

## UNEMPLOYMENT AND SEXUAL ADVANCES PREVALENCE AMONG FEMALE JOB SEEKERS IN LAGOS METROPOLIS

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### Abstract

The study examined how worsening economic conditions coupled with shrinking employment opportunities in the country exacerbated the pervasiveness of sexual advances to female job seekers. A survey design was adopted in the study. The survey was conducted on 125 respondents out of an infinite population using a convenience sampling technique. The psychometric property of the questionnaire used in eliciting the necessary information was tested by the use of Cronbach Alpha statistic which produced an Alpha coefficient value of  $\alpha = 0.903$ . The findings of the study revealed that unemployment has a significant influence on sexual advances prevalence ( $t = 3.960$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, the findings revealed that sociocultural factors also have a significant influence on sexual advances prevalence ( $t = 10.582$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) while it was also found that the existing legal framework has a significant influence on sexual advances prevalence ( $t = 10.7333$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The study therefore concludes that the incidence of unemployment is a factor responsible for the prevalence of sexual advances among job seekers in the Lagos State metropolis. Based on the findings, the study therefore recommended among others that there is a need to strengthen legal frameworks to effectively address sexual harassment in the workplace, including during the job-seeking process. Further studies on this subject matter should consider looking at the prevalence of sexual advances among job seekers across other regions of Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Sexual advances, sexual coercion, sexual harassment, socio-cultural factors, unemployment.

### Introduction

Sexual advances in the workplace, particularly during the job search, have long been a problem on a worldwide scale (Tade & Udechukwu, 2020). However, in Nigeria, the severe economic circumstances and high unemployment rates make the phenomenon more prevalent (Mezie-Okoye & Alamina, 2014). According to World Economic Forum estimates from 2021, achieving gender parity in the economy would take more than 267 years at the present rate of advancement. These disparities are exacerbated by workplace sexual harassment (Ogunwale & Oshiname, 2017). Sexual harassment not only increases the likelihood of absenteeism and work disengagement among individuals who continue in their existing positions, but it also has a significant negative impact on employment rates when harassers fire their victims. Numerous continents have seen the acknowledged effects of these economic implications (Merkin 2008; Merkin and Shah 2014).

Unemployment in Nigeria is still a significant social problem that is intricately linked to many aspects of economic stability and public well-being (Nguyen, Padilla & Villaveces, 2019). The labour market is having difficulty keeping up with the rapidly expanding population, which has resulted in a sharp increase in unemployment, especially for women and young people (Ajayi & Ezegebe, 2020). In the fourth quarter of 2020, the National Bureau of Statistics stated that the unemployment rate in Nigeria was roughly 33.3%. Notably, young women constituted a substantial share of this group. As a result of the high unemployment rate among women, they are more likely to be the target of sexual advances and other sorts of exploitation while looking for work (Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018). Female job seekers may feel pressured to accept or comply with unacceptable demands to obtain a job because of the desperate need to obtain employment, which frequently puts them in dangerous circumstances (Oyekanmi, 2015). This type of exploitation not only violates their rights and sense of dignity but also feeds the discriminatory and unequal gender society (Afolabi & Omole, 2011).

Numerous studies show the scope of the issue in high-income nations, even though there isn't a single global poll that offers estimates of the prevalence of sexual harassment worldwide. According to a survey conducted across 28 EU nations, 55% of women said they had directly encountered sexual harassment at some point in their lives (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014;

Directorate-General for Communication, 2016). Comparably, 59% of American women said they have been the victim of verbal or physical sexual harassment (Graf 2018). Moreover, extensive research conducted in several regions shows the high prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace globally.

Workplace sexual harassment has grown to be a significant worldwide problem. It has significant implications for employee well-being, organisational performance, and national economies. Sexual advances may be defined as any odd or unwelcome sexual activity. It occurs when another person (male or female) is subjected to repeated, unwanted sexual moves, solicitations for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical sexual behaviour against their will. Some job seekers confront these issues during their job hunt, and many have fallen victim to this unwanted conduct, which is typically associated with sexual harassment (Idris, Adaja, Audu & Aye, 2016).

