





## **Prevalence of Sexual Harassment of 9th-Grade Students in Basic School Education of Paraguay**

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### Abstract

This study examines the prevalence of school sexual harassment among 9th-grade students in Paraguay, focusing on differences by sex, geographical area, socioeconomic status, type of educational institution, and academic performance in Guarani, Spanish, and mathematics. Using data from the National System for the Evaluation of the Educational Process (NSEEP), the researchers analyzed a sample of 90,742 students, representing 96% of the national population in that grade. The findings reveal unexpected patterns: higher rates of sexual harassment reports among males compared to females, private schools versus public ones, urban areas versus rural areas, and wealthier students versus those from lower economic strata. These counterintuitive results suggest a need for further research to explore the relationship between school sexual harassment and various contextual factors. The study also calls for qualitative, focused case studies to investigate sexual harassment across different grades in both primary and secondary education, with particular attention to geographic location, type of educational institution, and territorial organization.

Keywords: Sexual Harassment, NSEEP, Socioeconomic Variables, Academic Performance

### **Introduction**

The school is a space for constructing and exercising citizenship and children's rights, where children acquire and develop knowledge and establish bonds of trust and protection (Jaikua'a Project - Ministry of Education and Science, n.d.). Within this framework, the safety of the sexual autonomy of children and adolescents is a duty that involves the whole society: parents, educational institutions, agencies, State entities, and civil society organizations. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has established that member states shall take all appropriate administrative, social, and educational measures to keep children safe from physical or psychological harm, neglect, abandonment, abuse, or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Among the forms of violation of the sexual and reproductive rights of children and adolescents is sexual harassment (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2006).

In Paraguay, as in most countries that make up the United Nations, sexual harassment is considered a crime against sexual autonomy and is typified in the Paraguayan Penal Code (1997). According to Article 133, "Sexual harassment implies those phrases, touching, signs or other conduct with sexual content or insinuations directed at a person and which are not desired by the person who receives them." It is essential to mention that in Paraguay, children's rights are protected at the constitutional level, as can be seen in Article 54 of the National Constitution of the Republic of Paraguay (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, 1992).

Sexual harassment is the threatening of physical intrusion, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Every year, millions of girls and boys worldwide are sexually abused and exploited (UNICEF, n.d.). Nearly a quarter of adolescent girls between 15 and 19 years of age worldwide (about 70 million) report having experienced some form of physical violence since the age of 15, and about 120 million girls under the age of 20 (almost one in 10) are victims of forced sexual intercourse or other coercive sexual behavior (Fernandez, n.d.).

It is a complex phenomenon, as is the definition of the term that can represent a diversity of facts related to the conduct of sexual content against persons who have not consented to the same. It includes harassment by peers and persons in positions of authority over the person harassed. It can occur through a variety of behaviors. While they share the characteristics of power imbalances, targeting, and recurrence, they also have specificities considered when interpreting their effects and determining optimal forms of intervention (Vivanco Calderón, Cely Campoverde, Solórzano López, & Belduma Murillo, 2021).

### **Literature Review**

There are many forms of sexual violence: rape or sexual violence, incest, sexual abuse of minors, sexual violence between partners, unwanted sexual contact or touching, sexual misconduct, sexual exploitation, showing another person one's genitals or naked body without consent, and public masturbation (Vivanco Calderón et al., 2021).

Sexual harassment differentiates from other concepts, such as sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The term harassment encompasses various acts of violence against integrity, while "abuse" is generally defined as more specific acts of such violence. Sexual exploitation refers to the situation in which there are sexual services exchanges for remuneration with or without the consent of the trafficked person (Atencio González, Castro Núñez, Coronel Piloso, & Díaz Basurto, 2021). Another concept refers to Frías (2020), who mentions this difference and textually expresses: "The difference between sexual harassment and sexual harassment lies in the number of stratification systems involved. While in sexual harassment there is a gender [power] hierarchy among peers, we find - at least - a double hierarchy: labor and gender." (p. 109)

Sexual harassment in school is any unwanted behavior or communication of a sexual nature that may occur between students, teachers, or other school personnel and students to obtain something in return. It hurts minors, often resulting in girls dropping out of school, affecting genders, ages, races, religions, incomes, abilities, professions, ethnicities, and sexual orientations, with social inequalities increasing the risk (Vivanco Calderón et al., 2021).

