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Student Attitude Towards on Sexual Harassment: The Case of Wolaita Sodo University, Ethiopia

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Abstract - An attempt has been done on attitude towards sexual harassment which is critical issue nowadays in higher institutions. The result of the study could suggest for putting proper polices in place which considered as vital in preventing sexual harassment as well as creating awareness about sexual harassment issue specially in higher institutions as well as other sectors in general. For study purpose we focus to investigate attitude towards on sexual harassment of students in Wolaita Sodo University students taking a sample of 377 students from all batch admitted in Wolaita Sodo University. Self-administered questionnaire was developed and piloted for use in this study. The cross tabulation with Chi-square test and binary logistic regression were employed to analyze the data. The result of cross tabulation with Chi-square test show that sex and level of schooling have significantly associated with attitude towards on sexual harassment at 5% level of significance. Also the result of the binary logistic regression analysis showed that age, sex and level of schooling have a significant relation with attitude towards on sexual harassment at 5% level of significance. It can be concluded that to promote and improve students' attitude towards on sexual harassment some crucial steps regarding gender issue in counseling as well as guiding about sexual harassment should be taken into consideration.

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I. Introduction

The issue of sexual harassment has been addressed in the realm of violence against women. Violence against women is a universal, historical and common phenomenon. Studies conducted across the globe have revealed that violence against women is the most common and widely spread problem faced by women and girl in all culture (Seblework, 2004). Thus it transcends income, class, race and ethnicity. Such violence relegates millions of women and girls to the margin of society where their rights and safety are denied.

According to the 2013 UN global review of available data, 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/ or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner violence (UN, 2013). The same study has revealed that some national violence studies shows that 70 per cent women have experienced violence in their life time. In similar fashion the WHO recent studies has confirmed that violence against women, affects more than one third of all women globally (WHO, 2013). The absence of a minimum age for sexual consent and marriage exposes children to partner violence in some countries. Globally, at least one in three women and girls have been beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime (International labor organization ILO. (2006).

Violence against women expressed in multifarious sort; from psychological intimidation and coercion to severe physical violence. According to the UN General Assembly Declaration (1993), on the Elimination of violence Against Women defined violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life."

Furthermore, according to UNFPA (2006) it includes: physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation/cutting and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence, and violence related to exploitation. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community: including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in Women, and forced prostitution. Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State wherever it occurs. Despite a number of international legal interventions, violence against women remained to be a challenge for the realization of women's human rights.

Ethiopia is signatory to the CEDAW convention of 1979 and it has subsequently institutionalized the rights of women in the national constitution as a means of addressing gender violence. (Art 35 of the FDRE constitution). It has also adopted its national policy in women in 1995 with the aim of bringing gender equality in all aspects of life. However violence against women remains one of the most pervasive forms of human

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rights violations throughout the country in general and in higher education in particular. According to WHO Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women in 10 mainly developing countries, found that 71% of women in Ethiopia reported physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime (WHO, 2005).

Sexual harassment is the most common form of sexual victimization. In spite of the importance of this topic in the social context we live in, sexual harassment occurring in the higher educations of Ethiopia remained unexplored topic. However one of the strongest challenges of studying sexual harassment is the fact that the term "sexual harassment" is open to several definitions (Hill and Silva 2005). Kastl and Klenier (as cited in Kayuni, 2009) argue, "The real challenge is how to apply this definitions in the real world because much of the definition contain description of the behaviors". Nevertheless researchers and feminist theorists believe it is more important to broaden the definition of sexual harassment (as cited in Mohipp, 2005).

For the purpose of this study, we have adopted the broadest definition used by Fitzgerald et al (as cited in Mohipp, 2005, Mohipp and Seen 2008). Using the Sexual Experience Questioner, they indentified gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion as the major form of sexual harassment (Mohipp, 2005). Gender harassment is characterized by both verbal and non-verbal behaviors that are derogatory, humiliating or aggressive and targets the victim because of her female gender. Unwanted sexual attention is considered to include a broad range of sexual behaviors that unwelcome (for example, repeatedly asking for dates or sexual relationship). Sexual coercion is typically describes as behavior that pressures, threaten or suggests bribes for sexual favors in order to gain some sort of benefit (Fitzgerald, 1995).

Currently conducted research revealed that sexual harassment is one of the most prevalent types of violence in higher education institutions of Ethiopia (Seblework, 2004; Tibebe, 2009). The same study indicated female students are overwhelmingly the target. In a cross sectional survey conducted in Addis Ababa University among 612 female students, the prevalence of sexual harassment in lifetime and 12 month period was reported in 58% and 41.8% of students respectively (Seblework, 2004 Assessment of sexual coercion among Addis Ababa university female students : Addis Ababa). And in randomly sampled survey conducted on female students of Jimma University from eight faculties of the university; the results indicate that 50% of the subjects have experienced one form of act/behavior that is considered sexual harassment. (Tibebe, 2009, sexual harassment: the case of Jimma University. Addis Ababa: institute of educational research).

