

ACADEMIC CONTRAPOWER SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN ZIMBABWE

D. Mawere

Department of Gender Institute
Midlands State University
Gweru, Zimbabwe

J. Seroto

College of Education
University of South Africa
Pretoria, South Africa

<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1737-719X>

ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment in the workplace, including the university, is not a behaviour perceived to be perpetrated only by males. In this article contrapower sexual harassment was investigated to find out whether female students harassed male lecturers at universities, and how harassment manifests with a view to devising measures to mitigate such harassment incidences. A qualitative case study research design was employed to explore the thoughts and experiences of participants at two public universities in Zimbabwe. Purposive sampling was employed in the identification and selection of participants with knowledge and experience of subjecting male lecturers to contrapower sexual harassment. Data were gathered through audio-taped face to face in-depth interviews with female undergraduates using a digital voice recorder. As data were collected through interviews, an iterative process was done. The study verified the existence of contrapower sexual harassment of male lecturers by female students. The study found that the measures that can be taken to mitigate contrapower harassment should include the explicit identification of all behaviours that constitute harassment and their consequences in university codes of conduct and policies. Universities should build a culture of respect in which students and lecturers interact without fear of harassment from either party. Universities need to ensure that lecturers are informed of the available resources should they have disturbing experiences pertaining to harassment from a student.

Keywords: sexual harassment, power, contrapower sexual harassment, higher education, Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment in academic environments is a concern since institutions of learning are intended for the acquisition and extension of knowledge in a physical and emotionally safe space (Mohipp and Senn 2008). Several theoretical frameworks use the concept of power to

explain sexual harassment. Sexual harassment has historically been understood as a person, usually male, in a position of power harassing a person of lower status, usually female. The context is also not limited to holding formal rank in organisations. The least commonly reported type of sexual harassment is contrapower sexual harassment. Benson (1984) defines contrapower sexual harassment as harassment of those with greater organisational power by those with less power. DeSouza (2011) views this phenomenon as harassment of a superior by a subordinate and it takes place in spite of an unbalanced power relationship between those involved. In other words, this form of harassment arises in situations where the perpetrator occupies a lower status than the victim. Research on sexual harassment has largely neglected contrapower harassment. Nevertheless, this form of harassment is frequent in various professions and job levels.

Contrapower sexual harassment is also a problem in educational institutions. In this context a person with a higher rank and more recognised authority (e.g., a lecturer or a study supervisor) is harassed by a person of lower status in a more vulnerable position (e.g., a student) (Lampman et al. 2016). Contrapower sexual harassment is often absent in university policies. University management may view sexual harassment of lecturers by students as an example of poor discipline and therefore the lecturer's fault. A challenge in university settings in focusing on power relations is that the potential risk of students harassing teaching staff is overlooked. In particular, male lecturers' experiences with this form of harassment perpetrated by female students has been relatively unexplored.

In the Zimbabwean context, research has been conducted in terms of sexual harassment of students by lecturers (Shumba and Matina 2002); sexual harassment of female students by male lecturers (Dhlomo et al. 2012); and sexual favours in return for grades including contrapower transactions (Ncube 2019). There is little research evidence surrounding male academics' experiences of contrapower sexual harassment. This article, based on doctoral research (Mawere 2019), addresses this gap by reporting on a qualitative case study which investigated contrapower sexual harassment perpetrated by female students on male lecturers at two purposefully selected public universities in Zimbabwe. The questions that guided the study are: How does contrapower harassment occur between female undergraduate students and male lecturers in the university setting? The aim of this study was to suggest interventions to reduce incidences of contrapower harassment in universities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The empirical inquiry is informed by selected theories of power which seek to explain why and how sexual harassment occurs. Power is a characteristic of an organisation's culture. People

can wield their power, status and position in an organisation to extort sexual favours from their subordinates (Sundaresh and Hemalatha 2013). The power models include the natural/biological; the organisational; the socio-cultural and the sex-role spill over. Finally, the phenomenon of contrapower harassment is discussed with special reference to the university setting.

The natural/biological model explains that power is exhibited in the physical advantage that men possess as they are generally larger and stronger than women. The model posits that sexual attraction between men and women is a biological phenomenon and that sexual harassment as such is a misnomer. It argues that the male is naturally more sexually aggressive and therefore males who pursue females, even if these attentions are unwanted, are merely expressing a natural instinct and are not culpable of inappropriate conduct. This model views sexual intimidation by men over women as the expected result of the difference in libido between men and women (Pina, Gannon, and Saunders 2009). The model lacks empirical support as it cannot explain examples of non-conventional harassment such as females harassing males.

