Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal – Vol.7, No.7
Publication Date: July 25, 2020
DOI:10.14738/assrj.77.8726.
Olusegun, G. F. (2020). Impact of Poverty and Religion on Sexual Coercion experienced by University Female Students. A*dvances in Social Sciences Research Journal,* 7*(7)* 852-858.

Impact of Poverty and Religion on Sexual Coercion experienced by University Female Students

Dr. Grace Funmilayo Olusegun
(Ph.D), Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the impact of religion and poverty on sexual coercion experienced among University female students in Nigeria Universities. The descriptive design of the survey type was employed for the study. The sample consisted of 1,200 sexually coerced female students, selected from nine universities drawn from South West using purposive sampling technique, simple random and stratified random sampling techniques. An instrument titled 'Sexual Coercion Questionnaire' was used. Test re-test method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. Analysis of Variance and t-test were used to test the hypotheses generated at 0.05 level of significance. It was revealed that sexual coercion experienced by female university students will depend on the type of religion practiced. It was also found that perpetrators will sexually coerce female students irrespective of their financial status. It was therefore recommended that the intensity of religious activities must be increased in Nigerian universities. More so, Professional Counselors should team up with the University administrators to fight sexual coercive behaviours among University Students and that anyone found guilty of sexual coercion should be punished.

Keywords: Poverty, Religion, Coercive Acts, University, Female, Students.

INTRODUCTION

The different form of sexual coercion is on increase, it has become a serious societal problem in Nigeria societies. It is commonly transpired among university students regardless of their gender or status particularly females. Practicing a religion and poverty has been ascribed to the occurrences and the wicked and selfish sexual acts aimed at exercising power and dominion over the victim has been triggering lots of damages in the life of female university students that could result to psychological shock, blackmail and intimidations which could destroy their ambition.

Fasting (2005), defined sexual coercion as any form of sexual behaviour or suggestion, in verbal, non-verbal or physical forms, whether deliberate or not, which is viewed by the person experiencing it as undesired or forced. Sexual coercion takes the form of forcible sexual actions and other sexual activities by threat of punishment such as award of poor examination grades, withholding examination grades and threat of failure as opined by Bello (2005). According to Guild (2009), he viewed that sexual coercion is categorized as the use of menacing verbal pressure or

abuse of authority that includes a range of sexual coercive behaviours such as undesirable touch of parts of the body such as breast and backside, beating the buttocks, scratching or parting of one's back or grabbing the waist ,unwelcome sexual arousal, undesirable embracing, annoying sexual comment, uninvited sexual jokes, unwelcome gestures, fondling, stalking, sexy talks, forced contacts, attempt by someone to force someone to have sex, tricked into having sex, rape (forced penetration).

Sexual coercion is a vital public health issue due to its undesirable association with social and health outcome. It has been perceived to be one of the social problems in Nigerian societies, mainly among universities students that pose inspiring questions on student's moral level and degrading the moral fabric of this country. The level of occurrence of sexual violence continues to be at the increase daily without check cutting across every female student regardless of their age and class level. The regular occurrence of sexual coercion is the acute damage done to the victims physically, socially, emotionally, and psychologically. It encompasses fear, pains, anxiety, worries, depression, and academic helplessness. Sexual coercion among University female students has now become a matter of concern to guidance counsellors.

In Olusegun perception (2010), sexual coercion is an offense against human sexual rights that affects the lives of many females either directly or indirectly at some point in their lives. Tyaden and Thoennes (2000) indicate that one out of six females in the general population will experience attempted or complete sexual assault in their lifetime. According to Koss, Gidycs and Wisniewski (2000), the number of affected females sometimes increases to one in four when bearing in mind the populace of campus females. World Health Organization define sexual coercion as any sexual act, effort to obtain a sexual deeds, unwelcome sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or if not directed against a person's sexuality using coercion by any person irrespective of their relationship to the victim in any situation. Sexual activity is devoted to the institution of marriage in human being and it is a common expression of married life and a means towards growth in personal life, it is not meant to be used as instrument of punishment. In fact, the nonappearance of sexual activities in a marriage could find no moral justification. Consequently, any procedure of sexual activity without shared agreement is coercive. The fact remains that sexual coercion is an unwelcome sexual practice usually directed to females against their violation living them with agonizing and memorable consequences.

Moronkola and Odu (1999), described poverty is the lack of crucial and basic needs like food, clothe, school fees and money for the up-keeping by female students which enticed them into situations that increase sexual coercion. As reported by Omorodion and Olusanya (2008), that poverty forces many students into circumstances that carry a relatively high risk of sexual coercion. As Faun (2007) supported Omorodion and Olusanya (2008) view that poverty creates huge pressure on female students when they find it difficult to get their basic needs, money to buy textbooks, handouts, levels in class, dresses and money for vital things that will be useful in the course of their study. Hence, to achieve good grades will be difficult, all of which render them vulnerable to sexual coercion from those who can promise these things. Omale (2000) opined that poor female students are also at danger of intimate partner violence, of which sexual coercion is often a manifestation.