At the level of people's health, sexual harassment has multiple and severe consequences, among which we can mention depression, stress, insomnia, low self-esteem, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, sleep disorders, sexual dysfunction, eating disorders, somatization of fear, and anxiety. In addition to guilt, denial, revictimization, and loss of self-image, it also affects various spheres of life, such as family, friends, study, and work (Larrea et al., 2020). These side effects include a lack of concentration in class, low self-esteem, and isolation, which can cause school absenteeism by not assimilating the lessons and even dropping out of school, which undoubtedly affects academic performance (Matselane, 2021).

Often, the victims, for various reasons, do not report, such as lack of knowledge of their rights, fear of revictimization, and knowledge on the part of the victims that the complaints do not prosper. In the case of sexually harassed students, some prefer not to report the incidents or tell anyone about them, highlighting the culture of silence. Breaking the silence is a new culture that the school community must adopt. The confidentiality issue and fear of further victimization could be why girls prefer to remain silent and not report incidents (Llanto, Valdez, & Velasquez, 2023).

For various reasons, including the emotional manipulation often associated with

abusive relationships, sexually abused children and youth may not recognize their experiences as sexual abuse or exploitation. They may also be afraid or unwilling to accept "help." Shame, social stigma, and fear of the consequences of telling others can be significant barriers to disclosing abuse and seeking help (UNICEF, 2020). In addition, the anonymity of complainants is often not assured, which can lead to harassment or increased violence, as Quintero Solís (2020) points out. The issue of sexual harassment in elementary school students is a topic little studied in high-impact publications and according to the review carried out in scientific literature database services such as Web of Science, Mendeley, and Scopus.

The study included the following descriptors for the search: "sexual harassment," "primary," "school," and "child" in their different combinations with the Boolean operators AND and OR. This search yielded no results, so the researchers used only the operator "sexual harassment," which yielded results downloaded in CSV format and analyzed in Microsoft Excel.

The search on Web of Science yielded eight results, of which there were no articles on sexual harassment in children, elementary school students, or similar levels. In Scopus, there were 68 results, none of which were articles on sexual harassment of elementary school students or children. However, some papers dealt with sexual harassment in students at other levels of education. Among these, we can cite sexual harassment among peers, incidence, and emotional reaction in a sample of students in the 4th year of compulsory secondary education by (Vicario-Molina, Fuentes, & Orgaz, 2010). There were 12 articles about higher education, of which four corresponded to descriptive research. The rest of the papers corresponded to analyses of scales, workshop evaluations, and documentary reviews.

In the Mendeley database, 26 results were found dating from 2019 to 2023, in the English language, based on descriptors sexual harassment and school sexual harassment, of which five articles were identified on sexual harassment in primary and secondary education institutions or similar denomination with the approach of types of sexual harassment, frequencies regarding gender, coping strategies and behaviors or behaviors related to this type of harassment and adverse consequences for mental health (Eek-Karlsson, Berggren, & Torpsten, 2023; Llanto et al., 2023; Lopez et al., 2020; Shute, 2021; Zhang, Liang, Cao, Zeng, & Tang, 2022). The remaining articles refer to sexual harassment in the workplace and higher education, proposals for protocols or regulations, standards to improve the organizational climate, and cyberbullying.

Outside these services, some articles did not coincide in methodology or population, as in the case of the work of Silva, Dascanio, & Gracy Martins do Valle (2016), in which the authors surveyed 309 students in Brazil and applied a questionnaire of open and closed questions constructed by the authors.

It is relevant to handle data on bullying and other forms of sexual violence in the

school environment from a framework of anonymity, as is the census survey of the results report of the National System for the Evaluation of the Educational Process (NSEEP) 2018. Given the development of the above considerations on the existing problem referred to as school sexual harassment, this research specifically addresses the need to generate information on a phenomenon that causes considerable damage in children's lives, affecting their social environment.