The organisational power model examines the impact of position power on sexual harassment. The organisational power model posits that harassment is likely to occur when the harasser is in a more senior position in an organisation than the victim. Sexual harassment, therefore, is a function, albeit a malfunction, of power hierarchies, where harassers occupy the upper ranks, and these are usually male. Victims are in positions of organisational weakness and these are usually females who occupy a less authoritative career position. The male perpetrators are usually at a higher level in the hierarchy and are not likely to be exposed by the victims (Cleveland, Vescio, and Barnes-Farrell 2005; Pina et al. 2009). There is much empirical support for the model. However, the model is inadequate to explain common incidences of other forms of harassment like peer and contrapower harassment.

The socio-cultural model posits that sexual harassment is the outflow of social expectations or cultural practices that accept and bolster superiority of males over females. The patriarchal system prevailing in society attributes status to men and affords them the opportunity to use their rank to harass women in the places of employment and others. Sexual harassment in this context is likely to take place when someone has societal power over another person and mirrors broader society's uneven distribution of power and status between males and females (Pina et al. 2009). The model's limitation, however, is that it does not explain instances where women intimidate men sexually.

The sex role spill-over model posits that sexual harassment is the outcome of gender roles being asserted over work roles. Women are described as kind, approachable and primary home

makers. Men are described as strong, work-orientated, confident and primary breadwinners. A woman working in a predominantly male area is seen as a woman before she is seen in her professional capacity. Women experiencing sex role spill-over are more frequently to be the victims of predatory sexual conduct and sexual harassment by men (Pina et al. 2009). To some extent this model specifically addresses contrapower sexual harassment and argues that male subordinates harass women supervisors to counteract differentials with the latter. In other words, the model explains contrapower sexual harassment as it relates to subordinate men harassing women in positions of authority and influence. However, the model's limitation is that it does not give a satisfactory reason why women of lower rank harass men in positions of power and influence.

CONTRAPOWER SEXUAL HARASSMENT RESEARCH

Contrapower harassment, as pointed out above, refers to unsolicited subordinate sexual attention directed toward a superior. This form of sexual harassment is more infrequent and has been given far less attention in the research literature. Although it is seldom reported, this kind of harassment prevails across occupations and job categories. It occurs in spite of a skew power relationship between those involved. This form of harassment arises in situations where the perpetrator enjoys less formal power than the victim. Contrapower harassment is a frequent form of insubordination in institutions and organisations, perpetrated against those above the perpetrators in the hierarchy. Whatever the rationale, the concept of students, individuals with lesser organisational power, confronting faculty members, individuals with greater organisational power, has become a reality in higher education (DeSouza and Fansler 2003; Lampman et al. 2016).

Benson (1984) was the first to use the term contrapower sexual harassment which refers to harassment of people with greater formal organisational power by those with less and this constitutes a situation outside the norm. In the university, which is the context of this study, contrapower sexual harassment occurs when a female student makes sexual advances to a male lecturer or supervisor in order to obtain academic favours. When that occurs, it is a scenario which is not appropriate, involving the harassment of male lecturers by female students. Like other forms of harassment, contrapower harassment affects the lecturer's work and personal growth. It can damage the lecturer's feelings of integrity and confidence. It also erodes the lecturer's professional self-image. It undermines the lecturer's assuredness and his position as a respected teacher and has damaging effects on relationships with students (Benson 1984, 518). It may also occur secretly through written notes to the lecturer or students' course assessments which enable students to sidestep disciplinary action. The inability to address the situation

created by secrecy in which the perpetrator is anonymous in many ways renders the lecturer helpless thereby reversing the power dynamic (King 2019).

Contrapower harassment, as with other forms of harassment, can vary from minor incidents which are relatively non-threatening to major problems. One of the first investigations of the issue of contrapower harassment of senior academics being sexually harassed by their students found that 58 per cent of the sampled academics failed to disclose sexual harassment because they felt it was not grave enough or that it was unavoidable. In a university environment, female academics disclosed that male students had paid them exaggerated attention, made verbal and written offensive remarks, physical advances and explicit sexual propositions, offered sex as a bribe and made suggestive phone calls from male students (Juliano 2006).

