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PREVALENCE AND PATTERNS OF SEXUAL COERCION OF FEMALE STUDENTS AND PRE-MARITAL OUTCOMES: AN ASSESSMENT OF TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA.

**Samuel Tyover IORKOSU^{1*}, Terfa C. CHIA², Aondover Bonaventure CHIA³, Grace Erdoo ATEATA⁴,
Nicholas Gbaden IORKYAA⁵**

¹ Federal University of Lafia, Lafia, Nasarawa State – Nigeria.

² Odaji Agbo Polytechnic, Ayeko-Yala, Cross-River State – Nigeria.

³ Centre for African Studies University of Leeds, United Kingdom

⁴ Fidei Polytechnic, Gboko, Benue State – Nigeria.

⁵ Department of Political Science, Benue State University, Makurdi – Nigeria

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***Corresponding author:** Samuel Tyover IORKOSU

Federal University of Lafia, Lafia, Nasarawa State – Nigeria.

Abstract

Sexual threat rests on the continuum of sexually aggressive behavior. This continuum includes many hazardous as well as hostile acts we listen to regularly, such as rape as well as sexual harassment. Rape is one of the most extreme kinds of non-consensual sex. This work is an investigation into coercive sexual activities on female students and premarital sexual outcomes in tertiary institutions of learning in Benue State. The study seeks to determine the prevalence and explore patterns of sexual coercion on female students. The sample for the study comprises 385 female students who were randomly selected across three higher educational institutions in the state. Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires titled 'Sexual Coercion Questionnaire, which will be administered to the 504 female students. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools; percent, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and partial correlation was used to analyze quantitative data and test relationship among variables. The result reveals that different kinds of sex-related threats takes place amongst female students of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria. The study also reveals that sexual coercion is relatively high in the study area. The research discovers that the age of students does not dramatically influence the experience of sexual coercion among female students of higher institutions. Based on the findings, it is therefore, recommended that female students of higher institutions that encounter sexual coercion or inducements due to their

physical features as well as actions that are peculiar to this, should be cautious in handling the opposite sex. Higher institutions' female students (married as well as unmarried) must desist from harmonious mindsets that might predispose them to sexual coercion. Counselors in tertiary institutions should arrange workshops on women's health and wellness to argue for reliable protection in Nigeria's higher institutions to curb sexually coercive practices. Provision of the hostel of well-safeguarded accommodation for higher institution female students will help in curtailing the menace. Also, institutions should design efficient programs on sexually acceptable practices that would certainly improve a change of behaviour among higher institution female students and the perpetrators of this act.

Keywords: Sexual coercion; Rape; Sexual harassment, female students, higher institution

Introduction

Copulation as a consummate level of romantic intimacy is traditionally an affair for married couples (Ajiki, 2016). Throughout known history and across global cultures and religions, commitment to sexual intercourse between persons who are not formally married is either frowned at, socially disapproved, or outrightly forbidden (Hornor, 2002). Sexual involvement is only sanctioned as a moral cum religious right for couples who are expected to procreate and propagate the human species (Duze & Muhammed, 2006). This means that any sexual activity outside the institution of marriage is a form of deviance and thus, socially unacceptable.

Sex is one of the cardinal needs of humankind, the others being food and security (Idyorough, 2008). It is of profound demographic importance because it is a precursor to human fertility, and could be a source of morbidity and mortality. Everybody is a product of sex. The commonality, regularity, and intensity of penetrative heterosexual activities fundamentally influence natural population change (Ode, 2006). Besides, sex as a social activity cements marital relationships thereby, providing legitimate contexts for the birth of children (Ajiki, 2016). Regarding morbidity and mortality, sex is responsible for the emergence and transmission of dreaded diseases (including HIV/AIDS) that have devastated human populations (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001; Ogundiran & Nyamuriakunge, 2005). The tempo of human sexual involvement inevitably corresponds to the tempo of pregnancies, births, abortions, sexually transmitted infections, and infirmities/deaths arising from such infections especially where sexual conduct is not properly planned (Chandra-Mouli & Braet, 2014). Thus, the conduct of coital activities *ceteris paribus* impinges directly on the very existence and perpetuation of humanity itself. In a word, sex creates populations, sex sickens and consequently weakens populations, and sex destroys populations. This makes human sexuality a very central demographic event.