An essential ingredient of man's life is religion. Lavinger, Miller and Lavinger (2008) made it clear that religion is an essential ingredient of man's life. It was declared that religion is a delicate issue

and there are diverse beliefs by various religious bodies. Yahaya (1991) presents the position of Islam on sexual coercion. He believed that the body of people are well versed in both western and Islamic education and therefore encourage better understanding of the Koran's ruling and teaching of Prophet Mohammed which strictly go against sexual coercion. To them, sexual activities are suitable only within marriage with consent. Conferring to the Holy Bible, standard sexual activities are permitted; rather, it is an essential ingredient of marriage.

Sexual practices such as sexual coercion, sexual harassment, sexual violence, premarital sex, extramarital sex, flirting, masturbation, promiscuity and various forms of sexual activities without consent is counter to religion. If University students could familiarize to religion ethics, sexual coercion might be eliminated. Reports from Manduro (1989) shown that Nigeria society is dominated by two types of religions; Christianity and Islam. They are the key source of Nigerian religious value systems, which upset sexual attitudes and behaviour. Christianity for instance, expects men and women to hold in high esteem the religious value of sexual purity. Girls are expected to be virgins at the period of marriage. Islam allows female children to be given in marriage before the age of puberty. These practices ensure that the female child is a virgin at marriage. All these analogy emphasize that sexual coercion is intolerable. Owuamanam (1995), stressed that religion is one of the key factors that had helped tradition to preserve sex in Africa closely related with procreation. As at today, religion have been created to produce inhibiting result on youth sexual behaviour, the more religious youths are, the less likely they are to engage in most undesirable sexual activities.

Kensly (1990) evidently revealed that religion has socially significant consequences and can make a difference in the social orientations of University students and who also established the fact that moral reasoning influences a persons' lifestyle, choice of career and the type of sexual attitudes one might exhibit. The strength of sexual coercion in any University may depend on the discipline, moral and religious standard of the students. It appears as if Islamic and Christian religion will have impact on sexual coercion experienced by female students because it seems that students from religious parentages were skilled to run away from sexual activities that are not consensual. While, Galadima (2006) opined that when students get to university environment, they tend to be inspired by a couple of issues such as peer influence and what is happening in their environment.

Sexual practices such as sexual coercion, sexual harassment, sexual violence, premarital sex, extramarital sex, flirting, masturbation, promiscuity and various forms of sexual activities without agreement is against religion. If students in the university could adapt to religion ethics, sexual coercion might be eliminated. Religion is one of the factors that determine the vulnerability of female students to sexual coercion as asserted by Clark (1988). He detected that psychologists had seen religion to have a very progressive effect on University students' sexual problems. Religion, he said releases University students especially females from unnecessary sense of sin by admonishing them with the fact that other people might be watching them in their act of sexual immoralities and confusing them from involving with sexual activities by supplying them with the sense of purpose.

As found in Ajuwon, Olaleye, Banji Faromoju and Ladipo (2006) study of sexual behaviour and experiences of sexual coercion among students in three states in Northern Nigeria that Christians and Muslims were less likely to experience sexual coercion than students who belonged to other traditional religion. Although Brucker and Bearman do not believe that religion has any important

influence in the sexual coercion of University students. It was detected by this researcher that there are some students with Christian teaching, yet, they displayed sexual coercive behaviour. But, it appears that larger percentage of those from Christian homes refrained from sexual coercive acts.
Based on the foregoing, the study examined impact of poverty and religion on sexual coercion experienced by university female students. The study specifically examined:

i. if religion differentiate university female students in their experience of sexual coercion; and
ii. if financial status differentiate university female students in their experience of sexual coercion

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were postulated for this study

1. Religion will not significantly differentiate university female students in their experience of sexual coercion.
2. Financial status will not significantly differentiate university female students in their experience of sexual coercion

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive research of the survey type which was considered appropriate because it focused on existing characteristics of a particular group in order to satisfy the curiosity and the desire for better understanding of the impact of poverty and religion on sexual coercion experienced by University female students The population for this study consisted of all University female students, in the various Federal, State and Privately owned Universities in the South-West, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 1,200 University female students selected from nine Universities drawn from the South West using multistage sampling technique. A research instrument titled 'Sexual Coercion Questionnaire (SCQ)' was used. Test re-test method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. The administration of the instrument was done by the principal investigator and assisted by some research assistants. The hypotheses generated were analyzed using Analysis of Variance and t-test. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

Hypothesis 1

Religion will not significantly differentiate university female students in their experience of sexual coercion

Mean scores of female undergraduates on the basis of their religious affiliation on sexual coercion were compared for statistical significance using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: One-way ANOVA Summary of Religion and Experience of Sexual Coercion by Female Undergraduates

Source	SS	df	MS	F-cal	F-table
Between groups	6473.693	3	2157.898	6.25	2.60
Within groups	412641.7	1196	345.018		
Total	419115.4	1199			

*P< 0.05

Table 1 reveals that F-cal is 6.25 and F-table is 2.60. F-cal (6.25) is greater than F-table (2.60) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, religion significantly differentiated university female students in their experience of sexual coercion. This implies that the sexual coercion experienced by female students will depend on the type of religion practiced.

