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School of Psychology

**Sexual Harassment, Psychological Distress and Coping Mechanism among Menelik
Secondary School Students**

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Menelik Secondary School Students

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Declaration

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Bilen Mesfin entailed “Sexual harassment, psychological distress and coping mechanism among Menelik secondary school students “compiles with the rules and regulation of the university and meets the accepted standard with respected to the originality and quality. Therefore, I hereby declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted to another university or institutions for the award of any degree or diploma.

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Abstract

This study explores the relationships between sexual harassment, psychological distress, and coping strategies among students at Menelik Secondary School. Utilizing a correlational research design and quantitative methods, data were collected from 288 students 185 from Grade 9 and 105 from Grade 10 using a stratified sampling technique to ensure balanced representation across grade levels. The instruments used were the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ), the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21), and the Brief COPE Inventory. Among the 285 valid responses, 28.4% of students reported experiencing sexual harassment, indicating a significant prevalence within the school environment.

The findings revealed that sexual harassment was positively correlated with all forms of psychological distress measured: depression ($r = 0.45, p < 0.01$), anxiety ($r = 0.38, p < 0.01$), and stress ($r = 0.42, p < 0.01$). These results suggest that students who experience higher levels of harassment are more likely to suffer from increased psychological distress. Additionally, coping strategies played a critical role in students' emotional responses. Problem-focused coping showed a moderate negative correlation with depression ($r = -0.32, p < 0.05$), indicating a protective effect, while avoidant coping was positively associated with anxiety ($r = 0.27, p < 0.05$), suggesting it may worsen psychological outcomes.

The study highlights the emotional toll of sexual harassment on adolescents and the importance of promoting adaptive coping strategies. It provides strong evidence that psychological support systems are needed within schools to address both the experiences and emotional consequences of harassment.

School-based interventions are recommended, including awareness programs, mental health support services, and training for staff on how to identify and respond to cases of harassment. Coping skills training should also be integrated into the school environment to enhance students' psychological resilience.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, psychological distress, coping strategies, secondary school students.

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Acronyms

| | |
|-----------|--|
| AAU | Addis Ababa University |
| Brief Cop | Brief Coping Mechanism Scale |
| DASS-21 | Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale |
| DSM-5-TR | Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition |
| FDG | Focus Group Discussion |
| SEQ | Youth Sexual Experience Questionnaires- Youth |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

The World Health Organization (2021) defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual behaviour, including verbal or physical conduct, sexual gestures, or requests for sexual favours that may occur in workplaces, educational institutions, or public spaces. Such actions create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment and negatively impact the victim's health, dignity, and well-being.

Sexual harassment is a persistent issue in educational settings, affecting both male and female students. It compromises students' safety, psychological health, and academic outcomes (UNESCO, 2019). While many studies focus on the experiences of female students, it is crucial to acknowledge that male students are also at risk and may face unique barriers when addressing or reporting incidents (Smith et al., 2021).

According to UNESCO (2020), more than one in three students globally have experienced some form of school-related gender-based violence or harassment. Recent research emphasizes that sexual harassment manifests in various forms, including verbal remarks, unwanted physical contact, and digital or cyber harassment (Jones et al., 2022). These experiences can lead to severe psychological consequences, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and reduced academic motivation (López et al., 2021).

Gendered expectations and societal norms often shape how students respond to harassment. For instance, male students may be discouraged from reporting incidents due to perceptions of

weakness or fear of ridicule (Smith et al., 2021), while female students often face victim-blaming and societal pressures that exacerbate emotional distress (Kassa & Desta, 2021).

Understanding students' coping mechanisms is essential in developing effective interventions. Coping strategies vary across genders and include denial, avoidance, seeking emotional support, and professional counselling (Nguyen et al., 2020). The effectiveness of these strategies is influenced by several factors, such as personal resilience, social support systems, and cultural context (López et al., 2021).

In Ethiopia, sexual harassment among high school students remains alarmingly high. A recent study in the Oromia region revealed that approximately 64% of female students experienced some form of harassment, such as being asked for sex, receiving unsolicited comments, or enduring verbal jokes related to appearance (Tadesse et al., 2021). Similarly, research conducted in Addis Ababa highlighted a strong link between sexual harassment and poor academic engagement among students (Abebe & Bekele, 2020).

Psychological distress, including anxiety and depression, is commonly reported by victims of school-based sexual harassment. Students often adopt maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as social withdrawal and avoidance, though some also seek support from peers and family (Mohammed et al., 2022). These behaviours differ by gender and are shaped by cultural and social norms within the school and community.

Given these issues, the current study seeks to examine the prevalence of sexual harassment at Menelik Secondary School, evaluate associated psychological distress, and explore the coping mechanisms employed by students. This investigation aims to contribute to the development of targeted, gender-sensitive, and culturally appropriate interventions within school environments, fostering safer and more supportive academic spaces.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Sexual harassment remains a pervasive issue in educational settings, negatively impacting students' mental health and overall academic performance. Studies indicate that experiences of sexual harassment among adolescents can lead to psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Campbell et al., 2019). Despite growing awareness of the issue, there is limited research on how students cope with these experiences, particularly in Ethiopian secondary schools. This gap in knowledge hinders the development of effective interventions tailored to the unique cultural and social context of Ethiopian students.

According to Joseph, (2015) the integrity of academic environment will be disrupted by sexual harassment. He stated that sexual harassment is a problem in educational settings that is underreported and under researched.

Despite growing global awareness, the problem of sexual harassment within Ethiopian schools remains largely understudied (Tadesse et al., 2021). Students particularly adolescents are highly vulnerable to harassment as they navigate complex social interactions and form their identities (UNESCO, 2020). This type of victimization disrupts academic engagement and has lasting consequences on mental and emotional well-being, including anxiety, depression, and decreased self-worth (López et al., 2021).

Most studies on sexual violence in Ethiopia focus primarily on more severe forms such as rape, attempted rape, and sexual coercion, which often result in visible physical or psychological harm (Abebe & Bekele, 2020). However, more subtle yet pervasive forms of harassment such as verbal abuse, non-consensual exposure to pornographic material, and inappropriate touching are frequently overlooked in both research and intervention efforts

(Kassa & Desta, 2021). Although these forms may not cause visible physical injuries, they can inflict deep psychological damage on victims, including chronic stress, social withdrawal, and reduced academic motivation (Mohammed et al., 2022).

The consequences of ignoring this problem are far-reaching. Left unaddressed, sexual harassment can lead to chronic psychological distress, decreased academic engagement, and long-term socio-emotional challenges (UNICEF, 2021).

Students who are victims often suffer in silence, unsure of how to define or report their experiences. Moreover, the psychological distress caused by such incidents, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress, can hinder their overall development and future potential. Without proper support, these students may adopt maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as withdrawal, substance abuse, or self-harm, further complicating their ability to overcome the trauma.

This research seeks to investigate the types of sexual harassment occurring at Menlik Secondary School, understanding how students define sexual harassment, assessing the psychological distress it causes, and examining the coping mechanisms employed by students.

1.3. Research questions

1. What is the prevalence of sexual harassment among Menlik Secondary School students?
2. What forms of psychological distress (e.g., anxiety, depression, or trauma) are experienced by students who have been victims of sexual harassment?
3. What coping mechanisms are students using to deal with the psychological effects of sexual harassment?
4. Are there relationship between sexual harassment, psychological distress and coping mechanism among Menelik secondary school students.

1.4. Objectives

The general objective of this research is to investigate the prevalence, types, and effects of sexual harassment among students at Menelik Secondary School,

The specific objective of this study is to examine:

1. To examine the relationships between sexual harassment and psychological distress and coping mechanism.
2. To determine the Prevalence of sexual harassment among Menelik secondary school students
3. To assess the types of psychological distress (e.g., anxiety, depression, or trauma) that students experiencing sexual harassment
4. To examine the coping mechanisms that student use to deal with psychological distress.

1.5. Significance of the study

According to the data of Ethiopian central statistics agency, the youth population consists of a large portion of the total number of the population of Ethiopia. From the total of the Ethiopian youth population over 50% are less than 18 years of age. The youth from 15-29 ages consists of 30% of the population. This shows that the Ethiopian population is consisted of a significant number of youths including adolescents which implies that there is a need to make this age group an area of study. Giving focus to this age group means giving focus to the larger portion of the population which will be important for the improvement of the life of these age groups and the development of the country at large.

This study is significant as it explores critical issues affecting student well-being, mental health, and the safety of educational environments. By examining the prevalence and psychological impact of sexual harassment, as well as the coping mechanisms students employ,

the research contributes valuable knowledge to the fields of education, psychology, and public health. The findings provide theoretical insight into the intersection of harassment and adolescent mental health, enriching the existing literature with context-specific data from Ethiopian schools. In doing so, the study helps bridge the knowledge gap regarding how harassment uniquely affects secondary school students in a low-income, culturally distinct setting.

Practically and structurally, the results of this study offer guidance for multiple stakeholders. Students benefit through improved support systems that can be designed based on the findings. School counsellors and mental health professionals can use the data to tailor interventions that address the psychological distress caused by harassment. School administrators and teachers can use the results to develop informed, gender-sensitive policies that create safer learning environments. Policy makers and education sector leaders can also draw on the findings to implement strategies that address school-based sexual harassment more effectively. Ultimately, this study supports efforts to make schools not only places of learning but also spaces of protection and growth for all students.

1.6. Limitation of the study

The study faces several limitations. First, it relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases such as underreporting or over reporting due to the sensitive nature of sexual harassment. Additionally, while the research focuses on Menelik Secondary School, the findings may not be generalizable to other schools in Ethiopia due to cultural and demographic differences. Time constraints may also limit the depth of data collection and analysis, especially if external factors like the school calendar restrict access to participants. Furthermore, discussing sexual harassment in a conservative cultural setting poses challenges, including potential resistance from participants, parents, or school authorities.

1.7. Delimitation of the study

This study is delimited to examining sexual harassment, psychological distress, and coping mechanisms among students at Menelik Secondary School in Ethiopia. The research focuses specifically on students within the school but not the students from other institutions. The study primarily investigates the prevalence and psychological impact of sexual harassment and does not delve into other forms of violence or abuse. Additionally, the study is constrained by a limited timeframe and budget, which restrict the scope of data collection and analysis to what can be feasibly achieved within these constraints.

1.8. Operational definition of terms used

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment refers to any unwanted and unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for the student. This includes verbal, non-verbal, and physical actions. Can be measured by sexual experience questionnaires (SEQ).

Psychological Distress: Psychological distress refers to the emotional suffering that may result from experiencing sexual harassment, characterized by symptoms such as anxiety, depression, stress, and emotional exhaustion. Measurable Indicators: Anxiety: Measured by indicators such as restlessness, difficulty concentrating and excessive worries. Measured by the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10).

Coping Mechanisms: Coping mechanisms refer to the cognitive and behavioural strategies that students use to manage, reduce, or tolerate the stress and psychological distress caused by sexual harassment. Measured by the Brief COPE Inventory.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual issues

2.1.1. Brief historical background of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a global issue that has historically been overlooked or minimized in many societies. Internationally, awareness of sexual harassment began to gain momentum during the women's rights movements of the 20th century. Legal recognition and definitions of sexual harassment emerged in countries like the United States during the 1970s, and were later adopted by international bodies. The World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations have since recognized sexual harassment as a form of gender-based violence that can occur in schools, workplaces, and public settings, urging countries to adopt laws and policies to address it (UN Women, 2019; WHO, 2021).