By its nature and role in the affairs of humanity, sex as an activity deserves solemn treatment. Such solemnity consists of its conduct being highly regulated, consensual, and cooperative. However, available data highlights huge evidence of sexual abuse. This is believed to emanate from the sexual revolution of the 1960s that originated in Western societies i.e. Europe and America, but which has spread globally and penetrated Africa (Hornor, 2002). Consequently, upon the revolution, sex has become commonized, liberalized, commoditized, and commercialized, and all forms of sexual behaviors such as nudity, kissing, hugging, homosexuality, heterosexuality, and premarital sex are being freely practiced (Eze, 2014). Also arising from the revolution, is the 'sex for pleasure' concept where young persons engage in intercourse without express intent for procreation and with little or no emotional

attachment (Aver & Ilim, 2014). These are a very disturbing phenomenon given that, such an upsurge in extramarital sexual activities predisposes young persons to varied forms of negative sexual outcomes. However, of concern that is more serious is the increasing incidences of sexual activities that are achieved at the detriment of the female and without her express acceptance. These constitute sexual coercion and are fast gaining roots in Nigerian society generally and educational institutions in particular (Lasisi, 2014). Girls typically consent to extramarital sexual intercourse as a way of displaying supreme love, achieving utmost intimacy, and solidifying relationships (Hornor, 2002). Where such willing and negotiated sex occurs, there are often precautionary measures to forestall all possible negative outcomes. However, research indicates that several sexual activities involving young unmarried girls are unplanned and are often directly or indirectly coerced (Wang, Li, Stanton, Kamali, Naar-king, Shah, & Thomas, 2007; Lasisi, 2014).

Coercive sexual phenomena are not only very common but are also actually growing in prevalence across the globe. A study of 4,500 adolescent girls from five European countries of Norway, Italy, Bulgaria, Cyprus, and England between 2013-2015 by a team of researchers from the Universities of Bristol and Central Lancashire found that more than four in ten teenage schoolgirls have experienced sexual coercion; many pressured to have sex or other sexual activity, while some brazenly raped (Atkinson, 2015). Further studies focusing on the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Finland revealed that 60-79 percent of girls said they were sexually harassed (Matharu, 2016). The study, which was conducted by the European Agency for Fundamental Rights and cited by the source, also revealed that Sweden and Denmark have the highest rates of sexual coercion events in Europe with more than 80 percent of young women reporting such incidences. In Britain particularly, Macdowell (2013) described coercive sexual events against young women as rife and 'normalized'.

Equally high levels of forced female sexual activities have been reported in the United States of America (Rabin, 2011). Results from a study funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and quoted by the above source showed that one in ten teens were coerced or had coerced another person into some form of sexual activity. Furthermore, Kempner (2013) reported that one-third of American young women have suffered sexual coercion. This translates to some 1.3 million young women who fall victim to sexual coercion annually. Earlier, Kalof (2000) had decried that sexual coercion was becoming an overly pervasive problem on American college campuses. Using data from a panel study of 54 college women, the source found that 35 percent of the respondents had experienced unwanted sexual intercourse through coercion.

On the continent of Africa, Andersson, Paredes-Solis, Milne, Omer, Marokoane, Laetsang, and Cockroft (2012) conducted elaborate studies of forced sexual activities among male and female students in ten selected countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) in 2003 and 2007. The researchers found that sexual coercion was very common among schoolchildren in the 10 countries, affecting one in every five children aged 11-16 years of both sexes. It was also found that the occurrence increased with age so that by 16 years, a quarter of male students and a higher proportion of female students had experienced coerced sex. According to the source, there was little evidence of a reduction in rates of forced sex between 2003 and 2007; the small reduction among female students was not significant in any country and the pattern among male students was inconsistent, with decreases in some countries but increases in others. By 2007, weighted for country population, an average of 4.7 percent of female students reported perpetrated forced sex.

In addition, Moore, Awusabo-Asare, Madise, John-Langba, and Kumi-Kyereme (2007) demonstrated that coercive sexual scenarios play out profoundly in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, especially among girls having debut sexual experiences. Using nationally representative surveys from 12-19-year-old girls in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda, the researchers examined the prevalence of sexual coercion at sexual debut among unmarried girls. In Malawi, 38 percent of the girls said that they were “not willing at all” at their first sexual encounter followed by Ghana at 30 percent, Uganda at 23 percent, and Burkina Faso at 15 percent. In Uganda, Koenig, Zablotska, Lutalo, Nalugoda, Wagman, and Gray (2004) in a study of 575 sexually experienced 15-19-year-old adolescents found that fourteen percent of the respondents had been sexually coerced. It was also found that very few of these encounters were protected with any modern contraceptive device. The source concluded that coerced first sex is an important social and public health problem that has potentially serious repercussions for young women’s health and wellbeing. In Ethiopia, northeast Africa, Benti, and Teferi (2015) reported a 28.7 percent sexual coercion rate among female students. Generating data from a sample of 564 female students drawn from nine technical, vocational, and educational training colleges in Nekemte town, the source revealed that only 9.5 percent of the sexually experienced unmarried respondents initiated sex through voluntary negotiation.

