

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**TEACHER-STUDENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN VAKPO SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL IN THE VOLTA REGION OF GHANA**



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SCHOOL IN THE VOLTA REGION OF GHANA**



**LAMBERT KITSI
(220009143)**

**A dissertation in the Department Social Studies Education,
Faculty of Social Sciences education, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment
of the requirement for award of the degree of
Master of Education
(Social Studies Education)
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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Lambert Kitsi, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

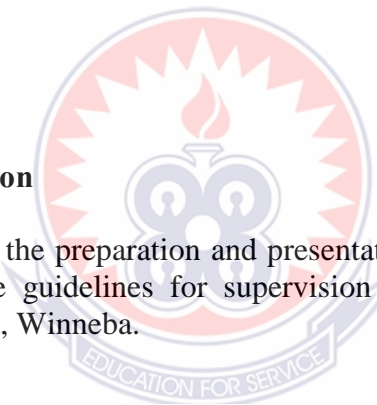
Supervisor's Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Simon Kyei

Signature:

Date:



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely and supportive family.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my profound gratitude to the Lord Almighty for his grace and protection which saw me through to a perfect completion of this study. This work would not have been successful without the guidance of my supervisor. I would therefore like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Simon Kyei for his professional guidance, advise and encouragement. I am really very grateful. I express my profound gratitude to all my lecturers. My heartfelt also goes to Dr. Felicia Esinam Pufaa for going through this piece of work.

Finally, I wish to thank my family and friends for their unwavering support. I say may God richly bless you and give you long life with good health.

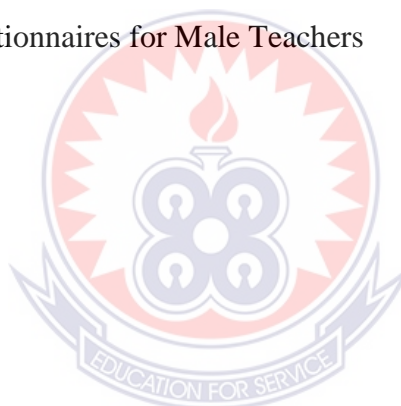


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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine student-teacher sexual harassment and its occurrence in Vakpo Senior High school in the Volta Region, Ghana. The study adopted the descriptive survey. The sample size was 145 respondents, comprising of 125 female students and 25 male teachers. Data was collected using the questionnaire and interview guide. Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Findings show that female students experienced sexual harassment from their male teachers. Both female students and their male teachers understand the acts that constituted sexual harassment. The study concludes that sexual harassment against female students actually took place and was mostly masterminded by the male teachers in the school. The harassment took place in form of sexual comments such as text messages, pinching and sexual looks. The study recommends that school authorities, chiefs and elders, the Ghana Education Service, the Ministry of Education, PTA and other stakeholders in education including NGOs should spearhead and intensify education on sexual harassment in the school. It also recommends that female students be empowered to be able to speak out anytime they feel harassed sexually but their male teachers. The study also suggested that, male teachers who are reported by female students for sexual harassment be dealt with to serve as deterrent to others.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In this 21st Century, violence against women and girls has gained international recognition as a grave social and human rights concern affecting virtually all societies. Violence against women can take many forms. Estimations on the prevalence of violence against women (VAW) vary depending on the type of violence in question. A study of 10 countries including Ghana, found that between 13 and 62 percent of women have experienced physical violence by a partner over the course of their lifetime (Bolt, Morrison & Ellsberg, 2005).

Thus, international studies have shown that between 8 and 26 percent of women and girls all over the world have been sexually abused, either as children or adults. In all cases these figures are likely to be an under-estimate of the true prevalence of abuse, as many women are reluctant to disclose violence due to shame and fear of reprisals (WHO Report, 2002).

Therefore, the term sexual harassment defies a precise definition because various authors have provided different definitions of it. One of such authors is Ryan, Miyoshi, Metzner, Krugman and Fryer (1996) who observed that sexual harassment is primarily an issue of power and not sex. It occurs when a person with power abuses that power and breaches the trust and the relationship that normally exists between students and teachers in academic environments and between subordinates and superiors in organizations. It is a phenomenon that creates confusion because of the boundary between professional roles and personal relationships. Most of the time,

several harassment cases tend to have elements of coercion, threats and or unwanted attention in a reciprocal relationship.

The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF, 1999) publication on sexual harassment in schools, has a legal definition of sexual harassment as "unwelcome or unwanted conduct of a sexual or sexist nature. It is an abuse of power or an act of hostility or prejudice that is expressed sexually."

Generally, sexual harassment is any physical, verbal or visual behaviour, that whoever experiences it objects to instantly or later. It could be in the form of sexual advance, derogatory or discriminatory remarks, which could be used as basis of employment or admission. Normally such behaviour has the tendency of humiliating and creating an offensive hostile environment for victims. Therefore, sexual harassment is not an act of flirtation or friendliness. It can be flirtation taken too far and is usually repetitive, but in some instances, a single occurrence can be deemed as harassing behaviour.

A Ghanaian newspaper, "The Public Agenda (May 24th -26th, 1999) dedicated a special page feature to an alleged act of sexual harassment involving the Managing Director of a company in Accra and the judicial proceedings associated with the said act (p. 8). A survey of female adolescents in Ghana that had had sex before found that, between 7 and 48 percent of their first sexual experiences had been forced. In most cases, the offender was someone known to the women: a family member, friend, school-mate or a teacher (Jewkes, Sen & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). Its impact can be seen directly through death and disability due to injuries, as well as indirectly through vulnerability to a host of physical and mental health problems. Girls who have been sexually abused in childhood are likely to drop out of school, have unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, engage

in high risk sexual practices, and suffer from depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts and behaviours (Forde, 2006; Gazmararian, Adams & Saltzman, 1995; Lori, Ellsberg & Gottemoeller, 1999).

International studies have shown that women with higher levels of education have a lower risk of being physically or sexually abused, though the link between education and violence is not necessarily linear (Jewkes et al, 2002). Unfortunately, a growing body of evidence suggests that, sexual harassment is widespread in educational settings in many parts of the world. In South Africa and Zambia, researchers documented a pattern in which schools dismissed girls' reports of sexual violence and harassment and failed to respond with any seriousness (Jewkes et al, 2002). In the study, the researchers asked high school girls to draw a map of places where they felt unsafe. The map showed that, the girls considered the gates of the schools, where former students would come to sell drugs and harass students, the toilet and staff common rooms were also indicated as places of harassment (Jones, Moore, Villar-Marquez & Broadbent, 2008).

A recent study by six African countries showed that, between 16 and 47 percent of girls in primary and secondary schools reported sexual abuse or harassment, by male fellow students and male teachers (Nelson Mandela, World Report on Violence and Health, 2002, p. 1). In Botswana, 20 percent of female students reported having been asked by teachers for sexual relations (WHO, 2002). In Cameroon, 8% sexual harassment or abuse of girls was committed by teachers, while South Africa found 37.7 % of all rape victims identifying a teacher or principal as the rapists (WHO, 2002).

In Ecuador, 22 percent of adolescent girls reported being victims of sexual abuse, while Brazilian schools found that 8 percent of students from 5th and 8th grade had witnessed sexual violence within the school environment (PREM, 2007).

In Africa, report on sexual harassment indicates that, between 16 and 47 percent of girls in primary or secondary school are harassed by teachers or classmates. Also in Managua, Nicaragua, women who reported abuse earned 46 percent less than women who did not, after taking into account the factors that could affect earnings. In Botswana, out of 560 girl students surveyed, 67 percent reported sexual harassment by teachers (Leach et al. 2003).

In the Ghanaian culture, discussing anything about sex especially with teenagers is seen as a taboo. Sexuality is not overtly discussed because it is considered sacred and therefore must be kept as such. In recent times, sexual discussion is gradually gaining prominence due to the upsurge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Efforts by women organizations and the Ghanaian media to demystify sexual discussions have been made opened. People who are alleged to have harassed female or male peers or colleagues have been exposed and are made to pay compensation to their victims.

Scholars like Riggs and Fryer (1999) have observed that the scope of sexual harassment in schools was first recognized during the early 80s and many efforts have been made to deal with the problem. For example, the United States of America, Europe and South Africa have developed policies, procedures, training programmes and logistics that seek to identify and prevent sexual harassment. Symposia and seminars are promoted to address the problem of sexual harassment. Despite these initiatives, the frequency of complaints of student-teacher sexual harassment in Senior High Schools has increased. This issue is one factor that has increased the researchers

interest to investigate into student-teachers sexual harassment in senior schools in Ghana and how it negatively impact female students who are mostly the victims.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Sexual harassment is a serious problem for students' at all educational levels. Students in elementary and secondary schools, as well as vocational schools, apprenticeship programs, colleges and universities can be victims of sexual harassment. This problem is more common than one might think because many students are scared or too embarrassed to report sexual harassment they encounter in senior high schools.

Recently, when Ghanaian community braced itself in confronting the canker, it had always been treated discretely and people only alluded to it. Victims of the act were usually not identified and were often blamed for enticing the culprit. Arguments raised were based mainly on hearsay since; victims themselves would not disclose their attackers.

In Ghana, a day hardly passes without the report on sexual harassment in the Media. A report of a recent research by Professor Morley and Dr. Katie of University of Sussex, UK, established that some male lecturers in Ghana and Tanzania “consider it their right to demand sex for grades” (Daily Graphic Feb 11, 2021). For instance, a school proprietor of the Great Lamptey Mills Institute was allegedly involved in a sexual scandal with their students which resulted in pregnancy. According to Bonney (2009), GES and other stakeholders' requests for full scale investigation, as a result, the school proprietor, Lamptey Mills is still in the hands of the law.

In a personal communication with some female students in Senior High Schools, it was affirmed that indeed some of them were harassed on campus, and that the phenomenon could not be hastily dismissed. The question then is; how do students cope or handle this situation emotionally, psychologically and physically when confronted with it and how and what can be done to resolve these situations that occur rampantly in the schools today? This and many other questions are the core influence of the researcher's stance and choice to investigate this phenomenon. In the light of the above, the study seeks to explore the prevalence and impact of sexual harassment on female students in the Vakpo Senior High school in the Volta Region.

There have been some studies on sexual harassment in Ghana including, Norman et al. (2013) and Konlan and Dangah (2023). These studies focused on students' experiences of sexual harassment in colleges of education and medical schools with paucity of literature on sexual harassment at the senior high level. The current study focused on teacher-students harassment at the senior high school level to bridge the existing gap.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to gain insight on student-teacher sexual harassment and its occurrence in Vakpo Senior High school in the Volta Region. Particular reference is given to the level at which it occurs. The study also examines the effects of student-teacher sexual harassment on students. One basic aim is to help formulate guidelines for heads of Senior High schools on how to effectively handle the problem in their schools. The general purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of sexual harassment on students in Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. assess students understanding of sexual harassment in Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region.
2. assess teachers understanding of sexual harassment in Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region.
3. examine ways of curbing student-teacher sexual harassment in Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

1. What are students understanding of student-teacher sexual harassment?
2. How does teachers understand student-teacher sexual harassment?
3. How can student-teacher harassment be curbed?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is significant in several ways. Firstly, the Ministry of Education plays a crucial role in setting policies and guidelines for educational institutions. Understanding the prevalence and dynamics of teacher-student sexual harassment in Vakpo Senior High School can help inform policy decisions at the national level. This study may contribute to the development of more effective and targeted measures to prevent and address such incidents, ensuring a safer and conducive learning environment for students.

Secondly, the Ghana Education Service (GES), as the body responsible for the management and supervision of educational institutions, can benefit significantly from this study. It provides an opportunity to identify gaps in the current system and

implement reforms that enhance the protection of students, promote accountability among educators, and strengthen the overall quality of education in the region.

Thirdly, teachers, as frontline actors in the educational process, are directly implicated in this study. This study allows educators to reflect on their roles, responsibilities, and ethical conduct. The findings will encourage the development of training programs and support mechanisms to ensure that teachers are well-equipped to maintain professional boundaries and foster a positive learning environment.

