



University Quasi Justice System and Underreporting of Female Sexual Harassment in Selected Universities in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract. Sexual harassment of female student in Universities has become an agonizing contemporary issue in all Universities of the world Particular in Nigeria, as it is evidenced by the incessant cases of female sexual harassment in Nigerian Universities. It is against this background, that this study sought to examine the justice system and underreporting of female sexual harassment in selected Universities in Edo State. The deterrence theory was used to explain the topic under investigation. The explanatory research design was used with the aid of the qualitative technique to gather data for the study. 15 key informant interviews and 30 in-depth interviews were conducted to gather data from the study area which comprised; University of Benin, Benin city, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, and Igbinedion University, Okada. The data gathered were contently analysed. The study revealed that although, there are social control mechanisms for addressing female sexual harassment in these Universities, but their effectiveness leaves much to be desired as the quasi justice system actors within these Universities more often than not pay lip services to enforcement. The study recommends a thorough overhauling of the University quasi Justice system and its social control mechanisms for addressing the harassment of female students sexually and the encouragement of victims to speak out.

Keywords: Quasi Justice System, Sexual Harassment, Underreporting, University, Victims

1. Introduction

In recent times, there has been a growing awareness over concerns with issues relating to female sexual harassment in Nigerian Universities. A plethora of these cases have hit national and international headlines with some of the cases already in the domain of the criminal justice system. The Sexual Harassment

in Tertiary Education Prohibition Bill (2016) was proposed in response to the outcry from concerned parents and other stakeholders against the on-going harassment of female students sexually in Nigerian University campuses. This Bill when passed into law will outlaw the crime of sexually harassing female students of tertiary institutions, but curiously the Bill is yet to be signed into law and female sexual harassment in Universities appears to be on the increase.

Sexual harassment in higher institutions of learning began in the early 80s, and research has shown that several complaints have risen over time (Bello, 2020; Joseph, 2015; Olaigbe & Fagbenro, 2021). Until recently, sexual harassment in the education sector has been largely downplayed by policy makers, law enforcement agencies and security officers in Universities; and where it has been addressed the focus was on peer-on-peer sexual harassment only (Leach, 2013).

Although female sexual harassment has received considerable attention recently in researches (Enaifoghe *et al.*, (2021); Makhene, 2022), it is still one of the least understood, least documented, grossly underreported by victims and focused on kind of violence in Nigerian Universities (Okafor *et al.*, 2023). Sexual harassment is a criminal offence in every culture and society around the world (Nigeria inclusive); and the functions of the criminal justice system is same globally (Akinseye-George, 2019). The main aim of the criminal justice system in every society is to protect the society from disorder and anti-social behaviour while ensuring that offenders who break the law are detected, tried and dealt with according to well defined legal principles (Osunde & Obarisiagbon, 2022). Ideally, every University in Nigeria (like elsewhere in the world) is expected to have a quasi-justice system which is embedded in the

school constitution to enable them maintain law and order (Obarisiagbon, 2016). This justice system is an extension of the criminal justice system of the country. Thus, social control mechanisms of a University are the ways in which individual's thoughts, feelings, appearance, and behaviour are regulated by the University justice actors – security units, disciplinary committees and the university council- who are responsible for administering and enforcing the laws within the University (Amadi *et al.*, 2023). The principal aim of this quasi-justice system is to protect individuals (both staff and students) in the University community, maintain peace, law and order, while ensuring that justice equity and fairness is served to every member of the University community (Amadi *et al.*, 2023). Hence the University quasi justice system and by extension the criminal justice system is expected to prevent, investigate all sexual harassment complaints and sanction offenders in order to ensure justice for victims and deterrence to would be offenders.

Sexual harassment is generally regarded as a misconduct and criminal offence in every University (Nigerians' inclusive); thus prompt, appropriate and effective response to all issues of sexual harassment is expected from the University quasi justice system in order to prevent, correct and where necessary, discipline such behaviour while justice is served to victims and sanctions and deterrence melted out to perpetrators and would be perpetrators respectively (Abudu, 2017). Section 34 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigerian 1999 guarantees every citizen (females inclusive) rights to human dignity. Additionally, Section 224 of the Criminal Code Act (2004), and Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act (2015) frowns at the sexual harassment of females. In fact, due to the upsurge in sexual harassment, there is a proposed bill - Sexual Harassment in tertiary education prohibition Bill (2016) which when passed into law will outlaw sexual harassment in Nigeria Universities. These laws are expected to be localized and embedded in the rules and regulations of Universities in Nigeria. Sadly, this seem not to be the case as many Universities in Nigeria have either scanty or no policy documents on sexual harassment, and female students in Nigerian Universities are still subjected to the violation of their right to human dignity by the continuing sexual harassment on them (Kabir, 2020). The question is why? What roles do the University justice actors (disciplinary committee, the security department and the University council) play in stemming this ugly social menace? This is a gap in literature that this study sought to bridge.

