



•Alex



•Joseph

Jesusegun Alagbe

There is only one option for the female students to get an A grade in their courses — sleep with the male lecturer taking the course or refuse to do so and keep failing. It's either sex or no marks.

For a male student, because he is sexually unattractive to the lecturer, the only way to bail out himself is to hire a lady who will sleep with the concerned lecturer on his behalf in order to pass the course.

Sexual harassment, especially of the female students by male lecturers, is perhaps not a new thing in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and globally, with many people tagging it as the "greatest education epidemic" ever known.

But in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, one of the first four federal polytechnics established in the country — in 1963 — frustrated students told our correspondent the extent some randy male lecturers go before they could pass them in their courses.

"The better ones among the lecturers give us the option of paying by cash for the course or finding a lady who will sleep with them on our behalf before we can pass. Passing a course costs us between N10,000 and N20,000," a Higher National Diploma student of the Department of Accountancy, simply called Alex, told *Saturday PUNCH* on the telephone.

However, the downside to choosing to pay by cash rather than sex, according to Alex, is that the student can never get more than a C grade.

He continued, "Paying by cash is for those who want just a pass. But if I find a girl who will sleep with the lecturer on my behalf, I'll get an A, for sure. I'll get at least 90 per cent in the course, even if I write nothing exceptional in the exam. This option of paying with money instead of sex only comes from about one or two of the lecturers out of 10.

"Some of the lecturers tell us point blank that they don't need our money. They will tell us to find them ladies who will sleep with them before we can pass their courses. They teach very important courses, so you cannot ignore them. They will keep failing us until we're given notice of withdrawal from the institution. It's something that has happened to a friend who claimed to be a born-again Christian. The guy wrote the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination afresh and is now at the University of Benin.

"So this is what we guys do: If I have a loyal girlfriend and I beg her, she can sleep with the lecturer on my behalf. The lecturer picks the hotel of his choice on the day we've agreed. I will book for it. I'll order for the meal he'll eat before the action. He will sleep with my girl and give me my A. I'll give the lady my name so that the lecturer will know she's from me.

"But if my girlfriend says no, then I have to hire someone else. I will get a prostitute from outside, pay her, book for the hotel the lecturer has picked, order for their meal and then I get an A in his course. I have done this for three lecturers now.

"The reality is we can't pass their courses by mere brilliance. Only one or two lecturers are sane in my department. They don't ask for

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anything. We read hard to pass their own courses. For the rest, sex is the key. This is why most of us don't fidget when exam period approaches. We know the way out. The lecturers have shown us."

Another male student in the Department of Accountancy who spoke with *Saturday PUNCH*, simply named Dickson, in HND 1, said he usually budgets some money right from the beginning of the semester to hire prostitutes who will sleep with the randy lecturers on his behalf.

He said, "I love my girlfriend and can't allow her to sleep for me. Some other guys do that. They beg their girlfriends to help them. It's not a coded thing. We all discuss it. The prostitutes make serious money from us, all because of the extent these lecturers have gone.

"Apart from the money my parents give me, I hustle on my own in the school. If I want to pass a course now, I need to budget at least N20,000 for it — N7,000 for hotel booking, N3,000 for meal and N10,000 to pay the prostitute."

Asked how he hustles on the campus, he said he co-founded a computer centre outside the school premises from which he makes some money.

Alex and Dickson told *Saturday PUNCH* that the randy lecturers usually pick the expensive hotels in the city to enjoy the pleasure at the cost to the students.

"Some of the hotels are along the Benin-Okene Expressway, Ekpoma-Auchi Road, Benin-Auchi Road, etc. The least amount for booking is N5,000," they said.

A lawyer and social commentator in Lagos, Bisoye Odubona, said the "devilish practice" the lecturers had caused the students to indulge in could turn them into riff-raff.

He said, "How will a student get N20,000 to pay the 'total package' on a course, all because of a randy lecturer? Don't be surprised that these students might be stealing laptops and smartphones of their colleagues and selling them in order to raise money just to get an A.

"I know sexual harassment happens in tertiary institutions, just like everywhere else, but I never knew it had gone to this level. These are the lecturers turning our graduates to riff-raff. They deserve a cruel punishment if they are ever caught and I hope they are."

All-expenses paid sex nights

According to some other students who spoke with *Saturday PUNCH*, sex is the only bailout option from these randy lecturers' snares.

But even the sex option doesn't come cheap.

"There was a lecturer then, a very randy one, who taught us Public Sector Accounting in HND 1. That was around 2013. He would tell us openly in the class, 'I don't want your money. I am richer than you. Give me a girl and you get your A,'" an ex-student of the department, simply known as Sam, who now works in Port Harcourt, told our correspondent.

He added, "There is a popular hotel along the Benin-Auchi Road where these lecturers used to tell us to book when they wanted to sleep with the ladies we gave them. It is one of the most expensive hotels to rent in the city. It's also a bit distant from the school, so they would not be seen, I guess. They chose whatever hotel they wanted

and we would pay for it. It's an overnight session. An all-expenses paid sex night for them.