The United Nations has identified sexual harassment as a violation of human rights and an obstacle to workplace gender equality. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines sexual harassment as "any unwanted sexual conduct, verbal, nonverbal, or physical, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. "Sexual harassment may have a significant influence on a person's well-being, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and poor job performance (ILO, 2021). According to a survey conducted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in the United States, up to 75% of women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace, compared to 25% of males. Similarly, a survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) revealed that one in every two women in the European Union has experienced sexual harassment at some time in their life.

In Nigeria, unemployment is a major problem; as of the fourth quarter of 2020, the National Bureau of Statistics reported that the country's unemployment rate was 33.3%. Because of institutional, sociocultural, and economic hurdles to work, women are disproportionately affected by this high rate. Female job searchers frequently encounter sexual approaches and harassment while navigating the difficult job market; this is a problem that negatively impacts their mental health, financial security, and general well-being. The intersection of unemployment and sexual advances presents a critical socio-economic issue for female job seekers.

Sexual harassment of job seekers is a serious but little-studied problem in Nigeria. Female job seekers may be put in vulnerable situations where they are the target of unreasonable demands from recruiting agencies or potential employers due to restricted opportunities and economic needs. In addition to undermining their rights and sense of dignity, this exploitation feeds the cycle of discrimination and inequality against women. Notwithstanding the gravity of the situation, there is a conspicuous dearth of thorough information and studies that particularly tackle the relationship between sexual harassment and unemployment among Nigerian women seeking jobs.

This issue affects more people than just the direct victims. Its wider socioeconomic ramifications include the maintenance of gender disparity in the workforce, impeding women's economic empowerment, and creating an unwelcoming climate for job seekers that deters women from applying. Sexual approaches made to women during their job hunt can cause psychological distress, low self-esteem, and motivational declines in them, all of which can harm their chances of finding work in the future and advancing their careers.

It is imperative to address this problem to promote a fair and safe labour market in Nigeria. A comprehensive study is desperately needed to determine the frequency of sexual approaches made to job searchers who are female, identify the underlying causes of this exploitation, and create workable countermeasures. Such studies ought to guide legislative changes, public awareness initiatives, and the establishment of victim support programmes, all of which will help to safeguard and empower women in the workforce. By addressing this gap, the study aims to foster a safer, more equitable job market where women can seek employment without fear of harassment and exploitation

The broad objective of this study is to examine the relationship between unemployment and sexual advances prevalence among female job seekers in Nigeria. To accomplish the broad objective of this study, the following specific objectives will be pursued: to examine the relationship between unemployment and the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers; to investigate the impact of socio-cultural factors on the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers and to assess the influence of existing legal frameworks and policies on the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers. In line with the specific objectives of the study, the present research seeks to provide answers to the following research questions: what is the relationship between unemployment and the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers? How do socio-cultural factors impact the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers and what is the impact of existing legal frameworks and policies on the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers?

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Social Exchange Theory**

This theory posits that individuals engage in social interactions based on exchanging resources, such as money, goods, and services (Homans, 1958). When applied to the workplace, this theory suggests that employers may engage in sexual advances as a means of gaining power or resources from their victims. Social exchange theory suggests that sexual advances towards job seekers during the hiring process may be influenced by social exchange processes, where job seekers may feel obligated to comply with sexual advances in exchange for potential job opportunities or career advancement. This theory suggests that job seekers may face a dilemma of whether to comply with sexual advances or risk jeopardizing their chances of getting hired or advancing in their careers. For example, a supervisor may offer a promotion or favourable work assignment to an employee in exchange for sexual favours. The victim may comply with these demands in the hope of obtaining the desired reward. However, if the victim refuses, the supervisor may retaliate by withholding the promised reward or even terminating their employment (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). This perspective highlights the power dynamics involved in sexual harassment and suggests that it is often driven by the desire to gain power or resources from others.

#### **Social Dominance Theory**

This theory posits that individuals are motivated by the desire to maintain and enhance their social dominance over others (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). When applied to the workplace, this theory suggests that individuals who hold positions of power, such as supervisors or managers, may be more likely to engage in sexual harassment as a means of asserting their dominance over their subordinates. This behaviour may be motivated by a desire to maintain their status within the organization or to reinforce the existing power structure (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). This perspective highlights the role of social hierarchies in sexual harassment and suggests that it is often driven by the desire to maintain or reinforce social dominance.