Media reports on incidents of sexual misbehaviour imply that the issue is still rapidly growing in Nigerian Universities and yet grossly under reported by victims (Kabir, 2020). In 2018, a lecturer named Richard Akindede was sacked by the authority of Obafemi Awolowo University for demanding sex from one Monica Osagie to upgrade her mark. Similarly, in 2019, British Broadcasting Service (BBC) did an exclusive report on sex for grade which exposed Dr Boniface of University of Lagos demanding sex from a female student of the University in exchange for grade, while Covenant University also sacked in 2022, a member of staff accused of sexually assaulting a female student (Odunsi, 2022), even as Nigerians await the outcome of the most recent case of sexual harassment involving Prof. Cyril Ndifor of the University of Calabar. The question is why has the existing extant laws such as, Sections 351 - 361 of the Criminal Code (2004), Violence Against persons (Prohibition) Act (2015), Section 34 of the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria 1999, Sections 281, 282 and 285 of the Penal Code (2004) as well as the code of conduct/University regulations not been able to deter this inhumane behaviour against female University students? Against this background, this study sort to examine how the University quasi justice system affects the reporting of female sexual harassment in the selected Universities in Edo State.

2. Quasi Justice System in Nigeria Universities

Universities which are homes to millions of young people in Nigeria, is a major public space where students particularly females, encounter various forms of sexual harassment (Olaigbe & Fagbenro, 2021; Omorogiwa, 2018). In the backdrop of the wave of complaints and accusations, and in order to ensure a secure and healthy learning environment, a bill on sexual harassment in tertiary institution has been presented at the floor of national assembly to be passed into law criminalising sexual misconduct and prescribing a five years jail term for offenders (Omonijo *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, Universities across the country are encouraged to create internal policy measures to help combat the menace of sexual harassment (Aina-Pelemo & Wellington, 2022; Erinsho, Femi-Oyewo, & Oduwole, (2018). as the growing abuse of female students seems orchestrated by lack of consistent and clear policy by Universities, governing councils and school authorities concerning sexual harassment (Omonijo *et al.*, 2013). Thus, it became necessary for these rules to be domesticated by Universities in Nigeria as its code of conduct for staff and students alike.

In Nigeria, the University council carry out a quasi-judicial function which is consistent with the transitional provisions of the institutions. Ideally, when the act of a staff is at variance with the rules and regulations of the University and the case is determined based on the report of the staff disciplinary committee/adhoc committee of inquiring, the offending staff may be given verbal or written warning, suspension, demotion in rank or termination of service, depending on the severity of the case.

Sadly, this seems not to be so as the study conducted by Premium Times in 2020, revealed that most Universities lack internal policies on sexual harassment behaviour. Premium Times correspondent who spoke with students and staff from 25 (federal, state and private) Universities across Nigeria said the stories were all the same (Kabir, 2020). According to Kabir (2020), most Universities in Nigerian have no internal policies against sexual harassment, especially on how victims can report in their student handbook. He further noted that the several pages handbook for students only talked about student's conducts and discipline, but silent on sexual harassment. Obarisiagbon (2016) noted that there is a plethora of statutory provisions that are against sexual harassment in Nigeria. He pointed out that section 34 and 42 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees its citizens the fundamental human right of self-dignity and freedom from discrimination. He went further to noted that regrettably these laws are not known by most University students.

3. Underreporting of Female Sexual Harassment and University Social Control Mechanisms

A study by Kebirungi (2021) of two Universities established that there is a culture of silence among female students and the University managements. The study found that most students lack confidence in their institutions as only 5.6% and 3% of students who had experienced sexual assault respectively reported it formally to their respective universities. According to him, this is a decline from 2016, when the corresponding reporting rates were still alarmingly low at 6% and 13%, respectively. Only 29.7% of individuals who reported sexual assault in 2021 felt the university's process was satisfactory. This increased to 41.3% for those who reported sexual harassment. These figures indicate that thousands of students are not seeking out or receiving the support they need following distressing incidents of sexual harassment (Clery, 2015; Henry, 2022).