Nearer home, sexual coercion has been identified as the most common form of violence against women in Nigeria (Amin, 2015). It is alleged that the phenomenon is ubiquitous enough to be touched and felt in our streets, in the neighborhood, at home, and very importantly, in institutions of learning. It is also very rampant in workplaces and another public arena. Nyitse (2015) also identified sexual coercion as a dangerous form of violence against women in Tiv land. The source quotes a recent survey by Project Alert as putting the sexual coercion prevalence rate at some 18.7 percent in the area. Elsewhere, Idyorough (2016) in a study of sexual practices among selected couples in Jos, Plateau State found that 38.1 percent of respondents declared they have suffered sexual coercion in the hands of their husbands and other men. Of the respondents who opened up to the source, only 17.2 percent stated they have never been sexually coerced. In their study, Odu and Olusegun (2012) found a rife incidence of sexual coercion among university female students in southwest Nigeria. Using a sample of 1,200 sexually coerced female students from nine selected

universities, the researchers discovered that different forms of sexual coercion occurred among university female students and the level of occurrence was high.

Sexual coercion exposes girls to adverse consequences of unprotected sex, some of which may haunt them for the rest of their lives. Such coerced sexual activities often involve adult males and adolescent girls (Lasisi, 2014). The imbalance in age and very often in power relations between the mating partners usually entails that the adolescent girl succumbs passively to the sexual whims of the more vintage man. Though all of the premarital sex is never entirely consequence-free, coerced premarital sexual intercourse heightens the vulnerability of adolescent girls to premarital sexual outcomes (Takele & Sategn, 2014). Such outcomes often transcend the somatic and impinge profoundly on the girl’s personality and mien in her adult life (American Academy of Paediatrics, 2013).

Unfortunately, scholarly investigations into coercive sexual activities and their impacts on female students in tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria generally and Benue State in particular are lacking. This has resulted in lack of a coordinated policy framework aimed at protecting the adolescent girls in these institutions against such escapades. The current study is thus, not only timely but also indeed urgent.

Statement of the Research Problem

Studies on human sexuality highlight huge evidence of high and increasing coercive premarital sexual activities globally (Matharu, 2016). In the developed world, strong legal systems and well-coordinated sex education programs have worked to effectively offer sexual protection to young girls (Lasisi, 2014). In such advanced societies, there is sufficient reportage of sexual coercion (both within and outside marriages) to appropriate regulatory authorities, leading to the apprehension, trial, and conviction of culprits. In this way, the sexual rights of all persons, particularly females are reasonably observed and enforced. There is also reasonable information on incidences of breaches of such rights. Unfortunately, in developing countries, like Nigeria, forced sexual activities on females are either underreported, wrongly reported, or never reported (Takele & Sategn, 2014; Adinew & Hagos, 2017). Consequently, the prevalence of such activities in many countries remains largely unknown. In Nigeria for instance, few related studies such as those conducted by Ntoimo (2011), Nyitse (2015), and Amin (2015) either simply attempted comparative analyses of sexual activities between adolescent boys and girls or focused on sexual violence within married contexts. Amin (2015) in particular concentrated on forced sexual activities as a form of domestic violence against married women in the hands of their husbands. None of these studies provided succinct data on sexual coercion in higher educational institutions. Lack of adequate and accurate knowledge on the prevalence rate and magnitude of coercive sexual activities leaves the problem largely unappreciated by relevant authorities. This has resulted in absence of a coordinated legal and policy framework towards curtailing the menace, especially among female students.

In addition and following from the above, there is a lack of accurate data on the category of people that coerce female students into sexual activities in tertiary educational institutions, especially in Benue State. Several related studies elsewhere have focused on problems of sexual harassment and rape on campuses of higher educational institutions (Odu & Olusegun, 2012; Takele & Sategn, 2014; Benti & Teferi, 2015). These scholars hold a unanimous

opinion that sexual coercion is common at all levels of the educational system. They, however, failed to identify perpetrators of sexual coercion on female students. Odu and Olusegun's (2012) study of Universities in Southwest Nigeria simply resulted in the conclusion that female students were sexually coerced by 'different categories of people in the university community. The source did not, however, revealed these categories of people. Lack of accurate and reliable knowledge on perpetrators of this heinous act makes them escape justice while the victims of such escapades suffer in silence. Such a knowledge gap also makes it extremely difficult to checkmate the menace.