Across Africa, cultural, legal, and social barriers have contributed to the persistence and underreporting of sexual harassment. Patriarchal norms and gender inequalities have deeply shaped how harassment is perceived and addressed. Many African countries only began to formally recognize and legislate against sexual harassment in the past two decades. Even where laws exist, enforcement is often weak, and survivors may lack the support systems needed to seek justice (African Union, 2015). In educational institutions, studies from countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa have highlighted widespread harassment, with female students being particularly vulnerable (FAWE, 2018).

In Ethiopia, sexual harassment has been shaped by historical, cultural, and socio-political factors rooted in gender norms and patriarchy. Traditional Ethiopian society, especially in rural areas, reinforced practices such as early marriage and abduction ("tefafa"),

which subordinated women and normalized gender-based violence (Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association [EWLA], Historically, harassment whether in public, private, or school settings was rarely discussed, and victims were often silenced by societal expectations to preserve family honour and avoid stigma.

During Emperor Haile Selassie's reign (1930–1974), the country modernized its legal system, yet protections against sexual harassment remained minimal. The 1957 Penal Code criminalized rape but failed to address workplace or school-based harassment (EWLA, n.d.). Under the Derg regime (1974–1991), rhetoric on gender equality increased, but sexual violence including during the Red Terror (1977–1978) remained prevalent (Human Rights Watch, 1991). After 1991, significant reforms followed: the 1995 Constitution promoted gender equality, and the 2004 Criminal Code addressed gender-based violence. However, clear definitions and legal protections against sexual harassment especially in schools and workplaces remained limited (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2004).

In recent decades, organizations such as EWLA have led efforts to raise awareness and advocate for legal reform. Symbolic progress was seen in 2019 when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed appointed women to high-ranking positions, reflecting national commitment to gender equality (Kassa, 2020). Yet, challenges persist: deep-rooted patriarchal norms, fear of retaliation, victim-blaming, and limited enforcement of laws contribute to underreporting and continued prevalence of harassment. These ongoing issues highlight the need for a more comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach to combat sexual harassment in Ethiopia.

2.1.2 Definitions of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment can manifest both verbally and physically, including behaviours such as stares, derogatory remarks, ratings, and rumours, as well as physical actions like unwanted touching, assault, and attempted rape (Hill & Kearnl, 2019; AAUW, 2019).

A study among high school students highlighted that actions such as suggestive comments, inappropriate whistling, sexual jokes, and intentional physical contact were widely recognized as forms of sexual harassment (Hill & Silva, 2018). However, students may often defend these behaviours as harmless flirting or joking. This misunderstanding is perpetuated by ignorance and cultural norms that downplay the severity of harassment in educational settings (Chiodo et al., 2020). Sexual harassment is unethical and involves unwanted intimacy (Hill & Kearnl, 2019), and according to Shoop and Edwards (2019), it is primarily an issue of power, not sex. At its mildest, it represents disrespect, and at its most extreme, it constitutes an act of violence. Student sexual harassment is often based on ingrained cultural assumptions about gender roles (Kearnl, 2021).

2.1.3 Sexual harassment in school setting

According to the American Association of University Women's (AAUW) study, *Hostile Hallways: The AAUW Survey on Sexual Harassment in America's Schools*, the impact of sexual harassment in schools is expansive. Most girls (85 percent) and 76 percent of boys have been harassed in school. AAUW identified two types of impact on students: educational and emotional.

The educational impact includes students no longer wanting to attend school, staying home from school or cutting a class. Students may have a lower participation in class and have

more difficulty paying attention. They may also have lower academic performance (particularly in the class where the harassment is occurring) and difficulty in studying. Some students in the study thought about changing schools, and some actually did.

The emotional impact on students is just as detrimental because students are embarrassed about receiving the unwanted attention. They begin to feel self-conscious, and their self-esteem decreases. Students who experience harassment feel more frightened at school and are less confident about establishing positive, romantic relationships. They also experience confusion about their identities and feel less popular.

The AAUW report states, “While nearly half the students (48 percent) say they were ‘very upset’ or ‘somewhat upset,’ an alarming 70 percent of girls responded this way, compared with only 24 percent of boys.” Thus, victims of harassment can be trapped in a lonely, frightening place

2.1.3.1. Sexual Harassment in School Settings in Ethiopia

Sexual harassment in Ethiopian schools has been a persistent issue, particularly affecting female students. Historically, the issue was largely ignored, with little attention given to harassment by peers, teachers, or school staff. Ethiopia’s patriarchal society and gender-based power dynamics contribute to an environment where authority figures, including teachers, sometimes misuse their power, leading to harassment (Alemu, 2018).

Deep-rooted cultural norms around gender roles have played a significant role in shaping school environments. Female students have been burdened by cultural expectations of modesty and submission, making it difficult to report harassment. Many fear social stigma, victim-blaming, or retaliation, leading to underreporting (Biseswar, 2019). These societal pressures have allowed sexual harassment to be normalized or dismissed within school settings.

Ethiopia's legal framework, including the 1995 Constitution and the 2004 Criminal Code, provides some protections against gender-based violence, but policies specifically aimed at addressing sexual harassment in educational institutions have been slow to develop. Recently, schools and universities have started implementing anti-harassment policies, though enforcement remains weak. Awareness among students and staff about their rights and the available mechanisms to report harassment is limited (Ministry of Education, 2019).

In recent years, growing awareness of sexual harassment in schools has led to public discussions and increased advocacy, particularly in urban areas. Local women's rights organizations and international support have helped bring attention to the issue, but significant challenges remain, especially in rural areas where traditional norms are more entrenched, and reporting mechanisms are less accessible (Alemu, 2018).

While progress has been made in developing anti-harassment policies in schools, enforcement and cultural resistance continue to hinder efforts to address sexual harassment in Ethiopian educational settings. Further work is needed to raise awareness and ensure that schools provide safe environments for all students.

2.1.4. Psychological distress

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR), psychological distress refers to a state of emotional suffering typically characterized by symptoms of depression and anxiety, which may include feelings of sadness, hopelessness, restlessness, worry, or fear. It can arise in response to life stressors, such as trauma, loss, or difficult life events, and may manifest in both emotional and physical symptoms.

While psychological distress is not classified as a mental disorder in the DSM-5-TR, it is often an important factor in diagnosing mental health conditions. Psychological distress can

serve as a signal that an individual is struggling to cope with stressors, and it is commonly assessed when evaluating an individual for mood, anxiety, and adjustment disorders.

The DSM-5-TR emphasizes that psychological distress can vary in severity, ranging from mild to extreme, and it may affect daily functioning. For example, individuals may experience difficulty concentrating, irritability, sleep disturbances, or changes in appetite. When the distress significantly impairs a person's ability to function socially, academically, or occupationally, it may be indicative of a mental health disorder.

2.1.5. Coping mechanism

Coping mechanisms are the strategies people often use in the face of stress and/or trauma to help manage painful or difficult emotions. Coping mechanisms can help people adjust to stressful events while helping them maintain their emotional well-being. (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2016; Folkman, 2017).

Coping mechanisms can be broadly categorized as active or avoidant. Active coping mechanisms typically involve an awareness of the stressor and deliberate attempts to reduce stress, whereas avoidant coping mechanisms are characterized by efforts to ignore or avoid the problem. These mechanisms can be either adaptive or maladaptive, depending on their effectiveness in helping individuals navigate stressful situations (Carver, 2011; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2016). Commonly used adaptive coping mechanisms include:

Support: Talking about a stressful event with a supportive person can be an effective way to manage stress. Seeking external support rather than self-isolating can greatly reduce the negative effects of a difficult situation (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2018).

Relaxation: Relaxing activities such as meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, or listening to soft music can help people cope with stress (Creswell et al., 2019).

Problem-solving: Identifying the cause of stress and developing solutions to manage it is an effective adaptive coping strategy (D’Zurilla & Nezu, 2010).

Humours: Making light of stressful situations can help people maintain perspective and prevent overwhelm (Martin, 2018).

Physical activity: Engaging in exercise like running, yoga, or walking can serve as a natural form of stress relief (Salmon, 2017).

In contrast, maladaptive coping mechanisms can exacerbate stress and may include:

Escape: Avoiding social interaction and withdrawing into solitary activities such as watching television or spending excessive time online (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2016).

Unhealthy self-soothing: Engaging in behaviours such as overeating, binge drinking, or excessive use of video games (Grant et al., 2007).

Numbing: Using junk food, alcohol, or drugs to numb stress and emotions (Kassel et al., 2007).

Compulsions and risk-taking: Stress may lead individuals to seek adrenaline rushes through risk-taking behaviours such as gambling, reckless driving, or substance use

Self-harm: Some individuals may resort to self-harm as a way to cope with extreme stress or trauma

2.2. Theories guiding the study

The major theoretical frameworks which try to explain the cause of sexual harassment are discussed below:

2.2.1. The socio-cultural theory

According to the socio-cultural model sexual harassment is a result of culturally legitimated power and status difference between men and women. (MacKinnon, 1979; Padavic & Orcutt, 1997).

Sociocultural theory suggests that sexual harassment in school settings reflects broader cultural norms that reinforce power imbalances and gender roles. It argues that the behaviour is not just about individual misconduct but is shaped by societal structures that normalize gender-based dominance, sexism, and objectification. (Brown et al., 2020; Fitzgerald & Ormerod, 1991; Tangri et al., 1982).

According to this perspective, cultural messages around masculinity and femininity often influence students' behaviours. Boys may engage in harassment as a way to affirm power, while girls are often socialized to tolerate or minimize such behaviour. Additionally, peer group dynamics play a critical role in reinforcing or challenging these norms. Schools can inadvertently perpetuate harassment by not addressing gender-based discrimination effectively, thus normalizing it as part of adolescent behaviour and peer interaction. Brown et al., 2020; Leaper & Brown, 2014; Tangri et al., 1982).

The prevalence of sexual harassment in schools highlights the need for institutional interventions that go beyond punishing individual perpetrators. Instead, creating an environment that actively discourages sexist attitudes is essential for long-term cultural change (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Gruber, 1997; Brown et al., 2020).

2.2.2. Ecological theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory offers a model for comprehending sexual harassment by exploring how individuals interact with their surroundings. It emphasizes that

harassment does not happen in a emptiness but within various interconnected systems that influence behaviour. This is how ecological theory explains sexual harassment. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Banyard & Hamby, 2021).

1. Microsystem (Immediate Environments)

Direct interactions with family, friends, teachers, and other people in close proximity are the main focus of this level. Peer pressure or toxic relationships (such as bullying or teasing) in a school context can foster harassment. It's also possible for these behaviours to be reinforced by improper adult intervention. (Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

2. Mesosystem (Connections between Microsystems)

The mesosystem studies the interactions between various microsystems, such as those between the home and school environments. When parents, educators, or other authority figures downplay or ignore harassment, it teaches students that this type of behaviour is okay at home and at school. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Hong et al., 2021).

3. Exosystem (Indirect Environments)

This system includes external forces that indirectly affect individuals, such as school policies, community attitudes, and media influence. Inadequate school policies and media that objectify individuals contribute to a culture where harassment is tolerated or normalized. (Banyard & Hamby, 2021; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

4. Macro system (Cultural and Societal Influences)

At the macro system level, broader cultural norms around gender, power, and violence are key. Societies that endorse patriarchal values or traditional gender roles may foster environments where sexual harassment is more likely to occur. (Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Hong et al., 2021).

5. Chrono system (Changes Over Time)

The chronosystem focuses on how changes over time such as shifts in social norms or policy reforms—affect behaviour. Historical trends in attitudes toward gender and the evolution of anti-harassment policies shape students' experiences across generations. (Banyard & Hamby, 2021).

