Schooling Silence: Sexual Harassment and its Presence and Perception at Uganda’s Universities and Secondary Schools

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Schooling Silence:

Sexual Harassment and its Presence and Perception at Uganda’s Universities and Secondary Schools

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Fall 2018, Uganda Development Studies
Dedication

I dedicate this paper to survivors. Though the world may try to invalidate your experience, I hear you and hope my work can provide some support for survivors here in Uganda.
Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the support and aid of numerous individuals. I sincerely thank all those who contributed to this project, and hope that you working with me will produce tangible change in the realm of sexual harassment policy.

First, I would like to thank the secondary school students and Makerere University students I spoke to. While I spoke to many stakeholders, your opinions and voices are the key component to this report. I thank you for your enthusiasm and lack of fear in sharing your stories and speaking your mind. I would also like to thank the secondary school and university officials who approved of my study. For sake of anonymity and protecting the secondary school I will not name the headmaster, but I thank you for your dedication to my project and all your help. To Makerere University, thank you for allowing me to complete my research – my hope is that it provides some benefit as the school moves forward in the coming months to improve its sexual harassment policy.

Other than the students I spoke to, I also talked to teachers, professors, and stakeholders in the field of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Your input greatly aided in this report and I am grateful for your time and contribution.

I would also like to thank all the SIT staff, specifically Charlotte Mafumbo. Thank you, Charlotte, for not only helping me with formulating my research concept, but also constantly supporting me through the process. Though this was a challenging subject, your encouragement and enthusiasm helped me to see the light at the end of this long tunnel of research. To Karol, Dorothy, Harriet, Helen, Paul, Bright, and Godfrey, thank you for your help and dedication throughout the semester and during this project. Lastly, to Martin and Lydia, thank you for helping me with my focus groups and interviews and helping to coordinate everything; your help made this process so much easier and I am ever thankful.

Finally, a big thank you to my family and friends back home for constantly support me when thousands of miles away. And to my fellow SIT students and friends, thank you for being there to struggle with me along this ride. I’m so happy and proud to see what we have all accomplished!
List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFPU</td>
<td>The Child and Family Protection Unit, Uganda Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVC</td>
<td>Deputy Vice Chancellor</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immune Deficiency Virus</td>
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<td>MoES</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Sports</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSGE</td>
<td>The National Strategy for Girls’ Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>RECESVID</td>
<td>Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>SGBV</td>
<td>Sexual and Gender-Based Violence</td>
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<td>STD</td>
<td>Sexually Transmitted Disease</td>
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<td>STI</td>
<td>Sexually Transmitted Infection</td>
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<tr>
<td>UJCC</td>
<td>Uganda Joint Christian Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>UKAID</td>
<td>United Kingdom Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UPE</td>
<td>Universal Primary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>USE</td>
<td>Universal Secondary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>YRBSS</td>
<td>Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System</td>
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Abstract

Although reports indicate that a majority of students in Uganda are sexually abused while in school, sexual harassment and its impact on educational attainment is a rampant yet understudied problem (The Uganda National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools, 2015). While harassment in schools by teachers and students is not the only factor leading to high dropout rates among students, the behavior of teachers and students in school, and the lack of discipline towards their actions is an internal contribution to this effect. This study aims to better understand the perceptions on what constitutes “sexual harassment” in Uganda (specifically sexual harassment in schools), if this conversational definition matches up with what the legal definition currently is, and to also assess the effectiveness of reporting systems on sexual harassment and what can be done to improve what is currently inefficient. Through focus groups with secondary school students and university students (n=13), as well as key informant interviews (n=10), participants were asked how they defined sexual harassment, how they came to know about it, and the barriers they saw to speaking up about it. Findings indicate that though the perceptions and definitions of sexual harassment are varied, young people perceive this to be a problem of great concern in schools. Despite this perception, schools themselves effectively foster a culture of silence around the topic of sexual harassment, ultimately resulting in ineffective reporting procedures and an environment that shames and mentally disturbs survivors.¹ Recommendations include comprehensive anti-sexual harassment education mechanisms and the creation of distinct anti-sexual harassment policies that separate this action from other forms of “bad behavior” that violate schools’ codes of conduct.

Content warning: mentions of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence, and rape

¹ The researcher will be using the word “survivor” rather than “victim” in this study, as it is more empowering to the individual, and the commonly accepted word now when discussing sexual violence.
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1.0 Introduction

Sexual harassment² and sexual violence are in every society, but their impacts and context matter in how they manifest. In the case of Uganda specifically, sexual harassment and sexual violence are major obstructions to development, especially in relation to the educational sector. The Gender Inequality Index for Uganda, which measures inequality between men and women in various dimensions of human development such as education and health, is 0.523 ("UNDP Human Development Reports of Gender Inequality Index (GII),” n.d.).³ Despite numerous laws and policies including the 2010 Domestic Violence Act, and a constitution described as one of the most progressive for gender relations in Africa, Uganda is still lagging in terms of equality between women and men (Yiga, n.d.).⁴ ⁵ There is an evident gap between the policy and practice of these laws, the result of a combination of issues including lack of funding and resources, corruption, and patriarchal norms. This inequality is consequently exemplified in all sectors of development, ranging from educational attainment to quality of life.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Uganda ratified, all children have the right to an accessible education free of discrimination (The United Nations, 1989). Regarding educational attainment, Uganda has had a system of Universal Primary Education (UPE) since 1996. While public primary school tuition is free, schoolchildren need scholastic materials and lunch fees hence many children cannot afford to attend school. In 2007, the government of Uganda implemented a Universal Secondary Education (USE) much like UPE. This program however required students to score 28 points or higher on exams to have their tuition subsidized (not waived entirely). For students who could not score 28 points, they still had to pay the full school fees in addition to fees for lunch and scholastic materials. This program however was announced to be phased out in early 2018. In addition to public schools, there are private schools at all levels of education in Uganda, though many have high school fees in a country where the average income per year is 604 USD

² For the purpose of this study, the researcher is primarily using the word “sexual harassment” as it is the most often used word to describe behaviors related to sexual violence in Uganda and the context in which to frame this study necessitates the use of colloquial language. The researcher acknowledges that despite this language in the report, for offenses such as rape or assault, sexual violence is a more proper and linguistically appropriate word to use.
³ No inequality is 0.
⁴ The Domestic Violence Act defines sexual abuse as “any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades, or otherwise violates the dignity of another person” (Republic of Uganda, 2010).
⁵ The Ugandan Constitution has provisions that assure human dignity, a right to life, a right to health, and right to gender equality and non-discrimination. It also voids all cultural practices that are in disagreement with the Constitution’s assurance of equality (Republic of Uganda, 1995).
Like other limitations that push children out of schools, economic capability is a key factor in educational attainment. Despite economic limitations however, school environment itself can be a push factor for some students to leave school.

Sexual harassment by teachers and students in Uganda’s schools, and its impact on educational attainment and inequality is a rampant yet understudied problem. Cultural factors play a major role in the lack of a national conversation about the problem of harassment in schools. This research project overviews student perception of sexual harassment in schools as comprehensive study is needed to understand the scale of the issue and the implications it has on the development of education in Uganda. Similarly, an understanding of how students and teachers define such vague terms as “sexual harassment” and “sexual violence” is beneficial for future literature so that education on sexual violence can be catered to dissolving misconceptions about these terms. In addition, the barriers to reporting for survivors of sexual coercion and harassment in schools are high, and thus this report provides an analysis on the reporting system and the factors that prevent people from coming forward. The final component of the study presents recommendations for universities and secondary schools on the design of reporting and protection systems for survivors who disclose their concerns about teachers and fellow students.

2.0 Background
2.1 Gender and Uganda: A Framework

Uganda is very diverse and is home to approximately 50 ethnic groups. While understanding of gender varies slightly by tribe, society is largely dominated by patriarchal values. The Baganda tribe, the largest ethnic group, comprises 16.5% of the population (Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), 2014). In Baganda culture specifically, boys and girls are socialized differently as youth based on their respective gender roles; girls are taught to be submissive and are tied to the home while boys are generally taught to be dominant, masculine, and aggressive. Common cultural phrases like Abasajja nkoba zambogo zejja zokka mubunya, meaning man should struggle in life to be independent, and omukazi akaza lujja, meaning a woman is meant to stay home and serve her husband, emphasize these strict gender roles (Action Group for Health, Human Rights and HIV/AIDS, 2013). The Baganda culture also assigns names to men and women based on how they conform to the expectations of their gender. From birth, the girl child may be referred to as gganemerde, or ‘not wanted’. Women who fail to act submissive may also be referred to as she-cocks, nnakawanga. Even attending
university in some cases can be grounds for receiving such a title, which comes with societal backlash. Though taking high-profile jobs and continuing schooling is more acceptable now than it once was, there are a variety of cultural factors that push women towards certain roles that are expected and values for their gender (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2009).

In other ethnic groups, gender expectations play out in much the same way. A common phrase among the Batooro is *Omusaija TayangwaI*, a man is never rejected. This word is used primarily in a marriage to describe the role of the wife in relation to the husband. Even with this added context however, the patriarchal expectation that the man has the power is further accentuated (Akiiki, n.d.).

Cultural construction of gender aside, the role of colonialism and Christianity should not be ignored when contextualizing the status of women today in Uganda. Gender-roles were already enforced and in place before Uganda was colonized. The entrance of the British grew these levels of inequality between genders because of the introduced literacy and employment gap (Selhausen & Weisdorf, 2015). Additionally, the introduction of Christianity and the roles of gender under this religion paralleled many of the ethnic roles that were already defined, but gave another justification to their enforcement. Approximately 85% of Ugandans today are Christian, and many children attend private Christian schools (“Religious Composition by Country, 2010-2050,” 2015). Even children that attend “secular” schools are surrounded by both traditional and religious values in the education system of Uganda that come with expectations related to gender.

### 2.2 Education and Sexual Violence

Uganda’s education system is challenged by high dropout rates, especially among girls. Less than 50% of Ugandans complete primary level education, and only 6% complete secondary school or some higher level of education. While percentage of children out of school is the same by gender for primary schools, for secondary schools, 30% of girls aged 13-18 are out of school versus 21% of boys. This disparity only grows as age gets higher (Education Policy and Data Center, 2014). There are a variety of factors that contribute to such a high dropout rate in schools particularly for girls; poverty, harassment in school, early marriage, menstruation, distance to school, poor law enforcement, disability, child labor, teen pregnancy, and food shortages among many others (Mpyangu, Awich Ochen, Olowo Onyango, & Moses Lubaale, 2014).

As sexual violence and harassment in schools is a major barrier to education, the Ugandan Gender in Education 2016 Report by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)
recognizes the need for policy on gender based and sexual violence in institutions of higher learning. However, this report does not assert the same recommendations for secondary and primary schools. For these schools, the report encourages sexuality education programs on sexual maturation with no note included about discussing sexual harassment or violence (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, 2016).

2.3 Sexuality Education Intersected with Sexual Harassment

Since 2001, the default sexuality education system in schools has been abstinence-only, part of the Abstinence, Be faithful, use a Condom (ABC) program (Human Rights Watch, 2005). Other governmental sexual health initiatives have included the School Health Education Program (SHEP), the Health Education Network (HEN), Safeguard the Youth from AIDS (SYFA), and the Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth (PIASCY). Despite these numerous policies though there has never been a comprehensive national framework to address all components of sexual health. In 2016, the Ministry of Education and Sports also banned all comprehensive sex-education under the assumption that it ruined the values of children (Bbosa, 2017). This move was supported by Parliament.

