

SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION: A TOOL FOR OPPRESSING FEMALE STUDENTS BY MALE LECTURERS IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

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Abstract

*This research elucidates female students' sexual victimization experiences with male lecturers in the Nigerian institutions of higher learning. It provides cases of the culprits (male lecturers) threatening the victims (female students) with either low grades or total failure in particular subjects, once they reject the lecturers' offer of sexual promiscuity. Analysis of how numerous similar cases conventionally gained popularity with what is termed "Sex-for-Grades" or "Sex-for-marks" incidences was revealed. The article further makes allusions to some practices that make some female students falling victims of such decadence, and the actions of both the schools and government to curb the menace. **Keywords:** male lecturers, female Students, sexual abuse, victimization, institutions of higher learning*

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INTRODUCTION

In general, institutions of learning – schools (public and private) are formal organizations into which students gain admissions with the mindset to – acquire desired skills, increase knowledge, gather crucial experiences, understand cultural norms, develop moral and societal values, as well as knowing their legal rights in the society. In many such cases, teachers/lecturers are therefore enjoined to play their roles accordingly with enthusiasm, honesty, trustworthiness, competence and professional ethical conducts. Teachers/lecturers are expected to teach, guide, supervise and secure the well-being of their pupils/students, and to ensure that their safety is guaranteed within the nooks and crannies of the school enclosure. On the contrary, however, in the Nigerian universities, there have been several cases of hue and cry by female students, where male lecturers were alleged of threatening female students (victims) with low grades and/or total

failure in particular subjects, if they refused to submit themselves to the lecturer's desire of sexual promiscuity. This is '**Victimization**,' a criminal act which can cause physical, moral, emotional and psychological damages to the victim. Hence, the laws must take its full course on the culprits (lecturers) to give the appropriate and necessary justice that is equivalent to the damage(s) that might have been caused.

DEFINITION OF VICTIMIZATION

According to the American Society of Victimology, the term *victimology* is not new. It was first used by Benjamin Mendelsohn (a French-Israeli lawyer) in 1947, as the scientific study of crime victims. Apparently, victimology is often considered a branch of criminology, and they do share much in common. To cite an analogy, just as criminology is the study of criminals. Victimology is the study of victims. Victimology, then, is the study of causes of victimization, its consequences, how the criminal justice system accommodates and assists victims, and how other elements of society, such as media, deal with crime victims. Additionally, Petherick, W. et al. (2009) described victimology as the scientific study of victims and victimization, including relationships between victims and offender, investigators, courts, corrections media, and social movements.

On the other hand, the *Dictionary.com*, refers to *victimization* – as the action of singling some one out for cruel or unjust treatment. Similarly, *Vocabulary.com* also defines victimization as an act that exploits someone (treats them unfairly). Victimization is a field that studies the process, rates, incidence and effects of inappropriate or inhumane behaviors undertaken by an offender toward the victim. A victim as used by (Petherick, W. et al., 2009) in the modern criminal justice system, is a person who has experienced loss, injury, or hardship due to the illegal action of another individual, group, or organization. Oftentimes, more importantly, in the institutions of higher learning, many female students have been oppressed and sexually assaulted by their lecturers, instructors or professors, with the purpose of awarding them better grades or assist them in successfully gaining entry into university during admission processes. Hence, many female students who have successfully passed through the terrain of tertiary institutions' education, at one time of their school years, have fallen victims of sexual abuse with some lecturers. This action is not different from what is conventionally termed "**Sex-for-Grades**" or "**Sex-for-marks**" in the Nigerian education communities, where some lecturers/professors have recently been exposed by the victims (students) in some well-known institutions of higher learning.

TRADITION OF LECTURERS' MOLESTATION OF FEMALE STUDENTS IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

Loudly and clearly, I would like to express that, crime is crime! '**Sex**', no matter how sweeter and pleasurable it may be felt or perceived to the genders (male and female) involved, it becomes a crime when either of the genders involved in such lovemaking is unwilling and seemingly forced to perform the action, either consciously or unconsciously. This is otherwise known as rape! It is a criminal act. A crime, which is an unacceptable form of behaviors (action or omission) that constitutes an offense in the way one conducts him/herself against the victim, and which is punishable by law.

To a great extent, Nigerian institutions of higher learning do share many similar features with other higher institutions across the globe. They are confronted with several contending issues, such as: accountability challenges, budget shortages, examination malpractices, students' unrest, superiority competition between and among faculty members, as well as rivalry between faculty and administration and so on. These are perennial issues within tertiary institutions.