2.3. Empirical evidences

2.3.1. Sexual harassment studies on student

Any unwanted sexual behaviour that causes discomfort or humiliation, including verbal remarks, physical contact, or gestures, is commonly defined by students as sexual harassment. They stress that harassment is a manifestation of power abuse in academic and social settings and is frequently influenced by societal norms that condone such behaviour (Cabras et al., 2022; Huerta et al., 2006). These incidents can have serious emotional and psychological repercussions and disproportionately affect female students. Students also emphasize the necessity of more responsive interventions and robust institutional policies to promote safer learning environments (Cantor et al., 2015; Banyard & Hamby, 2021).

In a study on the subject conducted by AAUW in 2001, a total of 2064 high school students participated. Almost all of the students (96%) said they knew what sexual harassment was, and 30% of them defined it as sexual remarks or gestures, 23% as unwanted touching, grabbing, or contact, and 17% as an act of seriously upsetting someone. According to AAUW, there is no statistically significant difference between the definitions of sexual harassment given by boys and girls in the same study. Sexual harassment was defined by both genders as unwanted physical action, sexual gestures, and verbal abuse.

2.3.2 Prevalence of sexual harassment in school settings

There are many studies conducted on sexual harassment in different social groups across the globe including Africa and Ethiopia. Some selected studies that show the intensity of the problem are synthesized and discussed below.

Sexual harassment in educational institutions remains a pervasive issue globally, with varying prevalence and manifestations across different regions. In the United Kingdom, a significant number of students have reported experiencing unwanted sexual behaviour during their time in higher education. A study by the National Union of Students (NUS) and the 1752 Group found that 41% of respondents faced unwelcome sexual advances and innuendo from university staff, raising concerns about power dynamics and institutional accountability (Topping, 2018).

Across African countries, similar patterns emerge. In South Africa, a study at a higher education institution found that both male and female students experience different forms of sexual harassment, with 25.5% of female respondents reporting unwanted touching (Dhlomo & Mokoena, 2019). In Kenya, a report by Akili Dada (2020) showed that over 40% of students in public universities experienced some form of violence, with more than 68% of these being female students (Mwangi, 2022).

Studies reveal that sexual harassment is a common problem in educational environments, with rates that differ greatly between locations and situations. A year's worth of junior high school students in high-income nations like Norway reported experiencing sexual harassment at a rate of about 32.6%, with female students being disproportionately affected (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005). Prevalence estimates differ in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), with research indicating that between 12% and 47% of female students have encountered harassment in educational settings (BMJ Open, 2021). It is challenging to

generalize study results worldwide due to variations in the definition and measurement of harassment; however, a growing body of evidence indicates that the normalization of harassment in schools is partly.

Different countries have very different rates of sexual harassment in schools, which are frequently influenced by social, cultural, and methodological factors. Studies reveal that a notable fraction of students encounter harassment while they are in school. Research conducted in wealthy nations like Norway, for instance, revealed that approximately 32.6% of junior high school students reported being sexually harassed within a year, with girls reporting higher exposure rates than boys.

Sexual harassment is extremely common in African schools, and school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is still a major problem. Research indicates that harassment experiences for boys and girls in these environments differ and are frequently influenced by cultural norms and socioeconomic circumstances. Girls are disproportionately affected by sexual harassment in schools in sub-Saharan Africa, which hinders their ability to learn and negatively impacts their wellbeing. For example, according to UNESCO research, up to 40% of students—particularly girls—have reported experiencing sexual harassment or violence at school in some regions. The issue is frequently made worse by the normalization of gender-based power disparities and the lack of appropriate legislation to address these practices.

According to the study conducted in Jima University on sexual harassment on 385 female students. This study was conducted by Eshetu, In the research the prevalence rate of physical harassment (e.g. unwanted sexual touching, unwanted kissing) was 78.2% and verbal harassment (e.g. unwanted sexual comment, offensive jokes) was 90.4% and non-verbal harassment (e.g. showing unwelcomed sexual materials, sexual gestures) was 80.0% (Mamaru et al., 2015).

Likewise, there was a similar study conducted in Ambo secondary and preparatory school students by Eshetu (2015) using a total of 414 female students, 35% of the female students had experienced sexual harassment throughout their school life and 33.3% of them had experienced sexual harassment in the 12 months prior to the study. 47.8% of the females had experienced verbal sexual harassment and 35.5% of the students had experienced physical sexual harassment. In the study the most frequent kind of sexual harassment was repeatedly told sexual stories or jokes (50.7%) followed by getting comments on sexual life (47%); being repeatedly asked for date, drink or dinner even when refused (46.4%); encountering several attempts to establish romantic relationship despite efforts to discourage (45.7%) and getting offensive remarks about appearance or body (44.2%).

Furthermore, in a study done in Eastern Ethiopia to investigate the perpetrators of sexual violence on 774 high school male students, 70% of them admitted that they have at least once committed sexual violence on their female peers. Among those males who admitted committing some kind of sexual violence on females, 56% admitted committing a sexual offense (unwanted sexual comments, jokes, discussions); 62% perpetrated sexual assault (unwanted touching, kissing, petting); 38% committed sexual coercion (unwanted sexual intercourse through verbal manipulation or psychological pressure), and 23% perpetrated sexual aggression (physically forced sexual intercourse) (Bekele, 2012).

Still there were Another similar study in Jimma university the study participant were 304 female students and according to the results of the study, 50% of the study participants reported that they had experienced insistent request to establish romantic relationship despite their efforts to discourage the person; 45% indicated that they had been repeatedly asked for dates, dinner or drink even when they said no; 43% reported that they were touched in a way that made them uncomfortable; 35% reported that men had made attempts to stroke or fondle

them, and 30% revealed that they have encountered attempts of drawing them into unwanted discussion of personal or sexual matters (Kassahun, 2009).

Finally, a study in Wolayita Sodo University in Southern Ethiopia revealed that among 374 female students 18.7% of them had experienced verbal harassment; 11.3% of them had faced forced sexual initiation, and 8.7% had experienced completed rape. The study further revealed that 42% 26 of the victims from the total female participant had experienced violence while they were in high school and during their first year stay at the university, while 11.1% were violated while in their second and third year of their study at the university (Tora, 2013).

2.4. Conceptual frame work

This study examines the relationship between sexual harassment, psychological distress, and coping mechanisms among Menlik Secondary School students. Sexual harassment, the independent variable, is defined as unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour that may be verbal, physical, or non-verbal. It is hypothesized to directly contribute to psychological distress, the dependent variable, which encompasses emotional, behavioural, and physical symptoms such as anxiety, sadness, withdrawal, and fatigue. Coping mechanisms serve as a moderating variable, influencing the extent to which psychological distress is experienced. These mechanisms are categorized into problem-focused coping (e.g., seeking help or reporting incidents), emotion-focused coping (e.g., seeking comfort or distraction), and avoidance coping (e.g., ignoring the problem or denial).

The relationship between these variables is grounded in the Stress and Coping Theory by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which explains how individual's app raise and respond to stressors, and the Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979), which highlights the influence of environmental factors such as family, school, and peer interactions. The study posits that sexual harassment directly causes psychological distress, but the type of coping

mechanism employed by students can either mitigate or exacerbate its effects. This framework provides a structured approach to understanding the interplay between these variables and guides the analysis of how students' experiences of sexual harassment impact their mental health and coping strategies.

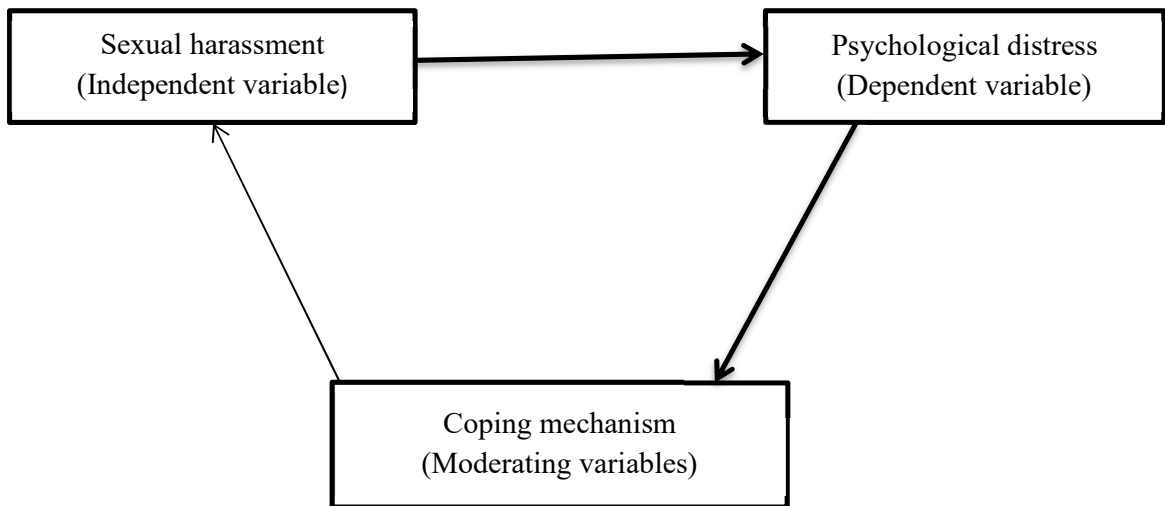


Diagram 1; the interaction between the interactions between sexual harassment (independent variable), psychological distress (dependent variable), and coping mechanisms (moderating variable).

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, population and sampling techniques, research Instruments, the procedure of data collection, and statistical methods used for analysis in the current study

3.1. Study design

The study adopts a correlational research design, which uses quantitative methods to investigate the relationships between variables. This design is selected to examine the strength and direction of associations between sexual harassment, psychological distress, and coping mechanisms among Menelik Secondary School students. A correlational design is particularly appropriate for this study as it aims to identify patterns and relationships between these variables without manipulating them, allowing for a naturalistic understanding of their interactions.

3.2. Study site

The study was conducted at Menelik secondary school. The school founded by Emperor Menelik II in October 1908 as a modern educational institution was guided by Egyptian educator Hana Salib and a number of Coptic teachers. This marked an initial period for modern Ethiopian education. It was designed by Greek engineers and architects. Before the establishment, Menelik issued a proclamation in 1906 that legitimized modern education.

The earlier phase of the school faced more secular and modern forms. The student population was estimated at around 100, primarily consisting of the sons of nobles. However, these nobles were reluctant to depart from traditional practices and began to send children of their servants or extended family members instead. Despite their traditional interests, they strongly encouraged the emergence of influential educated elites to promote development.

Menelik also faced opposition from the Coptic Church of Alexandria and Syria for emphasizing worldly affairs. The school was temporarily closed during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia from 1935 to 1941. Afterward, the school expanded its grade levels to include up to the 5th grade by 1942.

The secondary school is located at King George VI Street, Arat Kilo, in Addis Ababa, near Addis Ababa University. It occupies a space of 500,000 square meters. The school has a total of 7,000 students, including 3,800 evening students, with classroom sizes ranging from as few as 5 or 6 students to as many as 48. However, only 27 students have been maintaining the school's lawn, which has been in a neglected state for decades. The faculty includes 144 Ethiopian teachers and 16 expatriate instructors. The school is situated in Arada Sub-city, Woreda 1.