Other research studies in universities found that a third of male lecturers and a quarter of female lecturers were the focus of uninvited sexual remarks from students as often as once a week. The studies also established that between a third to two-thirds of students acknowledged employing potentially sexually harassing conduct toward lecturers at least once. At least half of the lecturers in one survey reported experiencing contrapower sexual harassment by students. Female lecturers were more frequently the recipients of sexually inappropriate conduct from male students than were male lecturers. Male students were often guilty of sexually harassing behaviour than were female students (Matchen and De Souza 2000). These studies demonstrate the proportionately high incidence of contrapower sexual harassment in academia. In view of this, contrapower sexual harassment is a pernicious problem and a concern in universities. However, research does not make it very clear whether both male and female students are involved in sexually harassing both male and female lecturers.

Students wield certain power as they assess lecturers who teach them. The evaluations are anonymous, therefore creating ideal conditions for a female student harasser to undermine a male lecturer, possibly injuring the male lecturer's career. Lecturers face different consequences than students when reporting contrapower sexual harassment. Doubt may be cast over their skills of classroom management effectively. It diminishes the overall quality of the educational experience of targeted lecturers damaging both their career success and well-being. Furthermore, there is fear of public exposure for male lecturers subjected to contrapower sexual harassment. There can be a perception that they are weak as lecturers, as superiors or as men. When male lecturers are sexually harassed, it usually takes the form of a proposition – an exchange of sexual favours for a positive grade. The female students perpetrating this type of harassment do it by using their sexual capital (Lampman 2009).

Male lecturers hesitate to report contrapower harassment. Their concern is that, doing so

will make them look like they are incompetent classroom managers. Furthermore, there is a risk of them being seen as, or charged with being the initiators of the improper behaviour. Another dimension is that a man may feel that if he does not agree to a woman's offer, she might still wrongfully accuse him of harassment (Juliano 2006; Melisa 2007).

The potential negative repercussions of academic contrapower harassment might also be more serious for staff whose jobs are less secure, including untenured or contract faculty, junior staff, or those in temporary positions. Faculty worried about job security or in line for promotion or tenure might also be reluctant to report this form of harassment because it might affect how others regard them as professional educators during staff evaluations. Suffering in isolation and secrecy, however, might make contrapower harassment more stressful for the victims (Lampman et al. 2016).

Male lecturers' experiences of contrapower sexual harassment in Zimbabwe is under-researched. The current study addresses the gap in the literature on mistreatment in universities by investigating harassment of male lecturers by female students, which is an area, by and large, neglected by researchers.

METHOD

The main research question was investigated by a qualitative case study research design. Qualitative research allows participants to be co-creators in the meaning-making process by voicing their understanding of the harassing experience. This type of research method is effective in addressing sensitive topics like contrapower sexual harassment. The method also helps to define a phenomenon of interest. A case study was selected because it is a useful method for probing feelings, context, viewpoints, as well as relationships in detail and was therefore relevant for this study. The design was used to gain greater insight into the thoughts and experiences of the participants (Corbin and Strauss 2015). Two public universities, identified by pseudonyms, were selected as cases for the study. The two public universities are designated as Western University (WU) and Eastern University (EU). The two public universities were regarded as information rich cases with participants within them with first-hand experience of contrapower harassment.

Purposive sampling is the most appropriate method for selecting participants who have experienced the phenomenon under study and are therefore most knowledgeable and informed about the topic. The purposive sampling method was used for identification and selection of individuals who had knowledge and experience of subjecting male lecturers to contrapower sexual harassment. The call for participants was placed on the two universities websites for volunteers to share their experiences of contrapower harassment. Those who indicated

willingness to participate included female students who had sexually harassed male lecturers and female members of the Students' Representative Council. Eight (8) female undergraduate students and five (5) female undergraduate members of the Student Representative Council were purposefully selected to participate in focus group discussions.

Data were gathered through audio-taped, face to face in-depth interviews with female undergraduates using a digital voice recorder. A digital voice recorder was used to capture data accurately in all interviews. Each interview was 25 to 30 minutes long. Prior to the interview participants were asked for and granted permission to be audio-taped.