Further, sexual coercion of female students in tertiary educational institutions is difficult to curtail due to a lack of sufficient information on the patterns of such coercion. Humper (2008) stated that perpetrators of sexual coercion employ force and deception to achieve their scams. Odu and Olusegun (2012) whose study focused on undergraduate students found such strategies as use of threat, violence, intimidation, deception, alcohol, drugs, and other forms of pressure or force as being employed to coerce female students into sex. While some of these strategies may hold in the study area, many may not. Being a largely unreported offense, no data are available to reveal the patterns of sexual coercion or methods commonly adopted by people who coerce female students into sexual acts. The current study determines strategies sexually employed against female students in Benue State educational tertiary institutions.

In addition, there is a lack of data on the category of female students that are most vulnerable to coerced sexual activities. Victims of sexual coercion, typically need counseling to be properly readjusted, socially and psychologically (Odu & Olusegun, 2012). Where such victims or those likely to be victims are not known, this intervention cannot be made and the problem continues. Unfortunately, few or no studies have addressed this critical area.

In sum, premarital sexual activity among young people has been heavily researched. Scholars have devoted substantial attention to studies of out-of-marriage sexual behaviors of both adolescents and adults as well as in-school and out-of-school persons (Wang, Li, Stanton, Kamali, Naar-king, Shah, & Thomas, 2007; Eze, 2014; Adogu, Udigwe, Udigwe, Nwabueze & Onwasigwe, 2014). Researchers have also investigated sexual coercion among both adolescents and couples globally (Rabin, 2011; Benti & Teferi, 2015; Matharu, 2016). Nonetheless, sexual coercion among female students in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria generally and Benue State, in particular, has been grossly under-researched. Consequently, its gravity and impact are unappreciated, thus making policy intervention unrealistic. This necessitates the study, especially into aspects of coerced sex that have never been convincingly addressed.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a mixed method. The term "mixed methods" refers to an emergent methodology of research that advances the systematic integration, or "mixing," of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained program of inquiry. The basic premise of this methodology is that such integration permits a more complete and synergistic utilization of data than do separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013).

The Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises all unmarried female students who are currently studying in regular programs of Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State Polytechnic Ugbokolo, and College of Education Katsina-Ala, all in Benue State. For the Benue State University, it shall include female students in remedial/pre-degree and full-time undergraduate programs. By this definition, female students in Continuing Education, Sandwich, or Postgraduate programs are excluded from the study population. The exclusion is necessary because, most students who enroll in such programs are adults, (often married), live with family members, and are not likely to be molested sexually. In the case of Benue State Polytechnic, the population shall comprise female students in diploma, ND, and HND programs but not those on weekend programs or those studying on a part-time basis. Regarding the College of Education, the study population shall comprise female students for regular pre-NCE and NCE programs and not those for part-time or degree programs. The current female students' enrolment at Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State Polytechnic Ugbokolo, and College of Education Katsina-Ala are 10897, 4614, and 7157 respectively. Therefore, the total population for the study is an aggregate of all these populations, which stands at some 22668.

Sample Size Determination

In attempting to select a representative sample size for the study, the sample size determination formula developed by Cochran (1963) will be used. The source recommended the following sample size determination formula for populations; usually those between 10,000 to 100,000 in size:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

n_0 = Required sample size.

Z = Standard normal deviate usually set at 1.96, which corresponds to 95% confidence level.

p = Proportion of the population estimated to have a particular characteristic. When there is no reasonable characteristic, 50% (0.50) is used.

q = $1.0 - p$

e = Desired level of precision, usually set at 0.05 or occasionally 0.03.

The size of the study population-female students in Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State Polytechnic Ugbokolo, and College of Education Katsina-Ala is greater than 10000. Thus, the formula is appropriate. Applying the formula, the sample size will be:

$$\begin{aligned} n_0 &= \frac{Z^2pq}{e^2} \\ &= \frac{(1.96)^2(0.50)(1-0.50)}{(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{(1.96)^2(0.50)(0.50)}{(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} \\ &= 384.16 \\ &= 385 \text{ (Rule of integer)} \end{aligned}$$

