UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ITS EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FEMALE STUDENTS IN SELECTED SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, ATEBUBU/ AMANTIN MUNICIPALITY

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Bayinima Abdul-Karim Kpajaah hereby declare that except for references made to other people's work which have been duly acknowledged, this report is the result of my own research and that it has neither in whole or part been presented elsewhere.

Signature………………………………...…..…………
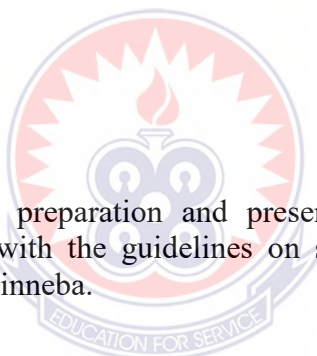

Date…………………….…………….……………

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name: ……………………………….……………

Signature………………………….…..…………

Date…………………….…………….……………

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Kpajaah family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I humbly express my unflinching accolade to my supervisor, Professor Lucy Effeh Attom who took the pain to supervise this work to be a success. I am forever grateful for her guidance and insightful suggestions which encouraged me to do the work. My sincere thanks also go to Mr. Philip Okai Mensah for his encouragement and support. Finally, I thank all my friends who assisted in one way or the other for the success of this work. I ask for the blessings and favour of the Almighty God for all and sundry.
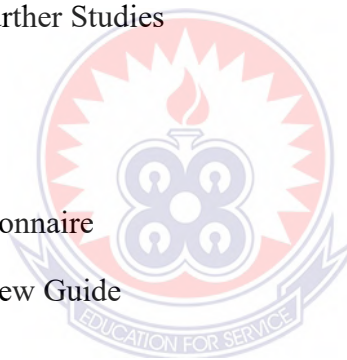
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAMA	Attebubu -Amantin Municipal Assembly
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CWEALF	Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund
GES	Ghana Education Service
GPA	Grade Point Average
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
OLS	Ordinary Least Square
SHS	Senior High School
SHCS	Sexual Harassment on Campus Survey
WHO	World Health Organisation

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of sexual harassment on the academic performance of female students in selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin, Ghana. The research aims to understand the nature and causes of sexual harassment, explore how female students handle such incidents, and assess the effects on their academic performance. Data was collected from 289 female students in five schools using questionnaire. Additionally, interviews were conducted with a school counsellor, an assistant headmaster/mistress (domestic), and a housemistress from each of the selected schools. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the questionnaire data, while thematic and narrative analysis were employed for the interview data. The findings of the study revealed that male peers are the primary perpetrators of sexual harassment. It was revealed that the nature of sexual harassment experienced by female students include unwanted attention, discussions, relationships, and physical contact. Factors contributing to harassment were inappropriate dressing, student behaviour, underreporting, and victim-blaming. Also, the study showed that most victims share their experiences with pastors/imam, teachers for prayer and counselling and avoid perpetrators. It emphasizes the negative effects of harassment on academic performance. To address the issue, the study recommends treating sexual harassment as a serious offense and enforcing relevant laws impartially. Implementing disciplinary measures can encourage modest dressing and discourage harassment. Additionally, victims should receive counselling and support to mitigate the adverse academic consequences.
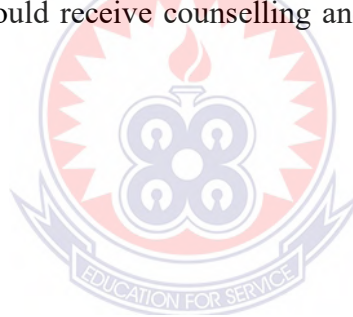
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Over the years, women and girls have garnered worldwide attention for violence, which has been a severe socioeconomic and human rights problem impacting practically all cultures. Abuse against women can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including sexual harassment and domestic violence (Abubakar et al., 2010). Sexual harassment is the most common type of abuse directed towards women or schoolgirls. There has recently been an increase in awareness about the subject of sexual harassment of students in schools. Research conducted suggests that campuses are increasingly becoming infamously hazardous and unfriendly environments, rather than providing a secure setting in which students may acquire information and create healthy life-long mutual friendships in a respected environment (Nwadiani, 2018). This is owing to the fact that in any open social organization where there are boys, girls, men, and women, there is bound to be interaction, which can be beneficial or harmful. Sexual harassment might thus be a result of such unpleasant contact among boys, girls, men, and women, with far-reaching consequences for individuals and the nation as a whole (Taiwo, Omole & Omole, 2014).

Sexual harassment is common in schools throughout the world. A research done by Bolt, Morrison, and Ellsberg (2005) in ten (10) nations, including Ghana, indicated that between 13 and 62 percent of women and girls had suffered physical abuse by a spouse over their lives. A World Health Organization (WHO) assessment (WHO, 2013) indicates that between 8% and 26% of women and girls worldwide had been

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sexually assaulted as children or adults. According to the reports, these findings are likely an underestimation of the real incidence of abuse because many women are hesitant to confess sexual assault owing to shame and fear of retaliation (WHO, 2013).

Sexual harassment is defined broadly as any physical, verbal, or visual behaviour that the person experiencing it objects to immediately or later (Onoyase, 2018). It might take the form of sexual advances, insulting or discriminatory statements that are used as a justification for employment or admittance. Typically, such behaviour humiliates and creates an offensive hostile atmosphere for victims. As a result, sexual harassment is not a friendly or flirtatious conduct (Reena, 2014). It can be flirting gone too far, and it is frequently repeated, but in rare cases, a single incidence might be considered harassing behaviour. Furthermore, sexual harassment entailed unwelcome sexual behaviours, a victim's impression of which produces a hostile, frightening, and humiliating atmosphere (Gaba, 2010). It might include physical material, the expression of sexually charged comments and jokes, the display of pornography, or making of unneeded and unwelcome comments about the individual.

Sexual harassment in schools is a kind of aggression towards schoolgirls, a violation of their human rights, and an offense incompatible with human decency. Cases related to sexual harassment in society has increased at an alarming rate in recent years, which has been a major source of concern for many individuals from all walks of life. Sexual harassment frequently occurs when there is disparity in power or authority among the individuals involved (Abubakar et al., 2010). Thus, there is a student-teacher relationship, an employee-supervisor relationship, and a junior-to-senior instructor relationship. This also includes treating people unequally based on gender

in work-related or academic obligations or programmes, as well as not giving female students equal academic chances as male students (Gaba, 2010).

The repercussions of sexual harassment have been documented in literature across time. Such behaviour is typically a symptom of power play, with the offender making sexual advances by using superior position or economic superiority to entice, compel, or frighten victims (Kheswa, 2014), and may involve people of the same or opposite sex (Pina, Gannon, & Saunders, 2009). It presents an offensive, devaluing, and threatening psychological experience, which is perceived to have a negative impact on the victims' ability to participate in and benefit from educational programmes, as well as create a hostile and offensive work/school environment for victims (Pina et al, 2009). Girls who have been sexually abused as children are more likely to drop out of school, have unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, participate in high-risk sexual practices, and suffer from despair, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts and behaviours (Abradu, 2013).

Several studies have also looked at the influence of sexual harassment on female students. For example, Abradu (2013) reported that sexual harassment is on the rise in senior high schools and is having a variety of detrimental consequences on female students in Ghana's Akuapem North District. According to a poll of female teenagers in Ghana, 7 to 48 percent of their first sexual experiences were coerced. In most cases, the perpetrator is someone known to the lady or schoolgirl, such as a family member, acquaintance, schoolmate, or instructor (Abradu, 2013). Effects of sexual harassment can be observed in the form of mortality and disability as a result of injuries and indirectly in the form of vulnerability to a variety of physical and mental health issues. Onoyase (2019) researched the frequency of sexual harassment among female

college students in Taraba State, North East of Nigeria and according to the findings of the study, there was a high frequency of sexual harassment among female tertiary students in the State. Inappropriate sexual comments, unwelcome groping of female students' breasts, touching of female students' buttocks, and tempting female students with sex for grade scores were all examples of sexual harassment of female students. The findings also demonstrated that there is no statistically significant difference in the incidence of sexual harassment of female students among respondents in colleges, polytechnics, and institutions of education.

This is one of the factors that have prompted academia to look at sexual misconduct in schools and how it affects female students, who constitute the majority of the victims (Abradu, 2013). This study, therefore, sought to examine the effects of sexual harassment academic performance of female Senior High School students in selected Senior High School in Atebubu Municipality.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Sexual harassment is a serious issue for students at all levels of education. Sexual harassment can occur at any educational level, including secondary schools, basic schools, apprenticeship programmes, vocational schools, universities and colleges. Most students are reluctant or ashamed to report sexual harassment at various colleges. This problem is more frequent than one may think. Normally, such canker is handled quietly and people just allude to it. The victims were usually accused of seducing the offender. However, the argument about sexual harassment was primarily based on hearsay (Equal Rights Advocates, 2019).

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According to Abradu (2013), sexual harassment is on the rise in Ghana's senior high schools, and it is having a range of negative implications for female students. There is not a single day that goes by without a report in the media regarding sexual harassment. There have been reports of male employees using their higher position and economic dominance to entice, force, or sexually intimidate girls. In certain cases, male pupils have been observed sexually intimidating female classmates (Kheswa, 2014). However, statistics on the incidence of campus-based sexual harassment has remained limited due to under-reporting of occurrences. The problem could not be dismissed lightly.

Campus sexual harassment is not a new phenomenon in Ghana as it has existed for a long time but has received little attention (Norman, Aikins & Binka, 2013). There has recently been a surge in interest in investigating sexual harassment concerns in Ghanaian schools, owing to the education system's unparalleled moral breakdown for a variety of reasons. Studies done on college campuses around the country verified the high frequency of various types of sexual misbehaviour. For instance, Sivertsen *et al* (2019) indicated that the most common sexual harassments were sexual expressions, recommendations or comments about an individual's body as well as unwanted touching or kissing. Gouws and Kritzinger (2022) also found that unwanted touching, kissing, clothing and other forms of sexual harassments are widespread among students. Sadly, despite the findings of these studies, few schools have used the clues to confront the issue and adopt policy mechanisms to regulate and/or discipline the behaviour (Mitchell, Ybarra & Korchmaros, 2014). As a result, it has remained a severe but under-addressed issue in the country.

There is no doubt that sexual harassment and/or sexual misbehaviour on college campuses require significant attention, not just for the repulsive character of the behaviour, but also for the social and psychological implications on the victim. Furthermore, the effect of sexual harassment restricts the right to an equal educational opportunity and may be a hindrance for the victim (particularly females) in realizing their academic as well as personal development goals (Kheswa, 2014). Based on the reported trends and studies conducted, the study sought to assess the effects of sexual harassment on academic performance of female students in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of sexual harassment on female students among selected senior high schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. ascertain the nature of sexual harassment among female students in selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality.

2. identify the causes of sexual harassment among female students in selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality.

3. assess the effects of sexual harassment on the academic performance of female students in selected Senior High School in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality

4. analyse coping strategies used by female students in selected senior high schools to handle sexual harassment issues.

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1.5 Research Questions

This study on the basis of the research objectives, answered the following research questions;

1. What is the nature of sexual harassment among female students in selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality?

2. What are the causes of sexual harassment among female students in selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality?

3. What are the effects of sexual harassment on the academic performance in selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality?

4. How do female students in selected senior high schools cope with sexual harassment in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research work would be significant to people in academia, practitioners and various educational institutions and policy makers as a whole. The goal of the study is to raise awareness among teachers and students so that they can take the necessary precautions to avoid sexual harassment in their schools. The study is also expected to inform future teachers and administrators on the forms of sexual harassment they may encounter in their schools. Teachers and students would benefit from the study since they would be more aware of where they are most likely to be enticed or attacked. The study would sensitize teachers about the negative consequences of sexual harassment as it would go a long way to educate them.

Based on the data, school authorities, parents, and other adults would be in the position to develop strategies, activities, and interventions to support girls who are victims of sexual harassment. The research would also be used to provide empirical proof of the effects of sexual harassment on academic achievement.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study was limited to six senior high schools in Ghana's Atebubu/Amantin Municipality because harassment cases seem to be high in these schools. Only two types of harassment were examined: harassment between teachers and female students, and harassment between peers in senior high schools. As a result, the study was conducted to determine the negative effects on the activities of students and teachers in senior high schools. Only females from the selected senior high schools were included in the study. The males were excluded from the study because there seem to be few cases involving them as victims.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

This is a five-chapter research report. Chapter One deals with the introduction to the study. It entails background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of study, and finally delimitation of the study. Chapter Two provides an insight on the concepts and reviews literature relating to sexual harassment and academic performance. Issues discussed include theoretical review, concept of sexual harassment, nature of sexual harassment, forms of sexual harassment, causes of sexual harassment, coping strategies adopted by female students in handling sexual harassment, effects of sexual harassment on academic performance, strategies to control sexual harassment, conceptual framework and summary of the literature. The Chapter Three captures the

methodology of the research. The methodology covers the research strategy and research design, study area and population, sampling and sample size, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter Four focuses on results presentation and discusses the findings in relation to literature. The Fifth Chapter, which happens to be the final chapter, is dedicated to the summary of major findings, conclusions and recommendations, limitations and areas for further studies for further studies.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Academic performance: The level of achievement, progress, or success in educational pursuits, typically measured through grades, test scores, and overall learning outcomes.

Awareness: Knowledge, understanding, or consciousness of a particular issue or problem, in this context referring to understanding the existence, prevalence, and effects of sexual harassment.

Causes of sexual harassment: Factors or circumstances that contribute to the occurrence of sexual harassment, such as power imbalances, cultural norms, societal attitudes, and gender inequality.

Coping strategies: Approaches, techniques, or actions employed by individuals to handle or manage the effects of sexual harassment, including seeking support, self-defence, or reporting incidents.

Education: Engagement in school activities.

Effects of sexual harassment: The consequences and impacts of experiencing sexual harassment, which may include emotional distress, psychological trauma, decreased self-esteem, academic setbacks, and disrupted social interactions.

Female students: Students who identify as female or are assigned female at birth, attending educational institutions.

Forms of sexual harassment: Various manifestations or expressions of sexual harassment, which can include physical assault, unwanted advances, explicit comments, online harassment, stalking, or non-consensual sexual contact.

Nature of sexual harassment: The characteristics, patterns, and types of behaviour that constitute sexual harassment, including verbal, physical, or visual forms of misconduct.

Precautions: Pre-emptive measures or actions taken to prevent or minimize the occurrence of sexual harassment, aiming to create a safer environment for individuals.

Senior High Schools: Educational institutions that provide education to students in the final years of secondary education, typically serving students between the ages of 15 and 18.

Sensitization: The process of increasing awareness, understanding, and sensitivity towards a particular issue or topic, such as educating individuals about sexual harassment and its impact.

Sexual harassment: Unwanted and unwelcome sexual advances, comments, or behaviour that creates a hostile or offensive environment for the recipient.

Strategies and interventions: Planned actions or approaches implemented to address and mitigate the occurrence of sexual harassment, including policy development, training programs, disciplinary measures, and creating safe reporting mechanisms.

Support for victims: Assistance, resources, or services provided to individuals who have experienced sexual harassment, aiming to provide emotional support, counselling, legal guidance, and other forms of aid.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of relevant literature pertaining to the topic of sexual harassment. The review encompasses various themes, including Theories underpinning the study, the concept of sexual harassment, nature and forms of sexual harassment, causes of sexual harassment, effects of sexual harassment on academic performance, coping strategies employed by female students in response to such incidents, preventive strategies, and a conceptual framework.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This section presents a review of the theoretical underpinnings that inform and shape the study on sexual harassment and its effects on female students' academic performance. The theoretical perspectives explored in this review include the natural/biological theory and organizational theory.
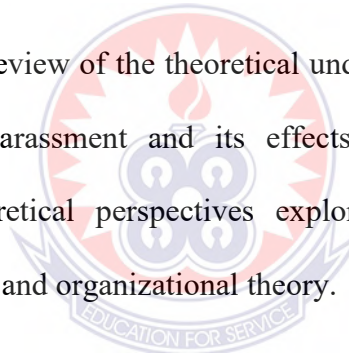
2.2.1 Natural/biological theory

The natural/biological theory is one of the theoretical perspectives that underpin the study on sexual harassment and its effects on female students' academic performance. This theory explores the influence of innate and biological factors on the occurrence and manifestation of sexual harassment.

The proponent of this theory was Thornhill (1999). Based on this theory, sexual harassment is seen as a natural sexual attraction between people. Men have larger sex drives, according to this idea, and are hence physiologically inclined to pursue women sexually. As a result, the harassing behaviour is not designed to be disrespectful or

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discriminatory; rather, it is the product of biological desires. According to this theory, men and women have a natural, mutual attraction, men have a larger sex drive, and men are sexual initiators, according to the theory (Anon, 2022). Biologically, men have a strong physiological want for sexual activity and may use coercion to satisfy their sex drive, but the other version says that men and women naturally have mutual sexual attraction and are equally accountable for sexual behaviours in the institution. This means that a person may not intend to sexually harass another person but nevertheless engage in the act because of the natural drive offered by the opposite sex attraction; hence, harassing behaviour may not always be regarded as offensive or discriminatory. As a result, the concept of sexual harassment, according to this theory, is incorrect because the relevant exchanges are more correctly understood as courtship behaviour. The natural/biological approach has the advantage of acknowledging the fundamental human tendencies that may be motivating sexually aggressive conduct (Collins, 2022).

According to this theory, sexual harassment can be partially explained by evolutionary instincts and biological drives. It suggests that certain innate behaviours and biological predispositions may contribute to the perpetration of sexual harassment. These behaviours can include a desire for dominance, competition for mates, and the expression of sexual aggression (Ward, 2006).

Evolutionary psychologists argue that sexual harassment may be rooted in reproductive strategies and sexual selection. Buss and Duntley (2008) propose that sexual harassment could be a strategy for men to maximize their reproductive success by attempting to gain sexual access to multiple partners. From this perspective, sexual harassment may be seen as an adaptation shaped by evolutionary pressures.

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However, it is important to note that the natural/biological theory does not excuse or justify sexual harassment. Rather, it provides insights into potential biological underpinnings that may contribute to the occurrence of such behaviours.

Critics of the natural/biological theory argue that focusing solely on innate biological factors oversimplifies the complex dynamics of sexual harassment. Social and cultural factors play a significant role in shaping behaviours and attitudes related to sexual harassment (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). Therefore, it is crucial to consider multiple perspectives, including socio-cultural and feminist theories, to fully understand the phenomenon of sexual harassment.

By examining the natural/biological theory, this study acknowledges the potential influence of innate biological factors in understanding sexual harassment. However, it recognizes the importance of integrating other theoretical perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of sexual harassment among female students.

2.2.2 Social Cognitive

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Albert Bandura, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding human behavior, learning, and motivation (Bandura, 1986). This theory emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between personal factors (cognitive, affective, and biological), environmental influences, and behavior. Within the context of sexual harassment and its potential impact on the academic performance of female students in senior high schools, SCT offers valuable insights and implications.

According to SCT, personal factors encompass cognitive processes, such as self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and self-regulation (Bandura, 1986). These cognitive factors play a significant role in shaping an individual's behavior and motivation. In the context of female students experiencing sexual harassment, their self-efficacy beliefs their confidence in their ability to navigate and cope with such situations can be severely compromised (Vigil et al., 2019). Negative outcome expectations, such as anticipating further harassment or retaliation, can also influence their behavior and academic engagement (Cortina & Kubiak, 2006).

SCT posits that environmental influences, including social norms, cultural beliefs, and interpersonal interactions, can shape an individual's behavior (Bandura, 1986). In educational settings, the prevalence of sexual harassment can create a hostile and intimidating environment, particularly for female students (Hill & Silva, 2005). This hostile environment can impede their ability to learn, participate, and perform academically (Huerta et al., 2006).

SCT highlights the bidirectional relationship between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavior (Bandura, 1986). In the context of sexual harassment, female students may exhibit avoidance behaviors, such as skipping classes or avoiding certain areas of the school, in an attempt to minimize their exposure to harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1997). Such behavioral patterns can directly impact their academic performance, attendance, and overall educational experience (Huerta et al., 2006).

A key tenet of SCT is observational learning, which suggests that individuals can acquire new behaviors by observing and modeling others (Bandura, 1986). In educational settings where sexual harassment is prevalent, female students may witness or learn about the experiences of their peers, which can shape their own

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perceptions and responses (Timmerman, 2003). Negative role models or a lack of positive role models can contribute to the normalization of harassment and perpetuate its occurrence (Banyard et al., 2007).