I (the chief researcher) posed probing questions to the participants in order to explore issues widely. Although a standardised interview guide (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006; McMillan and Schumacher 2014) was used, participants in the face-to-face interviews were also given opportunity throughout the interview to ask for clarification on any of the issues or questions discussed during the conversation. Probing added depth to the semi-structured interviews and this resulted in the introduction of unexpected dimensions to the conversation by certain participants.

Ethical issues are an essential component of qualitative research given the close interaction and relationship between researchers and participants. Ethical clearance for the study was granted by the University of South Africa through the College of Education Research Ethics Committee. Permission for the study was granted by registrars of the two institutions. They allowed us to post our research topic on the universities websites whereby we invited those female students who had harassed male lecturers, as well as female members of the SRC to participate. Thereafter we contacted those who indicated willingness to participate in the study to seek their consent before participating in the study. Steps were followed to ensure that the necessary ethical requirements with regard to voluntary participation, informed consent and confidentiality were met (Morrison, Cohen, and Manion 2011). Prior to participants' decision to participate in the study, a thorough explanation of the study and its aim were given to allay misconceptions.

A qualitative data analysis approach followed the ensuing iterative process. Data were prepared through listening to recorded interviews several times; a word for word transcription of each of the recorded interviews was made; data from the transcripts were read and reread to identify levels of specificity and the development of codes; through coding key categories were generated; themes emerged from the codes and categories; and conclusions were arrived at after no new and relevant data had emerged. The main themes were then used to make inferences on contrapower sexual harassment in the two public universities. Trustworthiness of the study is essential to the usefulness and authenticity of the findings (Cope 2014). To achieve

trustworthiness or credibility in this study female students who had harassed lecturers, and female members of the SRC were audio-taped as they were interviewed. Gathering information from all these sources was a triangulation measure intended to cross check accuracy and consistency of information collected.

RESULTS

The dominant theme emerging from the study was the seduction of male lecturers through (1) dress; (2) offering whatever services the lecturer wanted in exchange for the marking of overdue assignments; (3) visiting male lecturers' offices at odd hours; and (4) proposing love to male lecturers.

Dress

The excerpts below represent some of the ways in which the female students harassed male lecturers through dress:

“I went to a male lecturer's office wearing a very short mini-skirt. I sat in front of the class with my legs wide apart. His focus on the lecture was diverted.” (EU female student 1).

“I paid a visit to the office of a male lecturer who was teaching me. I knew he was alone in his office. I went there dressed in an irresistible way. I knocked and got into the office. When he asked me how he could help me, I told him that I liked him very much and had come to just greet him. Even though he knew that he was not allowed to have love relations with students he could not resist my love overtures given the way I was dressed.” (WU female student 1).

“Most female students in a bid to pass the module with a distinction visit a male lecturer dressed in a sexually suggestive way to entice the male lecturer and influence him to pass them never mind the quality of their papers.” (EU focus group discussion).

There is evidence in the excerpts above of attempts by female students to establish romantic or sexual relationships with male lecturers through dressing in a sexually suggestive way. Female students used body language of a sexually provocative nature by dressing in a sexually suggestive way.

Offering services to male lecturers

Offering services to male lecturers is another strategy that female students engaged in contrapower harassment as is evident in the excerpts below:

“I send a male lecturer an e-mail stating that I would want a better grade on my assignment and would do anything the lecturer requested if he were to yield to my request. I also reminded him that as a student I was going to positively evaluate him on his teaching in return.” (EU female

student 2).

“Female students in a bid to pass with distinctions visit male lecturers in their offices at odd hours improperly dressed with a view to enticing the lecturers.” (EU SRC focus group discussion).

Wanting to pass with distinction was one of the drivers leading female students to harass male lecturers in the two institutions. Female students attempted to hold the lecturer to ransom by reminding and promising the lecturer that they would evaluate their teaching positively if they gave very good marks on the assignments submitted.

Visiting male lecturers’ offices

Going to the lecturer’s office without invitation was another way in which contrapower harassment manifested itself among the female students.

“Our male lecturer last semester told us that we should not go to his office after 5 pm. Two girls who had not submitted their assignments on time went to him dressed in a sexually suggestive way. They requested to do anything the male lecturer wanted if he was going to accept their overdue assignments.” (WU SRC focus group discussion).

An attempt by female students to seduce male lecturers in order to gain favours, such as accepting and marking overdue assignments in exchange for any sexual favours that lecturers would demand from them is evident in the above excerpt.

