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KWAZULU-NATAL

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YAKWAZULU-NATALI

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**GENDERED A(SYMMETRIES):
PROBING EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL COERCION AMONG
FEMALE STUDENTS AT A ZIMBABWEAN UNIVERSITY**

by

TARIRO MUKWIDIGWI

(216074942)

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of Philosophy (PhD) in Anthropology
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SUPERVISOR: Professor Maheshvari Naidu

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DECLARATION

I, Tariro Mukwidigwi, hereby declare that this thesis is of my own origin. This research work is being submitted for the requirements of a Doctor in Philosophy in Anthropology at the University of KwaZulu- Natal, Durban, South Africa. It has not been submitted for the award of any qualification in any other university. All sources of information that have been drawn from other sources were duly acknowledged.

Signed

T. Mukwidigwi.

Date

10/ 11/ 2018

Supervisor: Professor Maheshvari Naidu

Signed:

M Naidu

Date:

11/11/18

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents,
Mr Anthony Matambo Mukwidigwi and Mrs Mary Chalwe Mukwidigwi.
Thank you for affording me a chance to gain an education and for believing in me.
God bless!

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There is a Shona proverb *Kusatenda huroyi* that means ‘not thanking is witchcraft’. I therefore owe many thanks to individuals who offered invaluable contributions to the completion of this thesis. This academic journey would not have been bearable without their support.

First and foremost, I thank the Lord Almighty for the gift of life, good health and providence during the course of this study. If it had not been for the Lord who was on my side, this academic pursuit would have been in vain.

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ABSTRACT

Overtone of ‘docility’, ‘passivity’ and ‘vulnerability’ characterise representations of female university students’ sexuality. Working within a gendered and feminist framework, I draw on the lived experiences of sexual coercion among female university students to understand the extent to which female students enact or challenge these assertions. Experiences of sexual coercion among female university students offered a potent context to explore matrices of power and subsequent exercise of sexual power, agency and subjectivity by the victims. I also examine how female university students perceive and interpret their experiences of sexual coercion. I further sought to understand the extent to which these interpretations and experiences were culturally and socially conscripted. The theoretical, methodological and analytical underpinnings of this study were informed by social constructionist epistemology. I adopted a sequential explanatory mixed-method design which gives pre-eminence to qualitative and interpretive methods. I utilised a survey questionnaire in the initial phases of research followed by interpretive methods including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observation. Analysis and interpretation of data was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, thematic and content analysis. The study findings are presented in the form of tables, graphs and themes which emerged from the inquiry.

The narratives of female university students presented a sexually volatile context. Their experiences and interpretations of sexual coercion were an interplay of social, cultural and individual factors. Though sexual coercion was endemic at the university, it was highly marginalised and underreported. The findings of this study present a dissent from notions of sexual passivity and docility held in extant literature. Overt and subtle reactions to sexual coercion in the form of negotiations, antagonistic reactions and (re)construction of dominant sexual practices and norms by female university demonstrated significant levels of agency, subjectivity and power. Constructions of femininity among some female students were framed around sexual control, autonomy, independence and assertiveness illustrated by an emerging group of “sexually empowered” female university students. The study findings inform interventions which consider female university students as active and agentic beings.

Key words: sexual coercion, institutions of higher learning, female university students

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FSNT	Female Student Network Trust
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GIME	Gender in Media Education
HIV	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus
IHE	Institution of Higher Education
MNSCASA	Minnesota Coalition against Sexual Assault
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NUST	National University of Science and Technology
SAYWHAT	Students and Youth Working on Reproductive Health Action Team
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UBA	University Bachelors Association
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Sexual coercion in institutions of higher education (IHE) has been the subject of a considerable amount of research, policy and social forums. While there has been considerable attention on sexual coercion in IHE, there has been relatively limited inquiry and analysis of the gendered dynamics underlying this social practice, particularly in the Zimbabwean context. Additionally, analyses of the extent of young women's acquiescence or resistance to gendered power relations during experiences of sexual coercion are relatively scant. This study therefore explored gendered dynamics underlying experiences of sexual coercion among female students in the context of higher education.

Earlier discourse on female university students frames them as passive, docile and vulnerable to sexual coercion perpetrated by males (Mosime et al. 2012, p. 8). Skafte and Silberschmidt (2014, p. 1) noted that such discourse tends to "reinforce normative stereotypes of women as powerless and subordinated". This study interrogated these notions by exploring the extent to which female students exercise sexual agency, power and subjectivity during experiences of sexual coercion. It considers the need to analyse experiences of sexual coercion based on the lived realities of female university students rather than by generalising their oppression and subordination. Although sexual coercion is endemic on African university campuses, it is often highly taboo and shrouded in secrecy. Plessis and Smit (2011, p. 175) opined that this culture of silence and tabooing has played a major role in hindering disclosure of sexual violence victimisation in higher education resulting in the problem not receiving the attention it should. In such contexts, voices of female "victims have been distorted, marginalized and silenced while perpetrators have continued in their acts of abuse" (Wondieh 2011, p. 6). This state of affairs has contributed to historical invisibility of this social practice and conditions under which it has been normalised. Normalisation of sexual coercion against female students engenders violation of their sexual rights and safety. It also has deleterious implications on their health and well-being. A report of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE, 1998) concurs that normalisation and tolerance of sexual coercion is damning for any educational institution. As such, "focusing on sexual coercion of female university students will allow certain aspects of sexual violence in higher and tertiary education to be brought to

the surface for the sake of the victims and institutions of higher education” (Bennett et al. 2007, p. 87).

Sexual coercion is deeply embedded in gendered cultural meanings and interpretations (Kalra and Bhugra 2013). It also occurs within a context of real and perceived matrices of power. As such, this thesis sought to understand sexual coercion of female university students within a framework of gendered power and control. It analysed, in particular, gendered power dynamics inherent in experiences of sexual coercion among female university students through interrogating social and cultural influences on their responses. It further examined the extent to which female university students enact, challenge and (re)construct dominant sexuality norms and boundaries in a bid to ascertain their exercise of sexual subjectivity, power and agency.¹ Carmody (2005) in Barnes (2007, p. 41) advanced that “young people have diverse reactions to dominant sexuality and discourses with some resisting and challenging the notions while others positioning themselves within acceptability to these norms”. This thesis set out to examine the processes through which female university students manoeuvre and negotiate their sexuality during experiences of sexual coercion.

1.1 Background and context of study

The sexual rights and safety of female university students are areas of priority because they contribute to the overall health and well-being of these young women. Disturbingly, a significant number of female university students fall victim to sexual violence on university campuses – Zindi (1994), Kalof (2000), Smallbone and Dadd (2000), Armstrong et al. (2006), Katsande (2008), Mosime et al. (2012), Clowes et al. (2009), Gordon and Collins (2013), Tora (2013), Mezie-Okey and Alamina (2014). The alarming rate at which female students are sexually victimised on university campuses has raised considerable attention in academic, policy and social circles. This has also seen a number of universities such as the University of Bindura, Carnegie Mellon University, Midlands State University, Stanford University and Great Zimbabwe University enacting and implementing sexual harassment policies and ordinances to prevent and eliminate sexual assault on university campuses. Media reports have also castigated the prevalence of sexual assault in institutions of higher learning.² However, despite significant efforts to prevent and eliminate sexual assault on university campuses,

¹ These concepts will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

² <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/09/22/health/campus-sexual-assault-new-large-survey/>, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jan/21/college-campus-sexual-assault-report-2015-university-students> and <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/09/26/tertiary-institutions-lack-sexual-harrasment-policies/rape>

sexual coercion of female students remains a common problem. Kerner et al (2017, p 41) concurs that, “federal laws and college prevention programs seem to have little effect on the occurrence of sexual assaults”.

Institutions of higher learning have generally been assumed to be sites for learning, equity and empowerment. However, explicit and implicit forms of gender discrimination and violence³ characteristic of these spaces shows this not to be the case. Institutions of higher learning are no longer the ivory towers of the past, but have become ‘hot spots’ for gendered violence and sexual coercion (Fisher et al. 2000, p.1, Smit and Plessis 2011, p. 173, Joseph 2015, p. 126). Earlier studies in the context of higher and tertiary education reveal that universities in Africa and around the world are not immune to sexual coercion prevalent in society.⁴ Sexual coercion within these institutions cannot be divorced from sexual violence rampant in wider society. A United Nations Development Fund for Women (2010) report revealed that six out of every ten women experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime around the world. It can therefore be inferred that university campuses are microcosms of gender-based violence rampant in wider society.

Multiple forms of gender-based violence which characterise university spaces create discriminatory and hostile learning environments. Earlier studies in IHE document patriarchal cultures on African university campuses⁵ (Bennett et al. 2007, p. 86, Mosime et al. 2012, p. 48). Mama (2003, p. 101) concurred that “institutional and intellectual cultures in African universities are permeated with sexual and gender dynamics”. In a workshop on gender and institutional cultures on African universities, it was noted that African university contexts were characterised by patriarchal privilege and hegemony (Bennet et al 2005). These power disparities contribute to female students’ vulnerability to coerced sexual activity. Additionally, active and passive forms of hegemonic masculinities⁶ inherent institutions of higher learning

³ Explicit gender violence is sexual in nature and includes sexual harassment, intimidation, rape and abuse whereas implicit gender violence includes forms of violence which are physical, verbal or psychological in nature but have a gender dimension (Mairead et al. 2003, p. 1).

⁴ Zindi (1994), Kalof (2000), Smallbone and Dadd (2000), Gaidzanwa and Manyeruke (2001), Armstrong et al. (2006), Franklin (2008), Katsande (2008), Vanderwoerd (2009), Brousseau et al. (2011), Geinsinger (2011), Edwards-Jauch (2012), Odu and Olusegun (2012), Clowes et al. (2009), Gordon and Collins (2013), Tlou (2014), Sagar et al. (2015).

⁵ Ayiera (2010, p. 12) defined patriarchy as a social-political order based on male hegemony through dominance and denigration of other experiences.

⁶ Kareithi (2014, p. 26) defined hegemonic masculinities as “traits which function to legitimate the social ascendancy of men over women”. Active and passive hegemonic masculinities refer to incidences when masculine superiority is strongly marked and discernible and when it is muted and indistinct, respectively.

perpetuate and maintain domination of female students in academic spaces where gender equity is expected to flourish (Bradbury and Kiguwa 2012). Female students become ‘outsiders’ despite their equal status as students. These power inequalities intersect with other forms of inequality such as class and age to generate systemic and structural limitations for female university students.⁷ Shepard (2010), cited in Ayiera (2010, p. 12), observed that “within such a context of patriarchal hierarchies, masculinity is expressed in aggression, militarisation, assertiveness and power wielding while femininity is the direct antithesis and is expressed in weakness, passivity and yielding to power”. Against such a context, female university students are positioned at an intersection of constant constraints, negotiation and (re)construction of their sexuality.

The preponderance of female victims of sexual coercion in IHE is a global phenomenon. Kerner et al. (2017, p. 41) noted that in the United States, “one in every four women on college campuses report being sexually coerced at some point in their lives”. This is also confirmed by studies in the Zimbabwean context (Tlou 2014, Katsande 2008, Mabamba et al. 2015, Mapuranga et al. 2015), in the sub Saharan region (Demise et al. 2002, Agardh et al. 2011, Bradbury and Kiguwa 2012, Odu and Olusegun 2013) and at international level (Kalof 2000, Kerner et al. 2017, Farahat et al 2017, Arafa et al. 2017) which report overrepresentation of female students as victims of sexual coercion within university spaces. A study by Demise et al. (2002) at a university in Ethiopia revealed that violence, harassment and lack of security were common problems among female students. Studies by Bradbury and Kiguwa (2012) and Mosime et al. (2012) examined ‘sexual safety’ of female students on university campuses. Both studies identified lack of safety for female students on the campuses studied. Similarly, in a study at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa, Bradbury and Kiguwa (2012) found that female students felt insecure and had a pervasive sense of being outsiders despite being students at the university. In this study, several university spaces were associated with high risk of violence against female students. Similar findings were found in the study by Mosime et al. (2012) at the University of Botswana. The physical campus was not a safe place for female students. These studies document the extent to which university contexts can be unsafe and potentially dangerous for female university students.

⁷ Crenshaw (1994) used the concept of intersectionality to describe this phenomenon. Intersectionality denotes that social categories such as gender, class, age, and ethnicity intersect to create social inequality and multiple forms of discrimination.

‘African sexual relations’ have traditionally been characterised by deep-seated masculine power and a heterosexist sexual order (Tamale 2007). Collusion of colonial and indigenous patriarchal discourses on African women’s sexuality rendered their sexuality as “hyper-sexual, primitive, filthy, morally corrupting and in need of control” (Skafté and Silberschmidt 2014, p. 2). Additionally, their sexuality has historically been associated with passivity and docility to patriarchal and neo-capitalist violence (Bennett 2010, p. 2). These social definitions have (re)produced and legitimated sexual hierarchies which have engendered subordination and policing of female sexuality.

In line with the aforementioned representations of African women’s sexuality, discourse on female university students’ sexuality generally frames them as docile and passive to coercive behaviours perpetrated by their male counterparts (Mosime et al. 2012, p. 48). This is a rather simplistic analysis of female sexual power and agency which calls for deconstructing and transformative analysis. Constructions of female powerlessness are founded on unexamined notions of female power. Hird and Jackson, cited in Barnes (2007, p. 41), observed that “young women’s sexuality is rarely explored in its own right but almost always as a secondary desire, responsive to active male sexuality”. Such discourse fails to capture nuances of power, control and domination inherent these encounters thereby reinforcing normative stereotypes of female students as powerless and subordinated by men. In this study, I adopt analysis which goes beyond facile description of university female students’ sexuality in order to understand complexities underlying their experiences of sexual coercion.

Feminist activism and theory raises concerted antagonism against overly simplistic representations of gender and sexual relations that do not reflect complex power dynamics (Amadiume (2006), Edstrom (2010) and Skafté and Silberschmidt (2014). It argues instead for an agentic female sexual power and subjectivity. Additionally, feminists construe the female body as a key site of resistance. Following these lines of argument, this thesis interrogated common representations of female students’ sexuality through examining power dynamics inherent experiences of sexual coercion. Operating within a feminist framework, I explored the extent to which female students exercise sexual agency, power and subjectivity in their experiences of sexual coercion. Equal representation, participation, access, and conditions in higher education are central feminist concerns, since “equality is indispensable for the full exercise of people’s capabilities, choices, and freedoms” (Heikkinen 2012, p. 13). This thesis examined sexual coercion in IHE which is part of feminist concerns with women’s rights to equality and control of their bodies within these spaces.

Interest over sexual coercion on university campuses is interwoven with increased concerns over issues of quality assurance in IHE, women and feminist movements and policy initiatives against sexual violence. Quality assurance requirements in higher and tertiary education have heightened the need for universities to constantly check and improve learning environments. Among other quality assurance issues in tertiary institutions is the mandate for universities to provide safe, equitable and non-discriminatory learning environments. Additionally, the principle of *loco parentis* which holds supreme in IHE makes them more accountable and responsible for criminal victimisation of students (Oluwajana 2017, p. 6). Increased reports of sexual coercion in IHE have resulted in the enactment of sexual harassment policies in universities.⁸ However, although a considerable number of tertiary institutions have implemented anti-sexual harassment policies and ordinances to address sexual coercion on university campuses, sexual coercion remains a recurring problem (Okeke 2011, Smit and Plessis 2011).

1.2 Statement of the problem

In spite of active preventive measures taken at various levels of policy and planning aimed at curbing sexual coercion of female students in tertiary institutions, this problem remains pervasive. Thus the need to understand this complex phenomenon remains pressing. Though earlier research has provided insight into this phenomenon, there has been limited inquiry into social and cultural processes underlying this phenomenon, particularly gendered power dynamics inherent these encounters. Hence this thesis set out to fill this gap in scholarly discourse and research through interrogating notions of docility and passivity commonly held in literature on the sexuality female university students. This was aimed at understanding the extent to which female university students exercise sexual agency power and subjectivity during experiences of sexual coercion.

1.3 Rationale of the study

Sexual coercion in IHE is significantly gendered. Males (i.e. students, intimate partners, lecturers and other members of staff) have been identified as the common perpetrators of sexual coercion compared to females within university contexts (Agardh et al. 2011, Odu and Olusegun 2013). Additionally, earlier research suggests that the greater proportion of victims is female (Agardh et al. 2011, Odu and Olusegun 2013, Tlou 2014). This is not to say males do

⁸ Bindura University of Science Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Carnegie Mellon University, Midlands State University, Stanford University and Great Zimbabwe University are notable examples of institutions that have put in place anti-sexual harassment policies and ordinances.

not experience sexual coercion but prevalent rates of sexual coercion are higher among female students than among their male counterparts (Agardh et al 2011, Odu and Olusegun 2013, Mapuranga et al. 2015). Odu and Olusegun (2013, p. 199) concurred that female university students are natural targets of sexual coercion regardless of age or marital status.

The preponderance of female victims of sexual coercion in IHE replicates high prevalent rates of sexual coercion against women in the wider society.⁹ Female university students fall victim to sexual violence perpetrated by their intimate partners, co-students, lecturers, administrative staff and other men with whom they interact (Eyre 2000, p. 293; Joseph 2015, p.131). As such, sexual coercion of female university students warrants special attention. The fact that female students continue to be victims of sexual coercion on university campuses points to a pressing need for further inquiry into social and cultural processes underlying these experiences. This is substantiated by Choudhry (2015, p. 16) who observed that “there is need for research to fill in the existing gaps in our knowledge of the social and cultural determinants of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR hereafter) among young people and a pressing need for further research and evaluation of evidence-based and effective SRHR intervention packages”. This study fills this gap in academic research and literature.

This thesis will be important for its contributions towards a comprehensive understanding of sexual coercion of female students on university campuses. Adedokun (2005, p. 1) asserted that “though sexual coercion in African educational settings has received local and international attention it remains the least understood, documented and focused on, of all forms of violence”. Additionally, Pande et al. (2009, p. 5) observed that strategies for young women’s sexual empowerment remain elusive. The findings of this study will serve to inform evidence-based interventions to prevent sexual coercion of female students on university campuses. Tamale (2007, p. 52) observed that “failure to comprehend local meanings, nuances and enactments of local sexualities results in irrelevant, inappropriate and time wasting interventions that are bound to be oppressive to the target populations and individuals”. This justifies the need for empirical and targeted research such as this study. While there have been earlier scholarly studies i.e. masters and doctoral studies on sexual coercion of females in institutions of higher education (Katsande 2008, Goba-Malinga 2011, Jeffry 2014, Eze 2016), these studies direct limited attention to gendered power dynamics that characterise these

⁹ Research indicates that the vast majority of victims of sexual violence are female (WHO 2003, p. 8) and most of these sexual offences are perpetrated by males (Stathopoulos 2014).

encounters. Additionally, the extent to which female students exercise sexual agency, power and subjectivity during experiences of sexual coercion has not been interrogated. Skafté and Silberschmidt (2014, p. 1) asserted that “African women’s agency, particularly sexual agency has been very little investigated”.

This thesis endeavours to add to the growing body of research that aims to understand the sexuality of female university students through exploring gender dynamics embedded in experiences of sexual coercion in IHE (Gaidzanwa and Manyeruke 2001, Bennet et al. 2007, Clowes et al. 2009, Mosime et al. 2012). The overarching aim of this thesis was to understand the gendered politics underlying experiences of sexual coercion among female university students. This thesis will expand anthropological, specifically gendered understandings of young women’s sexuality in the context of higher education. It is essential to form a more complete understanding of female students’ sexual agency, subjectivity and power. Parker et al. (2008, p. 2) asserted that, “analysis of gender and gender power differentials are central to any full understanding of sexual relations and interactions”. As such, this thesis examined sexual coercion of female university students within a framework of gendered relations. Gendered analysis of the female students’ experiences of sexual coercion facilitated a contextualised and nuanced understanding of the processes, dynamics and meanings they attached to sexual coercion.

The impetus for this study was the observation that though female university students are commonly coerced by partners with whom they have intimate and interdependent relationships, a majority of these cases are underreported, more than in cases of stranger coercion (Gross et al. 2006, Chan et al. 2008, Byers and O’Sullivan 2010, Kheswa 2014). According to World Health Organisation (WHO 2003, pp. 8-9), “abuse by intimate partners indicate that between 6% and 46% of women report that they have experienced attempted or completed forced rape by an intimate partner and some time in their lives”. A study by Elukar (2004) at a Ghanaian university found that female students’ intimate partners i.e. their boyfriends and husbands were the common perpetrators of sexual coercion, followed by their acquaintances. The fact that most cases of sexual coercion experienced at university campuses are perpetrated by individuals known to the victims has been a barrier to help-seeking and reporting. This has contributed to limited insight into the issue, specifically in the Zimbabwean context where most extant studies focus on student-lecturer relationships. Byers and O’Sullivan (2010, p. 69) opined that sexual coercion by someone known to the victim has equally and perhaps greater

detrimental consequences for the victims compared to sexual coercion from a stranger. This observation substantiates the severity of intimate partner coercion among university students.

This study explored how female students enact sexual citizenship in the context of higher and tertiary education. It provided insights on the various forms of gendered exclusions female students experience in the context of higher and tertiary education. Sexual citizenship is a multi-faceted concept which brings together discourse on sexuality and citizenship. This thesis draws on theorisation of citizenship that focuses on the “sexual citizen subject and spaces of sexual citizenship” (Richardson 2015, p. 3). Evans (2013) conceptualised sexual citizenship as the varying degrees of access to a set of rights to sexual expression and consumption. Sexual rights include rights to be free of coercion, discrimination and violence to attain the highest possible standard of health in relation to sexuality (WHO 2002). Nyanzi (2007), cited in Tamale (2007, p. 487), further noted that “at the centre of sexual citizenship are principles of body autonomy, freedom of expression, institutional inclusion and access to space”. Working within a framework of sexual citizenship enabled articulation, contestation and advocacy for the sexual rights of female university students. Additionally, rights discourse also offered a potent platform to examine opportunities for female students to access recourses and opportunities relative to male students.

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) expressed that “the human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Parker et al. (2008, p. 67) further stated that “sexual citizenship is possible only when people have the right to pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life”. Sexual coercion is a public health and human rights issue. It is an infringement upon sexual rights and citizenship. It is therefore critical to respond to sexual coercion of female university students to ensure that their rights and sexual citizenship are safeguarded in the context of higher education. This is because “full and active citizenship continues to be women’s elusive and conditional right in African contexts” (Schlyter 2009, p. 23). Additionally, sexual rights can be an empowering platform from which to operationalise social justice for female students in IHE (Nyanza 2007 cited in Tamale 2007, p. 487).

A broader issue this study is concerned with is ensuring that the sexual rights and safety of female university students are protected in institutions of higher education. The World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century (1998) Article 3 and 6 emphasises the

need for institutions of higher learning to create supportive learning environments which enhance equity of access by students and staff (UNESCO 1998). It is the mandate of the university to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment for students to achieve their potential (FAWE 1998, p. 6). Analysis of sexual harassment has been disregarded to a greater extent due to avoidance of liability by organisations (Smit and Plessis 2011). However, the development of effective preventive strategies for sexual coercion within institutions of higher learning is contingent on having in-depth empirical knowledge of this social practice.

Experiences of sexuality among university students are influenced by broader social and cultural sexual politics and dynamics. Inversely, broader sexual politics are re (shaped) within IHE. This confirms social construction of sexuality which is a central tenet of social constructionist ideas on sexuality. Social constructionism is the central theoretical paradigm informing this study. A broader issue this study focuses on is examining the social and cultural dynamics underlying sexual coercion of female university students and their experience of it. There has been little insight into social and cultural dynamics underlying sexual coercion in African IHE especially against a backdrop of sexual silence and sanctioning within these spaces. Studies that probe experiences of sexual coercion are relatively few in the African context because open discussions on this phenomenon are rare and almost taboo. This study aimed to fill this gap in scholarly discourse and research. Additionally, documenting and empowering female students to exercise sexual agency and autonomy during experiences of sexual coercion can serve to increase their ability to control sexual experiences and ameliorate negative effects of sexual coercion.

1.4 Research questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the female students' experiences and interpretations of sexual coercion?
2. Which intimate practices engender vulnerability to sexual coercion among female students? To what extent do female students resist or acquiesce to sexual coercion?
3. To what extent do female students feel safe on campus?
4. What are the implications of sexual coercion on the sexual citizenship of female students at the university?
5. What preventative measures do female students take to avoid sexual coercion?

The broader issues to be investigated in this study can be summarised as follows:

1. To explore the impact of wider social and cultural factors on female students' perceptions and experiences of sexual coercion.
2. To explore how female students enact, contest or negotiate gendered sexual norms during experiences of sexual coercion.
3. To explore what intervention measures have been put in place by the institution, government and non-governmental institutions to mitigate or curb sexual coercion of female students at the current university.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction

This introductory chapter gives an overview of the whole thesis. The chapter shows that sexual coercion is a recurrent problem in institutions of higher education to the extent that it has become normalized in some university contexts. The chapter reiterates the potency of a comprehensive understanding of sexual coercion to curb its occurrence in IHE. Additionally, the chapter demonstrated the feminist underpinnings of the thesis which sought to problematise power dynamics that characterise coercive sexual practices experienced by female university students with the aim of framing their gendered enactments of sexual agency, power and subjectivity during these encounters. The chapter also presents the statement of the problem, research objectives and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter contextualises the study within extant academic literature on sexual coercion in IHE regionally, internationally and in the Zimbabwean context. Specific reference was made to female students' experiences of sexual coercion in institutions of higher education. The chapter provides an overview and analysis of literature on sexual coercion critically analysing and identifying specific gaps the study aimed to fill.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework and research methodology

This chapter discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the study and the methodological approach adopted. Additionally, the chapter details the relevance of each of the theories to understanding experiences and interpretations of sexual coercion among female university students. The chapter also provides detailed explanation on how data was collected and

analysed. A justification of the research methodology and theoretical framework is also offered.

Chapter 4: Perceptions and experiences of sexual coercion among female students

This chapter discusses female student's perceptions and experiences of sexual coercion. The chapter explores sexually coercive practices female students were subjected to on campus. Their lived experiences of sexual coercion are discussed. Additionally, the impact of social and cultural processes (religious beliefs, sexual scripts, cultural norms, femininity etc.) on perceptions and experiences of sexual coercion among female students is discussed.

Chapter 5: Sexual coercion in the context of intimate practices among female university students

This chapter discusses ways in which intimate practices among female students increased vulnerability to sexually coercive practices. It offers a discussion on social and cultural exigencies governing these intimate practices. Furthermore, it interrogates ways in which social and cultural influences on intimate practices among female university students engendered resistance or acquiescence to sexual coercion.

Chapter 6: Gendered resistance(s) or acquiescence to coercive sexual practices and norms

This chapter explores gendered power dynamics inherent experiences of sexual coercion among female university students. It discusses the multiple forms of social and cultural power governing female students' perceptions and experiences of sexual coercion within university contexts. Furthermore, it discusses the extent to which female students resist or acquiesce to the resulting gendered power relations in order to demonstrate ways in which they exercise sexual agency, subjectivity and power. The chapter also discusses structural determinants which engendered vulnerability to sexual coercion among female students.

Chapter 7: Perceptions on safety and vulnerability within university spaces and implications for gendered citizenship

This chapter discusses perceptions of safety and vulnerability among female university students. It discusses the extent to which these perceptions impacted their embodied experiences in the university context. Additionally, the chapter discusses how perceptions of safety and vulnerability impacted the gendered citizenship of female students. The chapter also discusses the role played by the university, government and non-governmental institutions in mitigating and curbing sexual coercion of female university students.

Chapter 8: Re (constructing) university female students' bodies as sites for embodied agency, power and subjectivities

This chapter provides a summary of the research findings and discusses the main conclusions of the study. Drawing from the research findings, I articulate the extent to which female exhibit sexual agency, power and subjectivity during experiences of sexual coercion. Additionally, it gives an analysis of the extent to which earlier assertions of sexual docility, passivity and vulnerability among female students are not a true representation of their sexuality. Guided by the findings of research, the chapter provides recommendations for mitigating sexual coercion of female students in institutions of higher education.

1.6 Summary of chapter

This introductory chapter offered an overview of the whole thesis. Firstly, I provided a description of the study where I outline its main purpose. The chapter highlights the study's focus: analysing gendered power dynamics underlying experiences of sexual coercion among female university students. Analysis of gendered power dynamics was guided through problematisation of notions of docility, passivity and vulnerability in earlier descriptions of female student sexuality (Mosime et al. 2012). Using feminist rhetoric, I demonstrate that these are gendered, facile and unexamined notions which need deconstruction. I demonstrate the potency of examining these notions in order to determine the extent to which female students exercise sexual agency, power and subjectivity. The chapter also alludes to the pervasiveness of sexual coercion in institutions of higher learning both internationally and in the African context. It discusses the preponderance of female students as victims of sexual coercion in institutions of higher education therefore underscoring the need for further analysis on this phenomenon. The chapter also discussed the statement of the problem, the rationale of the study and offered an overview of the overall structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature on sexual coercion in institutions of higher learning. The review of literature was guided by the study objectives and research questions. The chapter is presented under specific themes which emerged from the review. It is organised into the following sections: an overview of sexual coercion, the sexual behaviour of university students, manifestations of sexual coercion on university campuses, factors influencing sexual coercion on university campuses, female students' safety on university campuses, the impact of sexual coercion of female university students, and sexual coercion on Zimbabwean university campuses. Specific focus will be placed on sexual coercion of female university students. The chapter critically positions the current study within extant studies (i.e. local, regional and international studies) while carving out gaps the study aimed to address.

2.1 An overview of sexual coercion

Historical analysis of sexual coercion shows that this practice has been characteristic of human society since time immemorial. Kastl and Kleiner (2001, p. 156) observed that “sexual harassment [coercion] has been a problem since there has been interaction between men and women”. Despite the long history, sexual coercion was not regarded as prohibited sexual conduct until the 1970s and 1980s. Although sexual coercion was generally overlooked in earlier years, it is now increasingly gaining attention from the general public and in the research and academic community. Siegel (2003, p. 3) traced sexual coercion to chattel slavery where both women slaves and free women were victims of sexual coercion at work and in households in which they worked. Common law during this period regarded sexual coercion as a normal rather than deviant condition of heterosexual relations (Siegel 2003, p. 6). According to Jones (1999, p. 838), “rape (which was the only form of sexual coercion recognised during this period) was considered rare and, in the eyes of many, either excusable or insignificant”. During this period, cases of rape were under the jurisdiction of psychiatrists who viewed rapists as sick people whose behaviour reflected mental illness and irresistible impulses as a function of personality, adjustment, or biochemical abnormalities (Jones 1999, p. 838).

Sexual coercion received increased scholarly attention after concerted efforts by feminists and feminist movements (Siegel 2003). Jones (1999, p. 838) noted that “Susan Brown Miller’s

(1975) text, *Against Our Will* is widely credited as a principal catalyst in making rape an important topic – socially, legally, and academically”. Other influential works include those by MacKinnon and Lin Farley (1974). These scholars brought to the fore the sexual assault experiences of women at work. Siegel (2003, p. 6) noted that the work of these scholars was instrumental for consciousness rising which enabled the American system to recognise sexual harassment claims. Aeberhard-Hodges (1995) observed that sexual harassment as a concept can therefore be traced to the development of civil-rights legislation in the United States.

There is little consensus on the definition of sexual coercion. Sexual coercion is generally difficult to define and categorise because it is a broad and heterogeneous concept. Its meaning and interpretation vary according to social and cultural contexts. Byers and O’Sullivan (1996, p. 1) highlighted that problems associated with categorising sexual coercion are linked to societies not acknowledging some forms of sexual coercion and within the legal system, sexual coercion scenarios have often been dismissed as women craving attention, wanting revenge for an unfaithful boyfriend or to cover up an active sexual life. Various typologies have been proposed to define and classify sexual coercion. Thus, it is important to set out the parameters for the present study.

Sexual coercion covers a continuum of behaviour ranging from acts of physical violence to verbal and non-verbal acts of sexual violence. Debates on the delimitations of sexual coercion emanate from the fact that sexual coercion encompasses subtle actions such as deception, pressure and threats. Aryeetey (2004) observed that the definition of sexual coercion also suffers ambiguity because it is often confused with playful flirting or courting. The South African Law Reform Commission (1999, p. 114) asserted that sexual coercion constitutes more than physical force and includes forms of exercise of power over another person’s emotional, psychological, economic, social or organisational power. Fischer (2015) concurred that sexual coercion can be devoid of physical force. He argued that sexual coercion occurs when someone intimidates, tricks, forces or manipulates someone into engaging in sexual activity even without the use of physical force. The inference from these assertions, therefore, is that sexual coercion constitutes more than physical force or threat to engage in sexual activity.

Omoteso (2006) categorised sexual coercion by reference to the situation in which it occurs and by the identity or characteristics of the perpetrators. These categories include date acquaintance sexual coercion, marital or spousal sexual coercion, gang sexual coercion, sexual coercion of children, statutory sexual coercion, prison sexual coercion, war and transactional

sexual coercion. Sexual coercion has also been categorised with reference to how the act was achieved. This includes practices such as drug and alcohol facilitated coercion, forcible coercion, verbal coercion, emotional coercion among others (ibid.). Legal definitions of sexual coercion centre on incidents where the exercise of sexual autonomy or consent is compromised.

The South African Law Reform Commission (1999, p. 114) outlines four conditions under which sexual autonomy is said to have been compromised. These include situations where the perpetrator uses force or threatens to use force, uses coercion or creates fear of violence, applies duress, psychological oppression, or abuses his or her power, coercive environments in which a perpetrator takes advantage of a victim and conditions where various forms of natural incapacity or reduced capacity exist which affect the individual's ability to give genuine consent (South African Law Reform Commission Law 1999, p. 114). Given the variability of definitions for sexual coercion the present study uses the definition by Struckman-Johnson et al. (2003, p. 76) who define sexual coercion as an act of using pressure, alcohol or drugs or force to have sexual contact with someone against his or her will. Sexual coercion encompasses sexual activity that results from threats or use of physical force and includes unwanted sexual activity resulting from verbal or emotional coercion.

Sexual coercion is endemic to almost all societies and it takes varied forms. Bott et al. (2005, p. 3) noted that sexual coercion is also common in the context of armed conflict and displacement where sexual violence is used as a weapon of war, in prisons and in the context of dating relationships i.e. intimate partner violence. Although sexual coercion is a universal phenomenon, it is relative. The social and cultural context significantly influences how sexual coercion is perceived, interpreted and experienced. A study by Varga (2004) among South African adolescents in KwaZulu-Natal townships revealed how young adults construct forced sex as normal and customary. Among the Gussi of Kenya, sexual aggression towards intimate partners was socially sanctioned and males were encouraged to use force and aggression to demonstrate power (Le Vine 1959). Bhana and Anderson (2013) also noted how young South African women often model their relationships around female vulnerability and male dominance. As such sexual coercion has different meanings to those involved. Maksimowski (2012, p. 10) asserted that "sexual acts, identities and communities are fluid and people contest and construct these in different ways across time and space". Studies of sexual coercion are therefore not comparable across communities or countries (Mirsky 2003). It is therefore

important to empirical studies, such as this one, to reflect the different realities faced by women in different contexts (ibid.).

Female university students in Jeffrey's (2014) study had different perceptions and attitudes toward sexual coercion perpetrated by their intimate partners. Some resented it and emphasised its inappropriateness in dating relationships. However, some females accepted less forceful forms of sexual coercion such as verbal pressure and arguments and arousal tactics. Some provided positive justifications for sexual coercion perpetrated by their intimate partners. In studies by Bridges (1991), Haworth-Hoeppner (1998) and Feltey et al. (1991) on universities, males showed greater acceptance to the use of sexually coercive behaviours in dating and romantic relationships. In Bridge's (1991) study at a university in England, male students supported the use of sexual coercion in certain encounters. Similarly, male participants in Feltey et al. (1991) study noted that sexual coercion was justifiable in situations where the couple have a dating history, when there is an opportunity for sex, when the male pays for a date or when drugs or alcohol are used. Though the aforementioned studies were conducted a decade ago, they attest to the fact that university students have varying attitudes towards sexual coercion. Some accept it as a normal and natural part of relationships. Thus it is important to contextualise experiences and interpretations of sexuality to avoid providing generalised conclusions.

2.2 Sexual behaviour of university students

Sexual behaviour is the way in which humans experience and express their sexuality (Brian et al. 2016). Sexuality encompasses a wide array of complex elements, including sexual knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours, sexual orientation, and personal/interpersonal sexual relations (Tamale 2011, p. 11). It touches a wide range of other issues including pleasure, the human body, dress, self-esteem, gender identity, power and violence (ibid.). In this section, I review sexuality patterns of university students as presented in extant literature.

University spaces have been identified as prime sites for sexual exploration and experimentation. Institutions of higher learning provide liminal space and time that enables young people to discover, develop and experiment with sexual relationships and identities (Brian et al. 2016, p. 90, Paul et al. 2010, p. 76). Although university contexts allow increased sexual independence, this milieu has also been identified as fertile ground for risky sexual

behaviour. University students, both in developed and developing countries are characterised by high rates of sexual activity coupled with unprotected sexual behaviour (Bennet et al. 2007, Agardh et al. 2011, Curtin et al. 2011, Fawole et al. 2011, Brian et al. 2016). Multiple sexual partners, unprotected sexual activity, hook ups, prostitution and coercive sexual practices are some of the reported sexual practices among students in higher educational institutions (ibid.). These are indeed high risk behaviours which increase chances of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies. Reasons for risky sexual behaviour among university students have been attributed to sexual experimentation and low risk perceptions of vulnerability to STIs partly due to somewhat ignorant attitudes toward the negative implications of such behaviour. In light of the above, university students have been categorised as a vulnerable population, particularly in the context of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

The sacrality of sexual activity in African traditional contexts is undeniable. Familusi (2011, p. 6) noted that although Africa has a diversity of cultural beliefs and values with regard to sexuality there are certain aspects that are supra-cultural. Sexual activity, specifically penetrative sex, is only acceptable in the confines of marriage. Virginity checks in African traditional contexts are some of the measures taken to ensure that there is no sex before marriage. Reviewed literature indicates that sex has become a norm in dating and romantic relationships among university students which can imply changes in the traditional intimate practices in African contexts. In traditional dating scripts, sexual intercourse occurred in the context of serious and committed relationships such as marriage. Normalisation of sex in dating and romantic relationships among university students suggests the influence of global sexual cultures on university female students' sexuality.

Multiple relationships are a form of risky behaviour that has been reported among university students (Fawole et al. 2011, Agardh et al. 2014, Heeren et al. 2015, Menon et al. 2016). These studies report that a majority of sexually active university students have more than one sexual partner. A study by Menon et al. (2016) at a Zambian University found that most students had more than one partner. Additionally, there was a tendency of multiple sexual partners to increase with advancement with university years attained. In this study, male students were more likely to have more than one partner. Similar findings were found in a study by Siegel et al. (1999) where students in the lower levels had a lower rate of multiple sexual partners compared to senior students. A study by Brian et al. (2016) at a Nigerian university revealed that 68% of the respondents were sexually active with 27.4% having sexual intercourse with

as many as six or more sexual partners. Similar findings were found in a study by Fawole et al. (2011) where the percentage of students having multiple sexual relationships was high. Given this context of increasing sexual activity among university students, multiple sexual relationships and institutional norms of sexual permissiveness, it can be inferred that university contexts are generally highly sexualised spaces. Sexual activity is reported to be rampant among university students (Hoque et al. 2014).

Casual and 'hook up' sexual relationships are among the romantic relationships found on university campuses (Puentes et al. 2008, Geinsinger 2011, Rosin 2012). A hook up is a form of casual sexual relation where there are no commitments or emotional attachments. This phenomenon has varied expressions in literature which include 'friends with benefits', 'booty calls', 'without strings' or 'fuck buddies' (Jonason and Richardson 2011, Garcia et al. 2012). Geinsinger (2011, p 4) described hooking up as involving a range of intimate behaviours including kissing, fondling or sexual intercourse between partners who do not have relational commitments. They also commonly involve friends and acquaintances rather than strangers (Fielder and Carey 2010). Geinsinger (2011, p. 4) further asserted that university students usually choose casual sexual relationships to avoid being tied down in long-term relationships which need investment in time and money. In her study, Geinsinger (2011) found that most students engaged in 'hook ups' to experience intimacy without investing in relationships. Additionally, Rosin (2012) opined that hook ups benefit young women by delaying the time they will be in serious relations. She observed that these relationships also beneficial to female university students because they are also afforded a chance to satisfy their economic and sexual needs (ibid.). A study by Puentes et al. (2008) showed that many undergraduates were involved in 'friends with benefits' relationships. In this study male students were more likely to emphasise the sexual benefits while female students focused on friendship. The reviewed literature showed that 'hook ups' afford university students access to both sexual experiences and some level of intimacy. As mentioned earlier, Puentes et al. (2008) noted that some 'hooks ups' focused on friendships. This reveals a form of intimate attachment between the parties involved. Hook-up and casual sexual relationships reflect changes in the traditional social and cultural sexual scripts that have emerged in contemporary popular culture (Gracia et al. 2012). This dating practice shows a shift from traditional dating practices, particularly in the African context, which emphasised sexual purity before marriage. Although 'hooking up' is a universal practice common among young adults, it has been reported to be widespread in western countries (Downing-Matibag and Geisinger 2009, Paul et al. 2010, Geinsinger 2011). Garcia

et al. (2012) noted that hook ups and casual sexual relations have become culturally normative among adults in the western world. Hooking up commonly involves high alcohol consumption and binge drinking and was found to be associated with risks of sexual coercion, particularly party rape. Sexual coercion commonly occurs when the female no longer wishes to continue with the relations or when the partner or stranger wishes to initiate or engage in sexual activities they are not comfortable with. Scholars have conflicting views with regard to power dynamics in sexual hook ups. Scholars such as McGinley (2013) and Gracia et al. (2012) argued that hook ups retain features of traditional dating, where women have less control and power. They present gendered asymmetries of power in which men retain most control and decisional power. However scholars such as Rosin (2012) have argued otherwise. Rosin (2012) proposed that hook ups offer young women a platform to use their sexuality and gain advantage over men during negotiations. Her position, however, overlooks the fact in some cases the young women are incapacitated to give consent or negotiate during hook ups which are commonly associated with high alcohol consumption.

Prostitution is another common sexual practice in universities. The reviewed literature indicated high rates of prostitution among university students (Tade and Adekoya 2012, Ofuophu 2014, Oyeouku et al. 2014, Sagar 2015). Both male and female students are reported to be actively involved in prostitution. Tade and Adekoya (2012) opined that female students are more actively involved in the sexual acts whereas male students commonly act as gatekeepers. Practices of prostitution have generally received considerable scrutiny, particularly in contexts where this is regarded as deviation from the normative social configurations. High rates of sexually transmitted infections in this sub-population have also heightened concerns over the issue. Tamale (2007, p. 495) added that, “university students are reported to engage in full time prostitution mostly in the guise of eking a living”. A research project done by Sagar et al. (2015) on student sex work in the UK indicated that a number of students engage in commercial sex work. The respondents in the study by Sagar et al. (2015) noted that they experienced verbal and physical aggression in these sexual relationships. The study revealed that prostitution among female university students increased vulnerability to sexually coercive sex.