Apart from the aforementioned issues, there are also sexual related issues between the female students (victims) and male lecturers (offenders) trending in Nigerian institutions of higher learning. Undeniably, there is virtually no academic institution in the world where such criminal act is not a matter of concern. However, what seems to make the Nigerian context different is its propensity. Many institutions of higher learning have investigated, reported and punished some lecturers who were found guilty of the same crime. Studies reveal that, the categories of students who oftentimes fall victims of such decadence are: (1) fresh students who are seeking admission into universities; (2) students with poor academic performances; (3) students who are being deliberately victimized by their lecturers and (4) those students who are not punctual in class.

Firstly, the Section (17) subsection 2(a) of the Nigerian Constitution of 1979 states that, every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law. This reveals that, in terms of social objectives, with relevance to academics and school communities, no lecturer/professor is expected to victimize or maltreat his or her students, talkless of assaulting them sexually. In the same vein, the law does not equally grant favor to the students over their lecturers to make them a targeted scapegoat. Rather, the law makes provisions for both to operate upon egalitarian principles without victimizing or oppressing each other in any way.

Secondly, the Section (31) Subsection (1) of the same Constitution (*under the Right to dignity of human person*) states that, every individual is entitled to have respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly – Subsection 1(a), (b) and (c) respectively state that – no person shall be subjected to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment; no person shall be held in slavery or servitude; and, no person shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour. But in a situation whereby a male lecturer is found to have wrongly and excessively exercise his authority over his female student, either for grade/mark manipulation or other purposes, it shows that such a lecturer has grossly violated the above sections of the constitution, and must be prosecuted for it.

In fairness, considering the psychological, mental and emotional damages the victims might suffer from the obnoxious behaviors of sexual abuse, one can possibly emphasize that sexual victimization related offences should attract severe punishment than just suspending, dismissing or slashing the salaries of the miscreant. Like I mentioned earlier, sexual victimization is a criminal act. Therefore, it should not be treated as a pardonable case and/or with frivolity.

Meanwhile, while I am trying to express my concern about the torment some female students do encounter with their male lecturers in the institutions of higher learning. I might be biased if I tend to deny the fact that, there do exist some female students who believe that they can possibly use what they have (their physical body) to entice their lecturers in order to get what they want (passing grades), in some subjects/courses. The reports compiled by the U.S Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000), from NCVS (National Crime Victimization Statistics), reveals that men are victimized by broad range of sexual assaults that

include incidents in which they are grabbed or touched “inappropriately,” sexually threatened, or even “flashed.”

Conversely, it would equally be wrong and unfair to assume that, all male lecturers possess the spirit of lascivious assault, and seek to molest their female students. To be candid, there is still a believe that those lecturers who are perpetrating such evils in the tertiary education communities are very minimal, yet, the consequences of their decadence forever print indelible memories on the minds of the victims.

THE GLOBAL NATURE AND CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

In recent times, stories have been flying around social media concerning the situation of things in Nigerian universities, specifically, cases of sexual abuse of female students by male lecturers. The society has been seriously condemning the attitudes of those male lecturers who use position of authority to take advantage of their female students for sexual favors while they concomitantly give passing grades as a reward on their subjects/courses. In as much as this act is condemnable and also being considered professionally unethical, then, there are however more issues it.

The society should not look at these incidents from only one angle. Parents send their children to school to learn, but not to be harassed and sexually assaulted by their lecturers. At the same time, tertiary institutions should not only be considered as learning environments but also a place where students fraternize. It could therefore be assumed that, it is not impossible for cases of sexual immoralities to permeate female students’ environments, most especially when they begin to take decisions on their own and become over-socialized on campus.

In the past, cases of sexual harassment, sexual pressure or ‘*sex-for-grades*’ were very uncommon. Now, the questions we should ask ourselves, are: (1) Why are sexual abuse cases so frequent these days? (2) Why are male lecturers becoming ogled or unreasonably attracted to their female students?

Unbelievably, the attitudes of the present day students toward learning could have a great impact on the cause of this moral decadence in the university system. For instance, from my personal experience as a teacher, I can express that, students are no longer as studious as how it used to be in the past. In those days, it was very absurd for someone to miss lectures as well as not being able to read for at least three to four hours in a day. It was absurd not to go to the school library to study in a day. As a matter of fact, at that point in time, students used to have permanent seats at the library. Campus parties truly existed, but, all social activities had specific time allotted for them. Students attended classes regularly, bought textbooks and/or went to the library in search for those they could not afford to buy. They organized daily study groups. The weak students would not hesitate to meet the stronger ones for tutoring. These were the typical features of the academic environments I passed through.