In order to locate the pairs of groups that are significantly different at 0.05 level of significance, Scheffe Post-hoc Analysis was used. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Scheffe Post-Hoc Analysis of Religion and Female Undergraduates' Experience of Sexual Coercion

Religion	Christianity	Islam	Traditional	Others	Mean
Christianity				*	24.45
Islam				*	21.68
Traditional				*	28.83
Others					56.25

*P <0.05

Table 2 shows that there is significant difference between sexual coercion of Christians and other religion. Also, the mean difference of Islam and others, traditional and others is statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance in each case.

Hypothesis 2

Financial status will not significantly differentiate university female students in their experience of sexual coercion

Table 3: t-test Summary of Sexual Coercion of University Females' with and without Financial Support

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab
With financial support	1053	24.30	18.90	1198	0.49	1.96
Without financial support	147	23.50	17.20			

*P> 0.05

Table 3 shows that t-cal is 0.491 and t-tab is 1.96. t-cal (0.491) is lesser than t-tab (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the financial status of female students will not significantly differentiate their experience of sexual coercion. This shows that perpetrators will sexually coerce female students irrespective of their financial status.

DISCUSSION

As revealed in this study, religious standard of female students could enhance sexual coercion. This study was in support of the findings of Clark (1988). He asserts that religion is one of the determinants of female students' vulnerability to sexual coercion. Likewise, Kinsley (1990) noted that moral reasoning influences a person's lifestyle.

The result of this study reveals that the financial status of female students will not significantly differentiate sexual coercion. The result of this study negate the report of Fan (2007) who believed that financial instability of female students could render them vulnerable to the risk of sexual

coercion. Female students could be sexually coerced by anyone in the University community irrespective of their financial status.

The limitation of this study is the fear of shame and guilt and fear of additional violence on the part of the respondents, in case their response is revealed so as not to be stigmatized. Although, the researcher was able to convince the respondents, and their emotion did not affect the result of the study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that religion of the female students could enhance their experience of sexual coercion if the intensity of religious activities is not boosted. It was also concluded from the study that University female students could experience sexual coercion irrespective of their financial status.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the intensity of religious activities must be increased in Nigerian universities. More so, Professional Counselors should team up with the University administrators to fight sexual coercive behaviour among University Students and that anyone found guilty of sexual coercion should be punished

References

Ajuwon A.J., Olaleye A., Faromoju, B. and Ladipo O. (2006). Sexual Behaviour and Experience of Sexual Coercion among Secondary School Students in Three States in North- Eastern Nigeria. Retrieved April 28th, 2008 from http://.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/6/310.

Bello, G. (2005). A survey of prevalence of sexual harassment in Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. UNADJOE, A Journal of the Faculty of Education, University Of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. 4(1), 1-13.

Clark, L. (2004). High school girls' knowledge and behaviour on sex. People and Development Challenges, 5(9), 17-18.

Fan, Z. (2007). Sexual coercion and assault. Male socialization and female risk. Sexual Coercion and Assault, 1(1), 2-8.

Fasting, K.L. (2005). Research on Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sport. Oslo: Norwegian School of Sport Sciences.

Guild, O.L. (2009). Rape and everyday life. Society, 20(1), 33-40.

Kilpatrick, D., Edmunds, C., & Seymour, A. (1992). Rape in America: A Report to the Nation. Arlington, V.A: National Victim Center.

Koss, M.P., Gidycs, C. & Wisniewski, N. (2000). The Scope of Rape: Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization in a National Sample of Higher Education Students. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 55, 162-170.

Lavinger, E., Miller, C.A. and Lavinger, K. (2008). Influences on Religious Beliefs. New York: Harper and Roer.

Maduro, G. (1989). Religion and ethics, factors affecting sexuality. File://E:\The International Encyclopedia of Sexuality. Nigeria. htm. Page 8 of 51.

Olusegun G.F. (2010) Sexual coercion among University Students in South West, Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Owuamanam, D.O. (1995). Youth: The age of contrast in human development: The Fourth Inaugural Lecture of the Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti, September 22, 1995.

Tjaden P, Thoennes N. (2000). Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence against Women: Findings from the National Violence against Women Survey. Washington, DC, National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, United States Department of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (NCJ 183781).

WHO, (2002), World report on violence and Health. 6,148.

Yahaya, L.A. (1991). Perception of Sexual Coercion in University of Ilorin. An Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis, University of Ilorin.