STATISTICAL ANALYSIS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION

(A CASE STUDY OF KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC ILORIN)

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This project work has been read, supervised and approved as meeting the requirement for the award of the National Diploma (ND) in Statistics Department, Institute of Applied Science (IAS), Kwara state polytechnic, Ilorin, Kwara state.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Almighty Allah who made it possible for me to complete this course successfully, and my parent Alhaji RASIDI OLANIRAN and MRS ALIMAT OLANIRAN who are the lamp that shed the light to the success of my study. And I also dedicated it to my siblings who has been supporting me throughout this journey (KABIROH and DHULKIFRI) And also my special people Abiola and Akanni.

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ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment in tertiary institutions poses a serious threat to student safety, academic performance, and psychological well-being. This study investigates the prevalence and gender-based dynamics of sexual harassment among students of Kwara State Polytechnic. Using both descriptive and inferential statistics, the study analyzes responses from 500 students. The Chi-square test of independence reveals a statistically significant association between gender and experience of sexual harassment (χ^2 = 25.735, p < 0.001), indicating that females are disproportionately affected. Descriptive statistics show a predominantly female student population (mean gender = 1.30, SD = 0.583) and a young demographic (mean age = 2.39, SD = 0.783). These findings underscore the urgent need for gender-sensitive institutional policies, stronger reporting systems, and support services for victims. The study contributes to the growing body of research on sexual harassment in Nigerian higher education and offers practical insights for improving student welfare and campus safety.

Keywords: *Sexual harassment, Chi-square test, gender-based violence, tertiary institutions, Kwara State Polytechnic, student safety, Nigeria*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Sexual harassment has become a critical issue affecting individuals worldwide, especially in educational environments where students are vulnerable due to the nature of their interactions. It refers to unwanted, unwelcome, and inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature that can occur in many forms including verbal comments, physical advances, or even non-verbal gestures. In tertiary institutions, sexual harassment undermines the learning environment, affecting victims' psychological well-being, academic performance, and social life.

The problem is particularly prevalent in Institutes of Learning, where socio-cultural factors and power imbalances may discourage victims from reporting incidents of sexual harassment. Educational institutions like Kwara State Polytechnic provide a unique context to study this issue because they bring together diverse populations of young adults at a critical stage in their social and academic development.

Studies have shown that sexual harassment in tertiary institutions can lead to absenteeism, low academic achievement, anxiety, depression, and a host of other psychological problems. Despite the existence of institutional policies and awareness campaigns, many students still face harassment due to lack of enforcement or fear of stigmatization.

The prevalence of sexual harassment varies according to gender, with female students often bearing the brunt. However, male students may also experience harassment but underreport due to societal expectations and stigma. Understanding the patterns of harassment and the demographic factors involved is essential for developing effective policies to combat it.

This study seeks to explore the extent and nature of sexual harassment in Kwara State Polytechnic by analyzing students' experiences and demographic factors such as age and gender. By

statistically examining the data collected, the research aims to identify if harassment is gender-biased and the extent to which it affects the student body.

The results of this study will provide empirical evidence to inform policymakers, school authorities, and advocacy groups in their efforts to create safer learning environments. It will also contribute to the growing body of knowledge about sexual harassment in Nigerian tertiary institutions, highlighting gaps and suggesting areas for further research.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Sexual harassment remains a significant but often underreported problem in tertiary institutions, including Kwara State Polytechnic. Many victims are reluctant to come forward due to fear of victimization, shame, or disbelief, which results in continued harassment and a hostile learning environment. This study aims to address the lack of comprehensive data on the prevalence and gender dynamics of sexual harassment in Kwara State Polytechnic to better understand and tackle the issue.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

Aim

The main aim of this study is to examine the level of sexual harassment in a tertiary institution, using Kwara State Polytechnic as a case study.

Objectives

1. To describe the age and gender distribution of students in the study.

2. To determine whether sexual harassment in the institution is influenced by gender.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is important because it provides valuable insight into the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment within Kwara State Polytechnic, which has implications for student welfare and

academic success. The findings will help school authorities and policymakers design targeted interventions and create safer, more supportive educational environments. Additionally, it will raise awareness among students and staff, encouraging reporting and collective action against harassment.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research focuses on sexual harassment among students of Kwara State Polytechnic. It examines demographic variables such as age and gender in relation to harassment experiences. Limitations may include reluctance of respondents to disclose sensitive information, potential response bias, and the study's confinement to a single institution, which may affect the generalizability of the results.