Moreover, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) dedicated to education and child welfare could leverage on the results of this study to advocate for policy changes, raise awareness, and provide support services. NGOs can collaborate with educational institutions to implement preventive measures, support survivors, and contribute to a cultural shift that condemns any form of harassment within the academic setting.

Additionally, the study will add up to empirical knowledge of sexual harassment in Senior High schools. This study could also be a source of information for educational practitioners and policy makers to make serious efforts to tackle the problem with all seriousness.

Finally, the results of this study will be helpful to researchers and academics interested in sexual harassment in educational institutions.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The research is limited to Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region of Ghana. The study focused on only teachers and students in Vakpo senior high school. By content, the study was limited to students understanding of sexual harassment,

teachers understanding of sexual harassment, ways of student-teacher sexual harassment could be curbed.

1.8 Definition of Operational Terms

Sexual harassment: any unwanted or unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours and other unwelcome visual, verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Rape: is an assault by a person involving sexual intercourse with another person without that person's consent.

Sexual abuse: is the forcing of undesired sexual behaviour by one person upon another

1.9 Organization of the Study

Chapter one consist of the introductory aspect of the study which comprised the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, definition of terms and organization of the study. Chapter two is devoted to the review of relevant literature and chapter three handles the methodology. Chapter three addressed the population, description of the study, method of selecting the sample, instrument, data collection and the procedure for analyzing the data. Chapter four dealt with the data analysis, results and discussion, while conclusions and recommendations are provided in chapter five.

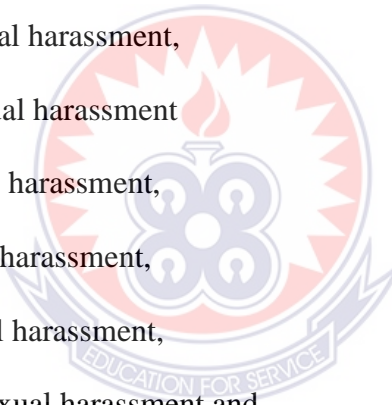
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature related to the study. The essence of this review is partly to provide a frame work which will constitute the basis for comparing and contrasting between this study and those of other writers so as to identify areas that requires further investigation. The review highlights issues such as:

1. Concept of sexual harassment,
2. Theories of sexual harassment
3. Nature of sexual harassment,
4. Types of sexual harassment,
5. Causes of sexual harassment,
6. Prevention of sexual harassment and



2.2 Theories and Models of Sexual Harassment

In providing an insight into why sexual harassment does exist in society, Marx's theory of alienation, objectification theory, conflict theory, and sexual terrorism theory are discussed. Marx used the concept of alienation to describe the way that factory workers felt about their work in the early days of industrialization. Marx argued that workers were alienated from their labour because they had no control over the product, over the means of production, and could therefore derive no satisfaction from it. Marx's theory of alienation has been used to describe gender relations and the situation of women under patriarchy by Marxist or socialist feminist critics.

Bartky (1990) argues that women are sexually alienated in patriarchal societies for they are denied the right to develop, as men do, and help to define what it means to be human. As Rubin (1975), states that “it is precisely this ‘historical and moral element’ which determines that a ‘wife’ is among the necessities of a worker, that women rather than men do housework, and that capitalism is heir to a long tradition in which women do not inherit, in which women do not lead, and in which women do not talk to god” (p. 164). It is this alienation from being viewed and viewing themselves as conscious subjects that alienate women from their own desire. Often, women view themselves as objects suited to fulfill another’s (male) desire.

Stemming from Marx’s theory of alienation is Bartky’s (1990) theory of women’s sexual objectification which provides insight into why women are the most frequent victims of sexual harassment and also why sexual harassment was considered to be natural human functioning until the recent past. As Bartky argues, “sexual objectification occurs when a woman’s sexual parts or sexual functions are separated out from her person, reduced to the status of mere instruments, or else regarded as if they were capable of representing her” (p. 35). In other words, women are often thought of in terms of the body, in terms of sexuality, and thus they are often reduced to just that “sexual beings that are not on an equal plane with that of men” (p. 35). Bartky further opines that, “clearly, sexual objectification is a form of fragmentation and thus an impoverishment of the objectified individual; it involves too the implicit denial to those who suffer it that they have capacities which transcend the merely sexual” (p. 36).

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) explain that the objectification theory suggests that sexual harassment may cause a higher self-consciousness about one's body. Moreover, sexual harassment has been linked to problems with body image for adolescent girls and college women (Murnen & Smolak, 2000). As Fredrickson and Roberts state, "at a psychological level, perhaps the most profound effect of objectifying treatment is that it coaxes girls and women to adopt a peculiar view of the self" (p.13). The objectification theory, according to Fredrickson and Roberts posits that the cultural milieu of objectification functions to socialise girls and women to, at some level, treat themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated" (p. 177). In other words, the objectification theory posits that the female body is objectified in American society through history, tradition, the media, etc. Because women are thought of largely in terms of their bodies, they are more susceptible to sexual harassment. Bartky (1990) observes that objectification itself, as well as its repercussions (namely sexual harassment), have damaging consequences for women.

According to Hartmann (1977), the conflict theories suggest that women, as well as people of colour, remain in secondary positions in society relative to white men because of the exploitation of the powers that be, i.e., powerful men. Hartmann further explains that in the not so recent past, women were considered to be the property of men. Industrialisation removed much work from the household, but women were allowed only the lowest paying jobs. White men, according him, were unwilling to lose control over the labour of women or the labour force in general. According to conflict theories, sexual harassment was a way for men to control women in the workplace.

Sexual terrorism theory (Sheffield, 1989) suggests that violence against women, such as sexual harassment, instills fear in them. Thus, females may show more distress when experiencing sexual harassment than males because of the unequal power afforded to them by traditional gender roles.

Violence against the female body (rape, battery, incest, and harassment) and the perpetuation of fear and violence form the basis of patriarchal power. Both violence and fear are functional. If men did not have the power to intimidate and to punish, their domination of women in all spheres of society political, social, and economic could not exist.

In other words, sexual harassment is merely one facet of sexual terrorism that serves to keep women in positions of fear and powerlessness. Marx's theory of alienation, Bartky's theory of sexual objectification, conflict theory and sexual terrorism theory all provide insight into the phenomenon of sexual harassment. Marx's theory of alienation suggests that all people within a capitalist society are alienated. Critics, both Marxist and socialist feminist, have expanded this theory and have suggested that because women lack the formal power that men enjoy in a patriarchal society, they are more susceptible to sexual harassment and to sexual objectification. Conflict and sexual terrorism theories suggest that sexual harassment functions as a tool to maintain the status quo where men enjoy the lion's share of power, autonomy, and economic opportunity.

There are numerous theories regarding the origination of sexual harassment. Many theorists working in the area of sexual harassment have explored the behaviour through aspects of the sociocultural perspective that positions sexual harassment as a product of Western society which generally delineates male dominance over female

(Malovich & Stake, 1990) by perpetuating beliefs, attitudes and actions that devalue women because of their sex (Tangri & Hayes, 1997).

The review of literature on the theories of sexual harassment that are applicable to the school environment reveals the following theories and models; abuse of power, psychological theories, social judgment-involvement, organizational theories and cultural theories. However all these theories are workplace-based, they have implications for understanding sexual harassment in schools. Each of the theory is discussed here.

2.2.1 Abuse of Power Theory/Model

Bargh and Raymond (1995), offer a psychological approach to understanding sexual harassment. In their model, they consider sexual harassment from a perspective of an abuse of power that has its origin in psychoemotional processes. The model holds that there is, in every situation, a possibility of holding the power will, for some, automatically and unconsciously trigger a sexuality schema, just as racial or gender features of automatically trigger stereotypes of that group. They observe that the possible origins of the automatic power/sex linkage are rooted in:

1. Dysfunctional parent-child relationship in which the opposite sex parent exerted inordinate control over the life of the harasser, and/or
2. Childhood instances of the harasser of sexual abuse where power also was exerted against the harasser as a child.

Johnson and Johnson, (cited in Wetzel and Brown, 2000), for instance, describe a situation where coercive power may be used to perpetuate peer sexual harassment in school. Coercion occurs when a person is forced to do something he or she does not want to do. In coercive power therefore, it is the situation where an individual

(student) is forced to do something (sexual harassment) for fear of negative consequences. The harasser's group leadership may coerce the harasser to participate in the sexual harassment act against the harasser's will. But as long as the harasser wishes to belong and remain in the group as a group member, he/she will participate in the act of sexual harassment. The consequence of his/her refusal will be an expulsion from the group, which the harasser might not wish to experience.

2.2.2 Psychological Theory

Offering a psychological theory, Levant and Brooks (cited in Wetzel and Brown, 2000) connect sexual harassment to the tendency of many males to view sexuality as separate from the intimate relationship. Specifically, it is argued that men's tendency toward non-traditional sexuality (defined as the tendency to experience sex primarily as lust without any requirement for relational intimacy or emotional attachment) is not natural, not genetic and not a product of evolution. Levant and Brooks observe that it is rather thought that the tendency is closely linked to the traumatic socialization of boys, in which display of emotion are discouraged and emotional intimacy is equated with the loss of autonomy. This socialization is said to breed not only sexual harassment behaviour but also other more physical forms of violence and abuse (White, 2000).

Allied with the psychological theory of Levant and Brooks (cited in Wetzel and Brown, 2000) is the "male gender socialization" theory of Lisak, (cited in Wetzel and Brown, 2000). He proposes that there is a relationship between male gender socialization and their perception and attitude about female. Specifically, he states that the training most males receive to be "masculine" leads to their having

stereotyped sex role beliefs, and particular attitude towards women; some have hostility toward women, and some end with hypermasculine belief.

Also connected to male gender socialization is the masculinization of sexuality, which teaches males to separate sex and emotions, thereby leading to the tendency to perceive the other person as an object and to be disconnected from empathizing with the other person (Lisak, cited in Wetzel and Brown, 2000). Lisak calls this condition an “empathy deficit”. He further points out that there are considerable research findings indicating that lack of empathy is associated with aggressive behaviour, which includes sexual harassment.

These psychological theories contribute to understanding sexual harassment by males but do little to further our understanding of sexual harassment about females. Wetzel and Brown (2000) note that while they provide some information about females’ reaction and acceptance, or non-objection to being sexually harassed, they do not explain it.

2.2.3 Social Judgment-Involvement Theory

Payne (cited in Wetzel and Brown, 2000) has offered a model of teacher-to-student and student-to-student sexual harassment on the basis of social judgment-involvement theory, which associates incidents of harassment with power, miscommunication, and myths about one’s own sex and/or the opposite sex. According to the theory, harassers “key” their victims so that a power contest will begin but the victims do not understand what is happening.

According to Payne, miscommunication occurs when power myths about men and women intersect during the harassment episode. Such myths, according to Payne include:

- (1) the “looking and touching” myth
- (2) the “failure to report” myth
- (3) the “macho man” myth
- (4) the “consenting adult” myth (Payne, cited in Wetzel and Brown, 2000).

When placed in a harassment episode, females make decisions about both the action and the harasser. These decisions examined in light of social judgment-involvement theory, indicate that feelings of powerlessness are the single strongest element perpetrating sexual harassment (Payne, cited in Wetzel and Brown, 2000).

According to Payne (cited in Wetzel and Brown, 2000), both sexes help create an environment ripe for sexual harassment by incorrect decision on four basic courses of action. These are:

- (1) trying not to respond and hoping it will go away
- (2) attempting to impugn the reputation of the women; attempting to change the system and its support of harassment
- (3) protecting the reputation of the men actively involved in the harassment, and
- (4) generally ignoring the issue of sexual harassment, which until recently had received little attention (p. 1).

Based on this theory, Payne states that in order to reduce or prevent sexual harassment from occurring in educational institutions, “students should be informed about sexual harassment, and learn that they do not have to put up with it (p. 1).