3.3. Population

The main target population of the study is all grade nine and ten students at Menelik secondary School. The total number of students in grades nine and ten is 1176 students from this 600 are boys and 576 are girls. Grades nine have 14 sections and each section contains 54 students and grade ten have 8 section and each section contain 57 students

3.4. Sampling procedure

This study employs a stratified sampling technique to ensure representation from both grade levels within the target population. The target population consists of Grade 9 and Grade 10 students at Menlik Secondary School, with 751 students in Grade 9 and 425 students in Grade 10, totalling 1,176 students. Stratified sampling is chosen to divide the population into two strata based on grade level, ensuring that both groups are proportionally represented in the sample.

Since the population size is fixed and known, Cochran's formula is used to calculate the sample size. Cochran's formula is as follows

$$n = \frac{N \cdot z^2 p(1-p)}{(N-1) \cdot e^2 + Z^2 p(1-p)}$$

Where:

- n = required sample size
- N = population size (1176 students)
- Z = Z-score (for 95% confidence level, Z = 1.96)
- p = estimated proportion (0.5)
- e = margin of error (0.05 for 5%)

$$n = \frac{1176 \times (1.96)^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{(1176-1) \cdot (0.05)^2 + (1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5(1-0.5)}$$

$$n = \frac{1176 \cdot 3.8416 \cdot 0.25}{1175 \cdot 0.0025 + 3.8416 \cdot 0.25}$$

$$n = \frac{1129.95}{2.9375 + .9604} = \frac{1129}{3.8927} \approx 290$$

So, this means 290 students in my sample for a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error.

Proportion for grade nine

$$\frac{751}{1176} = 0.6388$$

Proration for grade ten

$$\frac{425}{1176} = 0.3612$$

For ensuring that each stratum is represented in accordance with its size multiplying each proportion with the sample size it will help ensure that each group is adequately represented in the sample.

Grade nine sample sizes

$$290 \times 0.6388 = 185$$

Grade ten sample sizes

$$290 \times 0.3612 = 105$$

Grade nine, approximately 63.88% of the full population, could have 185 students within the pattern. Meanwhile, Grade 10, making up about 36.12% of the population, can have 105 students. This proportional stratified sampling technique ensures that each grade is safely represented in the pattern, reflecting the actual distribution of students inside the population. The very last pattern will encompass 185 college students from Grade nine and 105 from Grade 10, for a complete of 290 students.

3.5. Study variables

3.5.1 Independent variables

- demographic variables (age, gender and grade level)
- coping mechanism
- experience of sexual harassment

3.5.2. Dependent variables

- psychological distress (anxiety, dispersion, stress level)

3.6. Data collection instrument

For this study planning to use three instruments to gather data first, the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire – Youth (SEQ-Youth) was administered to identify students who have experienced sexual harassment. Following this, students who report harassment completed two additional assessments. The Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21) measure levels of psychological distress, and the Brief COPE Inventory evaluates the coping strategies these students employ. Together, these instruments provide a comprehensive understanding of the psychological impact and coping mechanisms related to harassment experiences.

3.6.1 Sexual Experience Questionnaires- youth (SEQ-Youth)

Sexual Experience questionnaires- youth (SEQ-Youth) was used to identify students who have experienced sexual harassment. SEQ-youth is a tool adapted from the original SEQ to measure sexual harassment experiences among adolescents, focusing on peer harassment and behaviours relevant to young people. It includes a variety of items assessing verbal, physical, non-verbal, and online harassment, with responses scored on a Likert scale SEQ was developed by the American Psychologist Fitzgerald and her colleagues in 1988 based on Till's 1980 classification of sexual harassment. According to Fitzgerald et al, (1995) the original 19 items of the SEQ over the years has been modified, used by several researchers, used in small and large populations, used in both educational and workplace settings, has been translated in to different languages and also has been used in cross cultural settings. (Fitzgerald, L. F. (1995), Ménard, K. S., & Morris, S. (2010).)

SEQ is a behavioural based questionnaire which assesses the frequency of sexual harassment and it lists 19 items which contain behaviours that may indicate the happening of sexual harassment to an individual. The term —sexual harassment comes only at the last of the questioner in order to make the answers given by the participant's unbiased (Fitzgerald et al, 1995).

According to Arvey & Cavanaugh, (1995); Beere, (1990) SEQ is an excellent, valid and the most theoretically and psychometrically sophisticated instrument available. However, SEQ demonstrated some shortcomings like the fact that scores especially on the most serious forms of sexual harassment (like sexual coercion) could be skewed. And SEQ do not have a standard scoring procedure and it leaves the scoring mechanism to the interest of the researcher and the seriousness of the issue.

Scoring

The SEQ and SEQ-Youth questionnaires often use a Likert scale for responses, typically ranging from “never” to “often.” Each item’s score reflects the frequency of harassment experiences. The scores are generally summed for subscales or overall, providing a measure of the severity or prevalence of harassment experiences.

The scores for all items are summed to create a total score, with higher scores indicating a greater frequency or severity of sexual harassment experiences. In some cases, the SEQ includes subscales that measure different dimensions of harassment, such as verbal, physical, and non-verbal harassment, allowing for separate analysis of each category.

Cut-off points are used to classify respondents into categories based on their total scores, such as low, moderate, or high experiences of sexual harassment. total score of 10 or below might indicate low or no experience, a score between 11 and 20 might reflect moderate experiences, and a score above 20 could indicate high experiences.

Reliability

The SEQ and SEQ-Youth show high reliability across studies. The internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) for the SEQ often exceeds 0.80, indicating that the items consistently measure harassment-related experiences. Test-retest reliability has also been established, meaning the scores remain stable when re-administered in a similar context.

Validity

The **construct validity** of the SEQ is well-supported, as it has been shown to correlate meaningfully with related psychological distress variables, such as anxiety and depression, especially among those experiencing harassment. It also has **content validity**, with items

grounded in well-researched harassment behaviours relevant to the specific populations it assesses (e.g., youth or adults in workplaces or schools).

3.6.2. Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale - 21 Items (DASS-21)

DASS-21 was utilized to assess the emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress among students. The DASS-21 consists of three subscales, each containing seven items that measure distinct but related emotional experiences. The depression subscale evaluates feelings such as dysphoria, hopelessness, lack of self-worth, diminished interest or engagement in activities, and lethargy. The anxiety subscale measures autonomic arousal, physical tension, situational anxiety, and subjective experiences of fear and anxious affect.

The stress subscale identifies chronic, non-specific arousal, capturing tendencies such as difficulty relaxing, and heightened irritability, overreacting to situations, impatience, and neurotic arousal. For each subscale, the scores were calculated by summing the responses to the relevant items, providing a quantitative measure of stress, anxiety, and depression levels. These scores were used to analyse the psychological distress experienced by the participants and to explore correlations with other variables in the study.

Reliability and validity

It has been demonstrated that the DASS-21 has sufficient construct validity. Confirmatory component analysis (CFA) modeling findings show that while the three DASS-21 scales measure a significant shared factor (general psychological distress), each scale also has variation unique to it. The DASS-21 scales have strong reliabilities; Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistencies of the Anxiety, Depression, Stress, and Total scales. α was 0.88 for the Depression, 0.82 for Anxiety, 0.90 for Stress scales; and 0.93 for the Total scale were found. Comparing the DASS-21 to the full-length DASS, there are several benefits. It is still sufficiently reliable, but it is shorter and hence more acceptable for clients who have

trouble focusing. Furthermore, it contains a more streamlined latent structure and leaves out components from the entire DASS that were shown to be troublesome (Henry & Crawford 2005).

Eleni (2020) reported that an assessment instrument was translated from English to Amharic by an MA student in counselling psychology and students from the TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) department at Addis Ababa University. To ensure the items were clear and substantively accurate, their content was reviewed and validated by two professionals in counselling psychology. Following this, a pilot test was conducted to evaluate the clarity of the items, the linguistic appropriateness, the reliability of the measurements, and their practicality, as well as to identify effective administration methods for the main research. The Cronbach's alpha values for depression, anxiety, and stress scales were determined to be 0.82, 0.71, and 0.71, respectively.

DASS-21 Scoring

The minimum score is zero and the maximum score is 21. Because the DASS-21 is a short term of DASS-42 the final score for each item group were multiplied by 2. Cut-off scores for conventional severity labels (normal, mild, moderate, severe) are as follows:

Table 1: DASS-21 Scoring

| | Depression | Anxiety | Stress |
|-------------------------|------------|---------|--------|
| Normal | 0-9 | 0-7 | 0-14 |
| Mild | 10-13 | 8-9 | 15-18 |
| Moderate | 14-20 | 10-14 | 19-25 |
| Severe | 21-27 | 15-19 | 26-33 |
| Extremely Severe | 28+ | 20+ | 34+ |

3.6.3 Brief cope inventory

Brief COPE stands for Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced; a questionnaire that measures how people cope with stressful life event. The scale is often used in health-care settings to ascertain how patients are emotionally responding to a serious circumstance. It can be used to measure how someone is coping with a wide range of adversity, including a cancer diagnosis, heart failure, injuries, assaults, natural disasters, financial stress or mental illness. The scale is useful in counselling settings for formulating the helpful and unhelpful ways someone responds to stressors.

The Brief COPE scale measures individuals' coping strategies in response to stress, categorized into three main styles: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidant coping. It also assesses specific strategies such as self-distraction, denial, substance use, behavioural disengagement, emotional support, venting, humour, acceptance, self-blame, religion, active coping, instrumental support, positive reframing, and planning. Each item is rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("I haven't been doing this at all") to 4 ("I've been doing this a lot"). Average scores are calculated for each coping style by dividing the total score by the number of items, indicating how often respondents use each strategy.

The three overarching coping styles are outlined below.

Problem-Focused Coping (Items 2, 7, 10, 12, 14, 17, 23, 25) Characterised by the facets of active coping, use of informational support, planning, and positive reframing. A high score indicates coping strategies that are aimed at changing the stressful situation. High scores are indicative of psychological strength, grit, a practical approach to problem solving and is predictive of positive outcomes.

Emotion-Focused Coping (Items 5, 9, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28) Characterised by the facets of venting, use of emotional support, humour, acceptance, self-

blame, and religion. A high score indicates coping strategies that are aiming to regulate emotions associated with the stressful situation. High or low scores are not uniformly associated with psychological health or ill health, but can be used to inform a wider formulation of the respondent's coping style.

Avoidant Coping (Items 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 16, 19) Characterised by the facets of self-distraction, denial, substance use, and behavioural disengagement. A high score indicates physical or cognitive efforts to disengage from the stressor. Low scores are typically indicative of adaptive coping.

Validity and reliability of brief cope inventories

The Brief-COPE (Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory) is a self-report questionnaire that measures how people cope with stressful life events. The reliability and validity of the Brief-COPE has been studied in a variety of contexts, including with adolescents, health professionals, and secondary school students.

The Brief COPE generally demonstrates good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values often above 0.70 for its subscales. Studies involving adolescents in school environments show that it reliably measures different coping strategies, such as problem-focused and emotion-focused coping, which are particularly relevant for understanding student stress responses. Test-retest reliability is also typically adequate, meaning students' coping strategies measured over time show consistent patterns.

The validity of the Brief COPE Inventory is supported by construct validity: the subscales effectively measure distinct coping strategies that correlate with other measures of stress, mental health, and resilience, aligning with theoretical expectations about coping. Studies in school settings have also found evidence of convergent validity, as scores on the

Brief COPE correlate with related constructs like stress levels, depression, and anxiety among students.

Overall, the Brief COPE has proven effective for use in educational research, especially in understanding how students respond to stress and challenges, making it a suitable tool for studies on psychological distress and coping mechanisms in youth.