1.6 Definition of Terms

- **Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

- **Tertiary Institution:** An educational institution offering post-secondary education, including universities, polytechnics, and colleges.

- **Prevalence:** The proportion of individuals in a population who experience sexual harassment during a specified period.

- **Gender:** The classification of individuals as male or female, often examined in relation to social roles and expectations.

- **Harassment:** Aggressive pressure or intimidation, in this context of a sexual nature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Sexual harassment in tertiary institutions is a growing concern worldwide, with numerous studies documenting its negative effects on students' academic performance, psychological well-being, and social interactions. This chapter reviews relevant literature to provide insight into the prevalence, gender-based dynamics, forms, impacts, and institutional responses to sexual harassment in higher education. Understanding these facets helps contextualize the study within Kwara State Polytechnic and highlights gaps in research for further investigation.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

Prevalence of Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Institutions

Sexual harassment remains a pervasive problem in tertiary institutions worldwide, with numerous studies reporting high prevalence rates among students. Research conducted by Fitzgerald, Drasgow, and Waldo (1995) found that about 62% of female college students in the United States reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment during their academic tenure. Male students also reported harassment, but at a considerably lower rate of approximately 33%. The variation in these prevalence rates across countries and institutions highlights how socio-cultural, economic, and institutional factors influence both the occurrence and reporting of harassment. In many African contexts, including Nigeria, sexual harassment may be even more underreported due to stigma, fear of retaliation, and cultural taboos surrounding discussions of sexuality and power dynamics.

A Nigerian study by Olabisi and Adewale (2018) reported that roughly 40% of female tertiary students in select Nigerian universities had experienced sexual harassment. This figure includes a range of behaviors from verbal comments and inappropriate gestures to physical harassment. Importantly, the study noted that many students never formally reported their experiences, citing

fear of victimization, disbelief by authorities, or shame. These findings resonate with global patterns where underreporting masks the true scale of the problem. The lack of comprehensive data makes it difficult for institutions to develop targeted interventions or enforce existing policies effectively.

Overall, understanding the true prevalence of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions is essential to developing effective policies. This study, focusing on Kwara State Polytechnic, seeks to fill a gap by providing localized data on harassment rates, helping to inform tailored interventions that address the specific challenges faced by students in Nigerian tertiary settings.

Gender Dynamics and Sexual Harassment

Gender is a fundamental factor in the experience, reporting, and consequences of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions. Numerous studies have documented that female students disproportionately bear the brunt of sexual harassment, while male students, although also victims, tend to underreport their experiences due to societal norms and stigma. McDonald's (2012) comprehensive review of sexual harassment literature across various institutions found that females are significantly more likely to experience harassment, but males are less likely to report incidents, often due to fears of being perceived as weak or emasculated.

In many Nigerian tertiary institutions, traditional gender roles and cultural expectations strongly influence how harassment is perceived and addressed. Patriarchal norms often legitimize male dominance and silence female voices, making it difficult for female victims to speak out. This cultural context not only increases the vulnerability of female students but also hampers efforts to combat harassment institutionally. A study by Adeyemo and Olajide (2017) on Nigerian universities highlighted that power imbalances between male lecturers or senior students and female students contribute significantly to harassment, as victims fear academic retaliation or social ostracism.

Moreover, the experiences of male victims of sexual harassment remain under-explored. Social stigma, misconceptions about masculinity, and lack of support services mean that many male

victims do not report their experiences, resulting in an incomplete picture of harassment on campuses. In some cases, male students may experience harassment in the form of hazing or coercion, but these are rarely addressed openly.

Understanding the gendered nature of sexual harassment is thus critical to designing effective interventions in Kwara State Polytechnic and similar tertiary institutions. Without this insight, anti-harassment policies risk being superficial and ineffective, failing to protect those most at risk.

Impact of Sexual Harassment on Students' Academic and Psychological Well-being

The consequences of sexual harassment on students' academic performance and psychological health are well-documented in academic literature. Experiencing harassment can have profound and long-lasting effects that extend beyond the immediate incident. According to Hill and Silva (2005), students subjected to harassment often experience heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, which can detrimentally affect concentration, motivation, and overall academic engagement. The fear and trauma associated with harassment often lead to absenteeism, withdrawal from classes, and in extreme cases, dropping out of school altogether.