Self-efficacy beliefs, a central concept in SCT, play a crucial role in academic performance (Bandura, 1997). Female students who experience sexual harassment may develop diminished self-efficacy beliefs, leading to decreased motivation, reduced effort, and lower academic achievement (Huerta et al., 2006; Vigil et al., 2019). This can create a vicious cycle, where poor academic performance further erodes self-efficacy, perpetuating the negative impact of harassment on their educational outcomes.
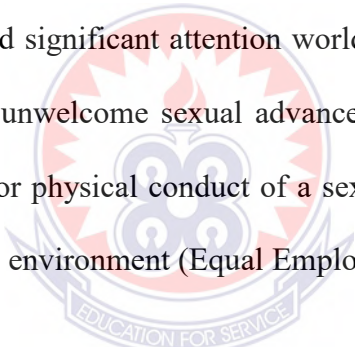
Numerous studies have explored the relationship between sexual harassment and academic performance, providing empirical support for the implications of SCT. For instance, Vigil et al. (2019) found that sexual harassment experiences were associated with lower academic self-efficacy and decreased motivation among college women. Similarly, Huerta et al. (2006) reported that sexual harassment was linked to lower academic performance, increased absenteeism, and higher dropout rates among female high school students.

Kaplan et al. (2020) examined the role of self-efficacy in mitigating the negative impact of sexual harassment on academic performance. Their findings suggested that interventions aimed at enhancing self-efficacy beliefs could buffer the detrimental effects of harassment on female students' academic outcomes. Furthermore, Banyard et al. (2007) highlighted the importance of creating positive social norms and role models in educational settings to prevent and address sexual harassment effectively.

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The Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex interplay between personal, environmental, and behavioral factors that contribute to the impact of sexual harassment on the academic performance of female students in senior high schools. By addressing these factors through evidence-based interventions, educational institutions can create a supportive and inclusive environment that empowers female students to thrive academically and reach their full potential.

2.2 Concept of Sexual Harassment

This sub-section provides a comprehensive review of the literature surrounding the concept of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a pervasive form of gender-based violence that has garnered significant attention worldwide (Abubakar et al., 2010). It encompasses a range of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2019).

The concept of sexual harassment emerged in the 1970s, driven by feminist movements and efforts to address workplace discrimination and gender inequality (McDonald & Charlesworth, 2015). Since then, the understanding of sexual harassment has expanded to include various settings beyond the workplace, including educational institutions. Sexual harassment can occur in both public and private spaces, affecting individuals across different cultures, ages, and genders (Abubakar et al., 2010). It is predominantly experienced by women and girls, although men can also be victims (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). The power dynamics, gender roles, and

societal norms prevalent in a given context contribute to the occurrence and perpetuation of sexual harassment (Gutek et al., 2004).

Sexual harassment has been the issue that is affecting the individuals either in workplace, institutions and other fields of life where human beings are involved. The issue has been predominantly going on irrespective of the measures been rolled out to control the problem. The definition of the term sexual harassment will therefore help to put the research in the appropriate context. However, to get the concept of the issue, several authors have defined the meaning of sexual harassment which needs to be examined in the context of this study.

According to Equal Rights Advocates (2019), sexual harassment in the workplace or at school can range from unwanted touching, gesturing, and unwanted remarks to someone guaranteeing a good grade or advancement in exchange for sex or expecting sexual favours in order to give you what someone deserves or want. Sexual harassment is any form of unwelcome sexual behaviour that's offensive, humiliating or intimidating (REACHOUT, 2019). According to Gutek (2019), these take the form of sexually provocative statements, gestures, or unwanted physical contact, such as leering looks, caressing, pestering, and requests for a date or sex when job hunting. The harassed is disadvantaged as a result of such behaviour. Unwelcome and unwanted sexual approaches, requests for sexual favours, and any sexually-related verbal or physical contact that creates a hostile or uncomfortable environment are all examples of sexual harassment (WageIndicator, 2022).

Sexual harassment refers to sexually inappropriate approaches provided by an employer or superior, particularly when adherence is made a prerequisite of on-going employment or progress (Collins, 2022). It is not necessary for the individual who engages in unpleasant behaviour to intend to sexually harass the other person for the behaviour to be termed sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is characterized by the nature and impact of the behaviour, not by the intention behind it, regardless of what was meant (Anon, 2022). With regards to the various definitions, it can be realized that, sexual harassment is an unlawful or unwanted act imposed by one person to the other.

2.3 Nature of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses various behaviours, expressions, and interactions. It predominantly occurs within power imbalances and involves unwanted sexual attention, advances, or conduct that creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2019).

Research indicates that sexual harassment is primarily experienced by women and girls, although men can also be victims (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). It occurs across different settings, including workplaces, educational institutions, public spaces, and online platforms (McDonald & Charlesworth, 2015). The nature of sexual harassment varies depending on the context, cultural norms, and power dynamics prevalent within a particular environment (Gutek et al., 2004).

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Studies have identified several common forms of sexual harassment. Unwanted sexual comments, gestures, or jokes are frequently reported, creating a sexually charged and uncomfortable atmosphere (Pina et al., 2009). Physical harassment, such as touching, groping, or assault, is another prevalent form of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald, 2018). Additionally, sexual coercion, demands for sexual favors, and explicit or implicit threats can also constitute sexual harassment (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2019).

The perpetrators of sexual harassment can be individuals in positions of power, such as supervisors, teachers, or colleagues, as well as peers or acquaintances (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). Power differentials, gender stereotypes, and social hierarchies contribute to the perpetration of sexual harassment, allowing individuals to exert control or assert dominance over others (Gutek et al., 2004).

The nature of sexual harassment extends beyond individual interactions and is influenced by broader social and cultural factors. Prevailing gender norms, objectification of women, and societal attitudes towards sexuality contribute to the normalization or tolerance of sexual harassment (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). These factors shape the context in which sexual harassment occurs and influence individuals' perceptions, responses, and reporting behaviours.

Understanding the nature of sexual harassment is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies. By recognizing its various forms and dynamics, educational institutions, workplaces, and policymakers can implement measures that foster safe and respectful environments. Efforts should address not only

the individual incidents of sexual harassment but also the underlying power structures, cultural norms, and gender inequalities that perpetuate this behaviour.

The nature of sexual harassment is not limited to explicit behaviours but can also be expressed through nonverbal cues and gestures. Unwanted physical contact, touching, or invasion of personal space without consent are also common manifestations of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald, Swan & Fischer, 2020). It is important to note that the nature of sexual harassment can vary based on the gender of the perpetrator and the victim. While sexual harassment can occur between individuals of the same gender, it is predominantly experienced by women and girls, perpetrated by men or individuals in positions of power (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). Moreover, the nature of sexual harassment is influenced by societal and cultural factors. Norms surrounding gender roles, power dynamics, and attitudes towards sexuality contribute to the perpetuation and tolerance of sexual harassment (Gutek et al., 2004).

Sexual harassment, according to Hunt et al. (2021) might include physical contact, making sexual jokes, displaying pornography, or making needless and unwanted comments about a person's looks. According to Hamilton, Snoeyink and Martinez (2019), sexual harassment of women by men can occur in student-teacher or doctor-patient relationships, particularly when the male has more power and the female has a lower status. Hamilton et al. (2019) further state that sexual harassment can take many forms, from sexist jokes and insulting statements about women in the classroom to the solicitation of sexual favours in exchange for good grades. Riggs (1993) noted sexually harassing behaviour includes unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favours when the acceptance or rejection of such activity serves as a foundation for academic or job decisions. Conduct that interferes with a student's or

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employee's performance by permitting a hostile working environment or hostile learning environment to persist is also considered sexual harassment.

RAINN (2019) focused on some common types of sexual harassment to provide an in-depth analysis of the study at hand which include making sexual favours a condition of work or progress, either expressly or indirectly, sexual assaults on the body, requests for sexual favours, verbal harassment of a sexual nature, including jokes referring to sexual acts or sexual orientation. Again, some common types further include unwanted touching or physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances, discussing sexual relations/stories/fantasies at work, school, or in other inappropriate places, feeling pressured to engage with someone sexually, exposing oneself or performing sexual acts on oneself and unwanted sexually explicit photos, emails, or text messages.

Moreover, Equal Rights Advocates (2019) highlighted some common forms of sexual harassment and realized that; sexual harassment is not always sexual. It can also take the form of taunting, intimidating, or offensive comments based on stereotypes (e.g., about how certain individuals "are" or should act), or bullying based on someone's sex, gender identity (man, woman, trans, intersex, no binary, two-spirit), or sexual preference (queer, bisexual, lesbian, gay, asexual, pansexual, etc.) (Anon, 2022). There is no requirement that the harasser or harassers gain any sexual satisfaction from their actions or be sexually attracted to their victims. In a nutshell, sexual harassment is abuse that is sexual, sex-based, or gender-based in nature, regardless of the harasser's orientation, gender identity, sexual interests, or enjoyment (Equal Rights Advocates, 2019). However, some common examples as highlighted include unwanted repeated requests for sexual favours or dates from a peer, requests for

sexual favours or dates from a teacher to a student in a k-12 setting, inappropriate or lewd comments said or repeated to you or around you, inappropriate or lewd comments about someone's body or appearance, saying bad things about someone (or about a group of people) based on gender identity or sexuality, gender-based or sexuality-based slurs (swear words).

Other common examples are jokes about sex, or making fun of people generally based on their gender identity or sexuality, unwanted emails, texts, messages, videos, or photos of a sexual nature, gossip about someone's personal relationships or sex life, unwanted touching of any body part, clothing, face, or hair, staring, leering, or making gestures of a sexual nature, blocking someone's way or their movement, especially in a physically threatening or intimidating way, inappropriate touching, massaging, kissing, or hugging, flashing or mooning and vulgar pictures or pornography, even if those pictures are not of or about you, if they are shown to you against your will repeatedly or in the context of other harassment.

It can be concluded from the discussions on sexual harassment that a variety of behaviours, such as physical aggression advances, sexual bribery, or gender harassment, constitute sexual harassment, and that it is a critical developmental issue that not only causes serious emotional, social, and psychological problems for the victim, but also has a devastating effect on society as a whole.

2.4 Forms of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can take on diverse forms, encompassing a wide range of behaviours that create a hostile or offensive environment for victims. Understanding the different forms of sexual harassment is crucial for recognizing its prevalence and developing effective prevention strategies.

One form of sexual harassment is verbal harassment, which involves unwelcome comments, jokes, or innuendos of a sexual nature. Verbal harassment can include explicit sexual language, derogatory remarks, or sexually demeaning statements (Gutek et al., 2004). Such behaviours contribute to a hostile environment, undermining victims' sense of safety and well-being.

Another form of sexual harassment is physical harassment, which involves unwelcome physical contact or advances. This can include unwanted touching, groping, or inappropriate gestures (Pina et al., 2009). Physical harassment invades personal boundaries and can cause significant distress and discomfort for victims.

Sexual harassment can also occur in the form of nonverbal harassment, which includes visual or written actions that are of a sexual nature and create a hostile environment. Nonverbal harassment can involve displaying explicit images, sending unwelcome sexual messages or emails, or sharing pornography (Fitzgerald, 2018). These behaviours contribute to a sexually charged environment that can be intimidating and distressing for victims.

Quid pro quo harassment is another form of sexual harassment that involves the conditioning of employment benefits or academic opportunities on sexual favors or compliance with unwelcome advances (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission,

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2019). In such cases, victims may face pressure or coercion to engage in sexual activities in exchange for job security, promotions, or favorable treatment.

Hostile environment harassment refers to situations where the overall environment is permeated with unwelcome sexual conduct or comments that interfere with an individual's ability to work or learn (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2019). It creates an offensive or intimidating atmosphere, negatively impacting victims' well-being and performance.

Sexual coercion is a form of harassment that involves pressuring or forcing someone to engage in unwanted sexual activities (Fitzgerald, 2018). It may include threats, blackmail, or the abuse of power differentials to manipulate or coerce victims into compliance. Sexual coercion is a particularly egregious form of harassment as it violates the autonomy and consent of the victim. Cybersexual harassment, also known as online harassment, has gained prominence with the rise of digital communication platforms (McDonald & Charlesworth, 2015). It involves the use of technology, such as social media, emails, or messaging apps, to harass or intimidate individuals with unwanted sexual content, explicit images, or online stalking. Cybersexual harassment has its own unique characteristics and can be highly invasive due to the anonymity and reach of online platforms.

It is important to note that these forms of sexual harassment can intersect and overlap, with individuals experiencing multiple forms simultaneously. Furthermore, the forms of sexual harassment may vary across different contexts and cultural settings, influenced by societal norms, power dynamics, and organizational cultures (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Gutek et al., 2004). Causes of sexual harassment differ and one

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person's experience may be different from another authors categorize it in various ways. The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund has highlighted two categories of sexual harassment in schools in its publications (CWEALF, 1995).

The first version was dubbed "Quid Pro Quo," or "this for that." This sort of harassment occurs when there are two people with varying levels of authority. This can make it difficult for the student to concentrate or enjoy her schoolwork and school experience (Gutek, 2019). A sort of 'quid pro quo' sexual harassment occurs when a teacher promises a student that if she goes out with him, she will do better on an examination. Furthermore, if the student refuses the teacher's offer, the teacher may retaliate by causing academic, social, and emotional harm to the student.

The second technique involves creating a "hostile atmosphere." This happens when inappropriate sexual behaviour, such as touching, taunting, name-calling, sexual posters, images, or jokes, create an environment that has a negative impact on a student's daily routine (Mubarik & Yemisi, 2021). Peers and people in power-sharing relationships are more likely to engage in this type of harassment. In order for a teacher or staff member to create a hostile environment, these actions must be widespread and severe. Other forms include explicit calls or letters at school or home, whistling, hooting, sucking lips, smirking, and animal noises, sexual exploits stories, sexual comments about a person's body, graphic description or display of pornographic material at work, sexual graffiti, inappropriate gift for a business relationship, and indecent exposure (Velázquez, 2022). Despite the above-mentioned forms, there are some forms of sexual harassment that need to be considered.

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2.4.1 Retaliation harassment

Retaliation harassment, on the other hand, occurs when a victim is subjected to a negative action after rejecting a sexual advance, filing a sexual harassment report, or assisting another victim with a complaint. Negative actions might include social marginalization, receiving a poor grade, or being fired, and are commonly used by perpetrators to punish victims (Anon, 2022). Adverse academic actions or decisions (such as evaluations, low grades, social exclusion, poor treatment in class) as a result of a sexual advance being rejected or reported, as well as adverse employment actions or decisions (such as evaluations, failure to hire or promote, transfer, social exclusion, poor treatment in the workplace) as a result of a sexual advance being rejected or reported, are examples of retaliation harassment. A person who believes that he/she is being subjected to unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature will first, where possible, make it clear to the harasser that the behaviour is unwelcome, that it is offensive and that it will immediately cease. If a victim is not comfortable approaching the harasser on his/her own, or if he/she has asked the harasser to stop but the offensive behaviour continues, the victim should to informal and formal reporting systems for resolving the problem (i-sight, 2022).

2.4.2 Psychological harassment

Psychological harassment which is sometimes refers to mobbing is defined as negative or hostile behaviour by one or more persons, directly or indirectly targeting a third person (i-sight, 2022). This is behaviour that occurs repeatedly and systematically over an extended period of time, and is intended to attack or demean a person, to isolate or exclude them and to gradually force them out of their workplace or educational programme (EVERFI, 2016). It refers to a series of occurrences that,

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when evaluated separately, may appear harmless, but that, when repeated, have a harmful effect on the person targeted. Psychological harassment refers to behaviour that is harmful to a victim's mental health.

This can negatively impact the victim's work life, health, and social life. Workplace psychological harassment might include isolating the victim, ignoring the victim, belittling the victim, and more. Some common examples includes expressing strong criticism, unintentionally giving instructions in an untoward manner, having a verbal argument or a harsh disagreement, being in a bad mood from time to time, requiring an improvement in a person's performance etc. (Freyd et al., 2022).

2.4.3 Power harassment

Power harassment occurs when someone in a workplace environment suffers some sort of discriminatory or abusive behaviour at the hands of a superior (i-sight, 2022). This kind of behaviour often goes well beyond the typical relationship between employer and employee into much more damaging territory. If it is indeed prevalent in a workplace environment, those suffering through it may have legal recourse if the harassment is severe enough. When a male or female student feels that power harassment has occurred, he or she must bring the problem to light for action to be taken. However, students are often scared they might fail in their examination, so they keep silent (Stein, 2022). The students have the right to take the matter on the table of the counselor where he or she can explain the matter to the one in charge but it is quite unfortunate most of the students keep mute when such unlawful act is imposed on them.

Power harassment sometimes occurs when there is a difference in power between the victim and the harasser (Freyd *et al*., 2022). The harasser bullies someone who has a lower status in the workplace hierarchy. Power harassment can include making excessive demands, demeaning comments, intruding into the worker's personal life, verbal intimidation, or physical harassment.

2.4.4 Physical harassment

Physical harassment, also often called workplace violence, refers to a type of workplace harassment that involves physical attacks or threats. In extreme cases, physical harassment may be classified as assault (i-sight, 2022). According to EasyLlama (2022) physical harassment is an act where someone inappropriately touched you against your will. Physical harassment in the workplace is also known as workplace violence. Physical harassment behaviour intimidates, embarrasses, threatens and makes the victim uncomfortable. Physical harassment is a type of workplace harassment that includes physical threats or attacks. In some cases, it can be an assault. Physical harassment may be criminal. Some examples of physical harassment include threats of harm, hitting, shoving, or kicking, threatening behaviour and destruction of property to intimidate someone

2.4.5 Visual harassment

At first look, "visual harassment" appears to be self-evident in the sense that one person exposes themselves to another who does not enjoy the exposure (EVERFI, 2016). Visual harassment, on the other hand, can take many different forms that aren't as obvious as a co-student exposing oneself. Cartoons or drawings that are rude and/or demeaning to the victim might be used to indicate visual harassment (EVERFI, 2016). For example, a male teacher may create a character based on a female student with

exaggerated breast size. In that case, the female student is being sexually harassed based on a vision of herself that could be interpreted as sexual while also making her feel uneasy. Again, visual harassment is a situation where the individual exposes themselves to another person without the consent of the victim, and the act affected their performance or attitude (EasyLlama, 2022). Example of visual harassment includes exposing of private parts, sending sexual images or videos to another person. For instance, sending pornographic videos to another person through a social website without informing the person, unwelcome gestures to another person, staring at someone else's body offensively, and making the person feel uncomfortable, placing a poster with information related to sexual behaviours, exposing someone else offensive pictures or images without their consent and displaying nasty messages or content from a website, book or magazine.

2.5 Causes of Sexual Harassment

Understanding the causes of sexual harassment is essential for developing effective strategies to prevent and address this pervasive issue. Sexual harassment is a complex phenomenon influenced by various individual, societal, and contextual factors. The following section provides a comprehensive overview of the causes of sexual harassment, as identified in the existing literature.

2.5.1 Socialization

People's upbringing has a significant impact on their behaviour. Various points of view could contribute to the creation of a conducive environment for sexual harassment to thrive. For example, in cultures where discrimination against those who are different (in terms of gender, colour, culture, religion, lifestyle, or political conviction) is or was normal until recently, the abuse of power humiliation that is

hallmark of sexual harassment will be commonplace (Stein, 2022). Men who have been raised with macho ideals such as "real men pinch bottoms," "girls were made to embrace and kiss," and "the more, the merrier," are more likely to carry these social norms and believe that harassment is praise (van der Meulen & Nelson, 2022).

2.5.2 Power games

Power dynamics have shifted as a result of recent social and political upheavals. Some men are threatened by women's and people of colour's growth in the workplace, or they are uneasy with women's newfound independence and assertiveness at home and at school (Anon, 2022). Other men who have just advanced in their careers may strive to prove the worth by bullying subordinates. Some males consider it as a "fringe benefit" to which they are entitled due to their position, power, and sex (Riggs & Murrell, 2022). Sexual harassment and bartering sexual favours as part of power games are real dangers in times of uncertainty, fear, limited advancement chances, personal stress, and performance pressure (Collins, 2022).

2.5.3 Moral values and cultural differences

In times of moral decency, when extramarital affairs and "one-night stands" are widely accepted, people equate monogamous with monotony (Gaba, 2010). A person trying to accept rejection, or who sees the reluctant colleagues as a challenge, can easily become a harasser or victimize the reluctant colleague

Sexual harassment happens because some culture believe that "women are brought up to care for men's wants" (Attar-Schwartz, 2014). According to Attar-Schwartz (2014), this happens when men are expected to take the lead in sexual things in intimate relationships. Women are also socialized to be fickle-minded from an early age; they

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respond to males and accommodate to their needs. In sexual encounters, this generally puts men in a stronger position. Finally, she pointed out that men abuse their power since women have a disadvantage in the workplace. In general, sexual harassment is a tactic used by men to threaten, humiliate, and control women.

