

## **Strategies used by Information and Communication Technology tertiary students to deal with sexual harassment during work-related learning period in Zimbabwe**

Tsokota, T.

### **Abstract**

In many developing countries like Zimbabwe more women are taking up careers in Information and Communication Technology. Whilst this is a positive development, these women still face many challenges like sexual harassment. There seems to be an apparent dearth of literature about the phenomenon of sexual harassment of women in the Information Technology field in Zimbabwe especially students on work-related learning (WRL). ICT students on WRL are most vulnerable and susceptible to sexual harassment mainly because they attend to IT-related concerns from employees at the lower-level hierarchy of an organisation to employees at the highest-level hierarchy of an organisation. Consequently, this qualitative research study sought to identify strategies used to deal with sexual harassment especially coming from the experiences of the IT students on WRL. Data was collected through in-depth interviews from twenty IT university students in Zimbabwe. Data was analysed and key strategies were identified through structural coding and thematic analysis. These strategies were supervisory support, forming pseudo relationships, avoidance, escort and effective no. The findings of this research will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges faced by ICT students during their work-related learning period, especially regarding sexual harassment. Consequently, the study's findings may provide useful insights to policymakers and educators on how to create a safe learning environment for students in the workplace. Thus, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical study on strategies to deal with sexual harassment especially coming from the experiences of the IT WRL students in developing countries.

**Keywords:** Sexual Harassment; ICT students; Work-related learning