Conversely, nowadays, the millennials in the academic institutions, are mostly distracted by a lot of things: they are accustomed to using android cellphones which they check every now and then when lectures are in progress. Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Snapchat, Gamings, and many other social media platforms including selfies (photos) are taking most of their times. The rate at which most of the students abscond classes is very alarming (*The Guardian*, 2019). They prefer to be somewhere else performing social activities rather than being in the lecture room. As a result of these, some universities have gone ahead to put a law which states that, for a student to attain and hold his/her studentship or eligibility of enrollment till the end of a semester, he/she

must attain 80 to 90% attendance. This measure is put in place to give students a sense of responsibility that would enable them to attend classes regularly. But, sadly, you would still find the majority of them defaulting. A student who does not attend classes regularly is susceptible to failure and in order to avoid failure, some student do make themselves vulnerable to seeking undue help (*The Guardian, 2019*). Uninterestingly, some students are in the habit of sitting back at the student centres (campus social arenas) fraternizing while lectures are on going. It is therefore important to note that, students who pay little or no attention to lectures and other class activities are more likely to seek extra help and/or present themselves for sex than students who participated actively in lectures.

In additional, another factor that is possibly causing sexual abuse on campuses, but, which is being ideologically ignored is the area of indecent dresses (partial nudity). To be factual, the way and manner in which many female students dress on campus could make it difficult for randy lecturers to resist them. Frankly speaking, it could be somewhat difficult for a lecturer who is already struggling to control himself to resist the appearance of some female students who wear these modern clothes (transparent clothing materials, micro-mini skirts, spaghetti blouses, low-neck blouses exposing the breasts, etc) while parading themselves on campus? In his work, Ogunbameru (2006) enumerated a number of factors that motivate the perpetuation of sexual abuse in Nigerian tertiary education. These include: indecent dressing pattern among female students, lust, pursuit of happiness, lack of norm of morality, lack of conscience, pursuit of pleasure, personality disorder, immaturity, abuse of power, and suffering from demonology. From the above instances, it could therefore be assumed that students sometimes deliberately make themselves vulnerable to sexual abuse. That being said, still, I am neither claiming that it is normal, appropriate and sensible for lecturers to get carried away by their students' fashion nor trying to brand raping that are supposedly punishable under that law. Rather, I am just giving different challenging situations that are possibly prompting sexual abuse cases on campuses.

In reality, without exaggeration, it is seemingly difficult to substantially establish that the persistent rate of sexual decadence that is traditionally termed "*Sex-for-Grades*" or "*Sex-for-marks*" culture in the Nigeria's institutions of higher learning will vanish anytime soon. Rather, several similar cases of such scandalous acts are being exposed daily by the victims from various campuses across the nation. It looks almost impossible to express that, there is no institutions of higher learning where this pandemic has not caught on.

Historically, one of the pitiful moments of such experiences was the one I observed with one of my classmates, a close friend of mine, in the mid 1990s during my college days. Unknowingly to me, she had been battling with a frustrating sexual victimization issue with one of our lecturers in the department since her first year in the college. She remained silent over it, and pretended to assume that all about her academics was smooth while she continued with school activities as normal. Perhaps, her silence was the major cause of her vulnerability. This particular lecturer insisted that, unless he had a sexual intercourse with her, she could not get a passing grade in his subject. Meanwhile, In order for her (the victim) to avert the evil of receiving failing grades in this sadistic pleasure-seeking lecturer's subject, she devoted more time to reading the subject. But unfortunately, her efforts was not commendable by the known enemy. When the results were released at the end of the semester, her efforts was terribly jeopardized. She failed the subject woefully. This frustrating action continued in the subsequent semesters that the victim had to retake the subject over and over again, yet, without making any success just because she resisted an offer of sexual decadence with the lecturer. This is what I called '*Sexual Victimization.*' Categorically speaking, before our graduation from the College in

the late 1990s, I did not see any sign that the victim's approach to single-handedly solve the matter with the lecturer offered her a glimmer of hope. And aside from this case which was observable to me, many other female students could have fallen victims of the same trauma but remained unknown either to their students or school authority.