Proposing love to male lecturers

The excerpts below represent the extent to which female students harassed male lecturers by proposing love to the male lecturers:

“I wrote a letter proposing love to a male lecturer. I gave the letter to a male lecturer, a colleague of the targeted lecturer, who was sharing the office with him.” (WU female student 5).

“I went to a male lecturer’s office alone. I greeted him and told him that he was handsome and I wanted to fall in love with him.” (EU female student 4).

“I personally admit that I have sexually harassed a male lecturer. I saw a lecturer I wanted to fall in love with. I strategically positioned myself for him to see me in his lectures. I also dressed in an inviting way. The lecturer was attracted by me. He put a note in my assignment which was written ‘see me’. There was no mark on the assignment. When I got to his office he asked me why I was sitting in a compromising way in the lecture. He fell for me and my objective was achieved.” (WU female student 1).

Female students in the excerpts above confirm visiting male lecturers’ offices without invitation. When asked why they did this, they explained that they wanted to seduce male

lecturers in order to gain favours like passing the lecturer's course with distinction. They wished to engage in romantic and sexual relationships with lecturers in exchange for financial support during their stay at the university. They knew that the male lecturers approached would not report these issues as they feared public exposure. This usually took the form of a proposition – an exchange of sexual favour for positive grades. These female students used their sexual capital (Lampman 2009).

The issues of female students visiting male lecturers' offices; putting on sexually suggestive dress and wanting to influence the lecturer to award them distinctions in their modules are instances of harassing the male lecturers. Members of the Student Representative Council who were engaged in focus group discussions on the existence of contrapower sexual harassment in the two universities concurred on the existence of this phenomenon in their institutions. Avoiding submitting assignments together with those of other students in order to have a reason to submit assignments at the lecturer's office unchaperoned and the readiness to do whatever the lecturer may want in order to coerce him to accept the assignment was another way of harassing the male lecturer as stated by the members of the focus group.

Wearing of mini-skirts, sitting with legs apart in the lecture, visiting male lecturers outside of office hours, and delivering overdue assignments in person without accompaniment as well as inappropriate declarations of admiration and love are behaviours by female students aimed at male lecturers and illustrate contrapower sexual harassment.

DISCUSSION

Contrapower sexual harassment defined as harassment by a person in a subordinate position to a person in a more superior position was evident in the two institutions as female students harass male lecturers. This form of harassment is prevalent in the two universities despite an unbalance in the power relationship between male lecturers and female students. Thus, this form of harassment presents in circumstances where female students have weaker formal power than the male lecturer (Benson 1984). In this study it is evident that contrapower sexual harassment occurs as male lecturers, with more institutional power, are sexually harassed by female students with seemingly less power. This occurs as female students seduce male lecturers in order to gain advantages such as passing with distinction. These are atypical circumstances, involving the harassment of more powerful male lecturers by less powerful female students.

This type of sexual harassment has not been rigorously researched or given attention in the literature. While it is possible that both male and female lecturing staff are objects of sexual harassment from students with females usually being the victims, more recent studies, such as this study, indicate that sexual harassment also affects men (Lampman et al. 2016). Many

academics who experience sexual harassment do not disclose their experiences according to formal procedures for a variety of reasons, including fear for their employment status if they are not tenured, a fear of being labelled as trouble makers and the notion that they will never be supported by university management.

Students, in general, do evaluate lecturers. These teaching evaluations focus on subjective student satisfaction with the instruction. This may foster negative comments in a situation where the male lecturer does not give in to overtures by the female student. The female students are aware that if male lecturers refuse their sexual overtures, they can come up with negative evaluations of their teaching. Such negative evaluations may not be availed to the lecturers as they are secretly kept in the lecturer's file. Male lecturer victims fear that female students who solicit for better grades and do not get them may want to get even with them by making negative comments about their instruction in student evaluations.

When one has no experience with contrapower harassment, one may find it difficult to consider how a lecturer can be sexually harassed by a student, how to deal with this behaviour and what consequences the experience might hold for the lecturer as a professional teacher (King 2019). In such a situation, male lecturers who face sexual harassment by female students often become depressed and lose hope in their work. This could harm their teaching performance and erode their publications and research. Job resignation is possible in a situation where they report the problem and the authorities do not respond to their predicament. On the personal level, contrapower harassment undermines a lecturer's confidence, both professionally and personally. This is not surprising as male victims are less likely to reveal unwanted sexual experiences to peers or seniors (Menard 2005). It can sour a lecturer's attitudes towards students, teaching and research and rob the lecturer of self-confidence, which may result in general caution and alienation with students (Benson 1984).