Intergenerational sexual relationships also seem prevalent among university students (Masvawure 2009, Gukurume 2011, Mosime et al 2012). The aforementioned studies reveal that intergenerational sexual relationships are common among university students, particularly female students. University students are believed to enter these relationships in a bid to accrue

financial, social and material benefits. These relationships place students, especially young women, in unequal relations that are associated with coercive sexual practises. Shumba et al. (2011, p. 55) observed that the bargaining strength of the young female adults for safe sex remains highly compromised in the unequal exchange situation. A study by Choudhry et al. (2014) among Ugandan students also revealed that the experience of sexual coercion for both male and female students was associated with having accepted money, gifts or some other form of compensation for sex. Though the reviewed literature points to the unequal nature of transactional relationships and their association with coercive practices, the studies did not delve deeply to examine the power dynamics inherent in these encounters. The conclusion that female students are powerless victims is a simplistic analysis of the power dynamics at play (Masvawure 2010, Gukurume 2011). There is a need to examine these power dynamics in order to explore some covert and subtle enactments of ‘constrained agency’ and sexual power within coercive sexual practices experienced by female students in the context of intergenerational and transactional relationships

2.3 Manifestations of sexual coercion on university campuses

Gender based violence has largely been understood in the context of spousal and conjugal relations. There is a general belief that when young people have sex it is wanted and consensual (Erulkar 2004). However, studies on the sexuality of college students have confirmed that sexual coercion is prevalent on university campuses (Armstrong et al. 2006, Clowes et al. 2009, Kiguwa and Bradbury 2012, Gordon and Collins 2013, French 2015). Sexual coercion on university campuses manifests in multiple forms and anyone is a potential victim within these spaces. Students, members of staff and visitors have all been reported to fall victim of sexual coercion in universities (Katsande 2008, Goba-Malinga 2011, Gordon and Collins 2013, Tlou 2014, Mapuranga et al. 2015). Furthermore, it has been reported that females, both students and members of staff, are the common victims while men are the common perpetrators (UNDP and UNESCO report 2010). In a study by the UNDP and UNESCO (2010) at three universities in Afghanistan, it was found that female students and members of staff often experienced sexual coercion more than male staff and students. Preponderance of female victims of sexual coercion in IHE can point to its gendered nature.

In my review of literature on sexual coercion in IHE I identified four main types which include verbal sexual coercion, physical sexual coercion, alcohol facilitated sexual coercion and quid pro quo sexual coercion. Physical forms of sexual coercion reported on university campuses include touching of a sexual nature, passion killings, forcible kissing and forced sexual

intercourse or rape. Earlier studies have documented occurrences of intimate partner femicide in IHE (Clowes 2009, Eze 2016). Female students are reportedly killed by jilted intimate partners. Perpetrators of passion killings commonly commit suicide after the murder. In a study exploring implications of passion killings in tertiary institutions in Botswana and Namibia, Eze (2016) found that the practice of passion killings was rampant among young people and women were reported the common victims. Furthermore, the study revealed that the psychological trauma and social shock of passion killings evoked feelings of insecurity and instability which in turn affected concentration and learning among university students. In another study, Clowes (2009) documented the stabbing of a female university student by her boyfriend who was also a student at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in South Africa.

Earlier studies have reported that university students experience attempted and completed rape (Iliyasu et al. 2011, Takele and Setegen 2014, Shimekaw et al. 2017). In these studies intimate partners of university students were reported as the common perpetrators of sexual coercion. In the study by Takele and Setegen (2014), 6.8% of the respondents had been raped at the university in Nigeria. The study by Shimekaw et al. (2013) reported that 35.85% of the respondents had been victims of completed rape. In this study, it was revealed that intimate partners and close family members were the common perpetrators of rape experienced by female students in this study.

Verbal sexual coercion is another type of sexually coercive tactic found in IHE. Pugh and Becker (2018, p. 4) defined verbal sexual coercion as a “tactic utilized by a perpetrator in a sexual encounter to persuade or coerce the other person to agree or give in to sexual activity against freely given consent”. Verbal coercion doesn’t involve use of physical force or explicit threats of force but involves compulsion by external psychological pressure (Katz et al. 2007). This type of coercion is also commonly perpetrated by individuals who are known to the victim i.e. acquaintances, friends, or intimate partners. In the context of higher education, lecturers have also been identified as perpetrators of verbal coercion against students. Verbal sexual coercion in IHE manifests in the form of sexual comments and jokes, using sexually charged names, spreading sexual rumours inter alia (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights 2010, Appaak and Sarpong 2015). In the study by the UNPD and UNESCO (2010) at Balku University, some staff members were reported to use verbal abuse against students. Additionally some female members of staff also reported experiencing verbal sexual abuse from male students. In a study by Okeke (2011) at a Nigerian University, it was revealed that female undergraduate students who were in traditionally male dominated disciplines reported

experiencing inappropriate jokes and inappropriate comments about gender. This was less common in traditional female dominated disciplines. This can point to the misogynist nature of sexual coercion in IHE.

In the context of intimate relationships, students were reported to experience verbal sexual coercion such as sexual persistence, persuasion or intimidation. In studies by Struckman-Johnson et al. (2003) and Zurbrigger (2000), female students reported being deceived and manipulated into having sex. In a study by Jeffry (2014), it was found that female students experienced verbal sexual coercion where boyfriends threatened to break up with female students for refusing to have sex with them. A study by Kaplinska (2016) also found that female students were the common victims of verbal sexual coercion in universities. This study revealed that young women who had attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were more likely to experience verbal sexual coercion. It was revealed that the more a woman was worried about being loved, the more likely she was a victim of sexual coercion. In the study by Illuyasu et al. (2011), respondents reported experiencing public criticism and embarrassment, verbal threatening and demeaning remarks. In this study, female students were also reported the common victims of verbal sexual coercion perpetrated by male students, lecturers and strangers.

Another common type of sexual coercion reported in institutions of higher learning is sexual coercion of female students by individuals in authority i.e. university male lectures and sports trainers. Literature consistently refers to this form of coercion as quid pro quo harassment. Quid pro quo harassment involves actual or threatening use of rewards or punishment from an organisationally dominant person to gain sexual favours either by threats or promise of rewards, promotion or favouritism (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of the United States 1980). A number of studies have found that lecturers (commonly males) misuse their authority to manipulate students by using marks as leverage for getting sexual favours (Zindi 1994, Katsande 2008, Tlou 2014, Edward-Jauch 2012).

Additionally, studies by Zindi (1994, Tlou (2014) and Katsande (2008) which examined sexual harassment in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions identified exploitative relationships which were prone to sexual coercion and abuse between male lecturers and female students. The studies found that some lecturers misuse their influence to sexually exploit female students for grades. This is commonly referred to as “a thigh for a pass” in Zimbabwean teachers colleges. Similar findings were found in a study by Edward-Jauch (2012) at the University of Namibia. The

study participants used the term “sexually transmitted marks” to describe this phenomenon (Edward-Jauch 2012, p. 107). Sports trainers in institutions of higher education have also been identified as perpetrators of sexual coercion (Mapfumo 2012, Muchena 2015, Muchena and Sarpong 2015). Power dynamics between the sports trainers and athletes were noted to influence adoption of sexually coercive tactics by the trainers who are usually in positions of power. However these studies overlook other sexual relations which expose female students to sexual coercion. They do not take into account the sexual abuse female students experience in the hands of their intimate partners and other individuals who are close to them. The present study seeks to fill this gap in literature.

2.4 Legal and policy frameworks protecting university students against sexual coercion

Examining legal and policy frameworks protecting university students from sexual coercion is a useful starting point prior to delving deeper into understanding the risk factors for sexual coercion in IHE. Several legal and policy frameworks addressing sexual coercion in IHE exist at international, regional, national and institutional levels. In most countries there exist legislative laws which criminalise sexual violence and victimisation such as rape, indecent assault and sexual / child abuse. University students are protected by statutes of law in their countries of origin. At international level, there exist policies and treaties that legally bind signatories to implement policies to protect citizens against sexual coercion. Among these are the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). The treaties offer provisions which protect citizens against gender and sexual violence. Sexual coercion in IHE also falls within the remit of these treaties and conventions.

In some countries, such as South Africa and the United States of America, sexual coercion in IHE is dealt with at the highest level of government. In these countries there exist enactments which mandate IHE to design and implement sexual harassment policies which seek to prevent and address sexual coercion within university settings. In the United States, several policies and acts of law have been passed to protect university and college students from sexual coercion. The Students Right to Know Act (1990), the Campus Security Act (1990), the Clergy Act and the Campus Save Act (2013) are policy frameworks that were implemented to increase the safety of students in IHE. In South Africa, the government through the education department implemented the Employment of Educators Act which protects students from sexual victimisation. The policy guidelines prohibit any sexual relations with students. Section

17 of the Employment of Educators Act prohibits educators from committing any form of harassment including sexual coercion against learners (Smit and Plessis 2011). The **Act** also prohibits educators from having sexual relations with learners. Contravening these prohibitions results in suspension or expulsion from duty. Even when a learner consents to a sexual relationship, it is against the law to have sexual relations with them. These legislative measures are geared towards awareness and prevention of gender-based sexual violence in educational institutions.

Perkins and Warner 2017) defined sexual harassment policies as policies and procedures designed to prevent sexual harassment and provide support services for victims. A significant number of universities such as the University of Bindura, Carnegie Mellon University, Midlands State University, Stanford University and Great Zimbabwe University have incorporated sexual harassment policies and ordinances to prevent and eliminate sexual assault on university campuses. This is aimed at ensuring that university students are afforded a safe learning environment that is free from discrimination or any form of violation. University students are therefore protected by the ordinances and regulations which are stipulated in these policy instruments.

2.5 Factors influencing sexual coercion in universities

Sexual coercion among university students is complex and multifarious; it results from interplay of multiple factors. These multiple risk factors interact at individual, relationship and community/societal levels. A number of etiological explanations for sexual coercion have been put forward. Among these are biological, behavioural, cognitive and socio-cultural theories which seek to explain the nature and basis of sexual coercion. Hypotheses and theories which fall under the biological framework emphasise genetic, hormonal, and neuropsychological bases that underlie sexual coercion. Structural explanations of sexual coercion consider brain impairments as a determinant for sexual offending. According to this school of thought “damage or injury to the temporal lobe and structures of the limbic system results in abnormal behaviour in sex, mood and violence” (Stinson 2006 p. 44). Abnormalities in the endocrine system are also believed to have far-reaching implications which affect sexual drive and cause sexually coercive behaviours. Despite the contributions made by biological, cognitive and behavioural explanations of sexual coercion, these theories have some drawbacks. Among these is the tendency to remove responsibility from the perpetrators of sexual coercion. They tend to naturalise sexually coercive behaviours as unchangeable and acceptable (Jones 1999).

While this thesis acknowledges biological and individual influences on sexual coercion, the review of literature focuses more on contextual (social and cultural) factors underlying sexual coercion on university campuses. Unlike the biological, cognitive and behavioural explanations of sexual coercion, socio-cultural analysis of sexual coercion shifts the focus from the perpetrator to the context within which sexual coercion takes place. Social-cultural analyses of sexual coercion view it as a product not only of individual pathology but collective socio-cultural determinism (Jones 1999, p. 840). It is to a greater extent a function of ‘inherited sexual response pattern or the extent of restraint exerted on the individual by society’ Brian (2016 p. 88). Describing this state of affairs, Tamale (2014, p. 8) stated that “how and with whom we have sex, what we desire, what we take pleasure in, how we express that pleasure, why, under what circumstances and with what outcomes, are all forms of learned behaviour communicated through the institutions of culture, religion and law”. This affirms that sexuality is to a greater extent governed by the social and cultural milieu of an individual.

Earlier studies (Gámez-Guadix 2008, Simon et al. 2012, Richardson et al. 2016) in university contexts have found strong association between childhood experiences and perpetration of sexual coercion among university. Insecure attachments which stem from childhood are believed to cause individuals to act in deviant ways, including sexual deviance. Furthermore, feelings of chronic loneliness and low self-worth that result from poor parental attachments lead to problems in interpersonal functioning, intimacy deficits and extreme frustrations (Stinson 2006, p. 72). In a study by Gámez-Guadix (2008), minor forms of neglect by parents, sexual abuse during childhood and corporal punishment were associated with the increased probability for verbal and physical coercion among female and male students. These findings are consistent with findings made in a study by Simon et al. (2012). Findings of this study indicated that continuous corporal punishment and exposure to pornographic material during childhood increased the probability of sexual coercion perpetration among male students. Similar conditions combined with paternal hostility were reported to increase the likelihood of sexual victimisation among female students.

Additionally, a study by Richardson et al. (2016) examining the link between family of origin and the perpetration of sexual coercion among 326 male undergraduate students found that family characteristics such as inconsistent parenting, over-parenting and hostility between parents during childhood influenced perpetration of sexually coercive behaviours. Results of this study showed that hostility between parents was associated with perpetration of sexual

coercion in young male adults. Conversely, over-parenting and inconsistent parenting were buffers for sexual coercion perpetration. Additionally, feelings of entitlement which are related to over-parenting and inconsistent parenting were found to be associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion for males showing the dual impact of inconsistent and over-parenting on sexual coercion perpetration in adult life. Studies which show links between family background and perpetration of sexual coercion in university contexts have important implications for primary prevention of sexual coercion within these spaces i.e. through family life and relationship education (Gámez-Guadix 2008 and Richardson et al. 2016).

Other studies have found that victims of sexual coercion are likely to practise this behaviour themselves (DeGue and Dillillo 2004, Loh and Gidycz 2006, Brousseau et al. 2012). This is termed the “cycle of abuse theory, the notion that victims of childhood abuse may be more likely than non-victims to perpetrate various forms of abuse as adults” (DeGue and Dillillo 2004, p. 676). This reflects reproduction of sexually coercive behaviours which engenders a cycle of perpetration and re-victimisation. Findings from a study by Loh and Gidycz (2006) indicated that men who had experienced sexual victimisation during childhood were six times more likely to perpetrate sexual coercion in adulthood. Similarly, a study by Lyndon et al. (2007) found that men who had a history of childhood sexual abuse reported using force to gain sexual contact compared to men who had not experienced childhood sexual abuse. Similarly, a study by Brousseau et al. (2012) found that childhood experiences of sexual abuse predicted sexual victimisation and perpetration. Findings of this study revealed that childhood sexual abuse was a significant predictor of female sexual coercion. Additionally, male sexual coercion was predicted by sexual victimisation and perpetration in previous relationships. Lisak et al. (1996) noted that a possible explanation why men with a history of sexual coercion are likely to perpetrate sexual coercion is as an effort to reclaim their masculine identity and feelings of control.

Some university-based studies found association between experiences of physical violence and experiences of sexual coercion (Karamagi et al. 2006, Agardh 2012, Mohammadkhani et al 2009, Griffin 2012). These studies revealed that students who were exposed to physical violence were at a greater risk of experiencing sexual coercion. The study by Griffin (2012) found that experience of physical coercion was a strong predictor for sexual victimisation. Similarly in the study by Mohammadkhani et al. (2009) it was found that a history of exposure to physical violence predicted experiences of sexual coercion among both female and male students. It was revealed that among 66 male students who had been exposed to physical

violence, 90.6% had also experienced sexual coercion. These studies therefore show that previous exposure to physical violence was linked to experiences of sexual coercion among university students.

Another hypothesis that attempts to explain sexual coercion under the cognitive framework proposes that maladaptive cognitive schemas disinhibit perpetrators of sexual coercion and justifies their behaviours (Ward et al. 1998, Hanson 1999). Stinson (2006, p. 92) noted that perpetrators of sexual coercion possess offense-supportive beliefs and attitudes which lead to sexually coercive behaviour. Dysfunctional information and cue perception are also believed to influence sexually coercive behaviour. This perspective posits that sex offenders have different and dysfunctional ways of interpreting social cues and lack an ability to make rational choices based on the information they receive. They are also believed to have difficulties in recognising and interpreting the emotional states of others and cannot consider their emotional perspective when making decisions (Stinson 2006, p. 92). It can be noted that these explanations overlook the impact of external social and cultural influences on the perpetration of sexual coercion. Camelleri (2008) found that psychopathy and cuckoldry risk were significant determinants for partner sexual coercion. In this study, males who raped their partners displayed low sexual arousal to rape scenarios unlike non-partner rapists. Similarly, a study by Munoz et al. (2011) found that psychopathic traits were a determinant for adopting sexually coercion as a mating strategy. In this study psychopathic characteristics such as callousness, calm and selfishness predicted gaining sex through minor forms of sexual coercion. Both male and female university students reported using minor to severe sexually coercive tactics in their current relationships.

As the preceding discussion and literature reveals, tertiary institutions are highly gendered spaces characterised by hierarchical power relations. Sexual coercion rampant within these institutions is invariably gendered. The gendered nature of sexual coercion on university campuses is confirmed by the fact that females i.e. both students and members of staff are at an elevated risk of sexual coercion compared to their male counterparts. Female students have been reported the common victims of sexual coercion on university campuses with males being the common perpetrators (Erulkar 2004, Hines 2007,). Female students have also been reported to be perpetrators of sexual coercion (Hines and Saudine 2003, Erulkar 2004, Struckman-Johnson et al 2003, Gamez – Guadix et al 2011). The study by Hines and Saudine (2003) found that both women and men engaged in sexual coercive practices though the rate was higher

among men. Similar findings were found in the study by Gamez – Guadix et al (2011) which found that both male and female students employed sexual coercion to gain sexual contact. The study found that female students used verbal coercion and physical force to have sex. In the study by Struckman- Johnson et al (2003) female students were reported to use sexual persistence. Additionally, Erulkar (2014) reported that girlfriends were also among the key perpetrators of sexual coercion among Kenyan youths. These studies also confirm that female students can also be perpetrators of sexual coercion. Studies Gender power imbalances contribute to occurrence of sexual coercion. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women recognises that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women. This is substantiated by feminist theorists who argue that sexual coercion against women is a form of domination of women in patriarchal societies.

Sexual norms, cultural ideologies and gender roles which are rooted in culture serve either as catalysts or buffers for sexual coercion. Certain cultural groups hold gender role beliefs and various attitudes supportive of sexual coercion. Sexual coercion against women is usually higher in cultures where there are rigid gender roles and manhood is defined in terms of dominance and toughness (Makwara and Kaseke 2015, p. 70). Lottes and Weinberg (1997, p. 68) further asserted that norms which encourage male dominance and restrict female sexual expression legitimate coercive behaviours in sexual interactions. Studies by Makwara and Kaseke (2015) and Kambarami (2006) in Zimbabwe document how traditional cultural practices such as forced marriage, levirate marriages and genital mutilation facilitate the victimisation and coercion of Zimbabwean women. Patriarchal practices in the Shona culture perpetuate gender inequalities which strip women of control over their own bodies.

Traditional sexual scripts strongly influence sexual interactions. These scripts often depict men as sexual aggressors and women as resisters (Simon and Gagnon 1986), which may act to normalise and perpetuate male sexual violence against women. Abbey (2002 p. 120) gives the example of American gender role norms about dating and sexual behaviour which encourage men to be forceful and dominant and to think that ‘no’ means ‘convince me’. This misinterpretation of women’s sexual intent facilitates sexual coercion in that woman’s sexual refusal is seen as a sign that they should try harder or a little later rather than that they should give up (ibid.). In a study by Abbey (2002), males at this university perceived women who drank beer as promiscuous and therefore sexually available. They were viewed as appropriate

targets for sexual coercion. Traditional sexual scripts which are rooted in gender role norms can influence perpetration of sexually coercive behaviour.

Drugs and alcohol are identified as factors behind the experience of sexual coercion on university campuses. Considerable studies identify substance abuse as a contextual factor associated with sexual coercion among college students (Lindo et al. 2016, Abbey et al. 2001, Krebs et al. 2008 and Choudhry et al. 2014, Mehra et al. 2016). Lindo et al. (2016) attributed the high rates of alcohol related sexual coercion to college party culture. Alcohol in itself does not cause sexual coercion but increases its likelihood as it exacerbates dynamics that can arise without its consumption. In a study by Choudhry et al. (2014) heavy episodic drinking was associated with experiences of coerced sex. In this study, the perpetrators and victims of sexual violence had high levels of alcohol and drug abuse. Similar findings were found in studies conducted by Krebs et al. (2008), French et al. (2015), Mehra et al. (2016). The study by French et al. (2015) at Missouri University indicated that sexual coercion was associated with greater alcohol use. In the Krebs et al. (2008) study, the majority (89%) of incapacitated sexual coercion reported drinking alcohol and being drunk prior to their victimisation. Krebs et al. (2007) further observed that sexual assault consequent of substance abuse takes various forms. They opined that sexually coercive acts can be facilitated by coercive and non-coercive drug ingestion or by the victim being incapacitated through voluntary alcohol or drug use (Krebs et al. 2008, p. 2).

Young age and 'newness' on campus among first-year students have been noted as predisposing factors for sexual coercion. The first year of university has been identified as a time during which female students face the greatest risk of being sexually coerced. A significant number of studies support the idea that the first year of university is a "red zone" for female students (Clowes et al. 2009, Mezie-Okey and Alamina 2014, Brian et al. 2016). The first years that are usually new and younger are consistently vulnerable to unwanted sexualisation from senior men (Bennett et al. 2007). A study by Mezie-Okey and Alamina (2014) at a Nigerian university found that first-year students were at a greater risk of being sexually coerced. Similar findings were found in a study by Clowes et al. (2009) where first-year female students, especially those from poor, rural backgrounds were particularly vulnerable to transactional and unequal relationships associated with coercive and sometimes violent sexual practices (Clowes et al. 2009, p. 22). Omorodion and Olusanya (2008) also observed that younger female students were at a higher risk of experiencing sexual coercion because they usually find it difficult to make firm decisions on sexual matters.

2.6 Impact of sexual coercion on female university students

Sexual coercion has adverse health, social, psychological and academic implications (Kertzner et al. 2009, Takele and Setegn 2014, Mengo and Blacks 2015,). It has the potential of interfering with the victim's educational performance, health and overall well-being. Describing the severity of sexual coercion on women's lives, a World Bank (1993) report acclaimed that sexual violence "causes as much ill health and death in women aged 15–44 as cancer and more than malaria and traffic accidents combined". Not only does sexual coercion affect individual victims, it also has negative health, social and economic implications at a national level. Sexual coercion undercuts the transformative power of education. Mirsky (2003, p. 1) confirms that female education does not only contribute to improved family health but is a major driver of social and economic development. Poor physical health has long-term implications for human capital and development at a national level. Women who have been sexually coerced report poorer physical health and greater health service use (DeVisser et al. 2007). Greater health service use by victims of sexual coercion strains national health budgets thereby affecting national economies in the long run. Universities also face a number of deleterious penalties which include bad reputation, negative media coverage and distrust with university personnel and administrators (Weller 2018).

Sexual coercion is a major public health issue. It is generally associated with damaging all key dimensions of health.¹⁰ Research confirms an association between sexual coercion and poor health outcomes (DeVisser et al. 2007, WHO 2013, Takele and Setegn 2014). Sexual coercion is significantly associated with poorer psychological, physical, and sexual well-being. In a study by Takele and Setegn (2014), victims of sexual coercion experienced frequent headaches, poor appetite, sleeplessness and reproductive health problems such as genital trauma, genital swelling and unusual vaginal discharge. Victims of sexual coercion are at a higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive health problems. In light of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, sexual coercion increases the vulnerability of contracting HIV and AIDS. Sexual coercion is also significantly associated with poor mental health outcomes among university students (Agardh et al. 2012, Mengo and Black 2015). According to the American Psychiatric Association (1994), women who have been sexually coerced are significantly more likely to experience major depressive episodes or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The

¹⁰ Health according to the WHO (1948) definition is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Sexual coercion has detrimental effects on the physical, mental and social well-being of its victims and perpetrators.

Adolescent Sexual Coercion Fact Sheet released by the Oregon Health Authority notes that “victims of peer sexual coercion often experience heightened psychological symptoms of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress”.¹¹ Experience of sexual coercion is associated with poorer psychological health. Furthermore, poorer psychological well-being contributes to poorer physical health status. A study by Agardh et al. (2012) revealed that sexual coercion has long-term negative health implications. In this study, both female and male students who were victims of sexual coercion had high symptom scores for psychiatric symptoms such as depression. In Mengo and Black’s (2015) study, victims of sexual coercion experienced psychological distress, depression, fear, and self-destructive and disordered eating behaviours. This is likely to negatively influence their concentration on schoolwork.

Sexual coercion has negative implications for sexual health. The World Health Organisation (WHO 2002) working definition for sexual health is

a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

Drawing from the definition above, being free of or ‘freedom’ from sexual coercion is an important determinant for overall sexual health and well-being. University studies have shown negative association between sexual coercion and sexual health (DeVisser et al. 2007, Jeffery 2014, Agardh 2011). In a study by Jeffry (2014), sexual coercion was found to have negative effects on the young women’s relationships, sex lives and relationship commitments. Female victims of sexual coercion were reported to have problems trusting men i.e. they generally attributed sex as the main motivation for entering relationships. In this study, sexual coercion resulted in relationship problems which led to arguments in relationships and in extreme cases it led to relationship break-ups. In Agardh’s (2011) study among Ghanaian university students, sexual coercion led to multiple sexual partners and inconsistent condom use. Such lifestyle behaviours have negative health implications particularly in light of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. In a study by DeVisser et al. (2007) victims of sexual coercion reported sexual performance anxiety and a lack of sexual pleasure. Similar findings were found in a study by Najman et al. (2005) which found that women who experienced sexual coercion in the form of

¹¹<https://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/ReproductiveSexualHealth/Documents/edmat/adolescentsexualcoercion.pdf>

child sexual abuse involving penetration had three or more symptoms of sexual dysfunction. The women reported a lack of interest in sex, inability to orgasm or they would orgasm too quickly, a lack of sexual pleasure, or anxiety about sexual performance.

Sexual coercion in IHE adversely impacts academic performance and career aspirations. Research has shown that victims of sexual coercion commonly experience a drastic decline in academic performance, transfer to other institutions or can drop out of university (Jordan et al. 2014, Mengo and Black 2015). Eyre (2000, p. 293) observed that female victims of sexual coercion changed programmes or universities while others left the university community altogether. Similar findings were found in a study by Mengo and Black (2015) where students who experienced sexual violence were more likely to leave school compared with students who experienced physical/verbal violence. In this study, the dropout rate for students who had been sexually victimised (34.1%) was higher than the overall university dropout rates (29.8%). Decline in academic performance experienced by victims of sexual coercion results from the fact that sexual coercion hinders full participation in academic programmes (Muasya 2014). Brousseau and Bergeron (2011, p. 343) noted that victims of sexual coercion face adjustment problems that include depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and negative sexual self-perceptions. The psychological and emotional trauma consequent of sexual coercion affects academic performance. Additionally, fear of sexual coercion among female university students restricts freedom and mobility around campus thereby affecting their ability to pursue their studies to their fullest potential (Clowes et al. 2009, Mama 2009 and Muasya 2014).

Previous studies have found strong association between experiences of sexual coercion and engagement in risky sexual behaviours (Erulkar 2004, George et al. 2007, Garoma et al. 2008, Thompson et al. 2011, Agardh et al. 2011). Compared with young women who have not been sexually abused, those who have been sexually coerced tend to have more sexual partners, have less control over the terms of sex, a lower likelihood of using contraceptives and a higher likelihood of experiencing sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancy. A study by Agardh (2011) found that sexual coercion was associated with early sexual debut and having multiple partners. Similar findings were found by Garoma et al. (2008) who found that young Ethiopian women who had experienced sexual coercion were three times more likely to have more than one sexual partner than other females. In a Caribbean study among high school girls, George et al. (2007) found that girls who had experienced sexual coercion reported increased risks of early sexual debut. Thompson et al. (2011) observed that college women who had experienced unwanted sexual contact reported having higher levels of alcohol-related

negative consequences, consuming more alcoholic drinks per day, and drinking more days each week than did their non-victimised counterparts.

Previous experience of sexual coercion has been identified as a possible risk factor for sexual coercion perpetration or re-victimisation. Studies have found that victims of sexual coercion are likely to experience further sexual victimisation in the future (Follette et al. 1996, Moore et al. 2010, and Brousseau et al. 2012, Griffin 2012). In a study by Makoboza (2016) at Makerere University in Uganda, a number of students reported to have been sexually assaulted more than three times. One in five students reported to have been sexual coerced multiple times. This study concluded that perpetrators of sexual coercion repeated these offences on the same victims which proved weaknesses in victim protection against re-victimisation at this campus. Moore et al. (2010) observed that emotional dysfunction experienced by victims of sexual coercion was a contributing factor for re-exposure. In their study, female students who were victims of sexual coercion engaged in self-harm and risky behaviour as a coping strategy. These health-compromising behaviours which usually include cigarette smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and drug use increases risks of further victimisation (DeVisser et al. 2007). A study by Yimin et al. (2002) among Chinese adolescent women found that sexual coercion was more likely to be associated with health-risk behaviours such as prostitution, and exchanging material benefits for sex. Such behaviour increased risks of sexual coercion; some respondents reported being beaten or abused by their partners.

Sexual coercion has been found to affect self-efficacy and overall social well-being. Social well-being relates to the relationship between individuals and their social worlds. Kertzner et al. (2009, p. 1) noted that social well-being “encompasses the extent to which individuals feel they make valued social contributions, view society as meaningful and intelligible, experience a sense of social belonging, maintain positive attitudes toward others, and believe in the potential for society to evolve positively”. In a study by Munando (2015) in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions, it was observed that victims of sexual coercion become subjects of gossip, derogatory information and speculations at campus. Stigmatised university students have to cope with feelings of despondency and helplessness and this has detrimental effects to overall health and well-being. Mawire (2013, p.100) stated that “the trauma of sexual coercion and assault experienced by women and girls at different stages of their life cycle leaves them with irreparable loss of self-worth and autonomy, leading to the acceptance of victimization as part of being female”. Normalising sexual coercion increases vulnerability to risky sexual behaviours and further victimisation of female students.

2.7 Sexual coercion in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions

Studies in the Zimbabwean context reveal high prevalence rates of sexual coercion on university campuses (Zindi 1994, Shumba and Matina 2002, Katsande 2008, Muchena 2013, Tlou 2014, Munando 2015, Mapuranga et al. 2015). Media reports have also bemoaned this social ill.¹² The Africa News Slider headline entitled “Sexual Harassment of Female Students Jolts Zimbabwean Parliament to Action” affirms that sexual coercion within these spaces mirrors high rates of sexual violence in the Zimbabwean community. A 2015 national baseline survey conducted by the Munando (2015) revealed that 98% of female students encounter varied forms of sexual harassment in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. Despite the reported preponderance of sexual coercion in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions, this practice is highly unreported and muted. This has hindered efforts to have a full understanding of this social practice and measures to eradicate it. Although most female university students are aware of their rights, victims of sexual coercion rarely report these cases (Katsande 2008, Munando 2015). This can be attributed to the negative stigma attached to this experience especially in African contexts. Open discussion on sexuality issues is taboo in Africa and this can discourage victims of sexual coercion from reporting (Tamale 2007). Under-reporting of sexual harassment is also common in those institutions without policies and procedures for dealing with allegations of sexual harassment (Zindi 1994, p. 178). It can also be attributed to power imbalances between the victim and perpetrator, for example, in cases of quid pro quo sexual coercion.

As mentioned, there is widespread under-reporting of sexual coercion cases in Zimbabwe institutions of tertiary education. This has also been reported in most studies in Africa and other parts of the world (Erulkar 2004, Gordon and Collins 2013). Among the reasons noted for not reporting cases of sexual coercion were the negative consequences of reporting. In Katsande’s (2008) study, respondents noted fear of being labelled troublemakers by university authorities, negative publicity and dreaded the cumbersome procedures of reporting a case. Similar findings were found in Zindi’s (1994) study. In this study the respondents noted that corruption hindered effective jurisdiction in cases of sexual coercion at universities and they emphasised the need for external arbitrators. One respondent is quoted stating, “How can one report sexual harassment by a lecturer without the fear of being victimized when the principal or head of department is also involved in the same thing?” (Zindi 1994, pp. 182 -183). Similarly in the

¹² <http://newsofthesouth.com/sexual-harassment-of-female-students-jolts-zimbabwe-parliament-into-action/>

study by Muchena (2013), the respondents were not confident that their cases would be dealt with fairly. Thus victims of sexual coercion confide in their friends and family members rather than taking the formal route. These studies reveal a general mistrust and lack of confidence in the university structures. Lack of proper structures for reporting and dealing with sexual coercion on university campuses hinders victims from speaking out and this contributes to its normalisation.

The government of Zimbabwe has enacted several laws and policies to prevent and protect victims of sexual harassment. Among these is the national constitution, Protocol on the Multi-Sectoral Management of Sexual Violence and Abuse in Zimbabwe (2012) and the Sexual Offences Act (2012) and the Domestic violence Act. However, legal and policy provisions which address sexual coercion in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions are still scant (Munando 2015). Existing legal frameworks can only be found in the country's labour laws (*ibid.*). Matsikidze (2017) observed that Zimbabwean labour laws are inadequate in terms of the content of the law and they lack clear policy and special procedures for detecting and resolving sexual harassment cases. He further pointed out that the Labour Act does not provide mechanisms for complaint procedures, for counselling, and procedures for compensation (*ibid.*). Additionally, tertiary institutions in the country are still lagging behind in terms of implementing sexual harassment policies (Munando 2015). Only four institutions had sexual harassment policies at the time of the study. These policy gaps can fuel and nurture sexual harassment in university contexts. This indicates that more has to be done in the country to ensure that university students are protected from sexual harassment and cases are dealt with effectively and efficiently.

Female students and employees are the common victims of sexual harassment while men are the main perpetrators (this has been reported in other universities regionally and internationally). Tertiary institutions are not only learning institutions but a workplace for administrative staff, lecturers and student support services staff members. Tertiary institutions, as workplaces, are not an exception in terms of sexual coercion. Studies by Mapuranga (2015) and Mabamba et al. (2015) focused on sexual harassment among female employees in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. Both studies revealed that sexual coercion was a common and prevalent phenomenon. Female employees were victims of sexual coercion perpetrated by their workmates. In the study by Mapuranga et al. (2015), respondents noted that sexual harassment was becoming a norm in their work environment. Low-level female staff were the

common victims. This can be attributed to power inequalities and the abuse of power by those with more authority. Female victims of sexual coercion, particularly those who were coerced by their superiors, silently succumbed to sexual harassment for fear of losing their jobs. Some absented themselves from work or avoided certain locations around campus to avoid being coerced. In both studies, victims of sexual coercion reported experiencing psychologically related problems such as depression, low self-esteem, fear and helplessness. Sexual coercion was found to affect work relations and performance (Mapuranga et al 2015 and Mabamba et al 2015).

Students in Zimbabwean institutions of tertiary education face multiple forms of sexual coercion. Among these are rape, sexual molestation, verbal coercion, sexual intimidation and threats (Gaidzanwa and Manyeruke 2001, Mlambo 2014, Tlou 2014). A study by Gaidzanwa and Manyeruke (2001) at the University of Zimbabwe identified multiple forms of coercive sexual practices to which female students are subjected. These included verbal abuse, sexual harassment and physical attacks. In this study, taxi assistants and male students were identified as the common perpetrators of sexual coercion. Similar findings were found in a study by Edwards-Jauch (2012) at the University of Namibia. The female students in this study complained that they were inappropriately touched and at times physically dragged by taxi drivers on campus (Edwards-Jauch 2012, p. 107). In a sociolinguistic study of sexual harassment at a Zimbabwean university, Mlambo (2014) observed the use of sexist language as a form of sexual harassment at the university. Sexual harassment was characterised by the use of hostile jokes and impolite utterances from the harassers.

Miller and Brase (2001, p. 241) described quid pro quo sexual harassment as a process in which “sexual compliance is tied to some consequent behaviour”. This includes bribes or threats by a person in a position of power to a subordinate. This type of coercion has been reported the most common in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions (Zindi 1994, Katsande 2008, Muchena 2013, Tlou 2014). University students commonly experience quid pro quo sexual coercion from lecturers, coaches and support services staff. Lecturers often coerce students using threats of failure. They use marks as leverage to get into sexual relationships with students. Male lecturers as compared to female lecturers are the common perpetrators of sexual coercion. Shumba and Makina (2002) observed that it was rare for female lecturers to sexually assault male students. They argued that this can be attributed to African culture which regards such behaviour as unacceptable. A study by Tlou (2014) revealed that lecturers manipulated and cornered

students to get intimately involved with them. Similar findings were found in studies by Zindi (1994), Zindi and Shumba (2001) and Shumba and Makina (2002). In Tlou's (2014) study, some respondents revealed that they did not openly reject lecturers asking for intimacy because they feared they would be victimised, for example getting failed or embarrassed in lectures.

University sporting activities have been identified to provide contexts highly conducive for the perpetration of sexual coercion (Muchena and Mapfumo 2012, Muchena 2015, Sarpong 2015). Sarpong (2015, p. 124) observed that sporting activities in universities are mainly characterised by high levels of physical contact. They are also commonly male-dominated and characterised by uneven gender ratios and unquestioned authority figures (ibid.). Such contexts present a rookery for sexual coercion against female students. In separate studies Muchena and Mapfumo (2012) and Muchena (2015) found that university sports women were victims of sexual coercion perpetrated by peer athletes, administrators, male coaches and spectators. Muchena (2015) observed that sexual coercion of female athletes by their lecturers and coaches in sport compromises performance.

2.8 Summary of the reviewed literature

Extant studies confirm widespread and yet uncurbed coercive sexual practices within university contexts. Adams-Curtis and Forbes (2004) concur that sexual coercion on university campuses has not substantially decreased over the past 50 years. This confirms that sexual coercion in IHE remains a priority issue. Reported silencing and under-reporting of sexual coercion cases in IHE has contributed to its normalisation within these spaces. Several factors have been identified for under-reporting sexual harassment in IHE. These include lack of confidentiality when handling cases, unfriendly reporting and management procedures fear of stigmatization and fear of stigmatisation.

Most research on sexual coercion has focused on rape and inadequate attention has been given to the continuum of coercion acts, which could be non-penetrative (Mehra et al. 2014, French et al. 2015). Lack of data on all types of sexual coercion skews our understanding of this social practice (ibid.). Instead of focusing on rape, I focus on sexual coercion which I believe is a broader and more heterogeneous category. The term 'sexual coercion' captures a plethora of sexual assaults women are subjected to. This is in line with the observation made in earlier research that verbal and substance coercion tactics occur more frequently among youth and young adults than attempted or completed forcible rape (French et al. 2015, p. 43).

The reviewed literature shows expansive literature on sexual coercion on university campuses in the Zimbabwean context (Zindi 1994, Shumba and Matina 2002, Katsande 2008, Muchena 2013, Mlambo 2014, Tlou 2014, Female Students Network Trust 2015, Mapuranga et al. 2015), in the African context (Erulkar 2004, Clowes 2009, Clowes et al. 2009, Mezie-Okey and Alamina 2014, Brian et al. 2016, Eze 2016) and in an international context (Kalof 2000, Smallbone and Dadd 2000, Armstrong et al 2006, Franklin 2008, Vanderwoerd 2009, Brousseau et al. 2011, Geinsinger 2011, Coussens 2015, Sagar et al. 2015). Male and female university students are reported to be victims of multiple forms of sexual coercion on and off campus. Studies by Struckman – Johnson et al (2003), Platt and Busby (2009), French et al (2014), Budd et al (2017) identify males as victims of sexual coercion. In the aforementioned studies, male students are reported to experience sexually coercive practices similar to those experienced by females. In the study by Platt and Busby (2009) male students experienced verbal and emotional coercion and blackmail in their dating relationships. This was found to result in decreased safety in these relationships. The reviewed literature on male victims of sexual coercion indicate that male victims of sexual coercion were less likely to report their cases of sexual coercion. Stigma surrounding male victimisation was identified as a key deterrent for reporting among male victims of sexual coercion. It has also been established that female students are the high risk group for experiencing sexual coercion at university campuses (Mouzon et al. 2005). Additionally, both male and female students perpetrate sexual coercion, but perpetration rates are higher among male students, lecturers and members of staff. These earlier findings authenticate the gendered nature of sexual coercion in IHE.

The point of insertion for this study was exploring the gendered dynamics which underlie coercive sexual experiences among female university students at a Zimbabwean university. This is an area which has relatively scant academic literature particularly in the Zimbabwean context. Extant literature in the Zimbabwean context (Zindi 1994, Shumba and Matina 2002, Katsande 2008, Muchena 2013, Tlou 2014, Mlambo 2014, Female Students Network Trust 2015, Mapuranga et al. 2015) direct little attention to gendered politics of sexual coercion in IHE. Earlier studies which have explored gendered politics of sexual coercion in African IHE were conducted in South Africa (Bennet et al. 2007, Bradbury and Kiguwa 2012) and Kenya (Muasya 2014). These university contexts have different geo-sociopolitical milieus which cannot be generalised to the Zimbabwean context. Female students in Zimbabwean IHE have

unique experiences of sexual coercion which are influenced by their specific social and contexts. Additionally, extant studies on sexual coercion of female university students do not thoroughly interrogate enactments of sexual agency, power and subjectivity by female students during experiences of sexual coercion. Given the paucity of studies which interrogate the gendered politics of sexual coercion in IHE in the Zimbabwean context, this study endeavoured to fill the aforementioned gaps in scholarly discourse and research.

Additionally, drawing from the reviewed literature it was observed that research in the Zimbabwean context direct little attention to sexual coercion experienced in intimate relationships (Zindi 1994, Shumba and Matina 2002, Katsande 2008, Muchena 2013, Mlambo 2014, Tlou 2014, Female Students Network Trust 2015, Mapuranga et al 2015). Mapuranga et al. (2015 p. 26) substantiated this stating that most studies on sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe have focused on the exploitative relationship between lecturers and students. Extant studies on sexual harassment in Zimbabwean institutions of higher learning tend to overlook sexual coercion in the context of intimate relationships. The present study aims to fill this gap by exploring various forms of sexually coercive practices experienced by female university students. Sexual coercion will be used as a term to accurately reflect the female students' interpretations and experiences of sexual coercion in intimate relationships. Furthermore, the study adopted a broader conceptualisation of 'intimate relationships' that did not only focus on sexual intimacy but included other 'intimate' relationships such as friendships, acquaintances and relatives.¹³

The present study also aimed to address the methodological limitations of extant studies on sexual coercion in Zimbabwean IHE. The review of literature in the Zimbabwean context showed that most existing studies utilised quantitative methodology i.e. they are based on survey research (Zindi 1994, Gaidzanwa and Manyeruke 2001, FNST 2015, Mapuranga et al. 2015). Chikovore et al. (2003, p. 56) also observed that most studies on sexuality and reproductive health in Zimbabwe have chiefly employed quantitative approaches. Quantitative approaches do not capture the nuances of sexuality and sexual practices such as sexual coercion. This justifies the use of qualitative methodology in the present study. Though Gaidzanwa and Manyeruke (2001) provided important insights on experiences of gender-based violence at the University of Zimbabwe, the study did not explore more deeply the lived experiences of sexual coercion among the female students. This study also utilised quantitative

¹³ I give a fuller explanation of my conceptualisation of 'intimate relationships' in Chapter 5.

methodology. Quantitative methodologies do not capture the richness, complexity, and in-depth nature of lived experiences. The study also did not problematise the power dynamics inherent in these encounters which is the overarching aim of the present study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

An intricate relationship exists between the researcher's view of epistemology, the theoretical framework, methodology and the methods they adopt in research. The epistemological approach adopted by a researcher guides their choice of the theoretical framework, the methodology and the methods which they use. This assertion by Crotty (1998) presented in Figure 3. 1, guides this chapter. This chapter discusses social constructionist epistemology and how it informed the theoretical framework, research methodology and methods I adopted in this study. Wiederman (2015) asserted that “no single theoretical perspective better accounts for the complexity of human sexual motivation and behaviours”. In line with this view I used three theoretical frameworks in my analysis of the complex and multifaceted experiences of sexual coercion among female university students. Theoretical analyses for this study drew from Foucault's key assumptions on sexuality, the sexual script theory and critical feminist theory. All three theories fall within the social constructionist paradigm which views sexuality as a social construct. This chapter discusses how each of these theories informed the study. It also identifies limitations of each theory and how these theories complement each other. This chapter further details and justifies the research methodology used.