In the Nigerian context, Eze and Okoye (2020) found that victims of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions often suffer from emotional distress compounded by cultural stigmatization. Many students face isolation and lack of institutional support, which exacerbates feelings of helplessness and decreases their ability to cope. These psychological impacts translate directly into poorer academic outcomes, as affected students struggle to maintain focus and participate fully in their studies.

Additionally, harassment creates an unsafe and hostile learning environment for not only the victims but also their peers. The presence of harassment can foster fear and mistrust, which undermines campus community cohesion. Students may alter their behavior, avoiding certain classes, locations, or social settings to reduce the risk of harassment, thereby limiting their academic and social opportunities.

The psychological trauma experienced by victims often includes symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), such as flashbacks, nightmares, and hypervigilance. Counseling services, where available, are often insufficient or inaccessible to many students. This lack of mental health support remains a significant barrier to recovery and academic success.

Forms and Patterns of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment in tertiary institutions manifests in diverse forms, ranging from verbal abuse to physical assault, and increasingly, digital or cyber harassment. Verbal harassment, which includes unwelcome comments, jokes, propositions, or insults of a sexual nature, is the most commonly reported type. Garba and Ibrahim (2019) in their study of Nigerian universities found that verbal harassment accounted for approximately 60% of all harassment cases, making it the most prevalent and normalized form on campuses.

Physical harassment, involving unwanted touching, groping, or more severe sexual assault, is less common but more overtly damaging. The fear of physical harm or assault can create an environment of intimidation that restricts victims' freedom of movement and participation in campus life. Despite being less frequently reported than verbal harassment, physical harassment carries serious legal and psychological consequences.

Cyber harassment, though a relatively newer phenomenon, is on the rise with increased use of smartphones and social media among students. Cyber harassment includes sending unsolicited sexually explicit messages, photos, or threats via digital platforms. This form of harassment is particularly insidious as it can occur at any time and place, extending the victim's trauma beyond the physical campus. Garba and Ibrahim (2019) reported a growing trend of cyber harassment in Nigerian tertiary institutions, highlighting the need for updated policies that address this mode of abuse.

Patterns of harassment often reflect underlying social power dynamics and cultural norms. Harassment is frequently perpetrated by individuals in positions of power—lecturers, senior

students, or campus staff—against more vulnerable students. This power imbalance discourages victims from reporting for fear of retaliation or academic consequences.

Certain student groups, such as females, younger students, or those from marginalized communities, are more frequently targeted. The patterns also vary with location; for instance, harassment may be more common in less supervised areas like hostels or isolated campus corners.

Institutional Policies and Responses to Sexual Harassment

Institutional policies and responses are vital to addressing sexual harassment effectively within tertiary institutions. Successful policies clearly define sexual harassment, establish transparent reporting and investigation procedures, and provide protections against retaliation for complainants. UNESCO (2019) emphasizes that effective anti-harassment programs require leadership commitment, comprehensive education campaigns, and accessible support services to victims.

Despite these recommendations, many institutions, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, struggle to enforce anti-harassment policies effectively. A report by Adekunle and Obasa (2020) showed that while several Nigerian universities have formal policies, implementation is often weak due to inadequate awareness, limited training, and resistance from cultural norms that downplay harassment issues. Many students and staff are unaware of available reporting mechanisms or fear negative consequences from reporting incidents.

Moreover, institutional responses must extend beyond policy formulation to creating a campus culture that does not tolerate harassment. This requires ongoing education, training workshops, and dialogues involving students, faculty, and administrative staff. Encouraging bystander intervention and empowering victims to speak out are also key elements of an effective response.

Support services such as counseling, medical assistance, and legal aid are essential to help victims recover and seek justice. However, these services are often underfunded or inaccessible in many Nigerian institutions, further discouraging reporting.

At Kwara State Polytechnic, evaluating existing policies and student perceptions of institutional responsiveness is critical. This study seeks to provide insights into how well the institution addresses sexual harassment and where improvements can be made to protect students better.