Male lecturers may not report contrapower sexual harassment perpetrated on them by female students. As mentioned, this is exacerbated in a situation where they are not yet tenured and fear for their employment status. Reporting harassment of this nature has a negative impact on lecturer's promotion and overall career advancement. Furthermore, they may be afraid of being labelled as trouble makers who believe that formal processes are ineffective and unsupportive. Therefore, lecturers who are working for tenure appear to be most vulnerable when it comes to student hostility (Lampman 2009). Male lecturers may hesitate to report contrapower harassment as doing so will make them look like they are ineffective classroom managers. Furthermore, there is a threat of them being perceived as, or accused of, being the initiators of the harassment. Another dimension is that women in general have sexual power over men, such that a male lecturer may feel that if he does not comply with a female student's

desires, the female student could make false harassment allegations against him (Juliano 2006, 8; Melisa 2007, 37).

Universities are extremely reluctant to bring to light the experiences of employees who experience sexual harassment. Universities, by their nature are wary of any allegations which may tarnish their reputation, so they have little reason to do more than to smother allegations and keep victims quiet (Phipps 2018). However, there is an institutional imperative to transform a university into a more hospitable and accommodating space where lecturers, as academics, are able to flourish and reach their full potential. Thus, there is need for institutional support in circumstances where male lecturers are victims of harassment by female students. Lecturers by and large are often uninformed of university policies and legal protections which protect them. There is need for university sexual harassment policies to speak to contrapower harassment in order to eliminate to this type of undesirable faculty-student interaction (King 2019). Overall, the findings of this exploratory study concurred with the findings of the literature.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The qualitative case study using interviews and focus group discussions verified the existence of contrapower sexual harassment of male lecturers by female students. Harassment is no longer a behaviour perceived to be perpetrated primarily by men. Harassment manifests itself in a myriad of ways. The most prominent ones include: female students desiring to establish sexual relations with male lecturers and dressing in a sexually suggestive way when visiting male lecturers' offices uninvited and seducing male lecturers in order to gain favours such as a distinction pass.

This article adds to the growing body of literature indicating that contrapower sexual harassment is common and injurious in universities. The study provides a new focus on contrapower harassment in universities; however, its limitations are also acknowledged. Limitations of this study include a relatively small sample; participants were from only two public universities' settings. The study did not investigate multiple contrapower harassment experiences across different universities in Zimbabwe. Therefore, findings may not apply across all settings in universities. Only one set of harassers, female undergraduate students, were the focus of the study. With regard to the student body, there may be observed power imbalances between postgraduate students and undergraduate students or between undergraduate seniors and first-year university students. These could be potential respondents should a multi-contrapower harassment research study in universities be conducted.

It is of paramount importance that university administrators communicate to all university stakeholders that their campuses take contrapower harassment seriously. Victims of

contrapower harassment are encouraged to take harassment behaviours to the appropriate authorities. A zero-tolerance policy on contrapower harassment should be put in place to reduce the incidence of this behaviour (Lampman et al. 2016).

Given the institutional imperative to transform universities into more hospitable and accommodating spaces where male lecturers, as academics, are able to flourish and reach their full potential, as well as where healthy interaction with female students takes place, the following measures have to be put in place:

- Scarcity of research on contrapower harassment in universities in Zimbabwe and elsewhere calls for research and education to educate university communities with regard to the identification, acknowledgement, prevention and reduction of contrapower sexual harassment.
- A safe campus environment is only possible when universities factor into their existing sexual harassment policies procedures pertaining to contrapower harassment. The policies should include descriptions of contrapower harassment, including special grievance procedures suitable to the unusual circumstances surrounding such a form of harassment.
- Universities should build a culture of respect in which students and lecturers interact without fear of harassment from either of them.
- Universities should strive to promote the mental well-being of both lecturers and students. Students should be made aware that the same harassing behaviours that are unwanted among students are also inappropriate when they are dealing with lecturers.
- Research carried out in the future could benefit from a more intentional and rigorous recruitment method to produce a bigger sample. Participants in this study selected voluntarily to participate, therefore the sample may be skewed toward participants who were particularly eager to share their experiences of harassing male lecturers.

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