With the current HIV and teenage pregnancy rates though, the Ministry of Education and Sports necessitated a new policy with the 2018 National Sexuality Education Framework. This framework is part of Uganda’s Vision 2040 to develop the country and covers four themes of Human Development, Relationships, Sexual Behavior, and Sexual Health. Previous policies focused on sexual health at a biological level. The intention of the new agenda is to not only talk about biology but also discuss health relationships and life skills in Uganda’s cultural context through all levels of schooling. One notable goal of this policy is “to make the environment in Educational Institutions safe for learners where they feel protected from all forms of sexual abuse and violence; including sexual harassment and exploitation (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2018). Despite this step forward, the policy relies on religious and traditional values and continues to maintain the former abstinence-only policy. It also is openly opposed by the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) which is comprised of Church of Uganda, The Roman Catholic Church, and the Uganda Orthodox Church as these institutions reject the necessity of any form of sex-education in schools (Ssenyonga, 2018). Education minister Janet Museveni also reasons this policy as a way to remove ‘threats of homosexuality’ which calls to question its intentions and feasibility as a way to decrease the problem of sexual harassment in schools (Nangonzi, 2018).
2.4 National Sexual Violence School Policies

The “Teacher Instructor Education and Training” policy suggestions also include increasing gender and disability responsiveness, but do not recommend strengthening policies against sexual violence in schools of all levels (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2016). The Ministry of Education and Sports also published a National Strategy for Girls’ Education (NSGE) in Uganda for 2014 – 2019 in organization with UKAID and the United Nations. This report recommends that the Government of Uganda “develop mechanisms to systematically deal with GBV in [pre-primary and primary education] schools e.g. defilement, rape and sexual harassment” and to create “bye-laws against abuse of girls e.g. sexual abuse and other forms of rights violations against girls” (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2013). One such mechanism employed was a 2016 amendment to the Children Act which asserts the right of children to be free from violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation (Republic of Uganda, 2016). Again, proper implementation of these laws proves to be a key barrier.

The law also mandates that teachers, social workers, and medical practitioners are obligated to report signs of abuse (Goitum, 2016). Another report on the National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools (2015-2020) further proposed amendments to the Education Act (2008) and the Penal Code (Amendment) Act 8 (2007) to incorporate mandatory reporting of violence against children in schools (Uganda Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports, 2015). At the same time though, the Education Service Commission Regulations of 2012 for public school teachers make no mention of gender discrimination or harassment being an offence, nor do they highlight these requirements on reporting. It merely requires teachers to not “[conduct themselves] in any manner prejudicial to the good image and reputation of the Government or the Education Service” (“Education Service Commission Regulations,” 2012). While harassing students is assumed to be a behavior not allowed under this code of conduct, there is no specific language in this policy.6

2.5 A Legal Understanding of Harassment

Though it is evident that there are a number of laws regarding sexual violence in Uganda, the issue is that there is no one law currently that consolidates all mandates on reporting and what defines a sexual offence. The Sexual Offenses Bill, proposed to Parliament in 2015, was tabled in 2016 and is still under debate. If passed, this bill would define clearly what constitutes a sexual offense, specifically in the case of teachers and students as “sexual offences relating to position of authority and persons in positon of trust.” The bill would also

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6 No specific language is a critical aspect.
define what legally constitutes rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and all other legal terms under the umbrella of “sexual offences” and “sexual violence” 12/4/2018 1:00:00 PM. This type of legislation has been in conversation since 2002 without any change in the law (Kyeyune, 2018).

Policy strategy is different from practice though even if such a law were to be implemented. While individual schools have their own rules regarding codes of conduct and reporting harassment, the definition of terms like “sexual harassment” and “sexual violence” may be varied per school when it comes to discipline. The mandatory reporting laws currently in place are also unclear and not enforced or even known to be in existence by schools. In 1998, the Uganda Police Force established the Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) to investigate all “domestic violence, rape, defilement, sexual harassment, child abuse and neglect, child labor, indecent assault, child desertion, children offenders, and trafficking in women and children.” This division also asserts that they visit schools to talk to children and teachers about abuse (“Child and Family Protection Unit,” n.d.). The Ugandan Police Force additionally has a Gender Based Violence and Sexual Related Offences Against Children Department, though there is no website or information on how to contact this department online – it is unclear if this department is still in operation. While these divisions exist, the Sexual Offenses Bill has not been passed and thus such terms they operate under are defined loosely in each individual school.

2.6 The National Conversation in Uganda

Over the past year, the conversation about sexual harassment in schools has widened. In April 2018, Parliament resolved to set up a committee on investigating sexual harassment in schools after discovering that the findings of The National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools found high rates of sexual violence (Segawa, 2018). Recent exposures of headmasters sexually abusing students (Hajj Ali K. Mugagga and Mukiibi Lawrence) have shocked the public and have increased calls for greater investigation of this issue. As a prominent Ugandan educator, Mukiibi preyed on both students and teachers at his schools, yet his acts went unreported until his death. Students and teachers who wished to come forward about what he had done to them were threatened by his family. The Observer reports that in the case of Mugagga, students unsuccessfully requested the Ministry of Education and Sports implement a Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Prevention Policy to better the reporting system of sexual violence cases in school (“Report Pins Suspended Kibuli SS Head Teacher on Sexual Harassment,” 2018). Even in instances where students come forward, school administrations
and the government treat the issue of harassment in schools as a coincidental rather than systematic issue.

The conversation about harassment in schools is centralized around higher institutions of learning despite these reports of it being a problem at all levels of education. The Makerere University Policy and Regulations on Sexual Harassment Prevention (2006) defines what the university constitutes as sexual harassment and violence and summarizes the reporting system (“Policy & Regulations on Sexual Harassment Prevention,” 2006). The focus of this policy is on the structural systems of reporting rather than the process itself; it’s a tedious document for student and practical consumption as it is essentially a systematic layout. A June 2018 report by the Committee Investigating Sexual Harassment found a number of problems with the language used in the policy however and the effectiveness of the reporting system. Many survivors feared retaliation during the investigative process of sexual violence, and struggled to provide the high amount of evidence needed. The disciplinary part of the policy does little to consider the survivor’s interests. Overall the key recommendations include the “design [of] more effective mechanisms of prevention, reporting, and investigative and victim-support [as well as a review of] the necessary steps to be followed in handling complaints.” The committee also recommended mandatory staff and student trainings on sexual harassment related issues, much like many American universities have in place. The timeline for various recommendations is for implementation to be carried out starting in 2019 (Makerere University, 2018).

3.0 Problem Statement

As evidenced, sexual harassment in schools by teachers and students is a prominent but unchecked problem hindering the educational capabilities of students, especially girls. Educational attainment is imperative to the development of a country. In the case of Uganda, high dropout rates threaten efforts to develop economically. The disparity in gender for dropout rates also challenges any efforts towards increasing the equality of the country. While harassment in schools by teachers and students is not the only factor leading to these dropout rates, as history and literature demonstrates, it is one aspect of a greater problem that has been widely ignored. Factors such as socioeconomic status or distance to school are external, but the behavior of teachers and students in school, and the lack of discipline towards their actions is an internal contribution to this effect of high dropout rates. As an internal problem, it is the responsibility of the government of Uganda and key stakeholders to ensure the child’s right to
an education free from violence. In addition, it is also evident based on the scope of the problem that both students and teachers seem to lack an understanding of what harassment is and the gravity of it. Even if not allowed technically in a code of conduct, the acceptance of the behavior through lack of discipline and the effect it has on student’s perceptions is dangerous to the whole country. Most current policies in Uganda also fail to take into account the survivor’s interests and mental health when it comes to disciplinary action. If students learn at a young age that their superiors can get away with abuse and fear speaking up, silence will only continue, and Uganda will move backwards development-wise.

4.0 Justification

There is a lack of literature on the perception of harassment in schools in Uganda specifically, reasons people choose not to report, and the barriers survivors face during the reporting process. If there is a comprehensive study done on how students and teachers perceive the issues of sexual violence and sexual harassment, better education policies on these issues and reporting structures can be created to best protect survivors. Additionally, an understanding of how teachers abuse their power over students and how this goes unchecked is needed to combat this large issue that Uganda’s education system currently faces.

5.0 Objectives

1. To better understand the perceptions on what constitutes “sexual harassment” in Uganda (specifically sexual harassment in schools) and if this conversational definition matches up with what the legal definition currently is.
2. To study the effects of sexual harassment by teachers and fellow students on educational attainment in Uganda, particularly that of girls.
3. To assess the effectiveness of reporting systems on sexual harassment and what can be done to improve what is currently inefficient.
4. To compile recommendations on how to develop the assessed reporting systems based on the data received regarding perception of harassment and the barriers students face in reporting sexual harassment or sexual violence.

6.0 Literature Review

There are significant benefits to keeping girls in school longer and improving girls’ access to education. These include lowered country-wide fertility rates, increased national
earnings, and higher national productivity (Rihani, 2006). Nevertheless, if schools are a violent place for both girls and boys and foster a culture of sexual harassment, these positive impacts are impossible to achieve.

While the barriers to female education are complex, one key yet understudied factor is sexual harassment in schools by both teachers and fellow students. The National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools found that in 2001, 41% of pupils in Uganda experienced sexual harassment in schools and this percentage had increased to 58% by 2007 (Uganda Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports, 2015). The percentage of students experiencing sexual harassment from their teachers more than doubled from 17% to 37% between 2001 and 2007 (UNESCO, 2011). Most of this nonconsensual sex from teachers and fellow students is described as coerced sex – while this term may not be used as often regarding sexual harassment in western cultures, this is the term used in most literature pertaining to sexual harassment in Sub-Saharan Africa, and describes sexual manipulation. For example, a teacher may threaten to mark a student down if they don’t agree to sex. A study on coerced sex among adolescent girls in Sub-Saharan Africa describes four types of sexual coercion: forced sex, pressure through money or gifts, flattery and threats, and passive acceptance. Of the Ugandan girls aged 12-19, 23% did not consent during their first sexual encounter. Some described these acts as committed by fellow classmates, teachers-in-training, and teachers. In Ghana and Malawi being in school increased a girl’s chance of having nonconsensual sex, which would indicate the school environment possibly contributing that effect (Moore, Awusabo-Asare, Madise, John-Langba, & Kumi-Kyereme, 2007).

Manvir Kaur Hayer in “Perceptions of sexual coercion among young women in Uganda,” also noted the importance of cultural context in describing sexual harassment beyond the standard western definition. The seven interviewed respondents found that their male teachers inappropriately touched their breasts, though in many other studies, especially those without in-depth interviews, such an act would not necessarily be reported as “coercion”, despite its negative impact on the education of these women (UNESCO, 2011). This inappropriate touching clearly fits the parameters of what constitutes “sexual violence” according to National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools for Uganda, yet a girl who had that experience may not report it as such because it was viewed as “everyday” and “normal” (Uganda Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports, 2015).

Sexual violence definition: Sexual violence is any sexual act (or attempt to obtain a sexual act), unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic a person’s sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force, by any person regardless of relationship to the child. This encompasses a range of offences, including completed
transactional sex in schools between teachers and students (or headmasters and students) to cover school fees, and school supplies is also not necessarily viewed as coerced sex as well because of its normalcy in rural areas. An additional report on “Experience of sexual coercion and risky sexual behavior among Ugandan university students,” found that 33% of the female students had experienced sexual coercion, but this relied on the individual definition of sexual coercion as “forced” (Agardh, Odberg-Pettersson, & Östergren, 2012). Transactional sex and other forms of sexual violence, as evidenced in other studies, are culturally not always viewed as coercive. Consequently, while all studies on this subject report sexual coercion and harassment against both boys and girls in school, how its defined it varies, especially based on diverse definitions of “forced,” and must be taken into consideration when interpreting literature.

