A Dissertation presented to the School of Graduate Studies and Research of the Ghana Institute of Journalism, in partial fulfillment of the Requirement for the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Development Communication.

SEPTEMBER, 2018
STUDENT’S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, this dissertation is the result of my own original piece of research and that, it has never been submitted in whole or in part for another degree in the institute or elsewhere. All references cited in my work have been duly acknowledged.

I bear sole responsibility for any shortcomings in it.

Signed: ………………………                                                     Date: ………………………

PERFECTUAL LABIK
(STUDENT)
SUPERVISOR’S CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised in accordance with guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

Signed: ………………………….

Date: ………………………….

DR. SAMSON OBED APPIAH
(SUPERVISOR)
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to survivors of all forms of sexual violence. We can, we shall, we will stop the violence. I believe you.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very grateful to my family, especially my father, Joseph Yaani Labik, as well my friends for their support.

Also, to my supervisor, Dr. Samson Obed Appiah, I say thank you for the guidance, time and patience.

I am very much appreciative to the respondents who took time to partake in this research.

Furthermore, I am thankful to Esther Armah, Mawuli Dake and Dr. Michael Boakye for their time and knowledge.
Sexual harassment for a long period of time, has been contextualized as a workplace environment phenomenon, however it is a societal problem. Gender-based violence including sexual harassment and sexual assault in Ghana, are not treated seriously. This can be linked to the patriarchal society that Ghana is, which has male entitlement of female bodies, a persistent rape culture which fosters victim blaming and shaming.

It is against this background that, this study sought to explore the perceptions and understanding of Ghanaians in Accra on female sexual harassment. Using the qualitative approach, interviews were used to seek the views of twenty respondents of the public on sexual harassment and expert knowledge on media discussions reporting and discussions on female sexual harassment.

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents had little to no knowledge about sexual harassment. However, after furnishing them with the definition, majority of male respondents admitted to being offenders while female respondents revealed they were victims of sexual harassment. Also, experts positioned that media discussions and reportage on female sexual harassment were generally poor. In line with the findings, recommendations made included the development and adoption of a comprehensive communication strategy for the ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection on sexual harassment and the need for media persons and journalists to be trained in sexual harassment and sexual assault reporting and discussions.
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CHAPTER ONE
PERCEPTIONS AND KNOWLEDGE ON FEMALE SEXUAL HARASSMENT-
GENERAL OVERVIEW

1.1 Background

Women had faced some forms of sexual harassment long before there was a term for it; be it at the workplace, home, school, streets and among friends. Female sexual harassment is an issue of growing concern and discomfort in Ghana and the world over. It is interesting to note however that, although this worrisome phenomenon has recently received varied attention and stirred up a lot of conversations, especially in the media space, issues of female sexual harassment predates back into history. Women movements from previous and recent eras, have done amazingly well to get governments, organizations, societies and individuals to give this issue the needed attention. The contributions and relentless efforts of feminists like Catherine MacKinnon, Roxanne Gay, Laura Beates, have tremendously brought some light and pathway to this as well.

The first published documentation of sexual harassment in the United States of America was in 1908(Fitzgerald, Shullman, Bailey, Richards, Swecker, Gold, Ormerod and Weitzman, 1988). Sexual harassment is considered as a form of sexual violence, a lot of research works have been done extensively on sexual harassment in the context of workplace environment (Boland, 2005, Ganu and Agyekum Boateng, 2013).

It has paved way for legislations, labor laws to be passed to protect the rights of women and ensure their safety. Female sexual harassment is a form of gender-based violence that violates the rights of women and out them at risk. In some jurisdictions, it is a criminal offence. This brings to light the social construct aspect of female sexual harassment. It is an undeniable fact
that the intricacies of gender undertones in sexual harassment. Roles assignment (culturally and socially) in forms and manners that seek to consciously and unconsciously, deepen, facilitate and perpetually encourage male dominance and entitlement over female bodies. The power play of female sexual harassment and the male dominance of possessing more privileges-sexually, have long gone a way to encourage female sexual harassment. It has taken strong feminine voices and struggles for some societies to somewhat recognize and accept female sexual harassment as a serious problem. The surge of the “me too” movement in Hollywood has done a great deal of good to get people to realize the severity of the issues.

It is however sad that it had to take the world this long and had to take Hollywood celebrities to get the world to listen. It is heartbreaking the long silences women have had to endure and suffer in pain. The fear, the mental and emotional torture. The many women who may never ever tell their stories and the many others that have been silence to their graves.

Localizing the issues, since the focus of the study is Ghana, it is very sad to note that Ghana as a country with a female population percentage of 50.5 (National Population ensus,2010), is yet to take female sexual harassment as seriously as it should. This is highly due to socio-cultural complexities. Deeply rooted in the social fabric of Ghana is patriarchy. Women have experienced sexual harassment in churches, schools, the marketplace, restaurants, on dates, in their homes, by their friends and family, in public transport, in the streets, on the internet, in the hospital, etc. practically, everywhere, a woman can be sexually harassed.
1.2 Problem Statement

A walk down the streets of Ghana by a woman or a ride in public transportation by a woman is likely to be met with words and snares from members of the opposite sex. Derogatory remarks about how a woman looks to trying to get a woman’s attention. Chants of “hey babe”, “hey sexy”, hissing sounds, are a daily dose of sexual harassment forms on the streets of Ghana. Some go to the extent of grabbing which is very normal in Ghana. Most often, a woman who registers displeasure and/or break down free from the hold of a male are insulted and called names.

Sexual harassment of women in Ghana has gradually become part and parcel of social life. Most people hardly even recognize it is a problem and a form of sexual violence. Women’s freedoms are being curtailed and restricted. The constant fear and paranoia, sense of awareness, makes women have their guard up most often and prevents free movement and confidence. Sexual harassments are persistent forms of gender-based violence that are rooted in gender inequality (Canadian women’s foundation). It is very common to come across a Ghanaian female who has experienced some form of sexual harassment.