Sexual harassment is generally regarded as misconduct in all institutions of higher learning; thus, prompt, appropriate and effective responses to all reports of sexual harassment are expected in order to prevent, correct and where necessary, discipline such behaviour (Abudu, 2017; Kabir, 2020). The magnitude and estimated cases of female harassment worldwide has not been easy to document because it is one of the most underreported crimes worldwide, including Nigeria as very few instances of sexual harassment are reported to the appropriate authorities (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2018). Due to underreporting of occurrences, data on the prevalence of sexual harassment on campuses have remained limited. Rather than reporting, victims would maintain silence or avoid the harasser out of fear of reprisal or embarrassment (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2018). According to Dziech and Weiner (in the book Lecherous Professor cited in Smit & Plessis, 2011): *sexual harassment by university professors of their female students is a fact of campus life and that the silencing thereof is part of the reason for the historical invisibility of the problem: silence, promoted by the fear that somehow they (the victims) are responsible for the sexual harassment in one way or the other, and/or the fact that students know they are subordinate to faculty staff and administrators*

University students, staff members, and parents all too frequently consider sexual harassment to be a normal part of life (Otekunrin *et al.*, (2017). Thus, they have all employed denial, dismissal, and minimizing to obscure the menacing reality (Otekunrin *et al.*, 2017). Sexual harassment more often than not goes unreported, while perpetrators often get away with it (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2018). Thus, the unregulated recurrence of the behavioural deficiency may be caused by this. Under-reporting of sexual harassment within University campuses has remained a major challenge as many victims of sexual harassment do not access support services (Makhene, 2022). In many societies, violence against the girl child have not been regarded as serious offences and remain unreported and unaddressed by the justice system (Bello & Osunde, 2022; Enaifoghe *et al.*, 2021), despite their detrimental and long-lasting consequences for the well-being, health and safety of female students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Bello & Osunde, 2022; Erinoshio *et al.*, 2018)

Despite the fact that sexual harassment is viewed as a violent crime against people and human society, it is surprising to note that its occurrence is largely underreported (Geidam *et al.*, (2010). Shedding more light on the foregoing, Menon *et al.*, (2014) noted that, there is a lack of information regarding the state of female safety and exclusion as it is experienced in the

public domain, particularly on University campuses. Makhene, (2022) argued that the prevalence of sexual harassment tends to be dramatically underestimated and incorrectly identified by school authorities, despite several engagements with pertinent parties on the subject. Additionally, the majority of these events on campuses are not typically documented.

Findings by Ajibola, (2020); Kabir,(2020), on how unclear policies contribute to sexual harassment in Nigerian Universities established that in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria there were no clear policies on sexual harassment and for those who had, there were lots of loopholes as regards to the institution's policy in the students' handbook provided yearly for newly admitted students, which most of the students (participants) admitted was quite frustrating as the lack of clarity in the students' handbook makes it difficult for victims to report cases of sexual harassment (Ajibola, 2020; Kabir, 2020). It was also noted that the student handbook did not specifically mention how victims should report sexual assault events; as the handbook only states: "Anyone found guilty of sexual misconduct may face disciplinary measures all the way up to and including expulsion" Thus, while the handbook assures victims of support – the handbook did not explain how victims can derive this desired support (Kabir, 2020).

In a study by Gordon and Collins (2013), it was revealed that a culture of fear exists among female students of tertiary institutions which is promoted by the unwillingness of authorities to respond adequately to sexual harassment issues. Thus, perpetrators have come to believe that they can operate with impunity, and that their acts are neither deeply antisocial nor criminal, but rather only mildly transgressed matters of individual preference that will not result in any serious repercussions (Gordon & Collins (2013) cited in Makhene, (2022). In a similar study by Omonijo, *et al.*, (2013), they observed that the silencing of sexual harassment of female students (victims) by male members of the University is a reality of campus life, and this to them contributes to the problem's historical invisibility.

On their part, Edosomwan *et al.*, (2018) said that although sex for grade has to some extent reduced in some universities with the introduction of computer based test (CBT) and the Vice Chancellors setting up disciplinary committees which ideally should disciplined erring male lecturers, they however noted that not all students have the courage to report lecturers who harass them sexually, as the female victims are more often than not the object of blame while the male offenders are usually not sanctioned, an

accusation that is usually based on the female victims indecent dressing by way of sensuous bodily parts (such as the navel, breasts and buttocks) being exposed by conspicuously tight or translucent clothing popularly referred to as "Sexual Flashpoints" (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2018).