2.6 Effects of Sexual Harassment on Academic Performance

Abradu (2013) investigated the impact of sexual harassment on female students in senior high schools in the Akuapem-North Municipality, utilizing a descriptive survey methodology and purposive and simple random sampling approaches to arrive at a sample size of 80 students from four schools. Acts of sexual harassment were reported to be on the rise in senior high schools, according to the data, and having a variety of negative consequences for female students. This study provides a valid and fascinating discovery, which includes the occurrence of sexual harassment in a single-gender school. However, while the study was insightful, it lacked a theoretical and empirical review to back it up.

Noam (2020) also did a study in Nyamira and Kiambu counties, Kenya, on the impact of sexual harassment on high school students' self-esteem in selected secondary schools. The study used a descriptive survey research approach, collecting and analyzing data using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. It was discovered that sexual harassment had a negative impact on pupils' self-esteem. It was also discovered that sexual comments, gestures, or jokes, as well as the use of obscene, dirty, or vulgar language and the use of sexually suggestive names, had a statistically significant detrimental impact on students' self-esteem because they were considerably more common in schools. It was also shown that pupils at public and private secondary schools had different degrees of self-esteem. Furthermore, the study

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found that sexual harassment had a greater impact on female students' self-esteem than male students since female students' self-esteem was lower.

Dooda *et al.* (2022) focused on sexual harassment towards female students in senior high schools in the Techiman Municipality of Ghana's Bono East Region, while the study used a quantitative method approach, selecting 720 female students for the study using a simple random sampling strategy. The findings were based on the study's objectives, and it was discovered that the majority of the participants were aware of the issue of female students being sexually harassed in schools. The study also indicated that the most common kind of sexual harassment was verbal sexual harassment, and that victims of sexual harassment often felt uncomfortable, embarrassed, and ashamed after being harassed. The study, on the other hand, did not use theoretical and conceptual examination to have a more in-depth look at the study in question.

Furthermore, Okeke (2021) employed a descriptive research design and the Sexual Harassment on Campus Survey (SHCS) tool to examine the influence of sexual harassment on women students' educational experiences in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study found that actual exposure to potentially harassing behaviours by faculty and students, as well as Grade Point Average (GPA) and cultural gender stereotypes held by women undergraduates, were more important than age and institutional characteristics such as academic fields, faculty and student gender ratios in determining whether women undergraduates will report having experienced sexual harassment. Perceived Sexual Harassment was explained by half of the variance by these variables. The findings, on the other hand, revealed that behavioral adjustment to environmental conditions was not well anticipated, and that, while reported

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harassment was fairly predictable, how individuals respond in terms of behavior adjustment appears to be less predictable. However, while the study was insightful, it lacked a conceptual and empirical examination to back it up.

Furthermore, Proulx and Martinez (2013) used exploratory qualitative analysis specifically using interviews to do a study on sexual violence against girls in schools in Awaso, Ghana, addressing the gaps between policy and practice. It was discovered that some parents are actively urging their children to accept the tutors' and other sugar daddies' offers. It was also discovered that lower-income populations are more likely to be victims than those with higher incomes. Furthermore, it was discovered that, of all the discussion groups, students are the least hesitant to accept the presence of unlawful teacher-student relationships. The qualitative approach used in the study, on the other hand, causes researchers to be biased when transcribing the findings for conclusive analysis.

Oni, Tshitangano and Akinsola (2019) focused on student sexual harassment and victimization: a case study of a higher education institution in South Africa to support the study. The data for this study was gathered using a quantitative, cross-sectional descriptive design with a questionnaire. The data revealed that both male and female students are subjected to various forms of sexual harassment. Females, on the other hand, are more likely to be subjected to sexual harassment, such as rape. Although the researchers' work was insightful, they did not conduct a theoretical or conceptual review to back up their findings. Furthermore, the researchers' geographical contexts differ from the study area in terms of conventions, values, morals, and laws against sexual harassment and the prosecution of violators.

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Kabo (2018) employed a cross-sectional quantitative technique to study sexual abuse of children in schools and the need for social work intervention. The study was done in Gaborone's capital city, and data was collected from three senior secondary schools. A self-administered survey questionnaire was given to 330 randomly selected participants, 300 of whom were students and 30 of whom were teachers. There were 100 kids and ten teachers in each school. The researchers used social exchange theory to examine human dynamics surrounding teacher sexual assault of kids. The data showed that sexual abuse was widespread and had a negative impact on schoolchildren. Many variables lead to sexual abuse of children by teachers in schools, according to the research, and many victims do not report the abuse for fear of being blamed or being victimized further by the offenders. The analysis of the findings, on the other hand, was informative but lacked conceptual and empirical examination to get a deeper understanding of the study; again, the work was done in other geographical locations where the laws and rules governing sexual harassment differed from the study area.

According to the authors' research, sexual harassment of female students is on the rise, and if not addressed, a significant amount of harm to Ghana's educational system is expected to occur in the near future. Furthermore, the authors claim that female students are more vulnerable to sexual harassment than male students, and that those who harass one another are usually teachers, administrators, and their peers in the institutions. Though their research was incisive and informative on the subject, it lacked a conceptual and theoretical evaluation to back up their conclusions. Again, the qualitative approach used in the study generates a tendency for researchers to be biased when transcribing the findings in order to make a comprehensive conclusion.

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Furthermore, several scholars did research on other geographical places in terms of the laws, norms, and moral standards that govern their study areas, as opposed to the subject area under investigation.

2.7 Coping Strategies adopted by Female Students in Handling Sexual Harassment

This sub-section provides a detailed literature review on the coping strategies adopted by female students to handle sexual harassment. Drawing from a range of scholarly sources, it explores the various approaches, mechanisms, and support systems utilized by female students in dealing with the effects of sexual harassment.

2.7. 1 Active confrontation and assertiveness

One coping strategy adopted by female students is active confrontation and assertiveness. This involves directly addressing the harasser, setting boundaries, and firmly expressing their discomfort with the harassment (Herrera et al., 2018). Active confrontation can involve verbal assertiveness, such as assertive communication techniques and clear expression of boundaries, as well as seeking support from trusted individuals, such as friends, family members, or authorities. Research by Matani et al. (2018) found that female students who engaged in active confrontation were more likely to regain a sense of control, reduce feelings of victimization, and experience a boost in self-confidence. By assertively addressing the harassment, female students reclaim their agency and challenge the power dynamic inherent in sexual harassment situations.

Research indicates that active confrontation and assertiveness can have several positive outcomes for female students dealing with sexual harassment. By directly addressing the harasser, female students regain a sense of control and empowerment in an otherwise disempowering situation (Matani et al., 2018). They challenge the power dynamic inherent in sexual harassment situations and assert their autonomy and rights.

One of the benefits of active confrontation and assertiveness is the restoration of self-confidence. Matani et al. (2018) found that female students who engaged in active confrontation reported increased self-confidence and a reduction in feelings of victimization. By standing up to the harasser, female students reclaim their agency and diminish the psychological impact of the harassment.

Moreover, active confrontation and assertiveness can contribute to the prevention of further harassment. When female students confront the harasser and make their boundaries clear, it sends a message that such behaviour will not be tolerated (Herrera et al., 2018). This can deter the harasser from engaging in repeated acts of harassment, creating a safer environment for all students.

However, it is important to acknowledge the challenges associated with active confrontation and assertiveness as coping strategies. Female students may encounter barriers, such as fear of retaliation, social backlash, or disbelief from others (González-Méndez et al., 2019). These barriers can create a reluctance to engage in active confrontation and may discourage some victims from asserting their boundaries.

In addition, the effectiveness of active confrontation and assertiveness may depend on various contextual factors. The power dynamics and institutional culture within educational settings can significantly influence the feasibility and outcomes of these strategies (Herrera et al., 2018). Support from teachers, administrators, and peers is crucial to empower female students and ensure a safe and supportive environment for active confrontation.

Moreover, it is important to recognize that active confrontation and assertiveness may not be suitable or feasible for every individual or every situation. Personal safety concerns and power differentials may limit the ability of female students to confront the harasser directly (Matani et al., 2018). In such cases, seeking support from trusted individuals or pursuing other coping strategies may be more appropriate.

2.7.2 Seeking social support

Seeking social support involves reaching out to friends, family, or support networks to share experiences, seek validation, and receive emotional support in response to sexual harassment experiences (González-Méndez et al., 2019). This coping strategy recognizes the importance of interpersonal connections and the role they play in coping with the impact of sexual harassment.

Research indicates that seeking social support can have several positive outcomes for female students dealing with sexual harassment. One of the main benefits is the provision of emotional validation. Sharing experiences and feelings with trusted individuals who offer understanding and empathy can help victims feel heard and validated in their experiences (Herrero et al., 2017). Social support helps to counteract

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feelings of isolation and self-blame that often accompanies sexual harassment incidents.

Moreover, seeking social support can contribute to the reduction of psychological distress associated with sexual harassment. Herrero et al. (2017) found that female students who sought social support reported lower levels of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress symptoms compared to those who did not seek support. The availability of a support network allows victims to express their emotions, process their experiences, and receive comfort and reassurance.

Furthermore, social support can serve as a protective factor against the negative consequences of sexual harassment on academic performance. Female students who have access to supportive relationships may experience fewer disruptions in their educational pursuits and have greater resilience in the face of harassment (González-Méndez et al., 2019). Supportive peers, teachers, or counsellors can offer guidance, encouragement, and practical assistance in navigating the challenges posed by harassment.

However, seeking social support as a coping strategy may also present challenges and limitations. Female students may encounter barriers to seeking support, such as fear of judgment, stigma, or disbelief from others (Matani et al., 2018). Concerns about confidentiality and the potential repercussions of disclosing harassment experiences can deter victims from reaching out for support.

The effectiveness of seeking social support may also depend on the quality and availability of support networks. Female students who have access to trustworthy and empathetic individuals are more likely to benefit from seeking social support (Herrero

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et al., 2017). Supportive relationships characterized by active listening, validation, and non-judgmental attitudes are crucial in creating a safe and supportive environment for victims.

In addition, it is important to recognize that seeking social support is not a one-size-fits-all strategy. Individual preferences and cultural norms may influence the choice and availability of support systems (González-Méndez et al., 2019). Some individuals may find solace in seeking support from close friends or family members, while others may prefer seeking professional support from counsellors or helpline services.

2.7.3 Self-care and emotional regulation

This sub-section provides a comprehensive literature review on the effectiveness of self-care and emotional regulation as coping strategies adopted by female students in handling sexual harassment. Drawing from a range of scholarly sources, it explores the impact, benefits, and challenges associated with these strategies. Self-care refers to engaging in activities that promote physical and emotional well-being, while emotional regulation involves managing and controlling one's emotions in response to stressful situations, such as sexual harassment (Matani et al., 2018). These coping strategies recognize the importance of self-nurturing and emotional resilience in dealing with the impact of sexual harassment.

Research indicates that self-care and emotional regulation can have several positive outcomes for female students dealing with sexual harassment. One of the main benefits is the reduction of stress and anxiety. Engaging in self-care activities, such as exercise, relaxation techniques, journaling, or seeking therapy, can help alleviate the emotional burden and promote a sense of calm (Matani et al., 2018). Emotional

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regulation techniques, such as deep breathing or mindfulness, can also help manage intense emotions triggered by harassment incidents.

Moreover, self-care and emotional regulation strategies contribute to the restoration of a sense of control and empowerment. By prioritizing their well-being and engaging in activities that promote self-nurturing, female students assert their agency and regain control over their emotional state (Pina et al., 2009). This can help mitigate the psychological impact of sexual harassment and foster resilience.

Furthermore, self-care practices can also have physical health benefits. Engaging in regular exercise, getting sufficient sleep, and maintaining a balanced diet can enhance overall well-being and strengthen the body's response to stress (Herrera et al., 2018). Physical self-care can also contribute to a sense of self-worth and self-confidence, counteracting the negative effects of harassment on self-esteem.

However, it is important to acknowledge the challenges associated with self-care and emotional regulation as coping strategies. Female students may face barriers to engaging in self-care activities due to time constraints, financial limitations, or lack of access to resources (Matani et al., 2018). Additionally, emotional regulation can be challenging, especially when faced with repeated or severe instances of sexual harassment.

Moreover, self-care and emotional regulation strategies should be complemented by a supportive environment and access to professional help when needed. Seeking therapy or counseling can provide additional tools and support for managing the emotional impact of sexual harassment (Herrera et al., 2018). The availability of

resources and supportive relationships can enhance the effectiveness of self-care and emotional regulation as coping strategies.

2.7.4 Legal and formal reporting

Legal and formal reporting refers to the process of reporting instances of sexual harassment to authorities, such as school administrators, law enforcement agencies, or other relevant institutions (Karakurt & Silver, 2013). This coping strategy recognizes the importance of seeking accountability and taking legal action against perpetrators of sexual harassment.

Research indicates that legal and formal reporting can have several positive outcomes for female students dealing with sexual harassment. One of the main benefits is the potential for justice and accountability. By reporting the harassment, female students take a stand against the harasser and send a clear message that such behavior is unacceptable (Cortina & Berdahl, 2008). Legal and formal actions can lead to disciplinary measures, protection orders, or even criminal charges against the perpetrators.

Moreover, legal and formal reporting can contribute to the prevention of further harassment. When instances of sexual harassment are reported and properly addressed, it creates a deterrent effect, signalling to potential harassers that their actions will not go unpunished (Karakurt & Silver, 2013). This can help create a safer environment for all students and discourage the normalization of harassment.

Furthermore, legal and formal reporting can provide validation and support for victims. The formal reporting process allows victims to have their experiences acknowledged, documented, and taken seriously by authorities (Cortina & Berdahl,

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2008). This can help alleviate feelings of self-doubt, shame, and isolation often experienced by victims of sexual harassment.

However, it is important to acknowledge the challenges and limitations associated with legal and formal reporting as a coping strategy. Female students may encounter barriers to reporting, such as fear of retaliation, disbelief, or secondary victimization (Fitzgerald et al., 2017). The fear of not being believed or facing negative consequences can discourage victims from pursuing legal action. Moreover, the legal process can be lengthy, emotionally taxing, and may not always lead to the desired outcome. Victims may experience re-traumatization during investigations or face challenges in obtaining sufficient evidence to support their claims (Karakurt & Silver, 2013). The burden of proof can rest on the victim, making the reporting process arduous and discouraging for some.

Additionally, legal and formal reporting should be viewed as one option among a range of coping strategies, and it may not be suitable or feasible for every individual or every situation. Personal safety concerns, cultural factors, and the individual's comfort level with engaging in legal processes should be taken into consideration (Cortina & Berdahl, 2008). Alternative strategies, such as seeking social support or pursuing informal resolution methods, should also be explored.

2.7.5 Avoidance and disengagement

Avoidance and disengagement refer to the tendency of female students to avoid or withdraw from situations or interactions that remind them of or expose them to sexual harassment (Cortina, 2008). This coping strategy involves minimizing contact with

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the harasser, suppressing emotions related to the harassment, and avoiding discussions or actions that may bring attention to the issue.

Research suggests that avoidance and disengagement may have short-term benefits for female students dealing with sexual harassment. It can help reduce immediate distress and create a sense of safety by limiting exposure to the harasser (McMahon, 2015). This strategy allows victims to create a temporary buffer from the negative emotions and potential re-traumatization associated with the harassment.

Moreover, avoidance and disengagement may serve as a protective mechanism to preserve mental and emotional well-being. By avoiding confrontations or reminders of the harassment, female students can focus on other aspects of their lives and maintain a sense of normalcy (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). This coping strategy allows victims to prioritize their own self-care and psychological recovery. However, it is important to recognize the limitations and potential consequences of avoidance and disengagement as a coping strategy. While it may provide temporary relief, prolonged avoidance can hinder the healing process and prolong the emotional impact of the harassment (Cortina, 2008). Avoidance can prevent the necessary processing and resolution of emotions associated with the traumatic experience.

Additionally, avoidance and disengagement can contribute to a sense of powerlessness and isolation. By avoiding discussions or seeking support, female students may internalize their experiences and feelings, leading to increased feelings of self-blame or shame (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). This can also limit the opportunity for awareness-raising and collective action against sexual harassment.

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Furthermore, the use of avoidance and disengagement as a coping strategy can perpetuate a culture of silence and normalize the harassment. By not addressing the issue directly, it may send a message that the harassment is acceptable or that the victim's experiences are not valid (McMahon, 2015). This can hinder the broader efforts to challenge and eradicate sexual harassment in educational settings.

2.7.6 Educational Empowerment

Educational empowerment refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and resources that enable female students to assert their rights, challenge oppressive structures, and advocate for change in the face of sexual harassment (Lindsay & Edwards, 2013). This coping strategy recognizes the importance of education as a tool for empowerment, self-advocacy, and resistance.

Research indicates that educational empowerment can have several positive outcomes for female students dealing with sexual harassment. One of the main benefits is the promotion of self-confidence and assertiveness. By gaining knowledge about their rights, the dynamics of power, and available resources, female students can develop the confidence to confront and challenge instances of sexual harassment (Lindsay & Edwards, 2013). Educational empowerment equips them with the tools to assert their boundaries and advocate for a harassment-free environment.

Moreover, educational empowerment can contribute to a sense of agency and control over one's circumstances. By understanding the underlying causes and consequences of sexual harassment, female students can better navigate and respond to such incidents (Murnen et al., 2016). This coping strategy encourages a proactive approach to addressing harassment, whether through individual actions or collective efforts.

Furthermore, educational empowerment fosters resilience and reduces the impact of harassment on academic achievement. Female students who are educated about their rights and options may experience less disruption in their educational pursuits and have the knowledge to access support services (Herrera et al., 2018). This coping strategy empowers victims to prioritize their education and overcome the barriers posed by harassment.

However, it is important to acknowledge the challenges and limitations associated with educational empowerment as a coping strategy. Female students may face barriers to accessing educational resources and information, particularly in contexts with limited educational opportunities or gender disparities (Lindsay & Edwards, 2013). Socio-cultural norms, institutional barriers, and inadequate support systems may hinder the full realization of educational empowerment. Moreover, educational empowerment should be complemented by a supportive and inclusive educational environment. Merely providing information and resources may not be sufficient if the broader school culture does not address the underlying issues of power imbalance and gender inequality (Murnen et al., 2016). Supportive teachers, counselors, and administrators who are knowledgeable about sexual harassment and responsive to victims' needs are essential in fostering educational empowerment.

2.8 Strategies adopted to Control Sexual Harassment

Establishing an effective school policy and offering training to staff and students are required to prevent sexual harassment. However, Senior High Schools currently offer some type of reproductive health education through some subjects including Social Studies, Home Economics and Science. Sexual and reproductive health programmes, such as how to avoid unsafe or threatening situations including violence, sex, or

drugs, and how to negotiate safe sexual behaviours among female students. Internal school systems that resolve infractions of a school's discrimination policy, including sexual harassment, are known as grievance procedures (Leaper, Brown & Ayres, 2013). Complaints of sex discrimination must be resolved quickly and fairly through grievance procedures. Students, parents, and employees should be aware of the school's anti-sex discrimination policy, which should be publicly distributed and simply understood. Students must understand how it works and how to take a strong stance against sexual harassment at the very least. All students and staff should be made aware that such behaviour will not be permitted.

Riggs and Murrell (2022) suggested a set of guidelines for preventing sexual harassment in schools. They believe that carefully crafted definitions of what constitutes sexual harassment, as well as explicit laws against such behaviour, should be in place. He also stated that there should be easily accessible grievance procedures that are discussed and understood by all members of the academic community regarding the nature of sexual harassment and its damaging effects.

According to Shaikh (2019), it is critical for organizations to adopt and disseminate an anti-sexual harassment policy by creating and publishing such rules at work or at school. An employer does not have to wait for a complaint to take action against sexual harassment in the workplace or at school. Shaikh (2019) further stated that school officials and businesses must make sure that all employees and students realize that sexual harassment is a behaviour that will not be tolerated by the organization (company or school). According to him, the policy should be written in plain English and include key elements such as an operational definition of sexual harassment, the

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kinds of conduct that constitute sexual harassment and consequences of sexual harassment for the victims, the workplace, school and the society as a whole.

