

Opportunities for tackling sexual harassment in Zimbabwe: Lessons from the Global North

**Author:**Pfuurai Chimbunde^{1,2} **Affiliations:**

¹Department of Education and Leadership Development, Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, Bindura, Zimbabwe

²Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Research Project Registration:**Project Leader:** A.G. vanAarde **Project No:** 2334682**Description:**

This research is part of the research project, 'Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics', directed by Prof. Dr Andries van Aarde, Post Retirement Professor and Senior Research Fellow in the Dean's Office, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria.

Corresponding author:Pfuurai Chimbunde, chimbundep@gmail.com**Dates:**

Received: 23 Feb. 2022

Accepted: 11 Sept. 2023

Published: 22 Dec. 2023

How to cite this article:

Chimbunde, P., 2023, 'Opportunities for tackling sexual harassment in Zimbabwe: Lessons from the Global North', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 79(3), a8576. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i3.a8576>

Read online:

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

This article employs content analysis to explore lessons that can be drawn from the Global North to confront sexual harassment in higher education (HE) in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. The slow progress in both the formulation and implementation of policies directed at mitigating sexual harassment in Zimbabwe's tertiary institutions is a slow and worrisome journey despite a well-crafted roadmap. This article, using appreciative inquiry (AI) as a lens, presents what developed countries have put in place to deal with sexual harassment. Proposals show that policies and guidelines on sexual harassment remain paper exercise in the developing countries, and are not backed by fair reporting mechanisms and education on how to deal with sexual abuse. The study suggests that policies must not remain paper exercise and therefore have to be implemented. Universities in the Global South may partner with those from the Global North and share notes and best practices on how sexual harassment can be mitigated.

Contribution: The article provides insights on how universities can improve sexual harassment policy frameworks and practices to create safe and inclusive campus environments for females so as to protect students' well-being for sustainable development.

Keywords: appreciative inquiry; higher education; mitigation strategies; sexual harassment; policies.

Introduction

Several initiatives have been made in the Global North to address sexual harassment through the adoption of well-crafted regulations, even though it remains a problem at universities around the world (Andrews & Yang 2021; Rubiano-Matulevich 2020). Despite this, developing nations in Africa, particularly Zimbabwe, are still unable to make progress towards reducing instances of sexual harassment in higher education (HE) (Chauraya 2023; Matope & Muchabaiwa 2023; Morley 2011; Moyo 2023). The regulations and guidelines in place in these developing nations are insufficient to address occurrences of sexual harassment of female students, hence it is urgently necessary to enact strict legislation along with reporting methods. Interestingly, the Global North has some reasonable recommendations on sexual harassment that might be used to advance gender parity that opposes patriarchy in educational institutions (Shamshuddin 2020).

The worldwide #MeToo movement shocked the globe by revealing how common sexual harassment is in all nations, in all kinds of settings, and at higher education institutions (HEIs) (Metz, Myers & Wallace 2021). Thus, the movement played a crucial role in shattering the long-standing taboo of victims and inspiring women around the world to speak out against unwelcome sexual approaches (Shamshuddin 2020). The women shared their experiences of being oppressed by patriarchal, male-dominated societies across the world. The movement thus gave sexual harassment victims a forum to come out honestly about their experiences, which in turn aided in raising awareness of the issue in the Global North and served as a catalyst for the adoption of regulations and guidelines to address sexual harassment (Metz et al. 2021). Surprisingly, the movement has received relatively limited attention from African nations, with Zimbabwe in particular receiving very little; as a result, the struggle against discriminatory practices is sluggish and less successful (Matope & Muchabaiwa 2023; Moyo 2023). In Zimbabwe, studies that report sexual harassment in tertiary institutions are many (Chauraya 2023; Moyo 2023; Shumba & Matina 2002; Zindi 1994). However, very little is known about the policies and how they are used to mitigate sexual harassment in Zimbabwe's tertiary institutions. The current representation of literature on policies to mitigate sexual harassment seems not to have any evidence from the

Copyright: © 2023. The Authors. Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

Note: Special Collection: O3 Plus, sub-edited by Munatsi Shoko, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

African scholarship at all. The purpose of this article is to respond to the following precise question: What lessons can be drawn by Zimbabwe from the Global North to confront sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning? The study adds new perspectives on how to restructure and enhance sexual harassment regulations and statutes that are prevalent in Zimbabwe but are poorly implemented in practice.