2.2.4 Organizational Theories

Fiske and Glick (1995) present a theory that is based on events in the workplace. It could be argued that if schools are children's workplace, then some of what they propose for the workplace can be applied to sexual harassment in schools. Basically, Fiske and Glick propose that any organisation or institution be it, educational or business, contains a complex interplay of ambivalent motives and gender stereotyping of females and the roles they are expected to fulfill. The ambivalence has as its source the conflicting motives for males of both dominance and intimacy. These in turn, produce both positive and negative feelings towards women.

Fiske and Glick (1995) model so called "cognitive-motivational" proposes an interaction of ambivalent, stereotyping of women, and gender stereotyping jobs. They propose four types of harassment:

- (1) earnest, where sexual intimacy is the motive
- (2) hostile, where domination is the motive
- (3) ambivalent paternalistic, where protections and sexual intimacy interact, and
- (4) competitive, where gender differentiation and sexual intimacy are the motive.

Regardless of the type of harassment, the end result is the same. However, understanding or accepting that there may be different motives for the harassment means that there must be a multifaceted approach to addressing sexual harassment, either on the job or in schools.

2.2.5 Cultural Theory

Lee, Croninger, Linn and Chen (1996) propose that structural and ethical cultural theories are appropriate to explain sexual harassment in schools. Structural cultural theory is based on school or group norms. Ethical cultural theories use the concept of

shared values and legitimate commonly held ethical and moral principles of group members as their basis. Both theoretical approaches use the prevailing culture and norms as explanations for why sexual harassment occurs, and is tolerated or addressed. Beliefs, attitudes and values in the community, schools and other groups shape behaviour responses to sexual harassment. These theories, therefore, propose that such beliefs, attitudes and values have to be addressed if sexual harassment is to be prevented, reduced or eliminated (Lee et al., 1996).

Wetzel and Brown (2000) comment that it is easy to see why it would be difficult to successfully intervene to address sexual harassment if it is an integral part of the culture as many, if not all, the beliefs, attitudes and values are internalised and acted on without conscious thought. On the other hand, if sufficient numbers of people in the culture perceive that existing beliefs and attitudes are inconsistent with strongly held values, or that some behaviours are harmful, then there can be successful intervention. Lee and colleagues (1996) acknowledge that changing perceptions is not easy, but it can be done.

2.3 Concept of Sexual Harassment

The term “sexual harassment” was coined by Catherine Alice MacKinnon in 1979 as part of a ground-breaking legal theory in which it was proposed that certain systematic behaviours occurring in the workplace constituted sex discrimination. MacKinnon referred to these behaviours collectively as forms of sexual harassment (Wetzel & Brown, 2000). Generally, the sexual harassment cited by MacKinnon included: (a) dispensing behaviour or rewards for work based on an individual’s classification and/or (b) intentionally singling out a woman as the object of unwelcome sexual advances (Wetzel & Brown, 2000). Wetzel and Brown observe

that as part of constituting her legal theory of sexual harassment, MacKinnon (1979b) noted that the position of women is that of a socially disadvantaged group, claiming that women, the world over, lived in a culture that assigned higher status and power to males. Thus, women were said to be experiencing a kind of forced inferiority, in which sexual harassment was but one example of an institutionally grounded system that negatively stereotyped women as a group.

In recent times, the study of sexual harassment does not only focus on girls or women as victims, but also on men and boys who can be targets for sexual harassment by their perpetrators. For instance the first large scale study of sexual harassment in United States of America schools by the Association of American University Women (AAUW) in 1993 and 2001 included both male and female students.

Sexual harassment is a complex phenomenon that has many accepted definitions. Scholars and legal experts disagree about what behaviours should and should not be included in the definition of sexual harassment. For this reason, the definition of sexual harassment continues to evolve.

Sexual harassment is defined by the AAUW (2001) as “unwanted and unwelcome sexual behaviour that interferes with your life. Sexual harassment is not behaviour that you like or want (for example wanted kissing, touching or flirting)” (p.2). Du Plessis, Fouche and Van Wyk (1998) define sexual harassment as “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. The unwanted nature of the sexual harassment distinguishes it from behaviours that are welcome and mutually acceptable” (p. 148). They further explain that sexual attention becomes sexual harassment if:

- (a) the behaviour is persistent (although a single incident of harassment can constitute sexual harassment)
- (b) the recipient has made it clear that the behaviour is considered offensive; and/or
- (c) the perpetrator should have known the behaviour is regarded as unacceptable.

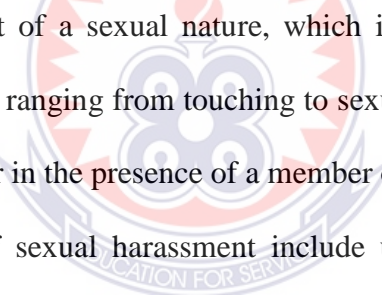
This definition is corroborated by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the United States Department of Education, which is responsible for enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which sees sexual harassment as a form of discrimination. In January 2001, OCR issued a “Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance” which defines sexual harassment under Title IX as follows:

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal, or non-verbal, physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment of a student can deny or limit, on the basis of sex, the students’ ability, to participate in or receive benefits, services, or opportunities in the school’s programme Office for Civil Rights, USDE (2001, p. 2)

AAUW (2001) observes that in education, sexual harassment, as an unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature, interferes with students’ ability to learn, study, work or participate in school activities. This harassment is perpetrated by both peers and individuals in positions of power relative to the person being harassed. In schools, though sexual harassment initiated by students is most common, it can also be perpetrated by teachers or other school employees, and the victim can be a student, a teacher, or other school employee.

While sexual harassment is legally defined as “unwanted” behaviour, many experts agree that even consensual sexual interactions between students and teachers constitute sexual harassment because, they say, the power differential creates a dynamic in which “mutual consent” is impossible (Smithson, 1990). Dziech and Weiner (1990) write that, “physical intimacy with students is not now and never has been acceptable behaviour for academicians. It cannot be defended or explained away by evoking fantasies of devoted or sophisticated students being denied the right to “true love”. Where power differential exists, there can be no “mutual consent”” (p. 23).

Du Plessis et al. (1998) suggest that sexual harassment may include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct, and is not limited to the following examples:

- 
- (a) Physical conduct of a sexual nature, which includes all forms of unwanted physical contact, ranging from touching to sexual assault and rape, including a strip search by or in the presence of a member of the opposite sex.
 - (b) Verbal forms of sexual harassment include unwelcome innuendoes, sexual advances, comments about a person’s body made in their presence or to them, unwelcome and inappropriate enquiries about a person’s sex life, and unwelcome whistling at a person or a group of people.
 - (c) Non-verbal forms of sexual harassment include unwelcome gestures, indecent exposure of body parts, and the unwelcome display of sexual explicit pictures or objects.
 - (d) Quid pro quo harassment occurs when an owner, employer, supervisor, member of management or co-employee undertakes or attempts to influence or influences the process of employment, promotion, training, discipline, salary

increment or other benefits of an employee or job applicant in exchange for sexual favour (p. 418).

A major element underlying the occurrence of sexual harassment is the influence of power (Smithson, 1990; Prinsloo, 2000). It is this power dynamic that makes students and subordinates at school or the work place more vulnerable to sexual harassment and violence. At the school environment, male students take advantage of the power of their masculinity to sexually harass female students, while male teachers also take advantage of their position as classroom figure heads to demand sexual favours from their female students for academic favour. Prinsloo (2006) observes that those in power of authority misuse this power to unfairly discriminate against subordinates, be it students or young staff. Power is the ability to execute authority. Gerber and Van Dyk (1998) distinguish between the following types of power:

- (a) Legitimate power (position power): This is the official authority delegated to a position. In terms of this power, the leader/educator has the right to expect subordinates to carry out their duties conscientiously, and to take disciplinary measures if they do not. In most cases of sexual harassment against students in schools, the victim finds themselves exposed to educators or fellow students who misuse their power of authority to intimidate and sexually abuse them.
- (b) Power by reward: This is used to give or withhold rewards such as recognition and appreciation, merits and promotion. The positive side of the power of reward is that it could be used to motivate staff or learners. But if this power is misused to get sexual favours, it is known as sexual favouritism. It happens where a person who is in a position of authority only rewards those who respond to his/her sexual advances. Girls in school are subjected to this serious form of unfair discrimination. The rewards could be in the form of financial

support to an impoverished household (the Citizen, 20 February 2002) or for grades.

- (c) Coercive power: This is inspired by fear, either psychological or physical, in subordinates. The much higher incidence of sexual harassment and victimization among female learners than males is a good example of coercive power, which may be attributed to the patriarchal attitudes of most societies (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

Due to the multiplicity of definitions of sexual harassment, the New York State Governor's Task Force on Sexual Harassment in USA found "no single definition of Sexual Harassment can be meaningful for all situations, purposes and individuals" (cited in Brandenbury, 1997, p.1). Martin (2005) opines that the reason why the phenomenon of sexual harassment possesses a multitude of acceptable definitions is because it is so complex involving a variety of interrelated factors – individual and societal: gender socialisation and orientation, locus of control, traditional patriarchal values, issues of power, language and discourse and one's ability to appropriate them.

Attafuah (2003) stated that students also harass teachers through phone calls, messages, letter writing and even visiting teachers in their bungalows to expose their sensitive parts to the teachers when they are alone with. Students sometimes threaten teachers to sleep with them if not that they shout "rape" and the teacher would be sacked by the authorities.

Another problematic area in the definition is whether or not there is a duration component to harassment. In technical definitions of harassment, it is implied that this is prolonged pestering: "worry continually; make repeat attack on" (Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus, 1995). It is debatable, however, whether one needs to suffer

multiple acts rather than a single act of pestering for this to constitute harassment. Behind this concern about the relevance of periodicity is the fear that a single serious act of harassment may be the precursor to violence, especially, with children or a threat to livelihood, especially, at the workplace.

As a result of the historical link between workplace and the debate on harassment, many people look at the public service to provide some guiding principles for dealing with harassment. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the United States (EEOC, 1980) provides some of the earliest documentation and has become the basis of definitions by multilateral or bilateral agencies. EEOC notes that sexual advances that bear the following characteristics are direct undisguised forms of harassment; sexual advances that become a pre-condition for employment, sexual advances that influence employment decisions affecting the target and sexual advances that create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment for the target.

Benokraitis' (1997) research in the US military which involved 20,249 respondents that revealed more forms of behaviour than they anticipated, were seen to be within the gamut of forms of sexual harassment. These included forms like; actual or attempted rape or sexual assault, persistent unwanted/uninvited touching, cornering, pinching, unwanted/uninvited sexually looks, gestures or body language, teasing, whistles, calls, hoots, remarks, jokes, or intimate questions, and unwanted/uninvited letters, phones calls, materials and display of sexual nature.

Sexual harassment agrees on only one semantic: that sexual harassment is improper behaviour that has as sexual dimension. Like most psychological constructs, it has been difficult to define. The following definition disagree on: whether a power

differential is necessary for sexual harassment occur; whether a location needs to be specified (e.g. the school), the importance placed on whether the victim perceives the behaviour as problematic, whether only women can be sexually harassed, whether an act can be defined as harassing in and of itself or whether further negative consequences are necessary for the act to be legitimate case of sexual harassment, and of itself or whether further negative consequences are necessary for the act to be legitimate case of sexual harassment “as opposed to sexual harassment, and whether sexist (e.g. “gender harassment”) as opposed to sexual behaviour is a type of sexual harassment (O’Donohue, Downs & Yeater, 1998).

Fitzgerald, Swan and Magley (1997) define psychological sexual harassment as an “unwanted sex-related behaviour at work that is appraised by the recipient as offensive exceeding her resources or threatening her well-being”. They suggest that the victim’s appraisal is determined by stimulus factors (having to do with the behaviour itself), contextual factors (having to do with the organization context in which the behaviour takes place), and individual factors (having to do with the individual woman).