#### **Power Dynamics Theory**

Power dynamics theory suggests that power imbalances between job seekers and hiring managers may influence sexual advances toward job seekers during the hiring process. Hiring managers may misuse their authority and exploit the vulnerable position of job seekers to engage in sexual advances. This theory posits that individuals in higher hierarchical positions may be more likely to engage in sexual advances toward job seekers due to their perceived power and control over the hiring process. While gender power dynamics vary from organization to organization, the reality is that in many workplaces, men hold the majority of positions of power. This can create several challenges for women, who may find themselves feeling marginalized or excluded from important decision-making processes. Fortunately, some steps can be taken to level the playing field and ensure that everyone has a voice in the workplace. (Li, Matouschek & Powell, 2015).

Overall, these theories offer valuable insights into the causes and dynamics of sexual harassment in the workplace. By understanding these underlying factors, organisations can develop more effective strategies for preventing and addressing sexual harassment.

## Conceptual Review

### 2.1.1 Sexual Advances Prevalence

Sexual advances prevalence describes how frequently and to what degree people—especially women—experience improper and unwanted sexual behaviours, frequently in situations where there is an imbalance of power (Kilonzo, Ndung'u & Nthamburi, 2009). These advances might take the form of spoken requests, implied demands for sexual favours in exchange for career prospects, or physical gestures made in the workplace or throughout the job search process (Adejimi, Sabageh & Adedokun, 2016). Studies reveal that sexual approaches are a widespread problem that negatively impacts women's professional advancement, work happiness, and mental health (Fitzgerald et al., 1997). High unemployment rates in Nigeria make it more likely for female job seekers to be used in this way. Research shows that the high incidence of sexual harassment in Nigeria is caused by sociocultural norms and insufficient legislative safeguards (Okurame, 2012). Moreover, underreporting frequently results from a lack of efficient reporting channels and a fear of becoming a victim, which feeds the cycle of abuse and impunity (Afolabi & Omole, 2011).

Therefore, comprehending the frequency of sexual advances is essential for formulating focused interventions and regulations meant to establish a more secure and fair work environment for female employees. A multifaceted strategy is needed to address this issue, including improved victim support networks, societal shifts, and strong legal frameworks.

### Unemployment and Sexual Advances Prevalence

Unemployment is the condition in which people who are capable and want to work cannot locate adequate job prospects (Dumbili & Williams, 2017). It is an important economic indicator that represents the state of an economy (David, Ezechi & Wapmuk, 2018). High unemployment rates can cause economic suffering, social instability, and psychological strain for job seekers (International Labour Organisation, 2020). The relationship between unemployment and the occurrence of sexual advances is strong, especially among female job seekers (Ajayi & Somefun, 2019). When unemployment rates are high, job competitiveness increases, and employers may take advantage of this desperation by making unwanted sexual advances in exchange for job prospects (Okechukwu, Souza, Davis, & de Castro, 2016). This power imbalance increases the vulnerability of job applicants, particularly women, to sexual harassment and extortion.

According to some studies, in environments with high unemployment, such as Nigeria, the prevalence of sexual advances is significantly higher due to economic desperation and restricted employment opportunities for women (Nwankwo, Kanu, & Nwogu, 2013). Addressing this issue involves comprehensive solutions, such as strong legal frameworks, societal reform, and economic policies focused on reducing unemployment and safeguarding job seekers from exploitation. We therefore propose this hypothesis;

**H01:** There is no significant positive relationship between unemployment and the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers.

### Socio-Cultural Factors and Sexual Advances Prevalence

Socio-cultural elements are the social, cultural, and environmental impacts on people's behaviours, attitudes, and relationships within a society (Izugbara, 2015). These influences include societal standards, cultural beliefs, gender roles, and power dynamics, which influence how people perceive and interact with one another (Hofstede 2011). The correlation between socio-cultural factors and the occurrence of sexual advances is severe (Oyekanmi, 2015). In many communities, conventional gender roles and cultural norms can perpetuate power inequalities and normalise unethical behaviour (David, Ezechi & Wapmuk, 2018).