Methodology and approach

Using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a tool for transforming the nature of gender relations in HE, this article draws from journal articles and policy documents in the public domain to investigate what institutions have done to safeguard students against sexual harassment. The researcher searched the literature in different electronic databases, namely the ERIC, Google Scholar, JSTOR and Science Direct, using the phrase 'sexual harassment in tertiary institutions' as search words. There were over 5238 journal articles that appeared at first search from various data base. A check for relevance using the abstracts was undertaken and finally 18 articles were retained for the analysis premised on the research question. The criteria for inclusion was that the articles were supposed to mainly focus on sexual harassment in HE and the policies used to mitigate sexual harassment in those institutions. Written documents are non-reactive data sources that may be read and examined multiple times without being influenced or biased by the researcher (Chimbunde & Kgari-Masondo 2022; Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). This makes the use of written documents to generate data advantageous. As a result, the study's conclusions were more credible because they could be easily verified by utilising the same documents. Athematic approach was employed to analyse the data. The core tenets of the AI that focussed on: the best of 'what is', 'what might be', 'what should be', and 'what can be' assisted to analyse data from the searched documents. The study was non-human and/or animal research because it relied on content analysis of documents from the public domain. In presenting the major arguments, this article borrows heavily from the AI lens, which hereunder is conceptualised in an effort to be on the same page with the reader.

Appreciative inquiry

Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) first introduced AI, one of the organisational development approaches. One of its guiding ideas is that it improves current potentials by recognising and valuing an organisation's competencies (Bushe 2011). Inherent in this view, institutions of HE in developing countries can better meet the norms and guidelines on sexual harassment already in use in the Global North. According to Asumeng and Osae-Larbi (2015) and Bushe (2011), new ideas are the most significant force for change, and AI is based on the premise that it is a process of communal discovery into the best of what is, what might be, what should be, and what can be. Since the early 1980s, thousands of people and hundreds of organisations from every sphere of society have been using AI to foster revolutionary change (Hashmi 2018). According to Bushe (2011), AI entails developing a

community's capacity for excellence and creativity. In order to liberate our collective desires, change how society constructs reality, and open up options and activities that had not previously occurred to us, we must constantly seek out new concepts, theories, pictures, and models. Appreciative inquiry has the ability to 'generate spontaneous, unsupervised, individual, group and organisational action towards a better future' in this regard (Bushe 2007:30).

The AI is a cyclic 4-D model that, in its most basic form, includes four stages: discovery, dream, design, and destiny or delivery. The participants' thoughts and debates on the 'best of what is' with respect to the topic are used to conduct an inquiry into the topic of change during the Discovery phase (Asumeng & Osae-Larbi 2015; Bushe 2011). The crux of this article is an example of an inquiry in which reflections and discussions on the ways the Global North employed to abate sexual harassment. 'The Dream phase', according to Asumeng and Osae-Larbi (2015:34), 'follows the Discovery stage and involves organisational members visualising the organisation in an ideal state in relation to the subject of change'. The Design stage, which comes after the Discovery stage, entails developing specific recommendations and solutions that the organisation might employ to close the gap between the present-day best practises and the ideal condition of the organisation in the future (Bushe 2011). Drawing from this stage, the Global North made strong and clear policies on what HE had done to combat challenges of sexual harassment. At the last stage of AI is the Destiny and/or Delivery stage, where member countries can implement what was envisioned by the leading institutions of HE. Here, the guidelines and norms planned and crafted from the Global South are astute and hence are of value to the Global South if they are put into practice.

The AI is centred on appreciating or valuing the best of what is, dreaming what might be, dialoguing what should be, and innovating what will be. In the context of this discussion, acceptance of what the Global North did amid sexual harassment incidents is valuing the best of what is. From that discovery of the Global North's actions towards sexual harassment stems the need to dream what might work for the Global South and then innovate what people aspire to see in institutions of HE.