However, this case being cited, does not mean to express that, sexual related offences are only being committed, observable or happening in Nigeria's institutions of higher learning. Many similar cases have been reported in different parts of the world. It is not an unfamiliar issue in the developed nations, such as – Australia, United Kingdom and United States of America. Morley, L. and K. Lussier (2009) stated that, sexual harassment is a global issue that has permeated the fabrics of higher education institutions and many workplaces where human beings (male and female) interact. Sexual harassment in universities and other higher education institutions is not limited to Africa.

Uninterestingly, this menace of sexual victimization in the institutions of higher learning is mostly rampant among the senior lecturers. Many of these perpetrators constitute the hegemonic group in their faculties. This chance therefore makes it easier for them to inappropriately use the influence of their position of authority to perpetrate the evil. Hence, they remain untampered with for a longer period of time. The harasser is usually older, powerful and possesses something of value and beneficial to the harassed (Taiwo, M. O. et al. 2014).

In the past, the situation was so challenging to the victims to the extent that many were defenseless unconditionally. If any student fell victim of such trauma, she would completely become helpless, hostile and frustrated. To such students, education seemingly looked meaningless, stressful and irrelevant. Some even went further to blame the periods they had stayed on campus. They preferred marriage institutions to higher institutions. This challenging situation sometimes prompted them to express a misguided statement, that, “*after all, woman's education ends up in the kitchen.*” Transparently, ‘**The Punch**’, a popular Nigeria's Newspaper, published on October 11, 2019, reported on the research conducted in United Kingdom regarding the consequences of sexual misconducts in our society. Thus;

“Studies conducted under the auspices of UNESCO reveal that sexual harassment of female students result in outcomes ranging from shame, loss of self-esteem, unwanted pregnancies, poor academic performance and, in some extreme cases, suicide. Additionally, a United Kingdom parliamentary report states that, sexual harassment experienced at university can lead to psychological, emotional and physical harm, as well as negatively impacting victims' studies.”

Concisely, the escalation of sexual decadence between randy lecturers (offenders) and female students (victims) in many of the Nigeria's institutions of higher learning purportedly lie on the complete lack of policies guiding the levels and manners of interactions between the concerned fellows. In the past, unfortunately, some lecturers had greatly used this insidious behavior to inflict injuries on a lot of female students in the process of seeking sexual favors from them, to the extent that such actions nearly made it impossible for many students to fulfil their academic achievements, while a host of others manageably graduated with poor grades. According to Taiwo, M. O. et al. (2014), they expressed that, sexual victimization is often associated with assault, bullying, coercion, discrimination, favoritism; exploitation and

intimidation as vices that play out in the sexual encounter leaving the victims with long-term pains that devastate their psychological well-being. They further stated that, sexual harassment undermines the integrity of the academic environment, and prevents its victims from achieving their full potential.

In an attempt to properly protect the female students from randy lecturers' vulnerability. Recently, the senate proposed legislation on sexual harassment, and this bill has passed the second reading (**PREMIUM TIMES**, 2019). Here;

The bill titled, "A Bill for an Act to Prevent, Prohibit and redress Sexual Harassment of Students in Tertiary Educational Institutions and for Other Matters Connected Therewith 2019" has 27 clauses. The bill proposes up to 14 years in jail, with a minimum of five years imprisonment, without an option of fine, for any educator who commits sexual offences in tertiary institutions. It also defines sexual offences as including: Sexual intercourse with a student or demands for sex from a student or a prospective student or intimidating or creating a hostile or offensive environment for a student by soliciting for sex or making sexual advances. Other forms of sexual harassment identified in the bill are "grabbing, hugging, kissing, rubbing, stroking, touching, pinching the breasts or hair or lips or hips or buttocks or any other sensual part of the body of a student; or sending by hand or courier or electronic or any other means naked or sexually explicit pictures or videos or sex related objects to a student, and whistling or winking at a student or screaming, exclaiming, joking or making sexually complimentary or uncomplimentary remarks about a student's physique or stalking a student."

