour for more effective security in Nigeria Universities to curb maladjustment behaviours among students. Government should provide well secured accommodation for university female students.

University female students (married or unmarried) should desist from congenial behaviours that could predispose them to the risk of sexual coercion. Counsellors in universities should organize seminars on marital counselling. Counsellors should design effective programme on sexually acceptable behaviour that would enhance a change of behaviour among University female students. Counsellors should initiate policies that would restrict the perpetrators of sexual coercion and make sure such policies are published and enforced. Penalties needs be clearly stated. Students need be made to know that involvement in sexual coercive activities is against the law and severe penalties like long jail terms.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Respondents were afraid to report their sexual coercion experience for fear of the consequences which include shame and guilt until the researcher convinced them. Nevertheless, this does not in any way affect the reliability of the result of the study

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