The objective was to determine the prevalence of sexual harassment at school by sex, rural and urban geographical area, quintiles, type of educational Institution, level of performance in Guarani, Spanish, and mathematics, and territorial organization of 9th-grade students in educational institutions in Paraguay.

### **Methodology Type of Research**

It was non-experimental, descriptive level, quantitative approach, and cross-sectional study.

### **Population and Sample**

As a unit of analysis, it considers 9th-grade students from educational institutions in Paraguay. The population corresponded to 94,767 according to the database of the Single Student Registry of the Ministry of Education and Science (SSR) in 2018 (Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa - Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias, 2020).

### **Sample**

The sample amounted to 90,742 students, representing 96% of the population. Of these, 67.7% were from urban areas, 32.3% from rural areas, 79% from public management institutions, 11.5% from private institutions, and 9.5% from subsidized institutions. It consisted of 51% females and 49% males, with ages from 10 to 20 years, a mean age of 14.67 years, and a deviation of 0.874. As this was a census scope work, no sampling procedure was required.

### **Instrument**

The study used the 2018 NSEEP [Sistema Nacional de Evaluación del Proceso Educativo (SNEPE)] from the Directorate of Educational Statistics of the Ministry of Education and Science as the data collection instrument. It aims to produce valid and valuable information for management processes to improve education quality. This instrument collects characteristics of students and their family context, individual

characteristics and school trajectory of students, family socioeconomic and cultural level, educational practices at home, institutional characteristics (area, type of management, size), parts of principals and teachers, school resources, school processes and teaching quality, school climate, school context/community and vision of the actors (Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa - Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias, 2020).

The items used for the analysis were:

(a) Test variable: Did any of these happen in your school/school during the last month? Sexually harassed.

b) Grouping variables:

(b1) sex; (b2) Zone; (b3) Quintiles; (b4) Type of educational Institution; (b4) Academic performance (Guarani, Spanish, and mathematics); and (b5) Department where it is the institution.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The data processing technique used was the application of IBM SPSS Statistics crosstabulations. The options of observed values, expected values, and percentages by rows in tables were applied. Except in the case of the analysis of harassment by department, in which it displays a cross-table.

### **Results and Discussion**

This section presents the results of cross-checking the mentions of sexual harassment against students from the groupings: sex of the student, economic level in quintiles, type of educational Institution, geographical area of the educational Institution, academic performance in Guarani, Spanish, and mathematics and finally by the territorial organization.

Table 1: Sexual harassment by sex of the student

		Sexually harassed		Total	
		Yes	No		
Student's gender	Female	Count	868	34104	34972
		Expected count	1196,6	33775,4	34972,0
		%	2.5%	97.5%	100.0%
Male		Count	1458	31551	33009
		Expected count	1129,4	31879,6	33009,0
		%	4.4%	95.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	2326	65655	67981
		Expected count	2326,0	65655,0	67981,0
		%	3.4%	96.6%	100.0%

\* Own elaboration based on data obtained from the NSEEP 2018 Survey.

A comparison of the incidence of sexual harassment between girls and boys shows that boys had a much higher percentage rate than girls, 4.4% and 2.5%, respectively.

Table 2: Sexual harassment by geographic area

			Sexually harassed		Total
			Yes	No	
Area or geographic zone of the Institution	Urban	Count	1899	45580	47479
		Expected count	1624,5	45854,5	47479,0
		%	4.0%	96.0%	100.0%
	Rural	Count	427	20075	20502
		Expected count	701,5	19800,5	20502,0
		%	2.1%	97.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	2326	65655	67981
		Expected count	2326,0	65655,0	67981,0
		%	3.4%	96.6%	100.0%

\*. Own elaboration based on data obtained from the 2018 NSEEP Survey.

When comparing students from different areas of the institutions, students from urban regions reported having been victims of sexual harassment in a much higher proportion than students from rural areas, with 4% and 2.1%, respectively.