"Some other lecturers gave us two options to get good marks — sex or money. If you chose sex, you were sure of getting grade A in the course. If you chose money, you would get C, D or E, depending on how much you paid. The least was N10,000 per course when I was in HND 1 and N15,000 for HND 2 students. Out of the 10 courses I offered in HND 1, three of the lecturers wanted sex only. Four others would give you the option of sex or money, depending on the grade you wanted.

"In HND 2, I offered nine courses. Five of the lecturers taking the courses were highly randy. Only two were good lecturers. They would give you marks according to what you wrote. Those two were highly disciplined. There was a particular lecturer who would tell us to come to class (even on Sundays) at so-so time. He would be in class 10 minutes before the time and start teaching empty class if no student was around. He would be talking to the board and empty seats until we arrived. He was very strict, but I liked him."

Apart from the Accountancy Department, *Saturday PUNCH* also gathered that this practice also happens in some other departments, for example, the departments of business administration and management, public administration, banking and finance, and so on.

"It's only that the practice was rampant in Accounting Department. Everybody knew that," said Moses Franklin, a former student of the school who graduated in 2014 and now works and lives in Lagos.

He added, "The situation is just not too obvious in some other departments. If you sleep with the lecturer, you get a good A, like

90 per cent, even if you know nothing. Sex is their food. They cannot do without it. They are cursed with it.

"I remember a certain lecturer then, one of the randy ones, who was paralysed in an accident while I was in HND 1. God was merciful on him, he didn't die. But despite that, the man came into the class in a wheelchair one day and

said, 'The fact that I'm paralysed doesn't mean I'm impotent. I can still use my hands.' From the way he was making gestures, he meant he could still use his hands to fondle ladies' breasts and buttocks; a very mad man."

"Sleep for two"

This is a slogan some students of the school have coined from the situation, as explained by Joseph, another HND 1 student of the Department of Accountancy of the school.

He narrated how it works, "For the lecturers who want only sex to pass us, they demand from the ladies as well. Any lady who refuses to agree is frustrated by the lecturer. But for us guys, since they can't have sex with us, they ask us to bring somebody that will do the job for us.

"We hire prostitutes to do the job for us. We rent the hotel room, pay for the lecturer's meal, then pay the prostitute some cash, depending on our agreement.

"But surprisingly, some female students in our department are also exploiting this situation to make money for themselves. They tell us not to go outside to hire prostitutes. Instead of paying prostitutes, they ask us to let them assist us and we pay them. But in the process, the female student, apart from doing the male student a favour, also

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does herself one. She sleeps with the lecturer for the guy, for her own sake too and she still gets paid by the male student.

"It's called 'sleep for two.' The lady helps both the guy and herself at once. Both of them get As. But if the male student has a loyal girlfriend, she does the job freely, except that the guy still pays for the hotel booking and meal."

"This is highly sickening," an educationist in Port Harcourt, Dr. Fidelia Peters, simply said, not knowing what else to say when she heard about the situation. She only added, "Those lecturers deserve to be placed in front of the firing squad and be got rid of. All of them will perhaps be blaming Nigeria's woes on corruption, but look at it, are they not also corrupt?"

"Talking about eliminating corruption, this is where it should start from. How can we improve or be intellectually sound if we are being taught by these sorts of lecturers? How can our education system improve? Not sure this is possible."

The President of the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics, Mr. Usman Dutse, said members of the body were always being cautioned against extorting and sexually victimising students.

"The students should report to the management. If they want the situation to be addressed, they have to report such lecturers. If perhaps they are afraid, they could report under condition of anonymity and such lecturers will be dealt with. But when they keep quiet, nothing much can be done. We hear these things too and we usually caution our members," he said.

Sleeping for marks: Ex-female student's account

While male students hire prostitutes, female students have to sleep with the randy lecturers themselves or they risk failing. For them, there is no option of hiring a prostitute or paying with cash in order to pass.

A former student of the school, simply called Mercy, who graduated in 2014, narrated her experience to our correspondent in Lagos.

She said, "All along, I was a very serious student, and of course, I should. I was sent to the school to study, not to sleep with lecturers to get marks.

"I didn't do my National Diploma in Auchi Poly. I only did my HND there. I was not exposed to that kind of practice in my previous school. Probably it was not rampant there. When I got to Auchi Poly, I didn't know those lecturers had set their eyes on me until when it was time to do my project. All the courses I offered while in the school, I never got more than a C, maybe in one or two. I did have lots of Ds and Es, and sometimes Fs, despite studying and writing well. That is why I graduated with just a pass from the school.