Dialoguing of 'what should be' becomes the critical stage in envisioning what norms and guidelines must be embraced to fight gender violence in universities and colleges in developing countries. This is because ideas from developed countries are forces of change suitable to confront sexual harassment in HE although one should notice that certain ideas may need to be reworked on to suit the African cultural context. Drawing from AI, institutions of HE are therefore seen as creative centres of human relatedness, alive with emergent and unlimited capacity to derail the patriarchy – a system of male domination. However, if these institutions neglect the sexual harassment that they must denounce, then they are broken-down machines in need of fixing; they are

problems to be solved. Institutional betrayal is the term used by Smidt et al. (2021) to describe the situation in which students' universities and colleges fail to prevent sexual violence on campus through inaction or omission, act in ways that may contribute to sexual violence on campus through commission, or respond poorly when sexual violence occurs on campus. Considering this, we entrust our institutions of HE with playing a critical role in abating incidents of gender violence, especially the sexual harassment that is on the rise that a corpus of literature detects (Andrews & Yang 2021; Maunganidze 2020; McNally 2021; Richards 2019; Shamshuddin 2020). From document analysis, the article then argues that the Global South must take the positives from the West and implement if sexual harassment in HE has to be circumvented.

Sexual harassment

To put the argument into context, the term sexual harassment must be explored. Zindi (1994) explicitly views sexual harassment as a form of sexual violence that can be noticeable in verbal and non-verbal forms. It might be physical, such as unwelcome, threatening, or unpleasant touching; non-verbal, like gesturing; or verbal, like offensive jokes or comments based on sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation (Bendixen, Daveronis & Kennair 2018). Derogatory sexual remarks, sexual jokes, sexual inquiries, requests for sexual activity, and the spreading of rumours are all examples of verbal sexual harassment, while non-verbal sexual harassment includes making kissing or leering noises or giving sexually suggestive facial or bodily signals (Bendixen et al. 2018). In addition, sexual harassment is defined by Shumba and Matina (2002) as an act or series of activities that are or are painted with a variety of negative meanings and implications regarding something disapproved of, not enjoyed, isolating, unpleasant, abhorred, bothersome, embarrassing, and provocative to the individual upon which it is perpetrated. This suggests that sexual harassment is disrespectful of people's rights, gender equality, and human decency (Bendixen et al. 2018; Shamshuddin 2020).

While in most cases female students are reported as victims, chances are also high that male students face the same fate, but their reporting is still in patches and shreds. That view covertly suggests the need for interrogation of the trend. What is evident in several studies is that both rich and developing nations experience sexual harassment of women on a worldwide scale (Shamshuddin 2020). For developed countries, awareness and commitment to combat sexual harassment cutting across religion, culture, race, caste, class and geographical boundaries are high. What is worrisome in developing countries is that sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning is spreading like the virus in society, as is happening in Zimbabwe, the site of this discussion. What then is the situation in developing countries and Zimbabwe in particular? I will unpack the sexual harassment phenomenon and those aspects that remain worrisome, drawing references from some African countries and Zimbabwe.

The setting: Sexual harassment in African countries and Zimbabwe

Academics in institutions of HE have made striking strides in gender research, as evidenced by the surge of research in that area in Africa. In her study on sex, grades, and power in HE in Ghana and Tanzania, Morley (2011) notes that some male academics view it as their right to demand sex with female students in exchange for grades. This sexual contract has become naturalised as a result of the hierarchical and gendered power relations within universities. According to Owoaje and Olusola-Taiwo (2010:340), in Nigeria, '70% of female graduates from a sample of tertiary institutions reported having been sexually harassed, with the main perpetrators being classmates and lecturers'. Mamaru, Getachew & Mohammed (2015:32) report that a survey of 385 female graduate students in Ethiopian universities found that '78.2% of the respondents had experienced physical harassment, 90.4% had experienced verbal harassment, and 80% had experienced nonverbal harassment'. Sexual harassment was also on the rise in Botswana, which led the government to pass legislation defining it as:

[A]ny unwanted, unsolicited, or repeated verbal or sexual advances, sexually derogatory statement, or sexually discriminatory remark made by a public officer to another, or by a person in authority over another in the service. (MMEGI Monitor Reporter 2000:9)

Similarly, an earlier study in Zimbabwe explored the nature of sexual harassment perpetrated by some lecturers in Zimbabwe's institutions of HE following disturbing reports that appeared in the Zimbabwean press about a lecturer's wife who battered a student on allegations of having sexual relationships with her husband (Zindi 1994). Several years later, a study by Shumba and Matina (2002) also documents the harassment of college students by lecturers. That same study registers concerns with regard to the abuse of students in institutions of HE. Maunganidze's (2020) study on dealing with gender-related challenges drawing from Zimbabwean women in the practice of law reveals that because of sociocultural and structural constraints, the strategies in use are devastatingly maintaining male hegemonic tendencies and discriminatory practices. For him, some people in society view women as sexual beings, not as human beings.

The research in these African nations that were cited provided insightful and sensible recommendations. For instance, Sithole, Manwa and Manwa (2013) recommend developing a policy that meets the educational requirements of girls, as well as creating a gender-sensitive learning environment in schools and a supportive home and community. Student affairs offices were implored by Shumba and Matina (2002) to educate and empower all new students regarding sexual harassment by lecturers and other students through conferences, workshops, and seminars. Some of these recommendations were adopted, while others were just paper exercises that remain the unfinished agenda and a crisis in these learning centres (Andrews & Yang 2021;

Maunganidze 2020). However, crafting good policies to mitigate sexual harassment does not imply its pursuit and fulfilment in praxis.

To promote gender equality and protect women's rights, Zimbabwe put in place gender friendly policies. Sithole et al. (2013) point out that Zimbabwe is a signatory to international conventions and has also introduced a number of legally binding documents that aim to improve the situation of women, such as the Beijing Declaration and the Global Platform for Action, both of which were introduced in 1995. The *Sexual Offences Act*, which was introduced in 2001, is one example of legislation that was gender-sensitive (Zindi 1994). In addition, it was mandated that the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender, and Community Development oversee the enhancement of gender programmes and quicken the adoption of gender mainstreaming. The impression that appears is that the legal framework in Zimbabwe is constructive, but this is not matched by action in institutions of HE. The dissonance between societal expectations as seen on paper and what transpires in institutions of HE is because there is no clear policy on sexual harassment of female students by lecturers in institutions of HE in developing countries (Morley 2011; Shumba & Matina 2002; Sithole et al. 2013). Consequently, most female students are still vulnerable to sexual harassment by male lecturers in the absence of such norms and guidelines. What is worrisome is that the 2018 World Bank Group's Women, Business and Law data show that:

[I]n 123 countries, there are no laws on sexual harassment in education and in Africa, 36 of the 47 countries with data do not have laws penalizing sexual harassment in this area. (Rubiano-Matulevich 2020:1)

This explains why there is very little action, if any, that is taken against such perpetrators by the authorities. Given this situation and the availability of good examples of policies from the Global North, developing countries in general and Zimbabwe in particular need to reflect and discuss the applicability of the policies at their disposal. The use of such policies is a good example of the positives that the AI celebrates. I argue that institutions of HE in developing countries can draw lessons from the best of 'what is' available and implement to mitigate sexual harassment. The question is: what are the good practices available that the Global South can utilise from the Global North? A look, reflection, and discussion of them is imperative.

Findings and discussions

Hereunder are the findings of the study anchored on the best of 'what is', 'what might be', 'what should be', and 'what can be' in HE in Africa in general and Zimbabwe's tertiary institutions in particular.