Sampling Techniques

The categories of samples outlined above were drawn using different techniques and procedures. A combination of cluster, simple random, systematic random and purposive sampling procedures was used to select 21 academic programs, 504 female students and 30 personnel from the three institutions. Benue State University has eight faculties and 23 academic programs, Benue State Polytechnic has seven schools and 27 academic programs while College of Education Katsina-Ala has six schools and 31 academic programs. These faculties/schools serve as clusters from where one academic program each was picked. To do this, the researcher implemented the fish and bowl method. Names of all the academic programs in each individual faculty/school were written on pieces of papers, wrapped and shuffled in a basket, and a blindfolded Research Assistant asked to randomly pick one. This is how 21 academic programs were selected. The researcher purposively chose two classes in each academic program for the study. For Benue State University, Makurdi, samples were drawn from 300 and 400 level classes, for Benue State Polytechnic Ugbokolo, they were drawn from ND 2 and HND 2 classes while for College of Education Katsina-Ala, they were selected from NCE 2 and NCE 3 classes. The researcher's decision to limit study sample to higher classes is to ensure meaningful results for the study. Irrespective of their mode of entry into the respective institutions, female students in the selected classes would have spent at least a year in the institution. They are therefore, more

likely than their fellows in lower levels to have deeper experiences or knowledge of coercive sexual phenomena and its prevalence in these schools. To select female students (respondents), systematic random sampling technique was employed. In order to avoid inclusion of outliers, and ensure equal chance of participation for every eligible female student, the researcher and his team met with the students at venues where they had lectures in core courses. Permission was sought and obtained from the lecturers/instructors of the respective courses to administer the questionnaire. Having obtained the needed permission, and upon entry into each class, the researcher picked the first female student on the first seat, then the second female student on the fourth seat, then the third female student on the seventh seat and continued, so, until the required sample size of 12 respondents per each class was administered.

Instruments for Data Collection

This study relies heavily on primary data. Apart from the review of extant literature, every other information was obtained from the field. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected (The "mixed methods").

Result

Prevalence and pattern of sexual harassment in tertiary schools in Benue state.

Table 1: Responses on sexual harassment by touching breast, buttocks or vulva against respondent's will. Crosstabulation

			Age				Total
			15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30	31 above	
someone touching your breast, buttocks or vulva against your will	not at all	Count	4	10	5	1	20
		% within age	4.6%	5.2%	4.7%	16.7%	5.1%
	very rare	Count	8	25	15	1	49
		% within age	9.2%	13.0%	14.2%	16.7%	12.5%
	Rare	Count	29	54	29	3	115
		% within age	33.3%	28.1%	27.4%	50.0%	29.4%
	Often	Count	37	85	35	1	158
		% within age	42.5%	44.3%	33.0%	16.7%	40.4%
	very often	Count	9	18	22	0	49
		% within age	10.3%	9.4%	20.8%	0.0%	12.5%
Total		Count	87	192	106	6	391
		% within age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table above shows the responses on sexual coercion by touching breast, buttocks or vulva against respondents' wish. It is evident from the table that this habit is one of the common patterns of sexual coercion practices found in the tertiary schools in Benue state. The most often age range who suffers from this pattern of sexual harassment is from age range 21-25 years (often 38.9%, N=75, very often 23.8% N=46) respectively out of 391 respondents that answered this question. Those from 15-20, and 31 years and above are rarely coerced.

Table 2: Responses on sexual coercion by hugging against respondents' wish Crosstabulation

			Age				Total
			15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30	31 above	
someone hugging you when you do not wish to	not at all	Count	3	10	8	1	22
		% within age	3.5%	5.2%	7.5%	16.7%	5.6%

do so	very rare	Count	13	22	9	1	45
		% within age	15.1%	11.4%	8.5%	16.7%	11.5%
	Rare	Count	21	40	22	1	84
		% within age	24.4%	20.7%	20.8%	16.7%	21.5%
	Often	Count	36	75	40	2	153
		% within age	41.9%	38.9%	37.7%	33.3%	39.1%
	very often	Count	13	46	27	1	87
		% within age	15.1%	23.8%	25.5%	16.7%	22.3%
Total		Count	86	193	106	6	391
		% within age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Work, 2022

Table 2 shows the responses on sexual coercion by hugging against respondents' wish. It is evident from the table that, this habit is also another pattern of sexual coercion practice found in the tertiary schools in Benue state. The most often age range who suffers from this pattern of sexual coercion is those within the age range of 21-25 years (often 38.9%, N=75), very often 23.8% N=46) respectively out of 391 respondents that answered this question. Those from 15-20, and 31 years and above are rarely coerced.