3.7. Data collection procedure

First, permission will be sought from the school administration and any necessary ethical approval will be obtained to conduct the study among students. Once approval is secured, the research team will implement a stratified sampling method to select participants from grades 9 and 10, ensuring a representative sample. A total of 290 students will be chosen based on the sample size calculation for a population of approximately 1117 students, limited to grades 9 and 10.

The selected participants will then be administered the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire – Youth (SEQ-Youth) to identify students who have experienced sexual harassment. Only students who report experiencing harassment will proceed to the next phase of data collection, where they will complete two additional assessments: the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21) to measure psychological distress and the Brief COPE Inventory to assess coping mechanisms.

Data collection will occur over two separate sessions. In the first session, all participants will complete the SEQ-Youth. In the second session, students identified as having experienced harassment will complete the DASS-21 and Brief COPE Inventory. Trained research assistants will oversee the process to provide support and ensure confidentiality, and all questionnaires will be administered in a private and safe environment.

After data collection, responses will be coded and entered into a secure database for analysis. Statistical methods, including correlation and regression analyses, will be applied to examine the relationships between sexual harassment experiences, psychological distress, and coping mechanisms.

3.8. Method of data analysis

The data collected were analysed using descriptive and correlational statistical methods. Descriptive analysis was employed to summarize and present the prevalence of sexual harassment, psychological distress, and the types of coping mechanisms used by students. Percentages and frequencies were calculated to indicate how many students have experienced specific forms of sexual harassment or employed particular coping strategies. This approach provided a clear overview of the distribution and characteristics of the variables within the population.

To examine the relationship between the variables, a simple correlation analysis was conducted. This method will assess the strength and direction of the relationship between psychological distress (dependent variable) and sexual harassment (independent variable). Correlation coefficients will be computed to determine whether there is a significant positive or negative association between these variables. This analysis will help to identify patterns and inform conclusions about the impact of sexual harassment on psychological distress among the students.

3.9. Ethical consideration

This study followed to the highest ethical standards to ensure the rights, dignity, and safety of participants are protected. Ethical approvals were obtained from AAU school of Psychology and Menelik secondary school confirmed this study can be done in the intuition.

Informed consent will be a key ethical consideration in this study. All participants will be provided with clear and detailed information about the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the research. They will have the right to ask questions and will only participate after giving their written consent. For students under the age of 18, additional parental or guardian consent will be obtained alongside the student's assent to ensure ethical compliance. Confidentiality will also be strictly maintained throughout the study. Personal information will remain confidential, and pseudonyms or codes will be used to protect participants' identities. The data collected will be used exclusively for research purposes and will not be shared with unauthorized individuals. Additionally, the research will respect the cultural values and norms of the participants, ensuring that their rights and dignity are upheld at all times.

Chapter Four

IV Result

This chapter presents the findings of the study examining the prevalence of sexual harassment, the levels of psychological distress, and the coping mechanisms used by secondary school students. Data were collected through a survey, which included scales for sexual harassment (SEQ), psychological distress (DASS), and coping mechanisms (Brief COPE). The relationships between these variables are analysed through descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The study involved a total of 288 secondary school students, who participated by completing the survey designed to assess their experiences with sexual harassment, psychological distress, and coping mechanisms. The demographic information collected includes participants' age, gender, and grade level, which serve as important background variables that help contextualize the findings of the study.

In terms of age, participants ranged from 14 to 20 years, with the majority falling within the mid-adolescent age group. The most frequently reported age was 16 years, representing 29.9% of the total sample ($n = 86$), followed by 17 years at 25.7% ($n = 74$), and 15 years at 21.5% ($n = 62$). Together, these three age groups accounted for over three-quarters (77.1%) of all respondents, indicating that the sample predominantly reflects students in the critical stage of middle adolescence a period commonly associated with increased emotional sensitivity, identity development, and susceptibility to environmental and peer influences, including harassment and psychological stress. The remaining participants were 18 years old (14.6%), 19 years old (6.9%), and a very small proportion were 14 or 20 years old (each 0.7%).

Regarding gender, the sample consisted of 153 male students (53.1%) and 135 female students (46.9%), demonstrating a relatively balanced gender distribution. This near-equal representation enhances the reliability of any gender-based comparisons and ensures that the perspectives of both boys and girls are adequately reflected in the analysis. Gender is an especially relevant variable in this study, as prior research indicates that experiences of sexual harassment and psychological coping strategies may vary significantly between males and females. The balanced gender composition thus strengthens the generalizability and inclusiveness of the findings.

In terms of grade level, participants were drawn from two key academic years. 183 students (63.5%) were in Grade 9, while 105 students (36.5%) were in Grade 10. This indicates a higher proportion of younger secondary school students in the study.

Taken together, the demographic data suggests that the sample includes a diverse but developmentally similar group of adolescents, with slight variations in age and grade level but a fairly even gender balance. This diversity is essential for exploring the research questions in depth and for drawing meaningful conclusions that can inform future policies, interventions, and school-based support systems aimed at improving the psychological well-being and safety of secondary school students.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

| Variables | Categories | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Age | 14 | 2 | .7 |
| | 15 | 62 | 21.5 |
| | 16 | 86 | 29.9 |
| | 17 | 74 | 25.7 |
| | 18 | 42 | 14.6 |
| | 19 | 20 | 6.9 |
| | 20 | 2 | .7 |
| Gender | Male | 153 | 53.1 |
| | Female | 135 | 46.9 |
| Grade | Grade9 | 183 | 63.5 |
| | Grade10 | 105 | 36.5 |

4.2 Prevalence of sexual harassment

As the table3 shows, 288 students participated in the study. However, valid responses regarding the experience of harassment were obtained from 285 participants, and data from 3 respondents (1.0%) were missing. Among those with valid responses, 204 students (71.6%) said they had never experienced any form of harassment, while 81 students (28.4%) said they had experienced harassment at least once.

This finding highlight that nearly one-third of the respondents have been harassed, which suggests that harassment is a serious issue among the secondary school students sampled in this study. That a considerable percentage of students reported such experiences is concerning in relation to the safety, well-being, and mental health of the students in the school environment.

The prevalence rate of 28.4% indicates that harassment is not a localized phenomenon but a common experience for a substantial minority of the student body.

Table 3: Prevalence rate of sexual harassment

| Harassment prevalence | Frequencies | Percentage |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 (Harassed) | 81 | 28.1% |
| 0 (Not harassed) | 204 | 70.8% |
| Missing system | 3 | 10% |
| Total | 288 | 100% |

4.3 Psychological Distress Levels

The prevalence of depression, stress, and anxiety among the respondents was assessed using the DASS-21, which categorizes scores into five levels: normal, mild, moderate, severe, and extremely severe. Based on the analysis of depression scores among 288 participants, the majority 198 individuals (68.8%) fell within the normal range (scores 0–9), indicating minimal or no symptoms of depression. A total of 55 participants (19.1%) were classified as having mild symptoms (scores 10–13), suggesting the presence of minor psychological concerns that may benefit from monitoring or basic support. Additionally, 32 participants (11.1%) scored in the moderate range (scores 14–20), reflecting a more significant level of psychological distress that may require professional intervention. Only 3 participants (1.0%) were categorized as experiencing severe depression (scores 21–27), indicating a need for immediate mental health support. Although a category for extremely severe depression (scores 28 and above) was included in the table, it erroneously listed all 288 participants (100%) under this category. This appears to be a clerical error, and there is no evidence to suggest that any respondents actually fell into the extremely severe range. Overall, while the majority of students appear to be

functioning within a normal psychological range, a notable portion exhibit mild to moderate symptoms that warrant further attention and potential intervention.

Table 4: Prevalence and Severity Levels of Depression among Respondents (DASS-21)

| Score magnitude | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0-9 Normal | 198 | 68.8 |
| 10-13 mild | 55 | 19.1 |
| 12-20 moderet | 32 | 11.1 |
| 21-27 sever | 3 | 1.0 |
| Total | 288 | 100.0 |

According to the analysis of anxiety scores a total of 288 participants, the majority—217 individuals (75.3%) scored within the normal range (0–9), indicating that most participants are not currently experiencing significant psychological distress. This suggests a generally positive level of mental well-being among the majority of the sample. Meanwhile, 54 participants (18.8%) fell into the mild category, with scores ranging from 10 to 13. These individuals may be showing early signs of distress that, while not severe, could benefit from light support, monitoring, or preventive interventions to avoid further escalation.

A smaller group of 17 individuals (5.9%) were identified within the moderate range (noted as 12–20 in the data, though likely meant to be 14–20). This group may be experiencing a more noticeable level of psychological discomfort that could impact their daily functioning, indicating a potential need for targeted psychological support or counselling. Lastly, 3 participants (1.0%) fell into the higher level of distress, although the specific label and score range for this group were not clearly stated. Their low frequency suggests that only a small

fraction of the sample may be facing more serious psychological issues requiring immediate attention.

Overall, while the majority of respondents fall within the normal range, a significant proportion show mild to moderate levels of distress, highlighting the importance of mental health awareness and the need for early intervention strategies within the population.

Table 5: Prevalence and Severity Levels of Anxiety among Respondents (DASS-21)

| Score magnitude | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0-9 Normal | 217 | 75.3 |
| 10-13 mild | 54 | 18.8 |
| 12-20 moderet | 17 | 11.1 |
| Total | 288 | 1.0 |

According to the analysis of stress scores a total of 288 participants, the majority 282 individuals (85.8%) scored within the normal range (0–9), indicating that most respondents are not currently experiencing significant psychological distress. This suggests a generally good level of mental well-being among the majority of the sample population. In addition, 28 participants (9.7%) scored within the mild range (10–13), indicating low levels of psychological symptoms that may not be critical but could benefit from early support or mental health awareness efforts.

A smaller group of 7 participants (2.7%) scored within the moderate range (reported as 12–20, although this overlaps with the mild range), suggesting a moderate level of psychological distress that might require closer attention or targeted intervention. The total number of valid responses was 282 (97.9%), with 6 cases (2.1%) recorded as system-missing meaning these participants did not complete or provide usable responses for this section of the assessment.

Overall, the data shows that the vast majority of participants are functioning within a normal psychological range, with only a small proportion exhibiting mild to moderate levels of distress. While severe psychological symptoms were not reported in this dataset, the presence of even mild to moderate symptoms in a portion of the sample highlights the importance of mental health awareness, early detection, and preventive care. It is also recommended to revise the score ranges to avoid overlap for example, defining mild as 10–13 and moderate as 14–20 to ensure clearer interpretation.

Table 6: Prevalence and Severity Levels of Stress among Respondents (DASS-21)

| Score magnitude | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| 0-9 Normal | 282 | 85.8 |
| 10-13 mild | 28 | 9.7 |
| 12-20moderet | 7 | 2.7 |
| Total | 282 | 97.9 |
| Missing system | 6 | 2.1 |
| Total | 288 | 100 |

4.4. Coping mechanism (Brief cope Result)

Based on the Brief COPE scores, participants depicted varied use of coping solutions with some using more than others. Of the five coping strategies that were assessed, seeking social support emerged as the most frequent solution, with a mean score of 2.20. This suggests that a majority of participants have the propensity of relying on others- such as friends, relatives, or peers-for emotional support or for instrumental assistance in coping with stressors.

This application of social networks can be defined as a relational or collective coping style that is commonly practiced in communal cultures.

The second most widely used strategy was active coping, with an average score of 2.16, and this was followed by planning at 2.13. These results imply that the majority of participants attempt to address stress by intervening actively or by figuring out instrumental steps to handle the situation, demonstrating a problem-focused coping style. Acceptance also demonstrated a nearly similar mean score of 2.12, indicating that most participants cope by accepting the fact of the matter and attempting to get emotionally adjusted rather than resisting the stressor.