Similarly, UNODC (2021) also noted that the few female students who mustered the courage in the face intimidation and report the abuse of their lecturers to the University authority are frequently questioned inanely, such as: what were you doing in his office/house? Why did you go there alone? Were you outfitted appropriately? They are blamed for the violent treatment that had been meted out on them inside the school that was supposed to protect them, rather than listening and offering them assistance. Abused female students are never treated seriously by our justice system (Kabir, 2020; UNODC, 2021). According to UNODC (2021), the university quasi justice system automatically presumed that female students had behaved in ways that called for the treatment they got from their abusers, instead of prosecuting the offenders to serve as a deterrent to potential offenders.

In the same vein, Ogunrotimi (2022) noted that the spate of this menace in Nigerian Universities has been attributed mainly to lack of a comprehensive anti-sexual harassment policy, lack of confidentiality-driven reporting channels and poor institutional response. Other reports have implicated lack of security, a decline in society norms exacerbated by violent tendencies among some members of the University community manifested in cult activities, and a lackadaisical attitude on the part of the University administration against those responsible for these offensive behaviours (UNODC (2022). Additionally, some parents of victims who are bold enough to report most times mounts pressures on the school authorities to quelled cases to prevent the added burden of stigmatization in the future on their wards (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2018). Similarly, Kabir, (2020) reiterated that although few cases had gained public reaction and sanctions in the last two years, many are still being swept under the carpet due to lack of clear policy against sexual harassment within the Universities. This according to some victims of sexual harassment is quite frustrating as their student handbook only speaks on sexual misconduct under code of conduct rules and regulations for students but not on how this misconduct can be reported to the school authority (Kabir, 2020).

Sexual abuse is still a widespread issue and demanding sexual favours in return for good grades in Nigerian

Universities is still common practice. The girl child is targeted for harassment in the society for social, religious, and criminal reasons (Okolo & Okolo, 2018; Bello & Osunde, 2022). This is a result of Nigeria's criminal justice system failing to respect women's rights (Ogunrotimi, 2022; Okolo & Okolo, 2018). Ogunrotimi (2022), for example, claims that many women experience abuse but do not report it to the police because they cannot afford to pay the police to fully investigate the situation. According to Okolo & Okolo, (2018), during the political unrest that erupted in Benue State's Logo Local Government Area, some women who stayed behind were allegedly subjected to molestation by unnamed criminals who prowl the streets at night robbing and raping women. The article also stated that most women who sought to report were discouraged from doing so because the authorities requested that she provide evidence that she was raped (Okolo & Okolo, 2018).

Ogunrotimi, (2022) opined that sometimes the police may not arrive promptly allowing the offender to assault the victim and flee the scene of the crime before the officers arrives. Furthermore, because police don't arrive quickly, the offender has more power over the victim, and she begins to feel genuinely helpless and alone. Then again, the law makes rape a crime and imposes sentences ranging from 14 years to life in jail on those found guilty, but due to social pressure and the stigma attached to being a rape victim, less rape cases are reported and less severe sentences are given upon conviction (Ogunrotimi, 2022).

4. Theoretical Framework

The deterrence theory was adopted for this study with focus on the University quasi justice system and underreporting of female sexual harassment viz a viz its implication for the continued harassment of female students sexually in Universities

4.1 Deterrence Theory

Deterrence theory is based on Hobbes, Beccaria and Bentham's idea that if punishment is severe, certain and swift, a rational individual will weigh potential gains and losses before engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour. If the loss is higher than the gain, individuals will be deterred from disobeying the law. Deterrence theory went further to illustrate the notion that would-be perpetrators of female sexual harassment will be greatly deterred if Universities have in place a social control mechanism where sanctions are certain, swift and severe. With regard to the subject under investigation, it is contended that if punishment is swift, certain and proportionate to the crime, it will discourage people from breaking the law. It is further contended that the laws on sexual harassment though clearly written, but regrettable the corresponding punishment is not well known to the public as vast majority of the people do not know the consequences of their behaviour viz a viz sexual harassment.

5. Methodology

The study employed the qualitative method of data collection, and data were sourced from both primary and secondary sources. The study was conducted in University of Benin, Benin city, Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, and Igbinedion University Okada. The purposive and convenience sampling methods were adopted in selecting the study participants for key informants' interviews (KIIs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs) respectively. The choice of these two techniques stems from the study desire to access key informants with in-depth knowledge relevant to the study and informants who are ready and willing to talk. Thus, forty-five (45) participants (consisted of 30 IDIs and 15 KIIs) were purposively and conveniently selected as the sample size for the study. Also the study got additional information from secondary sources.

