

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE MOVIE INDUSTRY: A STUDY ON THE  
EXPERIENCES OF ACTRESSES IN GHANA'S FILM INDUSTRY**



**BY**

**CONSTANCE SERWAA AMOFAH**


**10372998**

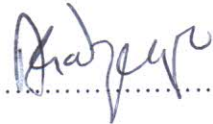
**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON,  
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**DECLARATION**

I, Constance Serwaa Amofah, do hereby declare that this research was conducted independently by me at the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana. All references cited have been acknowledged appropriately. I also do affirm that this research work has not been presented to any other school in part or in whole for the award of either a diploma or degree. This work was successfully completed under the supervision of Professor Audrey Gadzekpo.

  
.....  
CONSTANCE SERWAA AMOFAH  
(STUDENT)  
DATE: 11-02-2021

  
.....  
PROFESSOR AUDREY GADZEKPO  
(SUPERVISOR)  
DATE: 11-02-2021

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my father, Mr. Osei Adaatu Amofah, my senior brother, Mr. Prince Adjei Amofah, my husband, Pastor Patrick Asubonteng, my other siblings (Abigail Osei Amofah, King Osei Amofah and Henrietta Amponsah Amofah), and all those who believed its completion was a possibility.

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## ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment remains a serious problem in many industries around the world and the Ghanaian film industry is no exception. This study sought to explore the sexual harassment experiences of actresses in the Ghanaian film industry, the various forms and nature of sexual harassment in the film industry, the responses to sexual harassment as well as the effects it has on actresses. A qualitative approach was used in this research. Data collection was done by conducting semi-structured interviews with eight actresses in the film industry of Ghana who were purposively sampled because of their willingness to share their experiences.

The study found that, there is tolerance and normalization of sexual harassment in the Ghanaian film industry. The competition in the movie industry was highlighted to be a contributing factor. The study also found that sexual harassment happens at the early stage of actresses' career. The study further found that, the intimate working environments of the film industry provided opportunities for sexual harassment to take place. Also, deceit and threats were found to be the strategies used by perpetrators. The study also found that directors were the main perpetrators of the act. Sexual harassment manifests mostly as quid pro quo according to the study. In response to the act, Sexual Harassment Informants either avoided their perpetrators or devised a way to cope with them and continue working with them. Sexual Harassment Informants didn't see the need to report victims. The effects of sexual harassment as found by the study includes; emotional damage, physical harm, stress, and psychological effects. According to Sexual Harassment Informants, the best way to stop sexual harassment in the movie industry is to name and shame the perpetrators.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides information regarding the background of the study by explaining sexual harassment, its effects, the various forms and specifically sexual harassment and the entertainment industry. It also presents the problem statement, research objectives, research questions and the significance of the study.

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

In 1995, the United Nations held one of the largest conferences in its history known as—the fourth world conference on women which assembled in Beijing, China. Sexual harassment was recognised as an offense and violence against women (A/CONF.177/20, Chapter IV, Section D, 113 (b)).

Understandings of sexual harassment, a phenomenon which was earlier seen as a feminist constructed concept to push feminists' agenda has evolved over the years and is widely considered as a societal problem that would have to be addressed. Sexual harassment is prevalent in many industries of which the entertainment industry is no exception and many countries, industries and workplaces in recent times have started to take action on it.

Sexual harassment is about power relations, privilege and control through sex. It is therefore steeped in sex and power. It has been associated with masculinity and in the past was expected to be tolerated (Connell, 1978; Mackinnon, 1979). The patriarchal system which is associated with male dominance also contributes to the prevalence of sexual harassment for a very long time.

Sexual harassment is therefore seen as an extension of the control male have in society, based upon which men act to perpetuate women's subordination and vulnerability (Connell, 2003).

At the workplace for instance, male workers globally bring long-held traditions of society-wide gender differentiation to the organisation. The social and economic position of women leave them vulnerable to harassment. Therefore, men and women are likely to experience and perceive sexually harassing behaviors differently because of gender inequality and culturally prescribed expressions of sexuality (MacKinnon, 1979).

Sexual harassment is a common occurrence in workplaces around the world (Sam, 2016; Ganu & Boateng, 2013). Sexual harassment in the workplace continues to be experienced by many women around the world (Manuel, 2017; Fineran, 2002). It is evident in the modern working environment that there is an ever increasing number of women who enter and become relevant in the labour market. However, a main barrier to women's equality is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is therefore a significant obstacle to women's entrance into many sectors of the labour market (Ristow, 2007).

As much as men fall victims to sexual harassment, majority of the victims of sexual harassment are women. Men are more likely to sexualize their experiences therefore likely to make sexual remarks or engage in sexualized behavior which is the reason more men than women perpetuate the act (Gutek & Morasch, 1982). Sexual harassment is therefore seen generally as discrimination against women.

While it has often been defined as happening in the workplace, other researchers have found it also in other spaces, such as in schools. Sexual harassment has been looked at in many areas of society and industries. Various studies have been carried out within education, hospitality, health, mining, manufacturing sectors among others.

In the entertainment industry, following the recent revelations of sexual harassment of actresses such as Angelina Jolie, Kate Beckinsale and Lupita Nyong'o, by top film producer in Hollywood, Harvey Weinstein, several other men in the film industry have been exposed (Carlsen, Salam, Miller, Lu, Ngu, Patel & Wichter, 2018). With the expose on Weinstein, a hashtag #MeToo was created to encourage women to share their sexual harassment experiences. It is recorded that many actresses from Bollywood also used this platform to share their sexual harassment experiences. There were nearly 1.2 million #MeToo tweets, many from India (Khandekar, 2018). The #MeToo Movement thus encouraged women who have experienced sexual harassment or assault to speak up and this movement has led to a lot of women coming out to share their sexual harassment experiences. This movement has particularly put a spotlight on Hollywood (the United States' film industry) and Bollywood (the India film industry) on how prevalent sexual harassment is in the film industry.

### **1.1.1 DEFINITIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

There is not one agreed definition of sexual harassment. As far as 1980, The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) in the United States defined sexual harassment as “unwelcome sexual advances, or requests for sexual favours, as well as other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It explained that submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or imply a

term or condition of an individual's employment. Submission to, or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment conditions affecting such individual and also if such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment" (EEOC, 1980, p. 5).

Beijing Platform for Action, 1995 recognised sexual harassment as "Violence against women" and "Violence against women" was defined as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." (UN, 1995, A/CONF.177/20, Chapter IV, Section D, 113)

Sexual harassment is also defined as any unwanted sex-related behaviour that is perceived by a victim, who can be male or female, or person of the same or opposite sex, to be unpleasant and intimidating (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand & Magley, 1997).

The Equality and Human Rights Commission in UK defines harassment as "uninvited behaviour, sexual harassment or treating a person less fairly, because of a protected characteristic, in ways which violate a person's dignity or creates "an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the individual" (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010 as cited by Johns, 2013, p. 26). Harassment is unlawful and is unwanted conduct under the Equality Act 2010. Sexual harassment has also been formally defined in the U.S. as something that happens at

the workplace (Clair, Brown, Dougherty, Delemeester, Geist-Martin, Gorden, Sorg & Turner, 2019).

Africa commission on Human and Peoples' Right identified sexual harassment as a form of violence against women and defines violence against women as "all acts perpetrated against women which cause or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm, including the threat to take such acts; or to undertake the imposition of arbitrary restrictions on or deprivation of fundamental freedoms in private or public life in peace time and during situations of armed conflicts or of war." (Centre for Reproductive Rights, 2006, p. 8).

Provisions on sexual harassment in Ghana are found in the Labor Act, 2003 (Act 651, section 175), Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732, section 42) and the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. The Labour Act of Ghana indicates the offense of sexual harassment. The Section 175 of Ghana's labour laws define sexual harassment "as any unwelcome, offensive or inopportune sexual advances or request made by an employer or superior officer or a co-worker to a worker, whether the worker is a man or a woman."(Sam, 2016, p. 3).

Some institutions in the country also have policies regarding sexual harassment. The University of Ghana for instance, has a sexual harassment policy and an anti-sexual harassment committee. The policy defines sexual harassment as "an unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature including unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favours and other verbal, non-verbal, written, electronic, graphic or physical conduct or behaviour of a sexual nature when: i. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an

individual's employment, academic standing or participation in an educational programme or activity; or ii. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions or for academic evaluations, grades or advancement affecting that individual; or iii. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or working environment.” (University of Ghana Special Reporter, 2017, p. 2).

In defining sexual harassment, the sexual advance or behaviour must be “unwelcome”. This implies that a truly consensual sexual relationship or sexual conduct in which the alleged victim willingly participated in or began or invited, may not be considered unwelcome and hence, is not sexual harassment (Roumell & Danlene, 1999).

### **1.1.2 FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is broadly classified into two forms namely, quid pro quo and hostile environment sexual harassment. The term quid pro quo, in relation to a form of sexual harassment was coined by Mackinnon in 1979. Quid pro quo harassment is a form of harassment that links sexual favours or denials to employment decisions; either refusing a promotion or appointment, or declining a deserved raise because of the refusal of sexual advances. With quid pro quo sexual harassment, a supervisor or a manager, solicits sexual favors in exchange for some employment benefit like a promotion, an increase in salary or wages, a good grade or recommendation or to avoid some detriment such as termination, demotion, and a failing grade, denial of a fellowship in the workplace or in the classroom (Smith & Plesis, 2011; Ramsaroop & Parumasur, 2007). Miller

(2014) explains that, by nature, Quid pro quo harassment occurs between someone in a position of power and a subordinate. It could be an express or implied (indirect) demand for sexual favours.

Hostile environment sexual harassment is intimidating sexual advances. EEOC defined it in 1992 as including the telling of unwelcome jokes, passing sexist remarks, or using offensive language (Smith & Plesis, 2011). Miller (2014) explains that it occurs when there is frequent or pervasive unwanted sexual comments, advances, requests, or other similar conduct. She adds that, it can also take place when there is other verbal or physical conduct that is sexual in nature. It includes; sexual jokes, display of lewd or offensive materials and interference with persistent, unwanted interactions, such as asking for dates continually. In general, this type of conduct must be unwelcome and either frequent or pervasive (or both) to be considered a hostile environment.

Unlike quid pro quo harassment, a hostile work environment does not necessitate any employment benefit to be at risk and it is not link to the promise or threat of specific employment actions (Miller, 2014). Sexual harassment can take deceptive forms that are not easily verified, or it may also take more obvious forms that are embarrassing to the victim.

### **1.1.3 EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment has various effects which can be psychological, physical impact or economic impact. Sexual harassment could lead to low self-esteem and retard personality creation (Fineran, 2002). Other research suggests that productivity can be affected as it may lead to absenteeism. Also, as a form of discrimination, sexual harassment can result in quitting a job and possibly doing something injurious to oneself or to the provoker. Sexual harassment therefore demotivate employees and reduces the possible job satisfactions (Denissen, & Saguy, 2014). Manuel (2017)

also quotes Norman, Aikins and Binka (2013) to have suggested that sexual harassment can lead to physical injuries, psychological trauma, depression, anxiety and a loss of trust in authority and thus affect employee's health. It is therefore clear that sexual harassment has a negative economical and psychological effect on the victim. Similarly Mutekwe, Modiba and Maphosa (2011), found that victims of sexual harassment do not only experience physical but also emotional strain as in some cases they might suffer mental and/or emotional distress such as fear, trauma, depression, stress or anxiety after such an ordeal.

Although most perpetrators go unpunished, those brought to light can experience severe consequences such as shame and financial losses incurred due to legal charges and in some cases, compensation due to sexual harassment can occur (Howard, 2007).

Sexual harassment is disrespectful, and the behaviour negatively impacts the emotional, physical and professional wellbeing of women in the workforce. In addition to disrupting the psychological and physical wellbeing of its victims, it also leads to decreased job satisfaction and decreased retention (Gaudiano, 2018).

There are however many factors that discourage victims from reporting sexual harassment particularly in the workplace where working relationships are hierarchical. It becomes difficult for one to tell a superior that his or her attentions are unwelcome due to the consequences such as loss of job or promotion among others that may come with it (Manuel, 2017).

#### **1.1.4 THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The entertainment industry is a highly competitive industry. Due to the glamorous nature of the movie industry, a lot of people are attracted to the industry, this leads to high competition (Prakash, Faridabad & Chatterjee, 2017). It may therefore take a lot of effort and hard work to come into the lime light. As with other industries, such as politics and academia, entertainment industry interactions fundamentally rest on relationships of power imbalance and unevenness (Hennekam & Bennett, 2017).

In recent years, there has been a rise of media attention and publications concerning sexual harassment in the entertainment industry. Harvey Weinstein's sexual assaults and harassment in particular put the industry under the spotlight.