The development of sound policies

It emerged from the study that most universities in the Global North developed sound policies and codes of conduct that developing countries are still grappling with. The essence in

the development of policy and code of conduct is what Rubiano-Matulevich (2020) describes as an unequivocal declaration that sexual assault and sexual harassment are not tolerated from the top of a HEI. The literature from regions other than the Global South provides valuable examples of effective procedures for preventing, disclosing, and handling sexual harassment in HE. For instance, according to Andrews and Yang (2021), the University of Michigan has a Sexual Misconduct Policy enacted in 2019; the George Washington University also has a Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Interpersonal Violence Policy. While the American University has a Code of Conduct, the University of Cambridge has a Code of Statutes and Ordinances, Discipline (Chen, Huang & Jiang 2020; Metz et al. 2021), which are clearly explained and revised regularly. Not only are universities in the Global North on the right track to mitigate sexual harassment in institutions of HE, but some in the Global South are also making efforts to align their policies, although the revision of these policies is still wanting (Maunganidze 2020). Had it been updated, the stand-alone Sexual Harassment Policy (2008) of the University of Cape Town in South Africa and the University of Ghana Special Reporter (2011) of the University of Ghana could work as good practices in developing countries (Fedina, Holmes & Backes, 2018). That aspect of having redundant policies therefore must be looked into to effectively avert cases of sexual harassment in HE. In light of the above argument, universities in developing countries have to borrow from universities in the Global North on how they have navigated the challenges of sexual harassment in HE. For instance, they need to update their policies, taking into account the context in which these policies are implemented. This is the AI design stage, where it is necessary to provide specific recommendations and solutions for use by institutions in the Global South in order to bridge the gap between the existing best practises and the ideal state of the future (Bushe 2011). Drawing from this point, the study argues that the Global North had established robust and explicit policies regarding what HE needed to do to address difficulties related to sexual harassment. While good practices are available from the Global North, analysis of the gender-based violence at the HEIs in Zimbabwe found that the absence of:

[L]egal frameworks on sexual harassment such as policies that among other things, punish the perpetrators; deter others who may want to commit the same crime and eliminate it altogether is the tumbling block. (Chauraya 2023:7)

However, recent evidence shows that there are established procedures for reporting sexual harassment events and female students have received instruction on how to handle such incidents (Moyo 2023:15). Furthermore, the Zimbabwean government has approved a public sexual harassment policy, which the Education Council for Higher Education should adopt and oversee its implementation at HEIs (Matope & Muchabaiwa 2023). Notwithstanding, numerous studies agree that despite widespread attention and increasing knowledge of sexual harassment, the vice is on the rise (Chauraya 2023:6; Moyo 2023:17). For instance, a

survey conducted in 2022 by Mawere and Soroto found that 98% of female students in HEIs in Zimbabwe had encountered sexual harassment. This maybe a result of the nature of the implementation of policies and guidelines in Zimbabwe.

Policies and guidelines as paper exercises in developing countries

It was a finding of this study that policies and guidelines on sexual harassment are paper exercises in the developing countries (Maunganidze 2020; Shumba & Matina 2002), while universities in the Global North are far ahead in terms of implementing sexual harassment policies on campuses (Rubiano-Matulevich 2020). Despite this observation, it is interesting to notice that universities in Zimbabwe in particular and developing countries in general have some policies and norms with regard to the prevention and dealing with sexual harassment on campuses. However, it is still disturbing that these policies and guidelines remain paper exercises without sound implementation. Very little is said about how to deal with the victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment. Tertiary institutions in the Global North had made the best of 'what is' by directing efforts towards the implementation of a strong policy and code of conduct. India is one of the ports from which we can take some notes on how to leverage female students' rights in HE amid sexual harassment although it is not considered to be part of the Global North. For example, in 1997, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India acknowledged the gravity of sexual harassment of the working women at the workplaces. In response, India was compelled to put in place guidelines and norms that made it mandatory for those in authority at institutions to prevent the commission of acts of sexual harassment (Shamshuddin 2020). This was later followed by an enactment of a strong piece of legislation in 2013. The effort of introducing legal tools in place shows no disparities at all with what is happening in Zimbabwe and other third world countries. However, to strengthen their efforts, Indians went further and provided the procedures for the resolution, settlement or prosecution of the abusers. Furthermore, Complaints Committees made up of 50 percent women, a woman chair and an external third part expert were established (Shamshuddin 2020). The Committee was then mandated to oversee that the women's rights remain intact through a fair, informed, user friendly process of redress. This is India's innovative model in responding to sexual harassment, which is a good practice that developing countries can borrow to use in HE. Zimbabwe and other developing countries are therefore implored to appreciate the good of what is in India and then dream of their next destiny as embedded in the AI.

