

# **Effectiveness of the strategies used by public universities in Zimbabwe to curb sexual harassment of female undergraduate students**

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## **Abstract**

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the measures currently in place to curb sexual harassment of female undergraduate students in public universities in Zimbabwe. The study adopted a sequential explanatory research design with the aim of using a mixed research approach. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed to female students and 40 interviews were conducted with lecturers from three public universities in Zimbabwe. The study revealed that sexual harassment is caused by economic hardships in the country, indecent dressing by female students, intimidation of students by lecturers, and the pressure to earn better grades.

The study revealed the challenges faced by public universities in Zimbabwe in curbing sexual harassment of female undergraduate students are that students do not report most of the cases of sexual harassment, perpetrators are very influential and powerful people in the universities, and lack of financial support for female students. The measures put in place to mitigate sexual harassment is punitive action against the perpetrators of sexual harassment, education of female students on how to handle the incidents of sexual harassment, availability of detained structures to report sexual harassment cases and students have been encouraged to report sexual harassment. The study further highlighted that the measures in place to curb sexual harassment of female undergraduate students in public universities of Zimbabwe are less effective because continuous indecent dressing by female students has normalised sexual harassment as a way of getting better grades. The study recommends that the university authorities should come up with a dress code policy and that the government should avail scholarships for students.

**KEYWORDS:** Sexual Harassment, Gender harassment, Sexual bribery, Coercion.