However, one of the challenges has been defining the circumstances and behavior which constitute sexual harassments that are excused in the name of culture. It is very important for Ghanaian women to know what sexual harassment is, which helps in appropriately being able to report. It is unfortunate that, Ghanaian women have to live in so much self-awareness because of the inability of a section of men to behave properly and also the inability or lack of thereof, proper working structures to check this.

The other matter is, the perpetrators of sexual harassment hardly recognize their actions are sexually harassing. Some mistake it for being nice or friendly, regardless of literacy levels. Many
people never get to report sexual harassment because of cultural positioning on the matter. That is if she is able to recognize that she has been harassed and the harasser can be identified. However, these behaviors can be checked by educating men about behaviors that are sexually harassing and having systems that effectively and efficiently check these.

Society needs to recognize that sexual harassment is a human rights issue as much as it is a women’s rights issue. Women do not have to live in fear of being harassed sexually and getting it blamed on them. Women deserve to live in a society where they feel safe, confident and respected.

As writer and feminist activist, Campbell puts it, ‘there’s a knowledge of and tolerance of sexual harassment that makes women’s journey in public spaces always a little bit hazardous. I think the people who talk about these stuff as if it’s nothing forget how heartbreakingly sorrowful we feel about and how ashamed. The other structural conversation to have about this, apart from power, is shame. I am overwhelmed hearing these women’s stories. Recognizing them, their sense of shame, knowing that their entry into the public world is marked forever by that.’’

Victims of sexual harassment seldom report the issue. For many, the fear of victim blaming is enough to deter them from coming out to speak or report these incidences of sexual harassment. Some reasons women do not report sexual harassment are; Denial and minimization, fear of consequences, fear they will not be believed, a history of being sexually violated, lack of information, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, low self-esteem, lack of support.

In Ghana, the presence of a persistent rape culture makes it almost impossible for victims of sexual harassment to speak up, talk less of reporting it. The inadequate information and
education or a lack of thereof, creates an environment where people are unable to grab the issues and understand the nuances it comes with.

The media wields a lot of power in setting agenda for discussions, what people should be interested in, educating and informing the populace. However, in Ghana, the media is relatively insensitive in their reportage of sexual violence. It is safe to say the media in Ghana is gender insensitive in their reportage and discussions of sexual violence and gender-based violence. Victims of sexual violence need their identities protected, unless otherwise requested by the victim. There are ethics in the reportage of sexual violence which are thrown out the window in Ghana. Naming of victims, putting out photos of victims are included in media reportage. There is a lack of general sensitivity, ethics and education in handling reporting of sexual violence, which is very evident in the language used. The inability of media houses to always get knowledgeable resource persons in their discussions of gender-based violence, sexual violence, compounds the issues. If those who are to educate and inform the populace are under informed and under educated, that is a situation all should be worried about.

Reporting on sexual assault means finding not only the language, but the context and sensitivity to communicate a trauma that is at once, deeply personal and yet a matter of public policy; immediate and yet freighted with centuries of stigma, silence and suppression. Reporting on sexual violence, requires special ethical sensitivity, interviewing skills, and knowledge about victims, perpetrators, law and psychology (Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, 2011)

It does not come as a surprise the way security agencies, in this case, the Police service, handle issues of sexual harassment. Rape culture is evident in how issues of sexual harassment is handled. The severity or lack of it attached to it, creates an inability for reports to be taken
seriously. People tend to interpret it flirting or advances made by men. Groping of a woman’s buttocks, breasts or any other part of her body, passing sexual comments, looking at a woman suggestively are not flirtatious gestures.

There are two national acts that address sexual harassment in Ghana, at the workplace. The Labor act (2003) and the Domestic violence act (2007). The constitution of Ghana (1992) does not explicitly discuss sexual harassment (McLauglin, 2015). The two acts do not detail how and under what strategies sexual harassment policies should be implemented and strictly monitored (McLauglin, 2015). Furthermore, the Constitution of Ghana (1992) contextualizes sexual harassment as a workplace and/or a domestic issue, not taking into account the other places and forms sexual harassment could occur or take respectively.

However, street harassment is often committed by strangers, which makes it difficult for women to report these acts street harassment. The looming question is, how serious do Ghanaians take sexual harassment? Especially sexual harassment outside the workplace? Is Sexual harassment defined only as a workplace phenomenon, relegating other places where sexual harassment occurs to the back?

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the Ghanaian’s understanding of female sexual harassment?
2. What are people’s awareness and knowledge on laws and policies concerning sexual harassment?
3. What are the effects of sexual harassment on women?
4. What are the views of experts on sexual harassment reporting and discussions in the media space?
1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to ascertain the perceptions and understanding of female sexual harassment.

The following specific objectives would guide the orientation of this study;

1. To explore the Ghanaian’s understanding of sexual harassment
2. To assess awareness and knowledge of laws and policies concerning sexual harassment
3. To assess the effects of sexual harassment on women
4. To examine the views of experts on sexual harassment reporting and discussion in the media space.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

There were some limitations of this study that became apparent in the data collection and analysis of the study. The sampling technique used for the study was simple random sampling, and thus, this study is not generalizable. Though the simple collected bore similarities with the population under study geographically, the sample size is small to be generalized. Also, the ample population had limited variation with respect to age.

1.6 Significance of the study

Existing literature has focused on sexual harassment at the workplace environment and working women (MacKinnon, 1979; Fitzgerald, 1993). Much has not been done on documenting sexual harassment outside the workplace especially when the offenders are strangers. It is difficult also contextualizing and defining sexual harassment in the Ghanaian space.
The outcomes of this research work, will set precedence to contextualizing sexual harassment outside the workplace, aside adding to existing body of research. It will also set the tone for more research works to be done on the subject matter, giving a need to get the public interested, and engaged in conversations surround sexual harassment.  