Table 3: Responses on sexual coercion by trying to kiss you against respondents' wish * age Crosstabulation

			Age				Total
			15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30	31 above	
someone trying to kiss you against your wish	not at all	Count	5	14	2	0	21
		% within age	5.7%	7.3%	1.9%	0.0%	5.4%
	very rare	Count	8	16	9	0	33
		% within age	9.2%	8.3%	8.5%	0.0%	8.4%
	Rare	Count	18	31	14	1	64
		% within age	20.7%	16.1%	13.2%	16.7%	16.3%
	Often	Count	31	82	52	2	167
		% within age	35.6%	42.5%	49.1%	33.3%	42.6%
	very often	Count	25	50	28	3	106
		% within age	28.7%	25.9%	26.4%	50.0%	27.0%
	6	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		% within age	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.3%
Total		Count	87	193	106	6	392
		% within age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The raw data in the table shows that the responses on another pattern of sexual coercion in tertiary institutions in Benue state was by kissing against respondents' wishes. It is clearly reviewed in the data that the most often age range who suffer from this pattern of sexual coercion is from the age range of 21-25, 42.5%, N=82, 28.9%, N=25, and age range of 26-30 years (often 49.1%, N=52, very often 26.4% N=28) respectively out of 193 respondents that answered this question. Those from 15-20 are rarely coerced.

Table 4: Someone asking you for sexual intercourse when you are not interested * age Crosstabulation

			Age				Total
			15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30	31 above	
someone asking you	not at all	Count	5	19	3	0	27

for sexual intercourse when you are not interested		% within age	5.7%	9.8%	2.8%	0.0%	6.9%
	very rare	Count	9	19	10	0	38
		% within age	10.3%	9.8%	9.4%	0.0%	9.7%
	Rare	Count	14	49	24	2	89
		% within age	16.1%	25.4%	22.6%	33.3%	22.7%
	Often	Count	41	68	47	2	158
		% within age	47.1%	35.2%	44.3%	33.3%	40.3%
	very often	Count	18	38	22	2	80
		% within age	20.7%	19.7%	20.8%	33.3%	20.4%
Total		Count	87	193	106	6	392
		% within age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table above shows the responses on sexual coercion by asking for sexual intercourse against respondents' interest. It is evident from the table that, this habit is one of the common patterns of sexual harassment practices found in the tertiary schools in Benue state. It shows in the table that the most often age range who suffers from this pattern of sexual harassment is from age range 21-25 years (often 35.2%, N=68, very often 19.7% N=46) respectively out of 193 respondents that answered this question. Those from 15-20, and 31 years and above are rarely coerced.

Table 5: Responses on sexual coercion by asking for romantic friendship without accepting respondent's no answer * age Crosstabulation

			Age				Total
			15-20 yeares	21-25 years	26-30	31 above	
someone keeps asking you for romantic friendship without accepting your no answer	not at all	Count	10	13	4	0	27
		% within age	11.5%	6.7%	3.8%	0.0%	6.9%
	very rare	Count	13	24	4	0	41
		% within age	14.9%	12.4%	3.8%	0.0%	10.5%
	rare	Count	22	44	24	3	93
		% within age	25.3%	22.8%	22.6%	50.0%	23.7%
	often	Count	29	66	53	1	149
		% within age	33.3%	34.2%	50.0%	16.7%	38.0%
	very often	Count	13	46	21	2	82
		% within age	14.9%	23.8%	19.8%	33.3%	20.9%
Total		Count	87	193	106	6	392
		% within age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Work, 2022

As shown in the table about the responses on sexual coercion by asking for romantic friendship. It is evident from the table that this habit is one of the common patterns of sexual coercion practices found in the tertiary schools in Benue state. The most often age range who suffer from this pattern of sexual coercion is from age range 21-25 years (often 32.9%, N=66, very often 23.8% N=46) respectively out of 193 respondents that answered this question. This was followed by the age range of 26-30 (often 50.0%, N=53, very often, 19.8, N=21 of the 106 respondents that identified this pattern. Those from 31 years and above are rarely coerced.

Table 6: Sexual coercion by threats to fail his course or get low grade if respondents refuse to sleep with him * age Crosstabulation

			Age				Total
			15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30	31 above	
someone has threatened you will fail his course or get low grade if you refuse to sleep with him	not at all	Count	6	23	13	1	43
		% within age	6.9%	11.9%	12.3%	16.7%	11.0%
	very rare	Count	9	43	17	2	71
		% within age	10.3%	22.3%	16.0%	33.3%	18.1%
	rare	Count	15	35	20	0	70
		% within age	17.2%	18.1%	18.9%	0.0%	17.9%
	often	Count	39	50	36	2	127
		% within age	44.8%	25.9%	34.0%	33.3%	32.4%
	very often	Count	18	42	20	1	81
		% within age	20.7%	21.8%	18.9%	16.7%	20.7%
Total		Count	87	193	106	6	392
		% within age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The raw data presented in the table seeks to find out if the female students were coerced by threat to fail or get low grade if the respondents refuse to sleep with the male lecturers. It is clear from the table that, majority of the respondents reported, been often threatened by the lecturers i.e 15-20 =44.8%, 21-25= 25.9%, 25-30=34.0% and 31 and above= 33.3%.