There is a legal definition of sexual harassment by the Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) in their publication on sexual harassment in school in (1995) as an “unwelcome or unwanted conduct of a sexual or sexist nature. It is an abuse of power or an act of hostility or prejudice that is expressed sexually”.

According to Aeberhard-Hodges (1997) sexual harassment is an “unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature and a perception by the victim that it has become a condition of work, or creates a hostile, intimidating and humiliating working environment. To her, most definitions of sexual harassment combine three elements, the perception of the

victim such that behaviour is being used as a term or condition of work and the tendency to humiliate working environment offensive, hostile working environment for the victim. Sheffield, as cited by Attafuah (2003) argues that sexual harassment is “unsolicited non-reciprocal male behaviour that asserts a woman’s sex role over her function as a worker. It can be any or all of the following: Starting at, commenting on, or touching a woman’s body for acquiescence in sexual intercourse and rape”.

A survey conducted by the African Women Lawyers Association (AWLA) in 2003 defined sexual harassment as any unwelcome conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature, whether on a one-time basic or a series of incidents, that might cause offence, or that might reasonably be conceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment, opportunity for promotion etc. (The Daily Graphic, February 2010). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) with reference to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 under Title VII of the United States sees sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

According to Chuang and Kleiner (1999) sexual harassment means “unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of sexual nature made by someone from or in the education setting under any of the following conditions:

- a. Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or a condition of an individual’s academic status or progress.
- b. Submission to or injection of the conduct by individual is used as basis of academic decision affecting the individual.

- c. The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact upon the individual academic performance or creating and intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.
- d. Submission to or rejection of the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding honours programmes or activities available at or through the school.

They further add that the following might, continued or repeated, constitute sexual harassment:

- a. Unwelcome sexual propositions or graphic comments about a person's body.
- b. Sexually suggestive objects or pictures in the work place.
- c. Sexually degrading words to describe a person.
- d. Derogatory or sexually explicit statements about an actual or supposed sexual relationship.
- e. Unwelcome touching, petting, pinching and
- f. Derogatory gender humour

In the words of Attafuah (2003) at a presentation on the theme "The Meaning, Scope and Reality of sexual harassment in the Ghanaian Cultural Context", sexual harassment in the context of the workplace and for that matter the school is "unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that detrimentally affects the work or the school environment or leads to adverse consequences for the victim of harassment."

As cited by Attafuah (2003) Agarwal regards sexual harassment as "any sexual oriented practice that endangers and individual's continued employment (schooling) negatively affects his or her work performance or undermines his or her sense of personal dignity which may manifest itself blatantly in forms such as leering,

grabbing and even sexual assault, which in more subtle forms of sexual harassment, may include sexual innuendoes and proposition for dates or sexual favours”.

The main point made by the various scholars cited in this study is that, sexual harassment is said to have occurred whenever a behaviour is perceived as a or conditions of work is perceived as a or conditions of work and also when that behaviour creates an offensive working environment that negatively affects the victim’s performance. In this study, the definition of Attafuah shall be adopted, that is, “sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of sexual nature that affects the work or the school environment or leads to adverse consequences for the victims of harassment”.

2.3.1 Nature or forms of Sexual Harassment

Aeberhard-Hodges (1997) explains that sexual harassment can involve physical contact, expression of sexual jokes, and exhibition of pornography or unnecessary and unwanted comments on a person’s appearance. According to William (1987), sexual harassment of women by men can occur in student-teacher relationships or doctor-patient relationships, especially, where power is vested in the male, and the lesser status in a female. She further explains that the nature of sexual harassment can range from disparaging jokes and derogatory remarks about women in the context of classroom activities to the solicitation of sexual favours in exchange for high grades.

Riggs (1993) states that “sexually harassing behaviour encompasses a broad range of actions including unwelcome sexual advances or request for sexual favours when the acceptance or rejection of such action serves as a basis for academic or employment decisions.” Sexual harassment behaviour also includes conduct that interferes with a

student's or employee's performance by allowing the existence of a hostile working environment or hostile learning environment.

Fitzgerald et al. (1999), state more specifically that harassing behaviour includes the following;

- a. Gender harassment, including sexist statements and behaviour that convey insulting, degrading or sexist attitudes,
- b. Seductive behaviour encompassing unwanted, inappropriate and offensive physical or verbal advances
- c. Sexual bribery involving solicitation of sexual activity or other sex-linked behaviour by promise of reward,
- d. Sexual coercion or other sex-linked behaviour by threat of punishment, and
- e. Sexual assault, attempted rape and rape.

From the discussions on sexual harassment, it can be concluded that a number of behaviours such as unwanted physical advances, sexual bribery or gender harassment constitute sexual harassment, and that it is a vital developmental issue which does not only put the victim into serious emotional, social and psychological problems, but also has a devastating effect on the entire society.

In a study, Wolfe and Chiodo (2008) observed that the forms of sexual harassment against students may take different forms. In their study, they found that girls were much more likely to report being victims of unwanted sexual attention than boys on almost all their questions. Their study found that the most common form of harassment reported by girls in school was verbal harassment, reported by 46% of their respondents. Specifically, these students, mostly girls reported that "someone made sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks at me". Their study also found that

33% of the respondents reported that they experience physical harassment in their school. The physical sexual harassment was in the form of “someone touched, grabbed or pinched me in a sexual way” or “someone brushed up against me in a sexual way”.

In another study among adolescent school girls in South India, Leach and Sitaram (2007) found that verbal forms of sexual harassment were the most unpleasant experience that girls experience in their schools. The school girls reported that boys “teased girls, write love letters and notes which they passed on to girls, buy bangles for them and write the names of the girls who they “fancy” on their hands or on the school walls” (p. 265). Additionally, Leach and Sitaram found that the perpetrators of these verbal sexual harassment use strategies such as comparing a girl with a film star, sing film songs and so on, suggesting a romantic liaison. Leach and Sitaram observe that “this spreading of rumours was particularly alarming to girls” (p.266).

Similarly, Witkowski and Menckel (2007) found that with regard to sexual harassment, the kinds of offending verbal behaviours could be divided into two categories in accordance with their findings, namely implicit and explicit sexual references. They found that the most common sexual harassment behaviour against students were implicit in nature. These included demeaning comments about gender and sexuality, sexualized conversation, attractiveness rating and sexual comments. Witkowski and Menckel (2007) found that over 50% of their respondents were exposed to this harassment repeatedly (daily, weekly or monthly).

There are various forms of sexual harassment and different authors classify sexual harassment into different types. The Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF, 1995) publications identify two forms of sexual harassment in schools.

They noted the first form as “Quid Pro Quo” which literally means “this for that”. This form of harassment occurs when there are two people with different levels of authority. Often this put the student in an uncomfortable position and can seriously interfere with her ability to concentrate or enjoy her studies and school experience. For example, if a teacher lets a student know that she will perform better in an English exam if she goes out with him, it is a form of ‘quid pro quo’ sexual harassment. In addition, the teacher may retaliate if the student refuses his offer, and hurt the student academically, socially and personally.

The second form is the creation of a “hostile environment”. This occurs when there is unwelcome sexual conduct, such as touching, teasing, name-calling, sexual posters, pictures or jokes, which create an atmosphere that negatively impacts a student’s daily routine. This type of harassment more often occurs between peers and those in equal power relationships. To create a hostile environment by a teacher or staff, these behaviours need to be pervasive or severe.

Other forms may be explicit calls or letters at school or home, whistling, hooting, sucking lips, smirking and animal noises, tales of sexual exploits, comments about a person’s body in a sexual way, graphic description or display of pornographic material at the work place, sexual graffiti, inappropriate gift for a business relationship and indecent exposure.

2.3.2 Causes of Sexual Harassment

The causes of sexual harassment vary from person to person and from situation to situation. Many of the causes are interrelated, and are linked to the culture and values in society and companies, and to the roles, relative power status of the men and women concerned.

2.3.2.1 Socialization

The way people are brought up strongly influences their behaviour. Various viewpoints could create the enabling environment that allows sexual harassment to flourish. For example, in cultures where it is or was until recently “OK” to discriminate against people because they are different (in terms of gender, race, culture, religion, lifestyle or political conviction), the abuse of power humiliation that is typical of sexual harassment will not be unusual. Men who were brought up with macho behave like “real men pinch bottoms”, “girls were made to hug and kiss”, “the more, the merrier”, easily carry these social values and often think that women take their harassment as a compliment.

2.3.2.2 Power Games

Social and political changes in recent years have changed power relationships. Some men feel threatened by the career advancement of women and people of colour, or are uncomfortable with women’s new found independence and assertiveness at home or at school. Other men who have recently gained positions (possibly after decades of discrimination) may also try to prove them by harassing subordinate. Some men regard it as “fringe benefit” to which their position, power and sex entitles them. In times of uncertainty, fear, limited promotion opportunities, personal stress and pressure on performance are real dangers that sexual harassment and trading sexual favours form as part of the power games played.

2.3.2.3 Vulnerability of the victim

Evenhuis (1992) explains that the low status and importance of earning a living by women adds to the vulnerability of sexual harassment victims. Giuffre and Williams (1994) stressed that a victim of sexual harassment may be more likely to be believed

when there is evidence of assault, a situation that is analogous to acquaintance rape. Thus, low status, earning a living, age, employment and academic status tend to make women more vulnerable victims of sexual harassment. Also victims are usually not believed because there are no signs of assault. Aeberhard-Hodges (1997) is of the view that the victim is usually vulnerable due to age difference, or lower employment status. She further explained that, another factor contributing to the vulnerability of the victim is that of timidity of the victim or what might be called society's conditioning.

In total, vulnerability to sexual harassment may be due to factors in our environment such as social conditions. Vulnerability is importantly due to the continuing subordination of women in social, economic, political, education and the dominance of men in society. This dominance may be reflected in the attempt to impose male perception of decency and sexuality on women by determining what is provocation and what is decent in dressing styles.

2.4 Perception of Sexual Harassment

Williams (1987) explains that like rape and battering, the sexual harassment of women goes widely unreported. While sexual harassment is less violent than rape and battering, it is clearly an intimidation by men, and both of them are degrading and exploitative. Paludi and Barickman (1991) as cited by Attafuah (2003), point out that victims of sexual harassment by behaviour which fits the legal definition of sexual harassment and those who are traumatized by experience do not label what has happened to them as sexual harassment. Giuffre and Williams (1994) explain why many victims fail to label and even do not report cases of sexual harassment. They said that many people still do not recognize that sexual harassment is an actionable

offence. They further explained and labelled what many men and women experience in the work place (School) as pleasurable.

According to these authors, it is difficult to label behaviour as sexual harassment because it forces people to draw a line between illicit and legitimate forms of sexuality at work or school. To them, whether a particular interaction is identified as harassment or not, will depend on the intention of the harasser and the interpretation of the interaction made by the victim. Both of these perspectives will be highly influenced by work place or school, culture and the social context of the specific event. Also, the fact that men and women may enjoy certain sexual interactions in the work place and school do not mean they take place outside of oppressive social relationship neither does it imply that these routine interactions have no negative consequence for both the woman and the man.

Williams acknowledges that although there are now legal remedies, the problem of sexual harassment is by no means solved. Unlike rape and battering which leave physical evidence, sexual harassment may be hard to prove. Usually, it involves the word of one person against another with power. Flyer (2002) as cited in Essel (2007) explains that expression like “if the woman just said no he would have stopped”, “if you ignore sexual harassment it will go away” “sexual harassment is harmless,” “women who object to sexual harassment have no sense of humour” etc, are all myths that prevent the harasser from taking a bold action against it.

Meanwhile, the fact is that if many harassers are told “NO” repeatedly, it does no good. Generally, the harasser is a repeated offender who will not stop on his own. Not giving attention to it may be humiliating and degrading. It hinders learning, careers and often threatens economic livelihood. In brief, there is the problem of wrong

labelling; being forced to draw a line between illicit and legitimate sexuality, sexual harassment and sexuality with consent. Moreover, the power in proving sexual harassment and interpreting the female's "No" is not easy. In this view, victims of sexual harassment go through a lot of problems which may be psychological, emotional and economic. Also, they are confronted with inhibiting factors that prevent them from reporting the incidence.