In addition, it will be very necessary in influencing policy. In that, it can pave way in questioning already policies that address sexual harassment, the gaps and how they can be improved. Policies that center on addressing sexual harassment on the streets, and elsewhere. It will be in good fate if these acts are criminalized so s to protect the rights and safety of women. It is very important to recognize that sexual harassment is a serious human rights issue. This research work will help women be confident in labelling their sexual harassment experiences by helping them recognize the severity of sexual harassment and its effects.  

In light of the findings of this research work, policy formulation, participatory approaches in addressing sexual harassment; getting women involved in the decision making, education of the populace, media and security services should be paramount.  

1.7 Definition of Terms  

1.7.1 Sexual Harassment  

1. Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests, requests for sexual favors and the verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. **unwelcomed** behavior is the critical word. Unwelcome does not mean “’involuntary”. A victim may consent or agree to certain conduct and actively participate in it even though it is offensive and objectionable. Therefore, sexual conduct is unwelcomed whenever the person subjected to it considers it
unwelcome. Whether the person in fact welcomed a request for a date, sex-oriented comment or joke, depends on all the circumstances.


2. Sexual harassment can be defined as unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when;

   I. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual’s employment,

   II. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual,

   III. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment

the above brings to bear the following facts in understanding sexual harassment at the workplace.

- The victim as well as the harasser may be a woman or a man. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex.

- The harasser can be the victim’s supervisor, a co-worker or an employee in the organization.

- The victim does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.
• Unlawful sexual harassment may occur without economic injury to or discharge of the victim.
• The harasser’s conduct must be unwelcomed.

For purposes of this study, Sexual harassment is used in relation to sexual harassment on women by men outside the workplace environment. Specifically, in public spaces like the streets, public transport, social gatherings.

1.7.2 Sexual Abuse

Undesired sexual behavior by one person upon another

1.7.3 Sexual Violence

Any sexual act or attempt to obtain sexual acts by violence or coercion, acts to traffic a person or acts directed against a person’s sexuality regardless of the relationship to the victim.

1.7.4 Sexual Discrimination

Prejudice or discrimination based on a person’s sex or gender.

1.7.5 Gender Based Violence

Violent acts that are motivated by the victim’s gender as a result of inequalities between genders

1.8 Organisation of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the reader to the research by giving a general overview and background to the research topic. The chapter also explains the interest in the research topic, justification for the study, the research problem and objectives of
the study. The chapter prepared the reader’s mind for the findings and analysis, as well as grounding the study.

Chapter two is the literature review. It identifies and discusses studies that have already been conducted on the research topic. Chapter three is the research methodology. It focuses on the research methods used in the collection of data for the study. Chapter four focuses on research data analysis and presentation. Also known as “the body” of the dissertation, it consists of the results of the study conducted and analysis. Chapter five is the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations regarding the study.
2.0 Introduction

This chapter primarily seeks to examine what existing body of knowledge opines on the research topic. In this chapter, secondary sources i.e. research works done by others will be looked at. Academic literature, relevant to the research topic will be the main focus. This chapter will look into the definitions, historical works, gaps and knowledge from other works, followed by a review of the literature. In this chapter, the researcher will review existing research on the phenomenon. The literature will be reviewed based on the objectives of the study.

2.1 History of Sexual Harassment

'Sexual harassment' is a term that was used in the 1970s to try to raise consciousness. An attorney by the name of Lin Farley tried to basically get the idea that harassment was a kind of discrimination. The history of sexual harassment in the American workplace has its roots in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The 1964 Act does not specifically mention sexual harassment but did make it illegal to bar employment based on sex, race, creed or national origin. MacKinnon is sometimes credited with creating the laws surrounding sexual harassment in the United States with her 1979 book entitled *Sexual Harassment of Working Women*, the first known use of the term *sexual harassment* was in a 1973 report about discrimination called "Saturn's Rings" by Mary Rowe. Though Rowe has stated that sexual harassment was being discussed in women's groups in Massachusetts in the early 1970s, and wasn't likely the first person to use the term. At the time, Rowe was the Chancellor for Women and Work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Due to her efforts at MIT, the university was one
of the first large organizations in the U.S. to develop specific policies and procedures aimed at stopping sexual harassment.

Prior to this time, sexual harassment had merely been considered a way of life for many, if not most, women in the workforce (Baker, 2007; MacKinnon, 1979). In the 1970s, women’s grassroots movements and feminist authors who coined the term “sexual harassment” (Baker, 2007; Zippel, 2006) contributed to a legal doctrine that recognized sexual harassment as a violation of law because it was a form of sex discrimination.

2.2 Understanding sexual harassment

Various works researchers have contributed immensely to bring the issues of sexual harassment to the forefront, shedding light on the issues and forming discussions on it (MacKinnon, 1979; Fitzgerald, 1996; Farley, 1978; Gutek, 1985). Sexual harassment potentially relates to any human being; however, in fact, most victims are women (Gruber, 1997; Paludi and Paludi, 2003). It is a prevalent social phenomenon (Sbraga and O’Donohue, 2000).

There have been various attempts to understanding sexual harassment, primarily with the aim of breaking it down to the lay man’s understanding, taking into consideration, the complexities and nuances attached to the phenomenon. Being a social phenomenon, there is a need to adequately get members of society to understand the issue. The researcher begun to do this by looking at available definitions of sexual harassment.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) of the United States (1980) defines as sexual harassment as unwelcomed sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when;
1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment,

2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals, or

3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

4. Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests, requests for sexual favors and the verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. **unwelcomed** behavior is the critical word. Unwelcome does not mean “involuntary”. A victim may consent or agree to certain conduct and actively participate in it even though it is offensive and objectionable. Therefore, sexual conduct is unwelcomed whenever the person subjected to it considers it unwelcome. Whether the person in fact welcomed a request for a date, sex-oriented comment or joke, depends on all the circumstances (Preventing sexual harassment (BNA communications, 1992)

Sexual harassment is defined as undesirable sexually determined behavior which includes physical contacts and advances), inviting someone to view pornography, and demands for sex whether by words or action (stop violence against women, 2010)

The key word in the definitions of sexual harassment is that, it is unwelcomed behavior (stop violence against women, 2010). The International Women’s law center (2016) positions that sexual harassment does not have to involve any physical conduct at all.

