

PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KWARA STATE

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated the perception of teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara State. The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted in the study. The population were all teachers in all secondary schools in Kwara State while the sample was 250 teachers sampled from 25 secondary schools using a simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Perception of Teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students which was validated by two experts in the field of Test and Measurement. The reliability of the instrument was ensured using the test-retest reliability method. The researcher administered the instrument on 20 teachers outside the sample twice in two weeks and data collected was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation while the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.89. The instrument was administered by the researcher and three trained research assistants. The findings of the study revealed that the perception of teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara State was positive. There was no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students. The study recommended amongst others that government authorities should enact laws that will sanction the perpetrators of sexual violence and ensure that victims secure justice.

Keywords: Perception, Students, Sexuality, Sexual violence, Secondary schools

Introduction

One of the fundamental human rights according to the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization-UNESCO (2010) is the right to protection from harmful influences, abuse, and exploitation. United Nations Children Emergency Fund-UNICEF (2018) reiterated that its mission is to advocate for the protection of children's rights, especially children under the age of 18 years, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potentials. These rights among others include the right to be educated and the right to protect children from sexual abuse and violence.

Sexual violence among students of secondary schools occurs throughout the World. Jewkews *et al.* (2001) reported that up to one-third of the students reported that their first sexual experience was being forced. Sexual violence in the school is any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion, acts directed against a student's sexuality, regardless of the relationship to the victim (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 2019). Sexual violence is unwanted sexual activity with perpetrators using force, making threats, or taking advantage of victims not being able to give consent (Kazdin, 2015). It also refers to the activity of having sex with someone against their wishes or without their agreement. Forcing students into non-consensual sexual activity is a behaviour that is found in every country.

Sexual violence occurs in different conditions and settings around the world. An estimated 150 million girls and 73 million boys under the age of 18 years have experienced sexual violence or other forms of sexual abuse involving physical contact (Maureen, 2021). According to Maureen (2021), the estimated prevalence of sexual violence globally in self-reported studies was 18 percent among females and 7.6 percent among male participants. Also in a study that was previously carried out which was similar, it was discovered that 20% of girls and 5 to 10% of boys were victims of sexual abuse all over the world and the number keeps growing (WHO, 2012).

In Uganda, a study showed that 4% of boys and 13% of girls reported sexual abuse from a school staff member (Devries, 2014). Sexual violence can take the form of sexual abuse, harassment, rape or sexual exploitation in

prostitution and pornography and can happen anywhere. In many African countries, child sexual violence is a major issue, and children and adolescents are exploited for sex in exchange for money or other forms of payment, such as food and gifts (Wangamati, 2017). High levels of sexual abuse against peers have also been reported in sub-Saharan Africa. A more disturbing fact is that child sexual abuse cases take place in schools where sexual coercion and harassment are evident according to Mullen (2016).

According to the research which was conducted by Mathews (2016) stated that levels of violence before age 18 as reported by 18 to 24-year-olds (lifetime experiences) indicate that during childhood, 32% of females and 18% of males experience sexual violence. UNICEF (2017) also indicated that the most common perpetrators of sexual violence for females and males were found to be boyfriends, girlfriends, or romantic partners and followed by neighbours comprising 47%, 43%, 27%, and 21% respectively. According to the study carried out by Maureen (2021), the students who had experienced sexual abuse were asked to indicate the gender of those who had sexually abused them. The findings showed that 71% of the perpetrators had been male while less than a third (29%) were female. This shows that students were most likely to be abused by males. Of post-primary students surveyed in Nairobi in 2004, 14% of girls reported that they or one of their family members had ever experienced sexual assault, and 24% of boys reported that they or one of their family members had ever experienced sexual assault (UNICEF, 2017).

According to Okendo (2018), of the standard daily newspaper, in the past three (3) years Teaching Service Commission (TSC) has deregistered 162 male teachers for sexually harassing their students. In a similar study conducted by Maureen (2021) stated that in 2015 TSC struck off 126 teachers from the teaching role; of which 100 male teachers were kicked out of the profession for sexually harassing their students. Also in 2016, about 22 teachers were deregistered after evidence showed that they sexually abused female students. In 2017, TSC announced that some 40 male teachers were blacklisted and gazetted for sexually abusing students. This evidence paints a shocking reality in schools with questions emerging whether students are safe under the people that are expected to mentor them.

Statement of the Problem

A high prevalence of sexual abuse can be seen in public institutions in Nigeria, the findings of Maureen (2021) indicated that more than a third (38%) of the students that were asked if they had ever been sexually abused, had experienced sexual abuse. This shows that sexual abuse was prevalent among students in the study area. Sexual violence is a common form of sexual exploitation in Nigerian schools. In Nigeria and most African school setting, the most common place where sexual abuse occurs or take place is the school (Akanle and Asebiomo, 2012). Sexual violence or abuse can be directed at anyone, male or female, Student or non- students. Forcing students to have non - consensual sexual activity is a behaviour found in every country; students affected by sexual violence in school suffer from lowered social and emotional competence, diminished academic performance, and fear of more abuse (Burnham, 2019); therefore, the focus of this paper will be perceptions of teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara state.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara state. Specifically, the study determined the following:

1. perceptions of teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara state.
2. Difference in the perception of male and female teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara state

Research Questions

1. What is the perception of teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara State?
2. Is there any difference between the perception of male and female teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara state?