Table 3: Sexual harassment by quintiles

		Sexually harassed			
		Yes	No	Total	
Quintiles of the Student Socioeconomic Status Index (SSSI)	Q1	Count	227	12023	12250
		Expected count	419,1	11830,9	12250,0
		%	1.9%	98.1%	100,0%
	Q2	Count	354	11974	12328
		Expected count	421,8	11906,2	12328,0
		%	2.9%	97.1%	100.0%
	Q3	Count	411	12588	12999
		Expected count	444,8	12554,2	12999,0
		%	3.2%	96.8%	100.0%
	Q4	Count	582	13553	14135
		Expected count	483,6	13651,4	14135,0
		%	4.1%	95.9%	100,0%
	Q5	Count	752	15517	16269
		Expected count	556,7	15712,3	16269,0
		%	4.6%	95.4%	100,0%
Total	Count	2326	65655	67981	
	Expected count	2326,0	65655,0	67981,0	
	%	3.4%	96.6%	100.0%	

\* Own elaboration based on data obtained from the NSEEP 2018 Survey.

Let us analyze the recurrence of sexual harassment among students within the socioeconomic quintiles. We observe the quintiles with the highest levels of sexual harassment in the highest strata, with a progression of Q1=1.9%, Q2=2.9%, Q3=3.2%, Q4=4.1%, and Q5=4.6%.



Table 4: Sexual harassment by type of school

		Sexually harassed			
		Yes	No	Total	
Sector or type of Institution's management	Official	Count	1680	50070	51750
		Expected count	1770,6	49979,4	51750,0
		%	3.2%	96.8%	100.0%
	Private	Count	396	8753	9149
		Expected count	313,0	8836,0	9149,0
		%	4.3%	95.7%	100.0%
	Priv. Subsidized	Count	250	6832	7082
		Expected count	242,3	6839,7	7082,0
		%	3.5%	96.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	2326	65655	67981	
	Expected count	2326,0	65655,0	67981,0	
	%	3.4%	96.6%	100.0%	

\* Own elaboration based on data obtained from the 2018 NSEEP Survey.

Let us look at the type of management of the Institution. We observe that private institutions presented higher levels of sexual cases with 4.3%, surpassing in proportion to public and subsidized institutions by approximately one-third.

Table 5: Sexual harassment by performance level in Guarani

		Sexually harassed			
		Yes	No	Total	
Student's achievement level in Guarani	Level I Low	Count	1111	22979	24090
		Expected count	817,8	23272,2	24090,0
		%	4.6%	95.4%	100.0%
	Level II Medium	Count	796	24842	25638
		Expected count	870,3	24767,7	25638,0
		%	3.1%	96.9%	100.0%
	Level III Expected	Count	311	14481	14792
		Expected count	502,2	14289,8	14792,0
		%	2.1%	97.9%	100.0%
	Level IV Outstanding	Count	24	1499	1523
		Expected count	51,7	1471,3	1523,0
		%	1.6%	98.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	2242	63801	66043	
	Expected count	2242,0	63801,0	66043,0	
	%	3.4%	96.6%	100.0%	

\* Own elaboration based on data obtained from the 2018 NSEEP Survey.

When observing the academic performance in the Guarani test of the students concerning sexual harassment, we can highlight that these cases were in inverse relation to the best performance, those of level I (the lowest version) of 4.6% and level IV (superior performance) of 1.6%.

Table 6: Sexual harassment by level of performance in Spanish

			Sexually harassed		Total
			Sí	No	
Student's level of achievement in Spanish	Level I Low	Count	871	20489	21360
		Expected count	725,1	20634,9	21360,0
		%	4.1%	95.9%	100.0%
	Level II Medium	Count	726	21953	22679
		Expected count	769,9	21909,1	22679,0
		%	3.2%	96.8%	100.0%
	Level III Expected	Count	530	17462	17992
		Expected count	610,8	17381,2	17992,0
		%	2.9%	97.1%	100.0%
	Level IV Outstanding	Count	115	3897	4012
		Expected count	136,2	3875,8	4012,0
		%	2.9%	97.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	2242	63801	66043	
	Expected count	2242,0	63801,0	66043,0	
	%	3.4%	96.6%	100.0%	

\* Own elaboration based on data obtained from the 2018 NSEEP Survey.