In 2017 allegations against top film producer in Hollywood, Harvey Weinstein began to emerge. As part of the allegations, an American actress Alyssa Milano, used the phrase "Me Too" on Twitter and it became a very popular phrase then after and dozens more accusations emerged. The #MeToo movement therefore began to spread virally, on the heels of the initial allegations of sexual misconduct by Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein by actresses such as Angelina Jolie and Kate Beckinsale to include public allegations against other players in Hollywood and beyond. The perpetrators include producers, directors and actors (Carlsen et. al, 2018).

A *New York Times* analysis has found that, since the publishing of the stories of these woman who shared their sexual harassment experiences (followed days later by a New Yorker investigation), at least 200 prominent men have lost their jobs after the public allegations of sexual harassment.

A few, including Mr. Weinstein, faced criminal charges. At least 920 people came forward to say that one of these men subjected them to sexual misconduct. And nearly half of the men who have been replaced were succeeded by women (Carlsen et. al, 2018).

Khandekar (2018) states that sexual harassment is common in Bollywood, as in Hollywood. High-profile actresses, from 1970s superstar Zeenat Aman to 1994 Miss World Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, had shared disturbing personal accounts. However many actresses had not shared their experiences until actress Tanushree Dutta, a former Miss Universe finalist, in 2018 spoke to several Indian TV news channels about her frustration with a fruitless police complaint she filed in 2008. Her interviews encouraged many actresses to join the 'MeToo Movement' to share their experiences with the hashtag #MeToo. In the month following Dutta's interview, there were nearly 1.2 million #MeToo tweets, many from India (Khandekar, 2018). Khandekar (2018) also notes that, veteran choreographer Saroj Khan said that offering women work in the industry for sexual favours was rampant in Bollywood.

Also, in Nigeria, sexual harassment is problematic in Nollywood. Over the years, many Nollywood actresses have come out to talk about their experiences, but have refused to name the perpetrators. According to Nollywood actress, Blessing Egbe, filmmakers, investors, and powerful actors asking for sexual favours to advance careers is just a better-kept dirty secret in Nollywood (Izuzu, 2017). Veteran actress Joke Silva also confirmed the prevalence of sexual harassment in Nollywood to an online publication, *Pulse*, during a conversation about sexual harassment. Juliet Patrick Odigwe and other actresses have also shared their experiences. *Pulse* reveals that in 2014, Emeka Ike

listed Emma Ogugua, Murphy Stephen, Sunny McDon, Okey Bakassi and Ifeanyi Dikeh as producers who demand sexual favours from aspiring actresses (Izuzu, 2017).

Following the ‘MeToo Movement’, actresses in Ghana have begun to raise concerns regarding sexual harassment in the Ghanaian movie industry. Ghanaian actress Lydia Forson has said the increasing complaints about sexual harassment by young Ghanaian actresses is becoming more rampant in recent times (Nyavor, 2017). Also, according to Stacey Mawuse, better known as Boss Queen, she is yet to find her place in the industry because of her refusal to sleep with producers for roles. In an interview with *Showbiz*, the actress, said she had suffered her fair share of sexual harassment from producers. According to her, sexual harassment is an open secret in the Ghanaian film industry (Ocloo, 2018). In addition to the above, Ghanaian filmmaker Shirley Frimpong-Manso in an interview told *pulse* that, sexual harassment in the movie industry is worse in Africa because men get away with a lot in this part of the world (Izuzu, 2017).

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

There is growing recognition of sexual harassment in the workplace and thus an increase in research on the subject. The literature on sexual harassment in Africa, though still sparse is also growing. A study by Manuel (2017) examined the experience and perception of sexual harassment in the workplace in South Africa, the study found the prevalence of sexual harassment in South Africa.

Also, Khan (2005) studied sexual harassment at the workplace in Zimbabwe and found almost one in three women has been subjected to sexually harassing behaviours at the workplace. Ganu and

Boateng (2013) also examined the sexual harassment experiences in the Ghanaian work environment and found the prevalence of sexual harassment.

In countries such as Ghana general awareness about sexual harassment is just beginning to grow. Although there are legal provisions on sexual harassment, many Ghanaians do not think sexual harassment is a serious matter that infringes on the right of individuals. Thus, the issue is not openly discussed and often regarded as trivial (Ganu & Boateng, 2013). The 'MeToo' movement has put the spotlight on Hollywood but not much has been revealed or written about the nature of the problem in other movie industries such as Nollywood in Nigeria, which is the second largest industry in the world or the Ghanaian movie industry which has strong ties to Nollywood. The experiences, nature and forms of sexual harassment may differ from industry to industry and from one continent to the other hence there is a need for research to explore the experiences, nature and forms of sexual harassment in the Ghanaian movie industry.

Also, the dominant approach to research on sexual harassment, including in the movie industry, has been mostly quantitative (not in-depth) where researchers either look at the prevalence of sexual harassment or the perception people had about sexual harassment (Puente & Kelly, 2018; Manuel, 2017; Ganu & Boateng, 2013; Khan, 2005; Terkpeh, 2011). Researchers are therefore not able to get the individual stories, especially because quantifying does not allow for the nuances of individual experiences. This study therefore sought to take a qualitative approach to understanding sexual harassment in the entertainment industry by exploring the sexual harassment experiences of actresses in the Ghanaian movie industry.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The overarching goal of this study was to explore actresses' experiences of sexual harassment in the Ghanaian movie industry to unveil knowledge about the phenomenon. That is, the study sought to get insight from personal experiences and examined the context including the different situations under which sexual harassment occurred, the forms and nature of the harassment, how the victims of sexual harassment responded to the harassment as well as the effects it had on them.

The specific objectives were:

- To find out sexual harassment experiences of actresses in the film industry of Ghana.
- To explore the nature and forms of sexual harassment in the Ghanaian film industry.
- To determine responses to sexual harassment in the Ghanaian film industry.
- To determine the effects of sexual harassment on actresses in the film industry of Ghana.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the sexual harassment experiences of actresses' in the Ghanaian film industry?
- What are the nature and forms of sexual harassment in the Ghanaian film industry?
- What are the responses to sexual harassment in the Ghanaian film industry?
- What are the effects of sexual harassment on actresses in the film industry of Ghana?

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The research findings provide insight into the sexual harassment experiences of actresses, the nature and forms of sexual harassment in the movie industry in Ghana, the responses to sexual harassment as well as the effects of sexual harassment on actresses in the film industry of Ghana.

It also adds to the limited literature on sexual harassment in the film industry, particularly the Africa film industry. It would also facilitate the implementation of interventions to educate and re-educate actresses and stakeholders in the entertainment industry and minimise risks. This would ensure that most industry players if not all become aware of the severity of the matter, the pain and effects it has on victims and the repercussions and consequences of sexual harassment to the harasser and the entertainment industry as a whole.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework that underpins the study and also reviews related studies. Inequality theory, hegemonic masculinity and objectification theory were the theoretical framework used for the study. The chapter also reviewed literature on sexual harassment globally, in Africa and Ghana as well. The reviewed studies were on the prevalence of sexual harassment, that is, the evidence of sexual harassment, perpetrators and victims, reporting sexual harassment, sites for harassment and the nature and forms of sexual harassment.

#### **2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Several models and theories have been developed to investigate and understand the phenomenon of sexual harassment in different sectors. For the purpose of this research, inequality theory, hegemonic masculinity and objectification theory have been employed.

##### **2.1.1 INEQUALITY THEORY**

The inequality theory asserts that sexual harassment is sex discrimination because it is sexually subordinating. The theory was propounded by MacKinnon in 1978 .The inequality approach centers on the analysis that discrimination systemically disadvantages certain social groups. The discrimination lies in deprivation because of gender, a deprivation given meaning in the social setting of the dominance or preference of one sex over the other.

Under the inequality approach, when women are harassed by a man “they are harassed because of sex,” and often because the social and economic position of women leaves them vulnerable to harassment (Mackinnon, 1979). The inequality theory therefore characterizes women's situation as a structural problem of enforced inferiority that needs to be changed.

The theory therefore implies that women’s place in society (Africa) is a contributing factor to her sexual harassment. For MacKinnon, the harm of sexual harassment is best understood as stemming from the social disparity of women, and any attempts to redress it must include that understanding. According to her the recognition of sexual harassment as illegal would help support women’s economic equality (MacKinnon (1979).

### **2.1.2 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY**

The hegemonic masculinity theoretical framework is attributed to R. W. Connell. Hegemonic masculinity stems from the ideas of Italian political activist and communist, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), who conceived the idea of cultural hegemony. Gramsci explained that the ruling class develops and uses a kind of soft power that allows them to maintain dominance over the ruled with their consent (Connell, 2005). Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as a particular form of masculinity that is always put in a superior position to dominate and it derives strength from the way society is designed and how institutions at the macro-level are structured to maintain that status quo (Connell, 1987). The hegemonic masculinity theory therefore states that, the pattern of practices or social arrangements allow the dominance of men over women to continue.

Connell postulates that gender-based inequalities and marginalization are maintained and negotiated through interrelations among differently gendered and therefore differently privileged subjects within a larger gender system (Connell, 2003). The theory further explains that, historical cultures and societal norms have socialized men into roles of sexual assertion, leadership, and persistence whereas women are socialized to be passive, submissive and gatekeepers. These socio-cultural roles are played out at the workplace, leading to sexual harassment. In certain societies women are not held in high regard, where men invade women's private space with liberty and girls are socialized to expect subordination to men when they grow (Leach & Machakanja, 2000).

Sexual harassment is therefore a consequence and instrument of maintaining the gender social order. Thus, sexual harassment occurs because of the views on women as the inferior sex, but also sexual harassment serves to uphold the already existing gender stratification (Gutek, 1985 as cited by Buss, 2015). Sexual harassment is therefore a manifestation of hegemony which does not involve brute violence but active acceptance of a privileged position of a certain group. Both targets and harassers construct social realities and are both subject to principles of patriarchy which are passed on culturally (Vohlídalová, 2015).

Therefore, according to the hegemonic masculinity theory, sexual harassment is only one manifestation of the effect of a much larger patriarchal system (which is the case of Africa) in which men are the dominant group. It also reflects the larger society's differential distribution of power and status between the sexes.

### **2.1.3 OBJECTIFICATION THEORY**

‘Objectification theory’ theorizes that girls and women are typically treated as a body valued predominantly for its use by others for pleasure. This theoretical framework places female bodies in a sociocultural context that sexually objectifies the female body and equates a woman's value with her body's appearance and sexual functions. Sexual objectification therefore occurs whenever a woman’s body, body parts, or sexual functions are separated from her person, reduced to the status of mere instruments, or regarded as if they were capable of representing her (Bartky, 2005). Although sexual objectification is just one form of gender oppression, it is one of the reasons that enables various other oppressions women encounter, ranging from employment discrimination and sexual violence to the trivialization of women’s work and accomplishments (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

The underlying image of women as sex objects is associated with the work of Mackinnon (1978). In male dominated work for instance, women are to adopt and adjust to male expectations in order to stay afloat and cope with comments or actions of objectification as normal. The theory explains that there is objectification when there is emphasis on a woman’s natural rather than culturally acquired abilities.

A woman is seen as an object of sexual satisfaction as a result of the patriarchal culture in the society. Sexual harassment is therefore indicative of traditionalist views of gender relations founded on patriarchal notions of female inferiority and subordination (Kapila, 2017).

This sexualization occurs in many forms, ranging from sexual harassment to sexualized evaluation. According to Kaschak (1992), the most subtle form of sexual objection is through gaze, or visual inspection of the body (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Objectification of women also takes place in the sexually oriented representations of women in advertising, art and media, as well as how women are evaluated or judged sexually or appealingly in public spaces and events, such as beauty contests among others (Szymansk, Moffitt & Carr, 2011). Objectification theory provides an important framework for researching, understanding, and helping to improve women's lives in a sociocultural context that sexually objectifies women. (Szymansk, Moffitt & Carr, 2011).

## **2.2 RELATED STUDIES**

This section reviews literature that is related to this study. The section reviewed literature on sexual harassment globally, in Africa and Ghana as well. The literature reviewed was on the prevalence of sexual harassment, the nature and forms of sexual harassment, responses to sexual harassment, effect of sexual harassment and the perpetrators of the act.

### **2.2.1 SEXUAL HARASSMENT GLOBALLY**

Weber, Coats, Agrusa, Tanner and Meche (2002) studied sexual harassment in the restaurant industry in the United States. The purpose of the study was to scrutinize female restaurant employees' and male restaurant employees' perceptions and attitudes towards sexual harassment in the restaurant industry to get a better understanding of the similarities and differences between male and female employees. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The total

number of respondents were 330. The study found that sexual harassment was prevalent and male and female respondents felt sexual harassment is an inappropriate behavior. A relatively larger percentage of females compared to males had been in situations where employees repeatedly used vulgar or sexual language on them.

The study found that, more females had experienced instances of employee touching, patting, or hugging them on the job. More females than males said that they thought they had been sexually harassed by a customer, a manager, or a co-worker, and probably not coincidentally. More of these females had reported such incidents to a manager or supervisor.