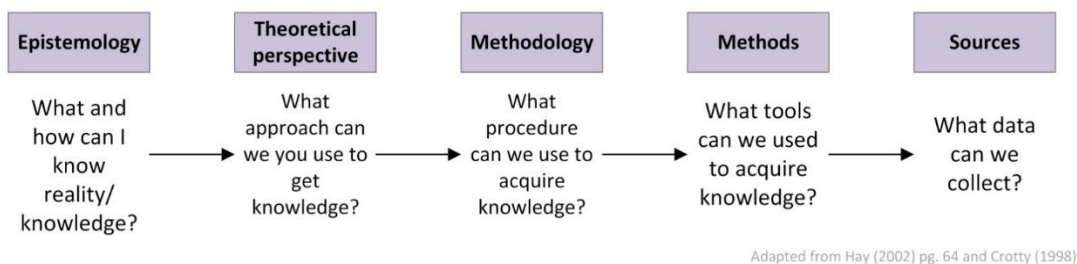


Figure 3.1: Relationship between epistemology, theoretical perspectives, methodology and research methods

Source: Crotty (1998)

3.1 Social constructionist epistemology

Epistemology in social research includes three main paradigms which are subjectivism, objectivism and constructionism. Social constructionism is unconcerned with ontological issues but focuses on the construction of knowledge and reality (Andrews 2012). Reality,

according to social constructionists, is a consequence of the context in which the action occurs and is shaped by the cultural, historical, political, and social norms that operate within that context and time (Darlaston-Jones 2007, p. 16). Social constructionist epistemology was useful for this study because it traces the origins of sexuality, meaning and reality to society and human relationships. This is a direct critic of essentialist ideas on sexuality which view human sexuality as a result of hormones, genes and other biological processes. Social constructionists argue that sexuality is learned behaviour that is shaped by culture, socialisation and situational influences (Baumeister 2001, p. 2). This constructionist notion allowed understanding of the way the experiences and interpretations of sexual coercion among female university students were influenced by social and cultural exigencies.

Social constructionists such as Berger and Luckmann (1991) and Burr (2003) argued that reality is subjective and advocate for its subjective interpretation. For social constructionists, reality is socially constructed by and between persons who experience it (Darlaston-Jones 2007, p. 16). Additionally, reality is perceived to be different for each one of us based on our unique understanding of the world and our experience of it (*ibid.*). Though earlier studies report a preponderance of female victims of sexual coercion in institutions of higher education (IHE), their realities are not identical owing to differences in social and cultural milieus. Based on these constructionist ideas, it can be inferred that experiences and interpretations of sexual coercion among female university students differ because of their different social, cultural and political realities. Consequently this study aimed at understanding the unique realities of experiences of sexual coercion among female university students at a Zimbabwean university. Using a social constructionist paradigm allowed me to explore the meanings and interpretations female university students ascribed to their experiences of sexual coercion.

Additionally, by emphasising the social construction of reality, social constructionists advocate for discussion and interaction based methodologies (Guba and Lincoln 1994) characteristic of qualitative methodology. Social constructionists put forward the argument that social reality and knowledge are constructed as people interact in society. When a researcher adopts interaction-based methodologies such as interviews and focus group discussions, both the researcher and participants become actively involved in the construction knowledge and reality. Darlaston-Jones (2007, p. 25) concurred that “adherence to a social constructionist philosophy requires the use of qualitative research methods”. Therefore my adoption of qualitative methodology was predicated upon social constructionist ideology. This study was

predominantly qualitative though I infuse quantitative data to increase the validity of the findings.

According to Darlaston-Jones (2007, p. 23), “social constructionism moves beyond the modernist view of the self with agency at its core and embraces a post-modernist view that incorporates the role of context in the constructions of identity”. Using social constructionist epistemology also allowed understanding of the exercise of sexual agency, power and subjectivity by female university students. Social constructionists emphasise the role played by individuals in the construction of social reality. They view agents and structure to be mutually constitutive. Social structures are perceived to shape individuals at the same time individuals actively re(create) broader social structures. With these views we can see notions of consciousness and intentionality in human existence. Additionally, notions of the symbiotic relationship between individuals and society enabled understanding of how the sexuality of university female students is shaped by broader social and cultural influences and how the female students are also actively involved in shaping broader sexual politics. In the following section, I discuss the three theoretical perspectives I adopted in this study. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, these theories fall under the social constructionist paradigm.

3.2 Michael Foucault’s ideas on sexuality and power

Michael Foucault’s analysis of power relations offered a potent framework for understanding gendered power dynamics that characterised coercive sexual practices experienced by female students in IHE. His analysis of power provided a model for understanding how power is exerted on and contested by victims of sexual coercion. Foucault’s main concern with power was on its effects on human behaviour. For Foucault, the body existed as a social and cultural entity. Foucault (1984, p. 136) stated that “in every society the body is in grip of very strict powers which impose on it constraints, prohibitions and obligations”. In this regard, Foucault (1984) showed individual behaviour is shaped by forces of culture i.e. cultural norms and values. These ideas helped in understanding the way cultural norms and values influenced the interpretations and experiences of sexual coercion among female university students in this study. Foucault’s key ideas relevant to this study can be summarised as follows:

1. Sexuality is coextensive with power.
2. Power is multi-directional.
3. Power is coextensive with resistance.
4. Power has a strategic component.

Foucault (1978) proffered that sexuality is not a natural feature or fact of human life but a constructed category of experience that has historical, social and cultural rather than biological origins. In this regard, Foucault argued that sexuality and sexual practices are socially constructed. Foucault (1984)'s concept of bio-power explains processes by which individuals control themselves by self-imposing conformity to cultural norms through self-disciplining practices. Socially constructed norms of femininity such as norms of sexual passivity, submissiveness and delicacy are believed to govern how individuals experience their sexuality as a form of disciplinary power. Using these ideas, I examined the extent to which female students regulated their behaviours to conform to dominant norms.

Foucault's analysis provides insight on the link between social and cultural contexts and individual experiences of sexuality. According to Foucault (1978), human beings are products of discourse. He put forward the argument that social and cultural discourses on sexuality are taken as the normal and natural way of behaving in sexual relationships. Foucault's ideas are substantiated by Millet (1970) who opined that men usually get sexual consent from the very women they oppress because of discourses on sexuality which these women internalise. Similarly, a study by McGinley (2013) found that romantic and perfect love discourses resulted in young women submitting to sexual pressure and coercion in relationships all in the name of love. Foucault's conceptualisation guided analysis of the influence of broader social and cultural norms and discourse female students' experiences of sexual coercion. Using Foucault's ideas, I explored the extent to which female students embody culturally and institutionally prescribed norms on sexuality in experiences of sexual coercion. These ideas were pertinent in my analysis of the social and cultural influences on the sexuality of female university students.

For Foucault (1978), sexuality is imbued with power and this power works through discourse. His analysis shows how discourse on sexuality can be used as a strategy to conceal and perpetuate power relations. For Foucault, self-regulation encouraged by institutions is internalised by individuals and pervades their thinking and behaviour in varied contexts. These norms are taken up by individuals and embedded in their perceptions, feelings and practices operating largely below the level of conscious reflection (McGinley 2013). This view is also put forward by Judith Butler (2009) in her theory of gender performativity where she presupposed that norms act on us before we have a chance to act at all, and that when we do act, we recapitulate the norms that act upon us, perhaps in new or unexpected ways, but still in relation to norms that precede us and exceed us (Butler 2009, p. 11).

Foucault (1984)'s analysis of power also points to the multi-directionality of power. He

proposed that power is not only exerted from the powerful to the powerless but is bidirectional. Foucault (1978, p. 75) stated that “where there is power there is resistance”. Individuals are not objects of power but are the locus where power and resistance to it are exerted (Mills 2003, p. 35). According to Foucault (1984), power creates new subjects and new possibilities for resistance and subjectivity. By portraying power as bidirectional, Foucault’s analysis places young women as active and equal subjects who can actively resist domination. Foucault (1984) provided an analysis of power and an explicit critique of domination that was useful for examining (a)symmetries of power between female victims of sexual coercion and perpetrators in question. It also enabled an exploration of the various ways power engendered sexual agency, power and subjectivity among the female victims of sexual coercion. His ideas on the strategic component of power offered critical considerations on the multiple dimensions female students improvise and use their power, both physical and sexual, to strategically react to coercion. Kabeer (1999) described this sense of agency as “power within”, the capacity for action. This manifests in numerous forms such as bargaining, negotiation, deception, manipulation, subversion or resistance (ibid.).

Foucault (1984) argued that power is decentralised, it is not possessed by individuals or a group of individuals but circulates within the human body and is inscribed on these bodies as soon as they enter a culture (Henderson 2007). This idea has however been criticised particularly by feminist scholars who have argued that it makes it difficult to explain domination in gender relations. The feminist paradigm was incorporated into the study to address some limitations presented by Foucault’s conceptualisation of power.

Additionally, Foucault has been criticised by radical feminists for producing victims of disciplinary power, ‘docile bodies’ that are passive and subjugated (Pylypa 1998, p. 22). His way of conceptualising human beings has been labelled the “death of the subject” (Burr 2006, p. 121) However, contrary to this assertion, it has been noted earlier that Foucault’s analysis of power brings out the idea that the power to resist domination is located in the very bodies which power is working to suppress. According to Foucault (1980, 142), there are no relations of power without resistances. He also stated that “individuals are not passive, inert entities who are simply at the receiving end of power” (Foucault 1980, p. 98). Using Foucault’s conceptualisation of power, young women's bodies are perceived differently and the hierarchical notions of gender are challenged (Henderson 2007, p. 251). Power produces not only docile bodies but the resistance to this power (McLaren 2012, p. 83). Foucault’s ideas on power and the resistance to power guide this study’s key assumption that the female body is a

powerful force for resisting and countering sexual coercion. Henderson (2007, p. 251) stated that, “Foucault’s work reminds us that our bodies are, in a sense, the battlefield”. It therefore helps in conceptualising the female body as a site for both sexual subjugation and resistance to domination. Though Foucault provides valuable insights on the agentic capacity of individuals, his work has been criticised for lacking a productive concept of agency. This observation prompted my adoption of the sexual script theory. I used the sexual script theory to complement and consolidate understandings on how sexuality is negotiated and sexual agency is enacted during sexual encounters.

3.3 The sexual script theory

The sexual script theory is a “conceptual apparatus with which to examine development and experience of the sexual” (Simon and Gagnon 1984, p. 40). The sexual script theory was developed by Simon and Gagnon (1984) as a critique to the essentialist and naturalistic approach to human sexuality. Simon and Gagnon did not deny the influence of biological processes on sexuality but take the position that sexuality should be understood as a result of interactions between social and cultural factors and biological conditions (O’Byrne and Watts 2010, p. 7). The sexual script theory therefore represents a radical departure from much mainstream sexology and sexuality research, which accounts for sexuality in relation to biological ‘drives’ and or individual ‘needs’, offering instead a much more clearly social approach to sexuality (Firth and Kitzinger 2001, p. 210). This standpoint situates the sexual scripts theory within the social constructionist paradigm. Though significant similarities can be drawn from Michael Foucault (1978)’s ideas and those of Simon and Gagnon’s (1984) sexual script theory, I take the position that the sexual script theory elaborates Foucault’s ideas. As alluded to earlier, the processes of sexual negotiation and subjectivity are more elaborate within this theoretical framework. However Simon and Gagnon (1984) did not investigate how the idea of sexuality arose which is one of the central themes in Foucault’s work. This can show how these theoretical frameworks were strategically positioned to complement each other in the present study.

The sexual script theory explains the social conscription of human sexuality. According to the sexual script theory, societal norms of behaviour describe “the who, what, where, when, why, and how of sexual interactions” (Dworkin et al. 2007, p. 270). Simon and Gagnon (1984) propounded that sexuality is not a constant or universal phenomena; it is expressed differently depending on the era or culture in which it occurs (O’Byrne and Watts 2010, p. 8). The meaning attached to sexual practices also varies across cultures and contexts (ibid.). This informs the

need for contextual analysis of experiences of sexual coercion among female university students rather than producing straightjacket conclusions. Each university campus is differently situated in terms of its geographical, institutional, political location and demography of student population thus underscoring the need for culture and context specific empirical studies. Masvawure (2010) concurred that exploration of young women's sexuality has to take into account their heterogeneity and multifaceted experiences.

Simon and Gagnon argued that human sexuality is performative. They used a dramaturgical analogy to the experience of human sexuality which gave their theory the title "sexual script theory". The basic premise of the sexual script theory is that sexual behaviour is scripted, as in a play in a theatre. Simon and Gagnon emphasised that sexual encounters are multi-layered performances. This dramatic metaphor guided my analysis of the extent to which female university students' level of intimacy and the experiences can be staged. This performance or enactment is a manifestation of agency (Butler 2006). Though Simon and Gagnon's conceptualisation of "sexual scripts" may denote fixed and socially determined lines of conduct, their approach also allows for change and agency in the constitution of the sexual self (Jackson et al. 2010, p. 14). This enables the understanding that though the sexual experiences of female students are socially conscripted, there is room for sexual agency, subjectivity and power.

Simon and Gagnon propounded that there are three interrelated components to sexual scripts which are the cultural, interpersonal and the intrapsychic. The intrapsychic stage occurs at the level of individual desires and thoughts. According to Jackson et al. (2010, p.16) intrapsychic scripting is the means by which we make sense of desires and practices and is informed by our engagement with interpersonal scripting. It is through our inner, intrapsychic life that we experience desire, construct fantasies and reflect upon sexual experiences (ibid.). I don't focus on intrapsychic sexual scripting because it was beyond the scope of this study.

The cultural component of sexual script theory comprises of group level sexual norms (O'Byrne and Watts 2010, p. 9). These function as instruction manuals that provide rough guidelines for what constitutes appropriate sexual behaviour within groups and what is deemed desirable and undesirable (O'Byrne and Watts 2010, p. 9). Cultural scripts are not formally codified but are often transmitted orally during conversations with intimates (ibid.). Gagnon and Simon (1984) argued that individuals ensure that they behave according to the dictates of their cultural sex scripts. In a dyadic interaction, they argued that individuals evaluate each

other using what they deem appropriate sexual behaviour. Drawing from these ideas, I examined the impact of cultural sexual norms on female students' perceptions and experiences of sexual coercion. I analysed the cultural sexual scripts i.e. traditional sexual norms and the institutional sexual norms governing the sexuality of female university students. Additionally, I examine the extent to which female students enact, contest or negotiate these sexual norms during experiences of sexual coercion.

At the interpersonal level, Simon and Gagnon (1984) argued that individuals shape and enact their own sexual scripts. Individuals are perceived to adapt the general guidelines they have learned from their experience of cultural norms to the specifics presented in each sexual encounter (Wiederman 2015). Simon and Gagnon (1984, p. 53) stated that "cultural scenarios are not entirely predictive of actual behaviour and are generally too abstract to be applied to all circumstances". This highlights how sexual norms can be negotiated depending on the sexual encounter one is presented with. Individuals internalise cultural level scripts and analyse them according to personal beliefs and perceptions and then change the scripts to make them congruent with their beliefs (O'Byrne and Watts 2010, p. 12). Jackson et al. (2010, p. 15) concurred that "scripts are therefore fluid improvisations involving ongoing processes of interpretation and negotiation". This brings out the idea that though individuals structure their behaviour according to cultural norms, they have the capacity to act autonomously. "Sexuality is constantly, reflectively modified through our lives" (Simon and Gagnon 1984). This theoretical framework highlights the importance of individual agency in sexual conduct and experiences. Sexual conduct is envisaged as a reflective processes of making and modifying sexual meaning (Jackson et al. 2010, p. 14). This theoretical framework allowed anticipation of the exercise of sexual agency, power and subjectivity among female university students.

3.4 "Feminisms"

Feminism or feminist theory is generally not easy to define. This is because it is a broad and heterogeneous category characterised by a wide range of positions and views. Each feminist theory tries to describe the causes, consequences of women's subordination and strategies for liberating and empowering them (McLaren 2012). Thompson (2001, p. 5) concurred that "there is little common agreement about what feminism means, even to the point where positions in stark contradiction to each other are equally argued in the name of 'feminism'. Although there are a number of feminist approaches, such as liberal feminism, radical feminism and critical feminism inter alia, feminists have a common focus on embedded gendered inequalities and power (Holland and Edward 2013). Feminist theorising is also woman-centred and advocates

social justice for both genders. Dietz (2003, p. 417) noted that “the tensions between equality and difference and the attendant issue of gender neutrality versus gender specificity remain fundamental features of feminist theorising”. In this thesis I draw from the wide range of feminist ideas that were pertinent to understanding experiences of sexual coercion among female students.

Feminists challenge stereotypical representations of women and problematise facile generalisations of women (Holmes 2007, p. 237). Radical feminists argue that women’s agency is not acknowledged in patriarchal societies. They advocate for the affirmation and celebration of female power and sexuality (Holmes 2007). Informed by these feminist views, I problematise notions of passivity and vulnerability of female university students’ sexuality. In this I reiterate the argument that female students exhibit sexual agency, power and subjectivity which are attributes that have been overlooked in earlier discourses. One of the aims of feminism is to ensure that women are given equal opportunities to attain the same socio-economic status as men. One of the objectives of this study was to examine the extent to which female students exercise full citizenship in the university context. Feminist scholars argue that citizenship is gendered. Cela (2015, p. 109) noted that the concept of citizenship is framed as quintessentially male thus excluding women from the equal status of citizenship. Using this theoretical framework enabled analysis of the extent to which female students had equal privileges and opportunities relative to male students at the university. This was aimed at understanding the extent to which the university context afforded full citizenship for both genders which is part of the feminist agenda on citizenship.

A fundamental feature of feminism is interrogating existing conditions and relations of power between men and women. The aim is to liberate female sexuality from the exploitative, oppressive influence of male dominated sexuality (Baumeister 2001, p. 3). Feminists purport that the aetiology of sexual coercion lies in male dominance in the social structure and a culture that sustains it (Lottes and Weinberg 1997, p. 67). They argue that patriarchy, which is the system of male dominance, is the root of forms of oppression faced by women. Patriarchy manifests in multiple forms and can therefore be referred to as “patriarchies”. This system relegates women to subordinate positions which leaves them at risk to exploitation and coercion. These ideas enabled the understanding that female university students experience their sexuality within a context of hegemonic masculine sexuality in which power is skewed in favour of their male counterparts. Using feminist theorising helped in understanding how power differentials between female students and their male partners engendered experiences

of coercive sexual practices in IHE. Using feminist lens, I examined ways in which gendered relations of power engendered objectification and subjectification of female students in the university context.

Feminists argue that dominant norms in society such gender and sexual norms facilitate domination of women. This domination is rooted in the values and practices which assign different roles and expectations for each of the genders i.e. femininity and masculinity and dictate compulsion to conform to these ideals. In this study I examine the extent to which female students' sexuality and experiences of sexual coercion are prescribed by dominant norms in society. Feminists also view the female body as a site of resistance. Feminists therefore construct the body as a site of both subjugation and resistance (Butler 2006). Informed by these ideas, I further examine ways in which female students resist or conform to processes of subjectification and objectification of their sexuality in a bid to ascertain their exercise of sexual agency, power and subjectivity. This is drawn from feminist notions which view women as citizens with circumscribed agency (Oldfield et al. 2009, p. 3).

The methodological underpinnings of this study were also informed by the feminist theoretical framework. Feminist research can be summarised by the mantra 'with women, by women, for women' (Goodey 1998). This alludes to the fact that feminist research is concerned with giving a voice to women. This informed my adoption of qualitative methodology because it is interpretative and contextualising. This study aimed to give a voice to female university students through capturing their emic perspectives and experiences of sexual coercion. I intersperse my discussion with the narratives of the respondents to give them space in this anthropological text. Feminist debates on power relations in the process of field work have increased awareness on the importance of adopting reflectivity in qualitative research (Bondi 2009). Hughes (2015) concurred that "feminist approaches are designed to recognize the subjects of research as well as the place of the researcher in the production of knowledge". It is worth mentioning that adoption of reflectivity in this study was predicated on these feminist precepts.

A key characteristic of feminist theory and research is its concern with gender. Hammersley (1992, p. 187) noted that "for feminists, gender is a crucial issue in areas of social life and must be taken into account in any analysis". Similarly, a feminist scholar, Tamale (2011, p. 16), asserted that "researching human sexuality without looking at gender is like cooking pepper soup without pepper – it might look like pepper soup but one sip will make it clear that an

essential ingredient in this specialty is missing”. This highlights the primacy of gender in feminist theorising and analysis. Additionally, feminist scholars identify sexuality as a key site of gendered politics (Kane and Schippers 1996, p. 651). The aforementioned feminist notions informed my analysis of sexual coercion from the vantage of gendered power relations.

This study was also guided by some key tenets of critical feminism. Critical feminist theory adds a gendered analysis to critical social theory by raising questions on women’s position in society. Critical feminism locates sexual coercion in patriarchal hegemony and discursive practices which support systems of domination (Eyre 2000). McLaren (2012, p. 11) pointed out that, “critical feminist theorizing examines how social, legal, political, educational and economic institutions structure individual and collective behaviour”. The main focus of critical feminist theory is equity, inclusion and social justice for women. This theoretical framework is considered for this study because of its preoccupation with notions of freedom, justice and rights. It guides the study’s analysis of the sexual citizenship of female students in university contexts.

Using this theoretical framework I examined the extent to which female students experience their sexual rights and freedoms in university contexts. Critical feminists argue that gender oppression is endemic and engrained in society (Geinsinger 2011). In the same line of thought, one can argue that gender oppression can be identified in all social contexts, including educational institutions. Guided by this theoretical framework, I ascertained the extent to which gender oppression manifests in university contexts particularly during experiences of sexual coercion. Critical feminists argue that policies and legal frameworks are associated with gender discrimination and oppression; thus they advocate for analysis and contestation of these institutions to ensure that women have equal rights with men (Geinsinger 2011). Guided by this theoretical framework, this study probed the extent to which the sexual rights and safety of female students are safeguarded under the institution’s policy framework and the extent to which the female students feel secure.

3.5 Research methodology

Sexuality is usually wrapped in silence, taboos and privacy and requires a research paradigm which enables a researcher to probe deeply into these complex issues. This prompted my decision to choose qualitative methodology as the dominant research paradigm. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, my choice of qualitative methodology was guided by social constructionist epistemology. Lieber (2009, p. 219) noted that qualitative methods take the

researcher closer to the phenomenon of interest than can be achieved with broader surveys or scales. Similarly, Darlaston-Jones (2007, p. 25) stated that “qualitative methodologies provide the means to seek a deeper understanding and to explore the nuances of experiences not available through quantification”. The aim of this study was to understand lived experiences of sexual coercion among female university students. The nuances and complexities of experiences of sexual coercion could be best captured by a qualitative methodology.

Additionally, qualitative methodology is interpretative, individualising and contextualising. For social constructionists, each person has a unique view of the world which is in line with their own perception and description of themselves and their reality. In the same line of thought, this study adopted constructionist interpretative analysis where focus was placed on understanding the meaning female university students attached to their experiences of sexual coercion. Interpretive research aims to understand human experiences from their point of view. The interpretive approach was apt for this study because it enabled understanding of interpretations and experiences of sexual coercion from the point of view of the female students. However, qualitative research has its limitations. These include problems of reliability due to the likelihood of researcher biases and idiosyncracies. These limitations were cushioned by the triangulation of the qualitative methods and the use of a survey questionnaire. Additionally, I took cautious efforts to adopt reflectivity in the process of my research in order to curtail my influence on the research findings.

3.6 The study site

The study was conducted at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST). This study site was chosen because the target population for this study were female university students. NUST is the second largest university in Zimbabwe and is located in Bulawayo, Matabeleland Province. The researcher purposively selected NUST because it has a heterogeneous and diversified student body. Though located in Bulawayo, the university has a large sphere of influence. It enrolls students on the basis of academic merit irrespective of where they come from (Makhurane 2010). The institution has a main campus in Bulawayo and a subsidiary campus in Harare. The study was conducted at the university main campus in Bulawayo.

3.7 Description of the study population

As stated earlier, the focus of this study was to understand gendered power dynamics that characterised experiences of sexual coercion among female students in the context of higher education. My impetus to focus on female university was driven by the fact that literature identifies this sub-group as the common victims of sexual coercion in IHE. As such, I identified undergraduate female students who were enrolled at a tertiary institution. A total number of 341 female university students were drawn as survey participants for the study. This sample size was statistically determined using the Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size for a known population size. This figure was drawn from the statistics of female students who were enrolled at the university during the time of the study. I gathered this information from the department of admissions and student records at the university. Table 3.1 presents the statistics of the female students enrolled at the university. The fieldwork for this study stretched from the period between the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years. In both academic years, a total number of 3285 and 3582 female were enrolled at the university. To reach a suitable sample for the study, I averaged the number of female students for the two academic years i.e. $3285 + 3582 = 6867 / 2 = 3434$. I then rounded off the figure to the nearest 1000 and got 3000 because the average figure did not tally with Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table which I used to determine the sample size for the survey research.

Table 3.1 Enrolment statistics for female students at the university

Year	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
2015-2016	3 280	522
2016- 2017	3 285	607
2017-2018	3 582	680
2018-2019	3 701	362
Grand total	13 848	1 785

Source: NUST department of admissions and student records

Of the 341 questionnaires that were distributed, 14 questionnaires were spoiled leaving the total number of participants for the survey research at 327. The study targeted undergraduate female students who were enrolled at the university thus participants were drawn from all

faculties at the university. Undergraduate students were chosen for this study because of their availability during the time of the study. Most post-graduate students at the present institution study on a part-time basis and are on campus either on weekends or during vacations. These time schedules were not convenient for the researcher. Out of the 327 survey participants, I then developed a core group of ten (n=10) female students who were victims of sexual coercion. The researcher purposively selected 10 participants for the study. The decision to interview ten participants was influenced by multiple factors. Among these factors were the challenges in recruiting female students who consented to sharing their experiences of sexual coercion. I provide a full discussion of the challenges I encountered in the fieldwork later in this chapter. However it is worth mentioning that I adopted several other methods of data collection to consolidate the data from the in-depth interviews i.e. the survey questionnaire, focus group discussions and observation. The sample size also enabled in-depth and case-oriented analysis. Table 3.2 presents a brief description of the participants for the in-depth interviews.

Table 3.2 Summary of the participants for the in-depth interviews

Name¹⁴	Age	Year of Study	Perpetrator of sexual coercion experienced
Ropafadzo	22	2	Boyfriend (university student)
Fadzai	21	1	Boyfriend
Anesu	22	2	Hook up partner (university student) Male acquaintance (university student)
Runyararo	24	4	Boyfriend
Ruvimbo	22	1	Boyfriend (university student)
Tarisai	23	4	Uncle
Rufaro	22	2	Male acquaintance (university student)
Rutendo	22	2	Male acquaintance (university student)
Ratidzo	24	4	Boyfriend (university student)
Tambudzai	22	2	Boyfriend (university student)

Table 3.3 shows the age distribution of the study participants. I categorised the female students into three main cohorts, 20 years and below, 21-24 years and 25 years and above. As illustrated in Table 3.1 above, 81 female students (24.8%) were aged 20 and below, 202 (61.8%) female students were 21-24 years. It can be observed that this age group constituted the greater percentage of the study population. Additionally, 44 female students (13.5%) were 25 years and above. In the Zimbabwean context, persons between the ages of 15-35 are categorised as youths. This is stipulated in the National Youth Policy (2013)¹⁵ and the National Constitution (2013).¹⁶ Thus that the participants in this study can be categorised as youths. “Youth” is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community” (UNESCO 2017).¹⁷ This age group is characterised with sexual development milestones which manifest in multiple ways. The sexual behaviours of youth are one of the main health priorities of most

¹⁴ The names presented in this table are pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of the study participants

¹⁵ http://www.youthpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/library/2013_YouthPolicy_Zimbabwe_Eng.pdf

¹⁶ http://www.youthpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/library/2013_Constitution_Zimbabwe.pdf

¹⁷ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/>

countries given the high prevalence risky sexual behaviours, human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and unwanted pregnancies (Noroozi et al. 2014). This can underscore the importance of this study on sexual coercion among female youths for the sake of their health and well-being.

Table 3.3 Distribution on the age of the participants

Age of Participants	Total Number
20 years and below	81
21-24 years	202
25 years and above	44
Grand total	327

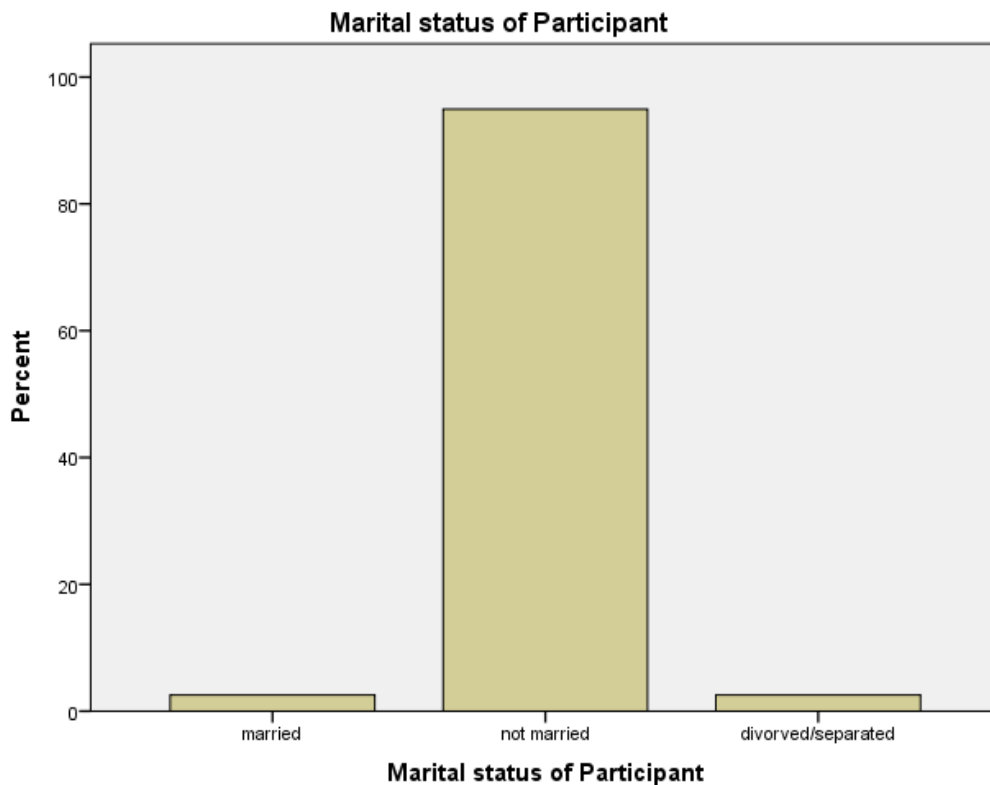


Figure 3.2 Distribution according to the marital status of the study participants

Figure 3.2 above presents the distribution according to the marital status of female students in this study. It is shown that 2.5% (n = 8) of the participants were married and 2, 5 % (n =8) were divorced / separated. Additionally the majority of the female students 95% (n= 300) were not married. The marital status of student can have a bearing on their experiences of sexual coercion in IHE. Earlier studies on sexual coercion in IHE have sought to find association between the marital statuses of female university students and their experiences of sexual coercion (Osakinle 2003, Odu and Olusegun 2013). In this study, statistical analyses of the association between the marital status of female students and experience of sexual coercion were conducted to ascertain whether marital status was a risk factor for sexual coercion at this university. These findings are presented in details in Chapter 6 where I discuss the structural determinants for sexual coercion at the university.

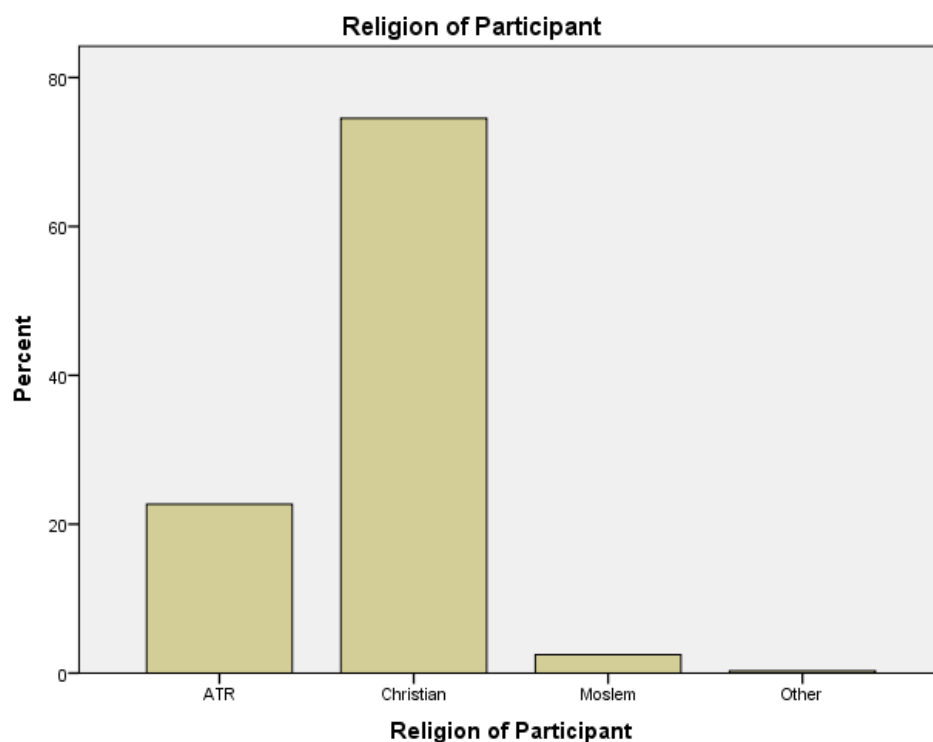


Figure 3.3 Distribution according to the religion of the study participants
Source: Researcher

Figure 3.3 above shows the percentage distribution according to the religious affiliation of female university students. It is shown that 22.7% (n= 73) were adherents of African traditional religion, 74.5% (n = 240) were Christians, 2.5 (n= 8) were Muslims and 0.3% had other religious affiliations. It can be observed that the greater majority of the female students were

Christians. Religion is a primary socialising agent for youths and contributes significantly to sexual attitudes, sexual behaviour and risk perception. In this study, analysis of the influence of religion on perceptions and experiences was conducted through examination of the narratives provided by the female students. A detailed presentation of the results is offered in Chapter 6. Figure 3.4 presents the percentage distribution of the academic year of study of the participants in this study. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the study population for this study was drawn from the whole student body at the university. Respondents for this study constituted female students who were at different levels of study and from different faculties. This was aimed at increasing the representativeness of the sample to the whole university context. Increasing the representativeness of the sample served to enhance the external validity of the study population in relation to the sample it was meant to represent (Lavrakas 2008).

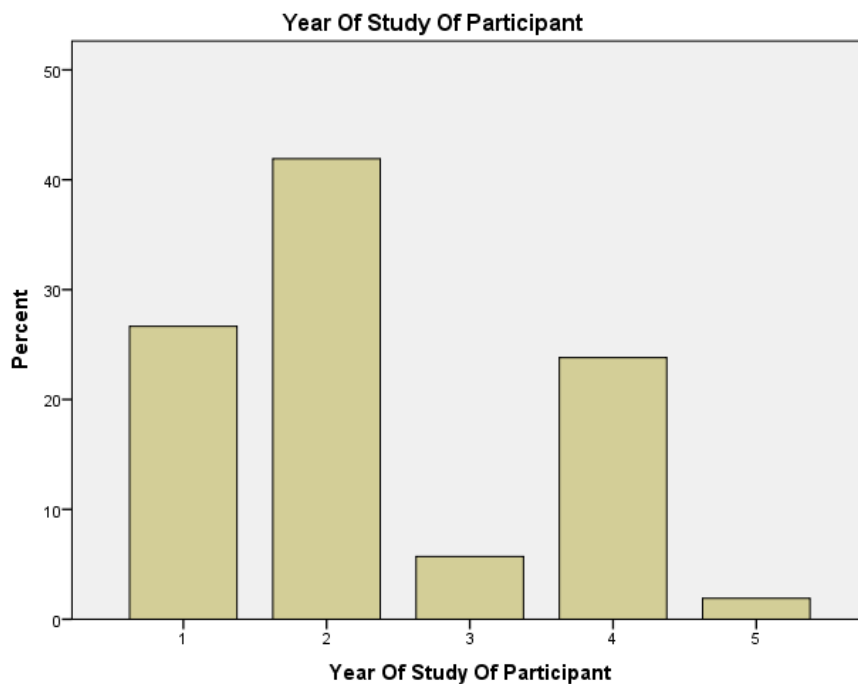


Figure 3.4 Percentage distribution according to the year of study of female students

3.8 Research design

A research design involves translating the research objectives into a specified plan for data collection (Jha 2008). This qualitative study adopted the mixed method design in social science research. The mixed method approach involves integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis in a single study (Creswell et al. 2003). In the mixed method research design, elements of either qualitative or quantitative approaches are combined in various ways

and at different phases of the study. In this study I incorporated quantitative data through the use of a survey questionnaire during data collection. Quantitative data had the strength of providing descriptive data on the prevalence rate and types of sexually coercive practices experienced by the female university students. It was also potent for increasing the representativeness of the study through the use of the survey. Quantitative analysis was also implemented at the data interpretation stage through the use of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Applying a mixed methodology design was motivated by the fact that sexual coercion is a complex social practice; therefore different kinds of methods are needed to best understand the complexities (Bryne 2007). Each research method has limitations, thus the researcher triangulated the methods to harness the strengths of each while neutralising their weaknesses.

Lieber (2009, p. 226) noted that blending qualitative and quantitative approaches can yield more comprehensive findings than a research employing one methodology. Variation of the research methods also served the purpose of enhancing the validity of the research findings. The study specifically applied the sequential explanatory mixed method design. In this design, “researchers first collect and analyse quantitative data and then build on these findings in a qualitative follow up which will provide an in-depth understanding of the quantitative data” Harrison and Reilly (2011, p. 16). The researcher administered a survey questionnaire in the initial phase of data collection. The survey questionnaire was followed by qualitative data collection using observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The choice of this paradigm was mainly because the approach follows a two-phase structure which makes it easier to implement. It also enabled collection of different types of data in the separate phases.

3.9 Methods of data collection

This section discusses the research methods I used in this study. I discuss how each of the methods was useful for understanding the issues under investigation. In this study I triangulated four qualitative data collection methods namely, focus group discussions, case interviews, key informant interviews and observation. Additionally, I used a survey questionnaire to infuse quantitative data into the study. The use of multiple methods as a triangulation measure was aimed at increasing the accuracy and validity of the research findings. More discussion on triangulation is provided in the discussion on measures taken to increase the reliability and validity of the research findings.

3.9.1 Survey

According to Krosnick and Presser (2010, p. 263), ‘the heart of a survey is its questionnaire’’. The questionnaire is a research main tool used in survey research. This is because survey results depend crucially on the questionnaire irrespective of how the conversation is mediated (ibid.). Bearing this in mind, I carefully crafted my questions such that there were minimum or no response errors. A number of questions included in the questionnaire were adopted from the Sexual Experience Survey by Koss et al. (2007). The sexual experiences survey “assesses victimization and perpetration of unwanted sexual experiences” (Koss et al. 2007). Closed and open-ended questions were used to enhance both the depth and breadth of the data. A pilot study with 20 questionnaires was conducted to ascertain the validity of the questionnaire. The pilot study was useful for determining whether the items on the questionnaire yielded relevant information (Simon 2011). The findings of the pilot study indicated the need for further explanation on how participants would contact the researcher for further discussion. Typing errors were also identified and corrected. This was implemented in the main study.

A self-report questionnaire focusing on experiences of sexual coercion was administered to 341 female students. These questionnaires were distributed around campus, in lecture rooms, halls of residence, boarding houses adjacent to the campus and in canteens. This was done with the assistance of four research assistants I recruited in this study. I trained the research assistants on how the survey research was to be conducted. During the training session, I explained the purpose of the study, the concept of sexual coercion which was the key phenomenon under investigation and the sampling strategy for the distribution of the questionnaire. This training session was important because most of the research assistants reported that respondents asked what sexual coercion was before responding to the questionnaire. The questionnaires were collected on the same day of distribution. This facilitated a high response rate and increased the pace of the fieldwork. The research assistants were students at the university. They were helpful because they comprehended the purpose of the study and conceptualisation of sexual coercion and this could be attributed to the fact that they were students at an institution of higher learning. They were able to provide further explanation on questions which needed clarification as per participant’s demands. Drawing from Denzin’s (1978) conceptualisation of investigator triangulation, I argue that the involvement of the research assistants who were key in explaining some of the key issues to the survey respondents also incorporated their input into the findings of this study. This has the potential to increase the validity of the study and

reduce biases or shortcomings of the main researcher. The research assistants were paid accordingly.

The questionnaire was used to gather information on the prevalence of sexual coercion and to ascertain the nature of sexual coercion experienced by female students at this university. The questionnaire was also used as a screening tool to recruit the core group for the study. Participants who experienced sexual coercion provided their contact details on the survey questionnaire and others contacted the researcher for further discussion. The quantitative data generated from the questionnaire was used to complement the qualitative data (data from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions). Questionnaires had the advantage of facilitating higher disclosure for respondents who had difficulties in disclosing private matters verbally.

3.9.2 Observation

During the duration of my fieldwork I took time to observe nuances of the university context which were pertinent to my study. Observation, particularly participant observation, has its roots in early anthropological studies. Observation as a research technique involves watching and recording behaviour, events, and artefacts in their social setting (Marshall and Rossman 1995). In the course of my fieldwork, I observed female students in their daily routines around campus. Dewalt and Dewalt (2002, p. vii) described this process as “active looking”. For the duration of my fieldwork I took careful note of the physical surroundings, the state of students’ halls of residence, road networks and street lights around campus, among other issues which were pertinent to my study.

Observational research was beneficial for this study because it facilitated a better understanding of the context within which female students experienced their sexuality. I managed to gain access to the female students’ “backstage culture” (Demunck and Sobo 1998, p. 43) because through observation, I gained insights on the institutional culture and confirmed information I had gathered from the study participants. This also helped enhance the validity of my findings (Chilisa and Kawulich 2005). Observation however has the limitation of possible researcher biases. The observations were also corrected and clarified in the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with study participants.

3.9.2 In-depth interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the primary data for this study. Ritche and Lewis (2013) described in-depth interviews as a form of conversation with a purpose. Semi-

structured in-depth interviews were considered for this research because they are less formal and more flexible than structured interviews. They are flexible in that the interviewee is allowed more space to answer questions on their own terms (Holland and Edward 2013). Given the sensitive nature of this study and the fact that most respondents were young women, I had to ensure that interviews were as comfortable as possible. Thus the location and time for the interviews were determined by the study participants. Most of the in-depth interviews were conducted at the female students' halls of residences and rooms. These were convenient because there were little to no interruptions.