According to a report from the (**PREMIUM TIMES**, 2019), University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, was the first university in Nigeria to unveil a policy against sexual predation in the country's tertiary institutions. The policy document defines the rules of engagement between lecturers, administrators and students, including visitors to the university. It states what constitutes sexual abuse and the actions to be taken against the culprits who wittingly and unwittingly violate its provisions in the line of duty. Thus, the University's Vice Chancellor, Professor Ndowa Lale, advised lecturers whose trousers' zippers were not properly sewn to approach their tailors for necessary amendments in order to avoid cases of unworthy behaviors and/or infatuation against their female students. He further emphasized under the established rules of fair hearing that, any lecturer who is accused of sexual misconduct would be presumed guilty until such allegation is proved otherwise. Conversely, any female student who harasses a lecturer to lobby for an undeserved mark/grade should be ready to dance to the music accordingly when she is caught in the act. During the presentation of the same Sexual Harassment Policy Document, Nwadiuto Akani, a professor at the Department of Paediatrics, gave a hint that, sexual misconduct often starts when a lecturer and student begin to call each other humorous names, such as: babe, baby, honey, darling, dearest, sweetie and sweetheart. She also added that what constitute sexual harassment include gestures, like – hugging, blowing kissing sound, touching of female student's body and sending unsolicited

messages (*PREMIUM TIMES*, 2019). Similarly, Onosaye (2019) reveals that sexual harassment of female students' were carried out through inappropriate sexual comments, unwanted touching of female students' breasts, tapping of female students' buttocks and enticing of female students with high scores for sex amongst others. From the victims' perspectives, Weiss (2010) mentioned some nonclassifying sexual victimization incidents which include – sexual coercion without force, “inappropriate” touching, indecent exposure and sexual harassment, as broader range of unwanted sexual situations.

At a recent time, in another university, specifically, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria. The institution was said to have reportedly sacked eight lecturers found guilty of assaulting their students sexually. The University's Vice Chancellor, Professor Eno Ibanga, explained that the decision to sack those malefactors (lecturers) was taken after a thorough investigation was made on their cases. He swore to run an institution in which its atmosphere would be free of sexual misconducts. This is to send a strong signal to other randy lecturers who have not yet been exposed to understand what is awaiting them in the future, in case they are also found guilty of similar offences (*PREMIUM TIMES*, 2019).

It is worth emphasizing that sexual harassment is not peculiar to Nigerian higher institutions, neither is it unique to campuses. It happens in workplaces, media houses, among politicians, in the entertainment industry and even in religious organizations.

In the global context, the results of sexual assault survey conducted by Revolt Sexual Assault (a national charity in United Kingdom) in partnership with The Student Room (UK's largest online student community) in 2018 reveals that, out of the 4,500 students and graduates from the 153 different institutions who took part in the survey, almost two-thirds (62%) of them had experienced sexual abuse at UK universities. According to Hannah Price, the founder of the Revolt Campaign, she expresses her encounter regarding sexual misconducts, as follows; “While at university I experienced everything from harassment and ‘casual’ groping to rape.”

Similarly, the *New York Times* (September 21, 2015), reported that, 1 in 4 women experience sex assault on campus. Evidently, in response to a survey commissioned by the Association of American Universities, 27.2% of female college seniors reported that, since entering college, they had experienced some kind of unwanted sexual contact – anything from touching to rape – carried out by incapacitation, usually due to alcohol or drugs, or by force. Nearly half of those, 13.5%, had experienced penetration, attempted penetration or oral sex.

According to the report from the *Australian Human Rights Commission* (March 5, 2020), in 1984, the Australian Government introduced the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, which specifically prohibited sexual harassment at work. Since that time, it has been said that, successive Sex Discrimination Commissioners have identified the elimination of workplace sexual harassment as a key priority. As a matter of fact, since 2003, the *Australian Human Rights Commission* has conducted four periodic surveys on the national experience of sexual harassment. The survey revealed that, when the Commission conducted a national survey on the prevalence of sexual harassment at Australian universities in 2016, one in two university students was found to have been sexually harassed, at least once in a university setting. The report, released in 2017, also noted massive under-reporting of the problem. The survey found out that 94 percent of students who were sexually harassed did not make a formal report or complaint to their university. But when Australia released the problem of under-reporting, a campaign to raise awareness of sexual assault and sexual harassment was initiated in its 39 universities. It also went further to provide better support services for students, encouraging universities to share resources on best practices.

SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND THE LEGAL SYSTEMS

Nowadays, undeniably however, if we critically examine the ways and manners in which the younger generations convey themselves in the societies, it might look difficult to apportion all the blames of erroneous misconducts on the lecturers. In other word, if parents fail to instill good moral behaviors in their children, it might take longer period for them to take to corrections. For instance, a female student who oftentimes engaged in – examination malpractices, less devotion to academic activities, and lack punctuality in classrooms during her high school years could find it more difficult to make a headway at higher institutions. Hence, such students would tend to become seductive to her male lecturer in order to achieve success in the subject. Generally speaking, this action is condemnable as it reduces the quality of education in the concerned department(s) and the school at large.