The available literature on understanding sexual harassment, have contextualized it as a workplace phenomenon.
2.3 Laws and policies on sexual harassment in Ghana

There are no specific laws in Ghana on sexual harassment to protect women. The Labour Act, 2003, (Act 651) requires employers to take action on sexual harassment at the workplace. This requires institutions to have Sexual Harassment policies. However, these policies are seldom checked, neither are they assessed.

The criminal code, 1960 (Act 29) makes provision on indecent assault which includes sexually bodily contact with another person without the consent of the person or sexual violation of the body of that person in any manner not amounting to carnal knowledge or unnatural carnal knowledge. Perpetrators found guilty face up to six months imprisonment.

The Domestic Violence Act 2003 (Act 723), also makes mention of sexual harassment. It does not however, define sexual harassment.

2.4 Effects of sexual harassment on women

Women who have been harassed repeatedly report that their behavior and confidence is affected, and they experience distress and anxiety, yet society continues to focus on the actions of victims and not on the perpetrators (Laura Beates, 2015)

There are many reactions to experiencing sexual harassment. For youth, symptoms may include changes in appetite, sleep patterns, or interest in daily activities, decline in attention to school work or participation in school activities, and increased expressions of sadness, anger, or isolation (Fineran, 2002). Youth who are sexual minorities and harassed, particularly through the internet, may also be at greater risk for suicide (Fineran, 2002; Finn, 2004).
Among adults, sexual harassment can cause emotional and physical problems similar to those of PTSD (Avina & O'Donohue, 2002; McDermut, Haaga, & Krik, 2000), and reduced self-esteem, fear, anxiety, depression, and disillusionment (Lundberg-Love & Marmion, 2003). Victims may demonstrate learned helplessness, exhibit conditioned responses, and changes in their world view and social relationships; their job performance may suffer as well (Avina & O'Donohue, 2002; Gould, 2000; Lundberg-Love & Marmion, 2003; MacKinnon, 1979). Recent research suggests that many victims do not seek professional services, but rather rely on informal support systems such as friends and family for help (Rospenda, Richman, & Shannon, 2006).

2.5 Media and sexual reporting and discussions on sexual harassment

With the increase in reporting on cases of GBV in the media in recent months, we have seen the potential of the mainstream media to affect the way that we think, understand and talk about violence within our communities (Sonke Gender Justice, 2017. Reporting on Gender-Based Violence. A Guide for Journalists and Editors)

The identity of perpetrators of violence is two times more disclosed than protected (disclosed in 65% cases and protected in 35%). The identity of a person who was subjected to violence is protected in 55% of cases when that person is the main subject of the story while it was disclosed in 45% of cases (research on media reporting on gender-based violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina (U.N. Women, 2016).

2.6 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Researchers increasingly use a theoretical lens or perspective in qualitative research, which provides an overall orienting lens for the study of questions of gender, class, and race (or other issues of marginalized groups). This lens becomes an advocacy perspective that shapes the types
of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change (Creswell, 2007)

This study is grounded on the Feminist theory. The feminist theory moves assumptions, lens and topical focus away from the male point of view, toward that of women. Feminist theory spotlights on social problems, issues and trends, that are overlooked misrepresented by historically dominant male perspective.

Feminist perspectives view as problematic women’s diverse situations and the institutions that frame those situations. Research topics may include policy issues related to realizing social justice for women in specific contexts or knowledge about oppressive situations for women (Olesen, 2000). Discrimination and exclusion, structural and economic inequality, gender stereotypes and roles, objectification, power and oppression, among others, are key areas of focus within feminist theory.

Feminist theory attempts to not only describe the present conditions of women and men, but also to present ways of understanding this and to prescribe methods to change the conditions towards the elimination of gender, race, class and sexual hierarchies (Institute of Gender studies. The University of the West Indies, 2014).

The feminist theory is based on certain principles. Firstly, Elimination of false dichotomies, which posits that, people should think critically and evaluate the way of thought and behavioral expectations are structured within culture. Secondly, rethinking knowledge as a principle of feminist theory, involves critically evaluating not only how one thinks about something, but it should also reflect facts. The principle of Gender role examines culturally defined expectations that define how people of a gender ought to behave, development process of teaching members
of a culture the appropriate expected patterns and values. Egalitarianism is an important principle of feminist theory which is a philosophy that, people should be treated equally as individuals without focusing on gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etc. Feminist theory also believes in the empowerment of women by enhancing their potentials for self-determination, and expanding opportunities.

Additionally, feminist theory maintains that, sexism is the result of the urgent social and political structures. Political experience is integrally woven with the social and political environment. The theory furthermore believes in the unit and diversity of women. Advocating for women to work together to achieve better quality of life for all. Feminist framework stress the importance of making structural and latitudinal changes to attain equality and opportunity for everyone. Lastly, Feminist theory is guided by valuing process equally with product. This is to say that, it is not only important what is done, but also, how it is done. Adding that, decision making should be based on equality for, and participation by all.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHOD

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides information on the research methods that were employed in undertaking this study. In this chapter, the research design, study area, study population, sample size, sampling technique, instrument of data collection, data analysis and management, field problems encountered, and ethical issues are outlined.

3.1 Research design

Qualitative research method was employed for the study. This is because the study sought to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The study was explorative in nature which were manifestations of female sexual harassment of women who have experience to bear, expert knowledge and general understanding of female sexual harassment.

3.2 Study Area

The study was carried out in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. Accra is very vibrant with people from diverse backgrounds, varying thoughts and experiences.