The forms and nature of sexual harassment according to the study included the use of uncouth language or sexually overt terms, commenting on a workers' appearance, and leering at him or her repeatedly. Touching, patting, or hugging and also customers flirting with them were found as the forms of sexual harassment.

Vohlídalová (2015) also examined the various coping approaches adopted by students harassed by teachers in Czech Republic. The study adopted qualitative methodology. The analysis is based on 18 semi-structured in-depth interviews with students of a selected faculty of a public higher education institution. Thirteen women and five men were included in the research sample, of whom eight studied a doctoral, seven master's and three bachelor's programme. The study noted that the coping strategies adopted by students could be grouped into internal and external strategies. Students adopted strategies such as, accepting sexual harassment, opting for mental care, being silent on it and rejecting to be harassed, as internal strategies for dealing with sexual harassment. Thus, the internal strategies sought to help students deal with sexual abuse but not to

eradicate it. Very few students opted for the external strategies which included open resistance and avoiding the harasser. It was also found from the study that most students preferred to deal with sexual harassment secretly instead of openly.

Eyre (2000) studied sexual harassment in a university community in Canada. The article illustrates how power is not just attached to specific individuals through a discursive analysis of one sexual harassment case. The study examined the public discourses surrounding a case of sexual harassment at a Canadian university. The study found that, sexual harassment in universities was a use of authority by deviant persons and this behaviour was checked with rules, warnings and some educational measures. The author also stated that the university community created an atmosphere that normalized sexual harassment. While some students resorted to relocating from their place of residence or changing their course, some just quit the university.

North (2016) also conducted a survey in 2012 which collected qualitative and quantitative data from female journalists in Australia. The general aim was to discover the levels of perceived discrimination based on gender by female journalists. The study also analysed written comments made by survey respondents in relation to key questions about harassment. There were 577 respondents who participated in the survey. The study found that, 304 respondents which represents, 57.3 percent of the 531 of the respondents who answered the question related to sexual harassment, had experienced sexist comments or gesticulations or been sexually harassed, while 14 (2.6 percent) were not sure.

It also found that, most of the respondents made light of its gravity and did not make formal reports because they feared discrimination or reprisal. Also, the study indicated that, there was a culture of secrecy and many women believe they should work it out themselves. The survey also found that, more of the respondents' encountered sexual harassment than noted by respondents in an earlier survey in 1996. Also, in nearly all instances the harassment was by a male colleague or a male in a senior position, as was the case in the 1996 survey. A total of 53.3 percent of the 298 who had experienced sexual harassment said that the harassment had occurred within the past five years signifying that sexual harassment is an ongoing, systemic problem that is part of the contemporary work culture in media organisations in Australia.

The study found the nature and forms of sexual harassment to be; objectionable remarks or behavior, obscene remarks or behavior, inappropriate physical contact and inappropriate use of technology to transmit objectionable content.

In another study, Johns (2013) examined bullying, harassment and discrimination in the entertainment and media industries of UK. The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative approach. The responses to the survey were 4104. Qualitative data were also taken from informants who were willing to share their experiences. The respondents included household names and high-profile figures in the arts world as well as those starting their careers.

The participants indicated harassment at workplaces across the creative industries which includes publically-funded national arts, music and media institutions in the Ireland and UK. It was reported

to be an attitude of “if you can’t stand the heat then get out of the kitchen”. According to the survey, there was almost an acceptance of the prevailing culture of bullying and sexual harassment.

Out of the 4104 surveyed, women were more vulnerable to bullying and discrimination than men.

One in ten respondents in theatre, television and film witnessed sexuality-related harassment.

The study indicated that, women (and some men) become prey to sexual harassment at the beginning of their career, however, they learned to develop strategies to avoid it over time.

Hennekam and Bennett (2017) in their study on sexual harassment in the creative industries of Netherland in 2017 employed an in-depth interviews to understand the characteristics of sexual harassment experiences of women in the Netherland’s creative industries. This study involved 32 in-depth interviews with women working in the Netherlands’ creative industries. The 32 interviewees worked in various sectors including fashion, dance and theatre with an average age of 28.5 years. It used a chain referral and convenience sampling method in reaching participants.

All 32 female participants described sexual harassment as part of the job. The study indicated that, the harassment experiences is in connection with Mackinnon’s quid pro quo. Out of the 32 participants, 21 presented that sexual verbal expressions and demand for sexual favours were commonplace during interviews and auditions.

Participants in the study observed different attitudes towards sexually immoral attitude and remarks. Many participants explained that, while they felt unease in those situations, sexual harassment has become part of the job hence it is considered normal. More than half of the participants indicated the normalisation of sexual harassment in the creative industries. The

findings presented that, a culture of tolerance and non-disclosure in relation to verbal and physical sexual harassment was the practice. Participants linked the tolerance to strong competition in the creative industry. They also reported that, gender and appearance are often vital skills in the male dominated creative industry. The study reported that sexual verbal expressions and demands for sexual favours were common during auditions and interviews. They explained that the encounters often began with suggestion and progressed to more explicit and overt sexual harassment.

Prakash, Faridabad, and Chatterjee (2017) conducted a qualitative research study that focused on harassment in the entertainment industry in India. The study highlighted some factors of sexual harassment associated with various evidence in the industry. This study tried to understand the prevailing and repetitive nature of problems surrounding harassment. The research was based on the experiences of actors engaged with the industry. For this research, primary data was gathered through broad interview sessions; these sessions were conducted with a sample size of 12 actors with previous acting experiences. Out of the 12 actors, 9 were male and 3 were female. Light was shed on the fact that men experience this issue just as much as women, their major challenges were sexual exploitation, malpractices and employment issues.

In light of this study, interaction with respondents gave a better understanding of this discourse, painting a more detailed picture on the why, who, how and what, in regard to harassment. Respondents made it very clear on some reasons why aspirants enter the entertainment industry; they stated that the glamour and fame is the major force that pulls individuals to pursue a career in this industry. The dominating factor is the cognitive component, that is, their dream followed by behavioral component, that is, their passion.

Puente and Kelly (2018) also studied sexual harassment in Hollywood of the United States. The study was an online research by USA Today in conjunction with the Creative Coalition, Women in Film and Television and the National Sexual Violence Resource Centre. The research was conducted on 850 self-selected individuals from the film industry of the United States. The findings from the online research showed that about 94% of the respondents have experienced some form of sexual harassment. This is notably the highest percentage of the literature reviewed in this study. The study revealed that the nature of sexual harassment ranged over unwelcome sexual comments, jokes or gestures, being touched in a sexual way, being shown sexual pictures without consent and being ordered unexpectedly to appear naked for auditions.

### **2.2.2 SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN AFRICA**

Ali, Saied, Elsabagh and Zayed (2015) studied sexual harassment against nursing staff in Tanta University Hospitals in Egypt. A sample of 430 nurses were selected randomly from the emergency, medical and surgical departments. A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out on the 430 nurses using a semi structured, self-administered questionnaire to collect the data. The study found the prevalence of sexual harassment among nurses at the workplace to be high. That is 70.2% of the studied nurses have experienced sexual harassment at the workplace. Out of these, 43.7% of them were working in both day and night shifts. The study found staring in a suggestive manner as the most common form of harassment. This was followed by hearing sexual words and comments or jokes. The common perpetrators were the relatives of the patients followed by the hospital staff other than the doctors. The study further found that, astonishment and shock were the most frequent responses in 65.2% of the harassed nurses, while after its

occurrence 38.4% ignored the situation. About 95% of the harassed nurses were left with psychological effects, mostly in the form of disappointment and depression.

Ristow (2007) also did a content analysis of sexual harassment in the workplace in South Africa. He argued that it is a significant hindrance to access many industries. He indicated that, despite the high figures of sexual harassment, few South African court cases and legal writings deals with this subject. According to the study, only few victims report the harassment because of fear of losing their jobs. He stated that, the South African Constitution indicates that no person shall be discriminated against and this provision comprises a person's right to work without harassment or discrimination.

The study mentioned that employers are expected to adopt a policy on sexual harassment, to communicate it to all employees and to ensure that the policy is followed. If harassment nevertheless takes place, the procedure and disciplinary process prescribed in the policy must be followed. Ristow (2007) stated that, although the labour law provides that harassment is a form of unfair discrimination, it does not provide any further insight into the subject of sexual harassment. It is as a result left to the courts to interpret and develop the law relating to sexual harassment as a form of unfair discrimination.

Manuel (2017) examined the experience and perception of sexual harassment in the workplace in South Africa. The research focused on 131 workers of an Information Technology firm who were made to answer questionnaires on sexual harassment. The study found disparities between male and female respondents as well as those who were single, married and divorced. There was also

disparities among individuals with different educational levels though age did not play a major role in sexual harassment.

Derdar (2019) studied sexual harassment against waitresses in Morocco. The study sought to explore the nature and extent of sexual harassment against waitresses as well as exploring the attitudes of the victims as well as of their male harassers. The study adopted a qualitative approach and in-depth interviews were undertaken and a total of 25 people were interviewed. The informants included 10 waitresses, 5 café managers and 10 male café clients. The study found the prevalence of sexual harassment in Moroccan cafés. Majority of waitresses (8 out of the 10) said they experience verbal sexual harassment on a daily basis. The study further found the normalization of the act. Waitresses were expected to find a way to deal with it or have issues with café the owner. This finding was confirmed by most waitresses and some café managers. The waitresses interviewed indicated that the perpetrators were male clients, managers and co-workers with male clients in the majority. Also, male informants in the study gave varied answers regarding sexual harassment of waitresses. While some had negative attitudes towards waitresses, others had positive attitudes.

Also, Khan (2005) studied sexual harassment at the workplace in Zimbabwe. One of the objectives of this research was to update a similar research that was conducted in 1995. The 1995 research was conducted by the Training and Research Support Centre to further their understanding of the dynamics and issues around sexual harassment. A survey was the method used for collecting data. The participants included women from 130 companies and organisations. It included women of all occupation levels which ranged from general hands to

professional women. These women were from both the private and public sectors though majority of the companies and organisations came from the private sector because permission was not granted to access some organisations under public sector. The respondents included 528 women aged from 17 to 61.

The results indicated that almost one in three women has been subjected to sexually harassing behaviours at the workplace. The researcher however stated that, the results is most likely an under-estimate of the actual incidence of harassment because although the women were assured of anonymity, it was apparent that many felt they would lose their jobs or promotions if they told the truth about the harassment they have experienced even in an anonymous questionnaires. Majority reported hostile environment consequences rather than 'quid pro quo'. More than half of the women stated that their harassers were individuals in supervisor roles. However, co-workers or persons who were in junior status were also included. Also half of the women never reported the harassment to anyone. Of those who did, the study indicated that, over half reported to formal agencies such as management, or workers' committees. Of these, the women stated that in half of the cases, management overlooked their report. Majority of the women were not aware of reporting procedures within organisations and even when they were, they were too uncomfortable or perceived themselves as too powerless, to lodge a report.

In relation to forms and nature of sexual harassment, majority of the respondent reported hostile environment consequences rather than quid pro quo.

### **2.2.3 SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN GHANA**

The researcher did not find literature or research on sexual harassment in the entertainment industry in Ghana and Africa as a whole. Although there has been some articles in the mainstream media about individual incidents, there has not been a research or statistical evidence of an industry-wide problem and this is the gap in literature the researcher seeks to fill.

However, literature on sexual harassment in other industries provide useful information on the context in the country.

The Gender and Human Rights Documentation Centre (1999) conducted a countrywide survey on violence against females in Ghana. The study was generally on violence but included sexual harassment. The centre sampled a total of 2,049 females who were 13 years and above, from 20 districts across the ten regions of Ghana for the survey. The findings from the survey showed that majority of females were prone to some form of sexual violence which included sexual harassment. It was also found from the survey that females below the age of 18 were more likely to encounter some form of sexual violence including sexual harassment (Appiah & Cusack, 1999).

In a chapter of the study, Gadzekpo (1999) reported that, sexual violence such as rape, and sexual harassment are considered taboo topics generally, and incidents are under-reported and the subject is not easily discussed. It was indicated that, incidents of rape, incest/sexual abuse and sexual harassment are not as common as many communities admit to. It also found that, shame, timidity and fear prevented respondents from reporting incidents of being forced to touch a man's private parts (sexual harassment).

Andoh (2000) in his study on the issue of sexual harassment at workplaces in Ghana sampled 100 respondents with 50 males and 50 females from both the public and private sector of Ghana. He employed survey and interview procedures in looking at how people were sexually harassed at their workplaces. The findings from his study revealed that sexual harassment was experienced by both females and males although the cases for females were more than that of males. The study also found that employees in their early years of work were more prone to sexual harassment as well as workers who were not married. It was noted from the study that, sexual harassment affected the performance of organizations if not dealt with out rightly.