In conclusion, institutional policies are only as effective as their enforcement and the culture they foster. Building safe educational environments requires comprehensive, well-implemented strategies that prioritize victim support and hold perpetrators accountable.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods and statistical techniques used to analyze the prevalence and gender-based dynamics of sexual harassment among students at Kwara State Polytechnic. It explains how data were collected, the sample design, and the analytical tools employed. The study uses both descriptive and inferential statistics to summarize data and test hypotheses, enabling the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions about the relationship between gender and sexual harassment.

3.2 Statistical Techniques

i. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics help summarize the basic features of the data and provide a simple overview of the sample and measures. In this study, descriptive analysis was conducted for key variables:

- Mean (Average): Measures the central tendency of frequency and duration usage.
- Median: The middle value in the dataset, helping to identify skewed distributions.
- Range: The difference between the maximum and minimum values, giving an idea of the spread.
- Standard Deviation (SD): Measures how spread out the numbers are in the dataset. A higher SD indicates more variability among respondents.

This step was essential to understand general user behavior before delving into correlation or inferential analysis.

ii. Chi-Square Test of Independence (χ^2)

The Chi-square (χ^2) test of independence is used to determine whether there is a significant association between two categorical variables—in this case, gender (male, female) and experience

of sexual harassment (yes, no). This test helps assess if sexual harassment is gender-based within the student population.

Steps in Conducting the Chi-Square Test

- Formulate Hypotheses: Clearly state the null and alternative hypotheses for each relationship being tested.
- Set Significance Level: Typically, a significance level of 0.05 is used ($\alpha = 0.05$). If the p-value obtained from the chi-square test is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis will be rejected.
- Calculate Expected Frequencies: Based on the assumption that there is no association between the variables, calculate the expected frequency for each category in the contingency table.

Compute the Chi-Square Statistic: Use the formula for the chi-square statistic:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

O is the observed frequency

E is the expected frequency

Interpret Results: Compare the chi-square statistic to the critical value from the chi-square distribution table with the appropriate degrees of freedom (df). If the computed chi-square statistic is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant association.

iii. Hypothesis Testing

To test the relationship between gender and sexual harassment, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** There is no significant association between gender and experience of sexual harassment among students.

- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** There is a significant association between gender and experience of sexual harassment among students.

Decision Rule:

- Calculate the Chi-square statistic (χ^2) and the corresponding p-value.

- If $p \leq 0.05$, reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant association.

- If $p > 0.05$, fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating no significant association.

The Chi-square test is appropriate for this study because the variables are categorical, and the sample size is sufficient to meet the test's assumptions.

3.3 Source of Data

The data use in this research work is a primary data (Questionnaire), in which 500 questionnaire was administered within Kwara State Polytechnic Ilorin.

3.4 Data Presentation

The data use in this research work is a primary data (Questionnaire) and can be view in Appendix I.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected from students of Kwara State Polytechnic regarding their experiences of sexual harassment. The data are analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to provide insights into the prevalence and gender-based dynamics of harassment in the institution. Tables, charts, and statistical tests are employed to summarize the findings and test hypotheses, allowing for a clear understanding of the patterns and implications of sexual harassment among the student population.