The phenomena may be avoided if the school established a discreet, unbiased, and expedient outlet for complaints to be received, investigated, and resolved in numerous ways. These ways do include establishment of a human rights committee, appointment of an in-house ombudsman and establishment of a disciplinary committee whose mandate could include the prevention of sexual harassment and the efficient investigation of complaints alleging such violations. Anti-harassment bulletins, posters, and banners should be posted on the wall, notice boards, and school bulletin boards to make it clear that such behavior will not be condoned. A copy of the organization's mission statement, which articulates anti-harassment messages to all personnel, visitors, customers, and the general public, should also be posted. Moreover Oni, Tshitangano and Akinsola (2019) further heighted some common sections liable to help in mitigating the sexual harassment in institutions In order to prevent and mitigate sexual harassment in higher education institutions, they recommended;

The presence of the policy and how to use the grievance procedure should be made known to all sectors of the higher education institution, together with a clear description of sexual harassment. When first-year female and male students arrive on school, these efforts should be focused on them. All students should be provided clear guidelines regarding safety and the facilities accessible on campus. At least once a term, a regular forum of stakeholders with management should be held to discuss instances and issues. The institution's leadership should make a clear statement about how serious it is about dealing with sexual harassment, and that it will not be tolerated

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under any circumstances. All campus media, such as the institution's radio station and notice boards, should be used to communicate about sexual harassment on a regular basis. The sexual harassment policy should be revised to include harsher penalties for offenders of sexual harassment, as well as secrecy and anonymity to encourage students to report occurrences of sexual harassment.

Additional ways for dealing with sexual harassment are shared by Stein (2022) include harsh repercussions, offer compassionate remedies to the harasser, such as individual or group counselling. Parents, particularly those whose children have been victims or witnesses of sexual harassment, should be included in public forums and private dialogues about the issues. School-based restraining and stay-away orders should be developed in a way that take into account class schedules, walking and bus routes, lunch times, and other components of the student's routine to help protect children who have been targeted. Provide training to multiple individuals who will serve as safe, trustworthy, caring, and approachable resources for young people.

With regard to the aforementioned tactics, it can be concluded that sexual harassment of female students is a big issue worldwide, and that if ignored, it is likely to lessen the unpleasant actions of youth and head teachers who are discovered to be understudy. Sexual harassment prevention must remain a top focus. All school employees should get training to assist them recognize and respond to sexual harassment appropriately, as well as to understand their responsibility in promoting supportive and respectful school environments. A multi-session training programme that incorporates the entire faculty, staff, and administrative staff will be more beneficial than a single session (Shaikh, 2019). For students, classes on civil rights, diversity, and tolerance can include sexual harassment as a topic and create

opportunities for ongoing conversation about respectful behaviour. Special materials about sexual harassment should be offered for classroom use, in addition to integrating this issue with existing curricula. A short movie about sexual harassment may be good to start a debate, but it is not as helpful as a discussion about altering student attitudes and behaviour. Students like to discuss their observations, thoughts, and experiences with adults and peers (WageIndicator, 2022).

2.9 Conceptual Framework

Based on the research objectives and the Natural/ Biological Theory and Organizational Theory, a conceptual framework is proposed for this study. Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework.
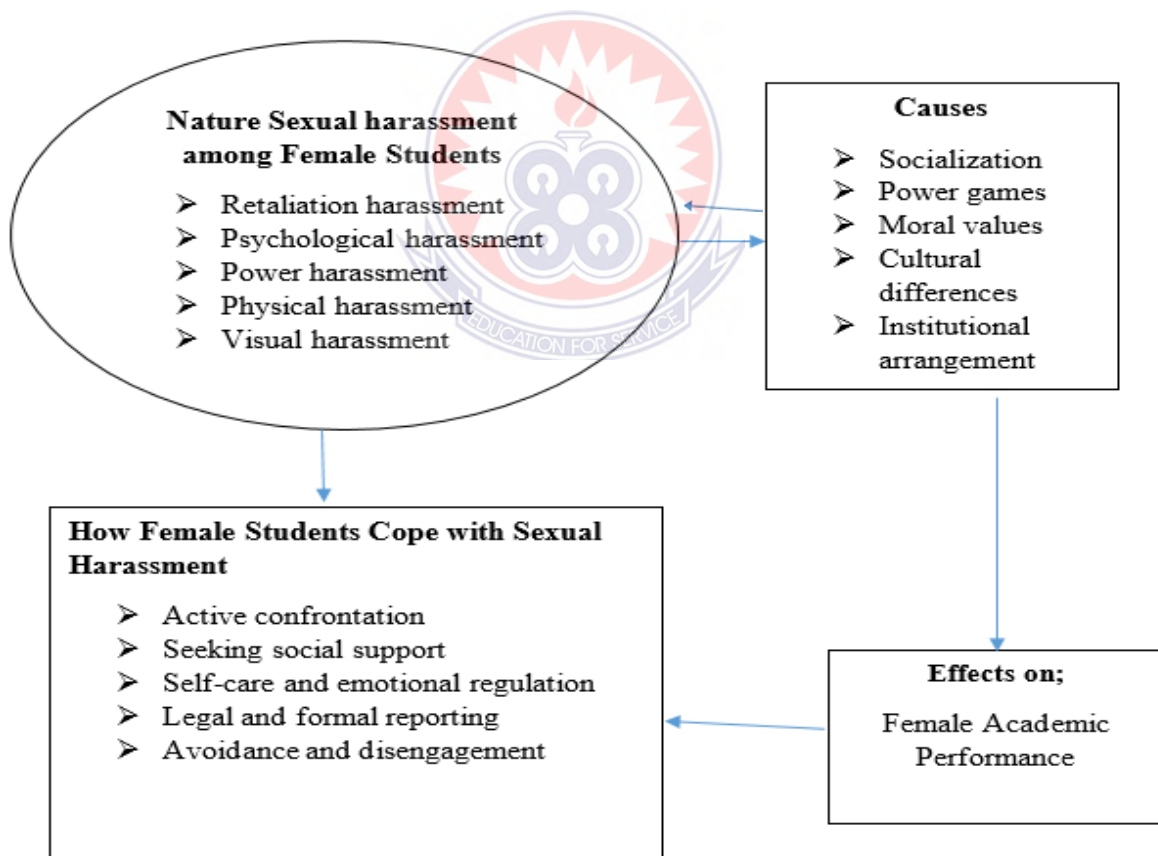
Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework on Sexual Harassment

Source: Adapted from Lee and Babin, 2015

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The conceptual framework presented in Figure 2.1 depicts the relationships and connections between the key components of the study: the nature of sexual harassment, causes of sexual harassment, effects on academic performance among female students and coping strategies. According to Nature/Biological Theory, males are sexually attracted to females and this attraction increases during the period of adolescence of the females. Organizational Theory further posits that teachers and male students have natural power and organization power through which they induce female adolescents into sexual harassment. Thus, based on these theories and empirical studies (for example, van der Meulen & Nelson, 2022; Anon, 2022; Attar-Schwartz, 2014), the common causes of sexual harassment include power, socialization, moral values and cultural difference.

The nature of sexual harassment is a fundamental component that encompasses the various forms and manifestations of harassment experienced by female students. This can include unwanted advances, verbal or physical aggression, inappropriate comments, and other behaviours that create a hostile or uncomfortable environment.

The causes of sexual harassment component explores the factors that contribute to the occurrence of harassment among female students. These causes can stem from a range of influences such as gender inequality, power imbalances, cultural norms, societal attitudes, and socialization processes. Understanding these underlying causes is crucial for developing effective interventions and prevention strategies. The effects on academic performance component examines the impact of sexual harassment on the educational outcomes of female students. Harassment can have detrimental effects on attendance, as victims may avoid school to escape further victimization or due to

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emotional distress. It can also hinder academic performance, affecting concentration, motivation, and overall engagement in educational activities.

The coping strategies component focuses on the approaches adopted by female students to handle instances of sexual harassment. This includes active confrontation, seeking social support, self-care and emotional regulation, and legal and formal reporting. Different individuals may employ different strategies based on their personal circumstances and resources available to them.

The arrows in the conceptual framework indicate the direction of influence or relationships between the components. For example, the nature of sexual harassment can influence the selection and effectiveness of coping strategies. If the harassment is more severe or persistent, individuals may be more likely to seek formal legal recourse or engage in active confrontation. The coping strategies employed, in turn, can impact attendance and academic performance outcomes. Effective coping strategies that provide support and address emotional well-being may mitigate the negative effects of harassment on educational outcomes.

Similarly, the causes of sexual harassment can directly or indirectly influence the occurrence and nature of harassment experienced by female students. For example, if there are prevalent gender inequalities or a culture that normalizes harassment, it may contribute to higher rates of harassment incidents. Understanding the underlying causes can inform interventions aimed at addressing the root issues and preventing future harassment.

2.10 Summary of the Literature Review

Chapter two of the literature review delves into various aspects related to sexual harassment and its effects on female students' academic performance. The chapter begins with a theoretical review, presenting different perspectives that shape the study on sexual harassment, including the natural/biological theory, sex-role spillover theory, organizational theory, socio-cultural theory, and feminist theory.

Next, the chapter explores the concept of sexual harassment, which is described as a pervasive form of gender-based violence encompassing various unwelcome sexual advances, requests, or conduct that create a hostile environment. The understanding of sexual harassment has evolved since its emergence in the 1970s, driven by feminist movements and efforts to combat workplace discrimination and gender inequality. Sexual harassment can occur in various settings and predominantly affects women and girls, although men can also be victims. The power dynamics, gender roles, and societal norms in a given context contribute to its occurrence.

The nature of sexual harassment is then discussed, highlighting its complexity and multifaceted nature. It occurs within power imbalances and involves unwanted sexual attention, advances, or conduct that creates an intimidating or offensive environment. The various common forms of sexual harassment include unwanted comments, gestures, physical harassment, sexual coercion, and cybersexual harassment, among others. The perpetrators of sexual harassment can be individuals in positions of power, colleagues, or peers.

The chapter also covers different categorizations of sexual harassment, such as "quid pro quo" harassment and creating a "hostile atmosphere," both having negative

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consequences for female students in educational settings. To address sexual harassment, female students adopt coping strategies, which are explored in the subsequent section. These strategies include seeking social support, self-care, confrontation, and legal reporting.

Finally, the chapter examines the effects of sexual harassment on female students' academic performance. Several studies have shown that sexual harassment negatively impacts self-esteem, attendance, and academic performance among female students. The conceptual framework presented in the chapter illustrates the relationships between the nature of sexual harassment, causes, coping strategies, and its effects on academic performance.

This literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of sexual harassment, its manifestations, and its impact on female students' educational experiences. It sets the stage for the subsequent chapters of the study, where interventions and strategies for prevention can be explored to create safe and respectful environments for female students.
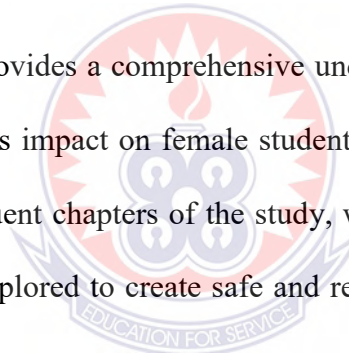
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the methodology employed during the research investigation. Issues discussed include the philosophical underpinning, research approach, research design, study area, population of the study, sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, validity and reliability, trustworthiness and data analysis. Ethical issues that were considered in the study were also discussed.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The study sought to explore the effects of sexual harassment on academic performance of female students in selected Senior High Schools (SHS) in the Atebubu/Amantin Municipality and adopted a pragmatic philosophical approach. Pragmatism is considered the most suitable philosophical underpinning for this study due to these reasons:

Pragmatism emphasizes practicality and problem-solving in the real world. The issue of sexual harassment and its effects on female students' academic performance is a pressing real-world problem with significant implications for education and gender equality. Pragmatism aligns with the study's goal of seeking practical solutions and interventions to address the challenges faced by female students in the selected SHS.

Pragmatism recognizes the importance of considering the specific context and individual experiences in understanding complex phenomena. Sexual harassment is influenced by contextual factors, such as cultural norms, power dynamics, and

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institutional practices. Adopting a pragmatic approach allows the researcher to delve into the unique experiences of female students in the Atebubu/Amantin Municipality, providing a deeper understanding of the issue.

Furthermore, pragmatism places a strong emphasis on examining the consequences and outcomes of actions. In the context of this study, it enables researcher to investigate the direct and indirect effects of sexual harassment on female students' academic performance. Understanding the implications of such harassment can inform policy and intervention strategies to improve educational outcomes.

In addition, studying sexual harassment and academic performance involves a multidimensional examination of social, psychological, and educational factors. A pragmatic philosophy allows the researcher to draw from various disciplines and theories to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Also, pragmatism philosophical worldview is associated with action-oriented research that seeks to make a positive impact on society. By adopting a pragmatic approach, the study aims to generate insights that can lead to actionable recommendations and initiatives to create a safe and conducive learning environment for female students.

Moreover, pragmatism encourages the involvement of stakeholders and practitioners in the research process. In the context of studying sexual harassment in schools, including the perspectives of school counsellors, school administrators, parents, and policymakers can enhance the relevance and practicality of the study's findings.

Finally, pragmatism underscores the importance of ethical considerations in research. When studying sensitive topics like sexual harassment, ethical considerations are paramount to protect the participants' confidentiality, safety, and well-being. A pragmatic philosophy emphasizes the need for the researcher to approach the study with sensitivity and respect for the participants' rights and dignity.

3.3 Research Approach

In order to achieve the research objectives of this study, a mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. A mixed-methods approach, as defined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), allows for the gathering and interpretation of data from multiple sources in a single research, utilizing philosophical presumptions to guide the investigation. This approach effectively interweaves post-positivism and interpretivism, harnessing the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data to address complex research challenges and offer a comprehensive understanding of smaller cases (Maxwell, 2016). The use of mixed-methods enables the researcher to respond to study questions with suitable depth and breadth while facilitating generalization of results and implications to the entire population (Enosh, Tzafrir & Stolovy, 2014). As Fetters (2016) highlights, this methodology provides several advantages, including a logical foundation, methodological adaptability, and the ability to effectively address research concerns.

The qualitative component enabled the researcher to develop knowledge claims based on various individual experiences, socially and historically established meanings, and participatory perspectives (Creswell, 2003). This approach allows for a deep understanding of the subject matter through narratives (Creswell, 2003). By utilizing flexible data collection methods such as interviews, the qualitative aspect captures the

socio-cultural context and provided valuable insights into the experiences of female students regarding sexual harassment.

On the other hand, the quantitative research aspect is rooted in post-positivist claims and employs preset instruments to gather numerical data (Creswell, 2003). This quantitative approach is particularly useful when investigating the effects of sexual harassment on female students' academic performance, as it allows for statistical analysis and generalization of findings to a larger population. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods ensures triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the research (Carter et al., 2014). Grix (2004) suggests that this methodological approach helps tackle the limitations of individual methods and provides a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

The inclusion of interviews from key stakeholders in education, such as school counsellors, assistant headmasters/mistresses (domestic), and housemistresses, provides valuable perspectives on the nature, causes, effects, and coping strategies of sexual harassment among female students in selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. Their insights contribute to a more holistic understanding of the issue and aid in formulating targeted interventions. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches not only strengthens the investigation but also enhances the research's credibility and applicability (Sarantakos, 2005). Despite some criticisms, the mixed-methods approach has gained popularity among academics due to its ability to address research problems effectively and comprehensively (Bryman, 2004).

3.4 Research Design

The study employed the convergent parallel design, which involves the convergence or merging of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a thorough understanding of the research topic. This design allows for the simultaneous gathering of both types of data, giving equal weight to each method and maintaining the independence of data analysis. The researcher collects two distinct strands of quantitative and qualitative data during a single period (Razali et al., 2019). Throughout the research process, the researcher ensures that both types of data are analysed separately before combining the results during the overall interpretation. The aim is to look for patterns of convergence, divergence, contradictions, or relationships between the two sources of data. As pointed out by Creswell (2013), this convergence is the challenging part of the research design, requiring researchers to possess a solid fundamental understanding of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

In this study, the researcher opted for a side-by-side comparison method to combine both quantitative and qualitative data. This approach is simpler compared to other methods like data transformation or joint presentation. By comparing the two types of data side by side, the researcher was able to gain insights into potential similarities and differences, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of the research topic. During the interpretation phase in the convergent approach, the researcher incorporated the findings into a discussion section of the research study. This section includes a report that compares the results from both quantitative and qualitative databases, highlighting any convergence or divergence between the two sources of information.

The use of a convergent parallel design mixed methodologies offers several advantages in this study. By combining both quantitative and qualitative data, the

researcher was able to triangulate the findings, enhancing the credibility and validity of the research (Carter et al., 2014). Moreover, this approach allows for a more comprehensive exploration of the research topic, providing a richer understanding of sexual harassment and its impact on female students' academic performance. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data in the convergent parallel design also strengthens the study's conclusions and recommendations. By corroborating findings from both data sources, the researcher can draw more robust and nuanced conclusions about the effects of sexual harassment on female students in selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality.

3.5 Study Area

The research was carried out in the Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. The Atebubu Amantin Municipality is one of Ghana's 261 Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs), and is part of the Bono East Region's 11 municipalities and districts. Its administrative headquarters is Atebubu. The Atebubu Amanten District was formed in 2004 from the former Atebubu District and was upgraded to the status of municipality in 2017 by Legislative Instrument (LI) 2266. The municipality is situated between latitudes 7^0 23'N and 8^0 22'N and longitudes 0^0 30'W and 1^0 26'W. The district has an area of around 257 square kilometers. It is bounded to the north by the Pru East District, to the east by the Sene West District, and to the west by the Bono East Region's Kintampo South District and Nkoranza North District. To the south, it is flanked by three districts in the Ashanti Region: Ejura Sekye Dumase Municipal, Sekyere East District, and Sekyere South District. According to the 2021 population and housing census, the district's population is 144,947 people, with 72,993 males and 71,954 females (GSS, 2022).

3.6 Population

According to Asiamah, Mensah, and Oteng-Abayie (2017), the general population is defined by participants who are typically inferred by the study purpose. The population for this current study comprised all female students in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. The target population was female students in selected senior high schools. The selected schools included Amantin Senior High School (261 female students), Atebubu Senior High School (251), New Konkrompe Senior High School (156 female students), Vision Obama Senior High School (242 female students) and Future Leaders Community Senior High School (251 female students) during the 2022/2023 academic year.

3.7 Sample and Sample Technique

3.7.1 Sample size

The sample size for this study, which focused on female students in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality, was determined using the Yamane, (1967) sampling technique. The equation used to calculate the overall sample size (n) is as follows: 1161

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where:

n = Sample size of the female students in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality

N = Population of the female students in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality

e = Error term

The population of female students in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality was 1,161 (N), and an error term of 0.05 (5%) was used.

Substituting the values into the equation:

$$n = 1161 / (1 + 1161 (0.05)^2)$$

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$n = 1161 / (1 + 1161 (0.0025))$

$n \approx 289$

Hence, the overall sample size of female students in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality involved in the study was 289.

Additionally, the study employed the proportional representation method to determine the sample size for each school. The relative reference (Rf) was calculated by dividing the student population of each school by the total population of female students in the municipality (1161). The sample size for each school was then calculated by multiplying the relative reference (Rf) by the overall sample size (289).

Table 3.1: Sample Size for Each School

Schools	Female Student population	Relative ref.	Sample size Rf*374
Amantin Senior High School	261	0.2248	65
Atebubu Senior High School	251	0.2162	63
New Konkrompe Senior High School	156	0.1344	39
Vison Obama Senior High School	242	0.2084	60
Future leaders Community Senior High School	251	0.2162	62
Total	**1161**	**1**	**289**

Source: Author's Construct, 2022

Each school's sample size was proportional to its relative representation in the overall population, ensuring a representative sample that adequately captures the diversity of female studentsin the Atebubu/Amantin Municipality.

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3.7.2 Sampling techniques

This study employed two different sampling techniques to select the participants. A simple random sampling method was used, which is a probability sampling technique. With simple random sampling, individuals are randomly selected with an equal chance of being chosen. Each female student in the selected schools had an equal opportunity to be included as a respondent in the study. This approach ensures that the sample is representative of the entire population of female students in the schools (Yates, Moore & Starnes, 2008).

To achieve the principles of simple random sampling, the study obtained a list of all the female students in each school and then used a random selection process without replacement. This means that each female student in a school had one opportunity to be chosen for the sample.

In the qualitative aspect of the study, the researcher adopted purposive sampling technique to select participants. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method where specific individuals are deliberately chosen based on their unique characteristics or roles relevant to the research topic. This approach is often used when researchers seek to gain in-depth insights from participants who possess specialized knowledge or experiences related to the study's focus (Palinkas et al., 2015). The researcher chose to include Guidance and Counselling Coordinators and Housemistresses from the selected schools as participants for several justifiable reasons:

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Guidance and Counselling Coordinators and Housemistresses are professionals with specialized knowledge and training in handling various issues related to student well-being, including matters of sexual harassment. Their experiences and insights make them valuable sources of information for understanding the nuances of sexual harassment within the school context (Savaya & Spiro, 2011).