Contrariwise, the experience becomes both bitter and sour for the (victim) female student when the lecturer/professor begins to frustrate her by threatening such student with failing grades in a particular subject/course unless she succumbs or surrenders to have a sexual intercourse with him.

In former times, many female students who fell victims of such occurrences suffered great psychological and emotional damages from the hands of those evil-minded, pleasure-seeking lecturers (offenders). Many of those victims suddenly became depressed. They lost the existing good interpersonal relationships already built with their classmates, and eventually developed poor academic performances. While some victims might experience delay in graduation due to the lecturer's deliberate giving of failing grades, others would summon courage by taking a bolder step, dropped their programs and went to another institutions of higher learning to start their programs afresh. This act is culpable and reprehensible. Evidently, it violates the Section (31) Subsection (1) of the Nigerian Constitution of 1979 (*under the Right to dignity of human person*) which states that, every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person (See the explanation above).

Similar to the good moral behaviors and gratifying ethical conducts stated in the Nigerian Constitution of the 1979. The Federal Republic of Nigeria's **National Policy on Education**, Section 1, subsection 4, also expresses the fairness of egalitarianism to all citizens, thus; this philosophy of Nigerian education is based on the development of individual into a morally sound and effective citizen and the provision of equal opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the basic, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system. Furthermore, Section 1, subsection (9a) also states that, the quality of instruction at all levels of education shall be oriented towards inculcating – respects for the worth and dignity of the individuals. But considering how some male lecturers handle some of their female students, it is obvious that these sections of the National Policy on Education are deliberately violated. Some female students (victims) are being utterly frustrated, poorly managed and unfairly treated if they refuse to accept a lecturer's offer of concupiscence.

According to the report from *Cable News Network (CNN)* on December 17, 2018, a Nigerian Professor, Richard Akindele was accused of demanding five (5) sex sessions from one of his female students, Miss Monica Osagie, 23, to be able to award her a passing grade, at the

Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. The case gained momentum after Osagie's exclusive interview with CNN. Osagie explained that she secretly taped a phone conversation with Professor Akindele to gather enough evidence against him. After proper investigation, which lasted for one month. The committee that was set up by the University to probe the allegation stated that;

“Professor Akindele’s actions in requesting for sexual favors from Miss Osagie to change her examination scores was scandalous behavior that has brought ridicule to the name of the University and has tarnished the reputation of the University, as it portrays the University as an institution where its teachers and examiners trade marks for sexual favors.”

In addition, the statement signed by the Vice Chancellor of the University (OAU), Professor Eyitope Ogunbodede, expresses how the panel arrived at a certain decision on the audio conversation that happened between Professor Richard Akindele and Miss Monica Osagie as follows: Around the 7th of April, 2018 or thereabout, there was an audio conversation between a man and a lady which was sensationally trending on social media because of its explicit sexual tone.

According to the statement, **“after thorough investigation, it was discovered that the said audio conversation was between a lecturer and a student of our University (OAU) who were later identified to be Professor Richard Akindele and Miss Monica Osagie.”**

Undoubtedly, from the audio conversation, the University Management set up a committee mandating it to submit its report within a week. It also took a step further by issuing a query to Professor Richard Akindele requesting him to explain his role in the saga, and was subsequently suspended pending the final determination of the case in line with the University regulations.

Hereafter, the committee invited both Professor Akindele and Miss Monica Osagie for hearing. After this is finally done. Its then submitted its final report to the Management of the institution (OAU).

In order to remove the elements of doubt from the judgement, and also to clear air to the public on the issue of an alleged cover-up, the Vice-Chancellor, on two occasions, issued press releases, personally signed by him. The press releases were maximally published by virtually all the media houses and aired by Radio and Television Stations across the globe.

Finally, on Thursday, 14th of June, 2018, The University Senate considered the Committee's Findings that:

- (1) Professor Akindele had an inappropriate relationship with his student Miss Monica Osagie. This was established through their conversation in the audio recording; his reply to the query; the oral evidence; and the printed 'WhatsApp conversations' tendered before the Committee.
- (2) He had acted in a manner that is seen to have compromised his position as a teacher and examiner, in that, his conversations with Miss Osagie were about examination scores and inducement of favor for the alteration of examination scores.
- (3) He offered to change Miss Osagie's purported “33%” result to a pass mark in consideration for sexual favors, this was established in the audio recording which he admitted.