A relevant example is Annabel S. Erulkar’s analysis on sexual coercion in Kenya. Of the respondents who had been coerced into sex, only 23% of women and 22% of men ever told anyone about their experience. For those who had been harassed by a teacher (5% of respondents in this study), very few reported the event to anyone. The study also acknowledged that this measure was widely underreported due to the fear of the respondents and disapproval of intimate relationships between young people and their teachers or employers. Many students who also had a sexual relationship with a teacher did not view it as a form of sexual violence or harassment because of the transactional nature, because they felt that nothing would be done about it, or because they thought it was normal. Regardless though, these incidences with teachers negatively psychologically impacted these girls’ relationship with schooling (Erulkar, 2004). Another study on the prevalence of sexual coercion among young pregnant females in Kampala also noted this narrow definition of “sexual harassment” and “sexual coercion” (Tusiime et al., 2015). While this study found that 1/3 of respondents were sexually coerced, two other studies, “Violence, and Mental Health - A Cross-Sectional Study among University Students in South-Western Uganda” (Agardh, Tumwine, Asamoah, & Cantor-Graae, 2011) and “Prevalence rates of sexual coercion victimization and perpetration among Uganda adolescents” (Ybarra, Bull, Kiwanuka, Bangsberg, & Korchmaros, 2012) found this rate to be 31% and 40% respectively based on how the terms “coercion” and “harassment” were defined.

non-consensual sex acts (i.e. rape), attempted non-consensual sex acts, abusive sexual contact (i.e. unwanted touching), and non-contact sexual abuse (e.g., threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment). This also includes the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful or psychologically harmful sexual activity; the exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; and the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials, and the provision of gifts especially from men to girls or from women to boys in return for sexual pleasure (Uganda Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports, 2015).
As previously described, sexual harassment in schools comes from both teachers and students. Florence Kyoheirwe Muhanguzi in her report on “Gender and sexual vulnerability of young women in Africa: experiences of young girls in secondary schools in Uganda” examined gendered sexual vulnerability for girls in secondary schools. Girls who rejected fellow students were bullied and harassed in class. Rejections of advances by male teachers were met with hostility, and respondents reported being fearful of going to school. Harassment by teachers was dismissed by school administrations, and as a result many respondents were reluctant to report any incidents (Muhanguzi, 2011).

A Raising Voices report on violence against children in schools also found that over 75% of children in schools had experienced sexual violence. 18% reported this behavior occurred as much as every day or at least once a week and though adults were the main perpetrators of this violence, schoolgirls described harassment and pressure by older male classmates. Students told stories about school administrations ignoring their concerns, or their parents refusing to help bring the cases to court. Dipak Naker also highlighted an additional negative effect of harassment by teachers; the impact on male students. The male students studied believed that male teachers were harsher with them to attract the attention of female students (Naker, 2005). On a similar note, a study entitled “Child Sexual Abuse in Schools: Preliminary Indication for Enhancement of Universal Primary Education and Community (EUPEC Project)” found that teachers were too busy to pay attention to the problems of harassment in schools and to educate children about their rights in reporting harassment. Because of their lack of knowledge on reporting, many students in the study chose not to disclose what had happened to them to school administration (Rwanyonga, Mbaziira, & Nakubulwa, 2009).

“Is Schooling a Risk? Gender, Power Relations, and School Culture in Uganda,” also adds an additional complexity to the challenge of sexual violence in schools; violence against female teachers. Female teachers in this report were harassed by both male students and male teachers. This harassment by male teachers of female teachers normalized this patriarchal and hostile culture in schools. Girls in this study wished female teachers would stand up for them and protect them, but these teachers lacked any power to do so (Mirembe & Davis, 2001). This school structure, like many others in Uganda, reinforced dominant masculinity and gender roles. While these themselves are not the reasons for sexual harassment, gender and male versus female power structures are one of many factors contributing to it.
7.0 Research Methodology

7.1 Research Approach

The researcher used a qualitative approach in this study to best understand the language and responsiveness that students had on the topic of sexual harassment. Research was conducted using 13 focus groups with secondary school and university students, optional surveys that were distributed to focus group participants, and 10 key-informant interviews with stakeholders in order to triangulate and contextualize information obtained from the students. The researcher framed this study within the human development paradigm, because of its focus on individual rights, health (mental and physical), as well as safety and security. Anti-sexual harassment policies are essential to protecting an individual’s right to an education free from violence, and this paradigm was chosen for this reason. This research also ties in to SDG 4, 5, and 10.

7.2 Focus Group Discussions and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

With the help of the headmaster, the researcher conducted six focus groups at a secondary school (an anonymous boarding school) with students ranging in age from 13 to 19. Three focus groups were limited to all girls and three were limited to all boys. Due to cultural barriers and taboos around discussing sexual harassment, the researcher felt it was best to limit these groups by gender to better understand possible differences in how young men and women view sexual violence and sexual harassment. All focus groups were also controlled to be between six and ten people in order to allow all students to have their voice heard. Overall, the researcher spoke with 47 total secondary school students, 24 of which were male and 23 of which were female.

At Makerere University, with assistance from two students, the researcher conducted seven focus group discussions with university level students. One focus group was mixed in gender, three were all women, and three were all men. Same with the secondary school focus groups, the researcher again limited these by gender to better understand gender differences in defining sexual harassment and to better allow respondents to speak their mind. In total, the research spoke with 50 total university students, 27 of which were male and 23 of which were female.

Focus group discussions ranged in time but averaged out to around 45 minutes per group, allowing the researcher to gain a large amount of information in a short period of time. During the focus groups the researcher attempted to allow the students to speak as peers and have a discussion with each other on sexual harassment. A general outline for discussion was
followed and is attached (see Appendix 14.1 and 14.2), though based on how the group discussion was progressing, questions varied from group to group.

For the focus groups in secondary schools specifically, the researcher also employed the Participatory Rural Appraisal Method to map out the sexual harassment reporting process that students were familiar with in map form. The reason for choosing PRA was that it gave validity to the thoughts and experiences of the participants; because the sexual harassment reporting procedure is not written down anywhere, this allowed students to formally record what they believed a reporting process would be like. As Andrea Cornwell explains, this method can help “break the ice” between the researcher and participants, especially for topics like sexual harassment that are so difficult to discuss (Cornwell, 2006).

7.3 Surveys

To triangulate data and give students the outlet to share their experiences with sexual harassment in schools, the researcher provided all 97 participants with the opportunity to fill-out an anonymous survey on sexual harassment (Appendix 14.3). The survey was handed out to all students, and every student was asked to at least write down “I have no answer” or “I choose not to respond” instead of leaving the survey blank as to not draw attention to students who were choosing to write down their personal experience. In total, the researcher received 72 complete surveys from secondary school and university students. These surveys were analyzed in relation and in addition to the focus group responses.

7.4 Key Informant-Interviews

While the focus groups and surveys were the core component of this study, ten key-informant interviews were conducted with various stakeholders on sexual harassment to better contextualize the nature of sexual harassment in schools (see Appendix 14.4 for a list). These stakeholders included Makerere University officials, members of the Committee Investigating Sexual Harassment at Makerere University, Secondary school teachers, experts on how gender plays out in schools, and individuals with creative solutions to combatting sexual harassment in schools. The initial intention of this study was to also conduct individual interviews with students, though the researcher found the anonymous survey information to be sufficient so that these interviews would not re-traumatize a survivor. Most key-informants were identified in the planning part of research, though some were found through the snowballing effect.

Interviews were conducted based on outlines that were formulated by the researcher (Appendix 14.5 has a sample outline). Questions were determined based on the individual’s
expertise and in some cases were sent to the interviewee before the interview so they had to chance to look it over and have answers prepared.

7.5 Sampling

Makerere University was chosen as the university studied in the report because of its role in higher education in Uganda and the recent national conversation surrounding its sexual harassment policy. This study comes at the time that recommendations have been delivered over this policy and thus allowed the researcher to better contextualize information gained from students around this history. The researcher went to one secondary boarding school which was chosen because of its investment and interest in the research. The students who were chosen to participate in the study at the secondary school were picked by the headmaster randomly based on who was interested. For Makerere University, the respondents were compiled by two students who chose classmates and people interested in participating.

7.6 Scope of Work

The scope of this work is secondary schools and universities in Uganda from a broad lens. The National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools indicates that sexual harassment in schools is an issue in any school setting as referenced by the high rate of children experiencing sexual violence (Uganda Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports, 2015). Makerere University as a high-profile case study can also potentially have impacts on other university policies across the country. The university-based research was centralized on Makerere for this reason.

7.7 Challenges and Limitations

This research, because of its focus on a taboo and controversial topic presented many limitations and challenges. One major challenge was time; with more time the researcher would have hoped to visit more than one school to see how sexual harassment may be defined among a diverse body of students. The six-week period however made this nearly impossible to arrange as the research also needed to factor in time for the focus groups at Makerere University. The researcher also had hoped to speak with more key-informants, though scheduling these interviews amidst conducting the focus groups in such a short period of time proved to be challenging.

Another difficulty was people’s perception of the researcher studying this topic. Some students and interviewees wondered why the researcher felt this was a relevant topic to study,
particularly as a white American, considering sexual harassment is a global issue not only present in Uganda. For students who asked questions about the intentions of the research, the researcher was as upfront as possible about what she was there to study, why, the possible impact of the work, and her personal connection. While these factors are unchangeable (race, nationality, gender, or age) this clarity allowed respondents to make their own decision about participation in the study.

7.8 Ethical Considerations

As sexual harassment is a sensitive topic, the researcher observed and remained cognizant of ethics throughout this research. A Local Review Board approved the research’s ethical framework, and Makerere University and the secondary school visited also approved the research.

At the secondary school (a boarding school), the head teacher signed a parental/guardian consent form (Appendix 14.6) and the students were provided with a minor assent form (Appendix 14.7). Focus groups were held in private rooms, and the researcher paused the groups if there were any interruptions. Before each focus group, the students and the researcher read through the form together. Students had the opportunity to ask questions and could choose to not be quoted or not be audio-recorded if they wished. The students were also told that they were not expected to share their experiences with sexual harassment, though they did have the opportunity to do so anonymously with the survey if they wanted that information to be known for research purposes. All students remain unnamed in this study, as does the school at which research was conducted because of the sensitivity of the information received.