These individuals are directly involved in managing and addressing incidents of sexual harassment within the senior high schools. As frontline staff, they possess first-hand information and observations of how such incidents are dealt with, the challenges faced, and the potential impact on the affected students (Palinkas et al., 2015).

By including Guidance and Counselling Coordinators and Housemistresses, the study aimed to gain access to rich and in-depth narratives about sexual harassment. These professionals often interact closely with the students, providing valuable insights into the underlying dynamics, contributing factors, and potential strategies for prevention and intervention (Savaya & Spiro, 2011).

Purposive sampling allows the researcher to efficiently target the individuals most relevant to the research topic. This method helps avoid wasting resources and time on participants who may not have the required expertise or experience related to sexual harassment issues.

3.8 Instruments of Data Collection

The instruments of data collection used in this study were questionnaire and interview guide.

3.8.1 Questionnaire

The primary instrument used for data collection in the students' survey was a questionnaire which encompassed both closed and open-ended questions to effectively address the research objectives.

For closed-ended questions, respondents were asked to provide their responses by simply marking or ticking the relevant spaces provided. On the other hand, open-ended items allowed the respondents to provide more detailed and narrative responses.

The questionnaire was specifically designed to examine the effects of sexual harassment on female students among selected senior high schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. To achieve this, the questionnaire was divided into five main sections, each labelled according to the specific research objectives.

Section one of the questionnaire focused on gathering general information and background details about the respondents. This section included items related to socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, age among others of the students under consideration. These details were essential for better understanding the respondents' profiles and their specific context.

Section two of the instruments delved into exploring the nature of sexual harassment experienced among female students. It aimed to uncover the various forms and frequencies, in which sexual harassment occurred within the selected Senior High Schools.

The section three of the questionnaire was dedicated to investigating the causes and contributing factors behind sexual harassment among female students. This section aimed to identify the underlying factors or circumstances that led to the occurrence of such harassment incidents.

Section four of the questionnaire was designed to assess the effects of sexual harassment on the academic performance of the victims in the selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. This section aimed to identify any adverse effects that sexual harassment may have had on the students' educational outcomes and achievements. Also, it aimed to elicit responses regarding the emotional and mental effects experienced by the students who had faced sexual harassment. Lastly, section five focused on the coping strategies employed by the female victims' sexual harassments in the study area.

The questionnaire was carefully administered to the female students, and its structure allowed for a comprehensive investigation of the research objectives. The combination of closed and open-ended questions ensured a balance between quantitative and qualitative data, providing a holistic understanding of the issue of sexual harassment among female students in the study area.

3.8.2 Interview guide

For the qualitative aspect of this study, the researcher used an interview guide to collect in-depth and detailed data relevant to the research objectives. In-depth interviews are a valuable qualitative data collection method designed to explore and analyse complex phenomena through open-ended questions and probing discussions (Patton, 2015). The interviews were conducted face-to-face, allowing for a personal and interactive exchange of information between the interviewer and the participants.

The interview guide was carefully designed to cover key themes related to sexual harassment among female students in the selected schools. These themes included:

1. The nature of sexual harassment experienced by female students.

2. Factors contributing to sexual harassment among female student

3. The effects of sexual harassment on the academic performance of female students.

4. Coping strategies employed by female students to handle sexual harassment incidents.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic, the researcher targeted specific stakeholders in the Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. The interview participants included one school counsellor, one assistant headmaster/mistress (domestic), and one housemistress from each of the selected schools. These individuals were purposefully chosen because of their involvement in addressing and managing issues related to student well-being and safety within the school environment.

The researcher conducted the interviews face-to-face with the identified stakeholders using the interview guide as a structured outline. The guide comprised a series of open-ended questions that allowed participants to freely express their perspectives, experiences, and insights on the topic of sexual harassment. Additionally, the semi structured interview guide provided opportunity for the research to probe and ask follow-up questions to delve deeper into specific aspects of the research theme (Patton, 2015).

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

This researcher followed the advice of Gray (2009) during data collection with the aim of achieving high response rate. Firstly, the researcher explained the purpose and usefulness of the study to all respondents to help gain interest and high participation from them. Secondly, the researcher assured the respondents strict confidentiality and anonymity; and explained the extent of engagement of the respondents. The research assistants were enlightened on the goal of the study, the true meaning of the questions, and how to manage data collection. To prevent wasting time and energy, respondents were urged to complete the questionnaires in the presence of researcher. The goal was to achieve a high response rate. When questionnaire are left with respondents, the response rate is usually low since some do not return them. Filling out questionnaire in the presence of Field Assistants assisted in overcoming the two primary drawbacks of employing questionnaires, namely the difficulty to determine whether or not a responder completed the questionnaire herself and the low response rate (Bryman, 2004). The data was collected from April 2022 to June 2022.

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Bryman's (2004, p. 38) suggestions on the use of interviews in data gathering guided the interview processes. The suggestions include creating interview guidelines, avoiding double-barrelled questions, identifying possible topic themes, identifying respondents, choosing the manner of recording the interview, obtaining permission for the interview, and scheduling the interview. The researcher in collaboration with the key informants in each school fixed date for the interview for each interviewee. The researcher tried to contact each interviewee two days before dates to remind them of the interview and to ask for their readiness for the interview. All indicated their readiness and preparedness for the interview as scheduled. Interview for each interviewee lasted for about 40minutes. With the consent of the participant, the researcher employed the use of an audio recorder to record the interviews. This recording served as a reliable reference during the data analysis process, ensuring that the detailed information obtained from the interviews was faithfully transcribed and accurately represented in the final analysis. The interviews were conducted by the researcher from April 2022 to June 2022

3.10 Validity and Reliability

The study pre-tested the questionnaire to assess its validity and reliability. The pre-test was conducted at SIMMS SHS in the Kwabre East Municipality. The questionnaire was pre-tested on 30 female students. The pre-test utilized a simple random sampling method.

Based on the feedback received from the pre-test respondents, the researcher made necessary improvements and modifications to the questionnaire. The data obtained from the pre-test was then used to assess the reliability and validity of the instrument. Cronbach's Alpha (α) was employed for this purpose. According to Cronbach (1951),

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a research instrument is considered reliable when Cronbach's Alpha is equal to or greater than 0.7 (i.e., $\alpha \geq 0.7$). From the pre-test data, the questionnaire yielded a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.883, indicating a high level of reliability.

As for the validity of the instruments, the study employed construct validity. Factor Analysis, specifically the Principal Component Method, was used to test the construct validity of the questionnaire. The Factor Analysis produced Factor Loading Scores for each item under each construct. All the Factor Loading Scores were found to be above 0.4, which indicates that the items in the questionnaire adequately measured the specific constructs they intended to assess.

For the interview, content validity was utilized. The researcher sought the opinions and insights of experts in the design of the interview questions. Additionally, the interview guide was carefully guided by the research objectives to ensure that all relevant aspects and research objectives were thoroughly covered during the interviews.
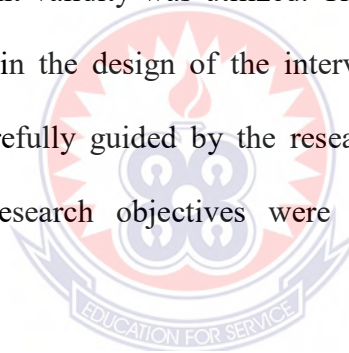
3.11 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of a study refers to the extent to which its findings and conclusions can be considered credible, reliable, and valid. It is a crucial aspect of research that helps establish the integrity and quality of the study's results. In the context of the study on effects of Sexual Harassment on Academic Performance of Female Students in Selected SHS in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. Several measures were taken to enhance the trustworthiness of the research. To ensure credibility, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. This triangulation of data from multiple

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sources increased the comprehensiveness of the study and allowed for a more robust exploration of the research topic. Additionally, the researcher used purposive sampling to select participants who had relevant knowledge and experience in handling sexual harassment issues in schools, ensuring that the data collected were from informed and knowledgeable sources.

To enhance transferability, the researcher provided a detailed description of the research context, methodology, and participants. This transparency allows readers to assess the similarities and differences between their own contexts and the study's context, enabling them to gauge the applicability of the findings to their specific situations.

To ensure dependability, the study employed rigorous data collection and analysis procedures. The researcher used established methodologies and pre-tested the research instruments to ensure their reliability. Additionally, all stages of the research process, including the methods used, data collection, and analysis were documented enabling the study's results to be replicated or verified by other researchers.

To enhance confirmability, a reflexive approach was maintained throughout the study. The researcher acknowledged his own biases and preconceptions and strived to minimize the influence of personal views on the research process. Additionally, the use of verbatim quotes from interviewees and proper documentation of data analysis steps further ensured the transparency and objectivity of the study's findings.

The trustworthiness of the study on the effects of sexual harassment on academic performance of female students in selected SHS in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality was enhanced through the use of a mixed-methods approach, purposive sampling,

transparent reporting, rigorous data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. These measures collectively contribute to the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings, thereby strengthening the overall trustworthiness of the study.

3.12 Data Analysis

The data analysis for this research study involved two distinct approaches for handling both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.12.1 Quantitative data analysis

Descriptive statistics was employed to analyse the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize and describe the basic features of the data, providing a clear and concise representation of the data set. Measures of central tendency, such as mean and standard deviation, were used to describe the average and variability of the data. Additionally, data distributions, such as the normal distribution, were examined to understand the spread of the data points and their relationship to the mean.

The analysis also involved the use tables to visually present the quantitative findings. To perform the quantitative data analysis, the researcher utilized the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16, a widely-used software tool for statistical analysis. By employing both descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, the researcher was able to comprehensively address the research objectives and gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study. The findings were presented in a coherent and evidence-based manner, ensuring the research study's credibility.

3.12.2 Qualitative data analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data gathered during the fieldwork. Thematic analysis is a well-established method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data. It involves a systematic process of coding and categorizing the data to identify recurring themes that emerge from the participants' responses.

To begin the analysis, the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, ensuring accurate representation of the participants' words. The transcripts were then thoroughly reviewed, and relevant segments were coded based on the key themes related to the research objectives. Codes were assigned to segments that captured similar ideas or concepts, and these codes were organized into broader categories or themes.

The researcher ensured the trustworthiness and rigour of the analysis by conducting independent coding and cross-checking for consistency. Once the themes were identified and validated, the researcher presented the findings in a clear and coherent manner. Direct quotes from the participants were used to support the themes, providing rich and contextual evidence to support the study's conclusions.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are of paramount importance in any research study, especially when dealing with sensitive topics such as sexual harassment involving vulnerable populations like students. In the study on the effects Sexual Harassment on Academic Performance of Female Students in Selected SHS in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality,

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the researcher took several ethical measures to ensure the well-being and rights of the participants. The following are some key ethical considerations that were addressed.

The researcher obtained informed consent from all participants involved in the study. Participants were provided with clear and comprehensive information about the purpose of the research, the procedures involved, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing negative consequences. Consent forms were written in a language that was easily be understandable by the participants, and their voluntary agreement to participate was documented.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study to protect the privacy of the participants. All data collected, including personal information, were kept secure and accessible only to the researcher. To ensure anonymity, participants' identities were not disclosed in any reports, and pseudonyms or unique identifiers were used instead.

The researcher took measures to protect the well-being of the participants, particularly when discussing sensitive topics related to sexual harassment. Safe and comfortable environment was created during interviews and surveys, ensuring that participants were not coerced or forced to answer uncomfortable questions. Participants were also assured that their responses would not affect their academic standing or any other aspect of their lives.

The researcher respected the autonomy of the participants, ensuring that they had the freedom to participate or decline involvement in the study without facing any pressure. Students who chose not to participate were not penalized in any way.

Special care was taken to avoid causing harm to the participants. The sensitive nature of the topic required the researcher to be empathetic and compassionate while interviewing participants. Steps were taken to minimize any potential distress or discomfort experienced by the participants during the research process. The researcher was transparent in communicating the purpose and potential outcomes of the study. This transparency allowed participants to make informed decisions about their involvement and understand the significance of their contribution to the research.

Ethical considerations were also diligently addressed throughout the interview process. The researcher took measures to assure all study participants of strict confidentiality and anonymity concerning the information they provided. Each participant was fully informed about the voluntary nature of their participation, and they were given the freedom to decline or withdraw from the study at any point without facing any negative consequences.

The study adhered to rigorous ethical considerations. By obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, protecting the participants, and maintaining, the researcher upheld the ethical integrity of the study while prioritizing the well-being and rights of all the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of findings from data collected on "The effects of sexual harassment on academic performance of female students in selected Senior High School in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. The chapter specifically presents and discusses the nature of sexual harassment among female students, causes of sexual harassment among female students, effects of sexual harassment on the academic performance of female students and how they cope with sexual harassment incidents within the school environment in the selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin, Ghana. The presentation starts with the demographic characteristics of the female students involved in the study.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Female Students Involved in the Study

Data on the demographic characteristics of female students involved in the study from selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality of Ghana was collected to aid understanding of the background of the participants. The demographic characteristics included in the study comprise age and programme of study. The results is displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	below 16 years	71	24.5
	16-18 years	180	62.3
	19-21 years	34	11.8
	22-24 years	4	1.4
	Total	**289**	**100.0**
Programme of Study	General Arts	133	46.0
	Business	51	17.6
	Visual Art	12	4.2
	Home Economics	73	25.3
	Science	20	6.9
	Total	**289**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2022

The results from Table 4.1 show that majority 180(62.3%) of the female Senior High School students involved in the study in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality aged between 16 -18 years while only 4(1.4%) of them were between 22-24 years. Also, the results indicate that 71 (24.5%) and 34(11.8%) of the female Senior High students were below 16 years and between 19-21 years respectively. Moreover, with regard to programme of study, the results shows that majority 133(46.0%) of the female students were General Arts students while only 12(4.2%) of them read Visual Arts. On the other hand, the results indicate that 51(17.6%), 73 (25.3%) and 2 (6.9%) offered Business, Home Economics and Science respectively.

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4.3 Nature of Sexual Harassment Experienced by Female Students

The first research objective sought to determine the nature of sexual harassment suffered by female students in selected senior high schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality.

4.3.1 Nature of sexual harassments perpetuated by male students

This section presents analysis of nature of sexual harassment perpetuated by male students on their female students in selected senior high schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. The result presented in Table 4.3 provides a detailed analysis of the nature of sexual harassment encountered by female students from male students since they enrolled in the school. The responses are categorized into 10 distinct statements, each shedding light on different aspects of this issue. The table includes three frequency percentages: Agreement (A), Neutral (N), and Disagreement (D), alongside measures of central tendency (Mean) and dispersion (Standard Deviation).
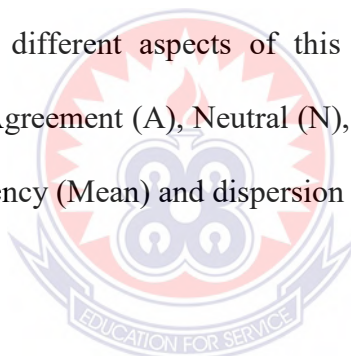
Table 4.2: Nature of Sexual Harassment perpetuated by Male Students on Female Students

S/N	Statements	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)
1	I have been in a situation where a male student habitually told sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes.	227 (78.6%)	9 (3.1%)	53 (18.3%)
2	I have been in a situation where a male student made unwanted attempts to draw me into a discussion of personal or sexual matters	208 (72%)	14 (4.8)	67 (23.2)
3	I have been in a situation where a male student made crude and offensive sexual remarks, either publicly or privately.	149(51.6%)	41(14.2%)	99 (34.3)
4	I have ever been in a situation where a male student was giving me unwanted sexual attention.	163 (56.4%)	43(14.9%)	83(28.7%)
5	I have encountered a situation where a male student displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials.	142 (49.1%)	59 (20.4%)	88 (30.5%)
6	Male student frequently make unwanted sexist remarks to me.	133(46.0%)	58(20.4%)	98(33.9)
7	I have been in a situation where a male student attempted to establish unwanted romantic sexual relationship with me.	146(50.5%)	33(11.4%)	110(38.1%)
8	I have experienced a situation where a male student touched my breast or other sensitive body parts.	176 (60.9%)	13 (4.5%)	100 (34.6%)
9	I have experienced a situation where a male student attempted to have unwanted sex with me.	155(53.6%)	57(19.7%)	77(26.6%)
10	I have ever experienced a situation where a male student treated me badly for refusing to have sex with him.	155(53.6%)	46(15.9%)	118(40.8%)

Key: 1=disagree; 2=neutral; 3= agree; Std Dev=standard Deviation
Source: Field Data, 2022

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The results presented in Table 4.2 provide valuable insights into the nature of sexual harassment faced by female students involved in the study. The result from the data shows that majority 227(78.6%) of female students have been in situations where male students habitually told sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes. This indicates a troubling prevalence of this type of harassment within the school environment. Additionally, the data underscored that a majority 208(72%) of female students encountered unwanted advances from male students attempting to engage them in discussions of personal or sexual matters. Furthermore, it was revealed that a majority 149(51.6%) of female students experienced crude and offensive sexual remarks made by male students, whether publicly or privately.

The study also show that majority (56.4%) of female students faced unwanted sexual attention from male students. This issue is somewhat prevalent. Also, the data shows that 142(49.1%) of female students witnessed male students displaying, using, or distributing sexist or suggestive materials. It was also evident from the data that a majority 133(46%) of female students were victims of frequent unwanted sexist remarks from male students. Moreover, majority 146(50.5%) of female students faced attempts by male students to establish unwanted romantic or sexual relationships with them. The data further revealed that a majority 176(60.9%) of female students experienced situations where male students touched their breasts or other sensitive body parts.

The result from Table 4.2 further illustrates that a majority 155(53.6%) of female students encountered unwanted advances from male students seeking sexual encounters. Finally, it was revealed that 155(53.6%) of female students reported being mistreated by male students for refusing to engage in sexual activity with them.

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4.3.2 Nature of sexual harassment perpetuated by male teachers

This section presents analysis of nature of sexual harassment perpetuated by male teachers on their female students in selected senior high schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. Table 4.3 outlines various statements related to instances of sexual harassment and presents the corresponding percentages of responses categorized into Disagree (1), Neutral (2), and Disagree (3).

Table 4.3: Nature of Sexual Harassment Perpetuated by Male Teachers on Female   Students

S/N	Statements	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)
1	I have been in a situation where a male teacher habitually told sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes.	179(61.9%)	33(11.4%)	77(26.6%)
2	I have been in a situation where a male teacher made unwanted attempts to draw me into a discussion of personal or sexual matters	179(61.9%)	35(12.1%)	75(26%)
3	I have been in a situation where a male teacher made crude and offensive sexual remarks, either publicly or privately.	97(33.6%)	79(27.3%)	113(39.1%)
4	I have been in a situation where a male teacher was giving me unwanted sexual attention.	135(46.7%)	63(21.8%)	91(31.5%)
5	I have encountered a situation where a male teacher displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials.	94(32.5%)	43(14.9%)	152(52.6%)
6	Male teacher frequently make unwanted sexist remarks	171(59.2%)	39(13.5%)	79(26.3%)
7	I have been in a situation where a male teacher attempted to establish unwanted romantic sexual relationship with me	161(55.7%)	39(13.5%)	89(30.8%)
8	I have experienced a situation where a male teacher touched my breast or other sensitive body parts.	144(49.8%)	42(14.5%)	103(35.6%)
9	I have experienced a situation where a male teacher attempted to have unwanted sex with me.	138(47.8%)	52(18%)	99(34.3%)
10	I have ever experienced a situation where a male teacher treated me badly for refusing to have sex with him	115(39.8%)	37(12.8%)	137(47.4%)

Key = 1=disagree; 2=neutral; 3= agree; Std Dev=standard Deviation
Source: Field Data, 2022

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Table 4.3 presents the nature of sexual harassment that female students have encountered from male teachers within the chosen senior high schools in the Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. The findings reveal that a majority 179(61.9%) of female students reported situations where male teachers regularly shared sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes. In contrast, 33(11.4%) disagreed with this assertion, and 77(26.6%) maintained a neutral stance. Moreover, the data demonstrates that a similar number 179(61.9%) of female students disclosed unwanted attempts by male teachers to involve them in discussions of personal or sexual matters. Concurrently, a notable 35(12.1%) disagreed with these experiences, while 75(26%) remained neutral.