Accra is the capital city of Ghana, with an estimated population of 4,010,054. Females make up 51.7% of the population, whereas males make up 48.3% of the population. (source: Ghana Statistical Service). It is the seat of government.
3.4 Target/Study Population

The research population of this study comprised of the general public and some experts in the field of gender-based violence. The general public gave a general understanding of sexual harassment and its related issues. Individuals with expert knowledge on female sexual harassment were interviewed on their views and assessment of sexual harassment reporting and discussions in the media space.

3.5 Sample Size

A sample size of twenty respondents, which comprised ten females and ten males were drawn from the general public to explore their knowledge on sexual harassment and also those who have experienced any form of sexual harassment. Three individuals with extensive knowledge on female sexual harassment, which will be referred to experts.

3.6 Sampling Procedure

Simple random sampling and purposive sampling were employed in this study. Simple random sampling was used to help get the general public’s understanding of female sexual harassment and its related issues. This sampling choice was to ensure members of the entire population has an equal chance of being included the study.

Extensive knowledge on female sexual harassment from individuals were sourced using expert sampling.
3.7 Instruments of data collection

This study employed interviews. Female sexual harassment, being a human and social phenomenon, needs a deeper analysis in trying to understands behaviors and people’s understanding of the issues. The aforementioned tool helped in achieving this.

3.8 Data management and analysis and Interpretation

One on one interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded and transcribed. A thorough content analysis was conducted. Data from the field were transcribed and organized into sub-themes.

3.9 Ethical Issues

Partakers of this study were promised and assured anonymity, safety and respect. Emotional, psychological support were readily available for survivors of sexual harassment recounting their experiences. The researcher at all times, ensured that her language and posture are ethically appropriate. In addition, the researcher respected the position of a participant if one opted out of the study. These were effectively communicated to the respondents.

3.10 Field Problem(s)

Sexual harassment is a very personal and sensitive topic; hence some respondents were hesitant in giving out information concerning the topic. People found it difficult opening up to talk about the issues. However, the assurance of adherence to ethics and effective communication helped solve this.
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

Analysis transforms data into findings by bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of data collected (Patton, 2002). This chapter makes meaning of the data collected from the field. Data were analyzed to identify, describe and explore the perceptions of the public on female sexual harassment. A total of twenty persons, comprising of ten males, ten females, were interviewed from the general public. Also, three individuals with expert knowledge on female sexual harassment were interviewed.

The interviews were broken into five sections; Socio-demographics, Understanding of female sexual harassment, Experiences of victims and offenders, Knowledge/awareness of laws and policies on sexual harassment, and, the media and sexual harassment reporting and discussions,

4.1 Socio- demographic characteristics of respondents

This section of the interview covered the name, age, occupation, sex and educational level of respondents. This information helped in the contextualization of findings. The real names of respondents however, will be omitted in the analysis to ensure respondent anonymity.

4.1.2 Age of respondents

The age distribution of respondents spanned from nineteen years to twenty-nine years. Out of the twenty respondents, one was nineteen years, four were twenty-two years, two were twenty-three years, three were twenty-five years, two were twenty-six years, two were twenty-seven, two
were twenty-eight and 1 was twenty-nine. One respondent did not give his age and two said they were in their twenties. This indicates that respondents in this study were young Ghanaians.

4.1.3 Sex of respondents

Of the twenty respondents, ten were females and ten were males. They were all interviewed on their knowledge and perceptions on female sexual harassment. The females were also interviewed on possible sexual harassment experience, where as the males were interviewed on possible offender experience.

4.1.4 Level of Education of Respondents

All respondents have had some formal education. Ten had first degrees, three were in the process of obtaining their first degree, two respondents had Master of Arts degrees, four Senior High School Certificates and one had a Junior High School certificate.

4.1.5 Occupation of Respondents

Sixteen respondents were employed, two were unemployed. The occupation of the respondents was varied. One waitress, one entrepreneur, one consultant, one teacher, two business persons, one electrician, one driver, one architect, one sales person, one secretary, one model, one national service person one banker, one realtor. Two were full time students.

4.2 Understanding of Female Sexual Harassment

The researcher sort to find out the perceptions and knowledge of people on female sexual harassment. The manner in which people perceive and understand what constitutes sexually harassing behaviors has an influence on their actions. A victim of sexual harassment can adequately report her experience if she knows and understands that the actions of the perpetrator
constitutes sexually harassing behaviors. Understanding of female sexual harassment is not limited to its definitions, but the forms as well.

Respondents were first asked their general understanding of female sexual harassment. Most of the respondents, confused sexual harassment with rape. However, a few had some knowledge on what female sexual harassment is.

One respondent said;

“*I think it is rape or forced sex*”

Averagely, majority of respondents did not understand what female sexual harassment is.

Subsequently, the definition of sexual harassment was given to respondents. Males were asked based on the definition, if they had sexually harassed a female knowingly or unknowingly, eight out of ten respondents admitted to having sexually harassed a female in one way or the other.

It is evident that, some offenders committed acts they thought to be normal and not sexually harassing because they did not understand what female sexual harassment is,

“*is it actually a thing? I thought it was a myth*” said, Evans.

“*females shouldn’t wear things that will cause men to harass them*” one male respondent retorted.

All female respondents revealed that they have experienced one or more forms of sexual harassment from males.

“*a guy used to send me message saying he wants to eat my buttocks*”

Ama recounted.
“a taxi driver once shouted while I passed by that my vagina will be taste good. I was very confused. I stood still for a while. I was very uncomfortable and felt bad”

Esinam said.

A couple of females said they have received unwelcomed penis photos from male friends and acquaintances on and off social media. They also revealed that they have received sexual comments, jokes, and slurs from male friends and strangers. Being harassed for sex, cat calling, touching and groping were said to be very common. They stated that cat calling is often done by strangers, sellers and whenever they register displeasure, the offenders proceed to rain insults on them.

