



## Sexual Orientation and Moral Value as a Determinant of Sexual Harassment among Athletes in South-South State Sports Councils in Nigeria

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### Abstract:

This study was designed to determine sexual orientation and moral value as a determinant of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south states sports council in Nigeria. Two specific objectives, two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprised of one thousand six hundred and forty seven (1,647) male athletes and one thousand two hundred and seventy four (1,274) female athletes. They give a total of two thousand, nine hundred and twenty one (2,921) sports athletes in South-South Sports Council which spread across the six states. The sample size

of the study consisted of three hundred and thirty six (336) male athletes and two hundred and sixty two (262) female athletes giving a total of (598) representing twenty percent (20%) of athletes from each of the state Sport Council. Instrument titled "Orientation and Moral Value as a Determinant of Sexual Harassment of Athletes Questionnaire (OMVDSHAQ)" was used for data collection. Instrument was trial tested on 20 athletes who were not part of the research sample. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Statistics and reliability co-efficient of 0.98 was obtained. The data was analysed using simple regression to answer the research questions while simple linear regression was used to test the hypotheses at .05 levels of significance. The finding of the study showed sexual orientations and moral values are determined by sexual harassments among athletes. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended among others that training on moral values should be organized for athletes from time to time in order to ensure high moral values, athletes should be encouraged to report cases of sexual harassment in the sport council and such report should be treated with all amount of seriousness.

**Keywords:** *Orientation, Moral Value, Determinant of Sexual Harassment.*

### Introduction

Sexual harassment is common social menace universally. It impacts on people negatively in several ways. As a result, no individual, group or

organization wants to be associated with the ugly monster sexual harassment. Precarious working conditions, hierarchical organizations, a normalization of gender-based violence, toxic



academic masculinities, a culture of silence and a lack of active leadership are all key features enabling sexual harassment (Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020). The phenomenon of sexual harassment is no longer new in south-south sports council and other institutions in Nigerian. It has become a common deviant practice in most of the sports organization including tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Suleiman, 2017). Sexual harassment is glorified in society with weak economy, poor educational systems, low levels of accountability, high level of poverty and gender inequality. It was further discovered that sexual harassment is more prevalent in a place where favouritism instead of meritocracy is the order of the day (Beninger, 2013; Lynch, 2013; Sharma, 2013).

Sports councils are ivory towers where ability, skill and honesty are expected to be promoted. Obasanjo (2012) opined that good education training must nurture in the individual those values which make for good citizenship such as honesty, selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hard work, personal integrity, all of which provide the rich soil from which good leadership is produced. Unfortunately, these values are replaced with deceit, disappointment, sex for position, favouritism etc. Considering the high incidence of sexual harassment among sports officials and its consequences on the victims, the issue of sexual harassment is likely to be a serious threat to achieving success in sports competitions in south-south sports councils in Nigeria. It therefore becomes crucial to consider sexual harassment as a threatening social phenomenon in Nigerian sports councils, which has severe psychological and social consequences on the victims as well as economic and political consequences on the nation in achieving sustainable development in sports (Suleiman, 2017). Thus, it is important to arrest the problem of sexual harassment of athletes in sports councils in Nigeria before it is too late.

### **Sexual Orientation as a Determinant of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual orientation includes a psychological component, such as the direction of an individual's erotic desires, or a behavioural

component, which focuses on the sex of the individual's sexual partners. Some people prefer simply to follow an individual's self-definition or identity. Scientific and professional understanding is that "the core attractions that form the basis for adult sexual orientation typically emerge between middle childhood and early adolescence "(American Psychological Association, 2020). Sexual orientation differs from sexual identity in that it encompasses relationships with others, while sexual identity is a concept of self. The American Psychological Association (2020) further explained that sexual orientation refers to an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic and or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes and that this range of behaviours and attractions have been described in various cultures and nations throughout the world. Many cultures according to them use identity labels to describe people who express these attractions.