Much like with the secondary school focus groups, university students were provided with an informed consent form (Appendix 14.8) and had the opportunity to ask questions before the focus groups began. Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, students were also informed of their right to refuse to answer any questions or to rescind their consent to be part of the study at any time. Secondary school students were provided with a fact-sheet on resources for survivors of sexual violence as well as the researcher’s contact information and were told they could reach out if they had any additional questions. University students were also provided with the researcher’s contact information. Students were told they could use this contact information to be referred to a mental health professional as needed.
8.0 Sexual Harassment Defined

Findings: To best assess the effectiveness of sexual harassment reporting policies, and the barriers to reporting, an understanding of how young people in schools define sexual harassment is needed for how this definition may conflict with both legal and widely accepted institutional definitions. The researcher found that the definitions that secondary school students and university students have developed match in some ways to what the Ugandan government’s definition of sexual violence is (see footnote 3). On the other hand, students themselves disagree on what specific actions constitute harassment, what consent really means, and how serious an offence is, likely because they receive their education on sexual violence and harassment from a wide range of sources. Student view of the word “forced” when it comes to harassment is also varied. Students also disagreed on the gender component of harassment based on how they had learned or experienced it.
8.1 Definitions of Sexual Harassment

Regarding definitions, the most common word that arose during focus groups to describe sexual harassment was “forced.” Other similar phrasings on how students described the word sexual harassment are shown in Table 1.1. These other common words include “nonconsensual,” “unwelcome,” and “unwanted.” At both schooling levels, female and male students also sometimes began their definitions by gendering their language. For example, one secondary school girl described sexual harassment as when a “man forces a woman to do something.” Generally, by the end of focus groups students had expanded their definition

### Table 1.1 How students in Uganda define sexual harassment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>School &amp; Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Being dragged into something intimate but you don’t like it.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Abusing sexual rights [with] nonconsensual sex.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Forcing someone into sexual intercourse – one of two persons does not want.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Trying to forcefully engage someone in a sexual act without consent.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A man taking advantage of what a woman wants.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a “person [is] not willing to have sex – forced into it.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Forced into a sexual act... not on his or her will.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Forceful relationship.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Forced into unwanted intercourse.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Apart from the sex part of it, to me, I think it’s any advances towards sex.”</td>
<td>University, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Unwanted and unwelcome sexual advances towards any gender.”</td>
<td>University, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Forced sex – you’re forced, you had no intention of having sex with this person.”</td>
<td>University, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Unconsented sex. You’ve not consented to the sex. The real sex is a mutual agreement between two parties.”</td>
<td>University, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Refers to a physical or a non-physical, a sexual non-physical, way of reacting to someone who is not okay with it.”</td>
<td>University, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Being sexual harassment it means you have not agreed to that action.”</td>
<td>University, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Harassment must be the feeling you have not intended, not wanted.”</td>
<td>University, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You’re not willing.”</td>
<td>University, Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 The above table is compiled of the variety of responses students gave to the questions “What is sexual harassment?”
though to sexual harassment as something that can happen to both sexes, usually after one student had pointed this out to the group. Still, many students emphasized that “both sexes [are] harassed differently,” as one university female student described.

| Table 1.2 What behaviors students in Uganda think are sexual harassment |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| When someone is “calling at women who dress badly. They rape you” | “Many forms – like blocking someone’s way as someone is moving, persistently asking for debts…” |
| -Secondary School, Female | -University, Female |
| “Rape, defilement” | “To some extent, these girls also harass because they need marks, [so they] try to seduce [their teachers]” |
| -Secondary School, Female | -University, Female |
| “Bad touches” | “Can include the following…for example at campus here, it is mostly the lecturers who have the authority here. You are forcing someone to have a relationship with you and you give conditions. Maybe it is a boy. You also force him or her to have a relationship with you” |
| -Secondary School, Female | -University, Male |
| “Rape, defilement, boys disturbing girls, bad touching” | “There are also thinks that are not physical ie. Sneering at someone, a lady, calling at her certain things” |
| -Secondary School, Male | -University, Male |
| “Uncomfortable gestures or words” | |
| -Secondary School, Male | |
| “Indecent dressing” | |
| -Secondary School, Male | |
| Sexual harassment can also be in “writing and verbal” | |
| -Secondary School, Male | |

Table 2.2 The above table is compiled of the variety of responses students gave to the questions “What behaviors are sexual harassment?”

As part of their definitions, students responded with these specific behaviors they believed to be sexual harassment, shown in Table 1.2. While many student’s definitions of sexual harassment were something along the lines of “forced sex,” the consequent behaviors they described ranged in scale from something as serious as rape/defilement to verbal harassment. As one secondary school boy put it, the overall theme among these behaviors listed was that “[they are] comprehensive [and] not about sex [but more] psychological.” That being said, there was disagreement among student at all levels about some behaviors related to sexual harassment. All students agreed that rape and defilement were sexual harassment but some students questioned the validity of calling some other behaviors sexual harassment. A number
of male university students were confused on the “line between sexual harassment, romance, and even rape” and were perplexed whether there was a “clear definition” of any of them.

Among all ages there was also a general perception that any sexual feelings were sexual harassment. For example, university men felt that if they found a female attractive and they thought about sex with her, she was harassing them, even in situations where she was dressed conservatively. Thus, their consequent harassment was not truly sexual harassment according to them because “when you need to put a lady in a mood, you have to harass her. Is it really bad?” One man even went as far as to say that his behavior was forced and he had no control over his actions. To him, the word “forced” as part of the definition of sexual harassment was his “forced” behavior resulting from a woman acting in a certain way: “You will just be forced to tap the butt. You have no intention of touching the butt, but you have to because of how she’s dressed or if you find her attractive.”

“At the university, we are being sexually harassed every moment,” remarked one male student as well. Another student thought that there should be analysis on “who harasses who first” because “maybe [the woman] harasses the lecturer before he harasses [her] – what do you expect from the guy. You’ve made him vulnerable.” This fit with the common accepted notion that “men are weak sexually,” a statement made by one male university student. Female university students agreed with these sentiments, accepting that their very presence could be ‘harassing’ a man into sexual thoughts about them, causing him to act on these thoughts with verbal or physical harassment against them. “Men are weak. Men are really weak,” said one female university student about when men harass women who they are interested in. “What do you expect this man to think,” was the overall tone of most of these women. It was expected for men to be sexually driven and their motivations with women centered on this. If a woman went into a situation without this assumption, some female students did not consider the man’s consequent actions sexual harassment because, “it’s you who created the rules…you cleared the way for him” (University, Female). University women especially were expected to consider most if not all encounters with men as encounters that could potentially turn sexual if the man saw them in that way. Contrarily, there was some sympathy on behalf of university students towards students who experienced sexual harassment in secondary and primary because they viewed them as more vulnerable in comparison.

When it came to sexual harassment in schools particularly, the main form that was talked about was lecturers harassing students at university through what is known as “sex for marks.” Secondary school students brought this up as an example and noted that a similar thing could happen at their school, but they did not think it would. One female secondary school
student in a survey cited a story about her friend’s teacher doing this in secondary but the idea of this happening or any specific instances were not brought up during focus groups. In surveys from secondary students, the main form of harassment in secondary and primary schools that they described was teachers cornering students in a classroom or asking students to stay behind class to bring books to their room to later abuse them.

Sexual harassment by university lecturers to students was a debated topic; some university students found those who were harassed were culpable for the harassment based on their actions while others found that these students were manipulated and did not deserve the consequences. The topic of sex for retakes also came up. Many students were under the impression that this form of harassment only happens when a student underperformed and needed to seduce a lecturer to get better marks. As one female university student described, “you knew maybe in your own perception that to get this retake, you had to sleep with this man.” One male university student also believed that “the issue of the lecturers comes into places when you fail to submit your work or fail a paper.” Sex for marks does not only arise when students underperform though: Dr. Betty Ezati, a member of the Committee Investigating Sexual Harassment at Makerere University, noted in an interview that sex for marks harassment arises in two ways. One form is initiated by female students to take advantage of the sex for marks system, while the other is when lecturers withhold marks or manipulate female students. In both cases, the students themselves often do not think of this as harassment even when it fits the traditional definition because of its transactional nature (Dr. Betty Ezati, Personal Interview, 2018).

Accordingly, even students who were aware of the difference questioned the student’s actions because they perceived there to be some benefit for the harassed student as part of the transactional sex. One female university student asked, “Why meet him in his office alone? Why do you keep close contact with him? Just talk to him after class.” Another affirmed, “I can’t understand why they start chasing these lecturers. If there is arresting, arrest the lecturer and the woman.” While there was not one hundred percent agreement on this, the overall sentiment by many was that both the harasser and the harassed had some blame in the action, and often this blame was perceived to be equal based on the cultural understanding of sexual relations between both genders and the expectations that come with being a certain sex. “In the African setting, any woman or girl can tell if a man wants to sleep with you,” and thus, as one female university student described, the actions theoretically had been preventable and therefore partly the woman’s fault in this scenario.
8.2 Who is Harassed

There was some disagreement on who is sexually harassed more often, women or men. Most focus groups came to the consensus that women were harassed more, and much of their language in describing harassment reflected this. On the other hand, some all-male university focus groups “[thought] the harassment is mostly on men,” because they viewed women’s dress and bodies as harassing their minds. That is not to say that men cannot be harassed in other ways, but the main way that all men and women participants perceived harassment against men was inappropriate dressing or women causing men to think about sex because of their presence or the way they carried themselves. Some cited that male students could also be manipulated by teachers for sex for marks, though they were unsure if this actually happened because “males are neglected when harassed” (Secondary School, Female) and are expected to keep quiet about what has happened to them. It is unclear though doubtful that this type of harassment is commonplace against men, and the surveys distributed demonstrated no sexual harassment against male participants in this manner.

It is “mostly women who are majorly harassed – because they are seen as the inferior species”
-Secondary School, Male

“People who fall into all categories can be sexually harassed – more so woman workers, who are easily harassed by male bosses”
-Secondary School, Female

In “more chauvinistic societies... they think ladies can be used as objects, only sexual objects”
-University, Male

Students also cited an economic and personality component to harassment. When it comes to transactional sex, “most are desperate, want money, and the teacher wants something from you,” so they have to give in to the sex (Secondary School, Female). At university, economically challenged students cannot risk repeating a poor semester or class and “many students are forced into this problem due to financial problems – that is economical” (University, Male). Sexual predators also target students who lack confidence and who are least likely to report or talk about the issue of sexual harassment, offering them a layer of protection to keeping their crime hidden.
8.3 Perceived Causes of Sexual Harassment

When describing the definition of sexual harassment, students cited a diverse range of causes, not all of which were universally agreed upon. Some specific reasons mentioned were peer pressure, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, power relations, gender relations and stereotypes, and mental disabilities. Overall most reasons had the commonality of occurring “in context of authority” in which someone would “use [someone’s] disadvantage for [their] advantage” (University, Male). Many students mentioned power dynamics, though very few equated this to gender imbalance outright in the case of men harassing women. Professor Sylvia Tamale in an interview with the researcher explained that this is due to people’s ignorance. Power and authority relations are used as words in place of gender, and participants may have been referring to gender when discussing power without outright saying the word because of their own lack of understanding (Professor Sylvia Tamale, Personal Interview, 2018). The context that women are inferior to men was backed up by some of the male participants’ opinions on gender relations. As one male university student said when describing women, “if they are a girl… they have a weaker [mind].” This in combination with the reasons for sexual harassment described by students reiterates the idea that though gender may not be a reason listed by students verbally, some may aware to an extent of how people of different sexes are treated.

8.4 Sexual Harassment is Common

The majority of respondents perceived sexual harassment to be a major and common problem in schools. As part of the anonymous survey, participants were asked how often they thought sexual harassment happened in schools. Of the 72 surveys collected, 51 participants
(or 70.8 %) thought that sexual harassment happened “often,” “daily,” “very often,” “every day,” or another word to indicate commonality (See Figure 1.1). Of the 21 that did not use these words, 13 surveys mentioned that it happened sometimes, and some specified only in schools that were mismanaged by their administration or in schools who had hired unethical teachers. 7 students thought it happened rarely, and one student did not respond. One student in a survey summarized the commonality of sexual harassment in schools that affirms this:

“I think it is a regular issue. It’s almost part of the culture in schools.”
-Anonymous Respondent

8.5 Stories of Sexual Harassment in Schools

All students who participated in the study were aware of what sexual harassment was and most had some understanding of how it manifests itself in schools. During the focus groups themselves, mention was made in all thirteen groups of teachers possibly harassing students. As one secondary schoolgirl described, “some schools have seen that – the teachers harass the students.” One of intentions of the anonymous surveys was to give students to opportunity to write more about harassment, specifically harassment in schools often done by teachers. Though this type of harassment was not the core of the focus groups, of the 72 surveys, 42 or 58.3% made some mention of teachers harassing students.