In Nigeria, for example, patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes frequently lead to a society in which sexual approaches and harassment are ignored or even implicitly tolerated (Aina, 2012). These socio-cultural forces prevent victims from reporting crimes, which can lead to a lack of responsibility for perpetrators (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013). According to research, socio-cultural variables such as patriarchal attitudes, gender inequality, and societal stigma have a key role in the high occurrence of sexual advances among female job seekers (Phillips & Mbizvo, 2016). This climate not only encourages



harassment but impedes efforts to confront and prevent such behaviours (Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018). To address the influence of socio-cultural factors on sexual advances prevalence, it is necessary to promote gender equality, educate the public, and implement complete cultural change to dissuade offenders and provide a more supportive atmosphere for victims (Tade & Udechukwu, 2020). This hypothesis is thus proposed;

**H02:** Socio-cultural factors do not have any significant impact on the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers.

### **Legal Frameworks and Sexual Advances Prevalence**

The organised system of laws, rules, and policies put in place by governing authorities to control behaviour, uphold the rule of law, and safeguard the rights of individuals within a community is referred to as a legal framework (Mezie-Okoye & Alamina, 2014). According to Stychin (1994), these frameworks give the legal foundation for addressing issues like sexual harassment, identifying inappropriate behaviour, and laying out the penalties for offenders.

It is important to understand the relationship between legal frameworks and the frequency of sexual advances. Good legal frameworks, with their precise definitions, severe fines, and strong enforcement mechanisms, can drastically lower the frequency of sexual advances (Phillips & Mbizvo, 2016). Nonetheless, there is a lack of public knowledge and lax enforcement of sexual harassment legislation in Nigeria (Oyekanmi, 2015). Sexual approaches are quite common because of the absence of strong legal protection and enforcement, which allows offenders to act with impunity (Adejimi, Sabageh & Adedokun, 2016).

According to research, thorough legal frameworks that are effectively put into place and upheld might decrease the number of sexual harassment cases by discouraging potential offenders and giving victims of harassment a way to seek compensation (McCann, 2005). For the protection of vulnerable groups, such as female job seekers, and the advancement of a safer, more equal workplace, these frameworks must be strengthened. We thus propose this hypothesis;

**H03:** Existing legal frameworks and policies do not have any significant impact on the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers.

### **Empirical Review**

According to a 2021 survey by Women in News (WIN), a development programme of the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), one in two women has suffered sexual harassment in the workplace in African media organisations. Women in News survey relied on data collated by 584 media professionals in eight African countries via an online survey and interviews. 70.2 percent of respondents were women, 27.4 percent were men, and 2.4 percent non-conforming gender. The research shows that 56 per cent of female participants have experienced verbal sexual harassment at least once, 31 percent five times or more, and 38 percent have experienced physical sexual harassment at least once, 12 percent five times or more. The respondents confirmed that different types of harassment take place in the workplace, “45 percent were looked at sexually, 44 percent received unwanted sexual comments/remarks about their clothing/accessories, 43 percent had conversations with uncomfortable sexual jokes/stories told, 35 percent received sexual statements/comments about their bodies, 33 percent told crude/gross sexual things and asked to talk about sexual matters when they didn’t want to, 27 percent received non-stop invitations to go out, get dinner, have drinks or have sex even after declining.”

About 77 percent of respondents stated that the abuse happened in the office/primary place of work with 91 percent of perpetrators being male. 69 percent who faced workplace sexual harassment experienced anxiety, 60 percent experienced depression, and 34 percent experienced post-traumatic stress (Okpeku, 2023). A survey was conducted on female students and professors from six Tokyo universities, including the University of Tokyo and Sophia University on “the sexual harassment of female job-seekers”

The female students who went for practical job experiences in various sectors of the Japanese economy shared their job-hunting experiences and it was discovered that many female students had fallen victim

to sexual harassment while seeking employment. Some students were asked questions unrelated to work by male company employees, such as "What kind of relationship do you have with your partner?" or they were asked out for drinks. According to the survey of university students reported by the business news website Business Insider Japan, a whopping 359 out of 723 people, or about 50 percent of the respondents, said they had experienced sexual harassment during the recruitment process. Three-quarters said they have never told anyone, not even those close to them, about their traumatic experiences. And majority of the subjects reported that the harassment was common in small enterprises (78%) as against large or government corporations (22%) (Japan Times, 2019).