I conducted a total of ten (n=10) case interviews with female students who had experienced sexual coercion in intimate relationships. As mentioned earlier, this core group was drawn from participants in the survey research. This group was also representative of the female students who had experienced sexual coercion at the university because they were drawn from the representative sample. The selection of the 10 participants was an ongoing process which took place as the survey research was conducted up to the end of the survey research. When a victim of sexual coercion was identified the researcher would seek their consent to participate in the study. The case interviews facilitated in-depth understanding of the individual experiences of sexual coercion among female students. The interviews were guided by pre-designed questions to ensure that the objectives of the study were met. Additionally, the questions were a combination of both open and closed questions. Bryman (2001) described this as in-method triangulation. This is when a researcher uses varieties of the same method to investigate a phenomenon (ibid.). The open-ended questions were adopted to give more room to the respondents to divulge information according to their interpretation of the question. This enabled me to capture additional information which was not in the research instrument but vital for understanding issues which were relevant to this study. Additionally, in-method triangulation enhances the validity of the findings.

Permission to use a voice-recorder was sought before the interviews were conducted. However, most study participants in the in-depth interviews preferred the use of a field notebook. This can be attributed to the sensitive nature of the study. Others noted their fear of cyber bullying and the negative implications should their sexual experiences be circulated on social platforms such as whatsapp. The participants from the in-depth interviews were encouraged to use the language they were most comfortable with: English, Shona or Ndebele. The researcher is fluent in both Shona and English therefore the use of either of the two languages was not problematic. Participants in this study were comfortable with the use of

Shona and English therefore I alternated between Shona and English. In almost all the interviews the participants commonly used Shona though they would use English in some instances. The use of vernacular was beneficial because it made our discussions less formal and more relaxed. This facilitated more discussion of relevant issues.

Data collected in the vernacular was translated by the researcher and stored on a flash disk for analysis. All data collected from the interviews was stored on a flash disk and kept in a secure place. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) noted that information gathering via one-on-one interviews is one of the most common and powerful ways to understand individual experiences. This method was also beneficial because it enabled the researcher to fully probe the issues that were raised by the respondent and non-verbal communication was also utilised.

3.9.3 Key informant interviews

I conducted key informant interviews with two university counselling services officials and an official from a non-governmental organisation named Students and Youth Working on Reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT). These key informants were not part of the 10 participants for the study. SAYWHAT was the only non-governmental organisation operating at the university. These authorities were the key informants for this study. Holland and Edward (2013, p. 164) stated that “key informants have a formal and informal position that gives them specialist knowledge and processes that are subject of research. These key informants provided information on the initiatives that were put in place by the university, government and the non-governmental organisation to mitigate sexual coercion in IHE.

All key informant interviews were conducted in English. The interviews with the university counselling services were conducted in one of the offices of the university counsellors. Due to time constraints, the university counsellors asked that I conduct an interview with both of them together. This group interview proved useful because I managed to capture both the collective and individual opinions of the informants. I interviewed the official for SAYWHAT at their offices in town. The interview was also conducted in English.

3.9.4 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions are a type of group interview which involve the researcher asking questions designed to elicit collective views on a specific topic (Patton 2002). The researcher conducted six focus group discussions with random female students at the university. Though I had intended to conduct focus group discussions with female students who had been victims of sexual coercion and those who had participated in the survey, this was not feasible. This was

as a result of the low turn-up for in-depth interviews by students who had reported to have been victims of sexual coercion. Coordinating time when each of the students was free was problematic considering that the study population was drawn from female students from different faculties and different levels of academic study. This prompted my decision to recruit female students who were readily available.

I conducted a total of six focus group discussions. The researcher purposively selected 6 focus group discussions on the basis of convenience and that the fact that research aims the focus group discussion sought to address were met. The focus group discussions consisted of female students from different academic disciplines and different socio- economic backgrounds. Additionally, all participants for the focus group discussions were undergraduate students. Four of the focus group discussions were conducted at female boarding houses and two were conducted in lecture rooms. Each of the focus group discussion consisted of 6 to 15 participants and the researcher took the role of moderator. The larger focus groups were conducted in the lecture rooms. The focus group discussions were approximately an hour and a half to two hours in length. All the focus group discussions were audio taped with the consent of the study participants. The focus group discussions were guided by specific themes which addressed the research questions. Though focus groups are commonly utilised in non-sensitive and low-involvement topics, there are numerous advantages that can be accrued from using this method in a study on sexuality. In this study, focus group discussions were used to explore shared norms and beliefs on sexually coercive behaviour among the female students and issues on safety and vulnerability around campus. The participants were not asked to reveal details of their individual experiences of sexual coercion in focus group discussions. This information was solicited during the in-depth interviews.

3.10. Sampling techniques

In this study I adopted both probability and non-probability sampling methods because of my adoption of a mixed method design. I utilised systematic random sampling to distribute the questionnaire and non-probability sampling methods for the qualitative research methods. The non-probability sampling methods I utilised were purposive sampling, convenience sampling and snowballing. The following section discusses the sampling techniques I adopted to mobilise participants for this study. This study utilised Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size for the survey. Table 3.4 provides sample sizes for a known population. With reference to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table presented below, a population of 3000 requires a representative sample of 341 participants. This table was considered for the

study because it provides all provisions required to determine sample size quantitatively. It also ensures that the sample is representative of the whole population.

Table 3.1
Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	1000000	384

Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size
 Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

Table 3.4: Krejcie and Morgan’s table for determining sample size.

Source: Krejcie and Morgan (1970)

3.10.1 Systematic random sampling

Systematic random sampling was used to administer questionnaires in the study sample. In systematic random sampling elements do not have equal probability of being selected. Selection of participants is conducted at specific intervals. This regularity and uniformity in selection makes the sampling systematic (Alvi 2016, p. 18). In this study, the ninth female student was given the questionnaire. This sample interval was arrived at using the equation $N/n =$ sample interval where $N =$ the number of elements in the study population divided by $n =$ the expected sample size) (Alvi 2016, p. 18). Therefore in this study, I used the calculation $= 3000/ 341 = 8.79= 9$. This sampling strategy was communicated to the research assistants during the training session. This type of sampling does not require a list of elements before conducting the study as in simple random sampling. Systematic random sampling was potent for providing a random and representative sample. This also contributed to external validity of the research findings.

3.10.2 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method which involves the selection of samples because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes that the researcher wishes to study (Ritchie and Lewis 2013). The study had a core group of ten female students purposively selected by the researcher. This group was not intended to be statistically representative but to be characteristic of the total population of female students. This figure was considered because it facilitated rich and in-depth description of the phenomenon under inquiry. The small sample size was manageable and allowed the researcher more time with each participant.

3.10.3 Convenience sampling

Convenience sampling involves “unsystematically recruiting individuals to participate in a study on the basis of their availability” (Battaglia 2011, p. 525). It involves drawing samples that are both easily accessible and willing to participate in a study (Teddlie and Yu 2009, p. 78). Using convenience sampling, I managed to mobilise female students to attend the focus group discussions. During my fieldwork, I visited the boarding houses where most university female students stayed. I managed to locate the houses through asking female students I met around the campus and within the vicinity of the boarding houses. I made sure I had my gatekeeper’s letter should this be required to authenticate my presence in these boarding houses. However, because of the minimal security in most of the boarding houses, no one asked me for the letter. While at the boarding houses I would knock at each of the rooms asking for female students who were free to join the focus group discussions. The focus group discussions were conducted in the foyer and some were conducted in the rooms of the female university students. Some joined the discussion after it had begun which I did not have a problem with.

3.10.4 Snowballing

Battaglia (2011, p. 526) defined snowballing as respondent-driven sampling which relies on referrals from an initial sample. I adopted the snowballing sampling technique to ensure that the expected number of respondents was recruited for the study. One of the study participants for the in-depth interview was a referral from a female student who noted that her friend could be interested in participating in this study. Additionally, identification of the female boarding houses was achieved through referrals from the study participants. The study participants also helped me to manoeuvre within the study area. Furthermore, recruitment of the NGO official came from a referral from the university counsellors who gave me the contact details of a staff member from SAYWHAT. The staff member later referred me to an official from the

organisation who became the key informant from the organisation. My field work and recruitment of participants for this study was made possible largely through referrals.

3.11 Data analysis

Data analysis and interpretation of the research findings was conducted through the use of both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. This was governed by the multifaceted data that was generated from the mixed method research design. In this section I discuss the methods of data analysis I adopted in this study. These include thematic analysis, content analysis and statistical analyses that were run using SPSS.

3.11.1 Thematic analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within data. The researcher analysed the collected data whilst noting recurrent behaviours and themes which addressed the study objectives. The common themes that emerged from the data were analysed for content. In this study I utilised Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase guide to thematic analysis. This sequence made analysis for the qualitative data easy to manoeuvre despite the large chunks of information. The sequence was as follows:

1. Becoming familiar with the data

After collecting the data from the four qualitative data collection methods I read through the narratives which were provided by the female students. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, most participants (n =8) did not consent to audio recording so I used a field note book. Only two of the participants from the core group agreed to use the audio recorder. I therefore revisited the field notes and listened to the audio recordings. I first listened to the audio recordings from the in-depth interviews then those from the focus group discussions. This process was vital because during my write-up for this thesis I could easily refer to the individual case narratives because of my familiarity with the lived experiences of the female students.

2. Generating initial codes

In the second phase of my analysis I coded the responses provided by the female students. In each of the narratives I labelled the specific areas of the study the responses were addressing. This was guided by the research questions and objectives of the study.

3. Searching for themes

After identifying the codes from the data I went on to link the themes that emerged from the

data. This was simplified by the coding process I had implemented in the previous stage. At this phase of analysis, I listed the themes that emerged from the data.

4. Reviewing themes

After identifying the themes emerging from the data I went on to critically assess whether the themes were in line with the objectives of study and answering the research questions.

5. Defining and naming themes

This stage involved identifying titles and subtitles for the themes that had emerged from the analysis.

6. Producing the research project

This stage involved writing up this research work

Thematic analysis was conducted within a social constructionist framework. In such a context, the researcher does not seek to focus on motivation of the individual but seeks to understand the socio-cultural context and structural conditions which influence an individual to act in a particular way. The audio taped focus group discussions and interviews were transcribed and translated from Shona to English. I listened thoroughly to the audiotapes to identify and code the themes which emerged.

3.11.2 Content analysis

“Qualitative content analysis is as an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification” (Mayring 2000, n.p.). The main advantage of content analysis, as noted by Elos and Kynngas (2007), is that it allows the researcher to test theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the data. It also allows the researcher to validate evidence from other sources. Implementing content analysis in the interpretation and analysis phase of this study enabled comparison of my research findings with the findings of extant literature. I was able to identify the extent to which the findings corroborate or negate previous study findings. Additionally, qualitative content analysis enabled discussion of the research findings within the theoretical lens I chose for the study. This enhanced analysis and comprehension of the research findings.

3.11.3 Analysis of quantitative data

The data collected from the questionnaires was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The most recent version, SPSS for Windows 14.0 was utilised. This statistical package enables one to obtain statistics ranging from simple descriptive numbers to complex

analyses of multivariate matrices (Arkkelin 2014, p. 10). Frequency tables cross tabulations and descriptive methods were used to describe and analyse the study sample. Descriptive statistics that were run were presented in the form of graphs and pie charts. The quantitative data was also analysed using the Person Chi-square test and the Fisher Exact test. Both tests were run to find statistical association between different research and demographic characteristics of the study participants and experiences of sexual coercion. My use of both test was predicated on the observation that there were certain instances where one of the tests did not apply i.e. in cases where the Pearson Chi-Square test was not employed because two cells (33.3%) had expected count less than 5, hence the adoption of Fisher's exact test.

3.12 Measures to increase the validity and reliability of the study findings

In this section I discuss the measures I took to increase the validity and reliability of the research findings. In this study I adopted reflectivity, triangulation and cleaning of the SPSS data set to increase the validity and reliability of my research findings. I interposed some of the measures I implemented in the foregoing discussion. Josen and Jehn (2009, p. 216) asserted that “the primary purpose of triangulation is to eliminate or reduce biases and increase the reliability and validity of the study”. In this study I triangulated multiple methods of data collection and data analysis to increase the reliability and validity of my research findings. I adopted methodological triangulation (Denzin 1978) through the use of four qualitative research methods i.e. focus group discussions, key informant interviews, observation and in-depth case interviews. Triangulation of qualitative methods of data collection is a process of cross-validation because it facilitates comparison of information to determine corroboration (Wiersma and Jurs 2005). According to Denzin (1978, p. 28), “the logic of triangulation is based on the premise that no single method adequately solves a problem with rival casual factors. Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality multiple methods of observation must be employed”. It can be noted that my adoption of triangulation was aimed at enhancing the validity of my research findings.

Reflexivity in research calls upon the researcher to reflect on the research relationships. Being a lecturer at the university where I conducted this study I ensured that I entered the field not as a professional but as a researcher. I related with the female students in a less formal way and dressed casually to ensure that I create rapport with the female students. Additionally I made sure that female students were given space in the construction of the research work. My adoption of an interpretivist approach to analysis and interpretation of the experiences of sexual coercion was aimed at documenting these experiences from the point of view of the study

participants. As I alluded to earlier in this chapter, I made specific reference to the narratives provided by the students to involve them in the construction of the work and to curtail imposing my point of view in the description of their lived experiences. Furthermore I intend to submit the findings of this work to the university such that female participants can have access to the final product of this thesis.

Another measure I took to increase the validity of these results was to clean the SPSS data set before running statistical analysis. Wilson (2003, n.p.) asserted that “cleaning an SPSS data set is an important process because it can significantly affect the final analysis of a study”. The process involves looking for incorrect entries, and inconsistent or out of the range responses. In this study one of the respondent from the survey research noted that they were 12 years **old**. This was an irregularity which needed to be corrected because it is not realistic to find a twelve year old at an institution of higher learning. It can be noted that I ensured that I had a clean SPSS data set by coding each questionnaire and verifying that correct entries were made before I ran the analyses in a bid to ensure that the findings were accurate and valid.

3.13 Ethical considerations

The researcher was cautious not to violate the ethical codes in social science research. The proposal was submitted to the UKZN Research Office to ensure the study was in line with the university’s ethical guidelines. The researcher followed proper procedures for gaining entry into the university by obtaining permission from the University Registrar. The letter of approval from the university and the ethical clearance document are attached in the appendix section of this thesis. I carried my gatekeepers letter during my fieldwork and produced it when it was required i.e. I showed the security guards when I entered the university premises e.g. the university female halls of residence. Furthermore, I ensured that informed consent was obtained from all the study participants. Participants were asked to sign a consent form before they participate in the study. The study also used audio recording to gather data. Consent to audio record was sought and participants were asked to sign a consent form for audio recording. Female students were not coerced to participate in the study. All participants i.e. the female students and the key informants for the study, signed the informed consent form as a gesture to show their consent to participate in the study.

A study on experiences of sexual coercion is likely to reignite hidden hurt, distress and trauma. It was therefore important to facilitate short-term support mechanisms for female students who had experienced sexual coercion. To mitigate this, I ensured counselling services were readily

available to cater for participants who were traumatised by the interview questions and needed professional counselling services. This is in-line with the WHO (2001) ethical and safety recommendations for domestic violence research which states that “the study design must include a number of actions aimed at reducing any possible distress caused to the participants by the research”. In the process of my research, I continuously asked participants, particularly those from the core group who narrated detailed accounts of their lived experiences of sexual coercion whether they were still comfortable and wished to continue with the study.

According to the NESH guidelines (2006, p. 17), respect for privacy aims at protecting individuals against unwanted interference and exposure. A study on experiences of sexual coercion undoubtedly encroaches on people’s private life, thus the researcher ensured due respect to privacy. The researcher debriefed participants on the study. Participants were informed that they should not feel obligated to answer questions they were uncomfortable with. Participants who divulged coercive experiences that were criminal in nature were advised to seek legal advice and psychological counselling. However, it is worth mentioning that this action was taken upon agreement by the participant. Additionally, in the event that there is admission to illegal activity, the researcher intends to share this information with law enforcement officials. The researcher has a legal duty to report any criminal activity that is disclosed during data collection. Female students 18 years and above were eligible for the study. None of the participants in this study were below the age of 18 years.

The code of ethics insists on safeguarding people’s identities. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) noted that all personal data ought to be secured and made public only behind a shield of anonymity. In line with these guidelines, the researcher utilised pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality. The researcher encouraged participants to respect each other’s privacy and anonymity. During the focus group discussions I asked participants not to reveal details of their individual experiences of sexual coercion or state names of people who they knew had experienced sexual coercion. The research data was also kept under strict security i.e. protected with passwords to ensure that the data provided by the participant was not disclosed. The stored data will be handed personally to the supervisor at her university office. Upon completion of the study, the researcher intends to provide the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) a bound copy of the research report. The thesis will be accessible from the university library. The researcher will also email soft copies of the research report to the study’s core group since the researcher has the contact details of the ten respondents.

3.14 Limitations of the study

In this section I discuss the limitations of the study and the challenges I encountered in the process of conducting this research. I also discuss the strategies I adopted to mitigate these challenges. In the African context, sexual experiences are “a taboo subject and therefore it is usually difficult to get people to talk and engage due to coyness, discomfort and stigma” (Tamale 2011, p. 45). In this study I faced considerable challenges to mobilise the core group for the study. Gaining informed consent wasn’t difficult for the survey participants and focus group discussants but only for the participants for the in-depth interviews. I had to reduce the core group to 10 participants from the expected number. Research participants were reluctant to disclose the experiences of sexual coercion for varied reasons. The female students feared perceived negative implications of disclosing their experiences of sexual coercion. The female students identified a number of reasons which included fear of being labelled negatively, being dismissed from university or failing courses taught by the lecturers who were sexually coercing them. The excerpts below allude to some of the reasons why respondents were reluctant to disclose their experiences. These statements were written on the questionnaires of female students who had been victims of sexual coercion.

I am afraid to be dismissed from school – survey questionnaire respondent¹⁸

I can’t disclose such private information to you – survey questionnaire respondent

I’m afraid of failing – survey questionnaire respondent

Some of the respondents in this study left wrong phone numbers on the questionnaires and I phoned wrong numbers on several occasions. Some respondents feared disclosing sensitive issues though the researcher assured strict confidentiality. I had to establish trust and rapport with the respondents to reveal private issues about their sexuality. Conducting focus groups and in-depth interviews at university campus had the challenge of making the research process more formal therefore impacting the research findings. To address this, I made significant efforts to ensure a relaxed atmosphere. Additionally I made an effort to ensure that most of the interviews and most focus group discussion were conducted in the halls of residence and boarding houses of the female students. I also harnessed gender congruence to build field relationships with the study participants. Being a female researcher was advantageous for me because it facilitated more discussion and openness despite the sensitive nature of the study.

¹⁸ The respondent uses the term ‘school’ to refer to the university.

This study was also limited in terms of its sample and the resulting implications on generalisability. The case-study approach which I employed has the limitation that research findings cannot be generalised beyond the confines of the particular case being studied. This study focused on female university students and the applicability of findings to non-university contexts is also problematic. Additionally the research methodology posed significant challenges during data collection. Though the survey questionnaire was very functional in this study it had some limitations. The use of a survey questionnaire which was collected soon after completion had an impact on the response rate for in-depth interviews. Emailing questionnaires was the best alternative to mitigate this limitation. However challenges of internet connection and the fact that some female students do not own laptops, made this impossible.

3.15 Summary of the chapter

The foregoing chapter detailed the theoretical framework and the methodology I adopted in this study. The discussion demonstrates how social constructionist epistemology informed the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this study. The chapter discussed Foucault's ideas on sexuality and discourse, sexual script theory and feminist theorising. I provide an explanation on the potency of each of the theories for understanding lived experiences of sexual coercion among female university students. The chapter further discussed the methodological approach I adopted in this thesis. The study utilised qualitative methodology as the dominant research paradigm. I demonstrate how qualitative methodology is rooted in social constructionist ideology. Additionally, I justified the use of qualitative methodology for a study of this nature. I went on to explain and justify my adoption of a mixed method research design.

The chapter also details the data collection methods utilised in this study. I utilised the multiple methods approach using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Additionally, the chapter detailed the methods used to analyse and interpret the research findings. Furthermore, I discuss the measures I took to increase the validity and reliability of the research findings. In the two last sections of the chapter, I discuss the ethical considerations I implemented in the study and the limitations and challenges of the study respectively.

Chapter 4: Perceptions and Experiences of Sexual Coercion among Female Students

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses female university student's perceptions and experiences of sexual coercion. The chapter explores sexually coercive practices female students at the university under study were subjected to and the meanings they attached to these experiences. Drawing from the social constructionist paradigm i.e. Foucault's ideas on sexuality and power, the sexual script theory and feminism, I examine the lived experiences of sexual coercion among the female university students. Additionally, I discuss the conditions under which female students acquiesce or resist sexual coercion. Social constructionist discourse subscribes to social and cultural conscription of human sexuality. Guided by this orientation, this chapter provides a discussion on social and cultural processes underlying female university students' experiences and perceptions of sexual coercion. Lastly, I discuss the effects of sexual coercion among female students.

4.1 Perceptions on sexual coercion among female university students

Sexual coercion has a wide range of meanings and interpretations. In this section, I examine how sexual coercion was understood and interpreted by the study participants. Understandings of sexual coercion among the study participants was solicited by the question "How do you understand social coercion?" and the follow-up question on the forms of behaviour they regarded as sexually coercive, "List examples of sexually coercive behaviour". I observed that there was a general difficulty in understanding the term 'sexual coercion' among some study participants. A majority of the female students had little knowledge on what constituted sexual coercion. In one of the focus group discussions, a participant confused the term coercion with cohesion. She asked,

When you are saying 'sexual coercion' are talking in the sense of action or activities that are happening in unity – focus group discussant

Some participants asked for clarification of the term 'coercion'. I observed that participants failed to comprehend the term 'sexual coercion' as a result of confusing 'coercion' with 'cohesion' as alluded to in the above excerpt. There is no Shona word which rightfully denotes sexual coercion so the expression could not be used in local dialect. To mitigate this challenge,

I defined the term ‘coercion’ and left participants to conceptualise sexual coercion for themselves. The researcher ensured research assistants were knowledgeable on the concept in the event that study participants asked what it meant. As alluded to earlier in Chapter 3, I conducted a brief training session with the research assistants before they distributed the questionnaire. During this session I acquainted them with the purpose of the research, how the study was to be conducted and explained some of the study’s key concepts which included the term sexual coercion. Lack of knowledge on sexual coercion might have negatively impacted disclosure among female students at this university particularly in the survey questionnaire where there was little room for further discussion on the concept. One of the respondents from the focus group discussion noted that,

Many times, people who are sexually coerced may not be aware that they are being coerced because they do not know what coercion is – focus group discussant

Explaining their understanding of sexual coercion, participants noted that,

You are forced to engage in sexual activity without your consent. – focus group discussant

You can agree to have sex with someone, say the person is your boyfriend but they have certain sexual preferences that you do not like. For example those people who want to have sex whilst tying you on the bed and some want oral sex when you don’t like it then then they end up forcing you. – focus group discussant

Being touched on your private parts without your permission – focus group discussant

Though participants articulated varied definitions of sexual coercion, two consistent ideas emerged from these definitions. The key elements in the narratives were that sexual coercion involved significant levels of pressure and unwanted sexual behaviour. This is confirmed by their use of terms “forced”, “threatened” and “without consent” shown in the excerpts. The study participants emphasised the need for consent to any sexual contact or activity. They noted that a person is believed to be sexually coerced when they are involved in any sexual act without their willingness to do so. These findings are consistent with other studies on university students’ perceptions on sexual coercion (Mouzon et al. 2005, Fisher 2015).

Participants in this study identified physical, verbal and emotional forms of sexually coercive behaviour. The participants demonstrated knowledge that coercion encompassed physical and non-physical dimensions. This was drawn from the following narratives:

When a guy does something that is unwelcome in a sexually provocative manner. Another example is when your boyfriend persuades you or even threatens you saying if you don't sleep with me (have sex with me) I will break up with you. – focus group discussant

Someone continually says inappropriate words to you, for example, how you have a nice body shape. – focus group discussant

Sexual coercion involves someone continuously asking to have sex with you. – focus group discussant

At times you are intimidated because you are younger and your boyfriend is older. You will end up doing certain things (sexual activities) because you think the older person knows better and is right. – focus group discussant

As shown in the above narrative, study participants alluded to non-physical forms of sexual coercion such as intimidation, threats of ending the relationship and sexual persistence. All these are verbal forms of sexual coercion. This conceptualisation confirms definitions of sexual coercion which include non-physical forms of sexual assault. The physical forms of sexually coercive behaviours noted by the study participants included unwanted touching of the body especially private parts such as breasts and buttocks, spiking drinks or cakes with drugs or alcohol, forced sexual intercourse, unwanted fondling and kissing.

A majority of the participants of this study revealed that sexual coercion was rampant at the university. This is confirmed by the findings presented in Figure 4.1. Of the study participants, 57, 8% noted that sexual coercion occurred on campus. This was also substantiated in the focus group discussions where a majority of respondents noted that sexual coercion was highly prevalent on campus. As shown in Figure 4.1, 32,7% of study participants reported that sexual coercion did not occur on campus, 25 % did not know whether it occurred or not, while 6% of the total participants did not respond to the question.

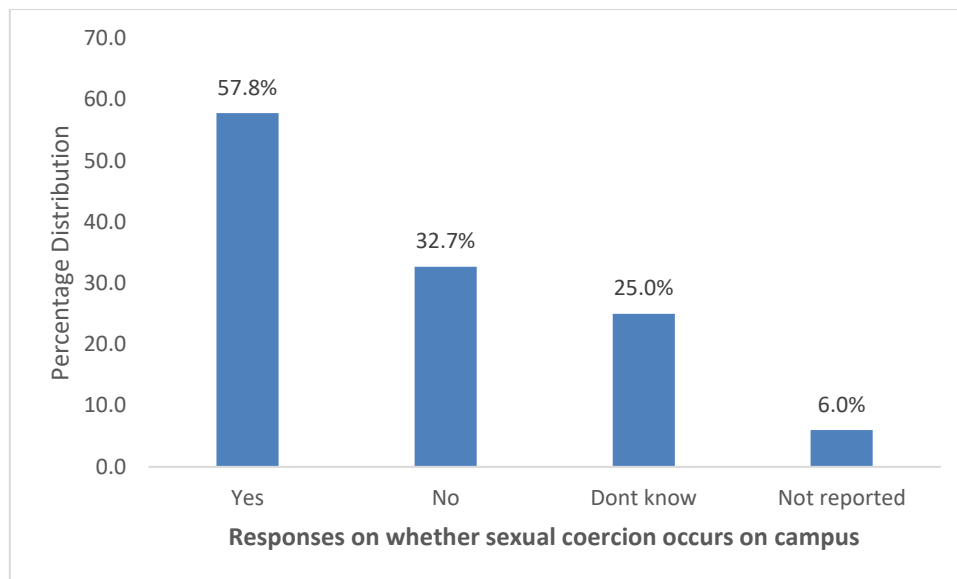


Figure 4.1: Percentage distribution of the perceptions on the occurrence of sexual coercion on campus

The findings of this research confirm the subjective experience and interpretation of sexual coercion among female university students. The narratives provided by the female university students presented the understanding that sexual coercion is a subjective experience which can only be understood from the point of view of the victim. This is in line with McKinney (1994) assertion that perceptions of sexual coercion are a result of a subjective judgment process. Additionally, participants argued that legal systems should understand sexual coercion from the complainants' perception of the situation. Some respondents from the focus group discussions stated,

I do not need someone to tell me whether I have been coerced or not. Some people view hugging as coercion but the next person might not view it as coercion. If I am a person who doesn't hug boys then when someone hugs me against my will then I am sexually coerced. Each person has their own boundaries of what constitutes sexual coercion. – focus group discussant

Sexual coercion is determined by the victim. Someone might not be comfortable with kissing whilst the other person is comfortable with it. – focus group discussant

Drawing from the above narratives, it can be noted that interpretations of sexual coercion among female students in this study showed significant levels of sexual subjectivity. Tolman (2002) defined sexual subjectivity as a woman's experience of herself as a sexual being, her feeling of entitlement to sexual pleasure and sexual safety, her ability to make active sexual

choices, and her identity as a sexual being. With reference to the first excerpt it can be noted that the female student revealed that no-one could determine whether she had been sexually coerced except herself. This narrative suggests notions of entitlement over the decision of whether they have been coerced or not. These findings critique notions of feminine passivity in “traditional” understandings of women’s sexuality.

Perceptions on sexual coercion differ across different social groups and contexts (Brase and Miller 2001). Some view it as a ‘normal’ part of dating (Jeffry 2014) and others view it as appropriate to certain extents i.e. when it is moderate and during specific contexts (Bridges (1991), Feltey et al.1991, Haworth-Hoeppner 1998). The findings of this study reveal that a majority of the female students had a negative attitude towards sexual coercion. Sexual coercion was regarded as unacceptable behaviour. Additionally, there was general agreement among the study participants that sexual coercion was an infringement of sexual rights. The participants demonstrated knowledge of individual rights to one’s body and freedom to make sexual choices without coercion. In one of the in-depth interview, Ruvimbo, one of the study participants, noted that “it is my body and I have rights to decide what I want to do with it”. The aforementioned narratives augment the finding that female students demonstrated significant levels of sexual subjectivity with regard to their notions of having control over their bodies and being entitled to sexual rights.

Female students perceived sexual coercion to be caused by several factors. They identified peer pressure, influence from older relatives, hormones, exposure to pornographic movies and substance abuse as the factors underlying perpetration of sexual coercion at the university. . Some of the respondents from the focus group discussions noted that,

Male students are influenced by their peers. If their friends are doing certain things (sexual activity) with their girlfriends they also want to do the same in their relationships – focus group discussant

Some guys do not want to be viewed as foolish by their friends for not being sexually active. This kind of gives them pressure to get involved in sexual activity in their relationships. This is why some guys end up coercing their girlfriends – focus group discussant

Men generally have higher sexual drives compared to women. So if you lead them on for example by wearing short or tight clothes they are easily aroused and end up sexually coercing women – focus group discussant

Drawing from the above narratives, it can be observed that female students perceived that sexual coercion was not only biologically determined but was socially constructed as well. This was confirmed by their reference to social influences such as peer pressure, media influences and socialisation by older kin. These findings suggest that sexual coercion is learned behaviour. These perceptions authenticate social construction of sexual experiences including sexual coercion as advanced by social constructionists. The sexual script theory posits that individuals learn to be sexual within the confines, rules and regulations of a specific cultural or social context. The findings of this study suggest sexual scripting of male perpetrators of sexual coercion.

Additionally, analysis of the narratives provided by the female students revealed that their perceptions on the causes of sexual coercion were rooted in traditional gender role attitudes on sexuality. Participants in this study assumed that males sexually coerced women because they had higher sexual drives compared to women. This is alluded to in the above excerpt. These findings endorse attitudes towards “traditional sexual roles of male dominance in heterosexual relationships” (Kiefer and Sanchez 2007, p. 6). They also reveal the extent to which perception on sexual coercion among female university students are socially conscripted. Furthermore, the narratives of the female students exhibit residues of rape myth acceptance. Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994, p. 134) defined rape myths as “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women”. The last excerpt shows how views of men’s sexual drives are used as an explanation for sexual coercion. It is revealed that these views influence perceptions that justify men’s perpetration of sexual coercion and blaming of victims. This however has the danger of tolerating sexual coercion and engendering its normalisation.

4.2 Prevalence rate of sexual coercion at the university under study

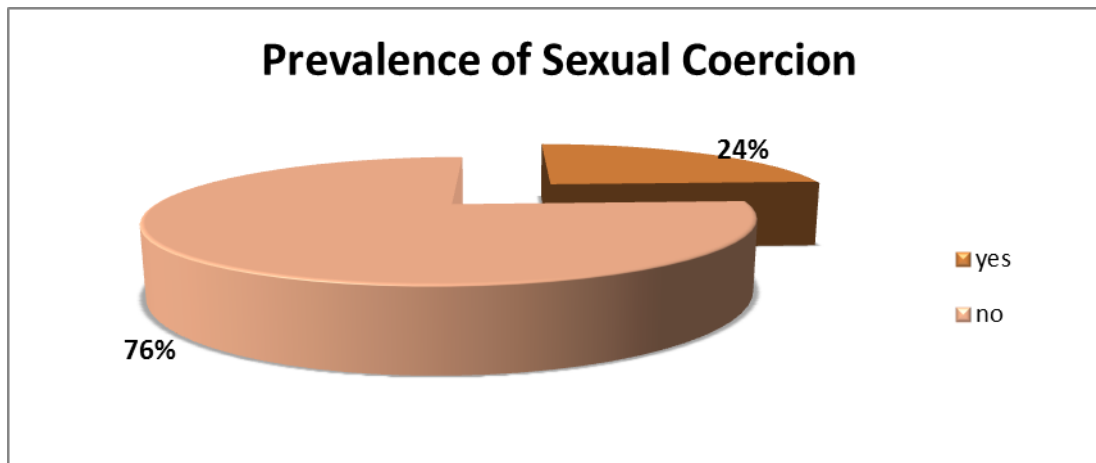


Figure 4.2 Prevalence rate of sexual coercion on campus

The prevalence rate of sexual coercion at this study site was generally low. As shown by Figure 4.2 above, among the 327 study participants who responded to the survey questionnaire, 79 respondents (24%) reported having experienced sexual coercion. A greater percentage (76%) of the study participants reported not having experienced sexual coercion. A number of factors can be attributed to low reporting of experiences of sexual coercion among the study participants. Earlier research reported that denial of experiencing and perpetrating sexual coercion is common among victims and perpetrators (Fass et al. 2008). The researcher observed that the low prevalence rate can be attributed to under-reporting. This observation is substantiated by Mirsky (2003) who reported that levels of violence reported are often minimum levels of actual violence because sexual violence is nearly always under-reported by women because some believe it is normal or they fear that making it public will cause them harm or shame, or they are not ready to talk about it (p. 4).

4.3 Experiences of sexual coercion among female university students

Participants in this study identified a wide range of coercive sexual practices they experienced. They reported experiencing physical and non-physical forms of sexual coercion. Some study participants reported being subjected to physical force and pressure to engage in sexual activity. Table 4.1 displays the percentage distribution of female students who experienced sexual coercion which involved the use of physical force or strength. The use of force included twisting the victim's arm, holding them down and the perpetrator forcing themselves on the victim. As shown in Table 4.1, 11.3% female students experienced sexual coercion through the use of force. The total experiences of sexual coercion through the use of force were 46, 84%

of the total number of female students who experienced sexual coercion at this university (n =79).

Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents who experienced sexual coercion through use of force

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	37	11.3	11.3	11.3
	No	289	88.4	88.7	100.0
	Total	326	99.7	100.0	
Missing	99.00	1	.3		
Total		327	100.0		

Narratives provided by some of the respondents relate how their assailants used physical force and pressure to gain sexual access to their victims. Rufaro related her story as follows,

I was sexually coerced by a friend who was asking to date me. We are in the same stream (academic year) but we are from different departments. I had visited his room at a boarding house¹⁹ for boys. As soon as I got there the other roommates left the room. We were watching a movie when we began fooling around. No one else was there. He continued to put so much pressure on me because he wanted us to have sex. When I realised this I started resisting. He twisted my arm and we were involved in a struggle up until he stopped. Initially I had told him to stop before we engaged in a struggle. I told my friend about the experience.

In a different incident, Rutendo narrated her experience as follows,

I was coerced in a car (laughs). This guy was asking me out. He is 22 years and a student here (meaning at the same university). This guy was proposing me (asking to date me) for quite some time and it was becoming annoying. So one day he came to visit me and we were in his car, he started kissing me out of the blue (laughs) as if I was his girlfriend (laughing). I wanted to stop him, but ndakapera simba (couldn't find the strength (laughs again). When I asked him what he was doing, he said he was sorry he got carried away. I shouted at him and got out of the car. We are no longer talking because of

¹⁹ Boarding houses are temporary houses for university students which are rented out by residents who live close to the university main campus.

this incident. Even if I were to date him, he showed that he was likely to sexually coerce me.

The narratives above reveal experiences of sexual coercion which involved use of physical force. In both incidents the perpetrators of sexual coercion were university male students. This directs us to a finding of this study that university male students were the common perpetrators of sexual coercion. As illustrated in Figure 4.3, university male students had the highest percentage (31.08%) of sexual coercion perpetration. These findings are consistent with the findings of an earlier study by Gaidzanwa and Manyeruke (2001) at a Zimbabwean university where male students were reported the common perpetrators of sexual coercion. Drawing from the narratives above, both perpetrators were known to the victims. This concurs with the observation that sexual coercion is commonly perpetrated by individuals known to the victim (Mirsky 2003, Abbey et al 2004). Similar findings were found in a study by Stenning et al. (2013) where the great majority of perpetrators of sexual violence against women university students were fellow students.

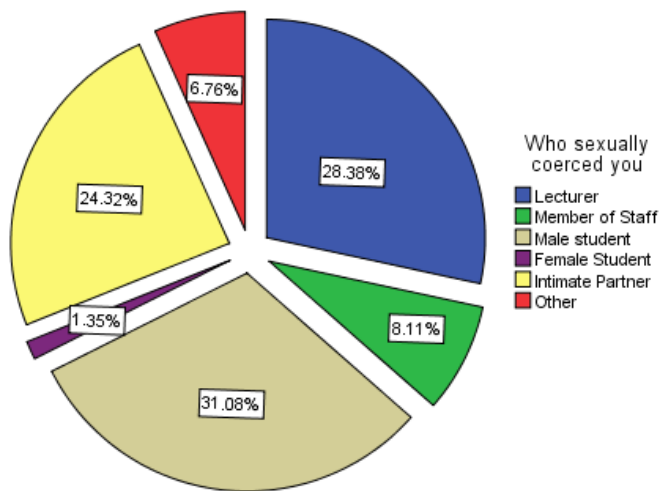


Figure 4:3 Percentage distribution on the perpetrators of sexual coercion

Analysis of Rutendo and Rufaro narratives reveals that the nature of their relationship with the men that sexually coerced them was not well established i.e. they were not in dating relationships. The findings of this study revealed that physical sexual coercion is commonly enacted in casual relationships and in contexts where perpetrators do not have an established personal relationship with the victim. In a separate incident, Anesu, one of the interviewees recounted how she was involved in physical struggle with a partner she had hooked up with at

a local club. Similar findings were found in a study by Jeffry (2014) where sexual coercion involving force was commonly experienced in not so serious relationships.

Another emerging theme from these narratives is the idea that female university students who were victims of sexual coercion demonstrated low situational risk perception of sexual coercion. I put forward this argument because it is evident from the narratives that the victims of sexual coercion were coerced at the perpetrators' places of residence or in the private space of the perpetrator. Reference can be made to Rufaro, Rutendo and Anesu's cases where they were all coerced in the private spaces of their assailants. This was common in most of the cases of sexual coercion in the present study. Seven (n= 7) out of the ten (n=10) respondents interviewed were coerced at the perpetrators place of residence. Two (n=2) were coerced in the perpetrators' cars. Similar findings were found in studies by Fisher et al. (2000) and Peters (2012) where the greatest number of experiences of sexual coercion occurred in a dormitory or place of residence i.e. flat or apartment.

Analysis of Rufaro and Rutendo's narratives reveals that their assailants were individuals who were proposing love from them i.e. wanted to enter into dating relationships with them. The fact that they adopt similar sexually coercive tactics to solicit love can suggest the influence of similar dating scripts that could govern their adoption of such tactics. In the sexual script theory, Simon and Gagnon propound that sexual behaviour is embedded in a complex set of scripts which are specific to particular social and cultural context. Individuals draw from these scripts when engaging in sexual behaviour. Drawing from the fact the male student perpetrators of sexual coercion adopted similar sexually coercive tactics as a mating strategy, one can put forward the argument they share the same sexual scripts. These scripts governed their enactments of sexually coercive behaviour during their encounters with female university students.

Alcohol and drugs were a situational risk factor for sexual coercion among female students at this university. This confirms the observation made by Abbey et al. (2002, p. 118) that alcohol consumption by the perpetrator or the victim increases the likelihood of acquaintance sexual assault occurring through multiple pathways. As shown in Table 4.2, 24, 2 % (n=20) of the 79 female students who had experienced sexual coercion were coerced through the use of drugs or alcohol. 59 reported not to have experienced sexual coercion that was drug or alcohol facilitated. Some of the participants who were victims of alcohol facilitated sexual coercion reported "being wasted" and some being "too drunk to know what was taking place". This gave

evidence to the effects of alcohol on the cognitive, psychological and motor functions of the victims. In such conditions the victims reported inability to consent to sexual activity or resist unwanted sexual contact.

Findings of this study revealed that house parties and ‘bashes’ conducted on and off campus increased risks of sexual coercion among female university students. These parties were commonly characterised by high alcohol consumption and drug use. In one of the focus group discussions, a respondent related a case where students were given a weed cake during a house party. The cannabis in the cake intoxicated everyone who ate the cake. This narrative gives evidence to forced intoxication to which female university students are also victims.

Table 4.2: Distribution of respondents who experienced alcohol / drug facilitated sexual coercion

			Experience of Sexual Coercion		Total
			Yes	No	
Sexual intercourse because a man gave you alcohol or drugs	Yes	Count	20	0	20
		% within Sexual intercourse because a man gave you alcohol or drugs	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within Experience of sexual coercion	25,3%	0,0%	6,1%
	No	% of Total	6,1%	0,0%	6,1%
		Count	59	247	306
		% within Sexual intercourse because a man gave you alcohol or drugs	19,3%	80,7%	100,0%
Total	% within Experience of sexual coercion	74,7%	100,0%	93,9%	
	% of Total	18,1%	75,8%	93,9%	
	Count	79	247	326	
	% within Sexual intercourse because a man gave you alcohol or drugs	24,2%	75,8%	100,0%	
		% within Experience of sexual coercion	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	24,2%	75,8%	100,0%

Unexcessive consumption of alcohol does not increase risks of sexual coercion but harmful patterns such as binge drinking, high alcohol consumption and forced intoxication can increase this risk. Respondents from the in-depth interviews reported being drunk when they were sexually coerced by their assailants. Ruvimbo, one of the study participants, narrated her experience as follows,

My boyfriend persuaded me to go for a bash with him. I drank alcohol for the first time and got so drunk. Actually, he persuaded me to drink alcohol. I was so wasted that I can't even remember what took place. I just woke up the following morning at his place, naked, sleeping in his bed. I really don't know what happened but I recall incidences when he was kissing me and touching me, but the thing is I was so drunk. When I asked him if we had sex, he said nothing had happened. I remember episodes when I said stop it! What are you doing! He was touching me but he didn't stop. I was so mad at him after this incident. I feel he shouldn't have done what he did because it is my body and I have to decide what I want to do with my body. He said he didn't see anything wrong with it because I was his girlfriend. I broke up with him for a day but got back with him because I felt lonely (laughs).