The number of experiences shared is not indicative of the rate of sexual harassment in schools because the survey was optional and survivors of sexual abuse have many incentives to not speak out about their stories. That being said, the stories that were shared shed light on what sexual harassment is like in schools and how it manifests.

One student cited an example of her own experience with sexual harassment by a teacher, and though the teacher was kicked out of school, the student had to transfer due to the stigma of fellow students and teachers. Another student noted on her survey that a friend dropped out of school because she was impregnated by a school staff member. Many students had a general wariness of teachers, especially male teachers and as one female secondary school student described, “news spread that teachers were involved in this and that we were to avoid male teachers the most.” Sexual harassment also has the potential to impact student leadership; in order to get a position as a prefect, teachers may demand sex from the student who wants the job, as described by one survey respondent.

Concerning missing marks, one university student shared her experience: “My marks went missing [and] I was given two conditions, sleeping with the lecturer or [doing] a retake…
I felt bad to spoil my document.” This experience indicates that sexual harassment by lecturers in not only students soliciting “sex for marks” but rather lecturers sometimes abusing their power to deliver grades to get sex from passing students. Sexual harassment against university students also takes place in the workplace setting when these students go off to do their internships. To get her internship, one female student described that the boss wanted her to give into sex.

8.6 Where the Definition of Sexual Harassment is Learned

As part of the focus group discussions, students were also asked to share how they had developed their previously said definitions of sexual harassment. There was no one dominant
source, though Figure 1.2 demonstrates the variety of places students received this information. The lack of one individual source of definition likely is the reason for discrepancies in how sexual harassment is described. How sexual harassment is conveyed in the media and on TV may be vastly different from how it is described by parents or teachers for example. The sources themselves also alter how a student conceptualizes sexual harassment and what behaviors are constituted under it. Stories of friends and personal experiences naturally would create more empathy and would give students a personal connection to some of the behaviors. An example of this is one survey by a student whose friend had been harassed by a teacher; “it was traumatizing [to hear].” Additionally, student’s view of whether “sex for marks” could differ based on if they or someone they knew had been solicited for sex as part of this.

9.0 Mental, Educational, and Physical: Sexual Harassment as a Problem

“To study the effects of sexual harassment by teachers and fellow students on educational attainment in Uganda, particularly that of girls.”

Findings: The opinions gathered from students indicate that most young people not only see sexual harassment as a problem in Ugandan schools, but a major one at that that threatens their educational capability. The impacts of sexual harassment that students described are many and can be psychological, physical, and educational, impacting the life of the survivor forever. Sexual harassment if left unchecked can also destroy the reputation of an institution. Overall, the clear majority of students were worried about sexual harassment as a problem and concerned about their peers. On the other hand, they felt silenced in schools on speaking about this use. Despite student concern, there is a major gap between student perception of sexual harassment as a problem, and how authority considers the issues.

9.1 Sexual Harassment is a Problem

Though the vast majority of respondents viewed sexual harassment as a pressing problem, their opinion of its scale depended on their definition of it. Since as part of their definitions many students used the word “forced” or a synonym, these same students saw sexual harassment as an issue because “it negatively effects the rights of an individual” (University Male). It is important to note though that these students were framing their conception of sexual harassment as a problem based on their personal definitions, and as
indicated in section 8.1, definitions had variation. For example, students who blamed the survivors for at least part of the reason for the harassment only sometimes saw sexual harassment as a problem but in the case for different reasons as their peers. All secondary students saw harassment in their school setting as a problem, though not all university students thought it was a problem in universities despite their consensus on sexual harassment being an issue in secondary and primary schools. “Personally, I don’t think it’s a problem in the university,” said one male student, because “we always have to consider the circumstances that lead an individual to what he wants to do.” Again, this circles back to the blame factor. Participants in the study considered sexual harassment a problem in their community insofar as they saw the survivor as innocent in their actions.

Part of the reason that sexual harassment may not be taken seriously is that it is viewed as normal and everyday behavior. As section 8.4 indicates, sexual harassment is generally perceived to be common. At the same time, as a secondary school girl indicated during one of the focus groups, it is not considered to be a large problem by authority because even those impacted by it question the seriousness of their own allegations as “sometimes you’ll find things normal.” One female student’s story of being harassed by a classmate in primary school, fits with this sentiment; “At a point I thought it was normal [so] I didn’t make an effort to fight it” (Anonymous Female Respondent). “[This is] something some teachers take as minor,” said another secondary schoolgirl referring to discussing sexual harassment as a problem with authority figures.

9.2 The Psychological Effect

The most common phrasing related to the impact of sexual harassment among all the respondents was “psychological torture.” This specific phrasing arose in nearly every focus group and on many of the anonymous surveys. Much of this psychological harm was not only attributed to the act of sexual harassment itself, but the consequent mental health effects and the stigmas the survivor had to face because of what had happened. “[You are] uneasy about yourself … so disappointed,” said one secondary schoolgirl. A male university student reflected on this point as well; “if a lady is being harassed…she feels she is not fitting in the society.” The effect of sexual harassment is isolating to the individual who experiences it, especially so in Uganda, and the stigmas associated with discussing it only increase this effect.

“A girl will never speak out. They’ll suffer psychologically.”

-Secondary School, Female
“You die silently … due to the threat. You will keep silent in your heart.”

-University, Female

Due to the diverse opinions on if sexual harassment is a problem, survivors also doubt the validity of their experiences and turn away from peers. “You will get so confused, you will dismiss yourself,” said one female university student. Survivors “fail to associate with others” reiterated another secondary school girl. Even participants who did not view sexual harassment as a problem were able to point out the adverse effects that it could have mentally on someone, though this of course depended on if they viewed things such as verbal harassment in the case of cat-calling for example as harassment or a compliment. Often extreme examples that all groups agreed were sexual harassment, such as rape, were cited when describing the negative mental health effects of sexual harassment.

In an interview, a representative from the Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence (RECESVID) also highlighted the impact that a teacher harassing a student can have mentally. As the representative explained, “if the child perceived the parental figure as a source of discomfort, you have a child who withdraws from all the things they like to do.” RECESVID also named other psychological effects of harassment in schools including PTSD, depression, and anxiety. These effects have implications on a student’s future schooling, relationships, and career potential.

9.3 The Educational Effect

The educational effect of sexual harassment is heavily tied to and impacted by the previously mentioned range of psychological effects in section 9.2. “You can never concentrate” in school after being harassed, explained a secondary school girl. If the harasser is a teacher, “obviously when that teacher comes back to class you see him in a new way and lose concentration” (Secondary School, Female). If the harasser is a fellow student “you can’t express in class” (Secondary School, Female). Ultimately, this lack of concentration and fear can manifest into students dropping out of school, which was brought up by secondary school male students and university female students in addition to the secondary school females.

Reasons for these school dropouts were attributed to wide range of sources resulting from the act of sexual harassment, including teenage pregnancy, STDs, HIV/AIDS, PTSD, depression, threats from the harasser, lack of community or parental support, and lack of justice.
“At some point [it] leads to school dropout, mainly when it comes to girls.”
-Secondary School, Male

“[Sexual harassment] may destroy her academic future.”
-University, Female

9.4 Other Effects

Most other effects that were discussed by respondents were related to physical health. As many respondents felt that sexual harassment mainly arose through unwanted sex, these described effects were “HIV/STDs/AIDS/syphilis” (University, Female) or unwanted pregnancy. Consequently, some survivors of sexual violence or sexual harassment choose to get dangerous and illegal abortion procedures to not let the experience impact their future. However, because abortion is illegal in Uganda, as one male university student explained, “after getting pregnant they decide to abort whereby they end up dying” due to some of the unsafe and underground practices used. Due to age differences and familial relations, these procedures are also more accessible to university students, whereas in high schools many “students drop out of school [due to] teenage pregnancy” (University, Female). Another female university student also stated that getting abortions for multiple unwanted pregnancies caused by sexual harassment “may ruin your fertility in the future” because of the current unsafe practices used.

Another concern of students regarding sexual harassment was the reputations of their institutions. This was more apparent in the testimony of university students, who feared that if Makerere University continues to have a culture of sexual harassment, their studies at it would be regarded as lesser than other universities, especially when competing for jobs or higher education programs in places other than Uganda. “Sexual harassment tarnishes the reputation the university … [and] the lecturers are known to be people good on sexually harassing students,” said one male university student. As Makerere tries to frame itself as a global university, another male university student reiterated that if the university does nothing about the problem, “parents will fear their children to bring to this university” and it will hurt Uganda and Makerere’s reputation as a center for education.

Some students also mentioned that the presence of sexual harassment and its treatment as a normal behavior encouraged others to act with the same views and engage in sexual harassment themselves. Male secondary students especially thought that sexual harassment is “learned in high school” (Secondary School, Male). “It grows up the more you grow up,” believed one student who thought that adult sexual predators began similar actions as children.
that only grew in scale as they aged. If students are sensitized on sexual harassment while they are young and impressionable, perhaps it will change the minds of some individuals who think harassment is conventional behavior.

10.0 The Barriers to Reporting are Ignored

“To assess the effectiveness of reporting systems on sexual harassment and what can be done to improve what is currently inefficient.”

Findings: In secondary schools, though the reporting structure is sometimes explained to students, the educational context of Uganda makes this reporting structure inefficient to the realities of sexual harassment. Secondary schools fail to consider student input on these systems and thus it is the researcher’s perception that most students would not receive the justice or support they wanted out of most if not all secondary and primary sexual harassment policies in Uganda. In universities, the 2018 Sexual Harassment Policy Recommendations for Makerere University offer important and necessary changes to the 2006 Makerere Sexual Harassment Policy, though it is unclear the feasibility of these reports coming to fruition with the effort that the committee intended. Even after all these hopeful changes, the university will have to contend with challenging reporting barriers and a Ugandan cultural stigma against sexual harassment that are not simply removed by changes to a reporting structure. As long as sexual harassment is minimized and not considered a serious issue in Uganda, these barriers will remain.
10.1 The Informal Reporting Structure

While Makerere University has a formal sexual harassment policy, many secondary schools in Uganda do not have clear policies on sexual harassment. An unnamed expert on sexual harassment in schools that the researcher interviewed believed that;

“There are very few schools, if any, that have sexual harassment policies which are even written ... I think [when students report, it] is reporting like reporting a bad behavior, but not named as sexual harassment as it is ... And so the follow up, the supporting mechanisms in schools sometimes do not help the girls ... Sometimes [they] blame the girls for being in places where they are not...
supposed to be, for putting on in the wrong way, for causing the harassment.”
(Anonymous Expert, Personal Interview, 2018)

As the expert explained, schools may just qualify sexual harassment and the various acts under this umbrella as equivalent to other bad behaviors disallowed in school codes of conduct, like skipping class for example. Due to this informal sexual harassment policy, the reporting structure is unclear to students, and thus as part of focus groups the researcher employed the PRA method for secondary students to draw their potential reporting path to assess student knowledge. Figure 2.1 is the combined map of three all-female secondary school focus groups with challenges identified in red underline, and positives to choosing a certain path in blue italics. The diversity of the chart is indicative of the lack of one clear reporting structure. The number of challenges also indicates the major potential for this informal reporting structure to be ineffective.