They further mentioned that, sexual harassment happens everywhere and anywhere. In the streets, in the club, at the church, in schools, at restaurants, in the hospital, at social gatherings. Also, anybody can be an offender. Be it friends, family, colleagues, acquaintances, boyfriends and even strangers.

On the whole, the respondents’ understanding of female sexual harassment is not solid or grounded. Majority of respondents do not grasp the concept of sexual harassment. Respondents outlined the forms of sexual harassment they are aware of or had experience (for females). The most common was verbal, followed by physical, cyber or electronic and coercion. All females had experienced verbal forms, with the commonest being cat calling, sexual comments and jokes.

Sexual harassment consists of a variety of unwelcomed behaviors which include but not limited to;

i) Groping/grabbing, derogatory or suggestive comments,
ii) Epithets, slurs or gestures,

iii) Offensive posters, cartoons, pictures,

iv) Inappropriate language,

v) Demands for sex and/or sexual favors,

vi) Innuendos,

vii) Comments with sexual overtones,

viii) Sex related jokes or insults,

ix) Sexual comments about a person’s body made in their presence,

tax) Unwanted inquiries about one’s sex life,

xi) Cat calling, l) Sending by electronic means,

xii) Unsolicited sexual tests and/or photos

Furthermore, female respondents revealed that they have experience sexual harassment in the church, on the streets, in school, in aero planes, at restaurants, at parties and social gatherings, in the night clubs, on social media. Virtually, everywhere and anywhere.

4.3 Knowledge of laws, policies, communication on Female Sexual Harassment

“I honestly do not know of any laws or policies on female sexual harassment”

a respondent said. All twenty respondents had no knowledge on slaws and policies concerning female sexual harassment in Ghana. Majority have never heard any form of communication or awareness on the issue.
4.4 Effects of Sexual Harassment on Women

The effects of sexual harassment on female respondents can be grouped into psychological, emotional and social effects. All ten respondents have never reported their ordeals to the police due to the thought of it not handled seriously, victims said they experienced a sense of shame and guilt as well, also sometimes, perpetrators are strangers they do not know so how do they report strangers?

Eight out of ten respondents have never spoken to anyone about their experiences. They revealed that, they want to avoid victim blaming and reliving the experience. They also said they’ve wondered if anyone will understand them. Two respondents have opened up you friends and/or family. They revealed those they opened up to were supportive and understanding.

“my sister’s boss came around looking for her but she wasn’t around. He wanted to touch but I told him no. he later said I shouldn’t tell my sister about what happened. I also didn’t tell my sister because I was scared she will blame me. The experience was haunting me. I used to see him in chasing me in my dreams”

Talata recounted.

“before, I knew things like that (sexual harassment) were going on but I didn’t take it seriously till I started happening to me. It’s made me self-conscious”

another respondent said.

“every day, I’m on guard. Everywhere, I’m on guard. With anybody, I’m on guard. Even with my male friends, they try to hug me and I’m suspicious of their intents. Because of past experiences with sexual harassment, I tend to doubt the intentions of male friends. I’m on the streets and I have to look out”

Said, Seiya.

“I feel unsafe, uncomfortable anytime I have to pass in front of ales or amongst males”

“Anytime I have to use a road with many males sitting or standing by, I look for and use another route”
“Anytime I want to go out, I get scared. I don’t want to go through the experience again. It’s humiliating and frightening at the same time”

“I’m less trusting of males”

These were some of the responses from female respondents on the effects their experiences have had on them.

4.5 Views of Experts on Female Sexual Harassment reporting and discussions in the media

Reporting on sexual assault means finding not only the language, but the context and sensitivity to communicate a trauma that is at once, deeply personal and yet a matter of public policy; immediate and yet freighted with centuries of stigma, silence and suppression. Reporting on sexual violence, requires special ethical sensitivity, interviewing skills, and knowledge about victims, perpetrators, law and psychology (Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, 2011).

“the media is a reflection of the society in which we live in so the people who are journalists, have come from the same culture as everybody else. They’ve been subject to the same attitudes, the same prejudices, the same biases, the same issues. So, this is about two things, it’s the quality of journalistic training, and the expectation that without that, people will somehow just better language this thing we call female sexual harassment and that is simply not the case. The shaming, blaming and victimizing, is done ten-fold in the media because somebody has a mic or they have a camera, or they have a pen or they have a keyboard and so what you see is the language tat is problematic. In other words, the language of shaming and blaming and victimizing that happens all over society is expanded when you put it in the media”

“abysmal. Again, they are part of society so sometimes, they reflect the general lack of consciousness and awareness and sensitivity to the issues. Unless we invest specifically in training the media...the reportage is bad. Usually they blame the victims, they trivialize they issues”

“the media needs to do better. Do we have media men trained well in reporting sexual harassment issues? If we don’t, we need to train them to be able to report on it”
These were the responses of the experts when asked their general overview of the media in sexual harassment reporting and discussion.

On how well the media does in employing expert opinions and resource persons in their discussions on female sexual harassment, one expert said;

“the bar is too low. There is a particular fallacy and that is there is a lack of expertise that people can go to and that’s not true. There’s a lot of expertise. We don’t often pick the right expertise to be on air. Media and journalists will say but those people are not available and I’ll say that’s a poor excuse. If you need to speak to the person and the person is not available, then you rearrange your interview for another time. It’s just about how important is the issue... so it goes to notions of agenda, it goes to notions of importance. There is not enough reaching of expertise... language matters and expertise matters... I also think the expertise has to learn to articulate its knowledge in easily comprehensible fashion so the people they are speaking to, understand what they are talking about”

These responses from the experts indicates a general inadequacy in the media on female sexual harassment reporting and discussions in the media. The media in Ghana is made up of more men taking lead positions, hence the possibility of misogyny taking center stage in sexual harassment reporting and discussions. This creates biases in reporting and discussions. The media also tends to parade personal opinions and sexist comments as facts. The failure or inadequacy to prep properly on sexual harassment issues, results in poor judgement and information of the public. The media plays a very important role in society. It sets the agenda for discussions in society, hence, it is not right that they tend to trivialize. Make a mockery of sexual harassment issues, while victim blaming and shaming. The media also does not find the right language always, to communicate issues of sexual harassment. One cannot over emphasize the importance of language in discussions. Issues of sexual harassment, is not treated seriously in the media, which can be linked to how seriously, the country takes gender issues and issues that strongly affect women. Discussions are most often one off and come across as minor issues. It is evident that
journalists in Ghana have not had any form of training in sexual harassment and assault reporting in Ghana. This feeds into the general lack of sensitivity and seriousness to gender issues.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is the final chapter, which consists of the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future research based on the analysed data in the previous chapter.