The development of a complaints mechanism

A unique finding of this study was a plausible strategy used to address sexual harassment evident in the tertiary institutions in the Global North wherein they had created a fair, open, and transparent complaints process that

guarantees privacy and security when reporting an occurrence. One good practice in reporting is that from the University of Manchester, since it has an online 'Report and Support' platform (Metz et al. 2021). Developing countries can use such an approach to reach the envisioned destiny of mitigating sexual harassment as argued by the AI. For instance, a website developed by The George Washington University known as the Haven (Metz et al. 2021) is a good practice that HEIs can employ to circumvent sexual abuse. The website assembles information focussed at raising awareness and assisting survivors of abuse and harassment, is also accessible and helpful for the Global South to imitate. The website offers details on harassment and abuse, what to do if one observes it or becomes a victim, and how to report it. This is consistent with Rubiano-Matulevich's (2020) recommendation that institutions establish at least one counsellor who serves as the initial point of contact for all formal allegations of sexual harassment. This counsellor must not be a member of the institution's management structure. In order to manage all complaints, the counsellor needs to be aware of ethical and safety standards, have access to referral services, and have access to a location where confidentiality and privacy can be maintained. Apart from such a physical reporting mechanism, there can also be a virtual reporting system. In the University of Manchester's 'Report and Support' platform that is the responsibility of the university's Diversity and Inclusion Team (Metz et al. 2021; Rubiano-Matulevich 2020); once a complaint is filed, an email informing the team is automatically sent, which asks a team member to log into the system. The report is then examined to determine and map out the next steps. The University of Oxford has a harassment policy that outlines the process for staff and student complaints of harassment, as well as the resources and sources of guidance that are available. This finding resonates with the AI model that argues for the best of what can be, and henceforth HEIs in developing countries are implored to embrace the reporting mechanisms found at universities in the Global North.

Reconfigure the awareness campaigns

Findings from literature show worthwhile examples of good practices for sexual harassment prevention, reporting, and response in HE. However, it came out from this study that while a policy on its own is necessary, it is not a sufficient condition (Rubiano-Matulevich 2020), and therefore must be reshaped across all spectrums of stakeholders. In this regard, for effective application of the policy, it must be publicly and readily available to all stakeholders other than being highly socialised to act as a reminder. According to Richards (2019) and Rubiano-Matulevich (2020), highly visible information about the policy can be provided on the institution's site, in student common spaces or toilets, through newsletters, and through course and/or unit outlines. In view of that, universities in Zimbabwe should not only have policies and the reporting mechanism in place but they must also educate and raise awareness among students and staff at all levels on how to recognise, prevent, and respond to sexual harassment, an argument supported by several scholars (Richards 2019;

Rubiano-Matulevich 2020). To ensure that employees and students are informed upon admission, tertiary education institutions may think about incorporating sexual harassment content into the organisation's core trainings, including orientation programmes. Such knowledge must include specifics on the complaint process and who to contact in the event that a complaint needs to be lodged.

Conclusion

This study looked at what emerging nations such as Zimbabwe and other African nations have done to reduce sexual harassment in HEIs. Unconvincing measures have been tried to address this grave issue, but alarmingly high rates of sexual assault on college campuses have persisted. Administrators at universities frequently lack the expertise needed to evaluate sexual assault claims. It was evident from document analysis that developing countries have made slow progress in the implementation of policies directed at mitigating sexual harassment in tertiary institutions despite well-crafted policies and guidance from some universities in developed countries. To curtail the rise of sexual harassment in HE, the guidelines and norms planned and crafted in universities from the Global South are astute and hence are of value if they are put into practice. The article argues that the AI centred on appreciating or valuing the best of what is, dreaming what might be, dialoguing what it should be, and innovating what it will be must be put on board to mitigate sexual harassment, thereby embracing the global call for gender equality in the socioeconomic and political spheres.