Ruvimbo's narrative confirms how alcohol consumption increases vulnerability to sexual coercion among female university students. During this experience, Ruvimbo was incapacitated to give her consent to the sexual assault perpetrated by her boyfriend. However despite the severity of her experience, Ruvimbo did not seem to perceive it as a serious issue. The fact that Ruvimbo laughed while she was narrating her experience can suggest trivialisation of the experience. It is evident from the narrative above that Ruvimbo was aware that her boyfriend took advantage of her incapacitated state. She also stated that she wasn't sure whether her boyfriend had sex with her or not because she was drunk. She further noted that her efforts to conduct a virginity test were fruitless because these services were not offered at the university clinic where she could get free medical treatment. This was common among most of the victims who were coerced by their boyfriends. Most of them didn't seek assistance or report their cases because they felt they were not serious enough to be reported. The findings of this study therefore suggest that perceptions on the severity of an experience of sexual coercion determined the extent to which the victim would report or take action about it. A key informant for this study noted that,

Female students usually come up to report or seek counselling services when they experience physical forms of sexual coercion. There is a tendency to ignore emotional and verbal forms of sexual abuse – key informant interviewee

Findings from this study also revealed that female students who drank alcohol, went to clubs or attended bashes were stereotyped as loose women. These stereotypes increased their vulnerability to sexual coercion especially from male students. Similar findings were found in a study by George et al. (1995) where women who drank beer were perceived as promiscuous, easy to seduce and more willing to have sex. In the in-depth interviews, two participants, Anesu and Rufaro who were friends, noted that the negative stereotypes they had been accorded because they partied and drank alcohol could be the possible reasons why they had experienced sexual coercion. In separate interviews they stated,

I think I was coerced because I have been labelled a party girl. I attended a function by a local artist, so I guess people generally think I'm loose – Rufaro

Anesu was a free-spirited young lady who presented an outgoing and fun-loving character. This was also confirmed in a focus group discussion in which she was a participant. During the in-depth interview, Anesu narrated how she had been a victim of sexual coercion from two different students at the university. The first incident involved a partner she had hooked up with at a local club and the second one involved a male student who had come to her room to collect movies and ended up touching her and making sexual advances. Anesu narrated her story as follows,

I experienced sexual coercion when I went to a club in town with my female friend who is also a student here. We hooked up with two guys who were also students at our university. These guys were older and were from a different department. After a few drinks, the guy I had hooked up with took me to his room. He started to force himself on me. I believe he tried to have sex with me because he thought I was drunk and he wanted to take advantage of me. I told him to stop and I also resisted physically by fighting back. I was later helped by my friend who later followed me to the guys' room. I experienced two encounters of sexual coercion from the same guy. After the first incident he apologised and explained that he was under the influence of alcohol. On the second encounter, I went to his room and we started watching a cartoon movie. It is during this period that he started forcing himself on me. This time he even wore a condom and started putting

physical and verbal pressure to sleep with me. I refused and laughed it off until he was pissed off. I think this guy continually tried to have sex with me because there is a bias that I am a loose girl because I drink alcohol and go to clubs and parties.

The narratives above give evidence to the fact that drinking alcohol and partying attracts negative stereotyping among female university students. This can be attributed to African gender norms. Female alcohol drinking is not a common and acceptable practice in African culture (Martinez et al. 2011). Therefore, alcohol consumption by female university students are overt enactments of resistance to traditional femininity norms that dictate sexual passivity. Drawing from Rufaro and Anesu's narratives, it is evident that alcohol consumption is perceived as signalling sexual availability i.e. the stereotype that they are loose girls. Stereotypical attitudes against female students who drink alcohol therefore suggest social sanctioning of their sexuality as espoused by feminists. Sexual coercion experienced by these female students can be viewed as an instrument of social control within patriarchal contexts. The fact that stereotypes given to female students who drink alcohol facilitates vulnerability to sexual coercion can bring one to the inference that traditional femininity norms which sanction female alcohol consumption in African contexts are a risk factor for sexual coercion among this group. Additionally the fact that female students who drink alcohol and enjoy partying are stereotyped as loose women articulates power relations on the social body as postulated by Foucault (1978). According to Foucault, power relations on human sexuality work through the use of discourse. Language and metaphor play a key role in the representation and construction of the body and embodied experience. The fact that this group of female students experience labelling and subtle forms of ostracism corresponds with these post-structuralist ideas.

The findings of this study show that some female students who were victims of sexual coercion experienced multiple forms of sexual coercion. These findings confirm observations made in earlier research that previous experiences of sexual coercion are a significant predictor of experiencing sexual coercion in the future (Follette et al. 1996, Moore et al, 2010, Brousseau et al. 2012, Griffin 2012). Statistical analysis of the survey results confirmed association between experience of sexual coercion and experiencing other forms of sexual coercion. What was not known was the frequency of the coercion experienced and whether the sexual coercion was perpetrated by a single individual. These methodological limitations were mitigated in the in-depth interviews. All these issues were probed during in-depth interviews.

Table 4.3 shows the association that exists between sexual intercourse by and sexual coercion through using force. Results suggest that a difference exists between those who forced and those who were not. The majority of those forced 80% experienced sexual coercion through compared to only 6.9% who did not experience sexual coercion by use of force. Pearson Chi-Square test confirmed that sexual coercion by use of force and sexual intercourse by use of force were associated ($\chi^2(1) = 99.456, p = 0.000$) that is $p < 0.05$. Findings can mean that those participants who experience physical sexual coercion are most likely to experience sexual intercourse by the use of force. Table 4.3.1 illustrates the inferred results.

Table 4.3 Association between sexual intercourse by and sexual coercion using force

		S/C through using force		Total	
		Yes	No		
Sexual intercourse by force	Yes	Count	16	4	20
		% within Sexual intercourse by force	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	4.9%	1.2%	6.2%
		Standardized Residual	9.1	-3.3	
No	Count	21	284	305	
		% within Sexual intercourse by force	6.9%	93.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	6.5%	87.4%	93.8%
		Standardized Residual	-2.3	.8	
Total	Count	37	288	325	
		% within Sexual intercourse by force	11.4%	88.6%	100.0%
		% of Total	11.4%	88.6%	100.0%

Table 4.3.1 Chi-Square Test results for association between sexual intercourse by force and sexual coercion using force

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	99.456 ^a	1	.000	.000	.000	
Continuity Correction ^b	92.340	1	.000			
Likelihood Ratio	57.494	1	.000	.000	.000	
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	99.150 ^d	1	.000	.000	.000	.000
N of Valid Cases	325					

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.28
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table
- c. For 2x2 cross tabulation, exact results are provided instead of Monte Carlo results
- d. The standardised statistic is 9.957

Additionally, Table 4.4 shows that there is an association that exists between sexual coercion by use of authority and sexual intercourse through the use of force. Results suggest that 59.1% (n = 13) of those who experienced sexual coercion through use of authority also experienced sexual intercourse through using force, compared to only 7.9% (n= 24) of those who did not experience this. Pearson Chi-Square test confirmed that sexual coercion through the use of authority and sexual intercourse by use of force were not independent of each other $\chi^2(1) = 53.443, p=0.000$ that is $p < 0.05$. Findings can imply that those participants who experience sexual coercion by use of authority have a higher chance of also being sexually harassed through the intercourse by the use of force. Table 4.4.1 illustrates the inferred results. Some participants from the in-depth interviews also revealed how they were subjected to coerced sexual foreplay by their partners who continually persisted to have sexual intercourse with them. Survey results of this study also show evidence that some female students experienced multiple forms of sexual coercion.

Table 4.4 Cross tabulation for sexual coercion through use of authority and sexual coercion through using force

			S/C through using force		Total
			Yes	No	
S/C through use of authority	Yes	Count	13	9	22
		% within S/C through use of authority	59.1%	40.9%	100.0%
		% of Total	4.0%	2.8%	6.7%
		Standardized Residual	6.6	-2.4	
	No	Count	24	280	304
		% within S/C through use of authority	7.9%	92.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	7.4%	85.9%	93.3%
		Standardized Residual	-1.8	.6	
Total	Count	37	289	326	
	% within S/C through use of authority	11.3%	88.7%	100.0%	
	% of Total	11.3%	88.7%	100.0%	

Table 4.4.1 Chi-Square test results for sexual coercion through use of authority and sexual coercion using force

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	53.443 ^a	1	.000	.000	.000	
Continuity Correction ^b	48.476	1	.000			
Likelihood Ratio	32.963	1	.000	.000	.000	
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	53.279 ^d	1	.000	.000	.000	.000
N of Valid Cases	326					

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.50.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

c. For 2x2 cross tabulation, exact results are provided instead of Monte Carlo results

d. The standardized statistic is 7.299

Anesu's re-victimisation and that of some female participants in the survey research can be attributed to several factors. Some of the possible reasons were refracted from Anesu's case. Firstly it can be suggested that low risk perception on Anesu's part could have contributed to

her re-victimisation. This is affirmed by her decision to visit her first perpetrator for the second time. As stated earlier in this chapter, low risk perception among female university students is one of the significant risk factors for sexual coercion. It was observed that most of the victims of sexual coercion in this study demonstrated low risk perception of sexual coercion. This can be attributed to the fact that the victims had a relationship with their assailants i.e. they knew their assailants and therefore demonstrated some level of trust in them. I put forward the argument that the fact that female students knew their perpetrators gave them a sense of false security which then increased their vulnerability to coerced sexual contact.

The “cycle” of sexual coercion experienced by female university students can be attributed to under-reporting and the utilisation of informal confidants. The findings of this study suggest that female students who were victims of sexual coercion experienced other forms of sexual coercion thus creating a “cycle” of sexual coercion. Such a context also contributes to normalisation of sexual coercion in university context. This was supported by the study’s key informant who stated that,

Sexual harassment (sexual coercion) is occurring at the university but reporting is mostly informal. This is mainly because there are no supporting structures to say if one reports a case will they be protected afterwards. Sexual harassment is there in the corridors and its being talked about by students and it cascades from one stream to the other – key informant interviewee

The findings of this study show that most female students who experienced sexual coercion utilised informal structures to report on this if they did at all. All participants from the in-depth interviews reported that they utilised informal structures of reporting i.e. friends and relatives. The survey results of this study also revealed that a majority of female students who experienced sexual coercion utilised informal structures of support. As shown by Figure 4.4, 62,2 % of the study participants reported their experiences of sexual coercion to a friend, 16,7% to a family member and 1% to a church elder or pastor. The cumulative total of informal reporting of experiences of sexual coercion in this study is significantly high (79,9 %). These findings are consistent with earlier studies (Sylaska and Edwards 2014, Schulze and Perkins, 2017) which empirically illustrated that disclosure of sexual coercion was often made to friends and family. Friends and family members, particularly female members are the most utilised informal support because they are generally considered the most helpful and supportive (Sylaska and Edwards 2014, p. 3).

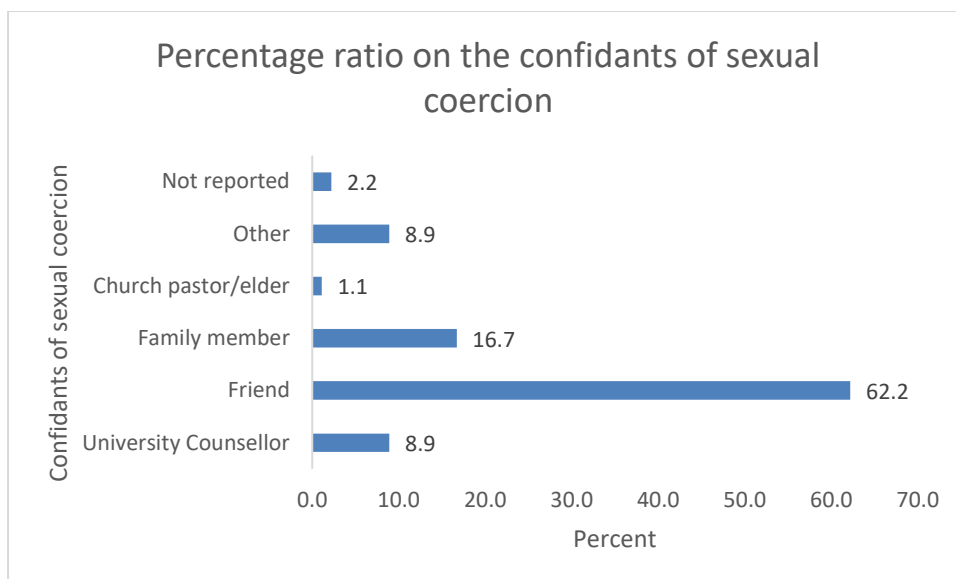


Figure 4.4 Percentage frequency of the confidants of experiences of sexual coercion

The efficacy of informal sources of support for sexual coercion varies with each support network. Without undermining the efficacy of informal structures of support, I propose that lack of proper legal and professional measures to mitigate experiences of sexual coercion among female university can be a significant predictor for re-victimisation. This is because it prevents access to appropriate therapeutic and legal interventions thereby worsening outcomes (Adeosun 2015, p. 154). Proper and professional measures of dealing with sexual coercion can be a panacea to its effective mitigation and prevention in IHE. The findings of this research, as illustrated in Figure 4.4, also reveal the need for the university to increase awareness of the services available to address cases of sexual coercion. Some of the respondents from the in-depth interviews reported that they didn't know that the university offered post-trauma counselling services. As illustrated in Figure 4.4, low utilisation of university counselling services by female university students can be as a result of their lack of knowledge. Re-victimisation of female students on this campus also suggests the need for the university to strengthen victim protection against further sexual coercion.

Some female students in this study reported being subjected to verbal sexual coercion. Experiences of verbal coercion reported included sexual persistence, threats to leave the relationship and continual arguments and pressure to engage in sexual activity. As presented in Table 4.5, 15% of the study participants experienced fondling, kissing or petting after continued arguments and pressure from their perpetrators. 7, 7% of the study participants had sexual intercourse after continued arguments and pressure from their perpetrators. The findings

of this study show that verbal sexual coercion was the common form of sexual coercion experienced by female students at this university. These findings concur with an observation made by Gilmore et al. (2011) that verbal coercion rates in women are consistently higher than other forms of sexual coercion.

Table 4.5 Distribution on the experiences of sexual coercion after continued arguments and pressure

Nature of sexual coercion experienced	Frequency	% of the population	% of total experiences of sexual coercion
Kissing, petting and fondling after continued arguments and pressure	49	15%	62%
Sexual intercourse after continued arguments and pressure	25	7,7%	31,6%

Drawing from the data from the in-depth interviews, it was observed that verbal sexual coercion was commonly experienced by female students who were in fairly established relationships with their perpetrators. Seven (n=7) of the 10 participants who were interviewed reported being subjected to verbally coercive tactics. Of the seven participants, six were in romantic relationships with the perpetrators, one respondent was coerced by a distant uncle who was soliciting a love relationship (this was more of a blesser relationship because the man was married and well-resourced). This was different from physical forms of sexual coercion which were commonly experienced in casual and short-term relationships such as hook-ups or with acquaintances. These findings corroborate with the findings of a study by Cleveland et al. (1999) that the use of power and substance-facilitated coercion tactics decreases as level of intimacy between the victim and perpetrator increases. The existing relationships afford the perpetrator more access to the women making other forceful tactics unnecessary (Livingston et al. 2004). This study provides empirical evidence which confirms that the nature of verbal sexual coercion experienced by female university students varies according to relationship type and status. It suggested high prevalent rates of verbal coercion in committed relationships as compared to casual relationships.

Several participants from the in-depth interviews reported experiencing verbal sexual coercion in the form of sexual persistence. Respondents reported experiencing repeated requests and persuasion to have sexual intercourse even after they had said no. This was the cause of most

of the relationship break-ups among the participants. One of the respondents noted how she was contemplating breaking up with her boyfriend because she was fed up with his continual pressure to have sex with her. What was most interesting from the female students' narratives were the justifications given by their boyfriends to indulge in sexual intercourse. The common justifications were that sexual intercourse "would take the relationship to another level". Ruvimbo stated that "he said sex brings people together" i.e. strengthens their sexual bond. Masters et al. (2013, p. 3) noted that traditional sexual scripts for men have them frequently being the ones to initiate sex and push it to the next level of intimacy, The fact that these males used the same justifications for engaging in sexual activity with their partners can suggest heteronormative sexual scripting of sexual interactions as postulated in Simon and Gagnon's (1984) sexual script theory.

Analysis of the narratives provided by the female students suggests influence of traditional sexual scripting on the behaviour of the perpetrators of sexual coercion. Sexual persistence directed from their male partners exhibited residues of traditional masculine sexual norms. Flowerdew and Richardson (2017, p. 397) stated that traditional heteronormative discourse views men as pursuers of the women in heterosexual courtships. Additionally, Abbey (2002, p. 120) noted that men often interpret a women's sexual refusal as a sign that they should try harder rather than that they should give up. Both notions emphasise precepts of sexual persistence which are rooted in traditional masculine sexual norms. Sexual persistence enacted by male perpetrators of verbal coercion experienced by female university students suggests subscription to traditional gender role beliefs on sexual behaviour. It is therefore plausible to note that an association exists between experiences of sexual coercion among female students and adherence to traditional sexual norms by their perpetrators.

Whenever my boyfriend wants to touch or kiss me he keeps on reminding me that I am his girlfriend and that if I didn't satisfy him who would. He also persists that if I continue refusing to have sex with him he would find someone else. I have been thinking of breaking up with him for some time now, but the thing is I have been dating him for a long time so I guess that is what is stopping me (laughs). – Ropafadzo (interview respondent)

My boyfriend always told me that I was childish whenever I refused to sleep with him (have sexual intercourse) with him. – Fadzai (interview respondent)

Some boyfriends make you feel bad for not doing what they want and you end up doing things you didn't want to do. The thing is you will be so deeply in love with the guy and he will tell you that he will leave you for another girl. – focus group discussant

The narratives above demonstrate emotional and psychological blackmail experienced by female university students in their dating relationships. Some participants from the in-depth interviews reported that their partners threatened to break up with them because of their refusal to have sexual intercourse with them. Ropafadzo's narrative relates how her boyfriend threatened to end their relationship because of her continued denial to be intimate with her partner. These findings are consistent with findings of an earlier study by Jeffry (2014) wherein female students reported that their boyfriends threatened to break up with them because they had refused sexual contact with them. Both participants reported succumbing to physical sexual coercion perpetrated by their boyfriends. Ropafadzo noted that she gives in to fondling and petting by her boyfriend even though she feels it's not right. She related how her boyfriend usually attempts to remove her clothes in the process. Additionally, Fadzai related that she gave in to sexual intercourse with her then-boyfriend after continual persistence and emotional blackmail.

Analysis of the narratives provided by female participants in this study gave evidence to situational factors under which female students acquiesce to sexual coercion. The study narratives suggested that female students acquiesce to sexual coercion perpetrated by their intimate partners to avoid rejection or partner disappointment. A number of female students who had been victims of sexual persistence indicated that refusal to have sex with their partners resulted in relationship strife. Some related how their partners would become very angry. Findings of this study revealed that the desire to maintain relationships was a motivating factor for remaining in sexually coercive relationships among female students. Data from the focus group discussions also confirmed the insight that female university students accede to sexual coercion perpetrated by their partners for fear of losing the title of being the lady of the moment. Some female students therefore succumbed to sexual coercion to **avoid** social ridicule. This was however at a cost of experiencing continuous sexual coercion and its deleterious effects.

The length of a dating relationship was another contributing factor for acquiescing to sexual coercion among female university students. The longer a relationship, the more likely a female student would acquiesce to sexual coercion. This is substantiated by Ropafadzo's narrative in

which she revealed that the duration of her relationship was holding her back from breaking up with her boyfriend despite being uncomfortable with the coercion she was experiencing. The findings suggest that time investment in dating relationships among female students' influences their decision to stay in sexually coercive relationships. These study findings concur with Edward et al. (2015) who noted that time investment contributes to young heterosexual women's desire to maintain coercive relationships. This is because it strengthens feelings of relationship quality, satisfaction and commitment.

Most of our female students are victims of sexual coercion perpetrated by blessers. Several of them have come to seek counselling services. A number of these students come from poor backgrounds and they try to meet the standards of students who come from well-up families. I think this shows lack of empowerment of female students. – Key informant

The narrative above gives evidence to the fact that female students may succumb to sexual coercion for economic and consumerist reasons. The findings of this study are consistent with previous findings on the link between transactional relationships and the experience of sexual coercion among female university students. Earlier studies at university campuses have documented preponderance of transactional relationships among college students, particularly female students (Masvawure 2010, Gukurume 2011, Shefer et al. 2012). Marked differences in age and economic status which commonly characterise these relationships and facilitate exposure to unsafe sexual practices and coercion (Shefer et al. 2012). The findings of this study further suggest that financial dependence of female students on their intimate partners facilitates acquiescence to coercive sexual practices perpetrated by these partners. This observation was drawn from the focus group narratives where a majority of female students conceded to the idea that female students who are economically dependent on their partners end up doing things they didn't want to do, only to please their partners. This increased their likelihood of experiencing and acquiescing to sexual coercion. The desire to continue receiving benefits from these men was noted as a key motivator for staying in these relationships.

Some participants in this study reported experiencing quid pro quo sexual coercion. Quid pro quo sexual coercion involves requests to submit to sexual advances as a condition of obtaining a benefit (Browne 2006). The use and abuse of power is tantamount to this type of coercion as the harasser usually has the ability to reward or withdraw benefits (Wky and Rothmann 2011, p. 170). Much of the data for quid pro quo sexual coercion was drawn from focus group

discussions and key informant interviews. No participant from the in-depth interviews reported experiencing quid pro quo sexual coercion. Results from the survey research confirm occurrence of this type of sexual coercion at this university. As shown by Table 4.6, the experience of quid pro quo sexual coercion was low. Of the female sexually coerced students at this campus, 27,8% experienced kissing, petting and fondling because a man used a position of authority. Additionally, 20% had sexual intercourse through the use of force from a man in authority.

Table 4.6 Distribution on the experiences of sexual coercion by use of authority

Nature of sexual coercion experienced	Frequency	% of the total population	% of total experiences of sexual coercion
Kissing, petting and fondling because a man used a position of authority	22	6,7%	27,8%
Sexual intercourse because a man used his position of authority to make you	16	4,9	20%

A female student (name was withheld) who came for counselling was contemplating suicide because of sexual harassment she was facing ... She revealed that her supervisor was demanding a romantic relationship with her and she was afraid rejecting him would result in her failing her industrial attachment. – key informant

Findings of this study revealed that female students were victims of quid pro quo sexual coercion perpetrated by lecturers and supervisors. It was gathered from the focus group discussions that were reports of female students who failed particular modules because they had rejected sexual advances from male lecturers. This type of sexual coercion is the most reported in most IHE (Zindi 1994, Katsande 2008, Edward-Jauch 2012, Kheswa 2014, Tlou 2014). Key informants for the study confirmed that female students reported cases of quid pro quo sexual coercion at the university. They, however, noted that the cases were quite few compared to coercion perpetrated by intimate partners, particularly male students. The narratives provided by the key informants with regard to perpetration of sexual coercion at the

university were confirmed by the overall findings of this study mentioned earlier in this chapter. Evidence of quid pro quo sexual coercion perpetrated by members of staff shows the need for the university to strengthen its policy with regard to protecting students from sexual coercion by members of staff.

4.3 The impact of sexual coercion on female university students

Consequences and responses to sexual coercion vary between individuals and gender (WHO 2003). The nature and context within which sexual coercion occurs also determines the extent to which a victim will experience negative consequences. Finkelhor and Browne (1985) suggested that poor outcomes of sexual coercion depend on the nature and characteristics of the coercion experienced. These include the frequency of the coercion, its severity and the perpetrator (WHO 2003). A majority of the participants reported experiencing negative social, psychological and academic consequences. However, some reported not experiencing any negative effects. Therefore, the findings of this study confirm earlier observations on the relativeness of the effects of sexual coercion on individuals.

One notable response was provided by a female student who revealed that though her experience of sexual coercion wasn't pleasant, it was a learning curve for her. She stated that,

This (experience of physical sexual coercion) has shown me that guys are capable of doing anything. You can be abused by anyone!!!! – Rutendo, interview respondent

Rutendo's narrative reveals that not all female victims of sexual coercion experienced negative consequences. She noted that her experience didn't affect her particularly but has been a lesson to avoid experiencing sexual coercion in the future. The findings of this study suggest that prior experience of sexual coercion increased risk recognition among female students. These findings are consistent with a study by Bryant (2001) where a history of sexual victimisation predicted women feeling more vulnerable to future sexual assault. In the present study most of the female students who were victims of sexual coercion reported ending their relationship with the perpetrators to avoid further coercion. Ruvimbo, one of the respondent from the in-depth interviews, who had been a victim of alcohol-facilitated sexual coercion noted that she vowed never to taste alcohol in her life. Adoption of preventive measures to avoid re-victimisation demonstrates significant levels of sexual agency among female students.

The findings of this study show that the severity of coercion experienced by female students also determined the extent to which it had negative effects on the victim. Respondents who had experienced less invasive forms of sexual coercion did not report experiencing adverse psychological and academic implications. Most of these female students reported not experiencing any negative effects. As stated earlier, Rutendo who had experienced forcible kissing from a male acquaintance who was proposing love from her reported that the experience didn't have any negative effects. Conversely, Fadzai, a victim of sexual intercourse after continued persistence and emotional blackmail from her boyfriend, reported experiencing chronic stress and being abnormally quiet. Drawing from these narratives, it is evident that the severity of the experience of sexual coercion determined the extent to which the victim experienced negative outcomes.

I was so depressed. I couldn't concentrate in class. I was so worried that I wasn't like the other girls now. I was asking myself what if he took nude pics (pictures) of me...what if my mom finds out?- Ruvimbo

I was so stressed after this incident, I became so quiet and distant from my friends. I also thought of this experience – Fadzai

The above narratives reveal the psychological trauma experienced by female students who were victims of sexual coercion. Both respondents had been victims of sexual coercion perpetrated by their boyfriends. Fadzai had given in to sexual intercourse after continued pressure and arguments from her boyfriend. On the other hand, Ruvimbo was a victim of alcohol facilitated sexual coercion from her boyfriend. Ruvimbo revealed that she wasn't sure if she had sexual intercourse with her boyfriend because she was very drunk. She just woke up naked in her boyfriend's bed. My analysis of the situation was that she did not want to disclose whether he had sexual intercourse with her while she was under the influence of alcohol. Even after continual probing, she denied knowledge of what happened. Several possible reasons could have contributed to Ruvimbo's decision not to disclose if the coercion she experienced led to sexual intercourse. The narration given by Ruvimbo met the legal context of rape. According to the narrative provided by Ruvimbo, it was highly likely that she was protecting her perpetrator who was still her boyfriend at the time of the interview. Earlier research on sexual coercion in dating relationships shows that victims tend to protect their partners with some finding justification for their behaviour (Jeffrey 2015). Virginity is sacralised in the

African traditional context and premarital sexual activity is not easily spoken about. Ruvimbo's concerns with her virginity can also be drawn from her narrative. This could be another possible reason for Ruvimbo's non-disclosure.

The findings of this study show that experiences of sexual coercion have detrimental effects on the education of female university students. These findings are consistent with earlier studies on the impact of sexual coercion on the education of university students (Fisher et al. 2000, Walter 2009, Muasya 2014). As shown in the excerpts above, female victims of sexual coercion experience psychological and emotional problems such as sadness, depression and stress. These problems affect concentration on studies, thus inevitably affecting academic performance. Additionally, findings of this study show that reports of sexual coercion increase perceived risk perception and fear among female university students. This hinders engagement in academic programmes thereby affecting academic performance. In this study, female students who were on parallel admission, reported high risk perception to sexual coercion because they attend lectures at night. They reported limited movement during the night and some would not attend lectures without their colleagues. Using feminist analysis, social exclusion of female university students is a way of maintaining the gendered status quo within these settings. Jacobsen (2009, p. 4) concurred that limitations of women's movement in different social spaces can be viewed as a way of maintaining men's dominance and power.

The social effects of sexual coercion among female university students can be seen by the way it leads to strained relationships, relationship break-ups and self-alienation. Findings of this study reveal that female students avoid social gatherings such as bashes and parties because of fear of victimisation. Female participants in this study revealed that past reports of sexual assaults and drug abuse have contributed to their fear to attend these functions. This denies female students extracurricular and social activities which are important determinants for overall well-being. Most female students who were victims of sexual coercion in intimate relationships revealed that they ended relationships with coercive intimate partners. Some reported frequent quarrelling and arguments over engaging in sexual activity. One respondent related that they would always argue when it came to issues of having sex. She noted that her boyfriend would become angry over her refusals. Furthermore some victims of sexual coercion reported distancing themselves from others such as Fadzai, one of the interviewees in this research. These study findings therefore reveal negative social effects associated with sexual coercion.

We didn't use condoms, he bought morning-after pills - Fadzai

Sexual coercion is commonly associated with non-condom use (Teitelman et al. 2010). The narratives of female students who were victims of coerced sexual intercourse revealed that some did not use condoms. Fadzai (see above) noted that her boyfriend made the decision to use morning-after pills rather than condoms for contraception. In her narrative, Fadzai revealed that she broke up with the boyfriend mainly because of her experience of unwanted sexual intercourse. She also noted that the boyfriend was very controlling. When I asked her why she agreed not to use condoms she noted that,

This guy was very controlling and bossy and aisambondinyerera (he did not compromise or lovingly persuade me to do things). Though he tried to work things out after the incident I refused because I felt that he was abusive and taking advantage of me because I was younger than him. – Fadzai

The narrative reveals sexual decision-making dominance in the context of heterosexual relationships as advanced by feminists. Feminists argue that men retain most power and control in heterosexual relationships. The findings of this study therefore corroborate feminist ideas on hegemonic masculinities in the sexual realm. Non-condom use is associated with myriad deleterious health implications. Among these are risks of infection with sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions. In light of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, non-condom use increases risks of infection with the deadly disease. In the present study, worrying was the fact that some female students who had had unprotected coerced sex reported they dreading going for HIV testing. Fadzai revealed that she had not gone for HIV testing since her experience. Similarly, Ruvimbo revealed that she had only made an effort to go for virginity testing and not HIV-testing. I put forward the argument that these findings demonstrate low risk perception to HIV among female university students. This is drawn from the fact that both participants above were oblivious to the fact that they might have contracted sexually transmitted diseases. For example, Ruvimbo noted that she was worried about the fact that she might have lost her virginity and that her mother would find out about the incident if by any chance her boyfriend had taken nude pictures of her. However after some probing and discussion on the health risks, both participants promised to go for HIV testing.

4.4 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter I discussed perceptions and experiences of sexual coercion among female students at the university. The findings of this study revealed that the occurrence of sexual

coercion was relatively low: 79 (24%) female students reported experiencing sexual coercion. This percentage is lower than findings from other universities reviewed in literature such as Vanderwoed (2009), Mezie- Okoye and Alamina (2014), Benti and Teferi (2015). In the study by Vanderwoed (2009) nearly half of all women in the study reported being sexually coerced. Studies by Mezie- Okoye and Alamina (2014) and Benti and Teferi (2015) had prevalence rates of 46.7% and 41.3 % respectively. Sexually coercive practices that were experienced by the female students included forcible kissing, fondling, petting and non-consensual sexual intercourse. Additionally, it was revealed that most female victims of sexual coercion at this campus did not formally report cases of sexual coercion but utilised informal structures of reporting such as friends, family members and church leaders. The findings also revealed that male students were the common perpetrators of sexual coercion followed by lecturers, intimate partners, other members of staff and female students respectively.

The findings justified the study assumption that female students were victims of sexual coercion perpetrated by their intimate partners. Furthermore, the chapter alludes to the extent to which interpretations and experiences of sexual coercion among female students were socially and cultural conscripted. Traditional gender norms and gender role attitudes influenced how female students perceived sexual coercion and their experience of it. The chapter also discussed ways in which female students resisted and renegotiated gendered norms of sexuality. Lastly, the chapter discussed the adverse social, academic and health implications of sexual coercion. The findings of this study show that female students who were victims of sexual coercion experienced poor concentration and depression which negatively affected academic performance. Additionally, the chapter discussed social implications of sexual coercion among female students. These included relationship break-down and self-alienation. The chapter also provides a discussion on the health risks that were associated with sexual coercion among the female students.

Chapter 5: Sexual Coercion in the Context of Heterosexual Relationships among Female Students

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed experiences of sexual coercion among female university students and the meanings they attached to these experiences. This chapter builds from the findings presented in the previous chapter which confirm that female university students were victims of sexual coercion perpetrated by intimate partners. This chapter aimed at understanding the patterns and dynamics of intimate practices among female university students and risk factors for coercive sexual practices within these “intimate relationships”. Examining intimate practices among female students was crucial in understanding how power relations were enacted and negotiated by the female university students in the context of heterosexual relationships and experiences of sexual coercion. Additionally, I explore the extent to which intimate practices among female students are socially and culturally conscripted. In line with the main themes of the thesis (sexual agency, power and subjectivity among female university students) I explore ways in which female students enact or resist feminine intimate practices and sexual coercion. In my analysis of a repertoire of practices of intimacy among female university students, I also interrogate the extent to which intimacy is staged, pretended or non-existent.

Though intimacy is to a greater extent closely linked with individual personal experiences, it has collective and cultural dimensions. Intimacy, like all other forms of human behaviour is socially and culturally conscripted. Individuals bring a set of intimate practices that are shaped by cultural conditions and economic constraints (Jamieson 2011). This is a central argument in social constructionism. Morgan (2011) noted that practices of intimacy encompass both innovative behaviour and habitual or institutionalised actions consistent with pre-existent scripts. This is to say, intimate practices are an interplay of both individual and socio-cultural influences. They can fit with or be a reproduction of conventional sexual norms.

5.1 Constructions of intimacy

Intimacy is a broad and multi-faceted concept. It is understood differently according to different cultural and historical frames of reference (Jamieson 2011). Due to the relativity of the concept of intimacy, Sehlkoglou and Zengin (2015, p. 20) proposed an ethnographically

grounded formulation of intimacy. This section focuses on constructions and experiences of intimacy among university female students. Traditional discourses on intimacy relegate it to physical contact, sex, romance or passionate love, invariably with a spouse or partner (Attwood et al. 2017). Sehlikoglu and Zengin (2015, p20) substantiated this by noting that “intimacy is tightly bound up with notions of privacy, sexuality, proximity and secrecy, and with dynamics of sensual and affective attachments and forms of desire”. Intimate relationships are therefore a type of close personal relationship that is subjectively experienced. They are antithetical to casual relationships. Ben-Ari and Lavee (2007) provided six defining characteristics of intimate relationships which distinguish them from casual relationships. These are knowledge, caring, interdependence, mutuality, trust, and commitment (ibid.).

Sehlikoglu and Zengin (2015) observed that the sexual realm is the primary definitive dimension of ‘the intimate’ in most sociological approaches to intimacy. Sehlikoglu and Zengin (2015, p. 21) further asserted that “preoccupation with sexuality, coupling and relationships in studies on intimacy risks limiting our horizons concerning the very nature of the intimate”. In this study, my analysis of intimate relationships goes beyond the confines of the sexual realm to include any form of close personal relationships female students were involved in. I examine a plethora of relationships in which female students had bonds or attachments with perpetrators of the sexual coercion they experienced. Attwood et al. (2017, p. 249) concurred that newer discourses of intimacy have emerged that refer to the non-sexual relationships. These include different domains like “friendships, acquaintances, work relationships and family relationships” (Register and Henley 1992, p. 467).

Constructions of intimacy among the study participants were limited to sexual intimacy. This was observed from the responses to the question on the nature of intimate relationships female university students were involved in. The list of “intimate relationships” noted by the study participants included “hook-ups”, “blesser” relationships, student-to-student relationships, relationships with lecturers and ‘normal’ heterosexual relationships i.e. relationship between a female student and a reasonably older partner. These are all in the confines of dating and love relationships. It is worth mentioning that there was no reference to same-sex relationships in this study sample. All discussions of intimacy centred on heterosexual relationships. I put forward the argument that obliviousness to homosexual intimate practices by the study participants demonstrated their unconscious conformity to heteronormativity. This can also be attributable to the homophobic context in Zimbabwe, where homosexuality is criminalised. I

did not probe further into the issues on homosexuality and lesbianism as they were beyond the scope of this study.

Vakomana vakawanda vanoti ukaramba kurara navo unenge usingamude. Inini ndinofunga kuti mukomana anotimurare mese asati akuroora anenge asingakude. Anengeachingoda kungotamba newe. Most guys say if you refuse to have sex with me you don't love me. I personally think that a guy who asks to sleep with you before they marry you does not love you, they only want to play with you. – focus group discussant

Kuchurch kwedu hatibvumidzwe kissing, kubatana-batana even kurara mese musati maroorana. Inini I prefer a relationship isina zvese izvozvo. At our church touching, kissing and premarital sex out of wedlock is not allowed. I prefer a relationship which doesn't involve sexual activity – Runyararo (in-depth interviewee)

Inini I am comfortable with hanging out but my boyfriend anongoda kuti tibatane- batane almost pese patinosangana. I am comfortable with hanging out but my boyfriend always wants us to touch and kiss almost every time we meet – Ruvimbo in-depth interviewee

Vakomana vakawanda pano pacollege vanoda zvekubatana-batana nekukisana- kisana. Vanoti havadi love yekuhigh school love yevana vadiki Most guys here at college (meaning university) expect sexual intimacy in relationships. They say hatidi love yekuhighschool love yevana vadiki (We don't want high school love, its immature love for kids) – focus group discussant

The above narratives reveal sexual scripts that governed intimate practices among some female university students. Sexual activity is shown to be normative in dating and romantic relationships in the university context. This is confirmed by the respondent who equated a dating relationship without sexual activity to that of primary school children. The narrative also confirms Simon and Gagnon's (1978) claim that sexuality differs with time and space. What is sexually acceptable in some social contexts may not be acceptable in other contexts. As narrated by the focus group discussant presented above, sexual play such as kissing is a normal demonstration of intimacy in the university context but immoral behaviour at church. Gagnon

and Laumann (1995) posited that sexual scripts are not static but are changed through inter- and intrapersonal innovations in how they enact sexuality. Despite the constraining effect of cultural level scripts i.e. religious sexual scripts which restrain sexual activity out of the context of marriage, the narrative shows that scripts can be changed at inter- and intrapersonal levels.

Furthermore, the above narratives provided by female students revealed preoccupation to engage in sexual activity by their intimate partners. Similar findings were found in a study by Bhatasara et al. (2006) which found that dating relationships among adolescent boys were based on sexual intimacy i.e. sex and fondling. Female participants in this study revealed that constructions of intimacy in terms of sexual behaviours by their intimate partners increased their vulnerability to coerced sexual practices. This resulted in them experiencing sexual persuasion and sexual persistence from them. As mentioned in Chapter 4, female students reported experiencing verbal sexual coercion perpetrated by partners who continually asked to have sex with them. The above narratives reveal that some female students preferred intimate relationships which did not involve sexual activity – “intimacy without sex”. Their narratives revealed preference for non-sexual intimacy. This type of intimacy is devoid of sexual activity and is characterised by socialising and “hanging out”. They revealed that this was contrary to the preferences of their intimate partners who usually referred such a context as “high school love” or “Grade 7 love”. The findings of this study reveal attempts to renegotiate intimacy from sexual intimacy to non-sexual intimacy by female university students. Additionally, the findings reveal the extent to which female students enact sexual subjectivity around their constructions of intimacy.

5.2 Sexual coercion in intimate relationships

Figure 5.1 shows the percentage distribution of perpetrators of sexual coercion. The study findings show 24.32% of the female students that who participated in this study were sexually coerced by their intimate partners. Drawing from the constructions of intimate partners among the study participants, it can be inferred that 24.32% female students were coerced by men with whom they had a romantic relationship. All ten participants I interviewed for the individual case studies were coerced by an individual with whom they had an intimate relationship i.e. friend, distant relative, acquaintance or boyfriend. Selection of this core group was guided by the broader conceptualisation of intimacy I adopted in this study.

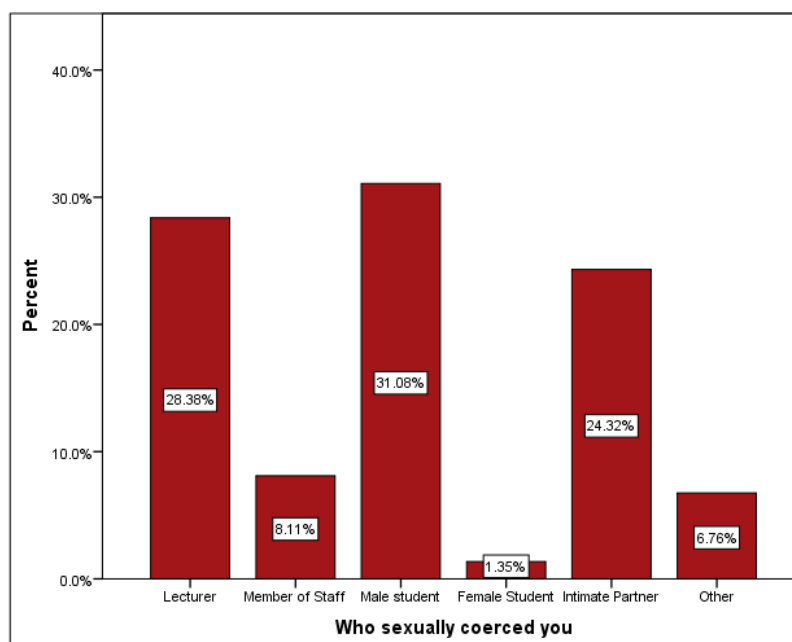


Figure 5.1 Distribution of the perpetrators of sexual coercion experienced by female students at the university

5.2.2 'Hook ups'

'Hooking up' is a casual form of sexual 'relationship'. It can occur between strangers or between individuals who are familiar with each other. It is different from a stable intimate relationship because it lacks interdependence, commitment and mutuality. Though 'hook-up' were not a common dating practice among female students at this university, there was evidence of this dating practice. In the present study, 'hook-ups' were largely associated with parties and bashes conducted on campus. These were usually conducted during the night and involved drinking alcohol and loud music. The findings of this study show that 'hooking up' was associated with coerced sexual behaviours. Anesu related that the partner she had hooked up with attempted to have sexual intercourse with her because he thought she was drunk. She managed to physically resist his advances and avoided unwanted sex. Additionally, the findings from the focus group discussions revealed that most women who reported being sexually coerced during 'hook-ups', were commonly incapacitated by alcohol and not in a position to give their consent to sexual activity. Such a context suggests that male students preyed on female students who were incapacitated by alcohol during social functions at the university.

Commenting on hooking up on campus, one respondent noted that it was usually the male students who talked about having hooked up with a female student. She noted that it was difficult to ascertain whether it was true because male students commonly found it 'prestigious'

to have 'hooked up' and slept with a female student. Analysis of this narrative can show the meanings that male students attached to 'hook-up' encounters. Drawing from the excerpt, the fact that male students are reported to see these sexual encounters as 'prestigious' and something they can freely disclose to other people, can suggest the extent to which this was a source of legitimating their manhood. This behaviour can be attributed to influences of traditional gender norms on masculinity that tend to view male sexual virility in terms of ability to engage in sexual activity and having multiple relationships. On the contrary, sexual norms in African contexts obligate young women to view their sexuality in the context of marriage which can also explain less disclosure among female students who were involved in 'hook-ups' as revealed by the study participant above.

In this study, there were some female students who chose to 'hook up'. However, it was noted that though some female students willingly engaged in 'hooks-ups', there were situations when the partners exceeded their sexual boundaries resulting in them being sexually coerced. Anesu, one of the respondents from the in-depth interviews, related a second 'hook-up' encounter with the male who had attempted to have penetrative sex with her. She related that she had gone to the male's room and began to be sexually intimate with him while they were watching a movie. She only resisted his sexual advances when she noticed he was wearing condom showing that he wanted to engage in penetrative sex. Anesu resisted his sexual advances for penetrative sex though she was comfortable with "fooling around". Anesu's narrative reveals the extent to which 'hooking up' poses high risks of coerced sex among female university students. However what is worrying is the low risk perception by the respondent who reported multiple experiences of coercive sexual experiences.