According to the study, forms of sexually harassing behaviours were: unwanted repeated proposals; unwanted sexual teasing, jokes questions or remarks; pressure for dates; unwanted love letters, cards, or telephone calls; unwanted touching of intimate body parts; pressure for sexual favours like sex, kisses among others; demand for sex in exchange for employment opportunity; demand for sex in exchange for employment-related benefits and attempted or actual rape or assault.

Also, Aryeetey (2004) studied the perspectives of Ghanaians on sexual harassment using semi structured interviews on 298 individuals between 1994 and 2002. The individuals were sampled from some organizations within Accra, Tamale and Takoradi in the public sector. The study found that about a quarter of the participants have experienced some form of sexual harassment within their organization with females being the main victims of sexual harassment. It was also found that

more than half of the participants knew persons who have experienced some form of sexual harassment.

From the study, seven types of sexually suggestive behavior were identified as offensive behavior amounting to harassment. These are; unwanted sexual advances; demand sex for favours/ as reward; forcibly having sex with someone; touching without concern, indecent/ sex dressing; excessive demands for sex in marriage and making complimentary remarks.

Terkpeh (2011) also studied sexual harassment in the workplace. The study sought to look at how sexual harassment was handled in Ghana's leading Telecommunication Company. The study sampled 106 workers from the organization and employed a descriptive research method in its analysis. It was found that sexual harassment was prevalent in the organization among both male and female workers. It was also revealed that although the organization had a policy on sexual harassment, most workers who were harassed did not report the harassers because they did not want them to lose their jobs. Although the policy on sexual harassment was available in the organization, most harassers who were reported were not dealt with as expected because they happened to be senior staff and colleagues of those to handle the issues.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the methodology that was employed in this study. It describes the processes and techniques that was used to produce the data to arrive at findings that appropriately addressed the research questions. The chapter provides an overview of the target population of the study. The research design, sample size and the technique for sampling informants. Also, the procedure for gathering data are all discussed in this chapter. The chapter clearly explains the methods employed for collecting data for the study. It spells out the processes, why it was used and its relevance to the study. The study employed the qualitative approach to data collection. The purpose of the design was to enable the researcher explore Ghanaian actresses' experiences of sexual harassment, that is, delve into the issue of sexual harassment in the industry in detail as well as find ways of dealing with it.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study adopted the qualitative approach. The researcher sought to explore Ghanaian actresses' experiences of sexual harassment. The researcher adopted a qualitative approach so as to gain in-depth understanding and also because of the sensitive nature of the research which demanded reassurance of confidentiality and follow-up questions based on information given. The qualitative approach also allowed the researcher to give clarification of questions to the informants where needed.

Wimmer and Dominick (2000) have stated that the biggest benefit of the qualitative method is that it is in-depth and provides a wealth of details for analysis. Similarly, Boyce and Neale (2006) attest that using the qualitative technique helps to explore the individual informants' perspective on a particular idea, programme or situation. The qualitative approach therefore helped the researcher explore actresses' experiences, perspective and gained rich and detailed understanding of actresses' sexual harassment experiences.

### **3.2 RESEARCH METHOD**

In view of the objectives of the study, it was appropriate in-depth interviews be conducted to gather rich data from the informants' words or the description of the informants' experiences. Although Focus group discussion also has a lot of advantages, it was not appropriate for this study due to the personal and sensitive nature of sexual harassment. In-depth interviewing is a method of collecting data that provides opportunity for the informant to freely express his or her experiences and meanings in context (Adams & Cox, 2008). The method was also useful for the interpretation and understanding of difficult realities and delicate issues. In-depth interviews are the most suitable way to study delicate areas because the interviewer has the time to psyche the interviewee before questions are posed (Kumar, 2005).

The aim of conducting the interviews in this study was to provide detailed insight into Ghanaian actresses' experiences of sexual harassment, the nature and forms of sexual harassment as well as their responses to sexual harassment in the film industry of Ghana. The in-depth interview was semi structured. Using the semi-structured interview approach allowed participants the room to answer questions on their own terms. It also helped the researcher to probe further and ask

questions based on the informants' responses and reassured them of confidentiality. The semi-structured interviews also enabled the researcher to explain complex questions to the interviewees.

### **3.3 POPULATION**

Babbie (2008) defines population as a group of individual subjects, normally people, about whom a researcher desires to draw conclusions. Thus, population is the entire group located at a defined place and who meet the criteria clearly outlined by the researcher. The population for the study was all actresses in the Ghanaian movie industry. The basis for choosing this group of people from the movie industry was to ensure that the research questions were answered and the objectives of the research accomplished.

### **3.4 SAMPLING PROCESS**

A sample is the set of data sources that is actually drawn from the target population because the whole population cannot be studied for various reasons (Taherdoost, 2016). The sample of this study was drawn only from actresses in the Ghanaian film industry who have experienced sexual harassment.

The study combined both purposive and snowballing sampling methods. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling is “a technique widely used in qualitative research for identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resource”. Bailey (2008) also advocates that, the benefit of the purposive sampling is that the researcher can use his skill and prior knowledge to select respondents. Snowballing is a nonprobability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their

acquaintances (Ghaljaie, Naderifar, & Goli, 2017). Snowballing is adopted because of how difficult it is to identify actresses within the film industry who have been sexually harassed.

In all, eight actresses were sampled. The participants were therefore selected using non-probability method, specifically purposive sampling. The researcher had an advantage of being associated with the movie industry and thus knew four actresses who had experienced sexual harassment and were willing to share their experiences. The other four informants were reached through snowballing sampling method where the four actresses who were purposively sampled recruited four of their colleague actresses. The researcher had to speak to eight actresses who were recruited by the actresses that were sampled purposively to finally get four of them who were willing to share their experiences. This is because some of the recommended actresses were not willing to share their experiences as they considered sharing it to be something risky.

The informants included high-profile actresses in the entertainment industry of Ghana as well as those starting their careers. The eight actresses interviewed have been harassed sexually while pursuing their careers as actresses. The actresses interviewed are referred to as Sexual Harassment Informants (SHI) and are identified through the numbers 1-8 (that is SHI 1-8) to ensure participants' anonymity.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION**

In this study, the researcher conducted interviews as a primary data collection means with a semi-structured interview guide. The researcher designed an interview schedule and eight actresses were interviewed. The purpose of the study was explained and respondent assured of confidentiality of

the information to be received. Appropriate permission was sought from the informants to record the interviews for the purpose of transcription later. There were some additional rechargeable batteries to serve as backup for uninterrupted interview session. The researcher also made notes alongside to capture salient points and core themes for quick reference and search. Informants were also assured that there was no risk involved in participating in the research and that they had the right to stop the interview if they so wished.

Kumekpor (2002) is of the opinion that interviews should be conducted in a “congenial and relaxed atmosphere devoid of fear or suspicion in the information being sought.” Each interview began at the scheduled time with preliminary remarks to fraternise and create a relaxed atmosphere to create the desired rapport between the researcher and the respondent. Interviews ceased once a point of saturation was reached. For reliability, the researcher conducted all the interviews. Also all the interviews were conducted through one-on-one interaction with the participants. Averagely, interview duration lasted up to 1 hour, 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English.

### **3.5.1 INTERVIEW INSTRUMENTS**

The actresses were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide (see appendix). The interview questions were aimed at eliciting relevant information concerning the sexual harassment experiences of the actresses. Questions relating to their experiences, the forms and nature of the sexual harassment, age and sex of perpetrators, where it happened, how frequent it was, how they responded to it and the effects it had on them, was asked during the interview schedule.

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

All interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The transcription was detailed to capture speed, tone of voice, emphasis, timing and pauses. The researcher familiarized herself with the data, took notes, and marked preliminary ideas for codes that described the content. Codes and themes were generated directly from the raw data through the process of thematic analysis. Defining themes involves looking out for patterned meaning across a dataset to provide answers to the research questions being addressed (Guest et al. 2013). The data gathered from the interviews was thus coded into themes and analysed thematically. In order to deal with the issue of reflexivity, the researcher examined her own personal, possibly unconscious, reactions and ensured that it did not affect the data analysis. Reflexivity can be defined as thoughtful, conscious self-awareness (Finlay, 2002, p. 532).

### **3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Rich (2016) defines “ethics to be a systematic approach to understand, analyze and distinguish matters of right and wrong, good and bad, and admirable and deplorable in relation to the well-being of and the relationships among sentient individuals.” Researchers need to respect their respondents and their privacy and particularly be confidential with the information they provide. Ethics is concerned with the formulation and clarity of research topic, data gathering techniques, processing and storage, presentation and analysis of findings.

Due to the sensitive nature of this research, the researcher assured participants of their confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher also informed the participants that they could leave the interview at any time without providing a justification.

Respondents were not coerced into participating in the study. They were informed of the purpose of the study. Also, the actresses interviewed are referred to as Sexual Harassment Informants (SHI) to ensure participants' anonymity.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents data analysis and results of interviews with actresses in the Ghanaian movie industry. The data are analysed thematically. Also, the findings are discussed within the scope of available literature (theories and related studies) to highlight the similarities and differences that exist between this study and previous research findings and literature. The researcher interviewed eight actresses from the Ghanaian film industry who have experienced sexual harassment. The informants included household names and high-profile figures in the Ghanaian movie industry as well as those starting their careers.

#### **4.1 FINDINGS**

##### **4.1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

The eight actresses interviewed have been harassed sexually while pursuing their careers as actresses. The ages of these actresses ranged from 23- 35 years. The informants included high-profile actresses in the entertainment industry of Ghana as well as those starting their careers. Two of the actresses have been in the film industry for five years, two have also been in the industry for four years. One has been in the industry for fifteen years. Another has been in the industry for nine years. One has also been in the industry for 7 years. Another has been in the industry for three years. This implied that majority of the informants have been in the industry for more than 5 years.

All the eight actresses live in Accra. Three of the actresses are from the Central region, two from Volta region, one from Bono East region, one from the Northern region, and one from the Ashanti

region. In relation to education, three have a First Degree, two have Diploma, two have Secondary education and one has a Master's Degree.

Only one of the Sexual Harassment Informants was married, all the others were single. Also, identity of victims of the sexual harassment reported in this study have been altered to protect their privacy.

#### **4.1.2 SEXUAL HARASSMENT EXPERIENCES OF ACTRESSES**

This section presents the sexual harassment experiences of actresses in the Ghanaian film industry. To elicit experiences, the researcher asked Sexual Harassment Informants about their sexual harassment encounters in the course of their work as actresses. They were asked questions in relation to when it happened and how old they were at the time it happened. They were also asked to narrate how it came about. Also, the age and sex of the perpetrator(s) were inquired from them. They were further asked where it happened as well as the frequency of the act. Other questions were asked based on the responses that were given. The findings on experiences are presented below. The experiences are grouped into subthemes which are; who the perpetrators are, where harassment occurs, when harassment occurs, tolerance/normalization and perpetrators strategies.

##### **4.1.2.1 WHO THE PERPETRATORS ARE**

The study found that, all the perpetrators of sexual harassment were males and they were between the ages of 25 and 45years. It included directors, producers and actors.

While directors were the main perpetrators of sexual harassment, the informants also identified producers and co-actors as offenders.

So, according to SHI 7 *“it’s often the directors who want to sexually harass you.”* SHI 2 confirmed this view noting *“so it happens not only with directors and producers but with co-actors too.”*

All the perpetrators of the sexual harassments lived in Ghana with the exemption of one Nigerian director who harassed one of the Sexual Harassment Informants while he had come from Nigeria to shoot a movie in Ghana.

As many had experienced multiple counts of sexual harassment, they often indicated more than one perpetrator.

SHI 2 in sharing her experience said that, *“I have a lot of experiences from directors, producers, from artists, like colleagues.”* SHI 5, 4 and 8 also noted multiple counts of sexual harassment. SHI 5 stated the following: *“my experience hmm, a lot to say. I have had experiences; I have actually been experiencing so many... like being harassed by directors and all that... other people in the industry trying to harass you... you know because of a certain role that you have to get and play.”*

Also, SHI 4 said *“Oh Hmm. My experience I think I have three experiences.”*

Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that those in positions of authority in the movie industry were more likely to be perpetrators of sexual harassment.

#### **4.1.2.2 WHERE HARASSMENT OCCURS**

The study found that sexual harassment occurs during auditions, on set and also where casts (actors and actresses) and crew are to be accommodated on location. In relation to auditions, sexual harassment experiences by the Sexual Harassment Informants differed just slightly from individual to individual as most of them have had similar experiences. Five of them recounted how they were sexually harassed during auditions. The harassment ranged from being asked to go naked during the auditioning to being forced to have romance with a producer or a director in the name of auditioning as they narrated.

The harassment during auditions according to the study comes in two forms. The first is sexual harassment during ‘open auditions’ (a casting call or audition that any actor can attend) and the other, ‘one on one’ or ‘closed’ auditions where an actress is made to come to the office of a director or producer to exhibit her acting skills to be considered for a role.

During ‘open auditions’ where sexual harassment occurred, the five Sexual Harassment Informants explained that, they were asked to strip naked. In some instances, the Sexual Harassment Informants were asked to show their tummies or expose parts of their bodies, remove their clothes or kiss one of the panelists.