Most school policies identify that students should go to teachers, or their head teacher for any concerns, sexual harassment included. Again, because sexual harassment is equated with other bad behavior, students are told “in case of problems or challenges whom you can at least go to for help,” as one female teacher explained (Anonymous Female Teacher, Personal Interview, 2018). The sexual harassment expert seconded this use of euphemisms to describe harassment to students; “They don't name it the way it is supposed to be named… They call it inappropriate behavior” (Anonymous Expert, Personal Interview, 2018). Because of this, students learn to view sexual harassment as equal to any other violation of the school code of conduct, creating further barriers to reporting when it comes to the view that sexual harassment is normal, as explained in section 9.1.

Despite this, students were able identify a teacher or head teacher as a potential person to go to after being sexually harassed. When asked about their own part in this reporting, the teachers themselves agreed on most of their roles and responsibilities, mainly being there to listen and pass along information to sources who could discipline the offender or investigate the case:

“My role first of all is to listen to the student and their entire story in this case. And advise the student where to take this information next. And I think in this case I would advise the student to talk to the senior man teacher if it's a male student, if it's a female student, lead them or advise them to talk to the senior woman teacher … to [help] direct the next course of action in regard to who to report to next.” (Anonymous Male Teacher, Personal Interview, 2018)
“I sit this girl down and ask her what has actually happened. And I have to keep it first confidential. Then I make research on what has actually gone wrong. Then I can counsel and then when necessary ask teachers. We have those ones like the senior lady, the matrons, you have to involve them and see what has taken place and if things actually go beyond, we always call the headmaster for further concern.” (Anonymous Female Teacher, Personal Interview, 2018)

It was evident when talking to the four teachers interviewed that most information had to pass through the head teacher, who would be the one to act. While students seemed to be encouraged to go to their teachers, this increased the number of channels the confidential information was passing through in the reporting process. The attitude of that senior teacher has the potential to impact how the survivor achieves some form of justice at the end of the day.

10.2 Barriers to Reporting

As mentioned in section 10.1, the senior male and female teachers hold a lot of sway in the informal reporting procedures of secondary schools. One huge barrier to reporting that was identified by students was the role of teachers and the head teacher in this reporting process. On the one hand, this reliance on teachers in this position of trust contradicts with the teacher student dynamic in Ugandan schools. As a male secondary school student said, because of the formality of education, “students fear to approach a teacher” for anything. There is little trust that the teacher will transcend the formal relationship and be sympathetic, even after teachers insist that they will. This reiterates what the sexual harassment expert said about the culture of schools in Uganda and how this influences reporting policy.

“What I see in most of these traditional schools, the Uganda type schools, the involvement in schools is so intimidating. Children fear teachers … So tell me, how will this girl be comfortable to come and talk to you about what has happened to her. It’s not conducive for the girls to report. They die with their issues.” (Anonymous Expert, Personal Interview, 2018)

The formal relationship also leads the students to believe that the teachers will not believe them and will place blame on them for the actions that occurred. The female secondary school students especially agreed that reporting to teachers would result in a lecture about their own behavior, and were reluctant to report to them for fear of being blamed. A male teacher’s account of his role in the reporting process backed up this fear that the students had; “Sometimes they also have a contribution. Either silent or spoken contribution. They have led to, they have contributed to being in such a situation. To a certain extent they can be blamed.
Now, if I have the chance, I’ve also talked to them about the dangers that can come out of such behavior” (Anonymous Male Teacher, Personal Interview, 2018).

“They will turn to you, blame you.”
-Secondary School, Female

Another nuance that creates a barrier for students reporting sexual harassment to teacher is the issue of confidentiality, especially in instances where the harasser is known to be another teacher. “They may charge the teacher [but] it will make other teachers have a bad attitude [and] they may start torturing you psychically or mentally” (Secondary School, Female). The interviewed teachers themselves emphasized the word confidentiality, but also listed several people they needed consult in order to investigate the authenticity of an allegation. One male teacher stated, “Maybe if it is reported to say me, I will not handle it alone. I will bring in other parties” (Anonymous Male Teacher, Personal Interview, 2018). There is potential for any additional person that hears about the sexual harassment to be unsympathetic to the student and drive them away from pursuing any form of justice. Even in cases where students went to the confidential school counselor first, the story would have to be passed along for discipline to be administered, and thus it could get leaked to more of the school staff or the students. Multiple secondary school students on the anonymous surveys reported having to leave schools themselves, or having friends leave school, after reporting a sexual harassment case against a teacher because of the consequent treatment they received from other school staff members. As the RECESVID representative explained about their clients, there is a perception that all sources of reporting are not confidential, and if “they don’t think the information they share will remain confidential … they stop at [seeking out] medical treatment” (RECESVID Representative, Personal Communication, 2018).

In universities, there comes the difficulty of cases where lecturers harass students, and the students are believed to be the ones who initiated the contact. In cases where the student is not believed and the lecturer remains teaching the class, “it destroys the relationships between the student and the lecturer and may lead to the failure of the student” because the lecturer retaliates in revenge against the student (University, Female). One female university student explained that, “most of the time they think students are lying” when they report cases of harassment because there are some cases that exist where the student initiates the “sex for marks” solicitation. Unfortunately, officials can take this as ground to assume that this is the
case for many of these situations, rather than the rarity. Due to this perception, “even students at times they may report, they’re expelled” (University Female).

Other barriers are identified in Figure 2.1.

10.3 Public Stigma

The public stigma around sexual harassment creates additional barriers to reporting and is perhaps the strongest push for survivors to remain silent. In schools especially, because of the age of the students, their reluctance to accept the normalcy of sexual harassment is “kiddish” according to the adult figures in the schools (Secondary School, Female).

“[You are] not an adult … [so they ask] how can you report small things … but to you it’s big.”
-Secondary School, Female

Additionally, the general taboo and fear of sexual harassment arises because the survivors are both blamed and judged after sexual harassment happens to them. One secondary school girl reported that “some [survivors] even fear to talk out of fear that they maybe [will be] laughed at so general [it is] not worth it [to report].” As noted before in section 10.2, survivors may be blamed by those who they report to, and in some cases punished themselves. As sort of an internal cost benefit analysis, survivors must weigh their mental health, quest for justice, and societal expectations in considering whether to report. Another secondary school girl described in her survey that “few cases are probably being registered … because most sexually harassed people feel shy and the fact that not many cases and actions are being acted upon makes the rest reluctant to report their own.”

Another dynamic is this how sexual harassment is treated related to other offences. As it is viewed as normal and equated with other ‘bad behavior’, in schools at least, punishment for sexual harassment can be mild to the offender and mentally damaging to the offended. Interviews with teachers indicated that for some offences of sexual harassment such as assault, the punishment could be a day of cleaning the yard at school. This is a similar punishment that is doled out to students who skip class or violate other school rules that are non-violent. Teachers generally disliked punishments such a suspension and expulsion because they believed that it would not teach students the correct lesson. Of course, some students in focus groups disliked this idea and wished the mental health of the harassed student was taken seriously. If the person that sexually harassed the student was a classmate, “you can’t sit with that person because you’re scared” (Secondary School, Female).
10.4 Ineffective Reporting Structures: Makerere

The Makerere University Committee Investigating Sexual Harassment identified many of the same inefficiencies in the Makerere University Sexual Harassment policy as this researcher (Makerere University, 2018). One of the greatest challenges university students identified was the case of evidence. “At times, you may like to report but you’re lacking evidence. They’ll say you’re lying,” said one female student during a focus group. Another identified problem was the investigation itself, which students believed was riled with corruption. “Some of the top officials are part of that,” feared one female student. Male university students identified corruption and bureaucracy as plaguing the reporting process as well. The school administration hopes that the new recommendations will influence a new policy that removes the burden of proof from the survivor, according to the Dean of Students (Makerere Dean of Students, Personal Interview, 2018).

“These people are influential. They will bribe the police.”
-Male, University

All this being said, a student will only go to report if they have knowledge of the procedure. The Makerere University 2006 policy is available online, though it is unclear if students knew this or knew to seek it out. University students in focus groups identified that the policy had been mentioned at first-year orientation, but many also said they had not gone and this orientation is not taken seriously. Other than first-year orientation, students could not identify another time they had learned about the policy unless they had searched for the information themselves. Because of this, as one male university student put it, “ladies and victims do not know their right” when they are faced with the question of reporting after an act of sexual harassment.
### Table 2.1
Student Recommendations for Anti-Sexual Harassment Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Tell [students] about their rights.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[We need to] form up organizations that speak about [sexual harassment].”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Teachers should become more free with students. [Right now] it’s very formal.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Keep anonymous reporting.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Parents should support children and their safety.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Perpetrators should be heavily punished as examples.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be “guidance and counseling to students to inform them about sexual harassment.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools should “[sensitize] people about effects of sexual harassment.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“School should conduct research of students about sexual harassment.”</td>
<td>Secondary School, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Education should start from these young kids, sex education … [we should] train kids with sex education.”</td>
<td>University, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Always have sessions reminding our rights as students.”</td>
<td>University, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Strict measures have to be taken against sexual harassment because it is something that is not welcome.”</td>
<td>University, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[The university should have] regular seminars…and maybe conferences…and interactive platforms so we can share [our input on sexual harassment.”</td>
<td>University, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[The University should organize] a campaign which can make aware the students of their own rights.”</td>
<td>University, Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[There should be] guidance and counseling maybe with the students, telling them their rights, how harassment takes place.”</td>
<td>University, Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 The above table is compiled of the variety of recommendations given by students on sexual harassment policies

10.5 Student’s Recommendations

While the intention of the researcher is to deliver recommendations (section 11.0) for how schools should develop reporting procedures, students themselves also had their own input into how the system should work. Students were asked during all focus what they thought could
make any system better. Table 2.1 shows the range of responses. There was not a general consensus, though these responses demonstrate what the young people’s input is on this issue when many of these policies are written by adults.

11.0 Recommendations

The fourth and final objective of this study was “to compile [practicable] recommendations on how to develop the assessed reporting systems based on the data received regarding perception of harassment and the barriers students face in reporting sexual harassment or sexual violence” (section 5.0). These recommendations are informed by the background information and literature reviewed by the researcher and the findings in sections 8.0, 9.0, and 10.0.

11.1 Comprehensive Education Policy

The findings indicate that sexual harassment is a common yet silent (in terms of public conversation) issue at all levels of schooling, and most students knew what it is starting as early as primary school. Schools effectively silence student voices on sexual harassment in the current state. For this reason, the researcher believes that traditional arguments that primary and secondary students are too young to discuss sexual harassment are unbalanced and fail to take into account the realities of sexual harassment in Uganda specifically – students in this study had accounts of classmates being harassed as young as Primary Three (as young as 9 years old). Students in this study also all wanted education on sexual harassment (see some student recommendations in Table 2.1). They wanted to learn more about it because in most cases, it was an issue they took to be salient. For this reason, even if not incorporated into sexuality education frameworks, it should be the priority of all schools to develop a comprehensive education policy on sexual harassment, comprised of informing students of their rights, resources available to them, and why sexual harassment is harmful – though the new Sexuality Education Framework includes a component of this, it is best for schools to tailor this to their settings so that the education can be sustainable. When conducting research at the secondary school, the researcher provided all students with a short resource sheet of organizations that work to combat sexual harassment in Uganda. Many students held on to this paper for their own personal records because they had not been provided with such information before – even a short guide like this can have a huge impact on how students view sexual harassment. Schools should also make an effort to teach mutual respect among girls and boys so that they see themselves on equal footing.
This education policy also should not be a one and done effort. Rather, it needs to be incorporated into the education framework throughout the year to remind students and keep the conversation of sexual harassment going. By discussing this issue regularly, it can help to remove some of the stigmas and taboos around harassment, and hopefully encourage students who are sexually harassed to pursue justice or go through the reporting process. Teachers should be trained and encouraged to discuss this policy in their classes.