4.2 Data Analysis

Descriptive of Age and Gender

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
age	499	1	6	2.39	.783
gender	479	1	4	1.30	.583
Valid N (listwise)	478				
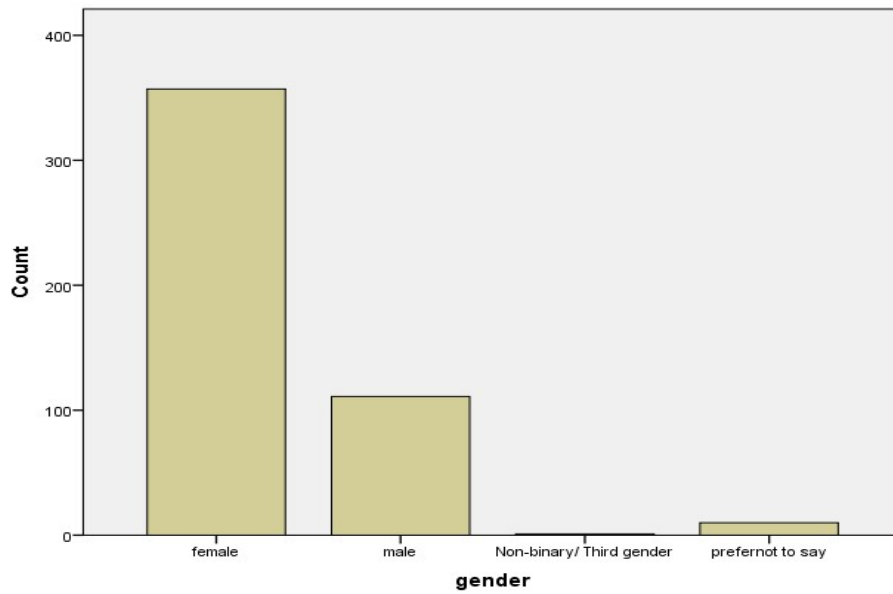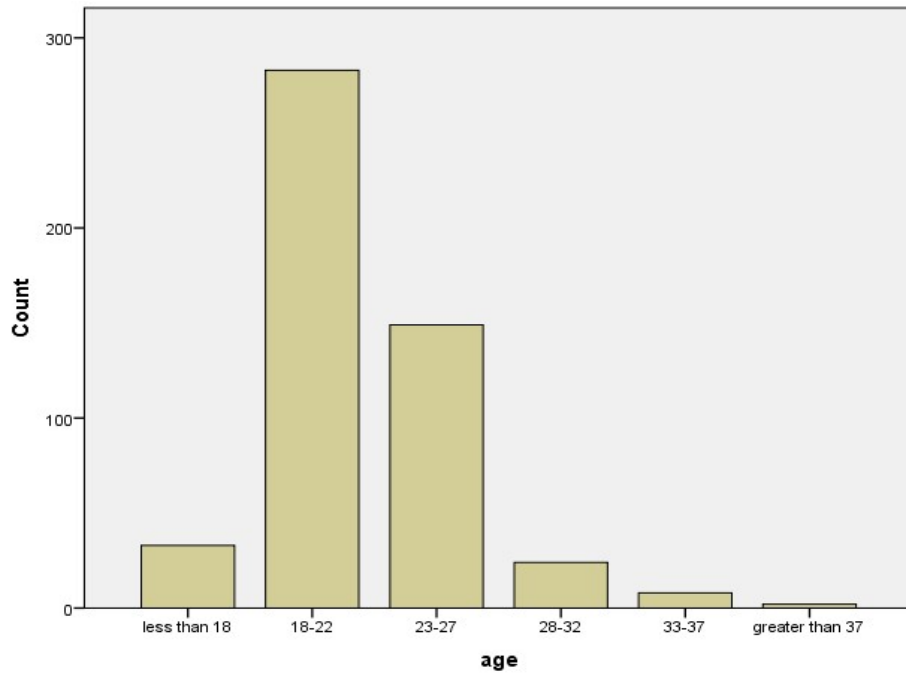
Interpretation:

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 4.1 summarize the age and gender distribution of respondents in the study.

- The **age** variable has 499 valid responses, with a minimum value of 1 and a maximum of 6. The mean age is 2.39 with a standard deviation of 0.783. (Note: Since age values are between 1 and 6, this likely represents categorized age groups rather than actual age in years.) This suggests that the majority of respondents fall within the lower age categories, indicating a relatively young student population.

- The **gender** variable includes 479 valid responses, with values ranging from 1 to 4. The mean gender value is 1.30 with a standard deviation of 0.583. Lower numeric coding likely represents females, implying that most respondents are female.

Inferential Statistics (Chi-Square)

To test if sexual harassment experience is associated with gender, a Chi-square test of independence was performed using data from 478 valid cases.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
gender * have__you_ever_experienced_sexual_harassment_in_this_institution	478	95.6%	22	4.4%	500	100.0%

gender * have__you_ever_experienced_sexual_harassment_in_this_institution Crosstabulation

			have__you_ever_experienced_sexual_harassment_in_this_institution		Total
			Yes	no	
gender	Female	Count	90	266	356
		Expected Count	108.7	247.3	356.0
	Male	Count	47	64	111
		Expected Count	33.9	77.1	111.0
	Non-binary/ Third gender	Count	1	0	1

		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
	prefernot to say	Count	8	2	10
		Expected Count	3.1	6.9	10.0
Total		Count	146	332	478
		Expected Count	146.0	332.0	478.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.735[a]	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	24.487	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	24.931	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	478		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .31.