- (4) His claim that Miss Osagie knew that she had passed with a score of ‘45’ but was seeking to score an ‘A’ and that this led to him being sexually harassed by Miss Osagie cannot be supported by any evidence.
- (5) Professor Akindele’s actions in requesting for sexual favors from Miss Osagie to change her examination scores was scandalous behavior that has brought ridicule to the name of the University and has tarnished the reputation of the University, as it portrays the University as an institution where its teachers and examiners trade marks for sexual favors.
- (6) From the evidence, Miss Osagie had no idea that she scored ‘45’, a pass mark as later claimed by Professor Akindele, although she later found out she did not fail the course.
- (7) Professor Akindele’s claims that he reported Miss Osagie’s ‘harassment’ to his colleagues cannot be supported by any evidence as all his colleagues denied it and one mentioned that she only talked about the matter with him after the audio recording was released over the internet.
- (8) Professor Akindele operated in a position of power and authority over Miss Osagie and as such sexually harassed her.
- (9) Professor Akindele was liable for all the allegations of misconduct levelled against him.

Accordingly, on Wednesday June 20th, 2018, the Senate, having found Professor Richard Akindele liable on all the allegations levelled against him for gross misconduct, recommended that he should be dismissed from the services of the University.

Of course, his dismissal from service did not end the case for him. In 2018, after pleading guilty to four criminal charges, as filed against him by the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Offences Related Commission (ICPC), at the Federal High Court, Osogbo, Osun State, Southwest, Nigeria, Professor Richard Akindele was convicted and sentenced to two (2) years imprisonment. ICPC is a Nigeria’s Federal Government Agency that was established to fight against corruption and other inappropriate conducts in Nigerian society. With reference to the documents observed by the *CNN* (December 17, 2018), the counts against Professor Akindele include – demanding sexual gratification from his student, soliciting sexual benefit from the victim to pass her, deleting parts of the Whatsapp conversation between him and Osagie and falsification of age.

According to Justice Maureen Onyetenu, she accentuated that,

“The professor needed to be taught a lesson to serve as a deterrent to those who abuse their authority. I know the mental torture many of our female students have been subjected to by the likes of the respondent. The adverse effect of such action is huge. Many of his like have been awarding passing marks/grades to those students that are ready to warm their beds, thereby releasing half-baked graduates into the society. It is a clear message to all those who harass students to stop it. If they don’t, we will come after them with the law. This brings some measure of relief to students in the system if this harassment occurs.”

Conclusively, as reported by *The Punch Newspaper* (April 4, 2020), being confirmed from a reliable source at the Nigerian Prisons Service (NPS). Professor Richard Akindele, a lecturer at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), who was ***“jailed for sexual harassment has been released from prison after serving a two-year term.”***

Similar to the above issue, but, in another institution of higher learning in Nigeria, precisely, University of Lagos (UNILAG), Akoka, Yaba, Lagos State. On Thursday, February 20, 2020, an Ikeja High Court sentenced a part-time lecturer in the University, Mr Akin Baruwa, to 21 years imprisonment for raping an 18-year-old admission seeker.

Justice Josephine Oyefeso, while giving the judgement described Mr Baruwa’s action as ***‘heinous’*** crime. Justice Oyefeso held that the sentence should serve as a deterrent to others. She emphasized that;

“The offence committed against this young lady was a violation of her chastity which would have left huge emotional scars which I pray and hope she will recover. I cannot begin to imagine the physical and mental trauma she has had to endure from the man whom she considered her father’s friend, a community leader who should have known better. This is a shame. This is a crime that not only offends the survivor, it offends her family, it offends the society at large, it also offends God.

I find you Baruwa Afeez Akin guilty of rape contrary to Section 258 (1) of the Criminal Law of Lagos, 2011, and I hereby convict you accordingly. You (Baruwa Afeez Akin), are hereby sentenced to 21 years imprisonment.”

Having lawfully criticized one of the unacceptable behaviors of some lecturers in the Nigerian education communities. Yet, in many ways, Nigerian institutions of higher learning are still very much similar to other tertiary institutions in the world. For instance, in terms of lecturer’s–students relationships, it could still be affirmed that, many of the Nigerian lecturers do give fair treatments to their students. They are very attentive, friendly and helpful. At the same time, the professionally unethical behaviors (sexual abuse) which some lecturers are perpetrating on campuses, are also being uniformly performed in other tertiary institutions across the globe, most especially, in the developed world.