In the United States for instance, the most frequent labels are lesbians (women attracted to women), gay men (men attracted to men), and bisexual people (men or women attracted to both sexes). However, some people may use different labels or none at all. They however added that sexual orientation is distinct from other components of sex and gender, including biological sex (the anatomical, physiological, and genetic characteristics associated with being male or female), gender identity (the psychological sense of being male or female), and social gender role (the cultural norms that define feminine and masculine behaviour) (American Psychological Association, 2020). In a nutshell sexual orientation according to the American Psychological Association (2020) refers to a person's sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviours, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions. These attractions are generally subsumed under heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality (American Psychological Association, 2020; American Psychiatric Association, 2012; American Psychological Association, 2015) while asexuality (the lack of sexual attraction to others)

is sometimes identified as the fourth category (Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2013).

American Psychological Association (2020) opined that a person who identifies as bisexual, for example, may sexually prefer one sex over the other. Sexual preference may also suggest a degree of voluntary choice, (American Psychological Association, 2020) whereas the scientific consensus is that sexual orientation is not a choice (Stewart, 2014). An asexual has little to no sexual attraction to people (Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2013). It may be considered a lack of a sexual orientation and there is significant debate over whether or not it is a sexual orientation (Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2013).

Lamanna, Reedmann and Stewart (2014) opined that scientists do not know the exact cause of sexual orientation, but they theorize that it is caused by a complex interplay of genetic, hormonal, and environmental influences. Researches over several decades have demonstrated that sexual orientations range along a continuum, from exclusive attraction to the opposite sex to exclusive attraction to the same sex (American Psychological Association, 2020). Bearman and Bruchner in Rahman (2020) identified several biological factors which may be related to the development of sexual orientation, including genes, prenatal hormones, and brain structure. No single controlling cause has been identified and research is continuing in this area. Staurt in Rahman (2020) noted that they generally believe that sexual orientation is not determined by any one factor but by a combination of genetic, hormonal, and environmental influences with biological factors involving a complex interplay of genetic factors and the early uterine environment (Lamanna, Reedmann and Stewart, 2014). There is considerably more evidence supporting non-social, biological causes of sexual orientation than social ones, especially for males (Bailey et al., 2016). Scientists do not believe that sexual orientation is a choice, Kersey-Matusiak, 2012; Lamanna et al., 2014) and some of them believe that it is established at conception (Vare & Terry, 2012).

## Moral Values as a Determinant of Sexual Harassment

Moral values are relative values that protect life and are respectful of the dual life value of self and others. The great moral values, such as truth, freedom, charity, etc., have one thing in common. When they are functioning correctly, they are life protecting or life enhancing for all. Our relative moral values must be constantly examined to make sure that they are always performing their life-protecting mission whereas cultural values are the core principles and ideals upon which an entire community exists and protect and rely upon for existence and harmonious relationship (McNamara, 2012).

Participation in organized sports offers athletes many opportunities for social interactions with peers and adults, which could lead to the development of moral and cultural values (Bruner, 2018). Because of the nature of sports activities, sports have the potential to shape the moral behaviour of athletes to stop harassing behaviour (Rutten, in Spruit et al., 2018). While sports are believed to promote moral and cultural values, it also tend to stop unwholesome behaviours such as sexual harassment (Fields in McNamara, 2012). Experiencing prevalence of harassing behaviour within the sports context can have negative consequences for the sports participation of athletes and limit the opportunities of effectively using sports activities as a vehicle of moral development (Al-yaaribi, 2016).