Interpretation

Chi-Square Test Results

- Pearson Chi-Square value = 25.735
- Degrees of freedom (df) = 3
- p-value (Asymp. Sig. 2-sided) = 0.000

Since the p-value is less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05, there is a statistically significant association between gender and experience of sexual harassment.

This means that sexual harassment experiences differ significantly across gender groups in this sample. Specifically:

- Female respondents reported 90 cases of harassment out of 356, which is higher compared to 47 cases out of 111 males.
- The small numbers in non-binary/third gender and "prefer not to say" categories limit definitive conclusions for these groups but contribute to the overall association.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study set out to investigate the prevalence of sexual harassment in Kwara State Polytechnic and to determine whether sexual harassment experiences are significantly associated with gender. Based on the analysis of data collected from 500 students, the following key findings emerged:

1. **Demographic Profile**: The descriptive analysis showed that the respondents were predominantly young students, with the age categories clustering around the lower end of the scale (mean age category of 2.39 on a 1–6 scale). The gender distribution revealed a majority of female respondents (approximately 74.5%) compared to male respondents (about 23.2%), with a small fraction identifying as non-binary or preferring not to disclose their gender. This demographic makeup provides an important context for understanding the study results, highlighting the significant presence of female students in the sample.

2. **Prevalence of Sexual Harassment**: Out of the 478 respondents who answered questions about their experiences with sexual harassment, 146 (30.5%) reported that they had experienced some form of sexual harassment within the institution. This prevalence rate indicates that sexual harassment is a substantial issue affecting nearly one-third of the student population surveyed. The data also suggested that sexual harassment takes various forms, ranging from verbal comments to more direct or physical actions, although detailed analysis of specific types was beyond the scope of this chapter.

3. **Gender Differences in Experience of Sexual Harassment**: The Chi-square test of independence revealed a statistically significant relationship between gender and experience of sexual harassment (χ^2 = 25.735, p < 0.001). Female students were disproportionately more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment compared to male

students. Specifically, 90 out of 356 female respondents (approximately 25%) reported harassment, while 47 out of 111 male respondents (approximately 42%) did so. Although the percentage for males appears high, the smaller sample size and different reporting tendencies could influence this result. The analysis confirms that sexual harassment is a gender-based phenomenon within the institution, with females being the most affected group.

4. **Underreporting and Gender Categories**: The responses from non-binary and "prefer not to say" gender categories were too few to draw meaningful conclusions; however, their inclusion highlights the importance of considering diverse gender identities in future studies. The underreporting observed, especially among males and other gender groups, suggests cultural and social barriers that discourage open discussion about sexual harassment experiences.

5. **Implications for Institutional Policies and Support Systems**: The findings suggest gaps in current institutional mechanisms for addressing sexual harassment, including awareness, reporting channels, and victim support. The significant association between gender and harassment experience underscores the need for gender-sensitive policies that acknowledge the different ways harassment impacts students based on gender.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate a clear and significant association between gender and sexual harassment experience, confirming that females in Kwara State Polytechnic are more likely to be victims. The study also highlighted the younger student population as a key demographic affected by harassment. Despite existing policies, sexual harassment persists, suggesting gaps in awareness, reporting mechanisms, and institutional enforcement. Addressing sexual harassment requires a comprehensive, gender-sensitive approach that prioritizes victim support and accountability for perpetrators.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthen Awareness and Education Programs:** The institution should implement regular workshops and seminars to educate students and staff about sexual harassment, its consequences, and prevention strategies.

2. **Enhance Reporting Mechanisms:** Establish confidential, accessible, and transparent reporting channels to encourage victims to report incidents without fear of retaliation or stigma.

3. **Support Services for Victims:** Provide counseling and psychological support services to assist victims in coping with the effects of harassment.

4. **Policy Review and Enforcement:** Review existing sexual harassment policies to ensure they are comprehensive and enforceable, and ensure strict sanctions against offenders.

5. **Promote Gender Sensitivity:** Incorporate gender sensitivity training into the institution's programs to challenge harmful cultural norms and empower all students, regardless of gender, to speak out.

6. **Engage Student Leadership:** Involve student bodies and organizations in creating a safe campus culture and peer support systems.

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