The findings of this study also revealed practices of casual intimate 'relationships' among female students. Rufaro, one of the in-depth interview participants, reported experiencing sexual coercion from her acquaintance who was proposing love to her. Rufaro revealed that she had visited the male acquaintance to watch a movie, during which they started 'fooling around' i.e. touching and kissing. She reported to have given in to the sexual activity. It was only when the male acquaintance attempted to have penetrative sex with her that she started resisting. In a separate interview, Anesu also reported experiencing the same type of sexual coercion from a male acquaintance who was also a student at the university who had come to collect movies from her room. She reported that the male acquaintance attempted to fondle her after which she scolded him and evicted him from her room.

Analysis of the narratives of both participants (i.e. Anesu and Rufaro) suggest sexual freedom. Both women were able to get sexual satisfaction in the context of romantic relationships. Tambudzai, one of the respondents from the in-depth interviews also related that she was comfortable with kissing and cuddling her boyfriend. The boyfriend was verbally coercing her for penetrative sex which she was not comfortable with. The behaviour of these female students exhibits active resistance to traditional sexual norms of female passivity and norms which reserve sexual activity for marriage. Furthermore, the findings of this study suggested that male perpetrators of sexual coercion tended to prey on this sexual freedom. Anesu narrated experiencing sexual coercion on three different occasions from two different men. In her narratives, she highlighted that she believed she was vulnerable to sexual coercion because there was a general perception that she was a loose girl because she attended parties and drank alcohol. Another interesting observation from the research was that Rufaro was Anesu's friend. The findings of this study therefore suggest that sexual freedom exhibited by these two participants was preyed on by male students at the university therefore increasing their risk to sexually coercive practices from men.

The aforementioned practices of 'hooking up' and casual intimate relationships among female students demonstrate unprecedented changes in traditional forms of dating. Bogle (2008, p. 1) concurred that "college students rarely date in the traditional sense of the term". These changes can be understood in the context of ongoing global social and cultural transformations. Adoption of the hook-up culture by female university students suggests influences of global culture on their sexuality. These findings authenticate Simon and Gagnon's (1984) view that dating and courtship behaviours are socially learned. Hooking up also reveals sexual liberation among female university students. Bogle (2008, p. 4) stated that "college students have become more liberal in terms of their attitudes on sex and sexual behaviour". Hooking up among female university students can show their resistance to traditional norms of femininity which dictate sexual passivity. These students demonstrate sexual liberation and freedom.

5.2.3 Student-to-student 'relationships'

Among the list of intimate relationships that predisposed female university students to sexual coercion were student-to-student relationships. Student-to-student "intimate relationships" included friendships, acquaintances and dating partners. These intimate relationships were identified using the broader conceptualisation of intimacy I adopted in this study. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, intimate relationships encompassed both sexual and non-sexual relationships female students were involved in. Seven of the 10 participants from the in-depth

interviews were sexually coerced by male students who were either their boyfriends or acquaintances. These findings were also authenticated by the survey results which revealed that male students were the common perpetrators of sexual coercion at the campus.

Among the participants from the in-depth interviews Ropafadzo, Ratidzo, Tambudzai and Ruvimbo experienced sexual coercion perpetrated by their boyfriends who were also students at the university. Anesu, Rufaro and Rutendo were sexually coerced by male students who they were not dating. To solicit the nature of the sexual coercion experienced by the female students, I asked the respondents to give an account of the sexual coercion that they experienced. Some of the responses from the participants were as follows:

Akatanga kundimonya ruoko rwangu nekuti ndakanga ndavakumupusha pandanga dandaona kuti aidakuti tirare tese.

He started twisting my hand when I started to push him away. This was after I noticed that he wanted to have penetrative sex with me. – Rufaro (in-depth interviewee)

Boyfriend yangu inondiisira pressure kuti anoda kuti tirare tese. Anenge achiti ndini musikana wake so ndikasamupa (slang meaning if I don't have penetrative sex with him) ndiyani aizomusatisfier. My boyfriend keeps putting pressure on me to have penetrative sex with him. He keeps reminding me that I'm his girlfriend and if I don't have penetrative sex with him who was going to satisfy him. Ratidzo (in-depth interviewee)

He just started kissing me out of the blue (laughs). – Rutendo (in-depth interviewee)

Ndakangomuka the following morning ndiri kuroom kwake, ndakarara pabed pake ndisina kupfeka anything. Handimboziva kuti what took place but I remember ndichiti stop it! Urikuita sei! achindikisser and nekundibatabata haana kumbomira.

I just woke up the following morning at his place, naked, sleeping in his bed. I really don't know what happened but I recall incidences when he was kissing me and touching me, but the thing is I was so drunk. When I asked him if we had sex, he said nothing had happened. I remember episodes when I said stop it! What are you doing! He was touching me but he didn't stop. – Ruvimbo

The narratives above reveal the different types of coercive sexual practices female students experienced from their boyfriends who were students at the university. Drawing from these narratives, it can be noted that female students experienced physical, verbal and alcohol facilitated sexual coercion. The verbal forms of sexual coercion included sexual persistence and blackmail. Ratidzo further revealed that her boyfriend threatened to break up with her because she was refusing to have penetrative sex with him. Physical sexual coercion experienced by some participants included forcible kissing and use of physical force such as twisting the arm. The study also revealed that female students were victims of alcohol facilitated sexual coercion from their intimate partners. Anesu reported experiencing physical sexual coercion from a ‘hook-up’ with a student at the university while she was drunk. The narrative above also relates how Ruvimbo was a victim of alcohol-facilitated sexual coercion by her boyfriend.

5.2.4 Lecturer-student / supervisor-student ‘intimate relationships’

Student-lecturer relationships were also reported by the study participants. Though no female student revealed that they were in such a relationship, it was a general agreement among participants from the focus group discussions and the key informant interviews that there were such relationships on campus. Though ‘intimate relationships’ with lecturers were reported to occur on campus, they were few and highly secretive. It is worth mentioning that despite policies and regulations to curb student-lecturer relationships, these remain a common feature on university campuses (Katsande, 2008, Tlou 2014). Some participants from the focus group discussions noted that

Some female students date lecturers to pass exams. – focus group discussant

Though some female students date lecturers these relationships are usually kept secret. These relationships are also generally few, you rarely hear of people talking about them. – focus group discussant

Obviously the lecturer won’t make you pass for nothing, you will have to meet half way. – focus group discussant

A female student reported being sexually coerced by her supervisor at the organisation she was attached for internship. She revealed that she

succumbed to the coercion because she did not want to fail her industrial attachment. – key informant

The findings of this study revealed that some female students enter into intimate relationships with lecturers for academic advantage while others entered these relationships because they feared failing their examinations. These relationships were associated with risks of sexual coercion. Female students noted that the lecturer in a position of authority increased the risks of experiencing sexual coercion by the female students in a subordinate position. Asymmetrical power relations between the lecturer and female students were noted as a risk factor for sexual coercion. The narrative provided by the key informant presented below also authenticated the idea that these relationships were manipulative and facilitated coercive sexual behaviour.

Sexual coercion among female students varies with the different levels of study. During the first year at university female students are vulnerable because they will be trying to adjust to the new environment. As they progress with their studies it becomes more manipulative because most students will be more concerned with passing and graduating. Female students become vulnerable to lecturers who take advantage and say they will fail the student if she refuses to date them. The one-on-one consultation of dissertations during final year also increases lecturer-student sexual harassment. – key informant interviewee

The underlying motives to enter into ‘intimate relationships’ with lecturers by some female students suggested the extent to which intimacy was staged. Some female students were purported to enter into relationships with lecturers to pass their examinations. I put forward this argument that the intimacy was staged because the narratives reveal that these relationships were used as a means of reaching an end i.e. passing examinations. Such a context increases the likelihood of staged intimacy. The concerned female students ensure that the lecturer believes a strong attachment exists between the two to an extent that they can risk losing their jobs by giving the students an examination paper. They have to exhibit a level of intimacy which gives the lecturer a high level of confidence. The study participants also revealed the extent to which these relationships increased vulnerability to sexual coercion.

5.2.5 The paradox of ‘blesser-blessee relationships’

This study revealed that some female students were involved in ‘blesser-blessee relationships’. ‘Blesser’ relationships are not new to university campuses (Masvawure 2007, Sepele et al. 2017, Thobajane et al. 2017). The term ‘blesser’ relationship was used by study participants to denote relationships with financially resourced men. Though none of the participants in this study openly agreed to be involved in a blesser relationship, the narrative provided by Tarisai, one of the participants from the in-depth interviews, replicated characteristics of a blesser-blessee type of relationship. She reported experiencing sexual coercion from an uncle who was married and approximately in his early forties. The occurrence of the blesser-blessee phenomenon was also confirmed by the key informants of the study and focus group discussants who noted that

Ehe, variko mastudents pano vanodanana nemablesser nevarume vakarooa. Mablesser vanobhadharira rent vachivatengera magroceries nehembe. Mablesser akazara, unongoenda kuGwanda road wonozvibatira blesser rako – urrrrgh.

Yes we have female students who are dating ‘blessers’ and married men. These men pay for their rentals buy them groceries and clothes. ‘Blessers’ are plenty, you can just go to Gwanda road (this is a busy main road which is adjacent to the university) and get one (urrrrgh – she was laughing when she said this). – focus group discussant

Most female students who date sugar daddies and married men, blessers, are usually from poor backgrounds, they try to catch up with other students so they find other means like dating these men. – key informant

Vasikana vakawanda vanodanana nemablesser vanenge vachida more than zvavanobva nazvo kumba. Vakawanda vacho zvawanenge vainazvo zvinokwana asivanenge vachida kungowonekera pacampus, maslay queen.

A majority of female students who date ‘blessers’ do so because they want more than what their families provide, most have enough to go by. Most of them want to be slay queens on campus. – focus group discussant

The above narratives show that the blesser-blessee phenomenon is complex and has paradoxical implications on the lives of female students. Blesser-blessee relationships are associated with sexually coercive practices but at the same time afford some form of ‘constrained’ economic empowerment to the female students involved. These relationships

were commonly associated with coercive practices engendered by power asymmetries emanating from differences in age and financial status between the female students and the male partners; this justifies the extent to which the empowerment was constrained. The blessing-blessee relationships are a broad category which exceed the scope of this study. As a result of the study delimitations, I did not further probe this practice among female students at the university.

5.3 Summary of chapter

This chapter has discussed constructions of intimacy and intimate practices among female university students. Constructions of intimacy among female students were limited to the sexual realm. Some female students preferred non-sexual intimacy. I argue that these active attempts to renegotiate sexual intimacy in their intimate relationships are enactments of sexual subjectivity. Additionally, the findings critique notions of sexual passivity on female sexuality. The findings of the study demonstrated that female students were not only victims of sexual coercion perpetrated by their dating partners but from other individuals whom they had close and personal relationships with i.e. friends, acquaintances and relatives. Additionally, the chapter discussed ways in which intimate practices among female university students were influenced by broader social and cultural processes.

The chapter showed that intimate practices among female university students exhibited conformity to traditional gendered norms of sexuality. However emerging findings discussed in this chapter also showed that though intimate practices among female students were shaped by structural influences, there was instances of resistance and negotiation. Female students were shown to actively resist and re-define traditional intimate practices. This was confirmed by their preference for non-sexual intimacy and adoption of casual sexual relationships. Additionally, the chapter highlighted the exercise of sexual agency and power among female students through their involvement in transactional relationships to meet their personal needs. Other female students entered into intimate relationships with lecturers for academic benefits. In this chapter I argue that these were enactments of sexual agency and power. However, it was also noted that these relationships increased the vulnerability of female students to coercive sexual practices.

Chapter 6: Gendered Resistance(s) or Acquiescence to Coercive Sexual Practices and Norms

6.0 Introduction

Female students' experiences of their sexuality are governed by social and cultural norms. These normative codes determine how they process and react to sexual acts such as sexual coercion. This chapter looks at the diverse reactions of female students to their experiences of sexual coercion. In this chapter I aimed at understanding the extent to which female students demonstrated overt or subtle forms of resistance or acquiescence to gendered codes of sexual conduct during experiences of sexual coercion. In this analysis, I also discuss implications of the diverse reactions. I develop the premise that despite being positioned in a restrictive context which worked to instil and reproduce gendered norms of sexuality and acquiescence to coercive sexual practices, female students enacted embodied resistances and (re)negotiated gendered norms of sexuality. Drawing from the narratives of the female university students, I analyse experiences of sexual coercion to explore their enactments of sexual agency, power and subjectivity. Additionally, I interrogated the extent to which these enactments were constrained.

The chapter is divided into two sub-sections, Firstly, I discuss the structural (economic, social and cultural) determinants that engendered vulnerability to sexual coercion among female university students. In the second section, I juxtapose multiple domains of sexual subjectivity, agency and power exhibited by female students within the context of coercive sexual practices. This is aimed at advancing the argument that notions of passive, vulnerable and docile female students are a misrepresentation of their sexuality and agency.

6.1 Structural determinants that engendered vulnerability to coercive sexual practices

6.1.1 Gendered norms on sexuality

Social constructionists argue that sexual practices are socially constructed: they are rooted in the social and cultural milieus within which individuals are situated. In this section of the chapter, I discuss the structural factors that increases risk of sexual coercion among the female students.

The findings of this study show that subscription to traditional sexual ideologies by some female students increased their vulnerability to coerced sexual practices. This also increased

their likelihood to acquiesce to sexual coercion. Traditional ideologies on femininity emphasise women's passivity, compliance and agreeableness (Curtin et al. 2011). Female students who internalised these codes of traditional femininity were less likely to exercise sexual agency. This also increased their vulnerability to sexual coercion and acquiescing to it. A participant from one of the focus group discussions noted that

Takangokura tichiziva kuti musikana haatangi anything. Unonzi wakangwarisa, unoda zvinhu and hausu type yekuisa mumba
We have been socialised to the idea that a girl doesn't initiate sexual activity, if you do so, you are viewed as too forward, loose and not fit for marriage.

This group of female students exhibited traits of emphasised femininity. They tended to accept male dominance and sexual coercion. Their constructions of femininity were premised on notions of sexual innocence and submissiveness. This group of female students viewed male aggressiveness and autonomy in intimate relationships as an acceptable and normal trait of manhood. Their submissiveness and deference to sexual coercion is based on perceptions that sexual coercion is an inevitable and normal part of being women. These female students avoided going against cultural expectations though this is what feminists argue against. A key informant of this study noted that in most cases, young women are counselled to succumb to sexual coercion by elderly women who commonly rationalise it as normal behaviour in heterosexual relations. In a Foucauldian analysis, these female students display processes of disciplinary power where they conform to mainstream gender role beliefs and voluntarily submit to their boyfriends' authority and control.

In the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews respondents noted that

Culturally, men have to initiate sexual activity that is what is normal, if you initiate sexual activity in a relationship you will be considered a loose girl.
– focus group discussant

Naturally ndozvitoripo kuti isusu as women we just feel we have to be submissive to man. (It is a given fact that as women we feel we should be submissive to men.) – focus group discussant

Analysis of these narratives reveals sexual scripting of the behaviour of female university students. It supports the idea put forward by Simon and Gagnon (1984) who argued that sexual encounters are governed by cultural level scripts which act as a guideline for how to act during

sexual encounters. Additionally, the narratives confirm feminist propositions that sexual scripts are gendered to an extent that women find it difficult to say no to sexual advances from men. The narratives of these female students are entangled with normative gender beliefs which support male sexual pre-eminence. They reveal remnants of male-superiority ideology and subsequent enactments of emphasised femininity.²⁰ It is evident from these narratives that this group of female students are complicit with unequal gender relations and tacitly accept their subordination. There is also evidence of the gender double standard with regard to how females are supposed to behave sexually in intimate relationships. This dyadic account of women's sexual subordination to their male counterparts corresponds with radical feminist ideas. Radical feminists argue for the existence of gender binaries of dominant masculinities and subordinate femininities in intimate heterosexual relationships (MacKinnon 1987, and Butler 1997). MacKinnon (1987, p. 3) asserted that "the social relation between the sexes is organized so that men may dominate and women must submit and this relation is sexual in fact, is sex". Similarly Paterman (1988, p. 219) described this as the law of male sex-right which gives males sexual access to and dominance over women. These power relations however, facilitate coercive behaviours perpetrated against women.

The phrases "natural" and "normal" alluded to in the excerpts reveal that these female students' perceptions of sexual normalcy are culturally conscripted. Sexual scripts are shown to dictate how female university students' enact their sexuality. The narratives support a central notion of the sexual script theory that sexuality is learned from culturally available scripts and adopted by individuals in particular interpersonal situations. This brings out the social constructionist stance in sexual script theory. Cultural conditioning of sexual behaviour is also described by Foucault (1978) who argued that norms of ideal femininity govern sexuality and how it is experienced in any given social context. A number of participants from the focus group discussions noted that though they were consciously aware of gender equality; they continue to yield to their male partner's authority. Focus group respondents noted that

My boyfriend told me not to talk to some guys from our class. We had a quarrel when he saw me talking to a guy he did not like. So whenever I need to talk to them, I check to see whether my boyfriend is watching or not. – focus group discussant

²⁰ Emphasised femininity according to Connell (1987) is characterised by women's subordination and accommodation of the interest and desires of men.

Some boyfriends act as if you are obligated to do what they want. Some even go to the extent of beating you... – focus group discussant

These narratives point to the fact that some female students are subject to the will of their male partners who retain most of the control in dating relationships. As alluded to in the above excerpt, some female students yield to the power of their intimate partners. The behaviour of the intimate partners as narrated by the female students reflects traits of hegemonic masculine sexuality. This is drawn from the fact that intimate partners of female students exercise domination over them. This engenders hierarchical power relations which perpetuate gendered inequalities and the subordination of female students in intimate relationships. The findings of this study corroborate with the feminist views that heterosexual relationships are characterised by hegemonic masculine practices which involve repression of women's behaviours while promoting patriarchal control.

6.1.2 Financial constraints and aspirations

The findings of this study show there was considerable institutional and financial pressure to engage in transactional relationships. 'Transactional relationships' is a value laden concept that has varied interpretations in literature. I put forward the argument that constructions of ideal relationships among female students in this study can be loosely defined as 'transactional' in nature. This is because their narratives centred on expectations of financial support and reputation, a context where they were in relationships more for themselves than their partners. This observation was drawn from the fact that a majority of female students preferred dating older men who were able to support them and provide lavish gifts that were expected in these relationships. Zimbabwean university students have not been spared from the vagrancies of the economic crunch that crippled the country's social and economic landscape since 2008. This context ushered in multiple challenges which hit university students hardest because they commonly experience little to no support from the government and families. This milieu saw some university students resorting to transactional relationships to eke a living (Masvawure 2010, Gukurume 2011). However, these transactional relationships were associated with coercive sexual practices. In one of the focus group discussions a participant noted that

Your friends will be talking about how their boyfriends would have taken them to nice chilling spots around town and to the popular Crazy Tuesdays at Pizza Inn (a promotion where you buy one pizza and get one for free) or at Nandos

but if you date a UBA [University Bachelors Association] they can't afford all that. – focus group discussant

You can't date a UBA who is also struggling to put food on the table just like you. – focus group discussant

These narratives show that dating relationships among female students hinged on material and social benefits that could be accrued from the relationship. This demonstrates commodification of dating relationships among these female students. This is because they assigned value to relationships depending on the benefits accrued for the relationship. Constable (2009, n.p.) observed that “intimate and personal relationships have become more explicitly commodified i.e. bought, sold, packaged and advertised, fetishized, commercialized, consumed and assigned values and prices”. Analysis of these vignettes provides evidence of the amount of social and psychological pressure experienced by some university students if they didn't have a boyfriend to provide them financial and material support. It was noted in one of the focus group discussions that dating a UBA, a cohort believed to be of low economic status, was generally looked down upon. These relationships were said to be kept secret “underground” – as stated by the participant. Dating a boyfriend who could provide material and financial support was more desirable.

Participants from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions also revealed that there was general competition to dress fashionably and to stay in classy and expensive apartments. Female students who exhibited these characteristics were classified as “slay queens”. Slay queens wore the latest clothing labels and stayed in expensive apartments compared to the average female university student. It was also noted that some female students were involved with older and financially resourced men to cater for and to maintain this lifestyle. However, not only did female students get involved in relationships to maintain flashy lifestyles but also to ameliorate financial problems they encountered at university i.e. food and stationery expenses. The aforementioned narratives are indicative of transactional, consumerist and liberalist sexual culture at this university.

Constrained economic situations and consumerist motivations also increased the vulnerability of female students to coerced sexual practices. This was mainly observed among female students who were involved in ‘transactional relationships’. Though female students who entered transactional relationships were agentic in the sense that they managed to exploit sexual relationships to meet their needs, the underlying motivations for entering these relationships

increased their vulnerability to coerced sexual practices. It is worth mentioning that it was quite difficult to ascertain the motivation for entering these relationships but these two main factors were principal. It was however commonly agreed by the research participants that a greater proportion of female students who were involved in transactional relationships were motivated by consumerist intentions.

Financial differences between female students who were in transactional relationships and their intimate partners engendered economic dependence. Most respondents in this study noted that such contexts increased risks of sexual coercion. Though these women had some level of power emanating from their sexual capital, providers in these relationships retained most control in these relationships. One respondent from the focus group discussions noted that “female students who date blessers are forced to do whatever the blesser says to ensure that the blesser continues providing what they want”.

In one of the interviews, Tarisai narrated her story as follows

I experienced sexual coercion from a distant uncle who was asking to date me. He is a married man. I first met him during vacation at our homestead in the rural areas. He told me that he lived in Bulawayo and insisted that we meet up when I come to school. Since this man was a distant uncle he used to give small amounts of money, saying I should use it for provisions at college. The coercion occurred when I met up with him in town one evening. We moved to the back of the car and he started forcing himself on me. He started kissing me and fondling me. At first I did not resist or fight back because I didn't want to ruin the relationship. I started resisting when I discovered that he had brought condoms and that he wanted to have sex with me. I told him to stop but he continued touching me. I continued to push him off until he gave up. My continued refusal pissed him off. He shouted at me and told me to leave. The problem was that I did not have transport money so I had to call a friend to come and get me. I told my cousin who knew this man and she disclosed that she had experienced something similar with this man in question. My cousin told me that this guy used his money to attract young females, particularly his relatives. This man is a rich businessman and I believe he thought I was after his money. Since that incident I cut communication with him and blocked him on all platforms of social media. – Tarisai, in-depth interviewee

Tarisai's narrative points to multiple issues pertaining to interlinks between the economic situation of female students, experiences of sexual coercion and subsequent implications on their exercise of sexual power and agency. It was revealed from the focus group discussions that female students who date blessers tend to act as per the dictates of the blessers. This group of female students are forced to engage in undesirable behaviour to please the person who was providing desired services. Tarisai's story is an example of intergenerational relationships that female university students engaged in. The fact that the man in question provided her with some financial support for sustenance at university suggests an economic relationship with this man. The fact that she had not brought money for transport can also confirm this observation. In her narration, she noted that she did not resist kissing and fondling by this man because she didn't want to ruin her relationship with him. This brings out the idea that some female students succumb to coercive sexual behaviours from their perpetrators only to maintain the relationship. However, Tarisai's ability to stop her assailant from coercing her further indicates an exercise of sexual power and agency. Even though she had experienced some form of sexual coercion she was able to speak out and physically fight back her perpetrator. Her decision to end this relationship demonstrates significant levels of agency. She noted that she didn't want to risk further coercion from this man.

The findings of this study suggest that the desire to pass examinations and industrial attachment increased vulnerability to sexual coercion among female students. This study shows that some female students acquiesce to coercive sexual behaviours perpetrated by lecturers and supervisors to avoid failure. A key informant for the present study reported cases of female students who were victims of sexual coercion from their internship jobs and one who was coerced by a blesser. One female student reported experiencing sexual harassment from her supervisor; she succumbing to the sexual coercion because she wanted to be assessed positively. The student disclosed that she was afraid that the boss would fail her if she attempted to report the assault. Another case involved a female student who was contemplating suicide because the owner of the company where she was working was making sexual advances towards her. These cases reveal that these female students were not able to resist sexual coercion because of their fear of the negative implication.

6.1.3 Age differences with male partners

Age differences between female students and their intimate partners engendered unequal power relations which increased vulnerability to coercive sexual practices. Wilchins and Gilmer (2016, p. 11) noted that such relationships add to the power inequalities already inherent in

most heterosexual relationships, in which men not only have greater physical power, but usually can exercise greater economic power through higher-status and better paying jobs, greater social resources, and through ties to other men in positions of strength.

In one of the focus group discussions, a participant noted that

Older partners commonly retain decision making in relationships. It is because you will be thinking they are older and have more experience and are in a better position to make responsible decision. – focus group discussant

Drawing from the above narrative, it can be noted that because of the age difference some female students allotted their partners control in their dating relations. This however engenders risks of manipulation and coercion. A considerable number of students preferred dating older partners compared to younger partners or age mates. Dating an older boyfriend who was also financially resourced was prestigious among the female university students. This corroborates with Wilchins and Gilmer (2016, p. 11) who highlighted that women see attracting an older and more powerful man as an important proof of femininity. It is a general norm in Africa that a woman should be married to an older man. In such contexts intergenerational relationships and sex are considered normative (Shefer and Strebel 2012). Preference for older dating partners among female university students can be linked to traditional femininity norms in African contexts. This affirms the cultural conscription of sexuality as advanced by Foucault (1978).

6.1.4 Maintaining relationship 'status' to avoid ridicule

The findings of this study showed that some female students succumbed to coercive sexual behaviours perpetrated by their intimate partners to avoid social ridicule or ostracism on campus. Ruvimbo, one of the study participants, noted that she got back with her boyfriend who was sexually coercing her because she could not stand the embarrassment of seeing the boyfriend with another girlfriend. It was also revealed in the focus group discussions that most female students remained in abusive relationships because they feared being ditched. It was generally agreed that it was embarrassing for one's ex-boyfriend to date another female student especially when she is from the same class. This implies that some female students stay in relationships where they are sexually coerced to avoid embarrassment. These narratives reveal institutional influences on individual experiences of sexual coercion among female students. This can be explained by Foucault's (1984) observation on the impact of social norms on

sexuality. It can also be noted this form of institutional pressure restrained exercise of sexual agency among female students.

6.1.5 *Religion as a facilitator or buffer for sexual coercion*

The findings of this study showed that the impact of religion on experiences of sexual coercion was two-way. Religion was shown to have the effect of either increasing or decreasing vulnerability to sexual coercion. Participants in this study also associated commitment to particular religious groups with lower sexual assertiveness and vulnerability to sexual coercion. Female students who came from conservative and strict religious groups such as apostolic sects were reported to be more likely to adhere to traditional ideologies of femininity therefore more susceptible to sexual coercion. One respondent noted

There are certain religious values which limit self-esteem and personal freedom. Examples are those churches which emphasize long dresses, covering every part of the body etc..... This is not to say it is bad but at the end of the day you end up stuck to yourself and your communication with the opposite sex is quite limited. Even in intimate relationships, I believe your communication will be affected. – focus group discussant

This narrative brings out the finding that some religious values limit the exercise of sexual subjectivity, power and agency. Such values have a conservative construction of femininity which tends to limit individual and subjective expression of sexuality. This can show the social influence on the sexuality of female students and their experiences of sexual coercion. It was revealed that such religious doctrines contributed greatly to a lack of personal freedom and expression in the sexual realm. Low levels of assertiveness have been reported to increase vulnerability to sexual coercion. The less an individual is able to state what she wants, the more she is forced to go against her will. One respondent noted that “if you don’t state what you like or don’t like, people will do what they want with you”.

On the other hand the findings of this study also showed that religion played a significant role in influencing the exercise of sexual agency, subjectivity and power among female university students. The impact of religion on sexual agency was two-way. Drawing from the findings of this study, religion acted both as a buffer or facilitator of sexual coercion. One respondent noted

Most churches preach the gospel of no sex before marriage, and the gospel of marriage. This influences sexual behaviours among youths, though I can say,

approximately 5% follow these teachings (loud applause in the group). – focus group discussant

This narrative brings out another theme which emerged from the study findings. Some religious values were shown to reduce risks of sexual coercion. An example is the Christian value of sexual purity. This value was reported to discourage risky behaviours which are associated with sexual coercion. Behaviour such as premarital sexual activity and multiple sexual partners is censored in some Christian doctrines. A group of participants who conformed to Christian values gave this as the reason they did not engage in sexual activity. It can be noted that this to some extent curtailed their vulnerability to sexual coercion. Additionally, religion acted as an empowering tool for sexual subjectivity and power. It informed decisions which enabled female students to avoid premarital sex and sexual coercion. Sexual agency in this case, was the ability of female students to make important decisions about their lives. This is a less visible form of power which Koester (2015, p. 2) described as the supreme and most insidious exercise of power. These female students are empowered to shape their worlds and sense of self. However, this did not make them immune to sexual coercion as some perpetrators went against these values coercing these young women into sexual activity against their will.

6.1.6 Alcohol intoxication as a risk factor for sexual coercion

Alcohol intoxication was associated with increased risks of sexual coercion among female students. The findings of this study suggest that perpetrators of alcohol-facilitated sexual coercion preyed on female students who were drunk. It was revealed that house parties and bashes which were conducted at the university were associated with drink-spiking and sexual coercion. Ruvimbo, one of in-depth interviewees, noted that her boyfriend took advantage of the fact that she was drunk and incapacitated. Similarly, Anesu who experienced sexual coercion during a hook-up narrated that the partner sexually coerced her because he thought she was drunk. She noted that he attempted to have sexual intercourse with her because he thought she was incapacitated. The findings of this study therefore suggest that excessive alcohol consumption and drink spiking increased vulnerability to coerced sexual behaviours among female students. These findings are consistent with findings of studies by Abbey et al. 2001, Krebs et al. 2007, Choudhry et al. 2013, Lindo et al. 2016 and Mehra et al. (2016). These studies found that drug and alcohol consumption increased risks of sexual coercion among female university students.

6.1.6 *Being in the perpetrators' social space*

The findings of this study also suggest that being in the perpetrators' social space i.e. place of residence or car was a situational risk factor for sexual coercion among female university students. Farris et al. (2008) opined that men perceive a greater degree of sexual intent in women's behaviour. Abbey (2002, p. 122) concurred that, "men frequently perceive women's friendly behaviour as a sign of sexual interest even when it not intended that way". The agreeability of female university students to visit their perpetrators or be in secluded spaces with them increases risks of sexual coercion. Risk recognition ability is an important buffer for sexual coercion. Conversely, Gidycz et al. (2006, p. 442) asserted that delayed risk cognition puts young women at higher risk of sexual coercion. I put forward the argument that misperception of the interest of the female students for sexual interest by their perpetrators could be a possible risk factor for sexual coercion. This is drawn from the fact that they regarded the sexual contact from the partners as sexually coercive.

6.1.8 *Students' demographic characteristics*

Earlier studies on sexual coercion in IHE have found that the first years at university were most at risk in terms of experiencing sexual coercion (Clowes et al. 2009, Mezie-Okey and Alamina 2014, Brian et al. 2016). However, statistical results for this study found that age was not a significant factor for experiencing sexual coercion at the university. Statistical results for this study suggest that age of a female university student did not have significant influence on experiencing sexual coercion. This is because nearly all age categories had a relatively similar probability of experiencing sexual coercion at the university. The findings of this study therefore inferred that sexual coercion was experienced by any female student irrespective of their age. The findings of this study are consistent with findings of the study by Ferguson (1997) and Odu and Olusegun (2013) which explored determinants of sexual coercion at different universities. Both studies found no significant difference in the rate of sexual coercion experienced by female students of different ages.

The findings of this study also revealed that the marital status of a female university student did not influence her experience of sexual coercion at the university. The statistical results for study confirm that there was no significant association between marital status and the experience of sexual coercion. The findings of this study indicated that marital status appears to be independent of experiencing sexual coercion at the university. Though the statistical result showed that divorced/separated female students appeared to have a higher prevalence, the

inferred results using Fisher's Exact Test reveal no association between marital status and experiencing sexual harassment. These findings imply that any female student could experience sexual coercion regardless of their marital status. These findings are contrary to the findings of Osakinle (2003) which found association between the marital status of a female university student and the experience of sexual coercion. In this study unmarried female students were reported to be more vulnerable to sexual coercion compared to married female students. Osakinle (2003) attributed vulnerability of unmarried students to sexual coercion to the fact that males related more to unmarried female students compared to married students therefore predisposing them to more risk. However, the findings of this study are consistent with the findings of the study Odu and Olusegun (2012) which found no association between the marital status of a female university student and experience of sexual coercion. The findings of this study suggest that both married and unmarried female students had equal risks to sexual coercion at this university.

6.2 Enactments of sexual agency, subjectivity and power within the context of coercive sexual practices

Tolman (2002, p. 5) asserted that "sexual subjectivity is intricately linked with power i.e. the power to appropriate sexuality, relational power and social power to challenge rigidly controlled norms". Furthermore Pande et al. (2009, p. 5) noted that agency is another key component of sexual subjectivity and power. Sexual subjectivity, agency and power are intricately linked therefore I analyse these concepts simultaneously. In this section, I juxtapose multiple domains of sexual subjectivity, agency and power exhibited by female university students. Beneath the female students' interpretations and reactions to sexual coercion were subtle reflections of agentic and subjective motivations of conformity and resistance to sexual norms and regulations. Though agency is commonly operationalised as decision-making, it takes different forms such as bargaining, negotiation, deception, subversion, resistance and intangible cognitive processes of reflection and analysis (Kabeer 1999). The findings of this study show that despite being positioned in a complex and constrained sexual milieu, some respondents demonstrated significant levels of agency and personal choice.

6.2.1 Sexual communication of expectations and desires

Sexual communication is another key aspect of sexual agency which that was demonstrated by the female university students. Byers and Demmons (1999, p. 180) defined sexual communication as "the extent of individuals' self-disclosure to a dating partner about their likes and dislikes with respect to specific sexual activities". Of the ten participants (n=10)

interviewed, seven (70%) revealed that they discussed sexual expectations and reservations with their partners. The focus group discussions also confirmed that a considerable number of female students were able to communicate sexual issues with their partners. The respondents noted that they discussed sexual boundaries and expectations with their intimate partners. The findings of this research however showed significant variation on the efficacy of sexual communication. Sexual communication to partners or individuals concerned did not always lead to the desired outcome thereby leading to coerced sexual activity.

Sexual communication among the study participants was determined by the nature and duration of the relationship. Most respondents reported that they discussed the extent to which sexual contact could go and what was acceptable in their dating relationships. This however was not the case with other participants who were coerced by friends or people who were asking to date them. In one of the focus group discussions, respondents noted that sexual communication in dating relationships were commonly referred to as “*bae goals*” around campus. Although this term is operationalised in different ways in literature and social media, the research findings suggest that “*bae goals*” encompassed relationship expectations, including sexual expectations. The study findings confirm that a majority of female university students feel some degree of freedom to discuss issues concerning their sexuality in dating relationships or with the opposite sex.

Traditional feminine sexual ideologies emphasise women’s compliance and agreeableness (Curtin et al. 2011, p. 49). Within traditional gender norms, an ideal woman is expected to shy away from sexual communication, expression and control (Pande et al. 2009, p. 3). This context tends to privilege male sexual assertiveness and emphasise sexual silence among women. The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that suggest changes in traditional sexual parameters. The narratives of this study revealed that a number of participants were able to communicate their sexual preferences to their dating partners. The more participants were sexually assertive, the more able they were to avoid being sexually coerced. Communicating about sex has been found to be critical in preventing sexually transmitted diseases and expressing sexual consent, desires and satisfaction (Faulkner and Lannutti 2010). Avoidance of discussions about sexuality leaves partners relying on interpretations of non-verbal communication and this usually leads to sexual coercion (Spengen 2013). Female university students therefore actively avoided possible incidences of sexual coercion by communicating their sexual expectations and desires. Drawing from the study findings, I put forward the

argument that some female university students are actively reproducing a culture of sexual communication in heterosexual relationships.

6.2.2 Sexual assertiveness

Sexual assertiveness is another important aspect of sexual agency that was demonstrated by the study participants. Curtin et al. (2011, p. 50) defined sexual assertiveness as the ability to refuse unwanted sex and to communicate with one's partner about what pleases one sexually. Averett et al. (2008, p. 332) also noted that sexual assertiveness can be expressed through having the confidence and freedom to not engage in certain sexual behaviours. The focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews revealed that some female university students refused to engage in sexual activity because it was not in their best interests. In one of the in-depth interviews, Runyararo noted that she did not engage in sexual activity with her boyfriend despite his continual pressures because she had vowed not to engage in sexual activity with someone she was not married to. She later ended the relationship with her boyfriend of three years because he was forcing her to have sexual intercourse. Other respondents noted

I decided to end my relationship with my boyfriend who is also a student here. The main reason for breaking up with him was because he was now demanding sex. I wasn't ready to engage in sexual activity so I had to end the relationship. The thing is, I didn't think I would marry him anyway. He is just a boyfriend at college. I thought in the event that I got pregnant, neither of us could take care of the baby. – Ratidzo, in-depth interviewee

I decided to end the relationship with my boyfriend the moment he started insisting on going all the way (having sex). Though we could kiss and cuddle I wasn't ready for sex. – Tambudzai, in-depth interviewee

The aforementioned narratives show that the decision for not engaging in sexual activity was not done without intention or consideration. Averett et al. (2008, p.332) stated that “sexual agency is found in the woman who reflects on a particular situation and decides to say no because agreeing to sex is not in her best interest, a true reflection of her desires or a pleasurable experience”. Using this observation, it can be noted that these respondents exercised sexual agency because they chose not to engage in sexual activity because it was against their personal interests. This group of participants framed their reasons for not engaging in sexual activity around issues to do with life choices, health and well-being. This is evidence of conscious deliberation and personal choice rather than acting on reflexive responses.

Some female students in this study were empowered to make decisions concerning their sexuality and were able to actively avoid coercion. This study also revealed that some female students presented a different set of power relations in heterosexual relationships. Some put forward the argument that at their level of education (tertiary education), an individual would have received considerable sensitisation and awareness of sexual rights. However, they did not disagree with the fact that there were some who were not assertive and confident enough to stand up to their male partners and therefore being susceptible to sexual coercion. The respondents who viewed themselves as empowered stated that

If you know who you are, then you won't let people boss you around. You will be able to say I do not want to do this or that. If someone touches me in an inappropriate way, I will tell them to stop outrightly. – focus group discussant

If my boyfriend is controlling, for example if is telling me who to talk to and who not to talk to I will tell him (arikuda kundibatirira- he is wants to take advantage of me) and that he can expect me to be talking to him alone – focus group discussant

The above narratives reveals that these female students perceived themselves as empowered young women. Their constructions of empowerment centred on their determination to take charge of their lives and ability to be assertive in intimate relationships. Drawing from the above narratives it can be noted that these female students exhibited sexual efficacy which is an important aspect of sexual agency. Sexual self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to engage in behaviours aimed at preventing unwanted sexual activity. These findings illustrate emerging youth femininities that are governing contours of heterosexual relationships. These traits of feminism are framed around a set of characteristics that included autonomy, independence, control and assertiveness. These sets of characteristics are contrary to traditional gender scripts which emphasise female sexual passivity and subordination. These female students are shown to be actively renegotiating traditional feminine roles of sexual submissiveness.

6.2.3 Ending relationships with perpetrators of sexual coercion

The decision by some female students to end relationships with partners who were coercing them was an indication of sexual agency and power. This is because victims of sexual coercion face multiple challenges during the process of leaving their abusive relationships. In an empirical review of the process of leaving, Anderson and Saunders (2003, p. 164) noted that

many survivors may leave an abusive relationship and return many times. This observation demonstrates how difficult it is to leave an abusive partner. The most common hindrances noted by the study participants were the fear of being alone, fear of losing social support from the partner and fear of failing a course or industrial attachment. Some of the reasons mentioned by the respondents were

I couldn't stand the embarrassment of him dating another girl in our class
– Rumbidzai (in-depth interviewee)

I was lonely so I just got back with him... – Ruvimbo (in-depth interviewee)

Female students who date blessers will make sure they please their partners because failure to do so will result in them losing the luxurious lifestyles sustained by these men. – focus group discussant

We have heard of students who have a failed course because they refused to date a lecturer or ended a relationship with the lecturer. – focus group discussant

Out of the ten female students I interviewed in the one-on-one interviews, eight revealed that they ended their relationships with the individuals who sexually coerced them. The decision by these female students to end relationships with partners who were coercing them was an indication of sexual agency and power. This I argue was an agentic life choice to avoid further sexual coercion. Some respondent from the focus group discussions also noted

It can either be my way or no way. If my partner forces me to do things I don't want, I would rather leave them, I can always get another boyfriend. – focus group discussant

Though my partner tried to work things out, I decided to end the relationship because I realized that he was very abusive and was taking advantage of me because I was younger than him. – Fadzai

6.2.4 Verbal and physical resistance to sexual coercion

Female students in this study sample agreed to the fact that sexual coercion was facilitated by differences in physical strength between the sexes. They argued that this was in favour of the males because most partners took advantage of their physical power over females.

These guys know that they have more physical strength so they have a tendency of using this when you are fooling around. This is a form of sexual coercion we tend to ignore. – focus group discussant

We were involved in a struggle after he started forcing himself on me. I fought back until he stopped. This occurred while we were fooling around in his room. – Rufaro (in-depth interviewee)

Despite being subjected to overt and subtle forms of physical sexual coercion, there are a number of female students who reported that they exerted some form of physical resistance. Acts of physical resistance enacted by the study participants included slapping, pushing and fighting the perpetrators. Similar findings were reported in a study by Fisher et al. (2000) among college and university female students in the United States. The female victims of sexual coercion used physical force as a protective action against their assailants. Of the victims of attempted rape, 70% used this response and ended their coercion. Similarly in the present study, all victims who physically resisted their assailants were able to avoid further coercion. Traditional codes of femininity emphasise deference to male authority and aggressiveness. I argue that these forms of physical resistance by this group of female students constitute significant levels of embodied resistance and power.

One of the respondents from the in-depth interviews related how she was able to talk down two different males who attempted to coerce her.

I had visited a guy who was asking me out. We were watching a cartoon movie and he started forcing himself on me. I managed to talk him down even though he had worn a condom to show how ready he was to sleep with me. I laughed at how he had gone to that extent, this pissed him off. (She was giggling as she was relating her experience). – Anesu

Anesu related how this was the second incident with the same person. During the first incident she revealed how the perpetrator had attempted to sleep with her when they had come back from a club.

I hooked up with this guy at a club in town. He is a student here but he is in level 4. He pulled me to his house because I was a bit drunk. He tried to have sex with me but I managed to push him off and continued to remove his hands off me. A

friend, I had gone with to the club followed me and helped me back to my room.

– Anesu

In another incident Anesu stated that

My classmate, a different guy, also came to my room in the guise that he wanted to collect some movies. He started making advances (fondling me and trying to kiss me), I shouted at him and told him to leave, which he did. I believe I am a victim of these incidents because guys have labelled me loose girl because I go to clubs and parties. – Anesu

Drawing from the narratives of this study, a number of female students used verbal resistance strategies to avoid or stop coercion. From the in-depth interviews there were some female students who managed to talk down their perpetrators and some shouted at them till they stopped the coercive behaviours. Anesu's narratives presented above provide empirical evidence of verbal resistance to sexual coercion. I put forward the argument that enactments of verbal resistance against perpetrators of sexual coercion are expressions of sexual power and agency among female students. This resistance also demonstrates resistance to hegemonic masculine sexuality.