6. Results and Discussion of findings

Please note that none of the names mentioned in the presentation of the qualitative data are real and don't relate to the actual respondents.

Table 4: Social Demographic Characteristic of Respondents

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Sex (Staff and students)	Male	25	55.6
	Female	20	44.4
Total		45	100
Religion (Staff and students)	Christianity	40	88.9
	Islam	3	6.7
	A.T. R	2	4.4
Total		45	100
Age (years) of students	16-18	6	40
	19-21	4	26.7
	22-24	3	20.0
	25 and above	2	13.3
Total		15	100
Age (years) of staff	30-35	4	13.3
	36-40	9	30.0
	41-45	7	23.3
	46-50	8	26.7
	51 and above	2	6.7
Total		30	100
Academic staff	University of Benin, Benin City	5	33.3
	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma	5	33.3
	Igbinedion University, Okada	5	33.3
Total		15	100
Non-academic staff	University of Benin, Benin City	5	33.3
	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma	5	33.3
	Igbinedion University, Okada	5	33.3
Total		15	100
Staff Academic Qualification	BSc.	8	26.7
	MSc.	10	33.3
	Ph.D	12	40.0
	Others	-	-
Total		30	100
Students	University of Benin, Benin City	5	33.3
	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma	5	33.3
	Igbinedion University, Okada	5	33.3
Total		15	100

Source: Field Work, 2023

The study reveals that 55.6% of participants were male, 44.4% were female, and 88.9% were Christians. The majority were Christians. The age range of participants was 16-25 years and above, with 40% aged 16-18, 26.7% aged 19-21, 20% aged 20-24, and 13.3% aged 25 and older. Also, the study reveals that 13.3% of staff members are between 30-35 years old, with the majority aged between 46-50. The study also reveals that 33.3% of participants are from the University of Benin, Ambrose Alli University, and Igbinedion University, with 26.7% holding HND/BSc, 33.3% holding MSc, and 40% holding Ph.D. degrees. Additionally, 33.3% of the participants participated in the interview from the three selected Universities.

6.1 Underreporting of Female Sexual Harassment

Information gathered from the field established that quite a number of cases of female students' sexual harassment by male lecturers in Nigerian Universities are under reported. Quite a number of themes emerged under the underreporting of female sexual harassment. Most of the participants appeared to have the mind-set that some of the victims see it as a normal part of life and so do not report incidence of sexual harassment. This was expressed by one of the informants thus: Somehow, some female students even when being harassed just see it as a normal part of university life and don't make fuss about it (Miss Doris/Student/Uniben/ 25years/Christian)

Similarly this position was strengthened by another participant:

A number of our girls on campus here are bad and when they are sexually harassed, it appears to them to be a case of birds of the same feather flocking together (Mrs Enoma /PhD/Staff/ A.A.U./56years/Muslim)

The view of one of the participants further illuminated this theme:

In some cases the naivety and innocence of these young female students sometimes make them passive about this social malaise (Mr Benson/Staff/MSc/Igbiniedion University/55years/Christian)

It was also gathered from the field that there is a strong link between the fear of reprisal attack and the underreporting of female student's sexual harassment by male lectures. Most participants believed that reporting a randy, harassing offending male lecturer to the university authority is like courting trouble for oneself.

I have heard of several stories of female sexual harassment and what usually befalls a student who refuses and or reports (Mr Eugene/Student/ A.A.U. /23years/Christian)

Another informant aptly captured this thus:

My friend told me her experience which was quite unfortunate that because she not only refused the advances of one of the male lecturers in her department, she also reported her to the head of department. The lecturer openly told her she will see, and truly, she saw. She failed 3 courses taught by the lecturer's close friends

(Miss Osahenrumwen/Student/ Uniben/22years/Christian)

Again, the data from this study further revealed that most female students are unwilling to report incidences of sexual assault by male lecturers to the appropriate authority because of the fear of blame. This view was expressed by one of the informants thus:

Some students will deliberately refuse to report a case of sexual harassment against a lecturer. This is because they would be blamed by their parents for going to his office or for causing it upon themselves. This to me is why a student will not report when sexually harassed (Miss Agnes /Student/Uniben/22years/Christian)

Another informant who corroborated the above stated that:

Most parents usually advice their daughters to be careful and avoid men, but how can you avoid men

when men are your lecturers? And as my friend's mother said in my presence, what did you go to do in his office? Shameless child! I can tell you of a certainty that my friend will never tell her mother again even if 20 lecturers harass her. (Miss Halima/ Student/ A.A.U./21years/Muslim)

The above view was further strengthened by another interviewee who argued that:

In Nigeria, present government blames past government and people generally blame people for the occurrence they had no control over. At the police station and even the security unit of some Universities, I have heard of the police blaming and mocking victims of rape for being the cause of their predicament. Who does that? This is why people are reluctant to go to the police station or school security unit to incident sexual harassment cases (Mrs Idahosa/Staff/PhD/Igbiniedion University/45years/ Christian)

The information gathered from the field clearly indicate that because of the fear of stigmatization and labelling, most female victims of sexual harassment by male lecturers are unlikely or reluctant to report the incidence to the appropriate authority in the University. Quite a number of participants disclosed that it is shameful for people to know that they have been sexually molested or that a lecturer had sex with them even when it was not consensual. This act even if it was a one off thing will stick and remain throughout their stay in the University and even beyond. One of the informants describes this situation thus:

Our society can stigmatize people and it is worse on campus. Ordinary fall that my friend fell the other day, she became nicknamed the 'faller' do you think such a student will report to the security department that she has been raped by a male lecturer? No way! (Miss Georgina /Student/Uniben/22years/Christian)

Another informant simply stated that:

People remember others for good or bad things and relate with them like that. They say it is labelling. Till tomorrow the student that was failed five times by a lecturer in Engineering and took laws into her hands is still remembered and called a particular name. Seeing this kind of stigmatization, students will be reluctant to report a lecturer who will sexually harass them (Mr Famous/Staff/ PhD/A.A.U. 52years/Christian)

The opinion of an interviewee from Igbiniedion University further strengthened this:

For me, God forbids a thing like this happens to me, I will not tell anybody! Is it me they will now start

calling names? (Miss. Sarah /Student/ Igbinedion University/ 21years/Christian)

Based on the analysis of data gathered, It was found in the study that:

The poor system of redress for victims of sexual harassment is a major underlying cause of the continued existence of female sexual harassment in Universities in Nigeria. The results from the study further showed that this situation is not helped by the fact that there are many hiccups in the journey for justice as many of the offending lecturers would do anything to pervert the course of justice. The invariably means that while the offending lecturers are bold in this social vice, the offended students chicken out when sexually harassed

Also, it was gathered from the study findings that those victims of sexual harassment don't just take the victim's position in silence, but are not forth coming when most needed at the disciplinary committee/ad-hoc committee of inquiring meetings. In the absence of the complainant, eyewitness, documentary or electronic evidence, most of the culprits are left off the hook for lack of evidence. Just like in the larger society, where cases are swept under the carpet at the police station, and celebrated cases already in court are later unheard of, the same scenario also play out in Universities.

Again, the results from the study also revealed that although social control mechanisms for addressing female sexual harassment exist in these Universities, their effectiveness leaves much to be desired as the quasi-justice system actors within these Universities more often than not pay lip services to enforcement. It must be pointed out here that this was not corroborated by the study findings from Igbinedion University Okada, which is a privately owned University as participants from the institutions all affirmed that the school has well established and enforced social control mechanisms for addressing female sexual harassment and such mechanisms have been very effective to the extent that sexual harassment is near non-existence in their campuses.

The study findings also revealed that most outcomes of female sexual harassment investigations and final decision by the school governing council are more often not publicized which could have acted as a deterrent to potential offenders.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Although there are relevant laws and institutional responses to sexual harassment, the phenomenon has

remained unabated owing to the fact that there is no compliance to the institutional rules and regulation. Also, the fact that more often the University's justice actors pay lip services to the enforcement of these rules and thus, rendering them ineffective. Based on the above, the following are recommended:

There should be reorientation and sensitization of students to the dangers inherent in not reporting harassment cases, and a total overhaul of the University quasi justice system

There is the need for the appropriate authority to develop clear policy on sexual harassment and sexual misconduct by laying bare specific penalties/punitive measures for perpetrators in the policy. Also, there should be an official reporting and monitoring procedure, which will help in classifying sexual harassment (and other sexual misconduct) as an offence of institutional concern. Outcomes and sanctions meted out to perpetrators of female sexual harassment in Universities should be widely publicized in order to convey to the entire University community that engaging in immoral sexual behaviour will have consequences as this will serve as deterrence to would be perpetrators and encourage victims to speak.

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