SHI 5 gave this example of her experience: *“There was a time that I went for an auditioning with three girls... the three of us were actually in the same room with the judges and then we were actually asked to naked ourselves.”*

SHI 4 also shared a similar experience: *“there was this audition I went, with other ladies where we were asked to strip naked...the panelists were all men and they were asking us to show our boobs and to also see if we have flat tummy”*

They also reported sexual verbal expressions were common during open auditions. These sexual verbal expressions includes: your breast is big, you would be very good in bed, you are sexy, and your tummy is big among others.

SHI 4 explained as follows: *“So they were commenting on how people’s boobs and body shapes looks like...serious oo... I think I like the way the shape and everything looks like...so they continued...I mean how?”*

SHI 4 further mentioned that, they were also asked sexually oriented questions such as: *“what is your bra size, whether you are a virgin or not?”*

With the one on one auditions, these actresses were told to play the roles with the directors and in some cases producers. The role required them to kiss the director or go naked in his presence to play a romance scene with him.

SHI 2 noted one such experience: *“I went to his office, and he was like, I should act with him. I should kiss him like my boyfriend.”*

SHI 4 had a similar experience with one director. *“I should take it like I just closed from lectures. I’ve gotten home and I want to go and bath. So I should go naked like I’m going to bath.”*

When she mentioned that she couldn’t do that, he again told her to play another role which required that she massage him. According to her, this lead to a forceful attempt by the director to have a sexual intercourse with her.

SHI 3, also narrated a similar experience as follows: *“I went to the director’s office with my CV indicating a role I played in a Hollywood movie. As if that was not enough, I was also willing to go through the audition only for the director to tell me to grab him and kiss him like he is my boyfriend...and he was not willing to change the role,”*

She added that, the focus of auditions is to assess how good an actor is or how fit the person is for a role. Facial expression and body language are thus very key, she explained that: *“How would he will even assess your performance? How will he be kissing you and looking at your body language and facial expression to assess you while he is busily kissing you? But that is what he asked me to do”*

Out of the four actresses who had experienced sexual harassment during ‘closed’ auditions, three of them had their experiences in the offices of directors and producers while one had her experience at a movie house.

Also, the study identifies two other places in addition to auditions, namely, on the set and at the accommodation during shooting. The intimate working environments of the film industry provided opportunities for sexual harassment to take place according to Sexual Harassment Informants.

SHI 1 explained as follows: *“I quite remember I was on a particular set, there was a case where the producer cum director was making advances towards me. We were using his car on the set, so he will call me to his car, sit down, ... and then he would be like, you are a very nice lady and he would get close trying to touch and kiss me.”*

SHI 2 also explained that: *“At times you having an intimate role with a person can bring about that. Maybe after the scene you guys played or the, uh, the role you guys played together, he wants to have more, so he would be like, I like you, and I don't have a girlfriend. I want us to date and stuff like that.”*

The study also found that, often when a project is ongoing, the casts are given accommodation and it often implies that they share a room with others and sometimes they are made to share a room with a male or males. It is expected that they cope with the producer and director to cut down cost even if it means sharing a room with a male. The sharing of the room becomes an opportunity for sexual harassment to take place as explained by Sexual Harassment Informants.

SHI 5 mentioned that: *“I have been to set whereby both females and males were in the same room and a lot of things were happening...and sexual harassment was also taking place.”*

She added that: *“yeah I have witnessed a lot of it...I remember we had a sleep over one time, that night some casts were harassing other casts, and I was also harassed by the director, he was touching me... he wanted to have sex with me. That night, I had a sleepless night.”*

Again, she said that, as if having a sleepless night was not enough, the director continued harassing her the following day. She noted that: *“The director actually came to me... he put his hand around my neck and errm ...you know, trying to tell me sexy things about myself.”*

SHI 7 also shared her experience on set: *“so in the evening I was sitting there when one actor came to sit by me, he said I was beautiful and he came closer to me only to show me a pornographic picture.”*

SHI 1 also had a similar experience: *“Another director, he is the director at the same time the producer. He told me, he is inn for me, I should make up my mind, and this guy was giving me pressure. Meanwhile I couldn't leave the set because we were not done shooting.”*

She also recalls another set where both males and females had to sleep in the same room together. While she was sleeping at dawn, the director came to her in an attempt to have sex with her: *“We were on set and when we finished, he said it was late so I should sleep by him, it wasn't any big*

*deal. There was one other actor and an actress. So we were like four in the room. Then at dawn the director woke up, he wanted to have an affair with me... while the others were sleeping in the same room”.*

Still in relation to accommodation, SHI 8 narrated her experience with so much pain, SHI 8 said she went to the house of an actor one night and she was nearly raped. According to her, she didn't have enough money on her for transportation back home as she was expecting to be paid but she wasn't. Her colleague actor convinced her to spend the night with him since it was late. After accepting the offer since it looked like the best option she had according to her, she was sexually harassed by the actor that night, she narrated the story with so much pain.

SHI 8 explained that: *“I was two weeks pregnant at the time of the incidence, he gave his bed to me, he said I should sleep on it alone...but while I was sleeping, he came to sleep by me and started touching me, I woke up ...I told him to leave, only for him to forcefully attempt to have sex with me.”*

The study there identified that sexual harassment is prevalent in the industry especially when the working environment becomes more intimate, that's where casts and crew are made to spend the night on set.

#### **4.1.2.3 WHEN HARASSMENT OCCURS**

The study further found that, sexual harassment occurs mostly at the early stages of actresses' career. At the early stages, they are seen as people who are desperate for fame because of the glitz and glamour associated with the industry. Perpetrators of sexual harassment therefore see them as vulnerable.

The study painted a picture of women becoming prey to sexual harassment at the beginning of their career, however, they learned to develop strategies to avoid it over time.

SHI 6 explained saying: *“I know in the minds of producers...some producers and some directors ...especially in the past...you know when we were all trying to fight our way into the industry... you will definitely come across it...you would be seen as desperate because you are new...you just started and you don't really know what you can do and so they would be like okay...this girl, I can use her...and so you are either forced to get a role in place of that, that is if you agree to it.”*

The Sexual Harassment Informants therefore mentioned that, they experienced sexual harassment in the early stages of their career where they did not have much experience and thus they were ready to compromise a lot of things to get a role to play.

SHI 2 also said: *“That was when I wanted to act for the first time, I met this director and we started chatting, that time I was very young. I was in SHS, I went to his office and he was editing. He's a director, he's an editor too. So I was sitting beside him. I just wanted to see how he was doing the thing like editing. So we were just there, he... he didn't propose, he didn't say anything...he just turned and he wanted to kiss me.”*

SHI 4 confirmed by noting: *“But because they know that we are up-comers, we don't know much and will agree to most of the things they say, they use those things to deceive us, and they know we would fall for it.”*

SHI 6 also added: *“you know when we were new, but right now, if you come and tell me that I should do audition and go naked, I would rather slap you...I will either slap you or I will just walk away...I just don't have time for you.”*

SHI 4 also mentioned that, being careful at the initial stage of their career is very essential: *“I didn't want to be rude since he is a director and any action or word which is not appropriate would lead to a bad relationship which is not a good thing for an actress who is quite new in the industry.”*

#### **4.1.2.4 TOLERANCE/NORMALIZATION**

According to Sexual Harassment Informants, sexual harassment is common in the industry and has been in the industry for a very long time. One has to either cope with it or leave. According to Sexual Harassment Informants, this act has been passed on from generations to generations such that, even new directors coming up are all doing the same thing. Actresses are therefore expected to see this act as normal. Some informants also mentioned that, sexual harassment has been normalised to the extent that some directors and producers are bold about it. The Sexual Harassment Informants mentioned that, they had to find strategies to cope with sexual harassment in the film industry of Ghana to continue pursuing their careers as actresses.

SHI 5 explained that: *“It is trending, the thing is trending from generation to generation, even new directors coming up are all doing the same thing because it is something which is there.”*

SHI 5 narrating a situation on a particular set noted that: *“what I witness from the other casts is that you could be walking by and they will just tap your buttocks. They see it to be normal. I saw a lot on set”*.

She explained that, the thing about that particular set which according to her was not too different from other sets she has been on is that, sexual harassment was normalised. She said nobody was being shy in doing what they were doing. Some casts were harassing other casts. She mentioned that she was sexually harassed by some colleague actors. She said it became somewhat common that, you could be walking or passing by and someone would just tap your buttocks. According to her, the co-actors saw it to be normal. She added that, you have to be determined or psyche yourself for it, it would help you to deal with situations like this.

SHI 2 also mentioned how normal it was: *“The very first day I went to meet him. I met him in his car. He told me, he was like, Oh, you have nice legs. Wow. I was glad I have nice legs so I was happy. Then he touched my legs for the first time and I was uncomfortable with it but I was okay. He's a producer.”*

Other Sexual Harassment Informants also explained that, while they felt unease in those situations, sexual harassment has become part of the job hence it is considered normal. With time some of the actresses develop strategies to play along for some time cautiously to get what they want.

SHI 4 in narrating one of her experiences said that, *“And I'm like I know what this man want so I'll do it, but I know how to caution myself... and I told him, okay, I'm ready for that.”*

SHI 2 shared a similar sentiment: *“Me, I always push for what I want. I can't let somebody stop me from getting what I want. I came to you. You ask for something doesn't mean I should stop pursuing my dreams. If I'm supposed to go for auditions and you'd want to do something, I would*

*look somewhere else. It doesn't mean everybody in the industry is like that or is going to ask you to do something with them before they give you a role or something. Definitely there would be that one person that would not ask you that."*

According to the Informants, sexual harassment has been normalised such that, some directors see those who object to it as actresses who are not serious.

SHI 1 noted one of such experiences: *"There are a lot, I once went for an audition, they asked me to show them my tummy, but I told them no, I can't and they were like so, why are you here? You have to leave for others who are ready to come in."*

SHI 5 confirmed noting: *"Even some directors go as far to say that even your other colleagues are doing it without they asking them, they are even doing it, so you trying to protect yourself...is what the hell are you trying to tell them you get it?"*

While some give in to sexual harassment, others also develop strategies to cope with the situation in the film industry of Ghana to continue pursuing their careers as actresses.

SHI 6 shared her coping strategy: *"I have always had a way of dealing with those things... they came and I'm like yeah...I tried to play along...because you know, you can't just push a man away totally... it is somewhat rude...so you just give them the benefit of the doubt...so that, they feel like ...yeah."* She added that, *"even if I find myself in that situation, it's either I withdraw or play along and get my role and play and run away or just don't play along at all...I just walk away...so erm that has been my experience."*

SHI 1 also noted that: *"I make sure that as soon as I finish, I leave. You just make sure it's all about business."*

These coping strategies were to prevent bad relationships according to Sexual Harassment Informants.

SHI 2 explained that: *“I didn't want to have any bad relationship with anybody so even though I didn't allow it, I was careful.”*

SHI 8 also narrated how she could not complain after she was not paid after shooting and how she nearly got raped that day. *“A DOP I know called me to come to a set and mentioned that they were going to pay me. After shooting, no money was given to me.” “I wasn't able to ask the producer because they may have a wrong perception about me. I couldn't even ask for money for transportation.”* She added that she had to spend the night with a colleague actor and he attempted to forcefully have a sexual intercourse with her that night.

#### **4.1.2.5 PERPETRATORS' STRATEGIES**

Deceit and threat were also found by the study as tricks used by perpetrators. Power was thus found to be at play. Perpetrators who were mostly directors according to the study, use their power as directors to threaten Sexual Harassment Informants that they couldn't help them again if they are not cooperative or do not yield in to their demands. Others said they were warned or told of the power of directors to blackmail you to other directors and producers in a manner which would make them not cast you for their projects.

Also, three of the Sexual Harassment Informants recounted occasions where they were deceived to get to a location only for them to be harassed by the perpetrators. Two of them were made to go to a hotel and one to a movie house. Two of these actresses did not know about the location until they got there.

SHI 1 shared her experience noting: *“A director I have worked with before called me on another set in Swedru. This particular set err, I went there, and there was nobody on the set. It was only him and then his brother whom he often shoots movies with, like they are co-partners. They were sleeping in a hotel and I was like ah, how come you made me come here and there is no one here. I mean those you shoot with are not here, so how are we going to shoot?”*

According to her, they told her the others would join them in the evening but that was also a lie: *“They didn’t show up and he told me they will come the following day so he will pay for another room for me to spend the night. It was evening and he said I should manage the room they were giving me....And he got me one of the rooms.... I was there ah and he came, errm I will be spending the night with you this evening.”*

According to SHI 1, this was the beginning of a sleepless night as she was not ready to open the door to let him in and he was also persistently knocking on the door.

She added that she realised the following morning that it was all a lie and there was no project to work on or movie to shoot.