2.5 Effects of Sexual Harassment in Schools

According to Fineran and Bennett (1998), peer sexual harassment can cause performance difficulty including absenteeism, decreased quality of schoolwork, skipping or dropping courses, lower grades, loss of friends, tardiness and truancy in its victims. In a related study, Plan Ghana (2009) also found similar effects of sexual harassment against female students. They report that victims of sexual abuse experience distorted attention in class, loss interest in schooling, become afraid of their perpetrators, feel stigmatised, withdraw from their peers and other school activities, such as games and sports.

Roscoe, Strouse, and Goodwin (1994) found that female victims of peer sexual harassment experience more detriment to their learning as a result of such experiences than do males. They also found that although many adolescents acknowledge that behaviours constituting sexual harassment are indeed wrong, most do nothing to stop them. Roscoe et al. also provided insight into why peers engage in sexual harassment: peer pressure; it is fun; to get the victim's attention; everyone does it; have seen others do it; do not recognise the behaviour as unwelcome and/or illegal; do not know other ways to show people of the opposite sex that they are interested in them; the entire area of sexuality is new and unfamiliar to them (p. 520).

Kopels and Dupper (1999) suggest that girls suffer a variety of long-term effects as a result of peer sexual harassment; these effects for female adolescents can adversely affect their learning. Sexual harassment can cause embarrassment and self-consciousness, which not surprisingly can foster feelings of insecurity or loss of confidence. In addition to these feelings females have reported that they did not want to go to school, talk in class, or that they found it hard to pay attention, as a result of experiencing sexual harassment.

Furthermore, research indicates that many young women have dropped courses, received lower grades, have a decreased desire to socialise, and may leave school altogether (AAUW, 2001/1993; Fineran & Bennett, 1998; Shoop & Hayhow, 1994; Stein, 1995). Such consequences of sexual harassment in the schools may serve to further strengthen female financial dependence upon men and serve to perpetuate traditional notions of gender.

Cleveland and Kerst (1993) argue that ignoring sexual harassment, with the hope that it will stop, may serve only to exacerbate the problem. As Cleveland and Kerst state, “two of the most common reactions that women have to sexual harassment are denial and to ignore the incident. . . . Ignoring sexual harassment, especially more subtle forms, may lead to continued harassment in the same or greater intensity” (p. 59). Some girls may be reluctant to come forward to report incidents of sexual harassment because such occurrences are downplayed in the school culture. As Shoop and Hayhow (1994) state, “what a man might consider innocuous, a woman might consider blatantly offensive” (p. 16). Simply because the feelings of females may not be validated by the male segment of the student population or the school culture in

general does not signify that something inappropriate did not occur. As Hand and Sanchez (2000) state:

Girls are far more likely to perceive harassment as more harmful than boys and to experience a far greater frequency and severity of harassment. Girls are more likely to be targets of physical sexual harassment than boys and that physical harassment rather than derogatory or verbal and/or visual forms of harassment exacerbate the gender gap in educational outcomes (p. 718).

This is why staff training on what behaviours constitute sexual harassment and the effects sexual harassment has on students is crucial. Jordan, Price, and Telljohann (1998) reported interesting findings regarding locus of control and peer sexual harassment in junior high school. They found that 67% of respondents believed they possessed the power to stop sexual harassment directed at them; 78% felt that if they took the correct actions, they could prevent their own victimisation; and 67% believed they would know how to handle the problem if they were to experience sexual harassment. Jordan et al. also found that while the majority of respondents felt they had the power to stop sexual harassment, 12-15% did not feel they possessed the power to stop sexual harassment.

The effects of peer sexual harassment on females are alarming. Martin (2005) found some of the effects as increase in absences and a decrease in the quality of schoolwork, dropping courses, truancy and a general decline in female victim's learning. He further suggested that victims failing to report incidents of sexual harassment may serve only to exacerbate the problem. Thus, in order to combat the problem of sexual harassment, it seems that schools may have to educate students on sexual harassment and the behaviours that constitute it. They may have to also

publicise reporting procedures and make them accessible so that students do not feel intimidated to use them. Schools may have to also do in-service training of staff to be aware of behaviours that constitute sexual harassment and to intervene when they witness such behaviours. This will alleviate some of the burden from the victims.

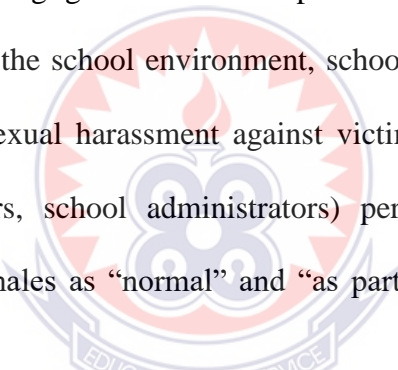
Interesting findings dealing with locus of control and sexual harassment also provide some hope in dealing with sexual harassment. If females are provided opportunities to increase their internal loci, that is, if a sense of empowerment is instilled within them, perhaps the effects of peer sexual harassment on them would be less damaging. As Schwartz (2000) argues, “because empowerment is one of the best ways to prevent harassment, schools need to build students’ self-esteem. Girls can be taught ‘assertiveness skills’ to enable them to express their feelings clearly and help them stop harassment should it occur” (p. 3). Perhaps then students, particularly girls, would feel as if they could do something about the sexual harassment they experience.

2.6 Sexual Harassment in Schools

Martin (2005) notes that in the United States of America, institutions receiving federal funds, such as public schools and universities, have been held liable for hostile school environments that promote sexual harassment. She provides instances of law suits (legal cases) between certain individuals and public educational institutions, such as, *Davis v. Monroe* (1996), *Doe v. University of Illinois* (1998), and *Gebser v. Lago Vista* (1998). She reports that these cases found that peer sexual harassment claims may be brought under Title IX of the 1964 Civil Rights Law, where students are involved in school activities or are under school supervision if school officials were aware of the harassment and failed to take action.

Martin (2005) further observes that recent court cases have been filed in the US law courts because of a school district's failure to recognize or take seriously claims of sexual harassment. Perhaps one reason for this failure or denial of the problem is that such behaviour in teenagers is viewed as "normal." Fineran and Bennett (1999) argue that sexual harassment is not only often viewed as normal, but also it serves the function of maintaining the status quo.

In Ghana, although sexual harassment against persons including students is a legal offence under the Domestic Violence Act, 2007, the law courts are yet to persecute any person or group of persons or institutions (including schools) for sexual harassment offences or negligence to act on reported cases of sexual harassment by a person or a student. In the school environment, school authorities usually do not act on reported cases of sexual harassment against victims, as most school personnels (teachers, head masters, school administrators) perceive the sexual harassment, particularly against females as "normal" and "as part of school life" (Leach et. al., 2003).

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central sun-like symbol with rays, surrounded by a wreath. Below the wreath, the motto "EDUCATION FOR SERVICE" is inscribed on a banner. The entire emblem is set against a light blue background.

The culture of viewing the phenomenon of peer sexual harassment as normal will not change or be reversed overnight. School communities have much work to do to make this change happen. Sexual harassment is a sensitive and complex issue involving many factors such as sexuality, power, language, gender roles, and abuse. All parties involved, students, parents, teachers, school personnel, and school officials, must educate themselves in all of these interrelated factors in order to make schools safer for students.

Perhaps the first step in approaching this new model of education about sexual harassment is to create an open dialogue between students and staff about the issue. As Stein (1996) states, “institutionalising and normalising the conversation about sexual harassment in schools might be one of the ways to reduce and eliminate sexual harassment in schools” (p. 23). If students are made to feel comfortable when discussing the issue, then they may be more likely to bring claims of sexual harassment to the attention of the administration; they may also be more likely to voice their disapproval when they witness other students engaging in behaviours that constitute sexual harassment. Before that is made to happen, however, staff members must learn to feel comfortable when dealing with the issue. As Shakeshaft, Mandel and Sawyer (1997) argue, “stopping peer sexual harassment requires changing the adolescent culture of the school. Because students don’t report harassment and because the peer culture requires that they act as though it doesn’t affect them, adults must take the lead in behavioural change” (p. 25).

2.7 Prevalence of Sexual Harassment

The incidence of sexual harassment has been studied in most countries and the report shows that the situation is a real problem in schools (Fineran, Bennet & Sacco, 2003). According to the American Association of University Women (AAUW), girls experience more forms and higher frequency than boys. In their 2002 survey on 2064 students in 8th through 11th grade, the AAUW reports that 83% of girls had been sexually harassed, while 78% of boys had been sexually harassed in school. The report also presents this information about the problem in American school; 38% of the students were harassed by teachers or school employees, 36% of school employees or teachers were harassed by students, and 42% of school employees or teachers had been harassed by each other.

In their later report (AAUW, 2006) on sexual harassment at colleges and universities, the AAUW claim that while both men and women were targets of sexual harassment, “women are disproportionately negatively affected”. For instance, the study found that 62% of female college students and 61% of male college students reported having been sexually harassed at their universities. These reports strengthen an earlier work by a province wide study by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (1995), in which over 80% of female students and 64% of male students reported that they had been sexually harassed in the school setting.

Teachers and other school staff have also been found to perpetrate the behaviour of sexual harassment against female students, in particular. In a study of secondary schools in the Netherlands, 27% of students reported having been sexually harassed by school personnel. Timmerman (2002) also found that sexual harassment by school personnel appeared to be more disturbing and caused more psychosomatic health problems than peer harassment. Kelly and Parsons (2000) found that 39% of female students experience sexual harassment on university campuses. They also observe that the perpetrators in school differ markedly in the case of undergraduates where fellow students are the main culprits, where for the graduate students, male faculty members are the main offenders.

Gouws and Kritzinger (1995) conducted study among students at the University of Stellenbosch and found that a higher percentage of women than men experienced sexist comments, grading on basis of appearance, repeated unwelcome invitations, and unwanted touching and fondling. Braine, Bless and Fox (1995) and Mayekiso and Bhana (1997) found similar results in convenience samples conducted at two high schools in India. Gouws and Kritzinger (1995) found that female students who had

been sexually assaulted experienced shame and stigmatisation in reporting their abuse. These two studies examined sexual harassment from peers and found that both male and female students identified sexual harassment on campus from peers as problematic.

When examining sexual harassment from school personnel, Mayekiso and Bhana (1997) found that 35% of students identified academic staff as perpetrators of sexual harassment, and 28% of students identified administrative staff as harassers. Eight percent of students surveyed by Braine et al., (1995) perceived academic staff to be responsible for sexual harassment and Gouws and Kritzing (1995) found that 2.8 percent of male students and 7 percent of female students were asked favour in exchange for more favourable grades.

Reporting on the incidence of sexual harassment of students by school teachers, the AAUW 2002 survey reported that of the students who had been harassed, 38% were harassed by teachers or school employees. One survey conducted with psychology students reports that 10% had sexual interactions with their educators; in turn 13% of educators reported sexual interaction with their students (Gallop, 1997). In a national survey conducted for the AAUW Foundation in 2000, it was found that about 290,000 students experienced some sort of physical sexual abuse by public school employee between 1991 and 2000. Following these findings, a major study was commissioned by the U. S. Department of Education in 2004, on the incidence of sexual harassment of students by school employees. The study found that nearly 10 percent of U.S public school students reported having been targeted with sexual attention by school employees.

In a study conducted in some selected Ghanaian schools, Leach, Fiscian and Casely Hayford (2003) found that abusive behaviours by male pupils, teachers and sugar daddies did exist in the Ghanaian school context. They also found that the greatest threat of girls came from older boys in the school. However, male teachers were also guilty of sexual misconduct with female students. Leach and her colleagues also found that ten out of 16 girls interviewed stated that they knew of a teacher having had sex with a girl in the same school and that they themselves had been propositioned for sex by a teacher. Five of them said that a teacher was having sexual relations with a girl in their class. Some of the girls also reported that they knew of a girl who had been made pregnant by a teacher in the school (12.5%) but that many more knew of a girl who had got pregnant by a boy in the school (62.5%), or by a man or a boy outside the school (37.5%).