Suppressing competing activities registered the lowest mean at 2.05. This indicates that fewer participants reported setting aside other activities or responsibilities in an effort to focus exclusively on stress management. This may imply that participants wish to strike a balance between stress management and performing their normal tasks, and do not favour prioritizing either over the other.

Table 7: Frequencies and Mean Scores of Coping Mechanism Subscales from the Brief COPE

| Coping Strategy | Frequency (0) | Frequency (1) | Frequency (2) | Frequency (3) | Frequency (4) | Mean Score |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Active Coping | 30 | 50 | 100 | 70 | 38 | 2.16 |
| Planning | 20 | 45 | 120 | 70 | 33 | 2.13 |
| Suppression of Competing Activities | 40 | 60 | 90 | 60 | 38 | 2.05 |
| Acceptance | 50 | 40 | 110 | 60 | 28 | 2.12 |
| Seeking Social Support | 25 | 60 | 85 | 75 | 43 | 2.20 |

4.5. Correlation Analysis between Sexual Harassment, Psychological Distress, and Coping Mechanisms

Correlation analyses were conducted to explore the relationships between sexual harassment, psychological distress (depression, anxiety, and stress), and coping strategies. The findings revealed several statistically significant relationships among these variables.

Firstly, there was a moderate positive correlation between sexual harassment and depression ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that participants who reported experiencing higher levels of sexual harassment also reported significantly higher levels of depressive symptoms. This relationship may indicate that being exposed to sexual harassment contributes to feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest in daily activities. It reflects the emotional toll that harassment can have on an individual's psychological well-being, potentially disrupting their mood, motivation, and mental health stability.

Secondly, a weak-to-moderate positive correlation was found between sexual harassment and anxiety ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that individuals who experienced more sexual harassment tended to report higher levels of anxiety. The anxiety symptoms may include nervousness, restlessness, or constant worry, which can arise as a psychological reaction to repeated or traumatic harassment experiences. This finding highlights how harassment can create a persistent sense of threat or fear, which in turn fuels anxious thoughts and behaviours.

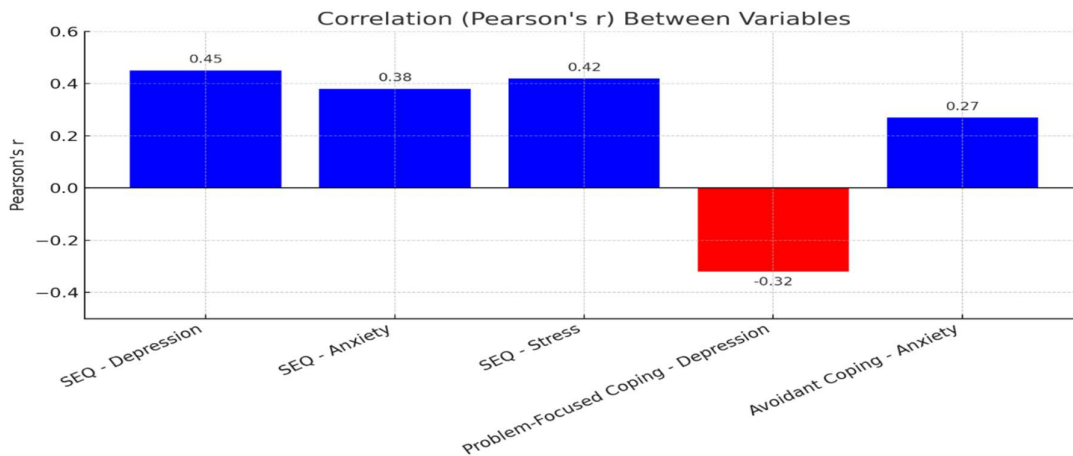
In addition, the results showed a moderate positive correlation between sexual harassment and stress ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$). Participants exposed to more frequent sexual harassment were more likely to experience elevated stress levels. Stress in this context may manifest as irritability, tension, difficulty relaxing, and trouble concentrating. This relationship

suggests that the on-going or repeated nature of harassment acts as a chronic stressor, overwhelming individuals' coping capacities and leading to heightened physiological and emotional responses.

Regarding coping strategies, a moderate negative correlation was observed between problem-focused coping and depression ($r = -0.32, p < 0.05$). This indicates that individuals who frequently employed problem-focused coping strategies such as active coping, planning, and taking concrete steps to address the issue tended to report fewer depressive symptoms. This finding implies that adaptive, solution-oriented coping can serve as a protective factor against depression by enabling individuals to feel more in control of their situations and better able to manage challenges effectively.

Conversely, the results revealed a low to moderate positive correlation between avoidant coping and anxiety ($r = 0.27, p < 0.05$). Participants who were more likely to use avoidant coping strategies such as denial, disengagement, or ignoring the problem also reported higher levels of anxiety. This suggests that avoiding the stressor instead of confronting it may lead to unresolved internal tension, uncertainty, and a sense of helplessness, which can heighten anxiety over time.

Overall, these findings indicate that sexual harassment is significantly associated with increased psychological distress, particularly depression, anxiety, and stress. Moreover, coping strategies play an important role in psychological outcomes: while problem-focused coping appears to mitigate the effects of distress especially depression avoidant coping may intensify anxiety. These results underscore the importance of developing and promoting effective, adaptive coping mechanisms to reduce the negative mental health consequences of sexual harassment.



Here is the bar chart visualizing the Pearson correlation coefficients between the variables

- Positive correlation (blue bar) show that as a one variable increases the other also increase
- Negative correlation (red bar) indicate that as one variable increases the other tend to decrease

Chapter Five

Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the present study in relation to existing literature and theoretical frameworks. The chapter interprets the prevalence of sexual harassment among secondary school students, the level of psychological distress experienced, and the coping mechanisms they employ.

5.1. Prevalence of sexual harassment (SEQ)

In the present study, out of 285 students who provided valid responses, 81 students (28.4%) reported experiencing sexual harassment, while 204 (71.6%) did not. Although this percentage may appear moderate, it is significant and concerning, indicating that nearly one in three students has been exposed to harassment within the school environment. This finding highlights sexual harassment as a pressing issue that affects students' psychological safety, emotional well-being, and academic functioning. When compared to a study by Tesfaye, Worku, and Alemayehu (2020), which revealed that 31.4% of female students in Addis Ababa secondary schools experienced sexual harassment, the results are notably similar. While Tesfaye et al.'s study was gender-specific, focusing solely on female students, the current study includes both male and female participants. Despite this difference in sample composition, the comparable prevalence rate points to the systemic and persistent nature of sexual harassment in Ethiopian schools.

Further support for this finding is provided by a study conducted by Gebremedhin and Nigusie (2022) in Bahir Dar City secondary schools, which found a slightly higher prevalence of sexual harassment, reported by 36.5% of students. Their research also highlighted that both male and female students were affected, although female students reported significantly higher

rates. The consistency in findings across multiple urban regions in Ethiopia demonstrates that sexual harassment is not an isolated problem, but rather a widespread concern in secondary school settings.

The psychological consequences associated with such experiences have been well-documented. Both Tesfaye et al. (2020) and Gebremedhin and Nigusie (2022) emphasized the link between sexual harassment and increased levels of psychological distress, including symptoms of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and school disengagement. These findings align with broader international literature, such as that of Lindquist et al. (2013), which associates harassment during adolescence with long-term mental health challenges. Thus, the current study contributes to the growing body of evidence that sexual harassment in schools is a serious concern that requires immediate attention from educational stakeholders. Implementing preventive strategies, promoting awareness, strengthening school policies, and ensuring access to psychological support services are critical steps toward protecting students and fostering a safe, inclusive learning environment.

5.2. Psychological Distress among Participants

The results of the current study, as measured by the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS), reveal that a considerable number of students are experiencing psychological distress at various levels. Specifically, 31.2% of students reported symptoms of depression ranging from mild to severe, while 24.7% reported symptoms of anxiety beyond the normal range. Stress was the least reported, with only 12.1% of students scoring above normal, indicating that stress symptoms are less prevalent in this population.

These findings are relatively consistent with previous research conducted in Ethiopia. For example, a study by Abebe, Alemayehu, and Berhanu (2021) in Addis Ababa secondary

schools found that 27.2% of students experienced moderate to severe depression, and 23.8% reported moderate to severe anxiety, similar to the prevalence rates observed in the present study. While the stress levels reported in that study were slightly higher (at 15.1% for moderate to severe cases), the general pattern aligns with our findings with depression and anxiety being more prominent than stress.

International research also supports the pattern observed in this study. A study by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995), who developed the DASS, indicated that among adolescent populations in Western contexts, around 30% reported symptoms of depression and anxiety above the normal range, particularly in high-stress school environments. These parallels suggest that psychological distress among secondary school students is not only a local issue but a global one, influenced by academic pressure, social stressors, and lack of access to mental health resources.

Furthermore, the relatively low rates of severe and extremely severe cases in this study may reflect protective factors such as family support, school environment, or resilience strategies adopted by students though this assumption would require further qualitative exploration. Nonetheless, the presence of mild to moderate levels of distress in nearly one-third of the students indicates the need for school-based mental health interventions, including awareness programs, psychological counselling, and stress-coping workshops.

5.3. Coping mechanism used by students

The results of the present study reveal that students predominantly utilize problem-focused coping strategies such as seeking social support ($M = 2.20$), active coping ($M = 2.16$), and planning ($M = 2.13$). These findings are consistent with previous research conducted in Ethiopia by Yirgalem (2020), who also found that Ethiopian university students primarily used

active coping and seeking social support to manage stress. In that study, approximately 70% of students reported using active coping and support-seeking as their main strategies for dealing with academic and personal stressors, highlighting a similar trend to the present study.

International research also supports the predominance of these coping strategies. A study by Carver et al. (1989), who developed the Brief COPE scale, found that problem-focused coping strategies, such as active coping and planning, were the most frequently employed among university students in the United States. This aligns with the findings of the current study, where students showed a preference for taking action or making plans to resolve challenges, rather than engaging in avoidance strategies. The consistency of these findings across different cultural contexts both within Ethiopia and internationally suggests that students in structured environments tend to prefer coping mechanisms that address the problem directly rather than relying on disengagement or avoidance.

On the other hand, strategies like suppression of competing activities ($M = 2.05$) and acceptance ($M = 2.12$) were used less frequently in this study, reflecting a lower reliance on emotion-focused coping strategies. This pattern is also in line with the findings of Yirgalem (2020), who reported that avoidance-based strategies were less frequently employed by Ethiopian students. Furthermore, Carver et al. (1989) found that emotion-focused coping strategies like acceptance and denial were less commonly used by students in high-stress environments, suggesting that students tend to prefer actionable responses to stressors rather than passive acceptance.

5.4. Relationship between Sexual Harassment, Distress, and Coping

The results of the current study reveal significant positive correlations between sexual harassment (SEQ) and mental health outcomes, specifically depression ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$),

anxiety ($r = 0.38, p < 0.01$), and stress ($r = 0.42, p < 0.01$). These findings align with Tolin and Foa (2006), who examined the psychological impact of sexual harassment and trauma on individuals. They reported strong positive correlations between sexual harassment and increased levels of depression, anxiety, and stress ($r = 0.40\text{--}0.50$). Similarly, Jones and Lacey (2017) found a significant association between sexual harassment and negative mental health outcomes in university students, supporting the current study's findings that harassment is a critical factor contributing to psychological distress.