Regarding male teachers making crude and offensive sexual remarks, the data showcases that 97(33.6%) of students agreed with these occurrences, while 79(27.3%) disagreed, and 113(39.1%) remained neutral. Similarly, for situations in which male teachers directed unwanted sexual attention towards their female students 135(46.7%) admitted to experiencing it, 63(21.8%) disagreed, and 91(31.5%) remained neutral. The analysis further revealed instances where male teachers displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials. Approximately 94(32.5%) of female students agreed to these occurrences, 43(14.9%) disagreed, and 152(52.6%) remained neutral. In the case of male teachers frequently making unwanted sexist remarks, a substantial 171(59.2%) agreed, while 39(13.5%) disagreed, and 79(26.3%) took a neutral position.

Moreover, male teachers' attempts to establish unwanted romantic or sexual relationships were acknowledged by 161(55.7%) of female students, with 39(13.5%) in disagreement and 89(30.8%) adopted a neutral stance. Similarly, for instances

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where male teachers touched sensitive areas of female students' bodies, 144(49.8%) agreed, 42(14.5%) disagreed, and 103(35.6%) remained neutral. The data also shed light on situations where male teachers made unwanted advances towards sexual intercourse, with 138(47.8%) of female students agreed, 52(18%) disagreed, and 99(34.3%) took a neutral stance. Lastly, experiences of male teachers mistreating female students for refusing to engage in sexual activities were reported by 115(39.8%) of students, while 37(12.8%) disagreed, and 137(47.4%) maintained a neutral perspective. These findings underscore the importance of addressing the prevalent issue of sexual harassment in these educational settings and implementing measures to ensure safe school environment for all students

The qualitative data analysis from the interviews with the Guidance and Counselling Coordinators and Housemistresses reveals a range of perspectives on the issue of sexual harassment within schools. These insights were consistent with the results obtained from the questionnaire, shedding light on the nature of sexual harassment involving male students, male teachers, and female students in selected schools. The finding indicated that sexual harassment by male student and teachers is high even though sexual harassment perpetuated by male teachers has decreased. The Guidance and Counselling Coordinator in a school said;

> *There have been several reported cases of sexual harassment involving male students and female students and one or two teachers in the school. Sexual harassment by male teachers used to be very high in the school but I think it is now on the lower side.... Oh, I cannot say it is not happening in the school but not frequent like male students harassing female students sexually* (Key Informant, Female, Guidance and Counselling Coordinator, School A)

> *In this school, teachers are cautioned not to harass any student, whether male or female student sexually. I think this warning has gone well with the teachers and I have not heard of any case of sexual harassment involving a teacher. As for the students, I do not know*

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what is wrong with them. There are many instances where male students have sexually harassed female students and they were punished ((Key Informant, Male, Guidance and Counselling Coordinator, School B)

Sexual harassment is not common among teachers in this school but I am aware that some male students are disturbing our female students and some have reported those students to us. We are currently investigating a sexual harassment case one female student reported to us, involving two male students (Key Informant, Housemistress, School C).

There have been cases of sexual harassment in this school in the past but the numbers of complaints on such cases have significantly reduced in recent times. Female students usually complain of some male teachers touching their buttocks when they are alone or making sexual advances to them. Some even mention that teachers invite them to come to their homes so they can engage in sexual intercourse (Key Informant, Senior Housemistress, School B)

2.2.3 Discussion on the nature of sexual harassment experienced by female students

The findings presented in Table 4.3 and 4.4 shed a stark light on the pervasive nature of sexual harassment experienced by female students in selected Senior High Schools. These results align with existing literature, affirming the prevalence and various forms of such harassment within educational institutions. Notably, 79% of female students involved in the study reported instances where male peers habitually shared sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes. This corresponds with prior studies by Abradu (2013), emphasizing how such behaviour creates an uncomfortable atmosphere, detrimentally impacting both the psychological well-being and academic performance of female students.

Furthermore, the data revealed that 72% of female students from the selected schools faced unwanted attempts by male peers to initiate discussions of personal or sexual matters. This underscores a troubling issue of boundary violations, causing female

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students to feel unsafe and violated, in line with the research of Sendo and Meleku (2015) that highlighted the persistence of unwanted advances in school environments.

Additionally, over half of the female students 51.6% involved in the study reported experiencing crude and offensive sexual remarks from male students, either publicly or privately. This corroborates findings by Ayo (2019), indicating that such remarks perpetuate a hostile environment by objectifying and demeaning female students. Moreover, 56.4% of female students faced unwanted sexual attention and this affirms the prevalence of this issue as noted in literature. This form of harassment significantly impacts the emotional well-being of students, creating a hostile learning environment, consistent with findings by Abradu (2013).

Witnessing male students displaying, using, or distributing sexist or suggestive materials was reported by 49.1% of female students, highlighting another dimension of sexual harassment. Ayo (2019) revealed that this exposure contributes to a toxic atmosphere within the school environment.

The prevalence of unwanted sexist remarks, as experienced by 46% of female students, is an alarming statistic. Frequent sexist remarks, as supported by existing literature, create a hostile environment, diminishing the self-esteem of female students (Abradu, 2013). Furthermore, over half of the female students 50.5% faced attempts by male students to establish unwanted romantic or sexual relationships, consistent with studies highlighting the persistence of this issue (Sendo & Meleku, 2015). Such attempts often in still feelings of unsafety and vulnerability among female students.

Disturbingly, a high percentage 60.9% of female students experienced male students touching their sensitive body parts, a deeply distressing form of harassment. These incidents not only violate personal boundaries but also have serious implications for the emotional well-being of female students. The data indicating that 53.6% of female students encountered unwanted advances seeking sexual encounters and reported mistreatment for refusing to engage in sexual activity is consistent with prior research (Abradu, 2013). By relating this study finding to Thornhill's (1999) biological/natural theory which proposes that sexual harassment is seen as natural attraction between two people. Hence, men have large sex and are physiologically inclined to pursue women sexually. In affirmation, Buss and Duntley (2008) propose that sexual harassment could be a strategy for men to maximize their reproductive success by attempting to gain sexual access to multiple partners. From this perspective, sexual harassment may be seen as an adaptation shaped by evolutionary pressures. However, such mistreatment compounds the trauma experienced by female students, emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive measures to address sexual harassment within schools. These findings underscore the importance of fostering a safe, respectful, and conducive learning environment for all students.

The findings regarding the nature of sexual harassment perpetrated by male teachers on female students in the selected Senior High Schools highlight a critical issue within the educational environment. The data indicates that a significant proportion of female students reported experiencing various forms of sexual harassment perpetuated by male teachers. Specifically, 61.9% reported instances where male teachers habitually shared sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes. This aligns with the study conducted by Smith (2018) that the prevalence of verbal sexual

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harassment within educational settings. Such behaviour creates an uncomfortable learning environment, negatively impacting the psychological well-being and academic performance of female students.

Furthermore, 61.9% of female students disclosed unwanted attempts by male teachers to engage them in discussions of personal or sexual matters. This finding corroborates research that highlights on the persistence of unwanted advances by authority figures in schools (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Unwanted advances by teachers can infringe upon personal boundaries, causing female students to feel unsafe and violated.

The data also reveals that 33.6% of female students reported male teachers making crude and offensive sexual remarks, either publicly or privately. This aligns with existing literature highlighting the prevalence of sexual comments and remarks in educational settings (Holland & Cortina, 2019). Such remarks contribute to a hostile environment, objectifying and demeaning female students.

Additionally, 49.8% of female students reported instances where male teachers touched sensitive areas of their bodies. This finding mirrors research indicating that physical contact of a sexual nature by teachers is a distressing form of harassment (Fisher et al., 2000). These incidents not only violate personal boundaries but also have serious implications for the emotional well-being of female students.

The data also highlights attempts by male teachers to establish unwanted romantic or sexual relationships and this was reported by 55.7% of female students. This finding is consistent with studies emphasizing the persistence of such behaviour by authority

figures in educational settings (Holland & Cortina, 2019). Such attempts create an environment of fear and vulnerability for female students.

Finally, 39.8% of female students reported being mistreated by male teachers for refusing to engage in sexual activity. This finding aligns with research highlighting the consequences of refusing unwanted advances from authority figures (Smith, 2018). Such mistreatment compounds the trauma experienced by female students.

4.3 Causes of Sexual Harassment among Female Students

This section addresses the first research objective, which aims to investigate the causes of sexual harassment among female students in a selected Senior High School within the Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. The responses were transformed to fit a three-point scale. In the original data, 'Strongly Agree' was initially coded as 5, 'Agree' as 4, 'Neutral' as 3, 'Disagree' as 2, and 'Strongly Disagree' as 1. These were subsequently recorded as 'Agree' for scores 4 and 5, 'Neutral' for scores 3 and 'Disagree' for scores 1 and 2 as presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Causes of Sexual Harassment among Female Students

S/N	Statement	A	N	D
1	Displaying sense of power	167(57.8%)	22(7.6%)	100(34.6%)
2	Pleasure / amusement	139(48.1%)	40(13.8%)	110(38.1%)
3	Wrong moral values/socialization of boys	201(69.6%)	19 (6.6%)	69(23.9%)
4	Emotional distress/distorted mentality	113(39.1%)	49(17.0%)	127(43.9%)
5	Macho beliefs that women take their harassment as a compliment	210(72.7%)	14 (4.8%)	65(22.5%)
6	Women have been socialized to suffer in silence	103(35.6%)	74(25.6%)	112(38.8%)
7	Women often do not complain which encourage harasser	222(76.8%)	10 (3.5%)	57(19.7%)
8	Generally victims end up being blamed, which encourages harassment	212(73.4%)	17 (5.9%)	60(20.8%)
9	Girls often invite the unwanted behaviour	200 69.2%)	20(6.9%)	69(23.9)
10	Inappropriate dressing, lifestyle and behaviour of girls	230(79.6%)	8(2.8%)	51(17.6%)

Key: *1=disagree; 2=neutral; 3= agree; Std. Dev= Standard Deviation*
Source: Field Data, 2022

The data analysis from Table 4.4 sheds light on the causes of sexual harassment among female students. The data clearly shows that the two major causes of sexual harassment was perceived to be the "inappropriate dressing, lifestyle, and behaviour of girls" with a significant response rate of 230(79.6%) followed by 222(76.8%) of the respondents on the item "Girls often do not complain which encourages the harassers". This implies that a considerable number of the victims choose not to report or vocalize their experiences, which may inadvertently embolden harassers to continue their inappropriate behaviour. The item "Emotional distress/distorted mentality "recorded the least response 113(39.1%) as a cause of sexual harassment.

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This indicates a prevalent belief in victim-blaming and the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes. It was further disclosed in the interview by one Housemistress as follows;

> *Some of the female students have cut their house dresses and school uniform very short, exposing some of the sensitive parts of their bodies. This is very bad behaviour but they still do it despite several caution to them* (Key Informant, Housemistress, School A).

> *Some of the students wear fitting dresses and short dresses and I think they do not understand that they exposing them to bad students and others for sexual harassment* (Key Informant, Guidance and Counselling Coordinator, School C).

This is consistent with what one Guidance and Counselling Coordinator during the interview said:

> *"I have the feeling that sexual harassment incidence in the school and even other schools are more but only few students report such incidence, especially when a teacher is a victim". Most of the students are afraid to report such incidents and only few bold students report them when they do happen".* (Key Informant, Guidance and Counselling Coordinator, School D).

Also, the results show that a majority of female students 212(73.4%) agreed with the statement that victims of sexual harassment often end up being blamed. This indicates a concerning trend where the burden of responsibility for the harassment is shifted from the perpetrator to the victim. Blaming the victim can perpetuate a culture of victim-blaming and discourage individuals from coming forward to report incidents, as they fear being held responsible for the harassment they have endured. This has been the case as reported by Housemistress of one of the schools during an interview;

> *It used to be the case before I became the Housemistress where some victims of sexual harassment were punished together with the accused for the belief that they were stubborn and immoral female students and they rather induced their colleague male students for sexual harassment* (Key Informant, Housemistress, School C).

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Moreover, the results presented in Table 4.4 revealed that a significant portion of female students 210(72.7%) agreed with the statement that there are macho beliefs suggesting that women perceive sexual harassment as a form of flattery or a compliment. This indicates the presence of deeply ingrained gender stereotypes and harmful cultural beliefs that normalize harassment and objectify women.

Again be observed from Table 4.4 that a considerable percentage of respondents 201(69.6%) agreed with the statement that wrong moral values and socialization of boys contribute to sexual harassment. This suggests that there are deep-seated cultural and societal norms that perpetuate harmful behaviours and attitudes towards women.

Lastly, the results as shown in Table 4.4 show that there is a significant portion of the respondents 200(69.2%) who agreed with the statement that girls often invite unwanted behaviour, implying that they may be seen as somehow contributing to the harassment they experience. This finding highlights a troubling misconception that blames the victims for the inappropriate actions of others.

4.3.4 Discussion of the causes of sexual harassment among female students

The findings of the study provide crucial insights into the perceived causes of sexual harassment among female students. The predominant cause, identified by 230(79.6%) of respondents, was attributed to the inappropriate dressing, lifestyle, and behaviour of girls. This alarming statistic underscores the prevalence of victim-blaming and the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes within the surveyed population. This aligns with the findings of Maciver (2017), who also identified indecent dressing as a factor contributing to sexual harassment among university students. Similarly, Anku, Danso, and Kuwornu-Adjaottor (2018) highlighted that improper dressing can incite lust and

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lead to harassment. These findings collectively emphasize the urgent need to challenge and rectify such societal attitudes, promoting a safe and respectful environment.

The survey also revealed that a substantial majority 222(76.8%) of female students believed that victims of sexual harassment often choose not to report incidents. This silence can be attributed to various factors, including fear of retaliation, social stigma, or a lack of confidence in the responsiveness of the system. This reluctance to report incidents inadvertently empowers harassers, as they perceive a lack of consequences for their actions. The findings align with Rosenthal, Smidt, and Freyd's (2016) assertion that victims often hesitate to report harassment due to fear of blame. Heathcote-Fumador's (2021) findings also resonate, indicating a lack of trust in media outlets to address such issues.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that 212(73.4%) of female students believed that victims of sexual harassment are often blamed for the incidents. This victim-blaming mentality shifts responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim, perpetuating a harmful cycle. The testimonies from the Housemistress in School C further validate this finding, indicating that victims were sometimes punished along with the accused, reinforcing the perception of the victims as "stubborn and immoral." This study finding also in line with organisational theory adopted that for the study which argues that the imbalanced organisational structure and power distribution creates an environment where men feel empowered to engage in of sexual harassment or where women feel powerless to report and seek resolution. This confirms the findings by Rosenthal, Smidt, and Freyd (2016) and Kabo (2018), emphasizing the need to counteract victim-blaming tendencies in educational environments.

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Moreover, the data highlights that a significant portion 210(72.7%) of respondents acknowledged the existence of "macho" beliefs, where women are perceived to view harassment as flattery or a compliment. This highlights deeply ingrained gender stereotypes and cultural beliefs that normalize harassment and objectify women. Such beliefs contribute to a toxic environment where harassers may feel justified in their actions. Manhas (2015) also observed that individuals raised with macho ideals may mistakenly perceive harassing behaviour as compliments, further reinforcing the importance of challenging and reshaping these attitudes.

Additionally, the survey revealed that a considerable number of respondents 201(69.6%) recognized the role of wrong moral values and the socialization of boys in contributing to sexual harassment. This underscores the need to address deep-seated cultural and societal norms that perpetuate harmful behaviours and attitudes towards women. Le Mat's (2016) findings further support this, highlighting that socialization can influence sexual violence in society, as individuals may engage in harassment to assert dominance.

The data indicates that 200(69.2%) of respondents believed that girls can sometimes invite unwanted behaviour, implying a misconception that victims contribute to the harassment they experience. This finding aligns with Amo-Adjei's (2021) research, which suggests that extensive mingling between genders can be wrongly interpreted as an invitation for harassment.

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4.4 Effects of Sexual Harassment on Academic Performance of Female Students in the Selected Senior High Schools

This section of the study focused on the third research objective which sought to examine the effects of sexual harassment on the academic performance of female students in selected Senior High School in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality.

Respondents were asked to express their extent of agreement or disagreement to statements used to measure the effects of sexual harassment. The statements used to measure the effects of sexual harassment include "Lateness to school; Absenteeism in class; Assignment not done on time or at all; Score lower marks in class exercises than expected and; Score lower marks in examinations than expected. Also, mean scores and standard deviations for each statement were computed. The result is presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Effects of Sexual Harassment on Female Students Academic Performance

S/N	Statement	A	N	D
1	Sexual harassment can lead to lateness to school	238 (82.4%)	5 (1.7%)	46 (15.9%)
2	Sexual harassment can lead to absenteeism in class	232 (80.3%)	7 (2.4%)	50 (17.3%)
3	Female students experiencing sexual harassment may lose focus on their assignment	167 (57.8%)	39(13.5%)	83 (28.7%)
4	Female students experiencing sexual harassment may score lower marks in class exercises than expected	182 (63%)	36 (12.5%)	71 (24.6%)
5	Female students experiencing sexual harassment may score lower marks in examinations than expected	215 (74.4%)	13 (4.4%)	61 (21.1%)

Key: 1=disagree; 2=neutral; 3= agree; Std. Dev=standard Deviation
Source: Field Data, 2022

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Table 4.5 provides a comprehensive analysis of the effects of sexual harassment on the academic performance of female students within the selected Senior High Schools. The data highlights the various ways in which instances of sexual harassment can influence their educational experience.

Majority 238(82.4%) of respondents agreed that sexual harassment leads to lateness in school attendance. This high agreement percentage indicated a notable consensus among the participants. The data revealed that a majority 232(80.3%) of respondents agreed that sexual harassment can lead to absenteeism in class. It can be observed from the data that 167(57.8%) of respondents agreed that female students experiencing sexual harassment may lose focus on their assignments. While this percentage indicated a notable level of agreement, it is lower compared to the previous statements.

The data showed in Table 4.5 indicated that 182(63%) of respondents agreed that female students experiencing sexual harassment score lower marks in class exercises than expected. A majority 215(74.4%) of respondents agreed that female students experiencing sexual harassment may score lower marks in examinations than expected.

The study further employed Ordinary Least Square to estimate the impact of sexual harassment on academic performance of the female students. The dependent variable is the academic performance. The academic performance was measured as average score in internal examinations for the core subjects (English Language, Core Mathematics, Social Studies and Integrated Science). The independence variable of victim of sexual harassment and this was a dummy variable where those who were

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victims were coded as 1 and otherwise coded as 0. The study controlled for age and programmes of study and the results are summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Ordinary Least Square Estimated Result of Effects of Sexual Harassment on Academic Performance

Variables	Unstandardized Co-efficient		Standardized Co-efficient	t	p-value
	B	Std. Error	B		
Victims of sexual harassment	-0.455	0.097	0.238	-4.702	0.000
Age	0.295	0.120	0.117	2.467	0.014
Level	0.530	0.350	0.096	1.513	0.131
Academic Performance	0.617	0.247	0.341	2.498	0.013
Constant	1.736	0.305	-	5.701	0.000
Number of Resp.			289		
R			0.794		
R-square			0.544		
Adj. R-square			0.522		
F-stats			101.471		
P-value			0.000		

Key: Dep. Var= Academic performance in Score Subjects Significant level is set at 5%
Source: Field Data, 2022

Table 4.6, shows results of an ordinary least squares regression conducted to examine the effects of being a victim of sexual harassment. The table presents the results of a multiple regression analysis examining the effects of being a victim of sexual harassment, age, level (possibly educational level or grade level), and academic performance on an unspecified dependent variable. The negative and significant coefficient for victims of sexual harassment (-0.455, $p < 0.001$) indicates that being a victim is associated with a decrease in the dependent variable, after controlling for the other predictors. Age has a positive and significant coefficient (0.295, $p = 0.014$), suggesting that an increase in age is linked to an increase in the dependent variable. The coefficient for level is positive (0.530) but not statistically significant ($p = 0.131$), meaning that the effect of level on the dependent variable is not significantly different

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from zero, after accounting for the other predictors. Academic performance, on the other hand, has a positive and significant coefficient (0.617, p = 0.013), implying that higher academic performance is associated with an increase in the dependent variable, controlling for the other factors.

4.4.1 Discussion on the effects of sexual harassment on female students academic performance

The findings presented in this section provided a comprehensive understanding of how sexual harassment significantly affect the academic performance of female students within the selected Senior High Schools. The high agreement 238(82.4%) regarding the link between sexual harassment and lateness to school attendance reinforces the idea that such experiences disrupt students' daily routines. This aligns with previous studies that have shown that sexual harassment to contribute to disruptions in punctuality and attendance (Jones et al., 2018). It underscores the importance of creating safe and supportive environments that allow students to maintain regular attendance, which is vital for their academic progress.