6.2.5 Choice of dating partners

My analysis of the dating relationships female students were involved in provided insights on their exercise of sexual agency and subjectivity. Some study participants demonstrated sexual agency in their selection and choice of dating partners. Although constructions of best partner differed among individual students, findings of this study indicated that female students considered the ability of a partner to provide financial and material support, sexual and emotional satisfaction as important factors in their partner selection. Informants in the focus group discussions noted that

Dating a UBA 'kutoshinga'²¹ (there was a loud applause) – focus group discussant

Though some female students date lectures, these relationships are very risky and not so popular around campus. Very few people disclose these relationships. We get to hear about them from the lady's close friends. More often than not, these relationships are unconfirmed speculations. – focus group discussant

²¹ 'Kushinga' is a Shona word meaning 'endurance'.

These constructions reflected motivations to meet personal needs. The respondents from the focus group discussions revealed that dating male university students was not so popular among female university students. This however did not mean there were no female students who dated male university students. There was a loud applause and laughter in one of the focus group discussion when there was discussion on dating male university students. Male university students were commonly referred to as UBAs (University Bachelors Association) or Ben Tens. Similar findings were found in study by Denisuik (2005) where female students' preferred older males and those in a high socio-economic status so that they could thereby raise their own social status.

6.3 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter I discussed gendered power dynamics that were embedded in female students' intimate relationships and experiences of sexual coercion. The power dynamics which characterised intimate relationships among female university students were influenced by the nature of the relationship i.e. whether it was 'transactional' or not, age difference between the female students and their partner and the extent to which female students resist or acquiesce to gendered norms of sexuality which emphasise deference to patriarchal power and control. It was revealed that traditional gendered norms of sexuality continue to govern sexual conduct of female students. Their constructions of normal and appropriate sexual conduct were rooted in traditional gender norms. Traits of sexual submissiveness, passivity and deference to patriarchal power and control exhibited by the female students justified traditional sexual scripting.

In this chapter I also discussed factors that influenced exercise of sexual agency power and subjectivity among female university students. Factors that hindered the sexual agency, subjectivity and power included fear of negative implications of relationship dissolution, gendered sexual norms and economic constraints. On the other hand, peers and Christian religion were identified as sources of agency and power. There was emphasis on the role played by Christian doctrine and peer advice in curtailing risk factors for sexual coercion.

The chapter also articulated ways in which female students exercised subversion and embodied resistance to traditional gendered norms of sexuality and patriarchal control of their sexuality. This was enacted through verbal and physical resistances to sexual coercion and adoption of practices which challenged traditional gendered norms of sexuality. This chapter demonstrates that though female university students were positioned in a context which restricted their

exercise of sexual agency, power and subjectivity, there was evidence of both embodied resistance²² and conformity to socially and culturally prescribed sexual norms and regulations. The findings presented in this chapter augment Foucault's account for both structures of power and domination and individual agency and subjectivity in the sexual realm. Drawing from the findings of this study, it is plausible to note that enactments of sexual agency, power and subjectivity by female university students challenge simplistic notions of docility and passivity in female sexuality discourse. In the following chapter I focus on the perceptions of safety and vulnerability among female university students and the subsequent implications on their gendered citizenship in the context of higher education.

²² Embodied resistance involves use of the body to convey a message that invents, contradicts, abrogates culturally prescribed codes (Pitts 1999, p. 71).

Chapter 7: Perceptions of Safety and Vulnerability among Female Students and Implications for Gendered Citizenship within University Spaces

7.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed the influence of gendered norms, sexual scripts and power dynamics on the sexuality of female university students and their experiences of sexual coercion. I brought to the fore ways in which female students acquiesce or resist these structures of social power in a bid to ascertain their exercise of sexual agency, power and subjectivity. In this chapter I offer a gendered analysis of campus safety issues that were of concern to female university students. Increasing reports of physical and sexual violence in institutions of higher education (IHE) have made campus safety issues a major concern among students and interested stakeholders i.e. the government, institutions, non-governmental organisations. Feminist geographers focus their attention on the mutually constitutive relationship between the human body and space. Their emphasis lies on how perceptions of fear influence embodied experiences in public and private spheres. Using feminist and post-structuralist analysis, I explore power dynamics embedded in female students' perceptions of safety and vulnerability to sexual coercion. Furthermore, I examine ways in which these perceptions influenced female students' embodied experiences of sexuality within the university context in a bid to ascertain their experience of sexual citizenship within these spaces.

Frazier and Falmagne (2014, p. 481) advanced that “much literature on violence prevention operates through popular constructions of women as frail, vulnerable and in need of protection”. These notions reflect discourse which equate femininity with passivity and vulnerability. Borrowing from the rhetoric of earlier feminist work, I interrogate popular discourse on the geography of fear which tends to regard young women as fearful and docile. To challenge these notions I go on to discuss varied strategies female university students employ to manage their perceptions of danger and vulnerability. This chapter advances the main argument of this thesis through framing the sexual agency, power and subjectivity of female university students in contexts of perceived risks and vulnerability. I emphasise that female students manage perceptions of fear and vulnerability and actively construct safety within the university context. This is followed by analysis of the role played by the university, government and non-governmental organisations to prevent and mitigate sexual coercion at the university.

7.1 Perceptions of safety among female students

Perceptions of safety and danger are subjective. They are products of social construction, collective agreement and communication. In this section I discuss female students' perceptions of vulnerability and safety. I describe ways in which these perceptions are socially constructed. Female participants in this study construed safety in terms of freedom from sexual violation. There was common agreement that one can be considered to be sexually safe when there are no possible risks of sexual victimisation. Results of this study indicate that a majority of female students did not regard the university community as a safe place with regard to experiencing sexual coercion. As shown by Figure 7.1, 56,8% of the participants reported not feeling safe and protected at the university. Of the study participants, 43,2% reported that they felt safe and protected at the university. Constructions of safety among female students were based on individual perceptions of safety within the university setting. Variation on the perceptions of safety among the study participants concurred with Simpson's (1996) view that perceptions of safety or danger are subjective.

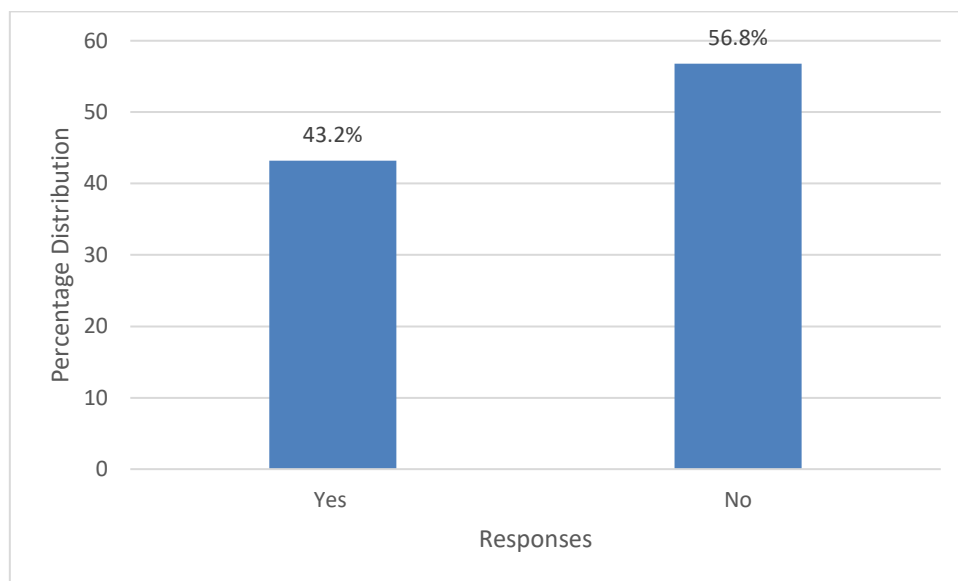


Figure 7.1 Percentage distribution of perceptions of sexual safety in relation to experiencing sexual coercion on campus

The findings of this study revealed that though some female students considered the university safe, there were concerns with the surrounding environment. A series of robberies and assaults reported in the area adjacent to the university campus increased safety concerns among female students. These findings are consistent with Oluwajan's (2017) observation that the surroundings of a college campus affect the degree of fright among students. In this study,

female study reported that the surroundings of the university were dangerous. One respondent from the survey research revealed that her acquaintance, who was also a student at the university, was robbed and assaulted i.e. her laptop and cell phone were stolen. A number of participants revealed that reports of stabbings were common in the area. These cases were confirmed by study participants from the focus group discussions. It is worth mentioning that after gathering this information, I became cautious of my own movements in the area. I remember walking briskly one afternoon when I realised I was alone in a long wide street. The area is a low density area so there are usually few pedestrians. I discussed much of these methodological challenges in Chapter 2.

The findings of this study also showed that the female students believed the university had to do more with regard to increasing security at the university. This was gathered from the survey question which asked whether female students felt the university had to do more to protect students from sexual coercion. As shown in Figure 7.2 a majority of the female students (77%, n =252) noted that the university had to make the university more safe for the female students. Only 23%, n= 75 female students felt the university was safe. These findings confirm that a majority of the female students at the university had concern for their safety on campus. These findings have implications for university security at this campus. The principle of loco parentis mandates the university to maintain a safe learning environment for students.

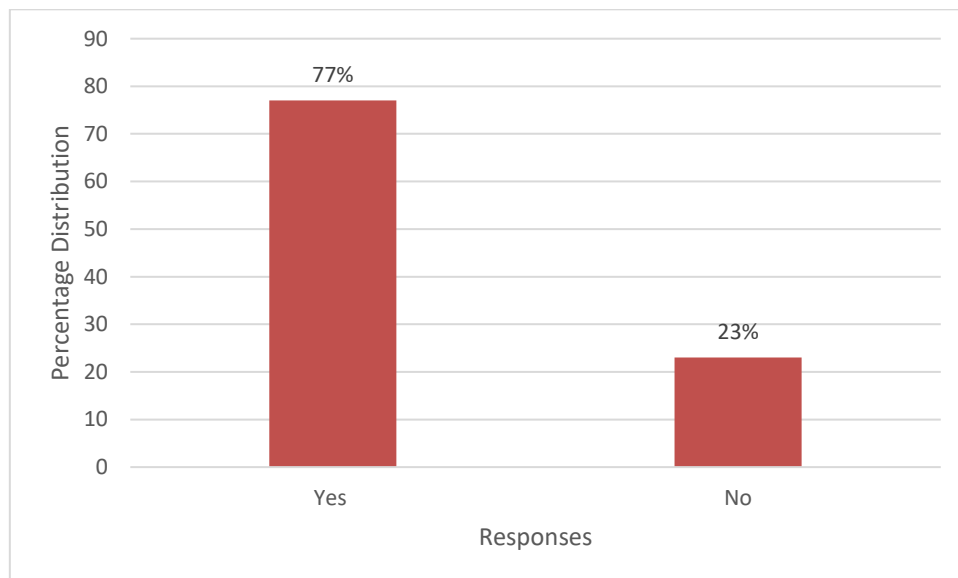


Figure 7.2 Perceptions on whether the university has to do more to protect students from sexual coercion

Some respondents in the study noted that;

There are so many reports of sexual harassment (sexual coercion) of female university students in the country and being a female student at a university obviously makes one vulnerable. – focus group discussant

Almost all organisations have cases of sexual coercion of some sort. Even here at university you can become a victim of sexual coercion. – focus group discussant

Drawing from the narratives of this study, it was revealed that perceptions of vulnerability to sexual coercion among female students emanated from reports of sexual coercion of female university students at the campus and in other universities in the country. This can be validated by the excerpts from focus group discussants cited above. The study participants revealed knowledge of the rampant nature of sexual coercion in IHE in the country. Furthermore, most study participants referred to lecturer-student sexual coercion. Reports on high prevalence of sexual coercion in IHE were shown to evoke high risk perceptions to sexual coercion among female students. These findings suggest that perceptions of vulnerability and safety among female students were discursively constituted. Fear and perceptions of vulnerability to sexual coercion emanated from media reports and social discussions among female students. According to Simpson (1996), beliefs about danger or safety do not often require empirical observation but can be formed through communication. “We share our fears through communication” (Simpson 1996, p. 552). The findings of this study authenticate social construction of fear among female university students.

Additionally, the findings of this study corroborate with Foucault’s ideas on the power of discourse and notions on self-disciplining. Foucault emphasised the constitutive role of discourse in society. According to Foucault (1978), discourse shapes our perceptions of the world and organises the way we behave. Discourse plays a key role in the construction of reality. The findings of this study suggest that discourse on sexual coercion of female students in IHE which was disseminated through media and social platforms framed embodied experience of sexuality among female students. Fear of sexual coercion which is propagated through media and social reports results in female students policing themselves and avoiding certain locations in the university context to avoid sexual coercion. These findings show that ‘female bodies’ are ‘sites’ that can be moulded and shaped by particular hegemonic discourses” (Naidu 2009, p. 128).

Respondents in this study revealed that

As a female student you end up avoiding certain places or functions at college because of fear of sexual coercion. We (female students) end up avoiding functions like bashes and parties because there are so many reports of spiking drinks. – focus group discussant

Some of the female students at this university are parallel students, so they attend classes at night. I think this increases their risks to be sexually coerced. – focus group discussant

Night lectures are quite scary, you can't even stay back to read after the lecture. Imagine being along in that huge chemistry department building. – focus group discussant

Drawing from the above narratives, it can be noted that the lives of female university students are restricted because of fear of sexual victimisation. Female students are hindered from participating in activities that they could have otherwise engaged in if they had no fears of sexual coercion. These study findings are consistent with the 'chilly campus hypothesis' alluded to in earlier studies (Ruth 2000, Onsongo 2006, Muasya 2014). This hypothesis describes a context of intersectional structural exclusions experienced by women in organisations and institutions. Structural exclusions experienced by female university students as a result of fear reproduce gender inequalities in society. In an excerpt cited by Mirsky (2003, p. 6), an undergraduate university student in Sri Lanka stated that,

Due to the shocking experiences I underwent, I was not able to participate in any social activities in the university... I was afraid to join any student organisations... I associated with a few selected students. Female undergraduate, Sri Lanka, Mirsky (2003, p. 6)

The students' narrative summarises the negative implications of sexual coercion to the social well-being of university female students. It is evident that the victim experienced adjustment problems and is not socially integrated. As alluded to in the excerpt for this study, female students reported avoiding certain locations on campus and didn't attend social and academic gatherings because of fear of sexual coercion. These findings suggest that fear of sexual coercion can hinder female students from succeeding in their studies. They are hindered from taking advantage of educational opportunities which allow them to progress in life. Bennet (2002, p. 4) concurred that " the existence of any form of sexual violence on campus creates a

climate in which women routinely have to fight harder for their right to the diplomas, degrees, and job opportunities that offer them the change of a professional future. At the same time, the prevalence of sexually abusive behaviour may deepen the divide between men and women on campus”.

These findings show the extent to which female students’ sexual citizenship is restricted in university contexts. Participation is a fundamental to the exercise of sexual citizenship. The aforementioned exclusions experienced by female university students relative to their male counterparts deny them exercise of full citizenship. This state of affairs replicates Acker’s (2006) concept of inequality regimes. Inequality regimes are processes, actions and realities that result in and maintain gender inequalities in organisations (ibid.). These findings have implications for university policy and planning. This is because failure to address these unequal regimes may serve to reinforce gender inequalities through preservation of privileged status of men within these spaces (Jacobsen 2009, p. 3). Bennet (2002, p. 4) concurred that “the existence of any form of sexual violence on campus creates a climate in which women routinely have to fight harder for their right to the diplomas, degrees, and job opportunities that offer them the change of a professional future”. Prevalence of sexual coercion in IHE widens the gender divide at the university and reproduces gender inequality in wider society.

Furthermore, the study revealed gendered spatial politics in IHE. Lico (2001, p. 30) asserted that “space is an instrument of thought and action which enacts the struggle over power between genders”. Hille (1999, p 112) concurred that individual use of space therefore depends not on individual free choice but is a product of social power relations. The findings of this study suggest that female students tend to adjust their movements and lives in order to deal with perceived risks of sexual coercion. The aforementioned spatial constraints experienced by female students are intertwined with gendered power relations. Feminists argue that there are underlying power relations in fear and perceptions of vulnerability among women. Using feminist lens, it can be argued that structural constraints experienced by female students in IHE because of anxiety of sexual coercion operate as a social control mechanism IHE. These gendered structural constrains can be viewed as a way to maintain masculine hegemony within university spaces. Hille (1999, p. 112) affirmed that “living in a spatially restricted life because of fear constantly reminds women of their relatively powerless positions. It reminds them that they are not supposed to be in certain spaces.” Perceptions of fear and vulnerability can therefore be seen as a mechanism existing within gendered power relations to maintain

women's vulnerability and men's domination in IHE. One of the focus group discussants from this study noted that,

Women are already at a vulnerable position because of their weaker physic. Men are stronger than us so it is quite difficult to physically resist coercion. – focus group discussant

The findings of this study reveal that perceptions of safety and vulnerability among female students are a gendered phenomenon. Lane (2013, p. 55) concurred that “gender is the most consistent predictor of fear of crime, regardless of time, place, social class, race or ethnicity, women are more afraid of becoming a crime victim than men are, and they are more fearful for others as well”. Female students in this study confirmed this observation when they noted that being a woman positioned one at a higher risk of sexual coercion. Fear of sexual coercion revealed in the female students' narratives are consistent with conventional gendered fear of sexual harassment. They display the double standard that men are stronger and women are the weaker sex. These traditional gender beliefs influence high levels of perceived risk to sexual coercion considering the fact that most IHE are co-educational institutions. These perceptions are in line with feminist ideas on the gendered nature of sexual coercion i.e. that women are coerced because of their gender. These findings of this study authenticate social construction of perceptions of safety and vulnerability among female university students. Drawing from the narratives above, it can be noted that female students' perceptions of vulnerability and risk are rooted in traditional gender role norms.

The fact that I am a female university student makes me vulnerable. There is a general belief that female university students are after material things so they can do anything to obtain fancy things. – Tarisai in-depth interviewee

Tarisai's narrative alludes to societal perceptions on the sexuality of female university students. It reveals that there are general stereotypical myths about female university students as sexually available. Some of the myths were that female university students commonly enter into relationships for consumerist reasons and can do anything to get consumerist goods. This social categorisation and stereotyping directs us to sexual politics underlying this process. Sexual stereotyping of female sexuality inevitably goes hand in hand with gender stereotyping in patriarchal societies (vanNierkerk 2000). In Africa, as is in most patriarchal contexts, women's images are constructed through male eyes (ibid.). According to feminist analysis, these

stereotypes are patriarchal means of policing female sexuality and maintaining masculine hegemony over female sexuality.

The findings of this study suggest that social categorisation and stereotyping of female university students as sexually available influences their risk and vulnerability to sexual coercion. This is because of the tendency of men to think of all university female students in terms of their social membership rather than as unique sexual beings. Tarisai narrated that the perpetrator of the sexual coercion she experienced continuously persuaded her to enter into a sexual relationship with her. She revealed that the man was a distant relative she had met at a family gathering at her rural home. She noted that the man was married and was rich. Tarisai revealed experiencing sexual persuasion and persistence from this man. She also noted that he promised to take good care of her and that she would not have any problems at university. She revealed that the perpetrator thought she would be lured by the lavish things he was promising. The findings of this study therefore suggest that social categorisation and stereotyping of female university students increased risks of sexual coercion and perceptions of risk among female university students.

There is a Shona proverb, “Chakatanga ndochakachenjedza” which translates to the common adage, “experience is the best teacher”. The findings of this study affirm this old adage. The findings of this study show that previous experience of sexual coercion influenced concerns for risk and safety among female university students. Female students who had been victims of sexual coercion demonstrated high risk perceptions to sexual coercion. Most of them noted that after their experiences of sexual coercion they became very cautious to avoid further victimisation. One respondent noted that her experience of sexual coercion made her realise that anyone can be a victim of sexual coercion from anyone else at any given time. These findings are consistent with the findings of studies by Bryant (2001) and Brown et al. (2005). In Bryant’s (2001) study, a history of sexual coercion predicted female university students feeling more vulnerable to future sexual coercion. Similarly, in a later study Brown et al. (2005) found that female students who had a history of sexual coercion perceived themselves more vulnerable to future sexual victimisation. The findings of this study therefore suggest that previous experiences of sexual coercion increased perceptions of risk among female university students. High risk perceptions to sexual coercion among female students who had been coerced were heightened by their previous experiences.

The findings of this study suggest that poor lighting in the area surrounding the university campus influenced female students' perceptions of safety. Conversely, proper and effective lighting increased their sense of safety. A majority of the participants in this study reported feeling a sense of fear and vulnerability to victimisation during the night. They noted that poor street lighting in the area surrounding the campus where they rented contributed to their perceptions of danger. It was revealed that parallel female students who attended lectures at night were at much risk. Respondents who were parallel students also revealed high levels of risk perceptions to sexual coercion as compared to conventional students who attended lectures during the day. These findings are consistent with earlier studies on the effects of lighting on university students perceptions of safety (Kirk 1988, Nair et al., 1997). In these studies, university students reported being more afraid at night mainly because of poor street lighting. The findings of this study therefore suggest that enough lighting can minimise fears and increase perceptions of safety among female students.

I feel that using the same hostels and bathrooms with male students increases our risk of sexual coercion. You can't even go to the bathroom wearing a drying towel. I personally feel vulnerable, anything can happen to me!!! –

Focus group discussant

As shown from the above excerpt, living arrangements at some of the university halls of residence and boarding houses contributed to perceptions of danger among female students. Some participants revealed that sharing accommodation facilities with male students increased anxiety for potential victimisation. It was revealed that in one of the halls of residence, female and male students shared the same bathroom). Female students residing at mixed-sex halls of residence reported increased perception of risk and vulnerability due to sexual coercion. Additionally, female students who stayed at boarding houses where male visitors were not allowed reported concern with personal safety. However some participants opted for these houses because they afforded a chance to exercise personal freedom. Differences in perceptions of safety among female students who were residing at the same boarding houses confirm the subjectivity of perceptions of safety and vulnerability.

7.2 Self-protective strategies adopted by female university students to avoid sexual coercion

Though some female participants reported fear and concern for their safety within the university community, the findings of this study also revealed that some adopted self-protective

behaviours and strategies. Analysis of the study narratives revealed that some female students adopted precautionary measures to avoid sexual coercion or further victimisation. These strategies were also vital for managing perceptions of safety among female university students. I put forward the argument that adoption of self-protective strategies by female students to avoid sexual coercion and manage their perceptions of fear demonstrates significant levels of female agency and reflectivity. Though female students are positioned in fear-evoking situations, they are able to improvise and find ways to mitigate this fear. These findings corroborate Foucault's view that individuals can improvise and are inventive. Additionally, these findings challenge simplistic notions of docility, fearfulness and passivity in earlier discourse on university female student sexuality.

In terms of safety from sexual coercion I believe where you stay can make a significant contribution. For example here where we are staying, visitors, particularly male visitors are not allowed. We also have a stipulated time when the gate is closed. So you can find that most of us feel safe. However in some boarding houses it's freelance, you are allowed to stay with your boyfriend or visitor for as long as you want. Also at most boarding students stay alone because landlords do not stay at the houses and students are free to do what they want. But I think this also increases risks of sexual coercion. – focus group discussant

So far we can say we safe! (This was a chorus response from a number of participants in this focus group discussion.)

As shown by the narrative above, some female students were able to make active choices to safeguard their personal safety. This also influenced their perceptions of risk and vulnerability. The choice of accommodation facilities made by some female students displayed conscious attempts to avoid risks of sexual victimisation. Risk recognition and the ability to implement measures to ensure safety by these female students demonstrates significant levels of agency and calculability. Participants in the above excerpt highlighted that they choose to stay at boarding houses which didn't allow in-house visits from the opposite sex. Their reasons centred on avoiding sexual victimisation from male students. This also had an impact on their perceptions of risks in the university community. This group of female students reported low levels of perceived risks to sexual coercion. As shown in the last excerpt, there was collective agreement on their perceptions of safety.

Some female participants in this study used avoidance as a strategy to minimise risks of sexual coercion. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, some female students avoided attending house parties. These house parties were reported to involve excessive drinking and were commonly characterised with reports of violence and sexual coercion. Others revealed that they avoided moving around when it was dark. This was mainly because during the night there was more risk of sexual coercion. These findings are consistent with the findings which found that female students commonly avoided places that were associated with high risks of coercion. These are referred to as ‘red zones’ in literature. Some of the participants noted that

I avoid places where someone is likely to fondle me, places like secluded lecturer rooms or labs are quite dangerous. I prefer to hang around in places where there are people around because it is so unlikely for someone to fondle your butt when there are people around. – focus group discussant

During bashes or other social gatherings I make sure that I’m cautious of what I eat or drink because I can be drugged. This is common in most parties conducted here at college. – focus group discussant

When I feel that I don’t want to have sex with my boyfriend I propose that we meet in town or someplace where we won’t end up having sex. – in-depth interviewee

The findings of this study indicate that some female students were able to act autonomously by avoiding risky heterosexual relationships. These female students chose to avoid consumerist relationships such as ‘blesser’ relationships which were associated with coercive sexual practices. Earlier studies have noted high risk tendencies for risky behaviours among university students (Clowes et al. 2009, Fawole et al. 2011, Agardh et al. 2011, Heeren et al. 2015, Menon et al. 2016). In a study by Clowes et al. (2009), it was found that there was considerable pressure i.e. peer pressure, consumerist pressures for university students to enter into risky heterosexual relationships. Similar findings were found in a study by Masvawure (2009) at a Zimbabwean university. In the present study, respondents revealed that the pressure to pass drives some students to enter relationships with lecturers. Additionally, key informants for this study revealed that some students entered risky heterosexual relationships as a result of peer pressure. However, despite the aforementioned institutional and financial pressures to engage in transactional and intergenerational relationships in university, some female students avoided such relationships. In one of the focus group discussion a participant noted that

When you are in a relationship with a 'blesser', you don't just get expensive things for free, there will be need for you to return the favour one way or the other, and this usually leads to sexual coercion. So it is best to avoid dating blesser or married men. – focus group discussant

I think the best thing is to avoid dating married men because you risk contracting sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS. – focus group discussant

The findings of this study are in line Simon and Gagnon's (1984) ideas that despite societal influence on sexual practices, individuals can act autonomously. They opine that at the interpersonally level of sexual scripts, individuals have the capacity to evaluate potential actions and consequences before engaging in them. Deliberation on the negative implications of risky sexual relationships, in this case with blesser or lecturers, demonstrates significant levels of agency among female university students. Contemplation on their vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies exhibits risk cognition and calculability.

Female students become victims because they expose their bodies to their male housemates. Male lecturers complain that they are victimised by how some female students who dress provocatively. I believe they lack empowerment on how to control their sexuality. – key informant interviewee

Yes you might be feeling hot and wear clothes that make you feel comfortable but you can communicate a different language. When you dress provocatively touts usually jeer at you. Some touts even touch your buttocks when you are entering the commuter omnibus. Vanokuperekedza akakubata magaro vachiti sister garai apa (they assist you to embark on the commuter omnibus whilst holding your buttocks, saying sister you can sit here) (there was a loud applause among focus group discussants) but when you dress in modest way touts say motherz²³ garai apa (mother you can sit here). – focus group discussant

²³ "Motherz" is street talk that shows respect to a woman whereas sister is not taken in its literal sense to denote a sibling but refers to unmarried woman.

The findings of this study reveal that participants believed dressing was a contributing factor for sexual coercion. The key informant for this study noted that female students were vulnerable to sexual coercion because of the way they dressed. She revealed that most female students generally expose their bodies therefore increasing their vulnerability to unwanted sexual contact from the opposite sex. These findings are consistent with the findings of a UNDP and UNESCO (2010) report on gender-based violence (GBV) in three universities in Afghanistan. In one of the universities, 69% of the participants noted that what and how female university students wore had an input on GBV. Respondents in this study noted that they felt they had to dress modestly to avoid inviting GBV. In the current study there was common agreement among the participants that a woman's dressing could not justify perpetration of sexual coercion. They also reiterated the subjectivity of what constituted "modest" dressing.

Additionally, the above narrative alludes to objectification of female bodies through clothing. This is confirmed by the dichotomy between "motherz" and "sister" offered in the narratives. Modest dressing is associated with a motherly and respectable figure; conversely revealing clothing is associated with sexual availability. Kennedy (1993) defined provocative clothing as clothing that deviates from norms by alluding to a more charged context than the one in which it is worn. Analysis of these narratives demonstrates that 'provocative clothing' was dressing which deviated from norms of modesty. These norms of modesty are rooted in traditional gender norms. Ostracism of provocative dressing shows that wearing revealing clothing was behaviour that deviated from the margins of acceptable behaviour in the given social context. The findings of this study corroborate Foucault's views on the social conscription of human sexuality. Drawing from the above narrative it can be noted that female sexuality is sanctioned through policing of their clothing. In this study some participants noted that they made sure they dressed modestly to avoid being coerced. This is because they believed exposing sensitive body parts such as cleavage/ breasts, thighs by wearing short clothing or very tight clothes were risk factors for sexual coercion. I argue that these enactments demonstrate deference to policing of their sexuality through sanctions on their dressing.

"Provocative dressing" among female students is a deviation of gendered norms of sexual passivity expected of females. Using feminist analysis, jeering of female students who wear so called "provocative clothes" by touts, who are commonly males, is a form of social control over female sexuality. It can be inferred that jeering serves as a sanction to reprimand female students to conform to expected gender norms. It is a form of patriarchal control of the sexuality

of female university students. Additionally, the decision to wear modest clothing as a self-protective strategy against both social ostracism and sexual coercion suggests significant levels of their sexual agency. This is because female students have to strike a balance between conforming to sexual norms and their individuality. Additionally, wearing modest clothing as a precautionary measure against sexual coercion and social ostracism comes at a cost of exercising full citizenship in university contexts. Awasthi (2017, p. 2) stated that, “clothing reflects self, the identity and material practice we engage with in daily life”. The fact that female students have to alter their social lives so that they don’t experience sexual coercion or social ostracism curtails their exercise of full citizenship in the context of IHE.

Another self-protective measure adopted by some female students in this study was to end relationships with partners who were sexually coercing them. Some female students noted that,

I think it’s best to end a relationship with a guy who continues to give you pressure to have sex because in the end they will coerce you– focus group discussant

I ended the relationship because my boyfriend continued to pressurise me to have sex with him. I decided to end the relationship because we always quarrelled about the issues to an extent that the relationship wasn’t enjoyable anymore. – Ratidzo, in-depth interviewee

Ratidzo reported that she had experienced physical sexual coercion from her boyfriend who would cuddle her and kiss her without her willingness. She reported succumbing to these sexual tactics because she felt pressured by the fact that they were in a romantic relationship. She later ended the relationship as alluded to in the excerpt

The above narratives shows that some female students decided to end relationships with partners who were coercing them as way to avoid further coercion. A number of participants revealed that they ended relationships with partners who subjected them to sexual persuasion or sexual persistence because they believed it would lead to sexual coercion in the future. This group of students displayed risk recognition which was pertinent for their avoidance of future sexual coercion. Some female students in this study revealed that they were autonomous and self-governing in their dating relationships. They noted that in this way they were less likely to be coerced by their intimate partners. Some of the participants revealed that they were ready

to end a relationship whenever they felt they were being taken advantage of i.e. being sexual coerced. One of the respondents noted that

If it was me, I tell my boyfriend dude, you hold me this way, and if not, GO!!!!!!! (She said this laughing). – focus group discussant

The narrative reveals an exercise of sexual autonomy and freedom among some of the study participants. The fact that these participants reveal their readiness to leave the relationships as soon as they feel their needs are not being met justifies Beck's (1992) analogy on the fragility of relationships in modern society. Some intimacy theorists have discussed disadvantages of individualisation and democratisation of intimate relationships. They argue that individualisation and intimacy drives people apart (Gillies 2003, p. 11).

Here at college guys say if you do not send me nude pics (pictures) you don't love me. But I think when a guy continues to give you pressure to do things you don't want its best to end the relationship. We are seeing a lot of nude pics of female students we know. Their pics (pictures) are sent by boyfriends they would have broken up with. This affects most female students because some end up missing classes because of the embarrassment. – focus group discussant

The above narrative also alluded to a type of sexually coercive tactic female students were subject to. It is revealed that female students were subjected to cyber sexual coercion whereby male students would circulate nude pictures after dissolution of relationships. This is also confirmed by the narrative provided by Ruvimbo who noted that she was afraid that her boyfriend who was also a student at the university might have taken nude pictures of her whilst she was incapacitated by alcohol. These findings can show that this sexually coercive tactic was common among male students at this university.

7.3 Multi- level approaches to prevent and respond to sexual coercion of university students

In this section I juxtapose collaborative measures taken at institutional, governmental and non-governmental level to address sexual coercion at the university. I specifically examine their role in the prevention and management of sexual coercion. Because sexual coercion is caused by multiple risk factors it requires a broad based multi-system response from a wide array of individuals, groups and agencies (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention 2004, p. 11). The

need for prevention and management of sexual coercion in IHE is also apparent given its pervasiveness within these spaces (Anderson and Whiston 2005, p. 314). Primary prevention is a critical and necessary strategy to prevent re (victimisation) and ameliorating the adverse effects on the victims (DeGue et al. 2014, p. 347). The findings of this study show that prevention and management of sexual coercion at this institution was a result of collaborative action among the university, non-governmental and governmental agencies.

7.3.1 Initiatives to raise awareness and reduce incidents of sexual coercion on campus

The findings of this study revealed advocacy and educational initiatives which were implemented by the university and SAYWHAT. Both agencies implemented educational intervention measures in the form of campaigns, peer education workshops and health expos. These programmes were aimed at awareness-raising and conscientising students on prevention and management interventions for sexual coercion in the university setting. Building awareness on sexual coercion is crucial for empowering students and preventing its occurrence on university campuses. Earlier studies affirm the efficacy of educational prevention programming as a strategy for preventing and mitigating sexual coercion in educational institutions (Flores and Harlaub 1998, Brecklin and Forde 2001, Anderson and Whiston 2005, Senn et al. 2015). The study by Anderson and Whiston (2005) found that respondents who had participated in a sexual assault educational programme displayed greater factual knowledge on sexual assault and had changed attitudes towards rape. In a later study, Senn et al. (2015) also found that a sexual assault resistance programme decreased experience of sexual assault among first-year university women.

The university through the Student Affairs Department runs workshops with first-year students during orientation week. During these workshops first-year students are acquainted with university life. Additionally, they are sensitised on sexual and reproductive health including issues of sexual coercion. These sessions are pivotal for empowering students to be able to identify sexual coercion and intervention measures they can take as victims. These short one-session programmes conducted during induction of first-year students are common in most state universities in the country. However, it can be noted that these sessions are not adequate for behavioural change which is needed to prevent sexual coercion in IHE. This is against the background that some students come to university with the predispositions for sexually coercion perpetration and vulnerability. This demonstrates the need for IHE to invest more time in advocacy and training throughout the course of the academic period i.e. from first year to final year. This can potentially increase effectiveness of educational prevention initiatives

for sexual coercion in IHE. This was confirmed by one of the key informants as noted in the excerpt below. Drawing from the narrative, the respondent emphasised the need for ongoing campaigns to remind students of sexuality and reproductive health issues.

Awareness raising on sexual and reproductive health issues during orientation week has challenges. This is because most first-year students will be trying to adjust to the new environment. Some students come late for the workshops while some do not attend the workshops altogether. – SAYWHAT key informant

The university has however been making significant strides to increase awareness among students. It was noted that the university, through the Student Affairs Department conducts Health Expos with students and members of staff. During these workshops, the university invites relevant stakeholders such as health personnel, NGOs, the police and various departments to discuss sexuality and reproductive health issues. Each of the stakeholders showcases the services they offer. These Health Expos serve as an important strategy for awareness and empowerment on sexual coercion at the university and for capacity building among members of staff.

We are an evidence based organisation, so we work with the university clinic to decide and validate what needs to be done or talked about. We collect data from the clinic on a monthly basis. We then engage relevant departments and authorities on the basis of the information we would have gathered. We then hold workshops and campaigns that are in-line with the needs of the university. Our last campaign was on gender-based violence after realisation that most of the students who were coming to the clinic were victims of gender- based violence. – key informant interviewee

The above narrative reveals the role played by SAYWHAT in the prevention and management of sexual coercion at the university. Drawing from the above narrative, it can be observed that SAYWHAT adopts an evidence-based approach to addressing sexual coercion at the campus. The evidence-based approach adopted by the NGO guides implementation of effective and efficient preventive measures. This is because they provide timely and targeted prevention strategies which are informed by clinical evidence. These university-based assessments enables the NGO to ascertain the most prevalent and pressing forms of sexual coercion on campus thereby responding to the exact needs of the university students. Additionally, the evidence-

based intervention measure is cost effective as resources are directed to the pressing needs of the students.

NUST is among the few tertiary institutions that have implemented sexual harassment policies in the country.²⁴ According to a Female Students Network Trust (FSNT) baseline survey conducted by Munando (2015), four tertiary institutions had sexual harassment policies at the time of their study. These findings can be attributed to the relatively weak policy framework addressing sexual harassment in tertiary institutions in the country. In the Zimbabwean context, there is scant legislation that effectively addresses the problem of sexual harassment in TEIs (Munando 2015, Matsikidze 2017). This is unlike other governments such as the USA and South African government which have legislative instruments that mandate tertiary institutions to implement sexual harassment policies in IHE. It can be inferred that policy gaps in the country's legislative framework have contributed to disturbingly high prevalent rates of sexual harassment in IHE.²⁵ In an earlier study, Zindi (1994) found that tertiary institutions which had sexual harassment policies and ordinances had lower prevalent rates of sexual harassment compared to those that did not have sexual harassment policies. Construction and implementation of a sexual harassment policy at the present university can demonstrate its proactive role in the preventing sexual coercion and creating a safe institutional climate.

In line with the research question which sought to examine efforts made by different stakeholders to prevent and mitigate sexual coercion at the campus, I examined the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy at the university. Sound and proper implementation of sexual harassment policies in IHE can be a panacea to the problem of sexual coercion within these spaces. Most scholars agree that the presence of a sexual harassment policy does not guarantee its effectiveness. Joubert et al. (2011, n.p.) concurred that a “policy has to be effectively implemented in order to have value and to avoid becoming another well-formulated, impressive sounding document compiled by consultants and filed by the human resource department”. One of the key informants for this study noted that

The sexual harassment policy supports students when they are on campus. There is limited protection for students who are on attachment. This can be confirmed by increases in reports of cases of sexual harassment among

²⁴ A copy of the sexual harassment policy for the university is attached in the appendix section of this thesis.

²⁵ Conclusions of high prevalence rate of sexual harassment in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions were drawn from the reviewed literature wherein the FSNT baseline survey (2015) reported that 98% of the female students reported experiencing sexual harassment in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions (Munando 2015).

students who are on attachment. The clinic also reported high rates of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancies among this group of students.

- key informant interviewee

The findings of this study revealed some limitations to the implementation of the sexual harassment policy. Students on attachment were noted to have limited protection by the sexual harassment policy. This was also confirmed by another key informant of this study who noted that there was an increase in reports of sexual coercion among female students on attachment. It was also revealed that the clinic reported an increased rate of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancies among this group of students. These findings confirm the vulnerability of students to sexual coercion during attachment. These findings are consistent with the findings of a GIME (2014) study which revealed that university students from the department of journalism noted that they had been sexually harassed by their workmate and sources during internship (Morna et al 2014 p, 317). In this study most students who had experienced sexual coercion noted that they would not consider journalism as a career (ibid). The findings of this study therefore suggest the need to ensure that sexual harassment policies are implemented properly ensuring that every university student is protected.

7.3.2 Multi-level responses to sexual coercion at the university

The findings of this study show that provision of support services for student survivors of sexual coercion was a result of collaborative action among the government, the institution and SAYWHAT. These structures provided health, counselling and legal services to ameliorate effects of sexual coercion among the victims. The university and SAYWHAT played a key role in the provision of counselling services for survivors of sexual coercion on campus. These counsellors assisted in the provision of psycho-social support, decision-making and referral for legal or medical assistance. The university through the department of student affairs offers student counselling services to assist survivors of sexual coercion on campus. The student counselling services are manned by two professional counsellors who assist students to deal and cope with an array of social, psychological and health related issues. The counsellors are trained personnel who have expert knowledge on dealing with survivors of sexual coercion. The efficacy of counselling services for mitigating sexual coercion are determined by the type of implementers (DeGue et al. 2014). The fact that the university has competent and trained staff is commendable. This increases the potential for effective connection and support for survivors of sexual coercion at the university.

The findings of this study revealed low-utilisation of university counselling services by survivors of sexual coercion at the campus. As illustrated in Figure 7.3, 8, 9% (n= 8) of the study participants utilised university counsellors. This a relatively low figure compared to the 62.2% (n =56) who utilised friends as confidants of their experiences of sexual coercion. These findings are consistent with findings of earlier researches which found that survivors of sexual coercion commonly utilize informal structures of reporting (Zindi 1994, Erulkar 2004, Gordon and Collins 2013, Tlou 2014). These findings were also authenticated by the narratives provided by the university counsellors. Both counsellors noted that few students used the university counselling services. They noted that the services were inaccessible to a majority of the university students.

Some of the respondents in the study noted

I can't just tell anyone. I didn't even tell my mother because she would be stressed that I encounter such situations at school, so the best person was my friend. – in-depth interviewee

There are some female students who are so dependent on their friends to an extent that these friends determine what is acceptable in their relationships. – in-depth interviewee

Peers are key secondary socialising agents of sexual behaviour particularly during early adulthood. The findings of this study show that most female victims confide in their peers and room-mates. Of the ten case interviews I conducted, seven of the respondents told their friends about their experience of sexual coercion. The findings of this study suggest that friends were sources of sexual knowledge and the most reliable confidants of sexual experiences.

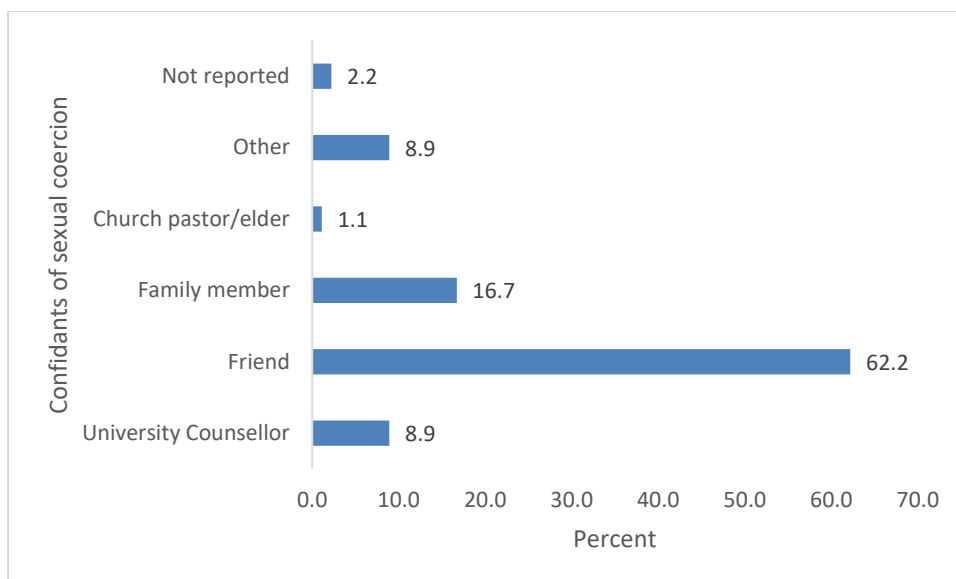


Figure 7.3 Frequency distribution of structures of reporting experiences of sexual coercion

Some respondents in this study noted

The problem we are currently facing is that the counselling services are located very far from the majority of the students. Most students don't even know that we are situated at the clinic. – key informant interviewee

I didn't use the university counselling services because I don't even know they exist. – in-depth interviewee

The university counselling services which are located at the clinic are far away from the clinic and have closing time. This is why we have already started on a project to develop a student friendly facility with the university which will be easily accessible to the students and run by other students. – key informant interviewee

The findings of this study reveal that visibility and accessibility challenges were a contributing factor for under-utilisation of university counselling services. This was drawn from the narratives of key informants of this study and female students as shown in the above excerpts. It was revealed that there were problems with accessing students counselling services at the university because of its location. Additionally some participants were not aware of the services. The findings of this study suggest that accessibility of students counselling services at the present university have to be improved in order for the students to benefit from the

services. Despite these findings, it should be noted that the university has also played a significant role in enhancing reporting and counselling services for sexual coercion at the campus. The university offers a service for reporting cases of sexual coercion online. A hotline for reporting cases was also created with the assistance of the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development. This ministry coordinates gender-based violence policies and programmes in the country. This assistance illustrates efforts made the government to address sexual coercion of in IHE.