Table 7: responses on harassment by someone who has vowed to frustrate respondents graduation, if she refuses to have sex with him * age Crosstabulation

			Age				Total
			15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30	31 above	
someone has vowed to frustrate your graduation from this school if you refuse to have sex with him	not at all	Count	18	28	17	0	63
		% within age	20.7%	14.5%	16.0%	0.0%	16.1%
	very rare	Count	30	63	31	4	128
		% within age	34.5%	32.6%	29.2%	66.7%	32.7%
	Often	Count	17	39	18	1	75
		% within age	19.5%	20.2%	17.0%	16.7%	19.1%
	Often	Count	16	45	21	1	83
		% within age	18.4%	23.3%	19.8%	16.7%	21.2%
	very often	Count	6	18	19	0	43
		% within age	6.9%	9.3%	17.9%	0.0%	11.0%
Total		Count	87	193	106	6	392
		% within age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table shows the responses on sexual coercion by vowing to frustrate the respondents from graduating. It is evident from the table that, this habit was not common in tertiary schools in Benue state. This is backed by the row data from the table. The result indicates that this pattern has rarely been encountered by the female students.

Table 8: responses on whether respondents have been seriously harassed sexually in the school * age Crosstabulation

			Age				Total
			15-20 years	21-25 years	26-30	31 above	
on the whole, have you been seriously harassed sexually in this school	not at all	Count	3	3	6	0	12
		% within age	3.4%	1.6%	5.7%	0.0%	3.1%
	very rare	Count	4	18	5	1	28
		% within age	4.6%	9.3%	4.7%	16.7%	7.1%
	rare	Count	20	37	18	2	77
		% within age	23.0%	19.2%	17.0%	33.3%	19.6%
	often	Count	39	91	60	3	193
		% within age	44.8%	47.2%	56.6%	50.0%	49.2%
	very often	Count	21	44	16	0	81
		% within age	24.1%	22.8%	15.1%	0.0%	20.7%
6	Count	0	0	1	0	1	
	% within age	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.3%	
Total		Count	87	193	106	6	392
		% within age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table seeks to know whether respondents have been seriously harassed sexually in the school. The data reveals that the majority of the respondents experiences sexual harassment in their respective schools. This is because the majority of respondents 44.8% (39) and 24.1% (N=21) out of 87 age range of 15-20 that responded to this question admits that they are often and very often respectively harassed sexually. Also, majority of the respondents from the age bracket of 21-25 admitted that they are harassed. This is backed by a raw data showing, 47.2% (N=91), 22.8% (N=44) out of 193 respondents under this age category. It is evident from the table that, those from the age category of between 26-30 reported to have been harassed (56.6%, N=60, 15.1%, N=16) and 50.00% of those from age range of 31 and above are often harassed sexually.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the rate of sexual coercion experienced by different ages of University female students. In order to test the hypothesis, mean scores of respondents on sexual coercion were compared among the age groups using one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. The result is shown in Table.

*p<0.05

Source	SS	df	MSS	f-cal	f-table
Between groups	3216.002	3	108.657	2.31	2.33
Within groups	413897.4	1189	427.740		
Total	417115.4	1196			

The table shows that F-cal is 2.31 and F-table is 2.33. Therefore, F-cal (2.31) is lesser than F-table (2.33). The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This shows that there is no significant difference in the rate of sexual coercion experienced by different ages of University female students.

Discussion

The study also revealed that female students have been seriously experiencing sexual coercion in these schools. The study revealed that the female students from the age of 15-25 years often experienced sexual coercion than age range of 26 above. The study further revealed that there is no significant difference in the rate of sexual coercion experienced by female students of different ages. The result of this study corroborate with the view of Atkinson, (2015) who reported that female students are natural targets of sexual coercion and that any female student could be a victim irrespective of the age, he believed that certain forms of sexual coercion are very closely associated with young females. The

report of Hornor, (2002), Lasisi, (2014), Wang, Li, Stanton, Kamali, Naar-king, Shah, & Thomas, (2007) negates the result of this study. These researchers asserted that female students in their teens and their early twenties are highly overrepresented among sexual coercion victims around the world and they believed that female students at these ages are target for older males. Amin, (2015)'s view about female students contradicts Bandura (2009), he opined that female students that are 25 years and above due to their chronological age, experiences, maturity and responsiveness, majority of them dress normally, they are always cautious of their relationship with the opposite sex and this makes a difference in

their experience of sexual coercion compared with female students that are below 25 years.