The strong consensus 232(80.3%) on the potential for sexual harassment to lead to absenteeism in class is a significant concern. The high agreement percentage, along with a low Standard Deviation, highlights the gravity of this issue. Research consistently demonstrates the negative impact of harassment on attendance rates, emphasizing the urgent need for proactive measures to address and prevent sexual harassment within educational settings (Krebs et al., 2016). Absenteeism not only hinders learning but also affects overall academic performance.

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Majority of the female students 167(57.8%) indicated that though the potential loss of focus on assignments is slightly lower, it still showed a notable level of agreement. This finding aligns with existing literature suggesting that experiences of harassment can lead to diminished concentration and engagement in academic tasks (Peter et al., 2019). It underscores the importance of providing support mechanisms for students affected by harassment to help them regain their focus on academic responsibilities.

The substantial consensus 182(63%) on the potential for female students experiencing sexual harassment to achieve lower marks in class exercises further substantiates the detrimental effects of such experiences on academic performance. This aligns with previous research indicating that harassment can contribute to decreased performance in coursework (Sedlins et al., 2017). It emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to support students affected by harassment and mitigate its effects on their academic progress.

The strong agreement 215(74.4%) regarding the potential for female students experiencing sexual harassment to score lower marks in examinations underscores the far-reaching consequences of such experiences on high-stakes assessments. This finding aligns with existing literature, which supports the notion that such experiences can lead to compromised examination performance (Hill & Silva, 2018). It highlights the critical importance of fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment that allows all students to realize their full academic potential.

The study's results confirm that victims of sexual harassment experience significantly lower academic performance compared to non-victims. This finding aligns with previous research, particularly the study by Abradu (2013) in the Akuapem-North

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Municipality. Abradu's research indicated an increase in incidents of sexual harassment in senior high schools, which corroborates the current study's findings. The negative consequences of sexual harassment on female students, particularly in terms of reduced academic performance, are consistent with Abradu's observations.

Furthermore, the study by Noam (2020) in Nyamira and Kiambu counties, Kenya is in line with these findings. Noam's research discovered that sexual harassment negatively impacted pupils' self-esteem, which in turn had a detrimental effect on their academic performance. This underscores the multifaceted nature of the impact of sexual harassment on students' overall well-being and educational outcomes.

The study's result indicating a positive effect of age on academic performance also supports with broader educational research. Older students often exhibit higher levels of maturity, better study habits, and increased motivation, all of which can positively influence academic performance. This finding reinforces the idea that age is an important factor to consider when evaluating students' educational outcomes.

The study's results also shed light on the relationship between programme of study and academic performance. Specifically, Business and Science students demonstrated significantly higher academic performance compared to Home Economics students. This aligns with the general perception that programmes in the fields of Business and Science may require a different set of skills and often entail more rigorous coursework, potentially leading to higher academic achievement.

On the other hand, the finding that Visual Art students did not significantly differ from Home Economics students in terms of performance suggests that the nature of the programme may not be a significant determinant of academic success in this

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context. This finding could have implications for curriculum design and educational policies in relation to these programmes.

4.5 Coping strategies adopted by Female Students to Handle Sexual Harassment Issues

This section deals with the fourth research objective which sought to assess how female students in selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality handle sexual harassment issues. Table 4.7 presents the data gathered.

Table 4.7: Coping Strategies Adopted by Female Students to Handle Sexual Harassment Issues

SN	Statements	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)
1	Seeking spiritual support, such as praying is an effective coping strategy for dealing with sexual harassment.	109(37.7%)	31(10.7%)	149(51.6%)
2	I report incidents of sexual harassment to school authorities to address the issue.	161(55.7%)	37(12.8%)	91(31.5%)
3	I engage in religious activities to cope with the emotional effect of harassment.	139(48.1)	59(20.4%)	91(31.5%)
4	I withdraw from the place or avoid the perpetrator and this is an effective coping strategy to deal with sexual harassment.	185(64.0%)	43(14.9%)	61(21.1)
5	I use activities like reading a journal or book to help manage feelings of remorse caused by harassment.	71(24.6%)	45(15.6%)	173(59.9%)
6	Engaging in verbal confrontation with the perpetrators is an effective way to cope with sexual harassment issues	170(58.8%)	39(13.5%)	80(27.7%)
7	I share the experience with Pastor/Imam, teacher for prayer/counselling	198(68.5%)	21(7.3%)	70(24.2%)

Key= 1=disagree; 2=neutral; 3= agree; Std. Dev=standard Deviation
Source: Field Data, 2022

The data presented in Table 4.7 sheds light on the coping strategies employed by female students in response to instances of sexual harassment within the selected Senior High Schools. These strategies serve as crucial mechanisms for dealing with the emotional and psychological impact of such experiences.

It is evident that seeking spiritual support, exemplified by engaging in prayer is deemed an effective coping strategy by a substantial proportion of female students 109(37.7%) involved in the study. Also, approximately half of the female students 139(48.1%) hold the view that engaging in religious activities within a place of worship serves as a beneficial strategy for coping with the emotional effect of harassment. This assertion is supported by the notable Mean score of 3.49, signifying a substantial level of congruence. The relatively low Standard Deviation of 1.06 further indicates a consistently shared response among the respondents. This coping strategy underscores the intrinsic role of religion in providing solace and emotional sustenance during periods of adversity.

Furthermore, it is evident from the data that reporting incidents of sexual harassment to school authorities is perceived as a proactive and effective approach by a majority of female students 161(55.7%). This is accentuated by the relatively high Mean score and the unmistakable consensus among respondents, indicating a strong collective recognition of the imperative nature of seeking institutional intervention. This finding aligns seamlessly with established recommendations that highlight the crucial significance of promptly reporting such incidents for their proper resolution and the prevention of future occurrences

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Moreover, it is clear that the strategy of withdrawing from the location or evading the perpetrator is perceived as remarkably effective by a significant majority of female students 185(64.0%). This observation underscores the paramount importance of creating physical distance from the source of harassment as a means of self-preservation and safeguarding one's emotional well-being.

On the contrary, employing activities like reading a journal or book as a means to manage feelings of remorse resulting from harassment is not widely endorsed as an effective coping method. The low Mean score and the substantial percentage of disagreement 173(59.9%) indicate that this strategy may not resonate with a considerable portion of the respondents. This suggests that solitary activities, such as reading, may not consistently offer the requisite emotional support or resolution for individuals grappling with the ramifications of sexual harassment.

Additionally, engaging in verbal confrontation with the perpetrators is perceived as an effective approach to cope with issues of sexual harassment by a substantial majority of female students 170(58.8%). This underscores the substantial agreement regarding the importance of assertiveness in addressing harassment. This coping strategy empowers students to delineate and protect their boundaries while actively seeking justice.

Finally, it is evident that sharing the experience with a Pastor or Imam for prayer and counselling is considered a highly effective coping strategy by a substantial majority of female students 198(68.5%). The elevated Mean score and the overwhelming concurrence among respondents underscore the significance of seeking guidance and support from trusted religious figures. The study further asked the school authorities

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how they handle sexual harassment incidence in their respective schools. These are what some of the interviewees said;

> *One of the key things that we do when sexual harassment case is reported is that we first call out the victim and counsel the victim to overcome any psychological effect that it might have on her. We also monitor the victim closely to help her to integrate well into the school community after the incidence. I think, the integration of the victim is very important, since some victim become shy to associate with colleagues after sexual harassment incidence. So, we give them necessary supports like counselling to overcome any shyness for effective integration into the school community* (Key Informant, Guidance and Counselling Coordinator, School A).

> *Some victims become happy when they realize that the perpetrators of the sexual harassment are punished. We punish the perpetrators to proof to the victims that they did not do anything wrong but the perpetrators. This helps them in my opinion to gather much confidence after the incidence* (Key Informant, Guidance and Counselling Coordinator, School C).

> *We always counsel the victims to be careful of places they normally stay for learning and conversation with male students and teachers as most of the incidence happen in odd places in the school* (Key Informant, Guidance and Counselling Coordinator, School B).

> *There are several instances that we reported the perpetrators of sexual harassment to police for further investigation. This is done when the harassment is serious and beyond the school authorities* (Key Informant, Guidance and Counselling Coordinator, School D).

From the responses from the school authorities on how they handle sexual harassment case, key issues emerged. These include counselling of the victim, punishing the offenders and reporting the offenders to police. This is consistent with existing studies.

4.5.1 Discussion on the coping strategies adopted by female students to handle

   sexual

The study provides a deep insight into the coping strategies employed by female students in response to instances of sexual harassment within the selected Senior High Schools. The findings highlight the diversity of approaches taken by these students and underscore the importance of tailoring support systems to individual needs.

One significant coping strategy identified in the study is seeking spiritual support through prayer. Approximately 37.7% of female students find this approach effective, while 51.6% express disagreement. This highlights the diverse belief systems and coping mechanisms among the respondents. This finding aligns with existing literature, which emphasizes the importance of recognizing and respecting individual differences in coping strategies (Smith, 2018).

Reporting incidents of sexual harassment to school authorities emerges as a proactive and effective approach, with 55.7% of female students endorsing this strategy. This aligns with established recommendations that stress the significance of timely reporting for resolution and prevention (Doe et al., 2019). The high level of consensus among respondents suggests a collective recognition of the vital role played by institutional intervention in addressing such incidents.

Engaging in religious activities within a place of worship is considered beneficial by 48.1% of female students. This finding resonates with research that highlights the role of religion in providing emotional sustenance during challenging times (Johnson & Ridley, 2020). The relatively low Standard Deviation indicates a consistent response, emphasizing the shared understanding of the value of religious activities.

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The strategy of withdrawing from the location or evading the perpetrator is perceived as remarkably effective by 64.0% of female students. This underscores the importance of creating physical distance as a means of self-preservation. This finding is consistent with studies emphasizing the empowerment of victims to take control of their environment (Potter, 2017).

On the contrary, using solitary activities like reading to manage feelings of remorse is not widely endorsed, with only 24.6% finding it helpful. This suggests that solitary coping methods may not consistently offer the necessary emotional support or resolution. This finding aligns with existing research that advocates for a diverse range of coping strategies tailored to individual preferences (Brown et al., 2021).

Engaging in verbal confrontation with the perpetrators is viewed as effective by a substantial majority (58.8%) of female students. This underscores the importance of assertiveness in addressing harassment, aligning with recommendations for victim advocacy (Brown & Messman-Moore, 2018).

Sharing the experience with a Pastor or Imam for prayer and counselling is considered highly effective by 68.5% of female students. This finding emphasizes the significant role of faith leaders as sources of comfort and guidance for individuals dealing with trauma. It aligns with existing literature highlighting the importance of seeking counsel and support from trusted religious figures (Leach et al., 2019).

The responses from school authorities reveal key practices in handling sexual harassment cases, including victim counselling, offender punishment, and, in severe cases, involving law enforcement. These practices are consistent with existing studies

and reflect a comprehensive approach to addressing such incidents (Smith & Thompson, 2020).

The findings of this study align with existing literature on coping strategies for dealing with sexual harassment. They accentuate the importance of recognizing individual preferences and beliefs in providing effective support. The practices of school authorities further emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach, involving counselling, punishment, and legal intervention when necessary. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the coping mechanisms employed by female students in the face of sexual harassment, ultimately informing efforts to create safer and more supportive educational environments.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study sought to assess the impact of sexual harassment on academic performance of female students in selected Senior High School in Atebubu/Amantin, Ghana. This chapter presents a summary of the main findings, conclusions and makes informed recommendations relevant for policy makers to limit the effects of sexual harassment on academic performance of female students in Senior High School.

5.2 Summary

Generally, the study sought to examine the effects of sexual harassment on academic performance of female students in selected Senior High School in Atebubu/Amantin, Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to determine the nature of sexual harassment among female students in selected Senior High Schools; examine the causes of sexual harassment; ascertain how female students handle sexual harassment incidence in the school environment; and to assess the impact of harassment on the academic performance of female students in selected Senior High School in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. Furthermore, the study reviewed related literature on sexual harassment and academic performance of students' especially female students in Ghana and other parts of the world.

The study employed a mixed method approach. Quantitative data was collected from 289 female students across 5 senior high schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. The female students were selected using a simple random sampling method across 5 senior high schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. These selected senior high

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schools comprised Amantin Senior High School, Atebubu Senior High School New Konkrompe Senior High School, Vision Obama SHS and Future Leaders Senior High School. On the other hand, the study gathered primary qualitative data from one school counsellor, one assistant headmaster/mistress (domestic), and one housemistress from each selected school in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. Questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the female students in selected senior high school.

The quantitative data was analysed descriptively using SPSS v23. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were therefore used to present the quantitative data. The primary qualitative data on the other hand was analysed thematically using the Atlas qualitative software.

With regards to objective one, that sought to determine the nature of sexual harassment experienced by female students in selected Senior High School in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality. The findings demonstrate that sexual harassment is a concerning issue within these educational institutions. The data highlighted that a significant percentage of female students have encountered different types of sexual harassment. Notably, male students habitually telling sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes was reported by 227(18.3%) of respondents, while 208(72.0%) stated that male students made unwelcome attempts to engage in discussions of personal or sexual matters.

A particularly troubling revelation is that 179(61.9%) of female students involved in the study reported experiencing sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes from male teachers. This unsettling finding points to a potential power imbalance and

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inappropriate behaviour from authority figures. Moreover, 135(46.7%) of female students reported encountering unwanted sexual attention from male teachers, raising concerns about the safety and well-being of students within the school environment.

The data unveiled instances of unwanted physical contact and attempts to engage in sexual activities without consent. Alarming percentages of female students 179(60.9%) and 194(49.8%) of the respondents who were involved in the study indicated they have been in situations where male students and male teachers respectively touched their breast and other sensitive body parts without permission. Equally concerning is that 155(53.6%) and 138(47.8%) of the females involved in the study disclosed that male students and male teachers respectively attempted to engage in unwanted sexual activities with them.

The corroborative interviews with Guidance and Counselling Coordinators and Housemistresses reinforced the quantitative findings. These accounts confirmed the prevalence of sexual harassment and its negative impact on female students. This present study finding aligns with prior studies to underscore the urgency of addressing this issue comprehensively.

In relation to the second research objective which was aimed at examining the causes of sexual harassment among female students in the selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality, The results revealed that a significant majority of respondents 230(79.6%) agreed that inappropriate dressing, lifestyle, and behaviour of female students contribute to sexual harassment. This suggests that there is a perception among students that certain behaviours or appearances of female students may invite harassment.

Another key finding was that a considerable portion of respondents 222(76.8%) agreed that victims of sexual harassment often do not complain. This indicates that many victims choose not to report or vocalize their experiences, which may embolden harassers to continue their inappropriate behaviour without facing consequences.

Moreover, a majority of respondents 212(73.4%) agreed that victims of sexual harassment often end up being blamed. This victim-blaming culture shifts the responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim, perpetuating a cycle of harassment.

The results also highlighted the presence of deeply ingrained gender stereotypes and harmful cultural beliefs. A significant portion of respondents 210(72.7%) agreed that there are macho beliefs suggesting that women perceive sexual harassment as flattery or a compliment. This contributes to a culture where harassment is downplayed or excused, making it more challenging for victims to seek help or report incidents.

Furthermore, a considerable percentage of respondents 201(69.6%) agreed that wrong moral values and socialization of boys contribute to sexual harassment. This indicates the presence of societal norms that perpetuate harmful attitudes towards women. The results showed that there is a significant portion of respondents 200(69.2%) who agreed that girls often invite unwanted behaviour, implying that they may be seen as somehow contributing to the harassment they experience. This highlights a troubling misconception that blames the victims for the actions of others.

The findings suggest that sexual harassment is influenced by a complex interplay of cultural beliefs, societal norms, and victim-blaming attitudes. Addressing these underlying causes is essential in combating sexual harassment and fostering a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. The study's findings align with

previous research and emphasize the need to challenge harmful attitudes and promote a culture of accountability and respect in schools.

On the effects of sexual harassment on female students' academic performance, the study brought to light that sexual harassment significantly affects the attendance of female students in classes. The majority of respondents 232(80.3%) reported agreement with the statement, indicating that they have experienced absenteeism in class due to sexual harassment. This suggests that the harassment they face creates an uncomfortable and unsafe environment, leading to a reluctance or fear to attend classes regularly.

Similarly, a significant proportion of respondents 215(74.4%) agreed that they have experienced a negative effect on their examination marks due to sexual harassment. This high percentage suggests that sexual harassment is linked to poorer performance in examinations, which can have serious consequences for the educational outcomes and future prospects of female students.

The results also indicate that sexual harassment has an impact on lateness to school, with 238(82.4%) of the respondents agreeing that they have experienced lateness in arriving at school due to sexual harassment. This high percentage suggests that sexual harassment incidents can delay students in attending their classes.

Moreover, a significant proportion of the respondents 182(63%) agreed that they have experienced challenges in completing assignments on time or at all due to sexual harassment. This high percentage indicates that sexual harassment negatively affects the ability of female students to complete their academic tasks promptly, leading to potential academic setbacks.

Furthermore, a considerable percentage of respondents 167(57.8%) agreed that they have experienced a negative effect on their class exercise marks due to sexual harassment. This finding suggests that sexual harassment can hinder the learning and progress of female students, impacting their performance in class exercises.

Additionally, the study employed Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression to estimate the impact of sexual harassment on academic performance. The results indicate that sexual harassment victims had significantly lower performance in academics compared to non-victims. This supports the findings from previous studies that sexual harassment negatively impacts students' academic performance.

Furthermore, the study found that age has a significant positive impact on academic performance, suggesting that older students tend to perform better academically. Additionally, students in the Business and Science programmes performed significantly higher than those in the Home Economics programme, while the academic performance of Visual Art students did not significantly differ from Home Economics students.

The findings underscore the detrimental effects of sexual harassment on the academic performance of female students and emphasize the need for effective measures to prevent and address sexual harassment in educational settings. Creating a safe and supportive learning environment is essential to ensure that all students can thrive academically and reach their full potential.

With reference to the fourth research objective which sought to find out how female students in selected Senior High School in Atebubu/Amantin Municipality cope with sexual harassment, majority of the female students (45.3%) reported that they did

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nothing when faced with sexual harassment. This suggests that a significant proportion of the victims choose not to take any action in response to harassment, which may be influenced by fear, stigma, or a lack of confidence in the system's responsiveness.

Another coping strategy reported by a portion of the students (25%) was giving in to the demands of their harassers. This indicates a concerning trend where some victims may feel compelled to submit to the harassment due to various pressures or perceived consequences of resistance.

A small percentage of the respondents (4.8%) indicated that they gave a warning to their harassers. This can be seen as an attempt to assert boundaries and communicate their discomfort with the behaviour.

Furthermore, some female students reported that they chose to report the incidents of sexual harassment. About 13.5% reported to school authorities, 6.2% reported to parents/guardians, and 21.5% reported to their friends. Reporting to school authorities suggests an attempt to seek institutional intervention and support, while reporting to parents or friends may be a way to confide in someone they trust.

The responses from school authorities on how they handle sexual harassment cases indicated key approaches. They emphasized counselling the victims to help them cope with the emotional and psychological stress associated with the incident. Punishing the offenders was also highlighted, either through school-based measures or involving law enforcement if the offense is severe.

The results demonstrate that female students employ a range of coping strategies when faced with sexual harassment, and the school authorities play a significant role in addressing such incidents. The findings emphasize the need for creating a safe and supportive environment where victims feel empowered to report incidents and where offenders are held accountable for their actions. Education and awareness programs on sexual harassment and the importance of reporting can also be implemented to foster a culture of respect and prevention within the school community.

5.3 Conclusions

The study sought to examine the effects of sexual harassment on academic performance of female students in selected senior high schools in Atebubu/Amantin, Ghana. Based on the key findings from the study, the following conclusions were made:

Female students in senior high schools experience some forms of sexual harassment perpetuated by both male teachers and male students. Nonetheless, female students generally experience higher levels of sexual harassment by their male peers in school relative to male teachers. Male students often tell female students sexual suggestive stories or offensive jokes, often give unwanted sexual attention to female students and make attempt to establish romantic sexual relationship with female students among others; however, male teachers rarely engage female students in these sexual engagements.

The causes of sexual harassment among female students include; inappropriate dressing, lifestyle and behaviour of female students; girls failure to complain when harassed, continuous blame of sexually harassed victims, "macho" beliefs that women

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take their harassment as a compliment, wrong moral values/ socialization of boys and unwanted behaviour exhibited by girls.