In another study, by Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE) (2008), it was found that 75% of Ghanaian school girls suffered several harassment from male classmates, and 27% endured pressure from teachers for sex.

From the literature, the incidence of sexual harassment as a problem in schools, particularly among Senior High School students is high. However, there has not been much studies done in this area among Ghanaian Senior High Schools female students. This study therefore seeks to examine the subject of sexual harassment in the Ghanaian context, with particular reference to its occurrence in the Kumasi metropolis of the Ashanti Region. The study would provide a good understanding of this issue within the Ghanaian context and also attempt to close the knowledge gap that exist about sexual harassment within the Ghanaian context.

2.8 Prevention of Sexual Harassment

In these times of prevalent HIV/AIDS pandemic, Senior High Schools now offer some kind of reproductive health education in the form of “Life skills” or “Family life education”. Sexual and reproductive health programs should also teach life skills, including how to avoid risky or threatening situations related to violence, sex or drugs and how to negotiate safe sexual behaviours.

Grievance procedures are internal school mechanisms that address violations of a school’s policy on discrimination, including sexual harassment. Grievance procedures must provide for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of sex discrimination. The school should ensure that its policy against sex discrimination are widely distributed and easily understood by students, parents and employees. At a minimum, students must know that it works, and how to take a strong stance against sexual harassment. It should also be made clear to all students and staff that such behaviours will not be tolerated. Riggs (1993) proposed certain measures by which sexual harassment can be prevented in schools. He observed that there should be carefully drafted definitions of what constitutes sexual harassment and clear policies that prohibit such actions.

He also added that there should be accessible grievance procedures that are communicated and understood by all members of the academic community about the nature of sexual harassment and its destructive impact within the community. Attafuah (2003) acknowledged that it is important for organizations to develop and publicize an “Anti-Sexual Harassment” policy by creating and posting such policies at the work place or school. An employer needs not wait until a complaint is made before taking action to address sexual harassment in the work place or school. He

further added that school authorities and employers need to ensure that all employees and students understand that sexual harassment is a form of behaviour the organization (company or school) will not tolerate. The policy, to him, should be expressed in plain language with the following key aspects;

- a. An operational definition of sexual harassment.
- b. The kinds of conduct that constitute sexual harassment
- c. Consequences of sexual harassment for the victims, the workplace, school and the society as a whole.

The phenomenon can be prevented if the school provided a confidential impartial avenue of expeditious treatment in terms of reception, investigation and mediation for complaints in any of the following ways;

- a. Establishment of a Human Rights Committee,
- b. Appointment of an in-house ombudsman,
- c. Establishment of a disciplinary committee whose mandate could include the prevention of sexual harassment and the efficient investigation of complaints alleging such violations.

It is good to post anti-harassment bulletins, posters and banners on the wall, notice boards of work place or school to indicate that such conduct is not tolerated. It is also useful to post a copy of the organization's mission statement that articulates anti-harassment messages to all staff, visitors, customers and the general public.

2.9 Summary of Literature Review

In this chapter, a discussion on the relevant literature on the issue of sexual harassment has been made. The discussion started with the conceptual issues of sexual harassment and explored the dynamics of the concept. For purposes of this

work, however, a working definition of sexual harassment was provided in order to set the scope within which the study will be looked at. Among other important issues, a good discussion of theories and models of sexual harassment were done as well as how these theories apply to the concept of sexual harassment in schools. The chapter also explored some empirical studies on the theme.

The literature reviewed revealed that sexual harassment as a major psychosocial issue in our educational institutions across the world, has been well studied and documented in the developed countries. However, very little research has been done in the African context (schools), particularly in Ghana. This study therefore aims at, among others, providing empirical answers to questions about sexual harassment within the Ghanaian Senior High School context, and also adds to the pool of literature on the subject from the Ghanaian perspective.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed existing literature relevant to the objectives of this research. The present chapter describes the procedural plan and the technique that was adopted to undertake the research.

3.1 Research Approach

The study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods and instruments to elicit data. The qualitative research approach provides an insider's perspective as well as in-depth insight into the phenomenon under study. The quantitative method on the other hand, enables the quantification of variables, generalization and answering of research questions. According to Rubin and Babbie (2001), qualitative research has the ability to provide the researcher a comprehensive perspective resulting in a deeper understanding. For Bell (2004), while the qualitative approach offers the researcher insight and understanding into the individual's perceptions of the world, quantitative approach makes statistical analysis and generalizations possible.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000), argue that although both qualitative and quantitative approaches ask questions, those of the qualitative approach focus on how social experience is created and given meaning while the quantitative approach focuses on measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables and not processes. This means the combination of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms has a high tendency to achieve both in-depth and insider perspective of the

phenomenon under study as well as quantification of variables to provide answers to the research questions.

3.2 Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. This is one of the most commonly used descriptive methods in educational research, adopting qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis (Orodho, 2009). A descriptive statistic, typically seeks to ascertain respondents' perspectives or experiences on a specified subject in a predetermined structured manner. Descriptive survey involves the use of questionnaire and interview in gathering data about peoples and their thoughts and behaviours. Babbie (2004) suggested that surveys are appropriate for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purposes.

3.3 Population of the Study

Population is the target group for a study. It involves all the individuals (or objects) with certain specified characteristics (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). However, the population of the study was all the students and teachers in Vakpo Senior High School of the Volta Region, Ghana. For the purpose of this study, the targeted population was made up of all female students and male teachers in Vakpo Senior High School. Therefore, the main participants in the study were female students and male teachers. The total population was one thousand four hundred and sixty three (1,463)

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sampling is the process of selecting respondents from the population. According to Anthony-Krueger and Sokpe (2006), a sample is a representative of a population. Based on the aforementioned factors a purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Since the participants for the study are a homogenous group (i.e only the male teachers and female students), selecting a fixed number of them from across the various academic programmes in the school would not put any of the sub-groups in the school at a disadvantage. Again, this will not affect the generalisability of the findings for the entire population. In view of this, simple random sampling procedure, using the lottery method was used to select 40 female students from each form (Forms 1, 2 and 3) which makes a total of 120 female students. Again, simple random sampling was used to sample 25 male teachers for the study. Hence, there was a total of 145 participants selected for the study, comprising 120 female students and 25 male teachers.

3.5 Instruments for Data Collection

To a large extent, the validity and reliability of any study depends on the instrument and the technique used in collecting the data. In selecting a instrument for the collection of data, the researcher had in mind the general characteristics of the sample and a suitable means of meeting them. The questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data. This is because it enabled the researcher to collect adequate data within a short time. The close-ended items consisted of statements that were followed by alternative answers that the respondent could choose from example “Yes or No”. The open-ended questions were meant to seek information from the respondent’s point of view.

Twumasi (2001) observed that the questionnaire is widely used for collecting data in educational research because it is effective for securing formal information about procedures and conditions and for inquiring into the opinions and attitudes of the

subjects. He added that, it is an efficient method in the sense that many respondents can be reached within a short time.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity of the study, the questionnaire was given to the researcher's supervisors to review. The instrument was given to the supervisors because of their expert knowledge in research. Their comments and suggestions were used to improve upon the instrument.

To ensure that the instrument is reliable, a reliability test was carryout on the questionnaire before administration. The internal consistency of the instrument was therefore determined using the alpha coefficient (also known as the Cronbach alpha). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) is used to compute the reliability of the instrument. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), this coefficient is a general form of the KR20 formula that are used in calculating the reliability of items that are not scored right versus wrong as in some essay tests where more than one answer is possible. According to Dunn (2001), for an instrument to be deemed reliable, the measure must display a positive correlation (reliability coefficient) that reaches or have a reliability coefficient (r) of .70. The reliability coefficient for the questionnaire used for this study was +0.72.

The questionnaire is formatted to ensure that the questions are spread out, that is uncluttered. No more than one question was presented on a single line to ensure the respondents do not spend a lot of time reading a question, in order to be discouraged from completing the questionnaire. The researcher checked all the administered questionnaires one by one and edited them for the purpose of completeness and accuracy. Serial number was assigned to each question for easy identification and for

correct data entry and analysis. A coding guide was developed to code and enter each question into the computer for analysis.

3.7 Data Collection Method

A letter of introduction, collected from the Head of Department together with the researcher's own letter intended to inform the school administrators about the researcher's exercise. The researcher's letter stated the time and period for the visit to the school.

The female students and male teachers were given prior information about the researcher's visit and the selected classes for the exercise were assembled by the Assistant Head of the school on appointed days and times. The researcher then briefs them on what she intended to do. Since the number in each class is larger than the number of questionnaire to be used, the researcher adopts the lottery system by writing "Yes" and "No" on papers for the students to ballot so that the estimated sample could be obtained.

The researcher then distributed the questionnaires to all the selected participants. The researcher returns to the school on the appointed days to collect the completed questionnaires from the class prefects and the teachers. On the whole, it takes the researcher two weeks to retrieve the data from the respondents. However, a hundred percent retrieval of the questionnaires is attained because all respondents did return their questionnaires.

3.8 Data Analysis

Yakubu (2015) defined data analysis as the “process of organizing and summarizing data, using descriptive statistics and/or inferential statistics” (p. 67). Data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Specifically, Frequencies and Percentages were used to analyse the research questions. Analysis was done using the Statistical package of SPSS version 23. Simple frequency and percentage distributions were used to analyse and present the data to answer each of the research questions. Finally, information obtained were summarized and presented in tables.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, interpretations and discussions of the study on student-teacher sexual harassment and its occurrence in Vakpo Senior High school in the Volta Region. The researcher sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are students understanding of student-teacher sexual harassment?
2. How does teachers understand student-teacher sexual harassment?
3. How can student-teacher harassment be curbed?

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

For a start, the study explored the personal attributes of respondents. The characteristics covered included; age and duration or length of stay in the school.

4.2.1 Distribution of Respondents' Age

The research sought to establish the age profiles of the respondents. Information relating to respondents' age profiles are presented in Table 1 (students) and 2 (teachers).

Table 1: Age Distribution of Female Students

Age	F	(%)
14-15 years	78	65.0
16-17 years	32	26.6
18-19 years	10	8.4
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The disaggregated data presented on Table 1 reveal that that a high number of the female student participants, 78(65.0%), were in the age bracket of 14-15 years. There

were, however, a small number of 10(8.4%) female students who 18 years and older. Ordinarily the age of senior high school students in Ghana ranges from 14-18 years.

Age is an important factor in understanding SH. Idoko et al., (2015) believe that when children attain the age of adolescence, there is an increase in cross-gender interactions which sometimes results in an inability to express sexual attraction in a socially appropriate way. For this reason, cases of SH are reported and escalate around this age.

However, the study also sought to establish the age profiles of the male teachers who participated in the study. The findings are captured in Table 2.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Male Teachers

Age	F	(%)
21-25 years	7	28.0
26-30 years	6	24.0
31-35 years	4	16.0
36-40 years	2	8.0
Over 41 years	6	24.0
Total	25	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The findings in Table 2 show that majority of the male teachers 17(68.0%) under study were 21 to 35 years of age. The remaining 8(32.0%) male teachers were 36 years and above. This finding is important to this study as the ages depict the youthfulness of majority of the male teachers.

4.2.2 Distribution of male teachers' years of service

The researcher sought information on the length of time in years the respondents had served as teachers. The number of years of service was important for this research since it would help the gauge the length of exposure and thus the level of experience of the male teachers as pertains to issues of SH. The results are presented on Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of Male Teachers' Years of Service

Years of service as a teacher	F	%
Less than 10 years	14	56.0
11-20 years	8	32.0
Over 21 years	3	12.0
Total	25	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data on Table 3 shows that majority of the male teachers 14 (56.0 %) had been in the teaching service for less than 10 years compared to a minority 3(12.0%) who had taught for over 21 years. In addition, the findings on the Table 3 show that 8(32.0 %) male teachers had served for between 11-20 years. This finding reveals that majority of the male teachers in the Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region were probably inexperienced in addressing SH issues since experience is related to duration of service (Ogola, 2010).