The study revealed that the prevalence rate of sexual coercion in tertiary institutions in Benue state was relatively high. This behavior occurred in different patterns and ways. This fact is backed by the data collected as regards the touching of breasts, buttocks or vulva against female students' wish was found to be a common practice in the tertiary schools in Benue state. The most often age range who suffers from this pattern of sexual harassment is from age range 21-25 years. This finding is in tandem with Hornor, (2002), Lasisi, (2014), Wang, Li, Stanton, Kamali, Naar-king, Shah, & Thomas, (2007) who averred that sexual coercion, are fast gaining roots in Nigerian society generally and educational institutions in particular. They pointed out that girls typically consent to extramarital sexual intercourse as a way of displaying supreme love, achieving utmost intimacy and solidifying relationships and where such willing and negotiated sex occurs, there are often no precautionary measures to forestall all possible negative outcomes. This entails that several sexual activities involving young unmarried girls are unplanned and often directly or indirectly coerced. Also the finding tallies with Atkinson, (2015) that coercive sexual phenomena are not only very common but are also actually growing in prevalence across the globe. This shows that this habit has been highly exhibited by the lecturers in the institutions of higher learning in Benue state. The above finding on the prevalence of sexual coercion tallies with Moore, Awusabo-Asare, Madise, John-Langba and Kumi-Kyereme (2007), who demonstrated that coercive sexual scenarios play out profoundly in other parts of the sub-Saharan Africa, especially among girls having debut sexual experiences. Using nationally representative surveys from 12-19 year-old girls in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi and Uganda, the researchers examined the prevalence of sexual coercion at sexual debut among unmarried girls. In Malawi, 38 percent of the girls said that they were "not willing at all" at their first sexual encounters followed by Ghana at 30 percent, Uganda at 23 percent and Burkina Faso at 15 percent. Also the study tallies with Koenig, Zablotska, Lutalo, Nalugoda, Wagman and Gray (2004) in a study of 575 sexually experienced 15-19 year-old adolescents which found that fourteen percent of the respondents had been sexually coerced. It also found out that very few of these encounters were protected with any modern contraceptive device. It can be deduced that coerced first sex is an important social and public health problem that has potential and serious repercussions for young women's health and wellbeing. Similarly, Benti and Teferi (2015) reported a 28.7 percent sexual coercion rate among female students. Generating data from a sample of 564 female students drawn from nine technical, vocational and educational training colleges in Nekemte town revealed that only 9.5 percent of the sexually experienced unmarried respondents initiated sex through voluntary negotiation. The uniqueness of this study is that it has detailed the age range of female students that mostly experienced sexual coercion in the study area.

Conclusion

This study contributes to sexual coercion prevention by identifying multiple tactics of coercion. Our study has the potential to promote sensitivity to adolescents and emerging adults who have been sexually victimized. Though, respondents hesitated to report their sexual browbeating experience for fear of the effects that include shame and stigmatization and until the researcher had to convinced

them. Nonetheless, this does not alter or negatively impact on the integrity of the result of the research study.

Based on the findings of this research study, it is our view that, higher institutions' female students are sexually coerced by different groups of individuals in the institutions, regardless of their age as a result of elements such as poor safety and security, deceptiveness, alcoholic usage, cultist-tasks, lack of ability to keep their decisions, as well as other liberal attitudes, admitted higher institution. This study will certainly be of importance to scholars as well as young adults since it gives information on the occurrence of sex-related coerciveness, factors responsible for sexual coercion, and impacts of sexual coercion on female students of higher institutions of learning. It likewise provides baseline details for possible and future research on reasons, effects as well as consequences of sexual coercion.

Recommendations

Students of higher institutions that go to greater risk of sex-related coercion as a result of their physical attributes as well as some acts that are peculiar to them which predispose them to the risk of sex-related coercion ought to be careful about where and they are around the opposite sex. Counselors ought to clamor for even more reliable protection in Nigerian higher institutions to curb maladjustment practices among female students. The government ought to provide well protected accommodation for female students in higher institutions. The higher institutions' female students (married or unmarried) need to desist from carefree/lose behaviors that could incline them to the threat of sexual coercion. Counselors in higher institutions ought to organize seminars on marriage coaching. Counselors should design reliable programs on sexually appropriate behavior that would boost an adjustment of behavior among tertiary female students. Counselors must start policies that would restrict the wrongdoers of sex-related coercion and make sure such plans are released as well as enforced. Charges need be plainly mentioned. Female students requirements should be made to recognize that, involvement in sexual coercive activities would or may result in the regulation as well as, serious fines like long prison terms.

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