Though sexual harassment is a gendered issue, in order to not alienate the sexes, both males and females need to be informed of their rights together. Sexual harassment cannot be treated as an issue that only affects girls, even if it does affect them disproportionately. By separating boys and girls it gives the opportunity for the school to continue to place this burden of sexual harassment on the girl child – many boys in the study had never had a discussion with school officials about sexual harassment even though all the girls did.

As part of these policies, sexual harassment also needs to be treated with the seriousness that it is. Rather than equating sexual harassment with other ‘bad behaviors’, schools need to emphasize the mentally and educationally damaging effects of sexual harassment in schools and acknowledge their responsibility to support survivors. While this study works with the operational definition of “sexual harassment” to describe forced sexual behaviors, in reality there are better words, namely “sexual violence,” that demonstrate the gravity of offences with the linguistic care needed. If anything, the word “sexual violence” or “sexual harassment” must be used, not “inappropriate behavior” or “bad behavior” as these euphemisms will only further stigmatize the issue. Survivors have little incentive to lie about their experiences, and even more so in Uganda because of the social ramifications. In the United States, a country in which it is less risky to come forward with allegations of sexual assault, the prevalence of false allegations is between 2 and 10 percent (Lisak, Gardinier, Nicksa, & Cote, 2010). Based on findings, the researcher assumes this number to be lower for Uganda. Therefore, the idea that survivors and perpetrators have equal footing in terms of protection is unwarranted. That is not to say that perpetrators do not deserve the right to defend themselves, but that survivors should be offered the additional mental support needed, as well as sensitivity and protections.

Regarding an education policy at universities, the researcher backs the importance of the Makerere Committee Investigating Sexual Harassment’s recommendation for an education module for students about sexual harassment and anti-sexual harassment policy. When the module is released hopefully in spring 2019, other universities and secondary schools should look to the information in the module as a model for their own sexual harassment sensitization and education policies.
11.2 Separated Sexual Harassment Policy

As described in section 10.1, sexual harassment is often equated or equalized with other ‘bad behaviors’ that violate a school’s code of conduct. It is invalidating and mentally damaging to survivors to minimalize the offence that has occurred to them, as demonstrated in sections 9.2 and 10.2. Sexual harassment as an offence should remain in all school’s codes of conduct, but schools should also try to develop a policy exclusively based on sexual harassment for teachers and students in order to indicate its seriousness in relation to many other issues. Though the Makerere 2006 Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy was ineffective, by having a separate policy, revision and conversation are easier, especially with the 2018 Committee Investigating Sexual Harassment. In developing these policies, secondary and primary schools should also use the National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools to form their definitions of what constitutes sexual violence/sexual harassment as it is the accepted definition of sexual violence in schools in Uganda (Uganda Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports, 2015).

This anti-sexual harassment policy should be additionally incorporated into the comprehensive education framework and needs to be available to all students in writing. As indicated in this report, many students don’t know their rights or who they are supposed to report to, nor is there a clear policy in the vast majority of schools. By providing students with a written copy, and access to written copies in every classroom, students can have the luxury of pursuing the policy on their own and learning more about it in addition to the education they are given as part of the comprehensive education framework.

Regarding punishment, by separating punishment for sexual harassment versus other ‘bad behaviors’ students can stop equalizing these offenses. Punishments for sexual harassment, especially for offences such as rape and sexual assault, should be high. While the teachers in this study were reluctant to dole out what they saw as extreme punishments, most students believed that serious offenses should result in expulsion. Expanding on this, survivors and perpetrators cannot be seen as equals with the same to lose – only 5% of Ugandan girls aged 15-19 will report their sexual harassment to anyone, even a friend. This number is 13 – 16% of older women (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2017). There bravery in coming forward is threatened by those who view their voice as equivalent to the offender. Holding both on equal footing during reporting also leaves the offended student vulnerable punishment. Students in this study feared reporting as they thought they would be punished or expelled for this, primarily because the survivor is left in a weak position when considered equal to a perpetrator.
One recommendations for the specific policy that the researcher has is anonymous reporting. Anonymous reporting is necessary because it removes many of the negative physiological effects on the harassed student. Due to the cultural stigmas around reporting sexual harassment, students have little reason to lie even when reporting anonymously. The risks to reporting often outweigh the benefits of receiving justice and many people choose not to report for this reason. Anonymous reporting merely mitigates the risks.

11.3 Media Education

One of the biggest concerns that students had was that they felt that they were never given much of an education on sexual harassment, nor were they given an outlet to discuss it among themselves. The public stigma around harassment discourages anyone from having a conversation, but there are ways to make introducing such a conversation easier. In an interview with Bwanika Baale Felix of Emboozi Production House, the researcher discussed creative educational solutions to informing children and young people of their rights. Emboozi Productions has launched an anti-sexual harassment media campaign with plays and movies related to teaching young people about the impact of it and encouraging the public to take the issue of sexual harassment in schools seriously. Media has the power to create an emotional impact and is able to reach more people than traditional means of communication (Bwanika Baale Felix/Emboozi Production House, Personal Interview, 2018. As part of anti-harassment education, schools should engage with students through media platforms, not only with lectures. The 2018 Committee’s recommendation of an online and engaging learning module is a good start to this concept. There are many movies and TV shows, such as Emboozi’s upcoming “Never Again” film which also discuss sexual harassment in schools that can be used as learning tools (Ogwal, 2018). By showing students these scenarios in a digestible format, either through interactive learning platforms or through media, these conversations in schools can be made easier and more natural, removing some of the preexisting barriers to discussion.

11.4 Student Behavior Survey

In the United States, the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) is a survey administered in all high schools every two years on adolescent health and behaviors. This includes questions on sexual violence and sexual health so that schools can gauge the scale of certain problems and can work to best support their students (“Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS),” n.d.). While it would be difficult and expensive to implement this on a national level in Uganda, individual schools should develop a survey system to
measure the commonality of sexual harassment, as it is underreported and hard to gauge the scale of the problem in many cases. The YRBSS can be used as a framework for questions and can be easily adapted to fit the needs of an individual Ugandan school. A school’s findings can be used to update the comprehensive education policy described in section 11.1. In the long term, the results from surveys can be used as Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms to allow student anonymous input on education and reporting policies. If schools truly want to take the issue of sexual harassment seriously, they need to work to understand if they are part of the problem of perpetuating it. By giving students a platform for this input, they can better assess this rather than making assumptions about their own efforts.

11.5 Teacher Trainings

Teachers may be the first person that hears this student’s account of sexual harassment – in many cases the action reported is mentally damaging and violent. How the first “responder” reacts to a disclosure of sexual harassment has a huge impact on the survivor’s recovery, mental state, and willingness to continue with a formal reporting process (Fehler-Cabral & Campbell, 2013). Teachers and their role in the reporting process have the potential to be important in the process (they were cited in every secondary student focus group as a person to go to for help, but in the case of this study many teachers took this as the opportunity to blame or lecture the students. In addition to training teachers on the school’s sexual harassment policy, teachers should be trained on how to respond to a disclosure of sexual harassment appropriately so students know they are speaking with someone sympathetic to their concerns. At Makerere University and others, this researcher offers an additional recommendation of providing free trainings for interested students on how to respond to disclosures themselves, or incorporating this education into the module.

11.6 Counselors

Students in this study viewed counselors, if they were present to begin with, as extensions of teachers. As part of school’s reporting policies, counselors should be emphasized as separate, in that if you go to the counselor about an issue of sexual harassment that information will not make its way back to the head teacher. This goes back to the issue of confidentiality, and in general this also needs to be highlighted in importance.
12.0 Conclusion

The intention of this study was to understand how young people in Ugandan secondary schools and universities perceive sexual harassment, where they get their information from, and how this information can be used as a basis for designing education policies and effective reporting structures. The researcher chose not to come up with a sample policy and instead delivered recommendations, because ultimately the institution with a policy must be invested in developing it itself for it to be efficient.

Regardless of these recommendations or student input, sexual harassment as a problem in schools will continue to negatively impact these students as long as school administrations continue to take it to be a non-issue. The reality is that most if not all schools in Uganda have a silent problem of sexual harassment; everyone knows it exists but nobody talks about it or wants to take proactive measures to reduce it and protect survivors. It is more convenient for schools certainly to place blame on child survivors who have no power rather than investing time, money, and effort to stop a rampant problem. It is more convenient to maintain the status quo rather than be the first of many to try a new solution. Schools owe it to their students to make that effort though. Without it, nothing is ever going to change.

The silence around sexual harassment is taught by these schools themselves, and the general community. By not equipping students with the knowledge and resources needed to combat harassment and report it, schools effectively silence all young people’s voices on the issue and the voices of survivors. Ugandans are told to kept quiet at a young age and instead of learning about sexual harassment and their rights by those responsible for providing that information, many students learn it from their own experience or through peer’s experience. This of course allows students to develop dangerous views about blame behind sexual harassment, and gender dynamics. The cultural stigma around sexual harassment is also strong and limiting, but ultimately schools as places of learning are obligated to keep their students safe and protect their futures – and part of that safety is mental. It’s challenging to contradict culture, but the concern of the students in this study demonstrate that they want to have that conversation if given the opportunity. They want to learn more about sexual harassment and what they can do about it. Students who were sensitized to the issue were more sympathetic and proactive to making the needed change. They just need the outlet to share their views.

Part of this study was motivated by the #MeToo movement in the United States and other parts of the world. What would it take Uganda to have that national conversation about sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools? What would it take for people to feel
comfortable speaking out about their experiences? Based on the barriers to reporting and public stigma around sexual harassment, there is a long way to go. There’s hope though in the voices of these young people. If they are given the outlet and education needed, and protected through effective reporting structures, Ugandans may one day be able to discuss sexual harassment vocally as it pertains to them without consequence. Until then, schools and universities as institutions of learning are at the key intersection between contending with the issue themselves and educating others on it.
13.0 Works Cited


UNDP Human Development Reports of Gender Inequality Index (GII). (n.d.). UNDP.


14.0 Appendices

14.1 Secondary School Focus Group Questions

Draft Focus Group Questions Outline: Secondary School Focus Groups

These focus groups will be the same questions divided by gender. Groups of 6 boys or 6 girls. For this exercise, I would need the sexual harassment policy of the school I was going to in advance for reference. I anticipate that males will give very different answers to females, and I will adjust the questions or omit any on the spot to account for this:

1. How do you define sexual harassment?

   *I will use big poster paper to write and engage with students as they name examples and definitions.*

2. How do you define sexual violence?

3. How do you define sexual coercion?

   *At this point, I will define the Ugandan government’s definition of sexual harassment and sexual violence for students so they understand the legal definition going into the next questions.*

4. Is sexual harassment a problem in your community? Why or why not?

5. Is sexual harassment a problem in your school? Why or why not?
   a. Does knowing sexual harassment happens in schools impact how you participate?
   b. Have you yourself experienced sexual harassment in school?