The article argues that workers in universities must re-evaluate their past behaviour and ask themselves if there is perhaps something to change or apologise for. Institutions of higher learning must change their policies and they also have to change their laws because there is still a long road ahead to reshape the world into a place that is less hostile to women, less accommodating of destructive men, and more embracing of both female pleasure and female freedom. The study therefore claims that universities can improve sexual harassment policy frameworks and practices to create safe and inclusive campus environments so as to protect students' well-being for sustainable development.

Recommendations

Premised on the findings and discussion made, the study recommends that universities in the Global South partner with the Global North and share notes on how sexual harassment can be mitigated. In their partnership, they can employ the AI model to transform their institutions. The policies that universities in Zimbabwe have must be supported by a reporting mechanism coupled to massive education on how to abate sexual abuse. In addition, the good policies evident in developing countries must not remain paper exercise and should be implemented to challenge patriarchy in universities. Considering that there is dearth of government subsidy to financially support

students at tertiary level that pushes especially some young women and men to fall prey to people with financial resources, the study recommends that the government of Zimbabwe must provide scholarship and grants for university education because the prevailing socio-economic impasse exposes countless women and girls to economic constraints, making them susceptible to commoditising their bodies.

Acknowledgements

The author acknowledges the contribution of the 3.0 UNESCO Conference panellists for shaping the article.

Competing interests

The author has declared that no competing interest exists.

Author's contributions

P.C., is the sole author of this research article.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not for profit sectors.

Data availability

All data generated or analysed during this study are included in this published article

Disclaimer

The views presented in this publication are those of the authors, and do not necessarily portray the views of UNESCO as well as the O³PLUS Project.

References

- Andrews, E.A. & Yang, J.Z., 2021, 'Behavioral modelling: Inspiring college students to intervene in instances of sexual assault', *Communication Research Reports* 38(1), 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824096.2020.1870446>
- Asumeng, M.A. & Osae-Larbi, J.A., 2015, 'Organization development models: A critical review and implications for creating learning organizations', *European Journal of Training and Development Studies* 2(3), 29–43.
- Bendixen, M., Daveronis, J. & Kennair, L., 2018, 'The effects of nonphysical peer sexual harassment on high school students' psychological well-being in Norway: Consistent and stable findings across studies', *International Journal of Public Health* 63(1), 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-017-1049-3>
- Bushe, G.R. 2007, 'Appreciative inquiry is not just about the positive', *OD Practitioner* 39(4), 30–35.
- Bushe, G.R., 2011, 'Appreciative inquiry: Theory and critique', in D. Boje, B. Burnes & J. Hassard (eds.), *The Routledge companion to organizational change*, pp. 87–103, Routledge, Oxford.
- Chauraya, E., 2023, 'Fulfilling obligations: A gender transformative framework for enhanced prevention of gender-based violence at a university in Zimbabwe', *The Dyke* 16(2), 1–24.
- Chen, H., Huang, Q. & Jiang, M., 2020, 'Empowering Chinese college students to prevent sexual assault in postmetoo era: An empirical study of the bystander intervention approach', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 37(1–2), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520917515>