To understand what makes up sexual abuse in the US legal ways, the United States of America, Office of Civil Rights (2019), the Federal Law (**Title VII of the Civil Rights Law of 1964 and Title IX of the Education** Amendments of 1972) defines what constitutes Sexual Harassment Policy, as – unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has a purpose or effect of interfering with one’s academic or work performance or social world by creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive, or violent environment. The unwelcome actions such as the following are condemned as inappropriate behaviors and therefore meet the definition of sexual harassment:

- Sexual pranks, or repeated sexual teasing, jokes, or innuendo, in person or via e-mail;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;

- Touching or grabbing of a sexual nature;
- Repeatedly standing too close to or brushing up against a person;
- Repeatedly asking a person to socialize during off-duty hours when the person has said no or has indicated he or she is not interested;
- Giving gifts or leaving objects that are sexually suggestive;
- Repeatedly making sexually suggestive gestures; and
- Making or posting sexually demeaning or offensive pictures, cartoons or other materials in the workplace.

The above definitions of sexual harassment shows that the modus operandi on the incident is much more stern in the United States of America. It is obvious that, universities are, by law, required to protect their students against any form of sexual assaults. The critical requirement involves creating many uninhibited and non-bureaucratic accesses for students to report sexual related offences to the university authority. It is therefore, mandatory for the universities governing councils to institute mechanisms that will ensure the turpitude is passionately accosted.

CONCLUSION

With the escalating “*Sex-for-Grades*” or “*Sex-for-marks*” scourge that is silently poisoning the academic pursuits of some female students in our tertiary institutions. The institutions of higher learning are expected to constitute an appropriate professional code of ethics that would judiciously guide female students’-lecturer relationship, which must be well monitored.

But, firstly, we need to understand that, no matter how strict the enacted policy could be, one thing that might likely and secretly jeopardize its operation capacity is the ability of the lecturer’s (offender’s) colleagues and school managements to use their collegial influence to conceal their member’s notoriety. Hence, a turn around of the atrocities would set-in. What do I mean? Some of the lecturer’s colleagues who might have seen a clearer picture of what is transpiring between the lecturer (offender) and the female student (victim) but do not like to come in-between the matter, sometimes give an intimidating advice to the victims, by saying, “*Just go and settle yourself with him.*” This statement often slumps the victims into the dark abyss of sexual abuse, leaving them in a position in which they can no longer seek possible solution to their vulnerability. In some cases, for them to be able to avert the taruma of sexual victimization, some of them could be provided an option of bailout instead of sexual requirements, while many institutions’ authorities apparently focus on different directions.

To properly address the issues of sexual victimization in the institutions of higher learning, the concerned school authorities would need to – improve on their discipline strategies, provide clear information on how to report incidences of sexual abuse, and offer greater support for the victims. Tertiary institutions should encourage the use of anonymous reporting tools. There should be awareness campaigns on how to report cases of harassment on campuses. Students

should be encouraged to avoid mortification, and emboldened to come forward to tell their stories without fear of being intimidated, embarrassed or punished.

Female students (victims) should be encouraged by the school authorities to freely express their worries over such sensitive matter, and be protected from the act of sexual victimization. Sexual abuse should not be considered as women's issue because they are the mostly negatively affected. Rather, it should be viewed as a societal issue which every society should contribute to address.

By critically looking at the harm sexual misconduct is causing in our society, in relation to its damages, it could therefore be suggested that, beyond suspending or sacking of randy lecturers, they should equally be ostracized. The federal government agencies in charge of tertiary institution's education and the affected university community should come together to make sexual harassment policy that would protect the female students on campuses as well as securing their future from the actions of sexual predation lecturers.

I, therefore call on the attention of the parents and journalists, to look holistically, not at one side of the story but at both sides by encouraging the students to uphold good practices of academics and not to be distracted by social activities, social media, and indecent fashion.

I am also appealing to male lecturers to uphold the appropriate ethical conducts of their profession. They should not hesitate to cry out in good time when experiencing any pressure from any female student whether directly or indirectly. The issue of seducing university lecturers should not be encouraged.

Sexual victimization in education Communities is totally condemnable. In fact, it is fundamentally unacceptable. It should therefore be prevented and abolished.

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