In terms of coping strategies, the present study found that problem-focused coping was negatively correlated with depression ($r = -0.32, p < 0.05$), indicating that students who actively address stressors through problem-solving and planning strategies tend to report lower levels of depression. This result is consistent with the work of Gordon et al. (2019), who found that problem-focused coping was significantly associated with lower levels of depression ($r = -0.35$) and anxiety ($r = -0.28$) in adolescents. Likewise, Aldwin (2007) highlighted that problem-focused coping is generally associated with better psychological outcomes, particularly in reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety, which is consistent with the findings of the current study.

On the other hand, avoidant coping was positively correlated with anxiety ($r = 0.27, p < 0.05$), suggesting that students who engage in avoidant coping strategies are more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety. This finding is in line with research by Carver et al. (1989) and Nezu et al. (2013), who found that avoidant coping strategies, such as denial and disengagement, are linked to poorer mental health outcomes. Carver et al. (1989) specifically noted that individuals relying on avoidance-based mechanisms tend to experience greater distress and anxiety because these strategies do not address the underlying causes of the stress.

Taken together, the findings from this study and previous research underscore the importance of promoting problem-focused coping in mental health interventions, particularly in the context of sexual harassment. Additionally, reducing the reliance on avoidant coping strategies is crucial, as they appear to exacerbate anxiety and depression. The alignment of the current results with previous studies reinforces the notion that both sexual harassment and coping strategies play significant roles in students' mental health outcomes, and addressing these factors in psychological interventions may improve overall well-being.

Chapter Six

Conclusion and Recommendation

The summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the study's findings are presented in this chapter.

6.1 Summary

This study explored how sexual harassment affects the mental health of students at Menelik Secondary School and how those students cope with their experiences. Using a survey of 288 students and well-established psychological tools (SEQ, DASS-21, and Brief COPE), the research found that nearly 28% of students reported experiencing sexual harassment. These experiences were strongly linked to symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress.

The study also looked into the coping strategies students use to deal with this distress. Those who actively tried to address their problems (problem-focused coping) generally had lower levels of depression, while students who tried to avoid the issue (avoidant coping) were more.

Likely to experience anxiety these findings show the emotional toll of harassment and highlight the importance of teaching students' healthier ways to manage stress.

Overall, the research points to a serious need for schools to provide better emotional support systems and take stronger steps to prevent harassment. Creating a safe and respectful learning environment is essential for students' well-being and academic success.

6.2 Conclusions

The present study aimed to investigate the relationships between sexual harassment, psychological distress, and coping mechanisms among students at Menelik Secondary School.

The results revealed significant findings related to all four research questions, providing a deeper understanding of the impact of sexual harassment on students' mental well-being and how they cope with these experiences.

Firstly, the study found a clear relationship between sexual harassment, psychological distress, and coping mechanisms. Specifically, there was a positive correlation between experiences of sexual harassment and elevated levels of psychological distress, including depression, anxiety, and stress. These findings support the premise that sexual harassment is a significant contributor to mental health challenges among students. Furthermore, coping strategies played an important role in shaping these distress outcomes. Problem-focused coping was found to be protective against depression, while avoidant coping was associated with increased anxiety. This indicates that the way students cope with sexual harassment influences the severity of their psychological distress.

Secondly, regarding the prevalence of sexual harassment, the study identified a concerning rate of harassment experiences among the students. This highlights the urgent need for effective interventions and preventive measures within the school environment to protect students from such experiences and reduce their negative impact on mental health.

Thirdly, the study explored the forms of psychological distress experienced by victims of sexual harassment, finding that depression, anxiety, and stress were the most common forms of distress among these students. The findings emphasize the mental health burden faced by students who are subjected to harassment, with their emotional well-being significantly impacted by these negative experiences.

Finally, the study addressed the coping mechanisms employed by students to manage the psychological effects of sexual harassment. It was found that while some students engaged

in problem-focused coping, which seemed to alleviate distress, others resorted to avoidant coping, which exacerbated anxiety and stress. These results underscore the need for schools to not only address the immediate effects of sexual harassment but also to provide students with the tools and resources to develop more adaptive coping strategies to manage psychological distress.

In conclusion, the findings highlight the complex relationship between sexual harassment, psychological distress, and coping strategies among secondary school students. The study underscores the importance of addressing sexual harassment and promoting healthy coping mechanisms to protect and support students' mental health. Further research and school-based interventions are necessary to mitigate the effects of sexual harassment and help students develop more effective ways to cope with the psychological consequences.

6.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that Menelik Secondary School take targeted steps to support students affected by sexual harassment and its psychological impact. School administrators should prioritize the integration of mental health services by ensuring access to trained counsellors or psychologists who can provide emotional support and early intervention. Teachers and school staff are encouraged to receive training to help them recognize signs of harassment and psychological distress and to respond appropriately, fostering a safe and supportive learning environment. Curriculum developers should consider incorporating life skills education that emphasizes stress management, resilience, and problem-focused coping strategies. These skills will help students manage psychological distress more effectively. In addition, peer-led initiatives and awareness campaigns should be promoted to reduce the stigma around reporting harassment and to encourage mutual support among students. Lastly, researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies, particularly using

longitudinal and qualitative methods, to explore students' personal experiences and the cultural or contextual factors influencing harassment and coping mechanisms. These insights would help inform more effective and sustainable interventions.

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Appendix

Appendix I: English Version questionnaire Addis Ababa University

College of Education and Behavioral Studies School of Psychology

Dear respondents,

I am a postgraduate student at Addis Ababa University, college of education and behavioral studies school of psychology. I am doing a master thesis on entitled: sexual harassment, psychological distress and coping mechanism among Menelik secondary school students. This research is being done for the fulfillment of the Master of Arts Degree in Counseling Psychology at Addis Ababa University. Therefore, you are kindly requested to give genuine responses to the questionnaire. Your responses have a crucial role in the success of this study. Your participation in this study will be completely voluntary. It will take 5-7 min to fully finish the questionnaire. The researcher will keep the confidentiality of the responses of the participants and the data will only be used for the academic use only.

General Directions:

- Please do not write your name on any part of the questionnaire.
- These questionnaires were filled with your own consent.

If you have any question and comments, don't hesitate to contact the researcher with address.

Email: *blenmesfin4@gmail.com* **Mobile No:** +251910259202

Thank you in advance for your cooperation

Part one -Demographic Variables

- 1. Gender Male Female
- 2. Age
- 3. Grade

Part two SEQ (Sexual harassment Questionnaire)

On the next few pages there are questions related to sexual harassment. Some of these questions may be sensitive, but please be assured that your responses will be completely anonymous and cannot be associated with you.

| Behaviour | Never | Once | Sometimes | Often |
|--|--------------|-------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1. Someone made sexually inappropriate comments about your body. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 2. You were touched in a sexual way without your consent. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 3. You received unwanted sexual messages (online or via phone). | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 4. Someone stared at you in a sexually suggestive way repeatedly. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 5. Someone showed you sexually explicit jokes or images. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 6. You were pressured to engage in sexual activity. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 7. Rumours or gossip of a sexual nature were spread about you. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 8. A teacher or staff member made sexually inappropriate remarks to you. | [] | [] | [] | [] |

Part Two: Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale

Please read each statement and putting (x) mark which indicates how much the statement applied to you. There are no rights or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement.

The rating scale is as follows:

- 0- Did not apply to me at all
- 1- Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time
- 2- Applied to me to a considerable degree or a good part of time
- 3- Applied to me very much or most of the time

| | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (s) | I found it hard to wind down | | | | |
| 2 (a) | I was aware of dryness of my mouth | | | | |
| 3 (d) | I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all | | | | |
| 4 (a) | I experienced breathing difficulty (e.g. excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion) | | | | |
| 5 (d) | I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things | | | | |
| 6 (s) | I tended to over-react to situations | | | | |
| 7 (a) | I experienced trembling (e.g. in the hands) | | | | |
| 8 (s) | I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy | | | | |
| 9 (a) | I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself | | | | |
| 10 (d) | I felt that I had nothing to look forward to | | | | |
| 11 (s) | I found myself getting agitated | | | | |
| 12 (s) | I found it difficult to relax | | | | |
| 13 (d) | I felt down-hearted and blue | | | | |
| 14 (s) | I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing | | | | |

Part three brief cope inventories

The following questions ask how you have sought to cope with a hardship in your life. Read the statements and indicate how much you have been using each coping style.

| No. | Item | 1 (Not at all) | 2 (A little bit) | 3 (A medium amount) | 4 (A lot) |
|-----|---|----------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| 1 | I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things. | | | | |
| 2 | I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in. | | | | |
| 3 | I've been saying to myself "this isn't real". | | | | |
| 4 | I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better. | | | | |
| 5 | I've been getting emotional support from others. | | | | |
| 6 | I've been giving up trying to deal with it. | | | | |
| 7 | I've been taking action to try to make the situation better. | | | | |
| 8 | I've been refusing to believe that it has happened. | | | | |
| 9 | I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape. | | | | |
| 10 | I've been getting help and advice from other people. | | | | |
| 11 | I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it. | | | | |
| 12 | I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive. | | | | |
| 13 | I've been criticizing myself. | | | | |

| No. | Item | 1 (Not at all) | 2 (A little bit) | 3 (A medium amount) | 4 (A lot) |
|-----|--|----------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| 14 | I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do. | | | | |
| 15 | I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone. | | | | |
| 16 | I've been giving up the attempt to cope. | | | | |
| 17 | I've been looking for something good in what is happening. | | | | |
| 18 | I've been making jokes about it. | | | | |
| 19 | I've been doing something to think about it less (movies, TV, sleeping, shopping, etc.). | | | | |
| 20 | I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened. | | | | |
| 21 | I've been expressing my negative feelings. | | | | |
| 22 | I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs. | | | | |
| 23 | I've been trying to get advice or help from other people. | | | | |
| 24 | I've been learning to live with it. | | | | |
| 25 | I've been thinking hard about what steps to take. | | | | |
| 26 | I've been blaming myself for things that happened. | | | | |
| 27 | I've been praying or meditating. | | | | |
| 28 | I've been making fun of the situation. | | | | |

-----**THANKYOU**-----

Appendix: Amharic version of questioner

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የትምህርትና ባሕሪ ጥናት ኮሌጅ

የሥነ-ልቦና ትምህርት ክፍል

የካውንሲሊንግ ሳይክሎጂ የ2ኛ ዲግሪ ፕሮግራም

ውድ ተሳታፊዎች፡-

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የትምህርትና የባህሪ ጥናት ትምህርት ቤት የድህረ ምረቃ ተማሪ ነኝ። በምኒልክ 2ኛ ደረጃ ት/ቤት ተማሪዎች መካከል ጾታዊ ትንተና፣ ስነልቦናዊ ጭንቀት እና የመቋቋሚያ ዘዴ በሚል ርዕስ የማስተር ቴሲስ እየሰራሁ እገኛለሁ። ይህ ጥናት በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በካውንሲሊንግ ሳይክሎጂ የማስተርስ አፍ ጥበባት ዲግሪ የሚሰጠውን ለማጠናቀቅ እየሰራሁት ያለ ተግባር ነው። ስለዚህ ለመጠይቁ ትክክለኛ ምላሽ እንድትሰጡ በትህትና እየጠየኩ። የእርስዎ ምላሾች ለዚህ ጥናት ስኬት ወሳኝ ሚና አላቸው። በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ የእርስዎ ተሳትፎ ሙሉ በሙሉ በፈቃደኝነት ላይ የተመሠረተ ሆኖ መጠይቁን ሙሉ በሙሉ ለመጨረስ ከ20-30 ደቂቃዎች ይወስዳል። ተመራማሪው የተሳታፊዎችን ምላሾች ሚስጥራዊነት ይጠብቃል እንዲሁም መረጃውን ለአካዳሚክ አገልግሎት ብቻ ጥቅም ላይ ይውላል።