"When it was time for project, I never knew why this particular lecturer who taught us Public Sector Accounting in HND 1 was frustrating me. He also took us Financial Management in HND 2. He was my project supervisor. I submitted 10 project topics to him, but he didn't approve any. I started submitting project topics to him right from the beginning of the first semester in HND 2, but he didn't approve any until it got to mid-second semester. It got to a point when I was frustrated and felt like committing suicide. So I approached him one day, 'Sir, I don't even have any project topic idea. Please tell me what topic to work on.' He replied, 'You're funny. It's because you don't know what to do like your colleagues. Go and

ask what your friends are doing. Have you ever come to greet me in my office?' I became dumb, couldn't utter a word. I made up my mind never to succumb to his pressure. That's why he approved my project topic in the middle of second semester when most students had gone far ahead of me in writing almost all the chapters of theirs.

"When he finally approved it, I started rushing through it. He approved the last chapter of my project two days before the day of defence. I was helpless, but there was nothing I could do but to accept my fate. On the day he approved it, I had to sleep in a business centre in the school to write, type, print, make photocopies and spiral-bind it. I couldn't eat. I didn't take my bath. I slept in the school till the morning of the day of defence. I couldn't go to the hostel for two days. In the morning of the day of defence, I showed up and tried my best. After my presentation, he shook my hand and refused to let it go. He was practically fondling with my fingers. He asked me, 'You think you are smart, right?' It was when the final results came that I knew what he was talking about.

"Other lecturers who took us Managerial Economics, Accounting Theory and Practice and some others were like that. Very randy people. The lecturer teaching us Taxation had his only special way. His case was different from others. No matter what you wrote, you could never get more than a C grade. He could set his eyes on and sleep with a female student, but that didn't translate to special marks. His was not a quid-pro-quo situation. We were always scared of him. He was a great womaniser.

"If a lady refused to give him sex, he would frustrate her. If he saw a guy hanging out frequently with the lady he had set his eyes on, he would assume the guy to be the lady's boyfriend. He then set his eyes on the guy. He would take the guy as his competitor and the reason why the lady refused him. He would frustrate him by failing him over and over again until the guy was given a notice of withdrawal. We ladies used to pray that the man shouldn't like us."

Mercy said she wished she didn't school in the institution, adding, "but to get an admission is not easy in this country. I am carrying a pass certificate around because of what I passed through in those lecturers' hands. I do wish sometimes I didn't school in Nigeria."

"I tried reporting, but the lecturers would tell us they're irremovable from the system. They wielded great influence, they claimed. 'If you like, go and report to the rector, there's nothing she can do,' they would say," she said of the lecturers.

Why students give in

Sexual harassment in tertiary institutions is used as a tool to create a fear of the future in the minds of the students by the lecturers who indulge in it, a psychologist, Mrs. Moyo Owolabi, said.

She said, "The students want good grades to boost their Grade



•Dickson



•Mercy

Point Averages, which have an eternal influence on the way they are treated in the job market later in life. Everyone knows that most companies hire based on the academic result a candidate has.

"If you don't have a minimum of 2-1, for instance, there are some jobs you cannot apply for. They tell you specifically it's a minimum of 2-1. So the desperation for good marks will always be there. The lecturers too know this, and they use it to exploit the students. 'If you want a good score, sleep with me or pay with money.' That's what they say. In many tertiary institutions, this is happening."

The institution's spokesperson, Mr. Mustapha Oshioyugie, asked students to report the lecturers to the school authorities, vowing that lecturers who harass their students sexually would be sanctioned if found guilty after investigation.

He said, "We hear all these things, but they are false. When we ask students to report such lecturers, they wouldn't come forward. No lecturer is above the law here, so when students come forward with reports, we will question the lecturer, but they wouldn't come.

"We tell them that if perhaps they are afraid, they should tell their parents to report on their behalf, but we don't see anyone. The students can also write us with proof and we will look into the allegations.

"We cannot just question a lecturer without a proof. There are policies in place which allow us to deal with such lecturers, but we need the students to report first, not just carrying rumours about. Our former rector

— Dr. (Mrs.) Philipa Idogho — even gave her phone numbers to the students, but they wouldn't report. And we can't take on a lecturer based on rumours.

"They have the opportunity to report to even the Dean of Student Affairs, or why do we have him? We encourage our students to avail themselves of the opportunity to report."

An education advocate in Lagos, Ms Viola Akhigbe, told our correspondent via Twitter that it was high time the authorities set up structures to fight sexual harassment in all forms in the institution.

She said of sexual harassment, "I think it is one of the most horrible developments of our time. In all fairness, some tertiary institutions in Nigeria, as in other parts of the world, have put structures in place to prevent incidences of sexual harassment, such as policies, increased awareness and heavy sanctions. Unfortunately, the effects of these measures have not been significant enough to stop the perpetrators.

"In the first place, we need to see sexual harassment, not as a school problem, but as a societal issue. It is a social crime which requires a whole societal response. Institutions need to be more articulate, decisive, sincere and transparent in their policy provisions and procedures for handling incidences of sexual harassment so that people are not only aware, but can also trust that justice will be served.

"Students themselves have to become smarter in handling such cases. Technology can definitely be helpful here, because evidence is also important. Our society is becoming more alive to issues of social responsibility and technology has been such a blessing. So lecturers, and indeed institutions, should not imagine that they will continue to get away with sexual harassment. It just must stop!"