SHI 2 also explained how she was deceived: *“He told me to go to a hotel, we are going to meet a renowned director. You've never met him, so at least you would want to go. I got there and it was a lie. He deceived me to a hotel room and he wanted to have sex with me.”*

SHI 4 shared a similar experience: *“So I went, I was thinking it was an open audition that there were lots of people but unfortunately it was just the two of us. And where he made me come was more or less like a movie house. How can you be doing auditioning in a movie house where there's bedroom and everything?”*

Sexual Harassment Informants also shared their experiences in relation to the use of power by directors and producers to threaten Sexual Harassment Informants that they couldn't help them if they are not cooperative or do not yield in to their demands.

SHI 7 said that *“a lot of actresses including myself are scared of directors because they can make you lose your role and influence other directors from calling you for roles.”*

SHI 5 confirmed noting: *“yeah (raises voice) you know because we are actually scared of directors by losing my roles and then people calling us for roles.”*

SHI 5 said that she is not a household name yet because she has refused to be cooperative with some directors and producers who have the power and means to make “stars”: *“I have been in it for like five years now... errm I met people who could have pushed me far, but because of this whole sexual harassment thing, I didn't allow myself, I am still at where I am you. I don't have a mind-set of quitting it yet, but I know one day I will leave.”*

In another instance, SHI 4 explained that, after a forceful attempt by a director to have a sexual intercourse with her, she slapped him and hit him to escape. She said that, he got angry, followed her and rather demanded an apology from her: *“he said I should rather apologise to him...and I was like... apologize? And then the man was like, I'm not serious. That how can I ... I even slapped him, a director?”* She explained that he felt so powerful that he thought he rather deserved an apology.

SHI 2 stated that: *“I didn't want to have any bad relationship with anybody so even though I didn't allow it, I distanced myself. I had to find a way of not accepting to do that but at the same time not to offend the all-powerful directors, so with time, they distance themselves from me as well”*.

SHI 4 similarly said: *“I didn't want to be rude since he is a director.” She further explained that, “the industry is quite small and as a result, a director can easily taint your image in the sight of other directors. This will make it difficult for you to be casted for a role”*.

Also, most of the participants kept saying they were not going to mention the names of their perpetrators during the interview even when they had not been told to do so. In one instance, SHI 3 said: *“It was during an audition. I will not mention the director's name.”*

SHI 8 also said: *“I went for auditioning, but I don't want to mention the producer's name.”*

Also SHI 3 said: *“I will not mention the person's name.... I will not mention the director's name.”*

This they explained that, it was a way of avoiding trouble. Even in the absence of their perpetrators and under a circumstance where the researcher assured them of confidentiality, they were afraid to name perpetrators of sexual harassment. This fear they associated to not being casted by perpetrators and other directors should they find out that they are those who reported the incidence. Also, the Sexual Harassment Informants mentioned that, due to competition in the movie industry, ladies who question certain behaviours are seen as difficult and as a result, they are not casted. They are therefore very careful not to offend the ‘all powerful directors or producers’. This has created a sort of fear in them.

#### 4.1.3 NATURE AND FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The study found that, the forms and nature of sexual harassment included: unwelcome sexual comments, jokes or gestures, being touched in a sexual way, being shown sexual pictures without consent, actresses being asked to strip naked during an audition, sexual advances, unscripted nudity, repeated proposals, pressure to enter a sexual relationship by a person in a position of power, forceful kissing, forceful attempt to have sex with victim and demand for sex in exchange for roles.

SHI 4 indicated that: *“I went for an audition, what's the audition ah, I should strip myself naked”*.  
*When she refused to do that he said, “I should come and massage him.”*

SHI 5 confirmed by noting: *“three of us were actually in the same room with the judges and then we were actually asked to naked ourselves?”* SHI 5 also added that, she had gone for so many auditions that asked participants to strip naked.

SHI 2 also in sharing an experience she had during a ‘one on one’ audition with a director, stated that: *“I went to his office, and he was like, I should act with him. I should kiss him like my boyfriend.”*

Also, SHI 1 narrated how she was pressurised by a producer who was also the director to enter a sexual relationship with him during a project. She said the shoot demanded that they sleep at the location where they were shooting and it was not a pleasant experience according to her. She stated that: *“I didn’t know what to do and this guy too was giving me pressure. Meanwhile I couldn’t leave the set because we were not done shooting.”*

Other Sexual Harassment Informants complained that unscripted nudity was also forced upon them during shooting.

SHI 1 shared her experience with unscripted nudity. She said: *“as we were shooting, the director came forward and said you are a nice girl, the very day I saw you, ermm, I knew you would be a good actress, bla bla bla. that particular movie, I was supposed to play I think, two roles or so, two or three, but this director ended up creating a lot of scenes for me... herh, he was just creating scenes...we had a script for that particular movie but he was creating the scenes out of nowhere. So I played, I think ...I shot errmm nine scenes and it included nude scenes”*.

SHI 2 talking about sexual advances said: *“I was standing outside with him, he wanted to kiss me before he goes inside to shoot.”*

Also, as Sexual Harassment Informants shared their experiences, it was mentioned that some of the time the sexual harassment is somewhat transactional. Perpetrators ask actresses directly to offer sex or sexual favours in exchange for a role.

SHI 2 explained that: *“Talking about the producers and directors too, because you want a role, you are desperate, you want a role so he wants to do something with you, he will be like, use what you have to get what you want.”*

SHI 5 explained that, sex in exchange for a role has become common in the movie industry. She added that, she has been a victim of such offers on several occasions. She noted: *“right now that is what people have made the whole thing look like. So sometimes even if the director doesn't ask for it, some of the cast want to give it to him.”* She said she has had so many experiences where directors and producers have harassed her sexually because of a role she would get to play. She added that: *“directors want to harass you even if the role they are giving you is not a lead role...the whole thing looks like it's all about trading sex.”*

SHI 6 also explained that: *“you are either forced to get a role in place of that, which is if you agree to it.”* She added that: *“I have had a few friends who have said yes they did it, as in had a sexual intercourse with a director for a role. And others said no they didn’t”*.

According to SHI 3, a director told her she wasn’t serious and he was not going to give her a role or work with her if she can’t grab him and kiss him like he is her boyfriend: *“He told me he can’t work with me if I can’t kiss him...yes he just told me straightforward you are not serious for the job and you cannot work with me so I can’t add you to my casts.”*

SHI 5 explained that, despite how talented or how good you are, some directors would want to have sex with you before giving you a role.

SHI 8 added that, *“Even some directors go as far to say that even your other colleagues are doing it without we asking them, yes they are doing it so what the hell are you trying to tell them... you get it?”*

The two cases of forceful attempt by perpetrator to have a sexual intercourse with the victim was also detailed by the victims.

SHI 8 narrated her experience: *“while I was sleeping, he came to sleep by me and started touching me, I woke up ...I told him to leave, only for him to forcefully attempt to have sex with me.”*

SHI 4 also said: *“so he dragged me and we started struggling.”*

Some also indicated that, some of the incidence of sexual harassment was subtle.

SHI 6 explained that: *“They start like, I want you to be my girlfriend, but if you look at the behaviour of the person, you can deduce this guy just want to have sex with you or harass you, so like I said, it’s there, you would come across it.”*

SHI 4 said: *“he said I should massage him.”*

SHI 7 shared her experience with being shown a pornographic picture without her consent: *“he came closer to me only to show me a pornographic picture.”*

Many other reports of sexual harassment detailed inappropriate sexual comments and touches.

Most Sexual Harassment Informants reported that they had many friends working in the film industry that had had similar experiences.

#### **4.1.4 RESPONSES TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Findings from the data suggest two main responses to sexual harassment. The first is the initial response to sexual harassment by the victims and the second is whether a Sexual Harassment Informant reported the incidence or not.

Three Sexual Harassment Informants (SHI 1, 4 8) indicated that they slapped one of their perpetrators. SHI 5 however mentioned that she warned one perpetrator.

The second response to sexual harassment found by the study has to do with whether a Sexual Harassment Informant reported the incidence. Sexual Harassment Informants said they didn't see the need to report victims because no one would believe them even when they report. They may end up becoming double victims if they reported.

Speaking in relation to what their initial response was, SHI 1 explained that she slapped one of her perpetrators. According to her, reporting was not an option, so she had to deal with the perpetrator in her own way. She said: *“That day the way I gave him slaps.”*

SHI 4 also explained that: *“So at one time he dragged me and then we started struggling, from there I just slapped him. So when I slapped him, I moved backwards, then he was like, you slapped me, and I was like I swear to God if you come closer again I’m going to do what is more than that”*. She said that in order to escape, she had to forcefully go out after hitting the perpetrator with her elbow.

SHI 8 experienced a hostile environment nature of sexual harassment. A colleague actor attempted to forcefully have a sexual intercourse with her. In her case, her initial response was slapping the perpetrator, she however had a slap in return. She therefore called the police to come to her aid initially, but refused to give the police directions to the scene of the crime. She mentioned she did that because, the perpetrator apologised and also she thought of it and concluded that, she would just be a double victim if the police come in. She explained that: *“He had removed his shirt and was wearing just boxers, ready to have sex with me. So I slapped him and I think it really hurt him, and this guy also hit me back err, while I was pregnant. Do you know why I even hit him...Because he was struggling with me on the bed...so I hit him, herr, and he also did same. (Sad and angry). So I picked my phone and dialled 191, the police...I called the police...”*

SHI 5 also explained what her initial response was noting: *“I had to stand on my feet and then warn the person, it wasn’t in public even though he did it in publicly.”*

Most Sexual Harassment informants however mentioned that, they either avoided their perpetrators or devised a way to cope with them and continue working with them.

SHI 5 further added: *“even if I find myself in the situation, it’s either I withdraw or I play along and get my role and play and run away or I just don’t play along at all...I just walk away.”*

In relation to whether a Sexual Harassment Informant reported the incidence or not, Sexual Harassment informants said they didn't see the need to report victims because no one would believe them even when they report.

So SHI 6 said: *"I would rather keep quiet about it than tell people about it."*

SHI 4 added that, even the perpetrators are convinced that reporting them does little: *"And he was like eerr you see, if you go out and tell people, they wouldn't believe I didn't even have sex with you."*

According to the sexual harassment informants, there is no safe space for victims to report, you would rather get into more trouble when you report (perhaps the one you are reporting to is worse) and it may be damaging to their career.

SHI 5 explained that, the best is to tell a colleague: *"okay I have told someone before, but not to a producer or a director because I believe they are all the same. So why am I reporting to a director or a producer? I may end up not getting roles... But to my other colleagues I have, but it ends there."*

The findings indicated that, due to competition in the industry, actresses who question certain behaviours are seen as difficult and are not casted as a results. They are therefore very careful not to offend the director or producer. As a result, most of these actresses that were sexually harassed did not report to anyone but kept it to themselves and rather left the set quietly and tried not to work with that director any more. Some of them tried to play along to secure their roles, finished acting and went their way. According to Sexual Harassment Informants, you therefore may have to master the act of playing along.

This is the strategy of SHI 8: *“if I go to a set and the location is in Accra, I would just come home to sleep. Like all these things wouldn’t have happened. Whenever I go to set and it is in Accra, even if it is 3 am, I pick a taxi or uber to the house.”*

On the contrary, SHI 4 who is the only actress who reported the act to someone, told a director friend of hers. Though she didn’t want to talk, the director called her as soon as she got home and asked her questions like he knew something had happened, she said it wasn’t surprising when she later found out that they (the perpetrator and her friend who is a director) were friends. Even after that, he had to meet her the next day, persuaded her before she told him everything that happened. He told her he would call the perpetrator, but she never got any feedback till date. According to her, it is three years now.

Therefore, the study found four key reasons why Sexual Harassment Informant did not report the incidents. These were; *‘No one to report it to’, ‘Fear of not being casted’, ‘I am not the only one’ and ‘A lack of proof’.*

#### **4.1.5 EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

According to this study, the effects of sexual harassment are emotional damage, physical harm, and psychological effects. The study further found that, sexual harassment had negative effect on the acting career of these Sexual Harassment Informants. Material loss (economical effect) was also identified as an effect of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment had multiple effects on the victims (Sexual Harassment Informants).

SHI 8 shared the effect it had on her: *“He had removed his shirt and was wearing just boxers, ready to have sex with me. So I slapped him and I think it really hurt him, and this guy also hit me back err, while I was pregnant.”* She added: *“as I was saying, he slapped me to the extent that my eyes became red a bit and it got swollen. I was crying, herr...it really hurt me that he slapped me in addition to the sexual harassment”*.