One of the factors within the sports context that has been linked to moral behaviour of athletes is the sport climate, that is, the moral and cultural environment of sport in which sports take place (Rutten in Spruit, Kavussanu, Smit and IJntema, 2018). In the broader field of athletic studies, the moral and cultural environment created by fellow athletes, coaches, sport directors, sport psychologists and parents, enable athletes to develop capabilities of shaping the behaviour of athletes in order to reduce or stop sexual abuse behaviour which is believed to be of great importance in shaping and cultivating moral and cultural behaviour of athletes to cushy the effect of sexual abuse behaviour (Kohlberg; Piaget in

Spruit et al., 2018). In addition, findings of empirical studies highlight the importance of the moral sports climate in the moral behaviour of athletes (Shields in Spruit et al., (2018). These insights are necessary in order to be able to provide guidelines for creating a sports context that supports positive moral development of athletes in other to stop or prevent the prevalence of sexual harassment.

Therefore, individual moral behaviour can be perceived as a function of group norms (Higgins in Spruit et al., 2018). They explain the association between moral climate and moral behaviour in sports (Jones and McNamee in Spruit et al., 2018). Again, the moral climate in the sports context is considered to be of substantial influence on moral outcomes in athletes (Kavussanu & Stanger, 2017). The moral climate of sports organizations could provide the base for moral judgments and related behaviour of the organization's members. Numerous studies have shown that collective team effort, coach, parent, spectator, and club norms are related to the moral functioning and behaviour of individual athlete (Arthur-Banning in Chiamogu & Chiamogu, 2019). For example, Stephens and Bredemeier in Spruit et al., (2018) found that reported likelihood of organization's members to act aggressively was higher when upcoming football players believed that other organization's members would play unfairly. Other researches have shown that when the moral climate of the sports environment are characterized by good norms, upcoming athletes tend to show more wholesome behaviours (Rutten in Spruit et al., 2018). This study was therefore proposed to determine the sexual orientation and moral value as a determinant of sexual harassments among athletes in south-south state sports councils, Nigeria.

### Statement of the Problem

In recent time the productivity of athletes in states sports councils in south-south, Nigeria has been discouraging. This however is attributed to be caused by the rising cases of sexual harassment emanating from the state sports councils. Parents, athletes and some concerned stakeholders are lamenting over the rate at which

the social menace called sexual harassment is becoming a regular occurrence in the south-south state sports councils. They claim that states sports councils lack the willingness to vigorously tackle prevalence of sexual harassments and other forms of sexual assaults such as sex-for-growth in the job coupled with lack of faith in the system to impartially dispense justice. Others believe that this growing social menace of sexual harassment is the reason most female athletes refuse to participate in sports and the few that summon courage to partake are likely to perform poorly in competition or even have less chance of being selected at all to represent their states except they yield to the pressure of being harassed. Some victims resort to take the law into their hands and some superior sports officials have been set up, stripped, beaten and humiliated by aggrieved victims who are desperate for revenge. However, the consequences may be poor performance and lack of willingness to voluntarily participate without being molested or intimidated.

Athletes in states sports council have their unique experiences of sexual harassments from staff and peers. Though, sexual harassment affects virtually men and women of all races, ages and colours; Nigerian victims experience more elusive types of harassment. In other countries or cultures, sexual harassment is a behaviour that is globally unacceptable in any public setting. Regardless of the form it takes, perpetrators disguise themselves but the society is not pleased with it. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate the prevalence and determinants of sexual harassments among athletes in South-South states sports councils in Nigeria.

### Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim and objectives of this study was to find out the sexual orientation and moral value as a determinant of sexual harassments among athletes in south-south state sports councils. Specifically, the study sought to;

- i. Determine whether sexual orientation is a determinant of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south state sports councils in Nigeria;

ii. Determine whether moral value is a determinant of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south state sports councils in Nigeria.

### Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

i. How does sexual orientation be a determinant of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south state sports councils in Nigeria?

ii. How does moral values be a determinant of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south state sports councils in Nigeria?

### Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and each of them was tested at .05 level of significance.

i. Sexual orientation is a significant determinant of sexual harassment of male and female athletes in south-south states sport councils in Nigeria.

ii. Moral values are not significant determinants of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south states sports councils in Nigeria.

### Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population of this study comprised all the 1647 male and 1,274) female athletes in the south-south state sports councils spread across the six (6) states of the south-south geo-political zone. The sample for this study comprised 336 male and 262 female athletes given a total of 598 athletes drawn from the six (6) states that make up the South-South states sport council of the South-south geo-political zone of Nigeria using cluster sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was entitled: "Prevalence and Determinants of Sexual Harassment of Athletes Questionnaire (PDSHAQ)". Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research

questions 1, 2 and 8 while simple regression was used to answer research questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9. Hypotheses 1 and 8 were tested using Analysis of Variance, hypothesis 2 was tested using independent t-test, while hypotheses 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 were tested using F-ratio in simple linear regression. All the nine hypotheses were tested at .05 levels of significance. The SPSS version 23 was used to analyzed the data.

## Results and Presentation of Data

### Research Question 1

How is sexual orientation a determinant of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south state sports councils in Nigeria?

**Table 1. Simple Regression Analysis of Sexual Orientation and Sexual Harassment of Athletes**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	% Contribution
Sexual Orientation	.167 <sup>a</sup>	.028	2.80
Sexual Harassment			

**Note:** a. Predictors: (Constant), Sexual Orientation

**Source:** Field work 2021.

The result in Table 1 shows the R for the strength of the relationship and R<sup>2</sup> for the determination of extent of sexual harassment based on sexual orientation. The R-value of .167 indicates a low relationship between sexual orientation and sexual harassment among athletes in south-south states sport councils in Nigeria. The R<sup>2</sup>-value of .028 which is the coefficient of determination indicates that 2.80% of sexual harassment is as a result of sexual orientation. This is an indication that the extent of determination of sexual harassment of athletes in south-south states using sexual orientation is low.

### Research Question 2

How is moral value a determinant of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south state sports councils in Nigeria?

**Table 2. Simple Regression Analysis of Moral Values and Sexual Harassment of Athletes**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	% Contribution
Moral Values	.174 <sup>a</sup>	.030	3.00
Sexual Harassment			

**Note:** a. Predictors: (Constant), Moral Values  
**Source:** Field work 2021

The result in Table 2. shows the R for the strength of the relationship and R<sup>2</sup> for the determination of extent of sexual harassment based on moral values. The R-value of .174

indicates a low relationship between moral values and sexual harassment among athletes in south-south states sport councils in Nigeria. The R<sup>2</sup>-value of .030 which is the coefficient of determination indicates that 3.00% of sexual harassment is as a result of moral values. This is an indication that the extent of determination of sexual harassment of athletes in south-south states using moral values is low.

### Hypothesis 1

Sexual orientation is a significant determinant of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south states sport councils in Nigeria.

**Table 3. Regression Analysis of Sexual Orientation and Sexual Harassment among Athletes in South-South**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3405.255	1	3405.255	16.720	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	118529.497	582	203.659		
Total	121934.752	583			

**Note:** a. Dependent Variable: Sexual Harassment;  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Sexual Orientation

The result in Table 3 indicates that the calculated F-value of 16.720 at 1 and 582 degrees of freedom is significant, since the p-value of .000 is less than the .05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that sexual orientation is not a significant determinant of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south states councils in Nigeria is rejected. Hence, sexual orientation is a

significant determinant of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south states sport councils in Nigeria.

### Hypothesis 2

Moral values are not significant determinants of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south state sports councils in Nigeria.

**Table 4. Regression Analysis of Moral Values and Sexual Harassment among Athletes in South-South**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3671.928	1	3671.928	18.070	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	118262.823	582	203.201		
Total	121934.752	583			

**Note:** a. Dependent Variable: Sexual Harassment;  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Moral Values

The result in Table 4 indicated that the calculated F-value of 18.070 at 1 and 582 degrees of freedom is significant, since the p-value of .000

is less than the .05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that moral values are not significant determinants of

sexual harassment among athletes in south-south states councils in Nigeria is rejected. Hence, moral values are significant determinants of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south states sport councils in Nigeria.