McLaughlin, Uggen and Blackstone's (2017) study provided important evidence from interviews and surveys that illustrated how an experience of sexual harassment early on in a woman's career could result in financial and career damage. The authors averred that systemic harassment that goes unchecked inhibits and discourages women from even applying for jobs in those sectors and fields where harassment is expected based on historical norms. Women entering higher education or the job market with career goals may be thinking twice about careers where gender inequality and the known lack of serious attention to risks women face in male-dominated workplaces steer clear of these risks; killing off potential career paths before the first step.

Extensive research exists on women's choice to participate in the labour force. However, very few have tried to link the threat of sexual violence to women's economic choices, particularly labour supply decisions. To our knowledge, Klasen and Pieters (2019); Chakraborty, Mukherjee, Rachapalli and Saha (2018) and Siddique (2021) are the only papers to study the relationship between sexual violence and women's labour force participation. However, both, Klasen, S and Pieters J (2019) and Chakraborty et al. (2018) only established correlations. While the former found a positive correlation in a Delhi-based survey, the latter used cross-sectional data from the India Human Development survey to find a negative relationship. The discrepancy in findings could be driven by the non-causal approaches. Siddique study (2021) is the closest to the current work. She used data from two rounds of the National Sample Survey between 2009 and 2012 and links it with political events data from the Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone (GDELT) to study the effect of any physical or sexual violence against women on women's labour force participation in India. After eliminating district-specific factors and accounting for state-time effects, she finds a significant reduction in women's participation in areas with higher reported incidents of violence

Siddique (2021) found a robust and statistically significant deterrent effect of sexual crimes on female workforce participation. A one standard deviation increase in sexual crimes per 1000 women (as per police reports) reduces the probability that a woman is employed outside her home by 9.4%. In comparison, Siddique (2021) found that a one standard deviation increase in local sexual assaults (as per media reports) per 1000 people reduces the probability that a woman is employed outside her home by 5.5%. This difference could be driven by the possibility that while police records of sexual crimes may underestimate actual crime rates, media reports likely suffer from a greater degree of measurement error.

In a study by Baka and Ogbonna (2020), the researchers observed the impact of sexual harassment on job seekers' perceived employability. The study found that job seekers who experienced sexual harassment were more likely to perceive themselves as less employable, which can reduce their employment prospects and increase the risk of unemployment.

### **Methodology**

This study made use of a survey design and used purposive sampling technique given the nature of the study. The principal objective of the purposive sampling technique is to concentrate on some specific attributes of a particular population that are of interest which will best enable respondents to answer the researcher's questions. E-questionnaires were designed and sent via selected social media platforms (WhatsApp chatting App and Facebook Messenger) to over 600 already identified subjects (female students in the Department of Business Administration and Management, Federal Polytechnic Ilaro) who have graduated between 2016-2022 and a majority of whom are based in the Lagos Metropolis.

The target population was not easily definable since the aim of the study was to have the responses of as many people who have experienced sexual advances during their job search. However, 125 participants responded to the forwarded e-questionnaire within a reasonable time frame and thus constituted the sample. Section A of the questionnaire expectedly presented the statements on the respondents' demographic characteristics. In section B the respondents were required to answer questions on the subject matter of the study "Sexual advances to job applicants" especially as it relates to their experiences in the labour market. The collected data were analysed using simple linear regression analysis with the aid of SPSS.

### Model Specification

$$y = f(x) \dots\dots\dots (i)$$

y = dependent variable i.e. sexual advances prevalence

x = independent variable i.e. unemployment

However,

$$y = f(x_1, x_2, x_3) \dots\dots\dots (ii)$$

where;

$x_1$  = Unemployment

$x_2$  = Socio-cultural factors

$x_3$  = Legal Framework

Thus:

$$SAP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 UNE_1 + \beta_2 SOC_2 + \beta_3 LFR_3 + \mu \dots\dots\dots (iii)$$

where;

SAP = Sexual Advances Prevalence

UNE = Unemployment

SOC = Socio-Cultural factors

LFR = Legal Framework

$\beta_0$  = Constant

$\beta_1$ - $\beta_3$  = Coefficient of variables

$\mu$  = error term

### Results and Discussion

The validity of the research instrument was achieved using content validity while the reliability test of the research instrument used for data collection was examined using Cronbach Alpha score. The result of the test is revealed in the table 4.1 below

**Table 4.1: Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.903	.888	20

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The Cronbach Alpha score of .903 is a great indication that the research instrument is highly reliable in achieving the objectives of this present study.