6. Based on your observations, who are the perpetrators of sexual harassment in schools? Who is being harassed?
   a. What role do age and gender play in this?

7. Does your school have a reporting system for sexual harassment? How much do you know about it?

8. What are some reasons that you would not report sexual harassment?
   a. Build questions off of this to expand on the reasons they give and why they are significant.

9. Barriers to reporting. Earlier we talked about reporting systems for sexual harassment.
   We’re going to draw a map with one of these scenarios (teacher defiles a student example). On the map, we are going to write every step that happens in the reporting process. At each step we’re going to write reasons you may not continue with the reporting process, or why the reporting process fails.

10. Now, looking at the map. Do you have any ideas on how to get rid of any of these barriers. Anything at all, no matter how crazy.
14.2 University Focus Group Questions

**Draft Focus Group Questions Outline: University Focus Groups**

These focus groups will be the same questions divided by gender. Groups of 5 boys or 6 girls. I anticipate that males will give very different answers to females, and I will adjust the questions or omit any on the spot to account for this:

1. How do you define sexual harassment?
   
   *I will use big poster paper to write and engage with students as they name examples and definitions.*

2. How do you define sexual violence?

3. How do you define sexual coercion?

   *At this point, I will define the Ugandan government’s definition of sexual harassment and sexual violence (and Makerere) for students so they understand the legal definition going into the next questions.*

4. Is sexual harassment a problem in your community? Why or why not?

5. Is sexual harassment a problem in your school? Why or why not?
   a. Does knowing sexual harassment happens in schools impact how you participate? Does it change your in class and out of class behavior?
   b. Have you yourself experienced sexual harassment in school?

6. Based on your observations, who are the perpetrators of sexual harassment at Makerere? Who is being harassed?
   a. What role do age, status, and gender play in this?

7. Would you call yourself knowledgeable to Makerere’s sexual harassment policy (as in would you know what to do if you had to go through the reporting process)? If yes, how did you come to be educated on this? If no, why not?

8. What are some reasons that you would not report sexual harassment?
   a. Build questions off of this to expand on the reasons they give and why they are significant.

9. Barriers to reporting.

10. What could your school do to make the reporting process more effective?

11. What responsibility does a school (like Makerere) or institution have in stopping sexual harassment?
14.3 Student Anonymous Survey

Anonymous Survey

The following short anonymous survey is part of “Schooling Silence: An Investigative Study on Sexual Harassment and its Presence and Perception at Uganda’s Universities and Secondary Schools,” a report being researched by Elena Mieszczanski with The School of International Training. This survey is anonymous and all answers are optional. If you choose not to answer a question or have no answer, please write “NO ANSWER” or “I CHOOSE NOT TO ANSWER.” If you would like to expand on any of these questions or share your experiences with sexual harassment or sexual violence in a confidential in-depth interview with me, please email elenamski@gwu.edu, call +256 775 606 816, or WhatsApp message +1 978 888 1757. This interview will be one-on-one and private.

Demographics (optional) -
Gender:
Age:
Level of School:

What is your experience with sexual harassment in schools since primary up to today? Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable.

How often do you think sexual harassment happens in schools?
14.4 List of Key-Informant Interviews

Key Informant Interview List

1. Anonymous Expert on Sexual Harassment in Schools
2. Anonymous Male Teacher 1 (Secondary School)
3. Anonymous Male Teacher 2 (Secondary School)
4. Anonymous Female Teacher 1 (Secondary School)
5. Anonymous Female Teacher 2 (Secondary School)
6. Makerere Dean of Students (Mr. Cynacio Kabagambe)
7. Professor Sylvia Tamale, Makerere University
8. Dr. Betty Ezati, Makerere University Dean of School of Education
9. RECESVID Representative
10. Bwanika Baale Felix of Emboozi Production House
14.5 Sample Key-Informant Interview Outline

RECESVID Questions Outline

1. What psychological effect does sexual violence/GBV have on a survivor and how does that psychological effect impact someone’s ability to get a job or education after?

2. How does that effect change when it’s a child survivor? A female survivor?

3. What are the barriers that survivors of sexual violence and trauma face when they speak about what happened to them in this culture/in Uganda?

4. Are those barriers different for child survivors?

5. How do you counsel a survivor of sexual violence when there’s so much pressure against them to hide what happened?

6. A big part of my study is on definitions of words related to sexual violence – as in how people conceptualize sexual violence is different than the legal or expert definition. Do you see this phenomenon, and what impact do you think it has on a survivor’s ability to report what has happened to them?

7. In Uganda there seems to be this taboo against speaking about sexual harassment, sexual violence, and GBV – why do you think that is and what do you think the best way is to increase the importance of this conversation?
14.6 Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Parent/Guardian Permission for Child’s Participation in Research

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and any questions have been answered. If there are additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I give permission for the child under my care to participate in the research study described above and will execute a copy of this Parent/Guardian Permission form after I sign it.

Consent to Video from Interview

I may refuse to have the child’s interview be recorded or to have the interview丽

Consent to Audio-Video Interview

I authentically and voluntarily consent to participate in the research study. I authorize the staff to record all components of the research data. The information collected will be used for the purpose of the research study. By signing this consent form, I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice to my relationship with the researchers. I also understand that the study is anonymous and any personal information will be kept confidential. I have been provided with a copy of the consent form and have reviewed it. I have the opportunity to ask questions and any questions have been answered.

Parent/Guardian’s Name (print and signature)
Head Teacher of RISKTED Secondary Boarding School

Date

Name of Person/Obtaining Parent/Guardian Permission

Date
MINOR ASSENT

Schooling & Sexual Assault: An Investigative Study on Sexual Harassment and its Perception and Prevention at Uganda's Universities and Secondary Schools.

Why are you being asked to be part of this study?
My name is Frances Kereh and I would like you to participate in a research study about sexual harassment and schools in Uganda. The purpose of the study is to look at the effect of sexual harassment by teachers and fellow students on educational attainment in Uganda, particularly that of girls. This includes analysis of perceptions of students and teachers on what constitutes "sexual harassment." In this study, you will also the effectiveness of reporting systems on sexual harassment in schools, and will contribute recommendations on how to improve the reporting procedures.

Will you be asked to do?
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion with six other students of the same gender. The focus group questions will include questions about your experiences with sexual harassment, harassment in schools, knowledge of the reporting procedures, and barriers to reporting harassment. Students will not be asked to personally share their experiences with sexual harassment or sexual violence during these focus groups. After the focus groups, you will be provided with a survey to anonymously share your experiences with harassment if you choose to fill it out. Participation should take about 45 minutes. You will not be photographed. You will not be audio-recorded unless you and your headmaster/handle teacher agree and verbal consent.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts for you?
Your participation in this study may involve the following risks: Risk could include discomfort, stress, or anxiety when talking about sexual harassment. You may feel emotional or upset when answering some of these questions. You can tell the interviewer at any time if you want to take a break or stop the interview. You may be uncomfortable with some of the questions and topics I will ask about. If you are uncomfortable, you are free to not answer any of the questions. At the end of the focus group, you will be provided with a fact sheet on resources for survivors of sexual violence and a contact number for support services.

Are there benefits to being in this study?
Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally, but we may learn new things about sexual harassment that will help to design reporting procedures to improve the safety and health of students. Additionally, you will receive information on the present reporting procedures of sexual harassment and your right to report.

Confidentiality
All participants will be informed of their rights in this study when they sign the consent form, and can ask questions. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Anonymity will be kept and all names will be changed. The final report will include no identifying information about participants. All data during this study will only be viewable by me, and will be kept on a password-protected drive in a secure location only available to me. Should you consent to being audio-recorded, the recording will be destroyed after transcription. Transcriptions and notes with identifying information will be kept locked up and secure during the time of research, and will be destroyed at the completion of this study. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no identifiable information will be used.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw
The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the interviewer of this study or REDACTED Secondary School. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process. Additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.

Who will use the information collected about you?
When I am finished with this study, I will write a report about what I learned. This report will not include your name or that of your child in the study. I will give you a fake name and I will not keep any of materials you recorded. I will remove all identifying details.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this study. My contact information is charlotte.mallette@umich.edu and 30.775.806.81. Academic Director: Dr. Charlotte Mallette, Charlotte.Mallette@umich.edu.

I understand what I will be asked to do in this study. I understand that I can stop participating at any time.
I want to take part in the study.

Signature of Minor Date

Principal Investigator Signature Date

Consent to Quote from Interview
I may wish to quote from the interview in the presentation of research resulting from this work. Your name will not be used, and identifying information will be removed from said quote. Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

[ ] I agree to...
[ ] I do not agree to...

Consent to Audio-Record Interview
Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

[ ] I agree to...
[ ] I do not agree to...
PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

Schooling Silence: An Investigative Study on Sexual Harassment and its Presence and Perpetuation at Uganda’s Universities and Secondary Schools.

Researcher Name: Elisa Mavrommati
My name is Elisa Mavrommati, I am a student with the SIT Study Abroad program in Uganda. Your participation is voluntary. Please read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand. Before deciding whether to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy of the form.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study is to study the effects of sexual harassment on educational environments in Uganda. This includes and analyzes on perceptions of students and teachers on what constitutes “sexual harassment.” In doing so, this study will assess the effectiveness of reporting procedures on sexual harassment in schools, and will compile recommendations on how to engage the field on prevention with sexual harassment reporting policies.

STUDY PROCEDURES
All participants will complete a survey and a focus group discussion with the other students of the same gender, and will remain anonymous. You will be asked questions related to your perceptions of sexual harassment and knowledge of the reporting procedures for sexual harassment. You will not be photographed. You will not be identifiable unless you give both written and verbal consent. You can withdraw from this study if you do not wish to be audio-recorded.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
No potential risks or discomforts have been identified. This study will not be conducted in a controlled setting. Participants may experience discomfort while talking about sexual harassment. During the interview (focus groups) you have the right not to answer any questions or to discontinue participation at any time. At the end of the focus groups, as needed, you will be provided with a list of resources for survivors of sexual violence and can be referred to a mental health professional from SIT.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/ OR SOCIETY
The benefits of the participants in this study include educational benefits and the reporting procedures of their school and increased attention on their rights to report harassment. The findings of this study have the potential to benefit all students in an educational environment and social violence, as well as the reporting system.

CONFIDENTIALITY
All participants will be informed of their rights in this study when they sign the consent form, and will not be interviewed. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. The information recorded on this form will be kept confidential, and will be destroyed upon completion of the research. Only identifiable information that is necessary for research purposes will be kept on a lockbox and stored during the time of research, and will be destroyed upon completion of the study. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, all identifiable information will be used.

PARTICIPATION AND INTERRUPTION
Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not providing any legal rights, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.

Participant’s signature: ____________________________
Researcher’s signature: ____________________________

Initial of the following to indicate your choice:
_________________________ (I agree to...
_________________________ (I do not agree to...

Consent to Audio Recording Interview
I may wish to quote from the interview in the presentation or articles resulting from this work. Your name will be used, and identifying information will be removed from your quote.
Initial of the following to indicate your choice:
_________________________ (I agree to...
_________________________ (I do not agree to...

I declare that I am 18 years of age or older.

April 27, 2020

[Signature]

RESEARCHER’S CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have any questions or wish to get more information about this study, please contact me at elisa.mavrommati@gmail.com

RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPANT/ IRR CONTACT INFORMATION

[Signature]