Sexual harassment has varied negative impact on the academic performance of female students Senior High Schools. Sexual harassment leads to students' absenteeism in class, lateness to school by students, scoring lower marks in examinations than expected. Also, sexual harassment causes students to score lower marks in class exercises than expected and also causes students failure to complete assignment on time or at all.

Reporting incidents of sexual harassment to school authorities emerges as a proactive and effective strategy adopted by female students handle sexual harassment. The strategy of withdrawing from the location or evading the perpetrator is also perceived as remarkably effective of female students in escaping from sexual harassment advances from their counterparts and male teachers. This underscores the importance of creating physical distance as a means of self-preservation.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that major educational stakeholders such as the Ghana Education Service, Ministry of Education, National Commission for Civic Education and Government should make effort in eliminating sexual harassment at all levels of education. These major educational stakeholders should provide education and sensitization programmes to the public on sexual harassment and the challenges it poses to victims, educational institutions and the society at large and how to address it

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The study recommends the need for educational institutions in collaboration with Ghana Education Service, the Government and the Ministry of Education to put in place appropriate support systems, for example guidance and counselling programmes as well as therapeutic and curative services to help students with their self-esteem and confidence after being exposed to sexual harassment and its adverse effects. Moreover, through guidance and counselling programmes, victims of sexual harassment should be encouraged to speak out publicly in order to dissuade students and others from distributing sexually explicit content, hence reducing sexual harassment, especially among female students in schools.

Furthermore, the study recommends that the key educational stakeholders should come out with policies that would enforce strict application and adherence of the requirements of the Sexual Offenses Act, as well as other sexual harassment regulations created by the Ministry of Education from time to time, in order to reduce sexual harassment and its impact on female students' academic performance in Ghana. Sanctions should be meted out to culprits of sexual harassment in the form of dismissal, suspension and fines among others, and in extreme cases revocation of teacher license. Also, the stakeholders should ensure that male students and male teachers found culpable are dealt with according to the law. Hence, this will serve as a deterrent to other male students and male teachers and therefore provide sanity in school which will subsequently impact positively on the academic performance of students, especially female in all levels of the education.

Lastly, the study recommends the important role of parents in empowering their children by teaching them about sexual safety issues at home and in school. This important function of parents to be rendered to children should not be confined to

teaching, but should also include advising and offering definitive guidance on how to conduct respectful relationships within and between genders that are free of harassment. This will help children or students to be cautious with their relationship with other people especially their male peers and male teachers, and hence reduce or eradicate incidence of sexually harassment among female students in all levels of education.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

A major challenged faced during the study was field data collection. A number of the respondents did not complete the questionnaire given due to respondent fatigue as the items were many (41 items). This was remedied by disqualifying such questionnaire during the data analysis so as to protect the integrity of the work. Getting opportunity to access students was a challenge as teachers were unwilling to forfeit their lessons for the questionnaire to be administered. I had to visit several times until they were ready for me to meet the students. The delay in seeking informed consent and permission from the Municipal Director of Education due to busy schedules was a constraint. I had to visit the Atebubu Amantin Municipal District Education office at his convenience before I got the permission to administer the questionnaire in schools.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

Further studies should be conducted on sexual harassment perpetuated by female teachers on female students and among female students themselves. Also, an investigation needs to be carried out on the cases of sexual perpetrated by female students against male students and male teachers within the Municipality and beyond.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FEMALE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SURVEY RESEARCH TOPIC: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ITS EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FEMALE STUDENTS IN SELECTED SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS (SHS) IN ATEBUBU/ AMANTIN MUNICIPALITY

Introduction:

This questionnaire seeks to assess the effects **sexual harassment on the academic performance of female students in selected senior high schools in Atebubu/Amantin municipality. T**his questionnaire is strictly for academic purposes. Any information given will be treated as confidential. In filling out this questionnaire, kindly read each item first and make sure you understand it. Indicate in one of the boxes a tick [√] to show how relevant the item applies to you. Please complete all questions and be candid with your response.
Informed Consent:

[This section must be completed by the household head before the interview commences].

After listening to/reading the introduction, I agree to participate in the study.

Date………………………… Signature………………

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age of the respondents

   Below 16 years ☐

   16-18 years ☐

   19-21 years ☐

   22-24 years ☐

2. Programme of study of the respondents

   General Arts ☐

   Business ☐

   Visual Art ☐

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Home Economics ☐

Science ☐

3. Are you a boarding student or a day student?

Yes ☐

No ☐

SECTION B: NATURE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT EXPERIENCED BY FEMALE STUDENTS

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding the causes of sexual harassment. Please tick the appropriate alternative applicable to you. Strongly Agree=5, Agree= 4, Neutral= 3, Disagree=2, and Strongly Disagree= 1.

Nature of Sexual Harassment Perpetuated by Male students on Female Students						
S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
4.	I have been in a situation where a male student habitually told sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes.					
5.	I have been in a situation where a male student made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal or sexual matters.					
6.	I have been in a situation where a male student made crude and offensive sexual remarks, either publicly or privately.					
7.	I have been in a situation where a male student was giving me unwanted sexual attention.					
8.	I have encountered a situation where a male teacher displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials.					
9.	Male student frequently make unwanted sexist remarks.					
10.	I have been in a situation where a male student attempted to establish unwanted romantic sexual relationship with me.					
11.	I have experienced a situation where a male student touched my breast or any sensitive parts					
12.	I have experienced a situation where a male student attempted to have unwanted sex with me.					
13. 1	I have ever experienced a situation where a male student treated me badly for refusing to have sex with him.					

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S/N	Nature of Sexual Harassment Perpetuated by Male Teachers on Female Students					
	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
14.	I have been in a situation where a male teacher habitually told sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes.					
15.	I have been in a situation where a male teacher made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal or sexual matters.					
16.	I have been in a situation where a male teacher made crude and offensive sexual remarks, either publicly or privately.					
17.	I have you ever been in a situation where a male teacher was giving me unwanted sexual attention.					
18.	I have encountered a situation where a male teacher displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials.					
19.	Male teacher frequently make unwanted sexist remarks.					
20.	I have been in a situation where a male teacher attempted to establish unwanted romantic sexual relationship with me.					
21.	I have experienced a situation where a male teacher touched my breast or any sensitive parts.					
22.	I have experienced a situation where a male teacher attempted to have unwanted sex with me.					
23.	I have ever experienced a situation where a male teacher treated me badly for refusing to have sex with him.					

SECTION C: CAUSES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS

Please tick the appropriate alternative applicable to you. Strongly Agree=5, Agree= 4, Neutral= 3, Disagree=2, and Strongly Disagree= 1.

S/N	CAUSES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS					
	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
24.	Displaying sense of power					
25.	Pleasure / amusement					
26.	Wrong moral values/socialization of boys					
27.	Emotional distress/distorted mentality					
28.	"Macho" beliefs that women take their harassment as a compliment					
29.	Women have been socialized to suffer in silence					

30.	Women often do not complain which encourage harasser					
31.	Generally victims end up being blamed, which encourages harassment					
32.	Girls often invite the unwanted behaviour					
33. 1	Inappropriate dressing, lifestyle and behaviour of girls					

SECTION D: EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements that measure the effects of sexual harassment on academic performance.

S/n	EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT					
	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
34. 1	Sexual harassment leads to lateness to school					
35.	Sexual harassment can lead to absenteeism in class					
36.	Sexual harassment results in assignments not being done on time or at all.					
37.	Sexual harassment leads to scoring lower marks in class exercises than expected.					
38.	Sexual harassment results in scoring lower marks in examinations than expected.					

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SECTION E: COPING STRATEGIES FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following coping strategies that female students may adopt to handle sexual harassment issues. Please tick the appropriate alternative applicable to you. Strongly Agree=5, Agree= 4, Neutral= 3, Disagree=2, and Strongly Disagree= 1.

S/N	COPING STRATEGIES FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT					
	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
39.	I seek spiritual support, such as praying with a Pastor/Imam, is an effective coping strategy for dealing with sexual harassment.					
40.	I report incidents of sexual harassment to school authorities is a proactive way to address the issue.					
41.	I engage in religious activities at a place of worship to cope with the emotional impact of harassment is beneficial.					
42.	I withdraw from the place or avoiding the perpetrator is an effective coping strategy to deal with sexual harassment.					
43.	I use activities like reading a journal or book to help manage feelings of remorse caused by harassment is a helpful coping method.					
44.	Engaging in verbal confrontation with the perpetrators is an effective way to cope with sexual harassment issues.					
45.	I share the experience with Pastor/Imam for prayer/counselling.					

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING COORDINATORS AND HOUSEMISTRESSES

RESEARCH TOPIC: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ITS EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FEMALE STUDENTS IN SELECTED SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS (SHS) IN ATEBUBU/ AMANTIN MUNICIPALITY

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to gather views and experiences related to sexual harassment among female students in your school. Your responses will contribute to a deeper understanding of this issue. Please, feel free to share your thoughts candidly and openly. Remember that your participation is entirely voluntary, and your responses will be kept confidential.

[This section must be completed by interviewee head before the interview commences].

After listening to/reading the introduction, I agree to participate in the study.

SECTION A: PROFILE PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY

1. What is your position?
2. What is your professional qualification?
3. How many years have you taught?

SECTION B: NATURE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT EXPERIENCED BY FEMALE STUDENTS

4. Can you briefly describe your role or position within the school?
5. How long have you been in your current position, and what motivated you to take up this role?
6. Based on your observations and interactions, do you think experiences of sexual harassment among female students' differ?
7. In your view, what factors contribute to these varying experiences of sexual harassment?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experiences with sexual harassment among female students in your school?

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SECTION C: CAUSES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS

9. .In your view, what are the causes of sexual harassment among female students?
10. How might the culture of silence impact the prevalence of sexual harassment in schools?
11. How do you perceive the relationship between dress choices and sexual harassment? Are there any cultural or societal factors that influence these perceptions?

SECTION D: EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

12. In your opinion, how does sexual harassment affect your psychological wellbeing?
13. In what ways does the persistent incidence of sexual harassment affect your academic performance?
14. Which of these effects is most rampant?
15. Are there any underlying reasons to that? Why?

SECTION E: COPING STRATEGIES FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

16. When a case of sexual harassment is reported, how does your school generally respond?
17. Based on your experience, what measure do female students put in place to prevent being sexually harassed.
18. Could you elaborate on the counseling provided to victims to help them avoid risky situations in the future?
19. How can schools empower female students to be proactive in preventing incidents of sexual harassment?
20. How does your school foster an environment where victims feel comfortable reporting incidents of sexual harassment?
21. What measures are taken to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of victims during the reporting and handling process?
22. Is there anything you would like to share regarding the strategies your school employs to handle sexual harassment incidents? Share on your views on that.

Thank you for participating.

18th March, 2024

Mr. Bayinima Abdul-Karim Kpajaah
C/o Department of Social Studies Education
University of Education, Winneba
Winneba

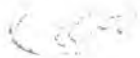Dear Mr. Kpajaah,

ORAL EXAMINATION: M. PHIL THESIS

Following the successful defence of your thesis on 18th March, 2024, we write to inform you that the Board of Examiners recommended the award of M.Phil degree in Social Studies.

However, the panel of examiners requests that you make the following corrections in your thesis to the satisfaction of your Internal Assessor:

- Properly conceptualize 'sexual harassment' in the study using the GES criteria.
- Delete all the hasty conclusions in thesis.
- Redo the entire analysis of the quantitative data in the entire work.
- Ensure that the data in the work give analysis of the effects on academic performance as indicated in the topic.
- Ensure that the over 95 in-text citations in the work which are not referenced in the reference list, are accordingly referenced and vice-versa.
- Correct the few grammatical, syntactical and typographical errors in the entire work.
- *Take note of other comments in the project reports and thesis submitted by the assessors that were not captured in this letter for redress.*

You are to submit the work within three (3) months with effect from 18th March, 2024.
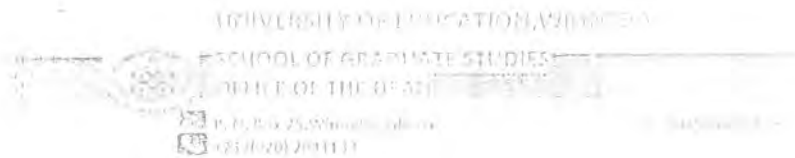
Yours sincerely,

Nana Nsadu Appiah
Secretary/ Faculty Officer

Cc: Head, Department of Social Studies Education

(UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION,WINNEBA
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT REPORT/DISSERTATION/THESIS

SECTION I (to be filled by the Head of Department)

A. NAME OF CANDIDATE

Surname: .... Kpajaah...

Other Names: ...... Bayinima Abdul-Karim ....

B. Index Number:...202137292...

C: Faculty: ...Faculty of Social Sciences Education............................

D. Department: ...Department of Social Studies Education...........................

E. Degree sought: (select as appropriate)

Ph.D ☐   M.Phil ☑   M.A ☐   M.Ed ☐

F. Title of Thesis/Dissertation/Project Work

Sexual Harassment and its effects on Academic Performance of Female Students in Selected Senior High Schools, Atebubu/ Amantin Municipal.....................................

SECTION B (to be filed by the Examiner)

You are kindly requested to assess the Thesis/Dissertation/Project Work according to the subtitles provided below. Kindly give brief comments in the spaces provided. (you may use separate sheets of paper if necessary).

PART 1
ABSTRACT (Max Score 5)

Is it an adequate statement of the substances of the thesis?   YES/NO

The abstract is generally good and touched on the relevant sections needed for an abstract. However improve it as follows: the Main problem investigated; the Main objective; the Methodology; the Main Findings; and Recommendations.

PART 2

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM (Max Score 5)

i.   Clearly Stated?   YES/NO

ii.   Adequately Stated?   YES/NO

understanding of the research being conducted.

PART 3

REVIEW OF BACKGROUND LITERATURE (Max Score 15)

Is the literature reviewed as background to the subject of the thesis?

i.	Relevant?	YES/NO
ii.	Comprehensive?	YES/NO
iii.	Gaps in literature?	YES/NO

A good theoretical and empirical literature search has been done. Important background information needed for understanding effects of family background on the academic performance has been provided.

There is a conceptual framework built from other research works with due acknowledgement noted. The candidate should look at other frameworks, indicate why they are not appropriate and hence the need to develop one. Some gaps in existing literature were identified.

PART 4

Hypothesis/Research Questions (Max Score 10)

i.	Do they drive from the literature reviewed?	YES/NO
ii.	Are they relevant to the subject matter of thesis?	YES/NO
iii.	Are they adequate	YES/NO

The research questions are clearly stated and relevant to the subject matter of the thesis. The research questions are adequate for the thesis.

PART 5

DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH/DATA COLLECTION METHODS (Max Score 20)

i.	Is the method of data collection justified?	YES/NO
ii.	Is the data collected adequate?	YES/NO
iii.	Is the data collected relevant to the problem investigated?	YES/NO
iv.	Is the data collected relevant to the hypothesis/research questions?	YES/NO

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The candidate presented the methodology used in the study describing the study area, study design target population, data sources, sampling procedures, data collection and the data analysis. Largely, the methods under this are is very clearly presented.

PART 6
ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION (Max Score 20)

i.   Is the experimental/research procedure adequately described?   YES/NO

ii. Are the analytical techniques/ arguments used appropriately valid?   YES/NO

iii. Is the discussion of the results or analysis............................?   YES/NO

        a. Adequate?   YES/NO
        b. Logical?   YES/NO
        c. Objective?   YES/NO

Good analysis and presentation of results have been presented. The candidate did a good work on the discussions of the findings. However, a lot of implications were missing in the text.

PART 7
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Max Score 10)

Are the conclusions/inferences drawn from the analysis?

    a. Logical/justifiable?   YES/NO
    b. Adequate in terms of the problem investigated?   YES/NO
    c. Objective in terms of the facts available?   YES/NO

Are recommendations made.......................................

    a. Justifiable?   YES/NO
    b. Substantial?   YES/NO
    c. Adequate?   YES/NO

Generally, the findings have been well presented by the candidate in line with the research objectives set. Sound conclusions have been drawn from the findings of the study. The recommendations given are based on the findings of the research work and equally sound. They are in agreement with the major objectives of the study. The candidates should however, direct the recommendations to specific stakeholders who are responsible for taking the necessary actions.

PART 8

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE (Max Score 5)

Do the findings ....?

    a. Correct existing information?   YES/NO

    b. Strengthen/confirm existing information through the use of new arguments? YES/NO

    c. Present a new theory?   YES/NO

PART 9
STYLE/PRESENTATION (Max Score 10)

i.   Is the language precise?   YES/NO

ii.   Is the language verbose?   YES/NO

iii.   Is the language clear and readily understood?   YES/NO

iv.   Are there many serious typographical errors that need to be corrected?   YES/NO

In terms of format, standard of presentation, citation, and referencing, sectioning, typing and grammar is good, However, there are errors, queries and inconsistencies as shown in the text.

Are all the illustrative materials (Sketches, diagrams, graphs, maps, photographs, tables, etc.)

    a. Relevant?   YES/NO
    b. Properly captioned?   YES/NO
    c. Error-free?   YES/NO
    d. Properly placed in the text of the thesis?   YES/NO
    e. Properly listed?   YES/NO

PART 10
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES (Max Score 10)

Are they..

i.   Adequate?   YES/NO

ii.   Properly set up?   YES/NO

iii.   Properly used in the text of the thesis?   YES/NO

iv.   Are all works in text cited in the references?   YES/NO

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SEXUAL HARRASSMENT AND ITS EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
FEMALE STUDENTS IN SELECTED SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, ATEBUBU/
AMANTIN MUNICIPALITY

NO	AREAS OF ASSESSMENT	APPROPRIATE/ RELEVANT COMMENTS
1	Problem Specification/Research Objectives/Questions/Hypothesis	Background to the study is well written, problem statement, research questions and objectives as are well formulated, including the significance of the study have been presented;
2	Knowledge of Relevant Literature, Theoretical/Conceptual Framework	The literature covered both conceptual and theoretical perspectives as well as empirical;
3	Design of Research/Data Collection Methods/ whichever is applicable	The candidate presented the methodology used in the study by describing the study area, study design, target population, data sources, sampling procedures, data collection and field data analysis. Largely, the methods under this chapter were logically presented;
4	Problem Solving/Logical Reasoning/Data Analysis (whichever is applicable)	The study is a useful one that sought to examined the effects of sexual harassment on the academic performance of female students in selected Senior High Schools in Atebubu/ Amantin, Ghana;
5	Major Findings and Soundness of Discussion	Generally, the findings have been very well thought through using specific objectives set out by the candidate. The flow and the soundness of the discussions suggests that the candidate has a good background knowledge of the topic that was researched upon;
6	Conclusion and Recommendations	The conclusions have been logically derived from the key findings obtained by the candidate after analysing the field data. The accompanying recommendations are equally sound, action-driven, practical and well thought through; and
7	Quality of Presentation (Appropriate and Grammatical use of Language, layout, Referencing etc.)	Largely, the candidate spent time to edit the report and therefore the entire work is fairly devoid of mistakes, except in few places that would have to be corrected in the text. The language as well as the overall quality of the output (the thesis) deserves commendation. Some of the sources in the text are also not in the reference list.

DETAILED AND INFORMED ASSESSMENT:

1. General comments on:
   - Candidate's demonstration of the relevance of the topic and its significance or value to national development

Generally, the candidate demonstrated the need to research into that particular topic. The statement of the problem was clearly stated as well as the research questions and its relevance to national development

   - Candidates knowledge of pertinent literature and how appropriately it is reviewed for the study

The candidate demonstrated this by reviewing literature on empirical and theoretical framework. The literature review was largely related to the thesis.

   - Appropriateness of data acquisition, validity of data, depth and soundness of analysis

The methods used to generate the data was on point. However, the depth of analysis was a bit scanty.

   - Candidate's main findings, novelty and soundness of recommendations

The conclusions were generated from the main findings and the accompanied recommendations are somewhat action driven and practical

   - Presentation, ie. Format, standard of presentation, citation and referencing, sectioning, typing, grammar etc.

The entire work was well presented and was largely devoid of mistakes. Almost all the references were cited.

2. Specific comments on:

   A. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
   The statement of the problem was clearly stated as well as research questions and objectives.

   B. CHAPTER TWO: - REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
   The candidate demonstrated evidence of scholarly analysis but did not work much on critiquing research relevant to the work. The student has excellent knowledge of pertinent literature. Despite the extensive review of relevant literature, the conceptualization of the topic in terms of the phenomenon being studied is weak. Also, drawing of differences and similarities between the thesis and previous investigations was not that clear.

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Banjivima Abdul-Rashid Kpawih

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