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara state.

Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted in the study. This allowed the researcher to describe the situation as it appears. The population for the study was all teachers in all secondary schools in the sixteen Local Government Areas of Kwara State. The sample was 250 teachers sampled from 25 secondary schools in five Local Government Areas using a multistage sampling procedure. The first stage was the use of a simple random sampling technique to sample five out of sixteen Local Government Areas in Kwara State. The second stage was the use of a simple random sampling technique to sample five secondary schools from each of the five Local Government Areas making 25 schools. The third stage was the use of a simple random sampling technique to sample ten teachers from each of the 25 schools making 250 teachers. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Perceptions of teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students. Both face and content validity of the instrument was ensured by two experts in the field of Test and Measurement. The reliability of the instrument was done using the test-retest reliability method. The researcher administered the instrument on 20 teachers outside the sample twice in two weeks and data collected was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation while the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.89. The validated and reliable instrument was administered by the researcher and three trained research assistants on the respondents. Two research questions were raised in the study and one of them was transformed into a hypothesis. The first research question which could not be transformed into a hypothesis was answered using mean and standard deviation. The responses are based on four-points, Likert-type scale of Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree, and the mean rating is 2.5, with the mean values of each of item compared in order to determine perception of teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara State. Any mean value which is equal to or greater than 2.5 means agreement to the questionnaire item, but when the mean value is less than 2.5 it means disagreement. The only hypothesis formulated in the study was tested using a t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the perception of teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara State?

Table 1: Perception of teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN SCORES	REMARKS
1	Students have encountered different forms of sexual violence	2.51	Positive
2	Students have been verbally sexually abused	3.81	"
3	Students have been kissed or sexually touched	2.69	"
4	Students have been forced to oral, anal, or vaginal penetration	2.72	"
5	Students have been abused by a person in a position of trust and authority	4.02	"
6	Students have been forced penetration with finger or object	2.59	"
7	Students have been forced into prostitution	3.89	"
8	Students have been raped	3.09	"
9	Students have been Pressured to do something sexual	4.01	"
10	Students have experienced rape or forceful sexual intercourse	2.76	"
11	Students have been forced to kiss someone	3.06	"

Results in Table 1 showed the mean scores of the perception of teachers in Kwara State on sexual violence among secondary school students. The benchmark to decide the perception is 2.5. This indicated that perception with a mean score of or above 2.5 is said to be positive while anyone less than 2.5 is negative. The results in Table 1 showed that teachers had a positive perception of sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara State. These findings are in line with the finding of Maureen (2021) that more than a third (38%) of the students that were asked if they had ever been sexually abused, had experienced sexual abuse. This shows that sexual violence is prevalent among secondary school students.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara state

Table 2: t-test Analysis of the Difference between Male and Female Teachers' Perception on sexual violence among secondary school students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-Cal.	Decision
Male	141	1.034	1.236	248	0.371	Accepted
Female	109	1.219	1.312			

The results in Table 2 revealed that the calculated t-value was 0.371 computed at 0.05 significance level with a degree of freedom of 248. Since the calculated t-value (0.371) was greater than the significant level (0.05), the null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara State is accepted. The mean scores showed that there is no difference in the perception of male and female teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in favour of the female teachers. This finding is in agreement with Burnham (2019) whose findings revealed that sexual violence or abuse can be directed at anyone, male or female, student or non-students.

Discussion

The result of the study revealed that sexual violence is prevalent among secondary school students. Teachers perceived that sexual violence is prevalent among secondary school students in Kwara State. The finding agreed with the finding of Maureen (2021) that an estimated 150 million girls and 73 million boys under the age of 18 years have experienced sexual violence or other forms of sexual abuse involving physical contact. The finding is also in line with the finding of Mathews (2016) which stated that the levels of violence before age 18 as reported by 18 to 24-year-olds (lifetime experiences) indicate that most experiences of sexual violence happened during childhood. The finding is also in line with the finding of Okendo (2018) which stated that in the past three (3) years, TSC has deregistered 162 male teachers for sexually harassing their students. In a similar study conducted by Maureen (2021) stated that in 2015 TSC struck off 126 teachers from the teaching role; of which 100 male teachers were kicked out of the profession for sexually harassing their students.

The study found that there was no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara State. The finding concurred with the finding of Maureen (2021) that more than a third (38%) of the students that were asked if they had ever been sexually abused have experienced sexual violence. Therefore, there was no difference in the perception of the teachers based on the gender.

Conclusion

The study concluded that teachers have a positive perception of sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara State. It was seen that sexual violence or abuse can be directed at anyone, male or female, Students or non- students. The study also concluded that there was no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers on sexual violence among secondary school students in Kwara State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need to educate students about sexuality, human rights and necessary actions to take when sexually violated. Valid training right from primary school will go a long way in empowering victims to handle sexual violence later in life.
2. There is need to employ counsellors in all the schools to educate, train and counsel students on sexual violence issues.

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