### Summary of Findings

1. Sexual orientation is a significant determinant of the prevalence of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south Nigeria states.
2. Moral value is a significant determinant of the prevalence of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south Nigeria states.

## Discussion of Findings

### Sexual Orientation as a Determinant of Sexual Harassment

The finding in table 1.2 revealed that sexual orientation is a significant determinant of the prevalence of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south Nigeria states. This finding is supported by American Psychological Association (2020) who noted that scientific and professional understanding is that "the core attractions that form the basis for adult sexual orientation typically emerge between middle childhood and early adolescence. In addition, they opined that a person who identifies as bisexual, for example, may sexually prefer one sex over the other. Sexual preference may also suggest a degree of voluntary choice, (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Further, Lamanna, Reedmann and Stewart (2014) opined that scientists do not know the exact cause of sexual orientation, but they theorize that it is caused by a complex interplay of genetic, hormonal, and environmental influences. Bearman and Bruchner in Rahman (2020) identified several biological factors which may be related to the development of sexual orientation, including genes, prenatal hormones, and brain structure. No single controlling cause has been identified and research is continuing in this area. Staurt in Rahman (2020) noted that they generally believe that sexual orientation is not determined by any one factor but by a combination of genetic, hormonal, and

environmental influences with biological factors involving a complex interplay of genetic factors and the early uterine environment (Lamanna, Reedmann and Stewart, 2014).

### Moral Values as a Determinant of Sexual Harassment

The result in table 1 revealed that moral value is a significant determinant of the prevalence of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south Nigeria states. Bruner (2018) in support of the finding affirmed that participation in organized sports offers athletes many opportunities for social interactions with peers and adults, which could lead to the development of moral and cultural values. More so, because of the nature of sports activities, sports have the potential to shape the moral behaviour of athletes to stop harassing behaviour (Rutten, in Spruit et al., 2018). Experiencing prevalence of harassing behaviour within the sports context can have negative consequences for the sports participation of athletes and limit the opportunities of effectively using sports activities as a vehicle of moral development (Al-yaaribi, 2016).

One of the factors within the sports context that has been linked to moral behaviour of athletes is the sport climate, that is, the moral and cultural environment of sport in which sports take place (Rutten in Spruit, Kavussanu, Smit and IJntema, 2018). In the broader field of athletic studies, the moral and cultural environment created by fellow athletes, coaches, sport directors, sport psychologists and parents, enable athletes to develop capabilities of shaping the behaviour of athletes in order to reduce or stop sexual abuse behaviour which is believed to be of great importance in shaping and cultivating moral and cultural behaviour of athletes to cushy the effect of sexual abuse behaviour (Kohlberg; Piaget in Spruit et al., 2018). In addition, findings of empirical studies highlight the importance of the moral sports climate in the moral behaviour of athletes (Shields in Spruit et al., (2018).

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study on the prevalence and determinants of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south sports council in Nigeria, it was concluded that female athletes are more vulnerable to sexual harassment than male athletes in south-south sport councils in Nigeria. It was also concluded that the use of drugs by athletes is the main determinant of the prevalence of sexual harassment among athletes in south-south states in Nigeria.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study;

1. A committee that is made up of male and female officials should be constituted to select athletes for participation in competitions based on merit instead of leaving the selection process in the hand of a single sport official to avoid sexual harassment.
2. Training on high moral values should be organized for athletes from time to time in order to ensure high moral values among athletes, which could reduce sexual harassment.

## Suggestions for Further Study

Based on the limitations of the present study, the following suggestions were made for further research;

1. Another study on the determinants of sexual harassment among athletes should be conducted in a post pandemic era.
2. Another study on the determinants of sexual harassment among athletes should be conducted in the whole Nigeria to corroborate the both findings.

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