**Table 4.2: Demographic Information of Study Participants**

S/N	Criteria		Frequency	Percentage
1	Marital Status	Single	45	36.00
		Married	80	64.00
		Divorced	-	-
		Separated	-	-
2.	Age	21-35	35	28.00
		36-50	75	60.00
		51-65	15	12.00
3.	Session of Graduation	2016-2017	36	28.80
		2017-2018	15	12.00
		2018-2019	12	9.60
		2019-2020	32	25.60
		2020-2021	14	11.20
		2021-2022	16	12.80

**Source: Field Survey (2024)****Table 4.3: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.946 <sup>a</sup>	.895	.892	.72473	2.075

**Source: Field Survey (2024)**

a. Predictors: (Constant), UNE, SOC, LFR

b. Dependent Variable: SAP

The R-square value of .895 indicates that approximately 89.5% of the variability in Sexual Advances Prevalence (SAP) can be explained by the combined influence of Unemployment (UNE), Socio-Cultural factors (SOC), and Legal Framework (LFR) in the model. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.075 suggests that there is no significant autocorrelation present in the model's residuals, indicating that the model's error terms are independent. Overall, these results indicate a strong relationship between the independent variables and SAP, with little evidence of serial correlation in the model's residuals.

**Table 4.4: ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	602.632	2	301.316	5.3883	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	70.907	123	0.5764		
Total	673.540	125			

**Source: Field Survey (2024)**

a. Dependent Variable: SAP

b. Predictors: (Constant), UNE, SOC, LFR.

The ANOVA results with an F-statistic of 5.3883 and a p-value of 0.000 indicate that the overall regression model, which includes Unemployment (UNE), Socio-Cultural factors (SOC), and Legal Framework (LFR) as independent variables predicting Sexual Advances Prevalence (SAP), is statistically significant. This means that at least one of the independent variables has a significant effect on SAP. Therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between the combined independent variables and the dependent variable, Sexual Advances Prevalence.



**Table 4.5: Correlation Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	.446	.830		.537	.592	2.088	1.196
1 UNE	.409	.103	.321	3.960	.000	.613	.205
SOC	.706	.067	.697	10.582	.000	.574	.838
LFR	.721	.067	.612	10.733	.000	.588	.854

**Source: Field Survey (2024)**

a. Dependent Variable: SAP

The correlation coefficient results reveal the strength and significance of the relationship between each independent variable (Unemployment - UNE, Socio-Cultural factors - SOC, and Legal Framework - LFR) and the dependent variable (Sexual Advances Prevalence - SAP).

Unemployment (UNE) has a beta value of .409, indicating a moderate positive correlation with SAP. The t-statistics of 3.960 and a p-value of .000 suggest that this relationship is statistically significant. Socio-cultural factors (SOC) have a beta value of .706, indicating a strong positive correlation with SAP. The high t-statistics of 10.582 and a p-value of .000 confirm the significant influence of SOC on SAP. Legal Framework (LFR) has a beta value of .721, indicating a strong positive correlation with SAP. The high t-statistics of 10.733 and a p-value of .000 demonstrate the significant impact of LFR on SAP.

These results imply that all three independent variables - Unemployment, Socio-Cultural factors, and Legal Framework - are important predictors of Sexual Advances Prevalence. Specifically, socio-cultural factors and legal frameworks exhibit the strongest correlations with SAP, suggesting that addressing cultural norms and strengthening legal protections are crucial in reducing the prevalence of sexual advances among female job seekers in Nigeria.

### Test of Hypotheses

**Decision:** Reject H<sub>0</sub> if the p-value is less than 5% and accept H<sub>1</sub>. However, if the p-value is greater than 5%, accept H<sub>0</sub> and reject H<sub>1</sub>.