4.2.3 Class Enrolments

The study sought information regarding the class levels of the female student respondents.

The findings are captured in figure 1.

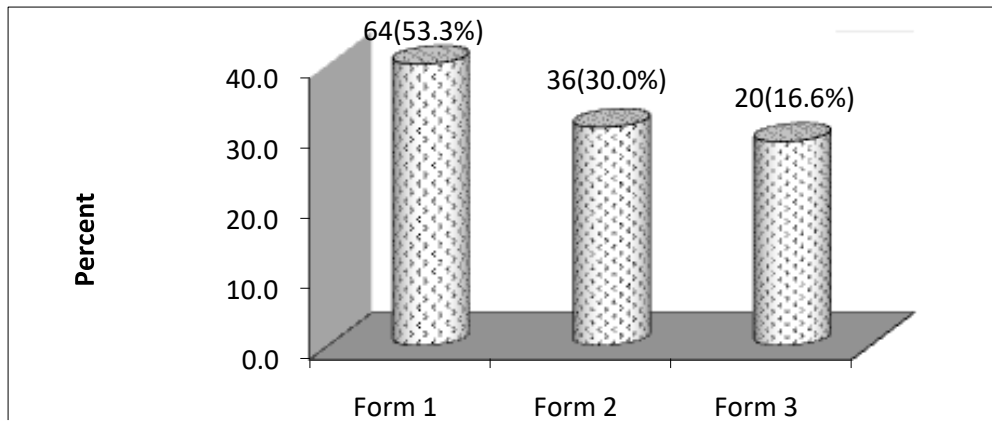


Figure 1: Distribution of Students' Enrollment by Class

Figure 1 shows the distribution in class enrolment of the female students who participated in this study. The Figure shows that 64(53.3%) female students were from form 1, 36(30.0%) were from form 2 and 20(16.6%) were from form 3. This most likely explains successful government efforts to increase transition from primary to secondary schools and across the streams.

4.3 Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are students understanding of student-teacher sexual harassment?

This research question seeks to find out students' understanding of student-teacher sexual harassment in Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region.

Table 4: Students Understanding of Student-Teacher Sexual Harassment

Description of Incident Responses	Female Students (n =120)	
	No	Yes
Have you ever been touched by male teacher or female student at any part of your body or made any sexual comments or gestures that you considered in appropriate or unwanted	20 (16.6%)	100 (83.3%)
Did the touch arouse your sexual feeling	38 (31.6%)	82 (68.3%)
Has the school ever organized education, counseling on sexual harassment	0	120 (100.0%)
Had a male teacher or female student ever forced to kiss you	113 (94.2%)	7 (5.8%)
Had a male teacher or female student ever winked you that you felt uncomfortable	13 (10.8%)	107 (89.1%)
Had a male teacher or female student ever asked you to do something sexual in exchange for some favour (better grade, recommendation, class notes, etc.)	45 (9.7%)	75 (37.5%)
Had a male teacher or female student ever showed, gave or left you sexual pictures, photographs, messages or notes	70 (58.3%)	50 (46.7%)
Had a male teacher or female student ever made unwanted sexual comments, jokes, gestures or look which you felt uncomfortable	18 (15%)	102 (85%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the table 4, a significant portion of female students, 100 out of 120 (83.3%), reported experiencing inappropriate touch or receiving sexual comments or gestures from male teachers or female students. Only 20 (16.6%) stated that they have not encountered such incidents. Of the female students who experienced inappropriate touch, 82 (68.3%) mentioned that the touch did arouse their sexual feelings, while 38 (31.6%) reported that it did not. Wolfe and Chiodo (2008) observed that the forms of sexual harassment against students may take different forms. This emphasizes the potential emotional impact of such incidents on the students. Fineran and Bennett (1998) states that sexual harassment can cause performance difficulty including

absenteeism, decreased quality of schoolwork, skipping or dropping courses, lower grades, loss of friends, tardiness and truancy in its victims.

Strikingly, all 120 female students (100%) indicated that their school has never organized education or counseling on sexual harassment. This points to a crucial gap in proactive measures to educate and support students in dealing with such situations. The majority of female students, 113 (94.2%), reported never being forced to kiss by a male teacher or female student. However, 7 (5.8%) acknowledged experiencing such incidents, which raises concerns about inappropriate behavior within the academic setting. The findings revealed that both the female students and the male teachers are aware that the school organizes education, counseling on sexual harassment. It is observed that counseling on sexual harassment as being more supportive than acquaintances, and also help both students and teachers in the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Youniss, 1980). Indeed, this shows that counseling on sexual harassment has a greater influence on growing individuals. Laursen (1993) also reports that the counseling on sexual harassment helps students most specially to develop their self-esteem and also build a sense of belongingness.

Regarding unwanted winking, 107 female students (89.1%) reported feeling uncomfortable, while 13 (10.8%) did not express discomfort. Unwanted gestures like winking can contribute to an uncomfortable and potentially unsafe learning environment. When asked if they were ever asked to do something sexual in exchange for favors such as better grades, recommendations, or class notes, 75 female students (37.5%) responded affirmatively, while 45 (9.7%) indicated that they have not encountered such situations.

Approximately 58.3% (70) of female students reported receiving sexual pictures, photographs, messages, or notes, while 46.7% (50) did not have such encounters. This highlights a concerning aspect of inappropriate behavior within the educational context. Out of the 120 female students surveyed, 102 students (85%) reported that they had experienced unwanted sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or looks from male teachers or female students. This indicates a disturbingly high prevalence of uncomfortable situations within the educational environment. On the other hand, 18 female students (15%) responded that they had not encountered such unwanted incidents.

Research Question 2: How does teachers understand student-teacher sexual harassment?

This research question seeks to find out teachers' understanding of student-teacher sexual harassment in Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region.

Table 5: Teachers Understanding of Student-Teacher Sexual Harassment

Description of Incident Responses	Male Teachers (n = 25)	
	No	Yes
Have you ever been touched by male teacher or female student at any part of your body or made any sexual comments or gestures that you considered in appropriate or unwanted	15 (60%)	10 (40%)
Did the touch arouse your sexual feeling	16 (64%)	9 (36%)
Has the school ever organized education, counseling on sexual harassment	0	25 (100%)
Had a male teacher or female student ever forced to kiss you	22 (88%)	3 (12%)
Had a male teacher or female student ever winked you that you felt uncomfortable	19 (76%)	6 (24%)
Had a male teacher or female student ever asked you to do something sexual in exchange for some favour (better grade, recommendation, class notes, etc)	25 (100%)	0 (15%)

Had a male teacher or female student ever showed, gave or left you sexual pictures, photographs, messages or notes	24 (96%)	1 (4%)
Had a male teacher or female student ever made unwanted sexual comments, jokes, gestures or look which you felt uncomfortable	14 (56%)	11 (44%)

Source: Field Data, 2023

From Table 4, it is evident that the majority of the female students had been touched by their male teachers inappropriately and also made sexual comments and gestures at them. That is, 100(83.3%) of the female students had such experiences and understanding. It is also evident from the table that a good number of the female students, 75(37.5%) were once asked to do something sexual in exchange for some favour (better grade, recommendation, class notes, etc.) by their male teachers.

Again, the findings in Table 4, also shows that majority of male teachers 15(60%) denied the fact that they had been touched by their female students inappropriately and also made sexual comments and gestures at them. Only, 10(40%) of the male teachers had such experiences and understanding. 9(36%) of the male teachers confirmed truly that the touches arouse their sexual feelings. Witkowski and Menckel (2007) found that most common sexual harassment behaviour against students were implicit in nature. These included demeaning comments about gender and sexuality, sexualized conversation, attractiveness rating and sexual comments.

Furthermore, 120(100%) of female students and 25(100%) of the male teachers are aware that the school organizes education, counseling on sexual harassment. This finding may be a pointer towards addressing issues related to SH in the school.

When the researcher probed the feelings of the female students towards their understanding of sexual harassment, this is what some students said:

I don't like it when I am told I have sexy eyes. I really don't understand what that means. It hurts me. (Ama, Form 3B, 2023)

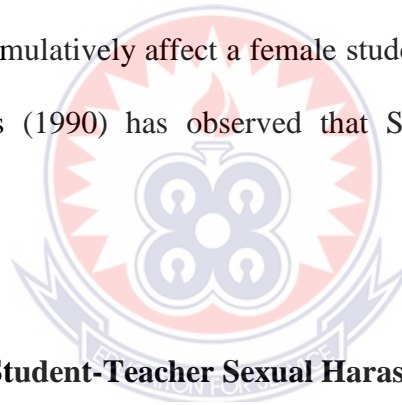
Another student said:

I always get these verbal remarks by male teachers saying 'you are cute', 'I admire your hips'....I don't like these remarks at all. Then there are endless cat calls whenever I pass. I don't think this is kind. I feel uncomfortable. (Ami, Form 2B, 2023)

A male teacher expressed dislike over what he considered a verbally insulting remark directed at him:

It is insulting to be told you have a good look by a female student. Is that right? I don't think so. (Rita, Form 1B, 2023)

These sentiments from both female students and male teacher indicate the upsetting nature of sexual harassment. Sometimes the sexual comments may be mild but when said repeatedly may cumulatively affect a female student's self-esteem and that of the male teachers. Quinas (1990) has observed that SH of whatever kind is never harmless.



4.4 Ways of curbing Student-Teacher Sexual Harassment

The fourth objective of this study was to determine ways of curbing student-teacher sexual harassment in Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region.

Research Question3: How can student-teacher harassment be curbed?

This research question seeks to examine how student-teacher sexual harassment can be solved.

Table 6: How Student-Teacher Sexual Harassment can be Curbed

Description of Incident Responses	Female Students (n =120)	
	No	Yes
Students or teachers should always report incident of	2 (1.7%)	118 (98.3%)

sexual harassment		
Student or teacher caught should be sacked or expelled from the school	0	120 (100%)
School authorities should often organize seminars on sexual harassment	0	120 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From Table 6, only 2 female students (1.7%) responded negatively, stating that students or teachers should not always report incidents of sexual harassment. In contrast, a substantial majority of 118 students (98.3%) expressed that reporting such incidents is necessary. This overwhelming majority highlights the importance placed on reporting to address and prevent sexual harassment.

All 120 female students (100%) agreed that students or teachers caught in incidents of sexual harassment should be sacked or expelled from the school. This unanimous response suggests a strong stance on implementing strict punitive measures as a means of addressing and deterring such behavior.

Similarly, all 120 female students (100%) indicated that school authorities should often organize seminars on sexual harassment. This unanimous agreement emphasizes the perceived effectiveness of educational seminars in creating awareness, preventing incidents, and fostering a safe learning environment.

Table 7: How Student-Teacher Sexual Harassment can be Curbed

Description of Incident Responses	Male Teachers (n = 25)	
	No	Yes
Students or teachers should always report incident of sexual harassment	11 (9.7%)	14 (56%)
Student or teacher caught should be sacked or expelled from the school	10 (40%)	15 (60%)
School authorities should often organize seminars on	0	120

sexual harassment	(100%)
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In Table 7, among the 25 male teachers surveyed, 14 (56%) agreed that students or teachers should always report incidents of sexual harassment, while 11 (44%) responded negatively, indicating that reporting might not always be necessary. This suggests a somewhat divided opinion among male teachers on the importance of reporting such incidents.

Regarding the suggestion that students or teachers caught in incidents of sexual harassment should be sacked or expelled from the school, 15 male teachers (60%) agreed with this measure, while 10 (40%) disagreed. This indicates a split opinion among male teachers on the severity of punitive measures as a solution to address and deter such behavior.

Notably, all 25 male teachers (100%) indicated that school authorities should often organize seminars on sexual harassment. This unanimous agreement aligns with the view that educational seminars are crucial for creating awareness and preventing incidents. It also emphasizes the role of proactive measures in addressing the issue.