As an organisation, we work with peer counsellors and peer educators in tertiary institutions. Here at NUST, we train peer educators and peer counsellors through referral from the Student Deans Office. Student victims of sexual coercion report cases of sexual coercion to these peer counsellors. These are lay counsellors so when they feel they cannot handle the case they refer to a professional counsellor. We are also in the process of implementing a new project with NUST starting from next semester. Actually the project is already running because we have trained a total of 25 peer educators so far. We avail these peer educators with information on gender-based violence and sexual harassment and refreshments to eat during the discussion. In this project each peer educator is expected to dialogue with a total of 10 students. So we are expecting 250 students to be reached out to through dialogue. –
key informant interviewee

The above narrative reveals the role played by SAYWHAT in providing counselling services for survivors of sexual coercion on campus. It also alludes to their role in primary prevention of sexual coercion through peer education. The approach of utilising peer counsellors and educators has been proven to be more successful and effective than traditional counselling sessions by professional counsellors (McMahon et al. 2015, p. 80). Peer educators have the advantage that they share the same background with their fellow students; as such there is bound to be more rapport between them and fellow students. Their similarity with fellow students also qualifies them as credible sources of information among other university students (McMahon et al. 2015). Similarly, DeGue et al. (2014) concurred that strategies that train and empower youth to serve as active bystanders utilise existing peer networks to diffuse positive social norms and messages about dating and sexual violence. The findings of this study show that peer education and counselling facilitate participatory and consultative methods of addressing sexual coercion at the campus. As shown in the excerpt above, university students

are actively engaged in discussions on gender-based violence and sexual harassment. These are effective because they capture the voice of students in the process and increase their involvement in curbing sexual coercion at the university.

The above excerpt also alludes to the coordinated referral system that existed between the university, SAYWHAT, the clinic and law enforcement agencies in the country i.e. the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP). According to a UNFPA report (2015, p.14), “clear referral procedures between services facilitate multi-sectoral response to gender-based violence (GBV) and better meet victim’s needs and wishes”. The university counsellors, who were key informants for this study, revealed that they worked closely with the clinic. Referrals were made between these two university structures to offer effective medical or psychosocial support to students who were victims of sexual coercion. The university also played a key role of offering health support services for student victims of sexual coercion at the university. The university clinic was manned by professional medical personnel, two nurses and a medical doctor who worked hand in hand with the university counsellors and SAYWHAT.

Additionally, the findings of this study confirmed a close link between SAYWHAT and the university clinic and professional counsellors in line with reporting of cases of sexual coercion. Referrals were also made to law enforcement structures. The university made students aware of ZRP hotline numbers and the university campus security contact details. Legal assistance was offered to survivors who consented to reporting cases of sexual coercion that required legal action. The university assisted students to report cases to the police and accompanied the student if criminal action followed. The findings of this study show that support services for sexual coercion at the university were delivered cooperatively within the different institutional structures. This ensured that survivors of sexual coercion at the university had access to the appropriate and most effective support services available.

*We have an arm called the Web for Life Team which specifically deals with female university students. This operates as a support group **where** female students come and discuss their experiences of sexual coercion. It is during these group discussions that some female students realise that they are being sexually abused.* – key informant interviewee

As shown from the above narrative, university female students also benefit from a support group which was created by SAYWHAT to address and mitigate sexual coercion among female university students. The key informant revealed that this project was specifically created for

female students following evidence that they were the common victims of sexual coercion in the university community. Through the Web for Life Team, the organisation brings female students together to learn about sexual coercion. They are also offered a platform to share their experiences of sexual coercion at the university. Drawing from the narrative provided by the key informant it can be noted that the Web for Life Team empowers female students to identify and actively respond against sexual coercion. The support group increases female students resilience against sexual coercion as they are experienced in different ways of avoiding and mitigating sexual coercion.

7.4 Summary of the chapter

This chapter discussed perceptions of safety and vulnerability among female university students. The chapter revealed that a large number of female university students felt vulnerable to sexual coercion within the university context. Perceptions of safety and vulnerability among female students were socially and discursively constituted. It was revealed that gendered beliefs on women's vulnerability, previous experiences of sexual coercion, media and social reports on sexual coercion in IHE, poor lighting in the surroundings of the university where a majority of the students stayed and a series of crimes that were reported in the area had significant influence on perceptions of vulnerability among female students. Using feminist and poststructuralist rhetoric, I argue that discursively and socially conscripted perceptions of vulnerability among female university students are a form of patriarchal control which serves to reproduce male domination within university spaces.

Additionally, the findings of this study confirm the gendered nature of the university context and built environment space. The gendering of the university context had effects on the embodied experiences of female students which in turn affected their right to access academic recourses, learn without fear and exercise full citizenship within the university context. Gendered expressions of appropriate dressing and the structural restrictions of female students from utilising university spaces at night or attending social gatherings that had greater risks of coercion confirm the gendering of the university context. The findings of this study show that perceived risks of sexual coercion among female students engendered structural exclusions from various opportunities at the university.

Although female students exhibited considerable fear of sexual coercion, there is emerging evidence which shows that some female students acted agentially by managing these perceptions and actively constructed safety. These findings were confirmed by their adoption

of self-protective strategies aimed at avoiding experiencing sexual coercion. It was revealed that some female students avoided mixed-sex boarding houses, getting involved in risky relationships i.e. blesser relationships or relationships with lecturers, avoided alcohol consumption to reduce their risks to sexual coercion. In this chapter, I put forward the argument that adoption of self-protective strategies by female university students are enactments of sexual agency and subjectivity thus augmenting the central argument of this thesis. The findings also challenge discourse such as “modernist citizenship discourse which positions and constructs women as subjects in citizenship projects and processes” (Oldfield 2009, p. 3) and presents women as fearful and docile.

Lastly, the chapter discussed collaborative roles played by the government, non-governmental organisation and the university to prevent sexual coercion and provide support services for survivors of sexual coercion at the university. Analysis of the intervention measures implemented by these stakeholders revealed their proactive role in the prevention and mitigation of sexual coercion at the campus. These stakeholders cooperatively implemented educational programmes as a prevention measure for sexual coercion on campus. These programmes included workshops and campaigns and peer education initiatives. These structures also played a key role in response and support for victims of sexual coercion at the university. They provided medical and legal assistance to survivors of sexual coercion and psychosocial support through counselling services. The multi-sectoral approach facilitated coordination among the three key stakeholders thereby increasing the effectiveness of the services which were provided. With regard to the limitations of the intervention strategies adopted by the three key stakeholders, the study found that there was need for the effective implementation of the sexual harassment policy at the university and governmental level. Key was the observation that students on attachment were not fully protected by the sexual harassment policy. The absence of an act of law or policy regulating the formulation and implementation of sexual harassment policies at governmental level was observed. These policy gaps can be attributable to the pervasiveness of sexual coercion at the university and in other IHE in the country. Additionally, the geographical location of the university counselling services was out of sight for the majority of the students which was a possible explanation for its underutilisation. The next chapter concludes the thesis. It presents the main conclusions of the study which emanated from the findings of the study. Suggestions for preventing and mitigating sexual coercion in IHE are provided by way of recommendations to interested stakeholders.

Chapter 8: Re (constructing) University Female Bodies as Sites for Embodied Agency, Power and Subjectivities

8.0 Introduction

This chapter is predicated upon radical feminist affirmation of female sexuality and power (Jewkes and Morrell 2012, Skafte and Silberschmidt 2014), I critically synthesise the key findings of the study focusing on the social construction of female students' interpretations and experiences of sexual coercion, how intimate practices among female students engendered vulnerability to coercive sexual practices and the ways in which female students reacted to sexual coercion, and how this impacted their sexual citizenship in the context of higher education. In this chapter I augment the argument that though female students in this study were positioned within a context of gendered asymmetries of power, they exhibit significant levels of 'constrained'²⁶ sexual agency, power and subjectivity. This central argument which I develop in the whole thesis is part of feminist critic and challenge of stereotypical representations of female sexuality.

One of the key positions on radical feminist theory is the "incitement and rejection of traditional gender norms and ways in which women are constructed in language, the media as well as in their personal lives" (Vukoicic 2017, p. 36). Drawing from enactments of embodied resistances and renegotiation of gendered control by female university students, I put forward the argument that notions of sexual passivity, docility and vulnerability are a simplistic representation of their sexuality. The chapter also provides recommendations for mitigating sexual coercion in institutions of higher education (IHE).

8.1 Summary of the main study findings

The overarching aim of this study was to understand gendered power dynamics embedded in experiences of sexual coercion among female university students. The study analysed influences of social and cultural structures of power on female students' perceptions and experiences of sexual coercion in the context of higher and tertiary education while refracting ways in which female students enact, resist or acquiesce to this power. The overall argument guiding the study was that female university students exercise sexual agency, power and

²⁶ I argue that enactments of agency, power and subjectivity among female students were "constrained" because some female students were able to navigate structural barriers that worked to instil acquiescence to sexual coercion and dominant norms.

subjectivity thereby challenging simplistic notions of sexual passivity, docility and vulnerability in earlier discourse. In the first section of the chapter I offer a critical analysis of the prevalence rate of sexual coercion among female students at the university and the female students' perceptions on sexual coercion. I draw ways in which structures of social power i.e. gendered norms on sexuality and masculine power governed and regulated female university students' experiences of sexual coercion. This affirms the social construction of their sexuality and experiences of sexual coercion. I go further to reiterate the subtle and overt enactments of resistance to structural domination of their sexuality.

8.1.1 Nature of sexual coercion at the university

The findings of this study reveal that female university students experience sexual coercion in Zimbabwean IHE. Female students at the present university reported experiencing multiple forms of sexually coercive tactics that were both physical and non-physical i.e. verbal, psychological. These findings are consistent with findings of earlier studies in the Zimbabwean context which show prevalence of sexual coercion of female students in tertiary institutions in the country (Tlou 2014, Shumba and Matina 2002, Katsande 2008, Muchena 2013, Munando 2015, Mapuranga et al. 2015). The findings of this study gathered from the survey research did not find statistical association between age, year of study, religion and marital status of student and experience of sexual coercion. Drawing from these findings the study revealed female students could become victims of sexual coercion regardless of their age, marital status, religion or year of study. The findings of this study justify the view put forward by feminists that gender oppression which manifests in multiple forms including sexual coercion is endemic to society. It can be identified in academic spaces which have been previously viewed as gender neutral contexts.

The prevalence rate of sexual coercion at the present university was relatively low (24%). Though the relatively low rate of sexual coercion is assuring since it depicts a low rate of perpetration at the university, a number of confounding factors could have contributed to this low percentage. The low rate of experiences of sexual coercion among the female students can be attributable to low reporting of sexual coercion in IHE. This position is drawn from the observation that a greater number of participants (57, 8%) assented to the high prevalence of sexual coercion at the university. This was also confirmed in focus group discussions and by the key informants for the study. A similar context was reported in the study by Zindi (1994) which revealed that only 499 (18%) of the 2756 students who participated in the study said

they had experienced sexual coercion. In his observation of the results, Zindi (1994, p. 185) stated that “what is particularly worrying though is the fact that 93% of the students said that they would not report sexual harassment to any authority for fear of victimisation or because they do not believe that the present structures are set to protect them”. The findings of the present study suggest that while sexual coercion was prevalent at the university, it is underreported. Drawing from the findings of the present study I argue that low reporting of sexual coercion continues to hinder accurate measurements of prevalence rates in IHE.

Female students in this study experienced multiple forms of sexually coercive tactics that were both verbal and physical in nature. Verbal forms of sexual coercion included continual arguments to engage in sexual activity, verbal manipulation and intimidation. Physical forms of sexual coercion included forcible kissing, hugging, petting and sexual intercourse. Emerging evidence from this study suggested that the nature of a sexual coercive tactics employed were determined by the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. Sexual coercive practices which included physical force were more common in casual relationships such as hook-ups or by acquaintances while verbal sexual coercion was more common in well established relationships i.e. dating relationships. The aforementioned coercive sexual practices experienced by female students had negative effects on their academic performance, health and social well-being. Female students who were victims of sexual coercion at the university reported experiencing concentration problems, depression and relationship strife and break-ups. Drawing from these findings, it can be noted that sexual coercion is actually an ongoing ‘epidemic’ that needs to be addressed for the sake of the health and well-being of female university students.

The study revealed that male students, intimate partners, lecturers and other staff members were the perpetrators of sexual coercion experienced by female students. Only one respondent reported being sexually coerced by another female student. The vulnerability of female students to sexual coercion perpetrated by males shows the gendered nature of sexual coercion in IHE. This corroborates with the feminist view that females are more vulnerable to sexual coercion compared to males. This state of affairs engenders feminisation of sexual coercion in IHE. It was further revealed that male students were the common perpetrators of sexual coercion at the university. Additionally, the study confirmed the study assumption that female students were victims of sexual coercion from their intimate partners. Of the 74 participants, 24% (18) who experienced sexual coercion were victimised by their intimate partners. Contrary to common

belief, most victims of sexual coercion know their perpetrators, who included intimate partners, relatives, authority figures, lecturers and acquaintances.

8.1.2 Socio-cultural influences on female students' perceptions and experiences of sexual coercion and their subsequent reactions.

The findings of this study confirmed the social construction of sexual coercion as espoused by social constructionist theorists such as Simon and Gagnon (1984) and feminist theorists. A myriad of factors were found to influence experiences of sexual coercion among female university students. This study identified alcohol abuse, financial dependence on intimate partners, stereotypical attitudes attached to female students, the need to pass and abuse of authority by lecturers as risk factors for sexual coercion among female university students. The social and cultural context in which female students were situated was shown to increase vulnerability to coercive sexual practices. The narratives of this study showed that acquiescence to gendered sexual norms of femininity by some female university students increased their vulnerability and acquiescence to coerced sexual practices perpetrated by their intimate partners. These findings corroborated the feminist view that sexual coercion is fostered by the gender system which is maintained by dominant norms. Other structural factors which engendered vulnerability to sexual coercion were economic, peer group and academic motivations to enter into "transactional relationships" that were associated with coercive sexual practices. The study revealed that some female students engaged in relationships which I conceptualised as "transactional" in nature for financial and social gains, to pass examinations and peer group appraisal. 'Blesser relationships' were the common type of transactional relationship reported in this study. These relationships replicate traditional transactional relationships and were characterised with coerced sexual activity. Female students who were in blesser relationships were reported to succumb to coercive behaviours from their partners to ensure that they continue to receive support from them.

Furthermore, the study revealed that stereotypical identities given to some female university students i.e. female students who drank alcohol or went to clubs and the female university students in the wider society increased their vulnerability to coerced sexual activity. Partying and alcohol consumption attracted perceptions of sexual availability thus exposing female students who drank alcohol or partied to risks of sexual coercion. Additionally, perceptions of female university students as consumerist and apt to enter transactional relationships for material gain exposed them to coercive sexual behaviours. It was noted that female students

were victims of sexual persistence from older men because of these preconceptions. Female students were also noted to be victims of quid pro quo sexual coercion. Male lecturers were reported to misuse their authority by demanding sexual favours from students with threats of failure.

Intimate practices adopted by female students in this study confirmed social and cultural scripting of their sexuality. The findings of the study showed that traditional gender role expectations structured the interactions of some female students with their intimate partners. Conformity to hegemonic cultural-level sexual scripts by female university students affirmed the social construction of human sexuality as espoused by Foucault (1978) and Simon and Gagnon (1984). The findings of this study revealed that female students acquiesced to global pop cultures and gendered norms of femininity. The findings of this study revealed that some female students continue to subscribe to traditional feminine sexual scripts. In this study some participants perceived traditional sexual scripts as the normative behaviour of behaving with the opposite sex. Findings from this study showed that some female students viewed certain behaviours as 'normal' or 'taboo' in intimate relationships. Their constructions of sexual normalcy were rooted in traditional hegemonic female sexual scripts. These findings corroborate the feminist view that male domination manifests in values that are subtle and "deeply embedded in the psyches of individuals" (Thompson 2001, p. 8).

Additionally, conformity to traditional norms of feminine sexual behaviour by some female university students was found to affect their exercise of sexual agency, power and subjectivity. Female students who exhibited traits of emphasised femininity displayed lower levels of sexual agency and subjectivity. These female students acquiesced to sexual coercion perpetrated by their male intimate partners owing to the fact that they viewed sexual coercion as a normal part of heterosexual relationships. Other factors that hindered exercise of sexual agency power and subjectivity among female university students were the fear of losing intimate partners, economic dependence on intimate partners and religious doctrines which emphasised submissiveness among female adherents. Female students were reported to yield to sexually coercive behaviours perpetrated by their intimate partners to avoid ridicule or embarrassment. The other reason was the fear of ending remittances that came from intimate partners particularly in transactional relationships. In addition, religious beliefs which emphasised female submissive were noted to affect sexual assertiveness and subjectivity among female university students therefore increasing risks of sexual coercion among the adherents.

Furthermore, Christian religion was also noted to act as a buffer for sexual coercion because it censures risky behaviours which are a risk factor for sexual coercion.

The findings of this study revealed that female students engaged in behaviours which demonstrated significant levels of sexual agency, power and subjectivity. It was found that female students exercised sexual agency in their choice of dating partners, choice of accommodation, sexual communication, and sexual assertiveness and through employing varied forms of embodied resistances to sexual coercion. With regard to the choice of dating partners, female students were reported to exercise conscious deliberation on the suitability of the partner. Partners were chosen on the basis of whether they were able to meet the social, emotional and economic needs of university life. The findings of this study showed that there was widespread preference for older dating partners among female students. UBAs i.e. male university students, were noted to be less attractive suitors because of their lower financial muscle. It is worth mentioning that constructions of suitable partners among female students hinged on their ability to provide material delicacies. This can demonstrate a high consumerist culture among female students in IHE. High levels of consumerist tendencies were also found in Masvawure's study (2010) at a Zimbabwean university titled "I just need to be flashy on campus".

Although the aforementioned study findings reveal subscription to traditional gendered norms of feminine sexuality in the repertoire of intimate practices among acquiescent female students, emerging findings of the study also revealed adoption of alternative intimate practices by some female university students. The findings of the study revealed that female university students adopted casual intimate practices such as hooking up and a liberal outlook to sexual activity in the context of their dating relationships. These practices which are components of global pop culture are antithetical to traditional gendered norms of sexuality in African contexts. Traditional norms of feminine sexuality dictate sexual passivity and conservativeness from women. Adoption of liberal intimate practices denotes a shift towards "detraditionalisation" and autonomy of female students in intimate relationships. Gross (2005, p 288) notes that the "detraditionalisation" thesis denotes the decline in the regulative traditions relating to intimacy. Proponents of "detraditionalisation" such as Beck (2002) and Beck, Giddens and Lash (1994) argued that traditional cultural practices are losing their legitimacy because of reflective agency in late modernity. Lived experiences of "detraditionalisation" of sexual practices among the female students in this study were enacted through engagement in hook- up and casual relationships, female alcohol consumption, sexual communication and verbal and physical

resistance to coercive sexual practices. These practices are commonly proscribed in African traditional culture which dictates female sexual passivity and conservatism. Additionally these findings demonstrate sexual subjectivity among female students thereby challenging notions of docility and passivity in earlier discourse.

Another demonstration of sexual agency and power among female students were enactments of embodied resistances to sexual coercion. Resistance strategies employed by female university students included verbal resistance and physical resistances to sexual coercion. Verbal resistance to sexual coercion included direct verbal resistances of refusal to enter into sexual activity. Participants reported directly saying “No” to unwanted sexual activity; others shouted at their perpetrators and were able to avoid being sexually coerced. Additionally, female participants in this study exhibited sexual agency and power through sexual communication. A number of participants revealed that they were able to avoid being sexually coerced by their intimate partners because they effectively communicate sexual boundaries with their partners. A number of students reported that failure to comply with these expectations would result in dissolution of the relationship. These findings demonstrate active resistance to traditional feminine norms which dictate female compliance and agreeableness to hegemonic masculine sexuality.

Additionally, some female students reported employing physical resistances to sexually coercive behaviours. Physical resistance to sexual coercion included slapping, pushing the perpetrators away while others reported engaging in physical struggle with their perpetrators until they stopped. Traditional codes of femininity emphasise deference to male authority. The findings of this study therefore showed active resistance of heteronormative codes of feminine behaviour by female university students. I argue that these forms of physical resistance by this group of female students constitute significant levels of embodied resistance and power thereby challenging earlier notions of sexual passivity and docility of female sexuality. The aforementioned enactments of resistance to sexual coercion confirm feminist and Foucault’s (1978) view that the body is a site of resistance and reflective agency.

The findings of this study revealed that a majority (56.8%) of female students felt vulnerable to sexual coercion in the university context. Perceptions of risks and vulnerability were influenced by poor lighting in the surrounding areas, a series of crimes in the area adjacent to the university where most students stayed, previous experiences of sexual coercion and reports on the prevalence of sexual coercion in institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, the study

revealed that perceptions of vulnerability among the female students were discursively constituted. Media reports and discussions on sexual coercion in IHE in the country evoked feelings vulnerability to sexual coercion among female students. The intersubjective nature of perceptions of safety and vulnerability among female students in this study confirm social constructionist views on the social construction of reality.

The study revealed that perceptions of risks impacted female students embodied experiences within the university context. Female students were reported to adopt self-protective strategies which were shown to curtail their effective utilisation of university resources and premises. Female students reported avoiding social and academic programmes which were associated with experiences of sexual coercion. Additionally, female students noted that they avoided moving around at night because of fear of victimisation. This however was detrimental to their exercise of the full citizen within the university space. This also had the possibility of affecting their academic performance because their use of academic resources is also hindered. These structural exclusions from participating in educational institutions continue to perpetuate gender inequalities and male dominance within IHE and in wider society. The findings of this study support the feminist claims that are structured on patriarchal principles that engender discrimination and exclusion of women in public spaces.

Although the adoption of self-protecting strategies by female students had negative implications on their sexual citizenship,²⁷ these enactments reflected significant levels of sexual agency and reflectivity. Self-protective strategies adopted by female students included the choice of accommodation services, avoidance of places and premises with increased risks of sexual coercion, avoidance of risky intimate relationships and risky behaviours such as high alcohol consumption and ending relationships with partners who were coercing them. With regard to the choice of accommodation, female students reported avoiding boarding house which predisposed them to risks of sexual coercion. Some female students reported avoiding mixed-sex accommodation services while others also noted that they avoid boarding houses which allowed inter-sex visits. The rationale behind these choices was the desire to avoid sexual victimisation from the opposite sex.

It was further revealed that some female students avoided places such as bashes, parties and going to study during the night to avoid being sexually coerced. Though this had implications

²⁷ Evans (2013) conceptualizes sexual citizenship as the varying degrees of access to a set of rights to sexual expression and consumption.

on their academic performance and overall well-being, it can be noted that these were agentic measures to actively avoid sexual coercion. Additionally, some female students noted that they avoided intimate relationships which increased risks of sexual coercion. Transactional relationships such as ‘blesser’ relationships and dating lecturers were noted as high risk relationships. These relationships were associated with coercive sexual practices and high risks to sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, study participants noted the risks of alcohol consumption as a contributing factor for sexual coercion. Some female students reported avoiding alcohol consumption because of its risks of reducing inhibitory control over sexual behaviour. Additionally, some female students noted that they ended relationships with partners who coerced them while others noted ending relationships with partners who exhibited tendencies for sexual coercion. One respondent revealed that she ended a relationship with a guy who kissed her forcibly noting that he had a high likelihood of coercing her in the future. Risk recognition ability by female university demonstrated exercise of sexual agency and active construction of safety.

The study identified collaborative roles played by the university, the government and non-governmental organisations to prevent and mitigate sexual coercion at the university. These structures were instrumental in the provision of educational programmes and services to ameliorate the effects of sexual coercion. With regards to sensitisation and empowerment on sexual coercion, it was revealed that the university and SAYWHAT, the non-governmental organisation operating at this university, conducted educational campaigns and workshops to sensitise the university community, particularly students on sexual coercion and the available services to utilise when one becomes a victim. It was observed that SAYWHAT played a key role on educating students through peer education and peer campaigns.

Another key role played by the university, the government and SAYWHAT was the provision of support services to mitigate the effects of sexual coercion on the victims. Among these services was the provision of counselling and legal advice to victims of sexual coercion at the university. The university employed two professional counsellors who dealt with multiple issues which included the provision of counselling and legal advice to students who were victims of sexual coercion. Furthermore, SAYWHAT also played a key role in the area of counselling through training and provision of peer counsellors. Peer counselling was observed to be an effective strategy due to the fact that it gave a voice to the students and was participatory thereby increasing its efficacy.

An additional key role played by the university, the government and SAYWHAT was the provision of a robust reporting system for sexual coercion at the university. The university through with the assistance of the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development set up a hotline number for reporting cases of sexual coercion at the university. These hotline numbers including those of the university security services can be found on the university website. An online facility to report cases of sexual coercion was also on the university website. Additionally, university peer counsellors could be used as a port of call by victims of sexual coercion at the university. The efficacy of these interventions lay in their accessibility and variance. The support lines were available all the time and students could utilise the services at their convenience. Additionally, the collaborative approach adopted by these key stakeholders enhanced the efficacy of their interventions because students could choose services well suited for them.

However, in spite of the roles played by these key stakeholders, some limitations to the efforts to prevent and address sexual coercion at the university were identified. Among these limitations was the inaccessibility of the university counselling services which affected its visibility to the student population. The findings of this study showed that a majority of the students were not aware of these support services. This was confirmed by key informants for the study. It was observed that the invisibility of these services rendered them absent. Furthermore the frequency of the educational programmes for sexual coercion particularly those spearheaded by the university were relatively low. The main education programme for sensitisation and empowerment on sexual coercion was conducted during the orientation week for first years. This finding implied that very little time was afforded for these programmes.

Another limitation to the effective implementation of interventions aimed at curbing sexual coercion at the university was the use of online platforms as key sources for disseminating information and support services for sexual coercion. Although this intervention was aimed at increasing accessibility of the information, its limitation lay in the fact that not all university students have laptops or easy access to the Internet. This factor curtails access to online-based interventions. The adoption of a multi-media strategy would be worthwhile. Additionally, the study revealed that there were limitations to in terms of the implementation of the sexual harassment policy at the university. It was noted that the sexual harassment policy offered less protection for students on attachment. Increased rates of STIs and cases of sexual coercion among this group can be attributable to this limitation.

8.2 Conclusion

This chapter summarises and concludes the thesis. Guided by the research questions of the study, I discussed the main conclusions drawn from the study findings. In conclusion, it can be noted that female students continue to be victims of sexual coercion in institutions of higher learning regardless of their demographic or student status. The nature of this coercion is gendered. Gendered norms of sexuality and hegemonic masculine sexuality were shown to govern interpretations and experiences of sexual coercion among female university students. The narratives provided in the study confirmed cultural-level sexual scripting of intimate practices among female students. Constructions of normal sexual conduct in heterosexual relationships by some of the study participants demonstrated adherence to traditional gender role scripting. Deference to traditional gender role scripts had negative implications on the exercise of sexual agency, power and subjectivity among this group of female students. Additionally, the study revealed patriarchal control of female university students in the form of embodied discourses and structural exclusions within the university context. This state of affairs engendered self-disciplining strategies among female students as a way to safeguard personal safety within a context of perceived risks and vulnerability. This posed significant barriers to their exercise of full citizenship within the university context.

However, despite the aforementioned social conscription of female student sexuality, the study showed that female students actively negotiated and enacted embodied resistances to gendered control and policing of their sexuality. This manifested in autonomous behaviour in heterosexual relations, adoption of alternative intimate practices which were contrary to the dictates of traditional gender norms of sexuality and agentic management of fear and active construction of safety. Though female students were positioned in contexts which restricted exercise of sexual agency, power and subjectivity, this did not negate improvisations and reflectivity in their conduct. The findings of this study challenge notions of docility, passivity and vulnerability of female university students and frames them as reflective and agentic beings.

Additionally the study identified the proactive and collaborative role played by the university, the government and SAYWHAT in the prevention and mitigation of sexual coercion at the university. However a few policy gaps which affected effective implementation of the intervention strategies were identified. The recommendations suggested in this study may have contributions to improvements in the delivery of prevention and support services for sexual

coercion among interested stakeholders at the present university and other institutions in the country.

8.3 Recommendations

Drawing from the findings of this study I put forward the following recommendations:

The findings of this study revealed that there were few educational programmes on sexual coercion at the university. It was noted that one key educational session on sexual coercion was offered to first-year students during their orientation week at the university. I am of the view that once-off educational sessions are not adequate for behavioural change which is needed to prevent and mitigate sexual coercion. This underscores the need for longer education programmes which are directed not only to the first-year students but to the whole study population and among staff members as well. Additionally, there is need for more educational programming for sexual coercion targeting male university students given they have been identified as the common perpetrators of sexual coercion at the university. The non-governmental organisation running at the university has a structure Web for Life which deals specifically with female students. I suggest that a similar measure be taken for male students as a measure to curtail perpetration of sexual coercion at the university.

The findings of this study revealed that there was underutilisation of the university counselling services by the majority of the female students. Though the university offered psycho-social support services for students, these services were not utilised by the students due its geographical location. It is imperative that the university increases the visibility of the university counselling services to ensure the effective use of the facility by the target population. This was drawn from the fact that the location of the facilities was out of sight for most students and its underutilisation can be attributable to this limitation.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that most students utilised accommodation services which were not provided by the university. These facilities had low security and increased the female students' perceptions of risk and vulnerability and exposure to risks of sexual and physical victimisation. The findings of this study revealed that these accommodation facilities were not safe i.e. there was poor street lighting, no security personnel because this was out of the bounds of the university and there were a series of reports of

robbery, assault and stabbings in the area. These findings underscore the need for the university to increase its capacity to provide student accommodation services.

The findings of this study also revealed that female university students continue to be victims of quid pro quo sexual coercion perpetrated by male lecturers. These findings underscore the need for the government to enact policies and laws which prohibit 'intimate relationships' between lecturers and university students as these have been found to be associated with sexually coercive practices. Additionally, there is a pressing need for the government to enact a policy which regulates the formulation and implementation of sexual harassment policies in the country. This will ensure that there are standard procedures for reporting and handling victims of sexual coercion in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions. There is also a need for increased involvement of more NGOs at the university to increase the effectiveness of civic participation in curbing sexual coercion of female students in the country. One NGO was operating during the time of the study.

The findings of this study have shown that female victims of sexual coercion at the university commonly utilise informal confidants such as friends and relatives. The effective training and utilisation of educators and peer counsellors is essential drawing from the fact that the findings of the study showed that a great proportion of female university students disclose their experiences of sexual coercion to friends. Additionally, the findings of the study have shown that sexual agency, subjectivity and power are important. The findings of this study have shown that sexual agency, power and subjectivity serve as important buffers for experiencing sexual coercion among female students in IHE. One can note that these attributes can be a panacea to sexual coercion of female students in IHE. It is therefore important to harness measures that seek to empower female students to capitalise on their sexual agency, power and subjectivity in order to avoid experiencing sexual coercion and to curtail its effects.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire for female university students



Dear Respondent,
PhD Research Project
Researcher: Tariro Mukwidigwi (+ 263 776 295 016)
Supervisor: Professor, M, Naidu (+27 71 681 9496)
Research Office: Ms. P Ximba (+27) 031-2603587

I Tariro Mukwidigwi am a PhD Student in the School of Social Sciences at the University of KwaZulu- Natal in South Africa. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: Gendered (a)symmetries: Probing experiences of sexual coercion among female students at a Zimbabwean University. You were selected as a possible participant because you are currently enrolled at an institution of higher education. Please read and understand this form carefully before agreeing to take part in this study.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequences. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this research project. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a respondent will be maintained by the School of Social Science, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, please contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

Your participation is extremely valuable because it will provide insight into an area that has been understudied. It should take you about an hour to an hour and a half to complete the interview. I hope you will take time to participate in the interview.

Signature of Participant

Date

Section A: Demographic data

1. Age
2. Programme of Study
3. Year of Study
4. Marital Status Married Not Married
Divorced/Separated
5. Religion Traditional Religion Christian Moslem
Other.....
6. Does sexual coercion of female students occur on campus?
Yes No Not sure
7. From the list below, choose one common perpetrator of sexual coercion on campus
Lecturers Male Students
Other female students Intimate Partners
Non- Academic Staff Other
8. Have you given in to fondling, kissing, or petting when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by a man's continual arguments and pressure?
Yes No
9. Have you had fondling, kissing, or petting when you didn't want to because a man used his position of authority (lecturer, member of staff, sports trainer etc.) to make you?
Yes No
10. Have you had fondling, kissing, or petting when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you? Yes No
11. Have you given in to sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by a man's continual arguments and pressure?
 Yes No
12. Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because a man used his position of authority to make you?
 Yes No
13. Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because a man gave you alcohol or drugs?
 Yes No

14. Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you?

Yes No

15. Have you had anal or oral intercourse or penetration when you didn't want to because a man threatened you or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you?

Yes No

16. If you have experienced any form of sexual coercion (you answered yes to any of question 8-15) who sexually coerced you?

Lecturer A member of staff
Male A female student
Intimate Partner Other

17. Who did you tell about the sexual coercion?

University counsellor Friend
Family Member Church elder/Pastor Other

18. Do you feel protected from sexual coercion on campus?

Yes No

19. Do you think the university has to do more to protect female students from sexual coercion

Yes No

Thank you for participating in this study.

If you have experienced any form of sexual coercion (**you answered yes to any of questions 8-15**) kindly leave your email or phone number in the section below for further discussion with the researcher.

.....

Or email the researcher:

tariemukwidgi@gmail.com/ Call or text 0776 295 016/ Whatsapp 0775486711

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for key informants

- Greetings and Introduction (general and positive)?
- inform the interviewee on the purpose of the study
- get their consent and inform them that they are free to leave the interview when they are no longer comfortable with the questions

Questions

1. May you comment the sexual coercion of female students on university campuses in Zimbabwe
2. May you give the possible causes for the sexual coercion of female students on campus
3. May you provide statistics of the female students who come and report experiences of sexual coercion to your department/non –governmental organisation (NGO)
4. May you give a comment on these statistics
5. What measures have you taken as a department/university /NGO to mitigate and curb the sexual coercion of female students on campus

Appendix 3: Interview Guide for female university students

- Greetings and Introduction (general and positive)?
- Inform the interviewee on the purpose of the study
- Get their consent and inform them that they are free to leave the interview when they are no longer comfortable with the questions

Questions

1. How do you understand sexual coercion
2. What form (s) of behaviour do you categorize as sexually coercive?
3. Can you comment on the university environment and how it may facilitate sexually coercive behaviour?
4. As a young woman, do you feel protected from sexual coercion around campus?
5. Do you feel the university has to do more to improve the sexual safety (researcher to explain what they refer as sexual safety) of female students. Any suggestions?
6. Have you experienced sexual coercion, where? Campus?
7. Can you describe the nature of your relationship with the person in question(the one who coerced you)
 - Their age, marital status, employment status, duration of relationship, are they an acquaintance, stranger etc.
8. Can you describe the nature of coercion you experienced- a brief account if possible
 1. The location, the people present, time etc.
9. How did you react to the sexual coercion?
10. If you asked the perpetrator to stop- did they stop when you asked them to
11. Can you give reasons for the action you took after sexual coercion?
12. How has this experience affected you?
13. Can you give possible reasons as to why you were sexually coerced
14. What strategies do you/have you implemented to avoid being sexual coerced by your person in question/partner?
15. Who did you tell about your experience? Why did you confide in this person
16. Did you use the university counselling service? If no, Why?

The following questions will be asked to female students who were coerced by intimate partners

17. Can you generally discuss the sexual decision making process in your relationship?
 - Who initiates sexual activity in your relationship etc.?

18. Who is in control of the sexual decisions, such as condom use, birth control etc.? Can you briefly explain the reason(s)
19. How do you manage/ negotiate sexual decisions in your relationship?
20. How frequent has your partner sexually coerced you?
21. How have you tried to solve this problem in your relationship?
22. Did you end the relationship after your partner coerced you? If the answer is no why?

Appendix 4: Guide for Focus Group Discussions

- Greetings and Introduction (general and positive)?
- Inform the interviewee on the purpose of the study
- Get their consent and inform them that they are free to leave the interview when they are no longer comfortable with the questions

Discussions will focus on the following themes

1. Perceptions on sexual coercion

- How do you understand sexual coercion?
- List examples of sexual coercive behaviour
- Who determines whether an act is sexually coercive or not?

2. Impact of culture on sexuality and experiences of sexual coercion in particular

- What social/societal pressures or expectations influence the way we interact with man(acquaintances/intimate partners) ?- our conduct, sexual behaviour, sexual relationships
- In what ways do cultural values and beliefs influence sexually coercive behaviour and our experience of it?
- researcher to probe and ascertain compliance and resistance to social and cultural norms

3. Sexual behaviour of female university students

- Discussion on the nature of relationships female students engage in on campus
- Probing sexual behaviour-what are the norms in terms of sexual relationships

4. Institutional environment and sexually coercive behaviour

- Discuss sexual safety on campus
- Comment on the physical environment and how it might influence sexual coercion
- Identify spaces where female are more vulnerable to sexual coercion

5. Preventative measures /strategies to avoid sexual coercion on campus and in intimate relationships

- What preventative measures/ strategies do you take to avoid sexual coercion on campus and in intimate relationships

6. Possible reasons for coercion with particular reference to intimate relationships

- What could be the possible for reason(s) sexual coercion?

7. Power relations with man in question (e.g. male students, intimate partners)

- Have you been able challenge sexual coercion? If yes How?
- Discussion on decision-making in intimate relationships- who has the control of sexual decisions in intimate relationships and why?
- Have you been able to empower yourselves to negotiate or sexual coercion(in intimate relationships)

Appendix 5: Informed Consent Form for Audio Recording

PhD Research Project

Researcher: Tariro Mukwidigwi (0776 295 016)

Supervisor: Professor M Naidu (+27 71 681 9496)

Research Office: Ms. P Ximba (+27) 031-2603587

This study will utilize audio recording as a data collection tool. However, audio recording will only be used upon your consent. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio recording or the transcript. The audio recordings will only be listened to and transcribed by the researcher and the research assistant. Audio taped material will be saved in a flash disc which will be protected by passwords and kept under lock and key. The material will be deleted permanently after five years.

By signing this form, I am allowing the researcher to audio tape me as part of this research. I have also understood and agree to the conditions of the audio recording.

I hereby confirm that I have read and understood the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix 6: Request letter for permission to conduct research at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST)

Tariro Mukwidigwi
School of Social Science
Howard College Campus
Mazisi Kunene Rd
Glenwood, Durban 404



Mr F. Mhlanga
National University of Science & Technology
PO Box AC 939
Ascot
Bulawayo
Zimbabwe

17 November 2016

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (NUST)

Dear Mr F Mhlanga

I am a Doctor of Philosophy student at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa. As part of my studies, I am conducting a research titled **Gendered (a)symmetries: Probing experiences of sexual coercion among female students at a Zimbabwean university**. The research has been necessitated by the observation that passive and active forms of sexual harassment of female university students are embedded and somewhat becoming normalised in university contexts. Some universities have adopted policies to fight this. However, while these efforts mainly deter manifest harassment, latent and passive harassment still continue. The problem is that these latent forms of harassment occur in a context of silenced sexualities thus leading to under-reporting and silencing of victims. There is thus a need to understand the social and cultural dynamics underlying this phenomenon. The study also aims to provide insights on female students' agency and possibilities for empowerment to resist and mitigate sexual harassment in university contexts.

I am writing to ask for permission if it would be possible to recruit my participants from your institution since it is one of the recognized higher education institutions in Zimbabwe. It is also the institution I am working as a Part-time Lecturer in the Social and Behavioural Sciences Department at the Medical School. The University of KwaZulu Natal requires written consent from your University (that is if you consent to my request) in order for them to issue an ethical clearance certificate for me to go ahead with the research.

I have prepared and attached a description of the study of what is involved in the study, together with the interview, survey and focus group questions. Ideally, I would like to commence my research as soon as the ethics certificate is out and my research will be held on your campus. To ensure that students are not disadvantaged in their studies, they will be asked to indicate a time they will be free to be interviewed on campus. Permission is also being sought to use the campus clinic councillor for those who will need to discuss their experiences with a professional.

I hope the project will take approximately 3 months to collect the data and will be done during term time. I would be collecting the data at sidewalks, sports grounds, cafes, residential halls and other areas where it might be necessary.

I hope that you find the attached project of interest and will be interested in working with me on it. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Alternatively, you may wish to contact my supervisor if you would like a reference or any other information,

Professor M Naidu on phone number: +27 71 681 9496 or e-mail: naiduu@ukzn.ac.zw

OR The School ethics committee on **The School Ethics Office,**

Phumelele Ximba,

Telephone, +27 (31) 260 3587

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide the National University of Science and Technology with a bound copy of the full research report. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

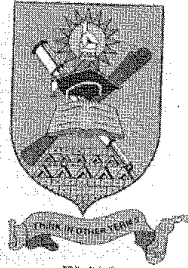
Yours faithfully

Tariro Mukwidigwi

UKZN PhD Candidate Email: tariemukwidigwi@gmail.com

Phone: 0776 295 016

Appendix 8: Ethical Clearance Letter



FM/sb

National University of Science and Technology

P. O. Box AC 939, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
Cnr. Gwanda Road/Cecil Avenue

Telephone: 263-9-282042/288413/39/58
Fax: 263-9-289057

From Registrar F. Mhlanga Dip Edu, BEd, MSc(UZ); MBA (NUST)

21 November 2016

Tariro Mukwidigwi
School of Social Science
Howard College Campus
Mazisi Kunene Road
Glenwood
Durban 404

Dear Mukwidigwi

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Reference is made to your letter dated 17 November, 2016 on the above request.

We would like to inform you that we have granted you permission to do your research study entitled "Gendered (a) symmetries: Probing experiences of sexual coercion among female students at a Zimbabwean university".

We note that you will be collecting data and would like to emphasize that all the information gathered should be for research purposes only and that confidentiality has to be exercised.

May we request for a copy of your findings when you have completed your study.

The University wishes you the best in your studies.

Yours sincerely


F Mhlanga
Registrar

cc Acting Vice-Chancellor
Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Chairman of the Research Board
Deputy Registrar, Academic
Deputy Registrar, Administration
Dean of Students
Director, Research and Innovation Office

