Nature and Effects of Sexual Harassment of Teachers in Special and Regular Secondary Schools in Central Province, Kenya

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This study sought to investigate the nature and effect of sexual harassment of teachers in both regular and special secondary schools. The objectives and purpose of the study were to establish the extent and nature of sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools, investigate factors that influence sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools, establish the effects of teacher sexual harassment on teachers in secondary schools and establish mechanisms devised by schools, teachers and Ministry of Education in preventing sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools. The study applied descriptive design that employed self-administered questionnaires, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. Validity of the instruments was determined by contacting the experts and the multi-disciplinary working group of the school safety project of School of Education, Kenyatta University. Reliability was determined by using test-retest method. Multi-stage sampling technique, which involved both purposive and simple random sampling, was used to arrive at the sample size of 120 respondents. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 while qualitative data were analyzed and presented thematically. Some of the conclusions made from the findings of the study are that teachers, both in regular and special secondary schools, experience sexual harassment. A total of 58.9% of the respondents indicated that the main targets of sexual harassment were young teachers and 67% consider being teachers on teaching practice face sexual harassment. About 17% of the teachers consider offices and distance between home and school as the most risky places for sexual harassment and the level of awareness of teachers about policies protecting them against sexual harassment is low. Some of the recommendations made are that teacher training institutions should offer courses on sexual safety to teacher trainees as a way of preparing them to be proactive in matters of sexual harassment and violence. Secondary schools should strengthen guiding and counseling departments to guide both teachers and students in dealing with sexuality issues.