- Chimbunde, P. & Kgari-Masondo, C.M., 2022, 'The decolonisation of African languages: Insights from Southern Africa', *Language Matters* 53(3), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10228195.2022.2138957>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K., 2018, *Research methods in education*, 8th edn., Routledge, London.
- Cooperrider, D.L. & Srivastva, S., 1987, 'Appreciative inquiry in organizational life', in R.W. Woodman & W.A. Pasmore (eds.), *Research in organizational change and development*, pp. 129–169, JAI Press, n.p.
- Fedina, L., Holmes, J.L. & Backes, B.L., 2018, 'Campus sexual assault: A systematic review of prevalence research from 2000 to 2015', *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 19(1), 76–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838016631129>
- Hashmi, G., 2018, 'Appreciative mentoring as an innovative micropractice of employee engagement for sustainability: A luxury hotel's entrepreneurial journey', in M.A. Gardetti & S.S. Muthu (eds.), *Sustainable luxury, entrepreneurship, and innovation, environmental footprints and eco-design of products and processes*, Advance online publication, pp.31–55, Springer, Singapore.
- Mamaru, A., Getachew, K. & Mohammed, Y., 2015, 'Prevalence of physical, verbal and nonverbal sexual harassments and their association with psychological distress among Jimma University female students: A cross-sectional study', *Ethiopian Journal of Health Sciences* 25(1), 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ejhs.v25i1.5>
- Matope, N. & Muchabaiwa, W., 2023, 'Redefining the gender narrative: Sexual harassment and intimate partner violence in selected institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe's tertiary institutions', *The Dyke* 16(2), 1–15.
- Maunganidze, F., 2020, 'Dealing with gender-related challenges: A perspective of Zimbabwean women in the practice of law', *Cogent Business & Management* 7(1), 1769806. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2020.1769806>
- Mawere, D. & Seroto, J., 2022, 'Academic contra power sexual harassment in public universities in Zimbabwe', *South African Journal of Education* 36(1), 193–206. <https://doi.org/10.20853/36-1-4515>
- McNally, R.J., 2021, 'Are memories of sexual trauma fragmented?', *Memory* 30(1), 26–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2020.1871023>
- Metz, J., Myers, K. & Wallace, P., 2021, 'Rape is a man's issue: Gender and power in the era of affirmative sexual consent', *Journal of Gender Studies* 30(1), 52–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2020.1834367>
- MMEGI Monitor Reporter, 2000, 'Sexual harassment in the workplace: Parliament to intervene', *MMEGI Monitor*, 29 February – 06 March 2000, pp. 8–14.
- Morley, L., 2011, 'Sex, grades and power in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania', *Cambridge Journal of Education* 4(1), 101–115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2010.549453>
- Moyo, G., 2023, 'Effectiveness of the strategies used by public universities in Zimbabwe to curb sexual harassment of female undergraduate students', *The Dyke* 16(2), 1–18.
- Owoaje, E.T. & Olusola-Taiwo, O., 2010, 'Sexual harassment experiences of female graduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions', *International Quarterly of Community Health Education* 30(4), 337–348. <https://doi.org/10.2190/IQ.30.4.e>
- Richards, T.N., 2019, 'An updated review of institutions of higher education's responses to sexual assault: Results from a nationally representative sample', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 34(10), 1983–2012. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516658757>
- Rubiano-Matulevich, E., 2021, *A guidance note for preventing, reporting and responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment in tertiary education institutions*, World Bank, Washington DC.
- Shamshuddin, S., 2020, 'A study on issues and challenges of female employees with reference to sexual harassment at workplace', *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 6(12), 437–452.
- Shumba, A. & Matina, A., 2002, 'Sexual harassment of college students by lecturers in Zimbabwe', *Sex Education* 2(1), 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681810220133613>
- Sithole, J.C., Manwa, L. & Manwa, L., 2013, 'Gender equity in education: An analysis of perceptions of Masvingo urban female students, parents and teachers towards the maternity leave policy for high school girls in Zimbabwe', *Journal of African Studies and Development* 4(2), 59–69. <https://doi.org/10.5897/JASD2013.0232>
- Smidt, A.M., Rosenthal, M.N., Smith, C.P. & Freyd, J.J., 2021, 'Out and in harm's way: Sexual minority students' psychological and physical health after institutional betrayal and sexual assault', *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 30(1), 41–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2019.1581867>
- The University of Cape Town Policy on Sexual Misconduct, 2020 (2008), *Sexual Offences and Sexual Harassment*, UCT Office of Inclusivity & Change, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.
- University of Ghana Special Reporter, 2011, *Anti-sexual Harassment Policy*, 49(6), Public Affairs, University of Ghana.
- University of Michigan, 2019, *Sexual assault prevention and awareness center*, viewed 05 September 2022, from <https://sapac.umich.edu/article/63>.
- Zindi, F., 1994, 'Sexual harassment in Zimbabwe's institutions of higher education', *Perspectives in Education* 17(2), 39–48.