In one of study conducted on prevalence of sexual violence among female students of Wolaita Sodo University, it has been noted that female students experience both physical and verbal sexual harassment (Abebayehu T, 2011). Thus, the issue of sexual harassment is of serious concern since it is estimated that over 50% of all female students have experienced some forms of sexual harassment. Hence this study emphasizes sexual harassment of students.

Wolaita Sodo University has adopted its anti-sexual harassment policy in 2012; the policy suffers from ambiguity and lack of clarity. It is also noticed that the policy appeared to be less efficient so as to deal with sexual harassment problem. This can be traced from the practice where there is misunderstanding of the notion-sexual harassment, which often noticed from a number of informal complains from WSU students about sexual harassment in one hand, and denial of the allegation by the instructors on the other. Thus, this issue of sexual harassment has remained to be a serious concern in WSU. However, to the knowledge and access of the researcher no such study had been undertaken in Wolaita Sodo University. Therefore, it becomes important to investigate attitude towards on sexual harassment of Wolaita Sodo University students at large.

II. Methodology

a) Description of study area

The study was carried out in Wolaita Sodo University in the academic year of 2012/2013. Wolaita Sodo University is one of the higher institutes of education in Ethiopia. It was established on October 2007(1999 E.C) by the government of Ethiopia. It is found in temperate region of South Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) regional state in Wolaita zone capital town of Sodo. Sodo town is located (54^0N latitude and 380^0 S longitude) and 396km south of Addis Ababa and 130km from regional town Hawassa. Now the University is operating more than 40 departments.

b) Study Design

The research design was qualitative as well as quantitative research design can be employed.

c) Source of population

All Wolaita Sodo University students admitted in the academic year of 2012/13. The Study Subjects were 377 students those who are randomly selected from the source population were the study subjects of this study.

d) Sample Size Determination

The sample size can be determined by employing Solven method with margin of error 5%. It is given by:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

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Where:

N is total population
n is sample size determined
e is margin of error with 0.05

Based on the above formula, *n* can be calculated as follow:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2} = \frac{6{,}553}{1+6{,}553(0.05)^2} = 377$$

Sampling Procedure was a simple random sampling technique was employed to select the departments which is 27 departments were randomly selected by using lottery method. In order to select the students from the selected departments, stratification on the base of academic years was done and appropriate probability sampling technique were used in all academic year of the department selected on basis of proportional to size as:

$$\frac{N_h}{N} = \frac{n_h}{n} = W_h(PPS) \ldots\ldots \text{proportional to size allocation}$$

where: N_h is population size in stratum h
n_h is sample size in stratum h

Table 1: Colleges, selected department and number of sampled students

No	College	Department	Population Size	Sample Size
1	College of Natural & Comp.Sci	Biology	533	40
		Chemistry	348	24
		Statistics	138	10
		Environ'tal Sci.	200	14
		IT & Comp Sci.	278	20
2	Engineering	COTM	452	36
		Electrical Eng.	318	22
		Civil Eng.	682	50
		Architecture	36	2
3	Agriculture	RDAE	149	11
		ARSc	130	9
		Plant Sci	135	10
		Agro-Business	27	2
4	Business &Economics	Economics	310	12
		Accounting	331	13
		Management	307	12
5	Social Sci & Humanities	English Lang & Lit	166	9
		EDPM	185	9
		Geography	189	10
		Psychology	206	10
		Sociology	139	7
6	Law	Law	357	16
7	Veterinary Medicine	Veterinary Medicine	109	5
8	Health Sci	Public Health	224	10
		Nursing	215	10
9	Medicine	Medicine	81	4
		Total	*N = 6,553*	*n = 377*

Source: Wolaita Sodo University Registrar 2012/13.

e) Variables Identification

Dependent variable: Student attitude towards sexual harassment which has two binary outcomes as positive attitude towards sexual harassment coded as 1 and negative attitude towards sexual harassment coded as 0 for the analysis purpose.

Explanatory Variables: demographic variables: age, sex, year level of schooling, etc

Exclusion criteria: week-end students, post graduate students, summer students, administration staff and Instructors are excluded from this study.

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f) Data Collection Methods

The structured questionnaire was prepared for quantitative method, while semi-structured questionnaire was designed for the qualitative method.

g) Data Entry and Analysis

Data entry and cleaning were carried out using statistical soft ware package SPSS version 22.0 for the analysis. Descriptive statistics analysis was used to show the frequency distribution and its results were presented by tables and graphs. Test of association were also performed to look at the association between the independent variables and dependent variable. In order to identify the effect of explanatory variables on the response variable binary logistic regression model (odd ratio) was used.