#### Hypothesis One:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant positive relationship between unemployment and the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers in Nigeria.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant positive relationship between unemployment and the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers in Nigeria.

**Decision:** in line with the result in Table 4.5, the p-value of unemployment (UNE) is less than the acceptable 5%, therefore the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative. Thus, the study concludes that unemployment has a statistically significant relationship with sexual advances prevalence among female job seekers in Nigeria.

#### Hypothesis Two:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Socio-cultural factors do not have any significant impact on the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers in Nigeria.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Socio-cultural factors have a significant impact on the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers in Nigeria.

**Decision:** Based on the result in Table 4.5, the p-value of Socio-Cultural factors (SOC) is less than the acceptable 5%, therefore the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative. Thus, the

study concludes that Socio-Cultural factors have a statistically significant relationship with sexual advances prevalence among female job seekers in Nigeria.

**Hypothesis Three:**

**H0:** Existing legal frameworks and policies do not have any significant impact on the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers in Nigeria

**H3:** Existing legal frameworks and policies have a significant impact on the prevalence of sexual advances experienced by female job seekers in Nigeria.

**Decision:** Based on the result in Table 4.5, the p-value of Legal Framework (LFR) is less than the acceptable 5%, therefore the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative. Thus, the study concludes that the existing legal framework (LFR) has a statistically significant relationship with sexual advances prevalence among female job seekers in Nigeria.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study indicate a strong relationship between unemployment, socio-cultural factors, legal frameworks, and the prevalence of sexual advances among female job seekers in Nigeria. The regression analysis revealed that the combined influence of these factors explains approximately 89.5% of the variability in sexual advance prevalence. The significant beta values, high t-statistics, and low p-values for each independent variable underscore their importance in predicting sexual advances prevalence. The study underscores the exacerbating role of economic vulnerability, highlighting that higher unemployment rates increase susceptibility to harassment.

Unemployment, socio-cultural factors, and legal frameworks emerged as significant predictors, with socio-cultural factors and legal frameworks exhibiting the strongest correlations with sexual advances prevalence. This suggests that addressing cultural norms and enhancing legal protections are paramount in mitigating the prevalence of sexual advances. The study underscores the need for multifaceted interventions, including policy reforms, cultural awareness campaigns, and support mechanisms for victims, to create a safer and more equitable job market for women in Nigeria. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on gender-based violence and highlight the urgency of addressing systemic factors that perpetuate such exploitation in the workplace. Further, the study contributes to understanding the socio-economic challenges faced by young women in the Lagos metropolis, providing a foundation for broader future studies and policy formulation to combat sexual harassment and support unemployed women.

**Conclusion And Recommendations**

This study elucidates the significant influence of unemployment, socio-cultural factors, and legal frameworks on the prevalence of sexual advances among female job seekers in Nigeria. The strong correlations between these variables and sexual advances prevalence corroborate existing literature highlighting the detrimental impact of socio-economic factors, cultural norms, and legal protections on gender-based violence in the workplace (Afolabi & Omole, 2011; McCann, 2005; Oyekanmi, 2015). Addressing these systemic issues is imperative for fostering a safer and more equitable job market for women. By drawing on insights from previous research and extending our understanding of the nuanced dynamics at play, this study contributes to the development of targeted interventions and policies aimed at combating sexual harassment and promoting gender equality in Nigeria's labour market.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

- i. There is a need to strengthen legal frameworks to effectively address sexual harassment in the workplace, including during the job-seeking process. This will involve the implementation and enforcement of anti-harassment laws, provide training for employers and employees on their rights and responsibilities, and establish accessible reporting mechanisms with swift and fair investigations.
- ii. In the same vein, the government needs to launch awareness campaigns to challenge harmful socio-cultural norms and attitudes that perpetuate gender-based violence. This would involve engaging with communities, educational institutions, and the media to promote gender equality, respectful workplace behaviour, and bystander intervention strategies.

- iii. Additionally, there is a need to establish support systems and resources for victims of sexual harassment, including counselling services, legal aid, and helplines. This may involve creating safe spaces for individuals to report incidents without fear of retaliation and ensuring confidentiality and privacy throughout the process.

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