Depending on the severity of the SH issue, the headmaster of the school reported that he was sometimes commanded that the perpetrator be referred for a more specialized counselling outside the school.

I have referred several female student and male teachers to external counsellors especially when I realize they are not giving truthful stories. You know, some of these victims come here giving us stories which do not add up. When I realize I am not making headway I refer them. That is the only way I can assist them. (HA, a 45-year-old teacher at Vakpo, 2023)

Besides these strategies, behavior change through talk was proposed as an effective strategy by most key informants (HA):

There is need for behaviour change. Talking and talking is the only way out this can be achieved. Some of the male teachers who harass female students do not know the consequences but when they get to a level and they discover what they were doing was wrong they will change. For now, they feel and think it is normal. So let's keep talking to them.

The findings revealed that male teachers and female students were all satisfied that the school authorities should often organize seminars on sexual harassment. Research has established that in schools where seminars on sexual harassment are strictly mandated, with effective guidelines and procedures of dealing with sexual abuse, the number of reported cases is significantly reduced (AAUW, 2004).



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a brief summary of the findings of the study on student-teacher sexual harassment and its occurrence in Vakpo Senior High school in the Volta Region, Ghana is presented. This summary is guided by the research objectives of the study followed by conclusions drawn from the findings. The chapter also provides recommendations to inform policy and practice and makes suggestions on areas for further research which emerged from the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Background characteristics of the respondents

The study first sought to capture the respondents' biodata details. Demographic information in regard to male teachers focused on age of the respondents and duration of service and stay at their stations of work. The study established that majority of the male teachers were relatively young, half of the male teacher respondents had taught for less than five years whereas the remaining 3(12.0%) had taught for over 21 years. This was an indication that many of the male teachers were relatively new hence unlikely to be very conversant with details pertaining to SH practices in their schools.

Further analysis showed that majority of the female student participants were in the age bracket of 14-15 years. This was within the expected age bracket of senior high school students.

5.2.2 Students and Teachers Understanding of Sexual Harassment

The research aimed to explore students' and teachers understanding of student-teacher sexual harassment at Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region. Findings revealed a troubling prevalence of inappropriate touch, sexual comments, and gestures experienced by female students, with a notable emotional impact reported. Strikingly, all surveyed female students indicated a lack of education or counseling on sexual harassment within the school, exposing a critical gap in proactive measures. Instances of forced kissing, uncomfortable gestures like winking, and requests for sexual favors were reported, raising concerns about inappropriate behavior in the academic setting. The study also highlighted a disturbingly high frequency of unwanted sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or looks from teachers or students, emphasizing the discomfort prevalent in the educational environment.

5.2.3 How student-teacher sexual harassment can be curbed

The unanimous agreement among female students on the importance of organizing seminars on sexual harassment highlighted their belief in the efficacy of proactive educational measures. In contrast, male teachers exhibited a more divided perspective on the significance of reporting incidents, with a split opinion on the severity of punitive measures. Nevertheless, there was unanimous support among male teachers for the regular organization of seminars on sexual harassment, emphasizing a shared belief in the preventative role of educational initiatives.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study made the following key conclusions as guided by the objectives of the study:

5.3.1 Students and Teachers Understanding of Sexual Harassment

The first and second objective of this study was to assess students and teachers understanding of sexual harassment in Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region. It was concluded that majority of the female students had been touched by their male teachers inappropriately and also made sexual comments and gestures at them. Also, a good number of the female students were once asked to do something sexual in exchange for some favour (better grade, recommendation, class notes, etc.) by their male teachers.

5.3.2 Ways by which student-teacher sexual harassment can be curbed

The third objective of this study was to determine ways of curbing student-teacher sexual harassment in Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region. It was concluded that reporting incident of sexual harassment is one of the effective way to addressing issues of SH. Again, male teachers and female students were very satisfied with the ideal of sacking and expelling victims from the school.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and guided by the objectives of this study, this study makes the following recommendations:

1. All stakeholders in Education including policy makers, school administrators, teachers, parents, students and other interested partners take an active role in educating both public and private secondary schools of the forms of sexual harassment. Also, school should pay active attention to dominant forms of sexual harassment including verbal sexual harassment which have are likely to negatively influence students' self-esteem.

2. The study recommends the implementation of suitable support structures including guidance and counselling programs to nurture the self-esteem of female students who have been exposed to sexual harassment and its harmful influences.
3. Parents and teachers should empower their children by educating them on matters of sexual safety at home and in school. This role should not only be limited to teaching but extended to guiding and providing definitive support on conducting relationships of respect within and across the sexes which are free of harassment.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study is aimed at identifying and analyzing the impact of sexual harassment situations, how such happened and how they were managed and controlled in Vakpo Senior High School in the Volta Region. Consequently, financial resources, inadequate materials and time constraints cannot permit the researcher to carry out the study beyond the scope set for her.

The limited area of study coupled with the random procedure used cannot allow for total generalization of the findings. Therefore, there is the need for other researchers to carry out similar research in other districts. This would help make a confirmation of the findings of the research and generalize them for other parts of the region.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

A replication of this study in other regions in Ghana should be carried out, taking into account bigger samples of schools and students from a substantial number of regions which will likely present a true picture of the situation on the ground thereby enhancing generalizability.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaires for Female Students

Respondent's confidentiality is assured

Section A: Socio-Demographic Profile of Female Students

Kindly respond by ticking the appropriate response or fill in the space provided

1. Name of school
2. Which form are you?
3. Age

16-18	
18-20	
20 and above	

Section B: Female students understanding of sexual harassment

Kindly respond to the following by choosing 'Yes or No' and where necessary provide answers or tick.

4. Have you ever been touched at any part of your body by a male teacher, or made any sexual comments or gestures that you considered in appropriate or unwanted? Yes/No
5. Did the touch arouse your sexual feeling? Yes/No
6. Mention any part of your body that was touched.....
7. Has the school ever organized education, counseling on sexual harassment? Yes/No

8. If the question above is yes, what did the seminar teach as sexual harassment?.....
9. Apart from the school did you learn sexual harassment tips from anywhere?
Yes/No
10. If yes,specify.....
11. Had a male teacher ever forced to kiss you? Yes/No
12. Which of the following sexual act(s) has a male teacher ever done to you?
(please, tick).
 - Touched my breast
 - Kissed my lips
 - Phone call with love words
 - Text message with love words
 - WhatsApp message with love words, pictures, etc.
13. Had a male teacher ever winked you that you felt uncomfortable? Yes/No
14. Had a male teacher asked you to do something sexual in exchange for some favour (better grade, recommendation, class notes, etc.)? Yes/No
15. If question above is yes, what was it?.....
16. Had a male teacher showed, gave or left you sexual pictures, photographs, messages or notes? Yes/No
17. Had a male teacher intentionally brushed up against you? Yes/No
18. Had a male teacher made unwanted sexual comments, jokes, gestures or look which you felt uncomfortable? Yes/No

Section C: Forms of Sexual Harassment

Kindly respond by ticking the appropriate response and where necessary give comment(s).

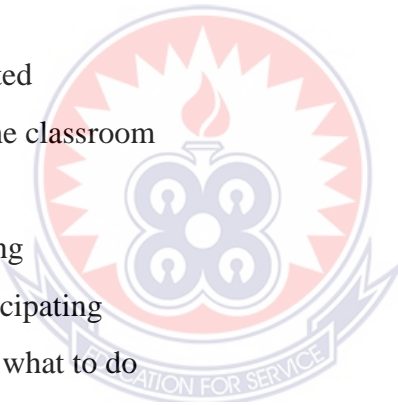
19. Did a male teacher forced to kiss you? Yes/No
20. Had a male teacher ever spread sexual rumours about you? Yes/No
21. Had a male teacher ever posted sexual messages or made comments about you on internet or any other social media platform? Yes/No
22. Had a male teacher winked you that you felt uncomfortable? Yes/No
23. Had a male teacher ask you sex in exchange for something? Yes/No
24. What was it?.....

25. Had a male teacher blocked your way, cornered or follow you in unwanted sexual way? Yes/No
26. Had a male teacher touched, grab or pinched you in unwanted sexual way? Yes/No
27. Had a male teacher ever invited you to his house? Yes/No
28. Had a male teacher ever approached you for any kind of sexual relationship? Yes/No
29. If yes what was your response?.....

Section D: Impact of sexual harassment on students' academic environment

30. Do you feel secure when going to where harassment took place? Yes/No
31. Will you want to leave the school's environment? Yes/No
32. How do you feel when the teacher who harassed you sexually comes to your class to teach?

- Intimidated
- Living the classroom
- Angry
- Disgusting
- Not participating
- Not sure what to do
- Other (please, specify)



33. What is your performance in the subject the teacher harasser teaches?
- Excellent
 - Good
 - Poor
 - Average
 - Not sure

Section E: Solution to the problem of sexual harassment in Vakpo Senior High School

34. Did you report incident of sexual harassment? Yes/No
35. If yes, to whom?

- Academic advisor
- Housemaster
- Headmaster
- Police
- PTA chairman
- Other (please, specify)

36. If no, what was your reason?

37. Would you want the teacher to be sacked from the school?

38. Would suggest to the school authorities to be organizing regular seminars on sexual harassment?



APPENDIX B

Questionnaires for Male Teachers

Respondent's confidentiality is assured

Section A: Socio-Demographic Profile of Male Teachers

Kindly respond by ticking the appropriate response or fill in the space provided

1. Name of school
2. Age

16-18	
18-20	
20 and above	

Section B: Male teachers understanding of sexual harassment

Kindly respond to the following by choosing 'Yes or No' and where necessary provide answers or tick.

3. Have you ever been touched at any part of your body by a female students, or made any sexual comments or gestures that you considered in appropriate or unwanted? Yes/No
4. Did the touch arouse your sexual feeling? Yes/No
5. Mention any part of your body that was touched.....
6. Has the school ever organized education, counseling on sexual harassment? Yes/No
7. If the question above is yes, what did the seminar teach as sexual harassment?.....
8. Apart from the school did you learn sexual harassment tips from anywhere? Yes/No

9. If yes, specify.....
10. Had a female student ever forced to kiss you? Yes/No
11. Which of the following sexual act(s) has a female student ever done to you?
(please, tick).
- Touched my breast
 - Kissed my lips
 - Phone call with love words
 - Text message with love words
 - WhatsApp message with love words, pictures, etc.
12. Had a female student ever winked you that you felt uncomfortable? Yes/No
13. Had a female student showed, gave or left you sexual pictures, photographs, messages or notes? Yes/No
14. Had a female student intentionally brushed up against you? Yes/No
15. Had a female student made **unwanted** sexual comments, jokes, gestures or look which you felt uncomfortable? Yes/No

Section C: Forms of Sexual Harassment

Kindly respond by ticking the appropriate response and where necessary give comment(s).

16. Did a female student forced to kiss you? Yes/No
17. Had a female student ever spread sexual rumours about you? Yes/No
18. Had a female student ever posted sexual messages or made comments about you on internet or any other social media platform? Yes/No
19. Had a female student winked you that you felt uncomfortable? Yes/No
20. Had a female student ask you sex in exchange for something? Yes/No
21. What was it?.....
22. Had a female student blocked your way, cornered or follow you in unwanted sexual way? Yes/No
23. Had a female student touched, grab or pinched you in unwanted sexual way?
Yes/No
24. Had a female student ever invited you to his house? Yes/No

25. Had a female student ever approached you for any kind of sexual relationship?

Yes/No

26. If yes what was your response?.....

Section D: Solution to the problem of sexual harassment in Vakpo Senior High School

27. Did you report incident of sexual harassment? Yes/No

28. If yes, to whom?

- Academic advisor
- Housemaster
- Headmaster
- Police
- PTA chairman
- Other (please, specify)

29. If no, what was your reason?

30. Would you want the female student to be expelled from the school?

31. Would suggest to the school authorities to be organizing regular seminars on sexual harassment?