ማሳሰቢያ፡-

- በዚህ መጠይቅ ላይ ስምዎትን መጻፍ አያስፈልግም፤
- ምላሽዎን ሲሰጡም በበጎ ፍቃድዎ ይሆናል፤

በዚህ ጉዳይ ላይ ማንኛውም ዓይነት ጥያቄ ወይም አስተያየት ካልዎት ከዚህ በመቀጠል ባለው መንገድ ያግኙኝ።

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ስለትብብርዎ በቅድሚያ ላመሰግንዎት እወዳለሁ።

እባክዎ ፈቃደኝነትዎን በፊርማዎ ያረጋግጡ፤

የወሲብ/የጾታዊ ትንኮሳ ልምድ መጠይቅ

ዓላማው፡ ተማሪዎች ወሲብ/ጾታዊ ትንኮሳ ደርሶባቸው እንደሆነ ለመገምገም።

ክፍል 1፡- የግል ሁኔታን የተመለከቱ መረጃዎች፤

1. ዕድሜ፡ _____
2. ጾታ፡
 - ወንድ
 - ሴት
3. የክፍል፡ ደረጃ፡
 - 9ኛ
 - 10ኛ
 - 11ኛ
 - 12ኛ
4. የኑሮ ዝግጅት፡
 - ከወላጆች ጋር
 - ከዘመዶች ጋር
 - በተቀመጠ መኖሪያ (ዶርም)
 - ብቻውን
 - ሌላ

ክፍል 2፡ የወሲብ/የጾታዊ ትንኮሳ ልምድ፤

እባክዎትን በቅንነት ይመልሱ። መልሶችዎ ሙሉ በሙሉ ሚስጥራዊ ሆነው ይቆያሉ።

| ተ.ቁ | ተግባር | በፍጹም | አንድ ጊዜ | አንዳንድ ጊዜ | ሁልጊዜ |
|-----|---|------|--------|----------|------|
| 1 | አንድ ሰው የሰውነትዎን ሁኔታ በማየት ያልተገባ ጾታዊ/ወሲባዊ አስተያየት ሰጥቷል፤ | | | | |
| 2 | ያልፈቀደዎ በጾታዊ መንገድ/መንፈስ ተነክተዉ/ተጎንጎተለዉ ያቃሉ፤ | | | | |
| 3 | ያልተፈለጉ ወሲባዊ መልዕክቶች (በመስመር ላይ ወይም በስልክ) ደርሰዎታል።፤ | | | | |
| 4 | አንድ ሰው ወሲብ ቀስቃሽ በሆነ መንገድ ደጋግሞ አይቶዎት ነበር።፤ | | | | |
| 5 | የሆነ ሰው ወሲባዊ ግልጽ ቀልዶችን ወይም ምስሎችን አሳይቶዎታል፤ | | | | |
| 6 | ጾታዊ ተግባራት/ ግብረ ሥጋ ግንኙነት እንዲፈጸሙ ተገደዋል፤ | | | | |
| 7 | በእርስዎ ላይ ስለ ወሲባዊ ተፈጥሮ ወሬ ወይም ሐሜት ተሰራጭቷል | | | | |
| 8 | አንድ አስተማሪ ወይም ሰራተኛ ለእርስዎ ወሲባዊ/ጾታዊ ተገቢ ያልሆኑ አስተያየቶችን ሰጥተዋል | | | | |

ክፍል 3፡- ድብርት፣ የመንፈስ ውጥረት እና ጭንቀት መለኪያዎች

እያንዳንዱን መግለጫ አንብበው የእርስዎን ሁኔታ የሚገልፀውን 0፣ 1፣ 2 እና 3 የመለኪያ መጠን ላይ መርጠው ትክክለኛው የ(x) ምልክትን ያስፍሩ። በዚህ ክፍል ውስጥ ትክክለኛ ወይም ስህተት ተብሎ የሚፈረጅ መልስ የለም። በአንድ ጥያቄ ላይ ብዙ ጊዜ በማሰላሰል አያሳልፉ።

0 =እኔን አይገልፅኝም፤ 1=በተወሰነ መልኩ ይገልፀኛል 2=በአመዛኙ ይገልፀኛል 3=እጅግ በጣም ይገልፀኛል

| ተ.ቁ | መጠይቅ | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (s) | መረጋጋት ይከብደኛል። | | | | |
| 2 (a) | አፌ ይደርቅብኛል። | | | | |
| 3 (d) | ምንም ጥሩ ስሜት አይሰማኝም። | | | | |
| 4 (a) | መተንፈስ ይከብደኛል (መሳል፣ ቶሎቶሎ መተንፈስ፣ ትንፋሽ ማጣት) | | | | |
| 5 (d) | ስራ ለመስራት መነቃቃት ይከብደኛል። | | | | |
| 6 (s) | አንዳንድ ሁኔታዎች ላይ በጣም አጋንኛለሁ። | | | | |
| 7 (a) | አንዳንድ እጆቼ ይንቀጠቀጡብኛል። | | | | |
| 8 (s) | ነገሮችን በፍርሃትና በጭንቀት እንደማድረግ ይሰማኛል። | | | | |
| 9 (a) | አንዳንድ ሁኔታዎች ላይ ተደነባብራ እራሴን ሞኝ ወይም ጅል እንዳልመስል እፈራለሁ። | | | | |
| 10 (d) | ወደ ፊት እንዲሆንልኝ ብዬ የማስበው ነገር የለኝም። | | | | |
| 11 (s) | አንዳንድ በጣም መርበትበት ይሰማኛል። | | | | |
| 12 (s) | ዘና ለማለት ይከብደኛል። | | | | |
| 13 (d) | አንዳንድ ድብርት ይሰማኛል። | | | | |
| 14 (s) | የምስራውን ስራ ለሚያቋርጠኝ ነገር ትግስቱን አጣለሁ። | | | | |
| 15 (a) | ለመረበሽ/ለመደንገጥ በጣም የተጠጋሁ እንደሆንኩ ይመስለኛል። | | | | |
| 16 (d) | ስለምንም ነገር መጓጓት ወይም ተስፈኛ መሆን አልችልም። | | | | |
| 17 (d) | ዋጋ የሌለኝ ሰው እንደሆንኩ ይሰማኛል። | | | | |
| 18 (s) | በቀላሉ ስሜቴ እንደሚገባ አስባለሁ። | | | | |
| 19 (a) | የአካል እንቅስቃሴ ብቀንስም የልብ-ምቴ ሲረበሽ/ሲመታ ይሰማኛል። | | | | |
| 20 (a) | ያለምክንያት የፍርሃት ስሜት ይሰማኛል። | | | | |
| 21 (d) | ህይወት ትርጉም እንደሌለው ይሰማኛል። | | | | |

ክፍል 4:- አጭር የመቋቋም መሳሪያዎች

የሚከተሉት ጥያቄዎች በህይወትህ ውስጥ ያጋጠሙህን ችግሮች እንዴት ለመቋቋም እንደሞከርክ ይጠይቃሉ። መግለጫዎቹን ያንብቡ እና እያንዳንዱን የመቋቋሚያ ስልት ምን ያህል እየተጠቀሙ እንደነበር ምርጫዎን የ(x) ምልክትን በማስፈር ያመልክቱ፤

| ተ.ቁ | ተግባር | ይህን በፍፁም አላደርግም | ትንሽ | መካከለኛ መጠን | ይህን ብዙ ጊዜ ሠርቻለሁ |
|-----|--|-----------------|-----|-----------|-----------------|
| 1 | አእምሮዬን ከነገሮች ለማንሳት ወደ ሥራ ወይም ሌሎች ተግባራት እዞር ነበር፤ | | | | |
| 2 | ስላለሁበት ሁኔታ አንድ ነገር ለማድረግ ትኩረት ሰጥቻለሁ፤ | | | | |
| 3 | ለራሴ “ይህ እውነት አይደለም”፤ | | | | |
| 4 | ለራሴ ጥሩ ስሜት እንዲሰማኝ ለማድረግ አልኮል ወይም ሌሎች መድኃኒቶችን አጠቀም ነበር፤ | | | | |
| 5 | ከሌሎች ስሜታዊ ድጋፍ እያገኘሁ ነው፤ | | | | |
| 6 | ችግሩን ለመቋቋም መሞከሩን ትቼዋለሁ፤ | | | | |
| 7 | ሁኔታውን ለማሻሻል እየሞከርኩ ነው፤ | | | | |
| 8 | መከሰቱን ለማመን ፍቃደኛ ነኝ፤ | | | | |
| 9 | ደስ የማይል ስሜቶቼን ለማምለጥ ነገሮችን እያወራሁ ነበር፤ | | | | |
| 10 | ከሌሎች ሰዎች እርዳታ እና ምክር እያገኘሁ ነበር፤ | | | | |
| 11 | እሱን ለመቋቋም እንዲረዳኝ አልኮል ወይም ሌሎች መድኃኒቶችን አጠቀም ነበር፤ | | | | |
| 12 | የበለጠ አወንታዊ እንዲመስል ለማድረግ በተለየ መልኩ ለማየት ሞከርኩ፤ | | | | |
| 13. | ራሴን ስወቅስ ነበር፤ | | | | |

| ተ.ቁ | ተግባር | ይህን በፍፁም አላደረግም | ትንሽ | መካከለኛ መጠን | ይህን ብዙ ጊዜ ሠርቻለሁ |
|-----|--|-----------------|-----|-----------|-----------------|
| 14 | ምን ማድረግ እንዳለብኝ ስትራቴጂ ለማውጣት እየሞከርኩ ነበር፤ | | | | |
| 15 | ከአንድ ሰው መጽናኛ እና መረዳት እያገኘሁ ነው፤ | | | | |
| 16 | ለመቋቋም ያደረግኩትን ሙከራ ትቼዋለሁ፤ | | | | |
| 17 | እየሆነ ባለው ነገር ውስጥ ጥሩ ነገር ፈልጌ ነበር፤ | | | | |
| 18 | ስለ እሴት እየቀለድኩ ነበር፤ | | | | |
| 19 | እንደ ሲኒማ መሄድ፣ ቴሌቪዥን መመልከት፣ ማንበብ፣ ቀን ማለም፣ መተኛት ወይም ልብስ መሸመትን የመሳሰሉ ስለሱ ያነሰ የማስበውን ነገር እያደረግሁ ነው፤ | | | | |
| 20 | የተከሰተውን እውነታ እውነታውን ተቀብያለሁ፤ | | | | |
| 21 | አሉታዊ ስሜቶቼን እገልጻለሁ፤ | | | | |
| 22 | በሃይማኖቱ ወይም በመንፈሳዊ እምነቴ መጽናኛ ለማግኘት እየሞከርኩ ነው፤ | | | | |
| 23 | ስለ ምን ምክር ወይም እርዳታ ከሌሎች ሰዎች ለማግኘት እየሞከርኩ ነበር፤ | | | | |
| 24 | ከእሱ ጋር መኖርን ተምሬያለሁ፤ | | | | |
| 25 | ምን እርምጃዎችን መውሰድ እንዳለብኝ ጠንክራ አስብ ነበር፤ | | | | |
| 26 | ለተከሰቱት ነገሮች እራሴን እወቅሳለሁ፤ | | | | |
| 27 | እየጸለይኩ ወይም እየሰላሰልኩ ነው፤ | | | | |
| 28 | ሁኔታውን እያሾፍኩ ነበር፤ | | | | |

-ተፈጻሚ-



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