SHI 4 also said: *“It got to a point where I had to urinate on myself because I had held it on for a long time and the pressure and emotional trauma I was going through even worsen it. I feared to ask him for a washroom as it might endanger me.”*

The Sexual Harassment Informants added that, aside it being uncomfortable, the experience leads to stress. SHI 1 explained that: *“I wanted to sleep, I was tired and also frustrated because he said we would be shooting that day but it didn’t come on, and in the evening too while I was sleeping, he kept coming to knock at the door. He said he couldn’t sleep and he wanted to sleep by me.”* She added that, she left the set the following day but she was still hopeful of the shoot coming on later, and thus left her bag in the hotel. This caused a mess in her relationship as her boyfriend started having trust issues. The effects according to her was both emotional and loss of material things that were very dear to her heart. She noted that: *“I had seen some of their jobs on TV, so I wanted to shoot badly, so I left my things and I came home. My guy got angry when he realized I left my things there. He said the shooting didn’t come on, I didn’t get paid and I left my things there on top of it. That thing created a lot of mess in my relationship, seriously”*. She added, *“do you know that, up till I haven’t gotten my bag. Meanwhile, because I was told I was the lead character, I packed a lot of things, my bags, shoes, my small small bags like purse and a lot of things... He told me that my role is that of glamour...that which hurts me most is my shoes. All these things were in*

*the bag, 'Encholac bag' ... this thing I'm telling you er, anytime I remember it hurts. Because I had a lot of things in the bag.*

SHI 1 in narrating another incidence of sexual harassment said she felt so cheap: *"I said to myself that have I become so cheap to the extent that, a director wants to have sex with me while others are sleeping in the same room."*

The study also found that sexual harassment reduces the morale and commitment to work or act. SHI 7 confirmed by noting, *"Yeah...so you don't feel comfortable when the person is around, that is one thing."*

The informants also spoke of many people who have left the industry due to this act which has been normalised. So according to SHI 3, *"people actually give up. They easily give up you get it...some actresses give up on their talent because of sexual harassment."*

SHI 5 confirmed by noting, *"I don't have the intention of quitting now, but I know one day I would also leave."*

SHI 2 also said she stopped going for auditions and approaching people she knows are in the position to help her advance in her career. She explained that: *"the very first time I met that producer, and he asked me to kiss him, I stopped going for auditions... It was because of this that I stopped approaching people that I know they can help me."*

SHI 3 had a similar fear: *"I was scared that when I go for an audition, a director or producer will ask for something."*

SHI 4 also mention how she was rejected upfront from being part of a project because she said no to sexual harassment.

SHI 5 passionately said, *“So if I could remember this director very well as in harassing me before, I get a different motive about the whole audition... you get it, I’m definitely not really comfortable about what is going on in the movie industry.”* She painfully lamented that, despite how talented or how good you are, some directors would want to have sex with you before giving you a role. She explained that, *“some people are very good in acting but they will not immediately accept you unless you give in to sex. So why should it be so? Because if you have seen the best in me why do I have to give myself to you before you accept my talent or you give me a particular role for me to play.”*

#### **4.1.6 SUGGESTIONS TO ADDRESS SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

In dealing with sexual harassment, the informants mentioned that, an industry-wide policy against sexual harassment would be helpful. Some indicated that, they do not know about any policy on sexual harassment in the film industry of Ghana. Two of the actresses however mentioned that, they had been on sets which had policies against sexual harassment but it was verbal and not detailed. In addition to written policy, some of the Sexual Harassment Informants are of the view that, “naming and shaming” perpetrators like Hollywood did is the best way to minimise the act of sexual harassment if not stop it entirely. Another suggestion by an informant to address sexual harassment is, a collective decision by actresses to say no to sexual harassment.

So according to SHI 2, *“there is no written policy.”* SHI 1 confirmed by noting that: *“errm...no, I have not encountered yet. Not on any of the sets I have been to.”* SHI 4 explained that she had only been on one set which had a policy against sexual harassment and sexual affairs on the set, however even that was not a written policy. According to her, they were verbally informed that, if you are

caught having a sexual affair with someone, or harassing someone sexually, you would be sacked from the set. SHI 5 also indicated that: *“I have been on a set that the director didn’t like what was going on. On that set, both males and females were sleeping in the same room and some started having sexual affairs. Others were harassing some actresses. It became bad that the director had to set some rules. That is the only set I have been on that there was an attempt to prevent sexual harassment.”*

The other Sexual Harassment Informants mentioned that they had not been to any set that had a policy (written or verbal) against sexual harassment. They were of a strong view that policies will help curb the issue of sexual harassment in the movie industry. There should therefore be better policies in the industry and greater protection for freelance actresses who happens to be the majority in the movie industry.

As the study revealed, actresses are of the view that, “Naming and shaming” the victim is the best way to minimise the act of sexual harassment. A Ghanaian version of the ‘Me Too movement’ was thus recommended by these actresses who have been victims of sexual harassment not once.

According to SHI 3: *“we actresses need to come out and start mentioning names...they should be out of the system.”* SHI 2 also added that: *“now I think the best is to get evidence like audio, video or any other evidence, then you name and shame the person. With the help of social media...my dear it will trend papa...it would go a long way to prevent other people from doing that.”*

SHI 4 is of the view that: *“the way to deal with perpetrators could be to set the person up, let other people bomb into the person in the act or you record everything that goes on...why because*

*the act is becoming too much...such evidence or case should be made public...this would prevent others from doing the same thing... their reputation is at stake and they will think or consider their reputation since a lot of people will get to know of their secret bad act which would cause so much shame to them.”*

They are of the opinion that, if authorities in the industry should create a system or an avenue where an actress could report cases of sexual harassment and mention names of the people who are doing that to them without it affecting their career, a lot of actresses would come out to share their experiences and perpetrators would change.

In addition to naming and shaming, SHI 8 was of the view that, a collective decision by actresses to say no to sexual harassment would be the best solution. She added that, *“as the upcoming actor, put it upon yourself that you would not allow or agree to any sexual harassment. At the end of the day, they would still need human beings to work with. So if I refuse you, you will go ah and come back to work with me. So we will still get roles even if we don't give ourselves to them.*

The Sexual Harassment Informants are of the view that, there should be tougher actions against perpetrators and sexual harassment in general.

#### **4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This study sought to explore the sexual harassment experiences of actresses in the Ghanaian film industry studying eight actresses. Also, it sought to find out the various forms and nature of sexual harassment in the film industry, the responses to sexual harassment as well as the effects of sexual

harassment on actresses. Five main issues emerged from the findings and this form the basis for the discussions. The findings of the current study are discussed within the scope of available literature (theories and related studies) in this section.

#### **4.2.1 TOLERANCE/NORMALIZATION**

The study found that, there is tolerance and normalisation of sexual harassment in the film industry of Ghana. The tolerance and normalisation of sexual harassment according to the study was influenced by; industry culture, competition for work, and the importance of informal social networks.

The film industry is a very competitive industry. A lot of people go into the industry because of the fame and glamour that is associated with it. Where sexual harassment is prevailing, actresses' do not report or are hesitant to do so because there is the fear that there is always someone else hungry to take your place if you complain. Also, the production-based nature of the industry implies that informal social network is important. Your next job could come from the director who may be the perpetrator of sexual harassment or from a recommendation he made in your favour. Majority of the actresses are freelance and this included all the Sexual Harassment Informants that were part of this study. It is quite easy for directors and producers to replace an actress because there is always someone hungry to take your place if the director or producer thinks you are difficult to work with or you complain too much. Perhaps, this is the reason why actresses tolerate the act especially in their early years in the industry. The competition in the industry therefore reinforces the perpetuation of sexual harassment.

As indicated by the objectification theory, women are to adopt and adjust to male expectations in order to stay afloat and cope with comments or actions of objectification as normal especially in a male dominated work or where men are in authority as found in this study. Also there is objectification in the film industry of Ghana as the Sexual Harassment Informants noted emphasis on their natural rather than culturally acquired abilities.

This finding is consistent with the findings of a study by Hennekam and Bennett (2017) which found that, participants in the study described sexual harassment as part of the job. Due to the high competition in the industry, directors and producers can easily change and replace actresses and that had led to a culture of silence. This culture of silence, allows perpetrators to behave in inappropriate ways without being reported, punished or facing any consequences for their actions.

Also, the finding is consistent with what Johns (2013) and Derdar (2019) found which indicated that, there was almost an acceptance of the prevailing culture of bullying and sexual harassment. This is accompanied by a culture of silence, which allows perpetrators to behave in inappropriate ways without being reported. The findings of Johns (2013) like the current study also indicated that, women (and some men for Johns, 2013) become prey to sexual harassment at the beginning of their career (that is at the early stages of actresses' career) however, they learned to develop strategies to avoid it over time. Similarly, Andoh (2000) also found that employees in their early years of work were more prone to sexual harassment.

Like this study, Eyre (2000) found that the university community created an atmosphere that normalized sexual harassment just like the film industry.

It must be noted however that, normalisation doesn't mean the act of sexual harassment is right. Education on sexual harassment is thus key.

#### **4.2.2 POWER**

The findings of this study indicate that, some directors and producers use their position and power to harass or threaten Sexual Harassment Informants. Some includes; they couldn't help them again if they are not cooperative or do not yield in to their demands. Some indicated that, sexual harassment and transactional sex sometimes become a criterion for selecting casts hence actresses who oppose such acts are not casted for projects.

There is therefore insecurity of being freelance, hence to avoid endangering future work meant one do not raise complaints about unreasonable treatment before, during and after projects. This has therefore led to a culture of silence. Also, the competition in the film industry allows for a remuneration that is subjective. Actresses are paid differently based on how talented and famous one is. Payments are therefore made in the discretion of the director or producer especially where no contracts are signed, some actresses do not get paid at all. This makes actresses careful in dealing with the perpetrators of sexual harassment who are mostly directors and producers according to this study. Some of the Sexual Harassment Informants reported that, finding a way to deal with the sexual demands of older male power holders was the only way to establish themselves.

Supervisors or individuals can use their power and position to extort sexual gratification from their subordinates. It is easy to see how a supervisor can use power to reward and punish in connection with demand for sexual favours (Tekper, 2011). Sexual harassment causes selective differentiation between men and women in the workplace, such that men are not placed in comparable positions to women when they are comparably situated. This leads to sex role spill over, where a female employee is categorized according to her gender role rather than her occupational role. She is viewed as a woman primarily, rather than as a worker.

MacKinnon (1979) indicates that, gender and sexuality are similarly identified as systems of power and domination, with adult men using sexual power to assert and maintain dominance over women. And this is what the current study found. This use of power is what the hegemonic masculinity theory explains as a form of masculinity that is always put in a superior position to dominate and it derives strength from the way society is designed and how institutions at the macro-level are structured to maintain that status quo.

The findings of this study are consistent with some other studies as discussed below.

Eyre (2000) like the current study also found that sexual harassment in universities was a use of authority by deviant persons as was also identified in the current study. Also, North (2016) found that in nearly all instances the harassment was by a male colleague or a male in a senior position. The current study also found that all perpetrators were male and majority were directors and producers, those who occupied senior positions in the movie industry. The findings therefore corroborate the finding obtained in the current research study that perpetrators of sexual harassment are mainly male in senior position.

Johns (2013) also found that, managers were the main perpetrators of bullying and harassment and the act was steeped in power. Khan (2005) findings corroborate the findings obtained in this study which indicates that, harassers were mainly individuals in supervisor roles. Also, both the study by Khan (2005) and Johns (2013) like the current study found that co-workers or actors were also perpetrators, however, majority were people who occupied senior positions.

Also, Terkpeh (2011) found that, reported cases were not dealt with as expected because perpetrators happen to be senior staff and colleagues of those who handled the issues. This therefore discourages reporting and put fear in employees. Power therefore comes into play. This finding agreed to the current study which found the fear to report incidence due to power of perpetrators. Hennekam and Bennett (2017) also found that, some women reported that, in order to establish yourself in the entertainment industry, you would have to submit to the sexual demands of older male power holders. Informants in the current study mentioned same but also indicated that with time, they developed strategies to cope or avoid sexual harassment.

It could be concluded that, the relationship between power and sexual harassment makes people in powerful positions more likely to harass individuals in a subordinate role. The power disparity deters victims from filing complaints for fear of retribution, and it often gives the perpetrators greater impudence and immunity (Gaudiano, 2018).

The finding implies that, power is a factor that influence the act of sexual harassment and also prevent victims of sexual harassment from reporting the incidence.

#### **4.2.3 NATURE AND FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

In the Ghanaian film industry, sexual harassment manifests itself mostly as quid pro quo and rarely as hostile environment according to the study. Although all 8 Sexual Harassment Informants had been victims of sexual harassment, none had a sexual intercourse with any of the perpetrators. All instances of sexual harassment with the exception of three of the incidences described during the in-depth interviews were quid pro quo.

The study found that, the forms and nature of sexual harassment included; unwelcome sexual comments, jokes or gestures, being touched in a sexual way, being shown sexual pictures without consent, actresses being asked to strip naked during an audition, sexual advances, unscripted nudity, unwanted repeated proposals, pressure to enter a sexual relationship, forceful kissing, forceful attempt to have sex with victim and demand for sex in exchange for roles.