5.1 Summary

The research study was conducted in Accra on the perceptions and knowledge of the public on the perceptions and understanding of the public on female sexual harassment. The research process covered a period of five months. The study area was Accra. Simple random sampling was used to fetch twenty respondents from the general public; ten males and ten females between the ages of nineteen to twenty-nine. Expert sampling was used to fetch three individuals with expert knowledge on female sexual harassment.

The following objectives guided the orientation of the study:

➢ Explore the Ghanaian’s understanding of Female Sexual Harassment
➢ Assess the awareness and knowledge of laws, policies and communication concerning Female Sexual Harassment
➢ Asses the effects of Sexual harassment on women
➢ Examine the views of experts on Female Sexual Harassment reporting and discussions in the media.
5.2 Summary of findings

5.2.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

- Respondents were between the ages of nineteen to twenty-nine years
- All respondents have had formal education. The least level of education of education was Junior High School. Master of Arts Degree was the highest level of education of respondents. Majority of respondents had first degrees with a few having Senior High School certificates.
- Ten females and ten males were interviewed from the general public and three experts were also interviewed.
- Majority of the respondents were employed whereas two were unemployed and two were full time students.

5.2.2 Understanding of Female Sexual Harassment

On the Ghanaian’s understanding of Female Sexual Harassment, the study found out that;

- Respondents confused sexual harassment with rape.
- Majority of respondents did not know what sexual harassment is.
- After giving out the definition of sexual harassment and what constitutes sexually harassing behaviors, eight out of ten male respondents admitted to having sexually harassed females. Majority revealed that they were not aware that their actions constituted sexual harassment.
- Some respondents exhibited cognitive dissonance when presented with the definition of female sexual harassment, as it was contrary to what they have always thought to be true.
• After giving out the definition of sexual harassment and what constitutes sexually harassing behaviors, all female respondents revealed that they have experienced and continue to experience sexual harassment from males.

• The commonest form of sexual harassment experienced by female respondents was verbal harassment, followed by physical.

• Majority of male respondents said they had committed offences without knowledge of what sexual harassment is.

• Female respondents revealed that they had been harassed on the streets, at church, in the night club, at social gatherings, restaurants and other public places.

• Patriarchy and male entitlement of female’s bodies, makes it difficult for males to grasp the problem of female sexual harassment, where as it makes it easy for women to accept sexual harassment as normal.

• There is a correlation between the upbringing and how Ghanaians view female sexual harassment.

5.2.3 Knowledge of laws, policies and government communications on Sexual Harassment

• All respondents revealed that they did not know of any laws and policies on sexual harassment.

• Majority said they have never seen or heard any communication by the government agencies on female sexual harassment.

• Respondents were not in the know of any channels to report sexual harassment cases or where to get any support or counselling programs.
5.2.4 Effects of Sexual Harassment on women

- Female respondents had experienced some social, psychological, emotional discomfort

Some female respondents revealed that they experienced psychological trauma after their encounters.

- Majority of female respondents said they experience social awkwardness when the are in public with males.
- Female respondents further sated, that they live in constant fear of being sexually harassed. In addition, they are less trusting of males. Some even stated that they have had to frequently change routes because of fear of being harassed by males.
- Additionally, female respondents they have felt like sex objects after being objectified by males. This has led them to have low self-esteem.

5.2.5 Views of Experts on Female Sexual Harassment reporting and discussions in the media

- The experts revealed that media reporting and discussions on female sexual harassment is terrible.
- Issues of female sexual harassment are trivialized and often, journalists make a mockery of the issues.
- Victim blaming and shaming, placing the spotlight on the victims instead of the culprits are rampant in the media.
- Also, the media does poorly in employing expert knowledge in their discussions on sexual harassment.
• Furthermore, they observed that media persons are not trained on reporting issues of sexual harassment, thus lack the skills to go about their reportage.

• Moreover, media persons do not prep adequately before coming on air to discuss issues of sexual harassment and this leads them into passing wrong opinions as facts, resulting in misleading the public.

• Additionally, the media does not take issues of female sexual harassment seriously. The presence of misogyny and the presence of more males leading the media, creates a bias in reportage and discussions.

5.3 Recommendations

• The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, should have a comprehensive Communication Strategy on Female Sexual Harassment. The communication should be audience specific, taking into consideration the culture and education levels of Ghanaians. The communication should handle various segments of society paying particular attention to definitions, education and information and also, behavioral change. Ultimately, Sexual harassment discussions will all year round and not a on off discussion when an issue arises.

• The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, needs to broaden their awareness creation on sexual harassment, and their avenues of support for victims.

• Sexual harassment should be included in school curricular of basic schools and second cycle institutions to at an early stage, educate them on sexual violence by the Ghana Education Service. It is very important to have working public institutions and structures addressing female sexual harassment.
• Creative, dynamic campaigns should be launched on female sexual harassment, taking advantage of new and traditional media, the vibrant creative talents in the country by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, and other Stakeholder agencies.

• Media persons should be adequately trained on sexual harassment and sexual assault reporting to ensure ethical, sensitive and responsible reporting and discussions. The media should make it a prerogative to employ expert knowledge on sexual harassment discussions.