III. Result and Discussions

The median age of students was 21 years, ranging from age 18 to 21 years. Age group of 18-21 years was more than half percent 196(51.98%) of study subjects, followed by greater than 21 years account 168(48.02%). Regarding their sex, 154(40.84%) of them were males and only 221(49.16%) of them were females during the study period. Regarding year of schooling 77(20.42%) was 1st year student, 150(39.78%) was 2nd year student, 115(30.5%) was 3rd year and 35(9.28%) was 4th year and above, respectively.

Table 2: Results of Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation of chi-square test

Variables	Attitude towards sexual harassment			
Variables	-ve Negative Positive	Total	χ^2	p-value
Sex: Male Female	91(59.09%) 63(40.91%) 113(51.13%) 108(48.9%)	154(40.84%) 221(58.6%)	2.34	0.013*
Age: 18-21 years Greater than 21 years	104(53.7%) 92(46.34%) 93(55.35%) 72(44.65%)	196(51.98%) 168(48.02%)	0.192	0.666
Year of Schooling: 1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year & above	40(51.94%) 37(48.06%) 80(53.33%) 70(46.67%) 64(55.65%) 51 (44.35%) 22(62.86%) 13(37.14%)	77(20.42%) 150(39.78%) 115(30.5%) 35(9.28%)	5.353	0.025*

**indicate significant at 5% level of significance.*

From the above table based on the chi-square result(χ^2) the variables sex and year of schooling were statistically significantly associated with attitude towards on sexual harassment by comparing p-value at 5% level of significance since all above mentioned explanatory variables p-value less than 0.05.

In this section it is discussed as the model summary, in order to identify factors associated with student academic performance Binary Logistic Regression Model is used. Moreover, the joint impact of all explanatory variables on the response variables will also determined by using the concept of Nagelkerke R^2 which is explained in the model summary.

Table 3: Model summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	494.061[a]	.22	.29

The most common assessment of overall model fit in logistic regression is the likelihood ratio test, which is simply the chi-square difference between the null model (i.e., with the constant only) and the model containing the predictors. Under Model Summary we see that the -2 Log Likelihood statistics is 494.061. This

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statistic measures how poorly the model predicts the attitude towards on sexual harassment, the smaller the statistic the better the model. The value of Cox & Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 are good enough. Cox and Snell or Nagelkerke R^2 is an analogous statistic in logistic regression to the coefficient of determination R^2 in linear regression, but not close analogy. The model summary provides some approximation of R^2 statistic in logistic regression. Cox and Snell's R^2 attempts to imitate multiple R^2 based on likelihood. The result of Cox and Snell R^2 indicates that 22.0% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the explanatory variables. NagelkerkeR^2 in model summary table above is 0.29, which indicates that 29.0% of the variability in attitude towards on sexual harassment was explained the explanatory variables (Table 3).

Table 4: Goodness of fit (Model Diagnostic)

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	13.732	7	.066

As it is observed from the table above since P-value is 0.066 is greater than the level of significance at 5%. We can conclude that the data fits the model well. Since the p-value is 0.066 which is insignificant therefore our fitted logistic regression model is good fit (Table 4).

Table 5: Results of binary Logistic Regression model

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)=0dds ratio
Step 1[a]	Age Category 18-21 years (ref.)	.173	.218	.633	1	***.042***	1.189
	Sex Male(ref.)	0.290	.223	1.299	1	***.019***	1.336
	Year Level of schooling			4.921	4	***.029***	
	1st year(ref.)	1.325	.683	3.759	1	.053	3.762
	2nd year	1.404	.665	4.461	1	***.035***	4.071
	3rd year	1.226	.672	3.326	1	***.045***	3.407
	4th year and above	1.547	.792	3.808	1	***.049***	4.695
	Constant	-1.431	.665	4.627	1	.031	.239

From the above table it is observed that the estimated odds ratio 1.189 indicates those students age group 18-21 years are 1.189 times more likely have positive attitude towards on sexual harassment as compared to those student with their counterparts controlling for other variables in the model. On the same fashion, the estimated odds ratio 3.762 indicates that student year level of schooling in first year are 3.762 more likely to have positive attitude towards on sexual harassment as compared to those counterparts controlling for other variables in the model. Similarly, the estimated odds ratio 1.336 indicates that student who sex group is female are 1.336 times more likely to have positive attitude towards on sexual harassment better as compared male students controlling for other variables in the model.

IV. Conclusions

- From the chi-square analysis the result of the study concluded that sex and year level of schooling were significantly statistically associated with attitude towards on sexual harassment.
- From the logistic regression analysis it was also concluded that the odds of sex, age and year level of schooling are significant predictor variables seems to indicate positive attitude towards on sexual harassment as compared to their counterparts in Wolaita Sodo University setting.

V. Recommendations

- A lot should be done towards developing the awareness of students' attitude about sexual harassment in counseling as well as guiding at university level.
- It can be also recommended that the university should set programs to strength mutual respect on students regarding attitude on sexual harassment.
- Further study with additional predictor variables have to be made so as to address the issues raised in this study.

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