The quid pro quo form and nature of sexual harassment as found in the study is similar to the findings of the study by Hennekam and Bennett (2017), North (2016), Aryeetey (2004), Weber et al (2002), Andoh (2000), and also Puente and Kelly (2018). Also Hennekam and Bennett (2017) in their study indicated that, the harassment experiences is in connection with Mackinnon's quid pro quo. It explains that, sexual verbal expressions and demand for sexual favours were commonplace during interviews and auditions. This corroborates the current study as Sexual Harassment Informants in this study also mentioned sexual verbal expressions and demand for sexual favours was common during auditions.

As found by Andoh (2000), Aryeetey (2004) and Puente and Kelly (2018), this study also recorded hostile environment. The current study reported just three instances of hostile environment. Thus, the study found that the common form of sexual harassment in the movie industry was quid pro quo. Which is consistent with many of the literature reviewed and mentioned above.

The findings are however contrary to Khan (2005) who studied sexual harassment at the workplace in Zimbabwe where majority reported hostile environment consequences rather than quid pro quo.

#### **4.2.4 RESPONSE/REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The findings of the current study are no different from studies that have found that victims of sexual harassment do not report the case or find the need to do so. Actresses interviewed did not see the need to report because according to them: it is risky to their career; it becomes a foolish case. More so, people even struggle to get justice when they are sexually abused or they go through other gender-based violence, so they turn to think when they report sexual harassment, it would be trivialised. However, some of the Sexual Harassment Informants indicated that they slapped the perpetrators knowing that reporting would make them double victims.

Like other research on sexual harassment of females in the entertainment industry, including North (2016), Ristow (2007) and Hennekam and Bennett (2017), sexual harassment informants in this study mentioned that, reporting could be damaging to their careers and promotional opportunities in a very competitive industry. This indicates a fear that if a formal complaint is made, the victims would be the target, rather than the perpetrators, to bear the repercussions. Being stigmatised as a complainer and also being disadvantaged in important professional relationships with producers, and directors who hold the key to their career progress would be the consequences of reporting.

The finding of Vohlídalová (2015) is similar to the experiences of actresses in this study, as they adopted more of the internal strategies and in few incidences the external strategies which included open resistance.

Similarly, findings of this study is similar to what North (2016) found; most respondents made light of its seriousness and did not make formal reports because they feared victimization or reprisal. Also, the study indicated that a culture of secrecy hides a major industry problem where many women believe they should work it out themselves. These findings are similar to findings of this study.

Contrary to the findings of this study, where only one person reported, Khan (2005) found that, half of the women the study was on reported the harassment. Of those who did, the study indicated that, over half reported to formal agencies such as management, or workers' committees.

This study found that Sexual Harassment Informants are unaware of an industry-wide policy against sexual harassment, on the contrary, Terkpeh (2011) found that, the organization had a policy on sexual harassment, and workers were aware. However most workers who were harassed did not report the harassers because they did not want them to lose their jobs, this is similar to this study as all but one Sexual Harassment Informant did not report the harassers.

The above therefore confirms that most victims in this study and other studies do not report incidences of sexual harassment due to the long term consequences to follow. The few who report

do not get positive feedback. This therefore empowers perpetrators to continue such behaviours considered to be sexual harassment.

#### **4.2.5 EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

According to this study, the effects of sexual harassment is emotional damage, physical harm, and psychological effects. The study further found that, sexual harassment had negative effect on the acting career of these Sexual Harassment Informants. Material loss (economical effect) was also identified as an effect of sexual harassment. The Sexual Harassment Informants in this study said it is an uncomfortable experience and leads to stress. It also reduces the morale and commitment to work or act. The informants also spoke of many people who have left the industry due to this act which has been normalised.

North (2016) also found that, sexual harassment could lead to low self-esteem and retard personality creation. According to the study, harassment undermines the confidence of victims and affects work significantly. This corroborate this study as it also found that sexual harassment undermines the confidence of victims and affects work significantly.

Andoh (2000) also found that, sexual harassment can lead to absenteeism, stress and ill-health which is similar to the findings of this study. Ali et. al (2015) also found that, about 95% of the harassed nurses were left with psychological effects, mostly in the form of disappointment and depression, This corroborate the current study.

The effects of sexual harassment could therefore be emotional, psychological and could also have financial implications.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

This study sought to explore the sexual harassment experiences of actresses in the Ghanaian film industry studying eight actresses. Also, it sought to find out the various forms and nature of sexual harassment in the film industry, the response to sexual harassment as well as the effects of sexual harassment on actresses. This chapter gives the summary of the key findings of the study, paying particular attention to issues that address the research questions and objectives of the study as stated in the first chapter of this dissertation.

A qualitative approach was adopted in this research. The researcher employed this approach due to the exploratory demands of the research objectives and the need to gather rich information on the topic. Data collection was done by conducting semi-structured interviews with eight actresses in the film industry of Ghana. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed and analyzed thematically. This chapter also presents the conclusions drawn from the results of the analysis of the interviews and makes recommendations for further studies.

#### **5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

One significant finding from the study is the tolerance and normalization of sexual harassment in the Ghanaian film industry. The competition in the movie industry was highlighted to be a contributing factor to the tolerance and normalization of sexual harassment in the Ghanaian film industry. In all, the tolerance and normalisation of sexual harassment according to the study was influenced by; competition for work, industry culture and the prominence of informal social

networks. This is consistent with other studies on sexual harassment in the media and entertainment industry.

The study also found that sexual harassment happens at the early stage of actresses' career. This they associated with the fact that, at the early stage of their career, they so much want to get fame that they become vulnerable hence some men deciding to take advantage of them.

It was also identified that, sexual harassment occurs during auditions and this included auditions that were opened to the general public and "one on one auditions" with directors and producers.

In addition to the above, the actresses stated that, the intimate working environments of the film industry provided opportunities for sexual harassment to take place. Deceit and threat were also found by the study as tricks used by perpetrators.

The study also found that, all the perpetrators of sexual harassment were males and it included directors, producers and actors. Directors were the leading perpetrators of sexual harassment, however, the informants also identified producers and co-actors as offenders. Most of the actresses had experienced several counts of sexual harassment and they pointed out more than one perpetrator. Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that those in positions of authority in the movie industry were perpetrators and were also more likely to be perpetrators. Power was thus found to be at play. Perpetrators who were mostly directors according to the study, use their power as directors to threaten Sexual Harassment Informants that they couldn't help them again if they are not cooperative or do not yield in to their demands.

The study further found that, sexual harassment policy was hardly available on set. Actresses were unaware of policies which are meant to deal with sexual harassment in the film industry.

Sexual harassment manifests mostly as quid pro quo and rarely as hostile environment in the Ghanaian movie industry, according to the study. The study also found that, the nature and forms of sexual harassment included; unwelcome sexual comments, jokes or gestures, being touched in a sexual way, being shown sexual pictures without consent, actresses being asked to strip naked during an audition, sexual advances, unscripted nudity, unwanted repeated proposals, pressure to enter a sexual relationship, forceful kissing, forceful attempt to have sex with victim and demand for sex in exchange for roles (transactional sex).

In response to the act, Sexual Harassment informants either avoided their perpetrators or devised a way to cope with them and continue working with them. Sexual Harassment informants said they didn't see the need to report victims because no one would believe them even when they report. They may end up becoming double victims if they reported.

The effects of sexual harassment as found by the study are emotional damage, physical harm, psychological effects, financial implications and negative effect on the acting career of these Sexual Harassment Informants. They said it is an uncomfortable experience and it leads to stress. It also reduces the morale and commitment to work or act. According to Sexual Harassment Informants, the best approach to stop sexual harassment in the movie industry is to name and shame the perpetrators.

Sexual harassment is a serious problem in a lot of industries of which the Ghanaian film industry is no exception. It is steeped in power. Like Hollywood, Bollywood and other film industries who are strongly advocating for an end to sexual harassment in the film industry, Ghanaian film industry may have to pay particular attention to sexual harassment as Sexual Harassment Informants indicated how widespread the act is.

With few victims reporting sexual harassment, other approaches of addressing its prevalence consequences need further exploration, as the study also found that sexual harassment reduces the morale and commitment to work or act. The informants also spoke of many people who have left the industry due to this act which has been normalised and this implies that the industry has lost talented people as a result of how widespread the act is.

Additionally, as Sexual Harassment Informants indicated that workplace culture and written policy has implications for sexual harassment, there is a need for better policies in the industry and greater protection for freelance actresses who happens to be the majority in the movie industry. Also, the film industry needs to recognize the prevalence of sexual harassment in the industry and invest in educating men about sexual harassment and its implications for women. In a professional space, people should learn the difference between words that sexualize a woman as against compliments. Also, if people complain, or happen not to be comfortable with a compliment that is given about their physical appearance, one should desist from such act.

As the study revealed, actresses are of the view that, "Naming and shaming" the victim is the best way to minimise sexual harassment. A Ghanaian version of the 'Me Too movement' could happen in the near future if sexual harassment in the film industry is not given the needed attention.

## **5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

During the course of the study, the researcher faced some limitations. The most prominent was that, quite a number of the actresses that were contacted through the snowballing method were not willing to grant interviews which made it almost impossible to carry on with the research. In addition, time scheduled for the interviews had to be changed on several occasions due to the unavailability of the interviewees, prolonging the duration of the study. However, the use of semi-structured interviews was helpful in bringing out rich and relevant information pertaining to the study area (the film industry). It also proved to be a very tactful way of gathering very meaningful data from the very few participants.

Also, the researcher did not find literature or research on sexual harassment in the entertainment industry in Ghana and Africa as a whole. Although there has been some articles in the mainstream media about individual incidents, there has not been a research or statistical evidence of an industry-wide problem. However, literature on sexual harassment in other industries provide useful information on the context in the country.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The relevance of this research is clear. Until now detailed analysis of the sexual harassment experiences of actresses in the film industry of Ghana is rare. Nonetheless, further study can be conducted to focus on how prevalent (quantitative) sexual harassment is in the film industry of Ghana. Also, data collection methods such as surveys, observations, and focus-groups might also add nuances to the findings that the constraints of this study did not enable. Other studies could also explore the experiences of male actors as the sexual harassment experiences of male and female actors' may differ. Future studies could also widen the scope to include other sectors in the entertainment industry and media.

To improve the situation highlighted in this study, actresses and other industry players as well as employees from other industries are supposed to understand what sexual harassment is and the various forms of sexual harassment and the likelihood that it may happen. Also, they should be proactive in combating the problem more effectively. Although acting is classified as an informal work, the working environment must be made conducive by superiors to prevent a quid pro quo or hostile environment form of sexual harassment. It must be noted that, the informal sector is a large part of the Ghanaian economy and must be given attention.

Below are the specific actions that could be taken to improve the situation;

- The Ghanaian film industry should make policies against sexual harassment and also ensure the implementation as well as allocating resources to help in the implementation. Written policy on sexual harassment is important and also it should officially be recognized that, sexual harassment is a demeaning offence for both children and adults.

- Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) who advocate against gender inequality, human rights and sexual harassment could advocate that, victims of sexual harassment should speak up.
- Also, in view of the gravity and consequences of sexual harassment, it must be emphasized that policies addressing sexual harassment must be put in place in all industries and organisations.
- There should also be public education, discussion, rejection of blaming the victim and training about sexual harassment issues as well as formal reporting and compliant mechanism.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**TOPIC: SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE MOVIE INDUSTRY: A STUDY ON THE  
EXPERIENCES OF ACTRESSES IN GHANA'S FILM INDUSTRY**

I am Constance Serwaa Amofah, a Masters student with the Department of Communication Studies of the University of Ghana, Legon. I am conducting a research on sexual harassment in the movie industry, the experiences of actresses in the film industry of Ghana. The goal of the research is to provide insights for learning and further studies.

I requests to engage you in an informal discussion towards generating data for this study. Your views are strictly confidential, although with your permission I would like to record the interview for the purpose of transcription and analyses. Reports resulting from the study would not contain any information that could be used to identify you.

I would very much appreciate it if you could respond to all my questions but you are free to stop this interview or skip any issues you find unnecessary or sensitive.

I would be very grateful if you would spare some time out of your busy schedule to participate in this interview.

#### **UNDERSTANDING OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

1. In your own words, what is sexual harassment?
2. What kinds of behaviours would you consider as sexual harassment?

#### **EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

1. Have you ever encountered sexual harassment in the course of your work as an actress??
2. When did it happen and how old were you?

3. How did it come about?
4. What is/was the age and sex of the perpetrator?
5. Where did it happen?
6. How frequently did it happen

### **RESPONSE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

1. How did you respond to it?
2. Did you report to anyone?
3. What was the outcome when you reported (or did not respond)

### **CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

1. What do you think was the cause(s)?
2. What were the effects of the sexual harassment?
3. What usually happens to victims of sexual harassment?

### **DEALING WITH SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

1. What do you think should be done to perpetrators in order to stop harassment?
2. How best do you think the problem could be addressed?
3. Are there any rules or guidelines against sexual harassment in the film industry that you know of?

### **SNOWBALL**

1. Can you lead me to someone who has been sexually harassed?