• The security agencies should be educated and trained more on being sensitive and not to turn away victims of sexual harassment.

• Offenders of female sexual harassment need to named and shamed to deter others by the Police.

• It is not enough to have policies and laws on sexual harassment. These laws and policies need to implemented and followed to the latter. Perpetrators should punishment should be made publicly.

• Government should laisse with young and vibrant activists in the field of gender to advance the cause of eliminating sexual harassment in the society.

• There should be specific laws on sexual harassment outside the workplace environment street sexual harassment by Government.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Further studies can be conducted in the following under researched topics;

• Effects of sexual harassment on women.

• The importance of a communication strategy in addressing sexual harassment.
• Street Sexual harassment.


Dart center for journalism and Trauma

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APPENDIX

KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS ON FEMALE SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF GHANAIANS IN ACCRA

Interview Guide for Experts

Dear respondent, I am a MA Development Communication student of the Ghana Institute of journalism, carrying out a research on: knowledge and perceptions on female sexual harassment of Ghanaians in Accra

I will be very grateful, if you assist me with answers to the following questions. Information provided shall be used only for academic purposes.

Interview Protocol Interview: knowledge and perceptions on female sexual harassment of Ghanaians in Accra

Date:
Venue:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of Interviewee:
(Briefly describe the project)
Questions:

Section A: Socio-Demographics of Respondent
Section B: Understanding of sexual harassment

1. How will you define/ describe sexual harassment?
2. What forms of sexual harassment are you aware of?

Section C: Role of Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in addressing female sexual harassment

1. What role(s) do you think the ministry needs to play in addressing female sexual harassment?
2. What strategies, campaigns on sexual harassment of the Ministry are you aware of?
3. How effective do you think the ministry has been in addressing the issue?
4. Are you aware of any communication strategy of the Ministry of Gender? Addressing female sexual harassment?
5. What communication strategy do you think will be most effective in addressing female sexual harassment in Ghana?
6. *(the communication strategy of the ministry on addressing female sexual harassment will be made available at this point)*
Section D: Views on media discussions on female sexual harassment

1. What are your general perceptions of media reportage and discussions on female sexual harassment in Ghana?

2. How well does the media do in employing expert opinions and resource persons in their discussions on female sexual harassment?

3. There is a perception of misogyny in the media space. Does this create a bias in reportage and discussions on female sexual harassment?

4. Do media persons in Ghana need training on female sexual harassment reporting? Will it help create sensitive and responsible reportage?

Section E: Ghanaian society and Sexual harassment

1. What is the general Ghanaian outlook on female sexual harassment?

2. How well do you think the Ghanaian society understands sexual harassment?

3. How often do you think women get sexually harassed in Ghana?

4. Why is there a misconception between flirting and sexual harassment?

5. Is there a correlation between the Ghanaian culture/upbringing on how Ghanaians view female sexual harassment?

6. Patriarchy and male entitlement of female bodies, do these make it difficult for males to grasp the problem of sexual harassment? Does it make it easy for females to accept sexual harassment as normal?

Section F: Policy on female sexual harassment

1. What policies on female sexual harassment are you aware of?
2. In reviewing literature on sexual harassment, it is evident a lot of focus has been on policy. How effective has policy been in confronting the issue of female sexual harassment?

3. What are your views on social behavioral change communication as a communication strategy in addressing female sexual harassment?

4. Should there be laws on street sexual harassment? If yes, how do people report since it is mostly committed by strangers?

5. Are the current polices, laws, enough in addressing sexual harassment? Do they need changes?

Section F: Suggestions/ Way forward

1. What are your suggestions on addressing female sexual harassment in Ghana?

2. Any additional information or comments?
Interview Guide for the General Public and victims of sexual harassment

Dear respondent, I am a MA Development Communication student of the Ghana Institute of journalism, carrying out a research on: **knowledge and perceptions on female sexual harassment of Ghanaians in Accra**

. I will be very grateful, if you assist me with answers to the following questions. You are assured that information provided shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and used only for academic purposes. Anonymity is assured. At any point, if you wish to discontinue this interview, your request shall be upheld.

**Interview Protocol Interview**: knowledge and perceptions on female sexual harassment of Ghanaians in Accra

Date:

Venue:

(Briefly describe the project)

Questions:

**Section A: Socio- Demographics of Respondent**

Age:

Sex:

Educational level:

Occupation:

**Section B: Understanding of Female Sexual harassment**
1. What is your lay man understanding of female sexual harassment?

2. What forms of sexual harassment are you aware of?

**Section C: Definition and Experience**

Sexual harassment can be defined as: Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests, requests for sexual favors and the verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. UNWELCOMED behavior is the critical word. Unwelcome does not mean ‘’involuntary’’. A victim may consent or agree to certain conduct and actively participate in it even though it is offensive and objectionable. Therefore, sexual conduct is unwelcomed whenever the person subjected to it considers it unwelcome. Whether the person in fact welcomed a request for a date, sex-oriented comment or joke, depends on all the circumstances

**Male Experience**

1. Per this definition, do you think you have ever sexually harassed any female(s)?

2. if yes, in what forms?

3. What’s your understanding of flirting, as opposed to sexual harassment?

**Female / Victim Experience**

1. Per this definition, do you think you have ever sexually harassed any female(s)?

2. if yes, in what forms?

3. If yes, did you report or speak to anyone about it? If yes, who and what were their response? If no, why didn’t you report or speak to anyone about it?

4. Can you please briefly recount your experience(s)

5. How has this experience(s) affected you? Be it socially, psychologically, emotionally, etc.
Section C: knowledge/Awareness of Policy, laws, communication strategy in addressing female sexual harassment

1. Are you aware of any laws, policies, communication strategies on female sexual harassment? If yes, what are they?

Section D: Effectiveness of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in addressing female sexual harassment

1. How effective do you think the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has been in addressing female sexual harassment?