The student's academic performance in the Spanish test referred to sexual harassment; it is in inverse relation to the best performance, those of level I (the lowest performance) of 4.1% and level IV (higher version) of 2.9%.

Table 7: Sexual harassment by performance level in mathematics

		Sexually harassed			Total
		Sí	No		
Student achievement level in mathematics	Level I Low	Count	863	19149	20012
		Expected count	690,8	19321,2	20012,0
		%	4.3%	95.7%	100.0%
	Level II Medium	Count	975	28078	29053
		Expected count	1002,9	28050,1	29053,0
		%	3.4%	96.6%	100.0%
	Level III Expected	Count	388	14072	14460
		Expected count	499,1	13960,9	14460,0
		%	2.7%	97.3%	100.0%
	Level IV Outstanding	Count	63	2725	2788
		Expected count	96,2	2691,8	2788,0
		%	2.3%	97.7%	100.0%
Total	Count	2289	64024	66313	
	Expected count	2289,0	64024,0	66313,0	
	%	3.5%	96.5%	100.0%	

\*Own elaboration based on data obtained from the 2018 NSEEP Survey.

Suppose we observe the student's academic performance in the mathematics test concerning sexual harassment. In that case, we can highlight that the cases of harassment are in inverse relation to the best performance, those of level I (the lowest version) at 4.3% and level IV (superior performance) at 2.3%.

Table 8: Sexual harassment by territorial organization

Department of Institution	Number of Institutions	Students	Harassment	% Dept.	% School	Per 100 mil inhabitants
Capital	233	6.492	273	4.21**	1.17**	4.205**
Central	799	19.618	863	4.40**	1.08**	4.399**
Amambay	69	1.251	55	4.40**	0.80**	4.396**
Alto Paraná	414	7.933	314	3,96**	0,76**	3.958**
Cordillera	209	3.320	121	3.64*	0.58*	3.645*
Misiones	90	1.219	44	3.61*	0.49*	3.610*
Alto Paraguay	12	119	5	4.20**	0.42*	4.202**

Ñeembucú	47	859	18	2.10	0.38*	2.095
Itapúa	345	5.252	126	2.40	0,37*	2.399
Presidente Hayes	85	898	25	2,78*	0.29	2.784
Caaguazú	435	5.175	124	2.40	0.29	2.396
Caazapá	212	1.902	59	3.10*	0.28	3.102*
Concepción	200	2.560	55	2.15	0.28	2.148
Paraguarí	233	2.617	63	2.41	0.27	2.407
Guairá	172	1.954	44	2.25	0.26	2.252
San Pedro	471	4.493	95	2.11	0.20	2.114
Canindeyú	202	1.907	40	2.10	0.20	2.098
Boquerón	35	412	2	0.49	0.06	485
Total	4.263	67.981	2.326			
Average	84	984	18,41	2.23	0.28	2.233
• Own elaboration based on data obtained from the 2018 NSEEP Survey.						

\* Above average

\*\* Well above average

Regarding cases of sexual harassment in the geographic distribution by department, we can observe data such as the percentage of cases per department and educational Institution, as well as the rate of cases per 100 thousand inhabitants. Five departments showed values well above the average: Capital, Central, Amambay, Alto Paraná, and Alto Paraguay.

In the following, the results of this research contrast with similar investigations. In each subheading, the findings contrast with previous research both in favor and against, and a speculative hypothesis is presented that may be useful for future study of greater depth that intends to propose explanations based on different levels of research.

### **Sexual Harassment by Sex of the Student**

We observe that 4.4% of boys and 2.5% of girls mentioned harassed in the last month. It accounts for a much higher rate of harassment in boys, in a ratio of 63.8% to 36.2%. The result of this research is in line with the results of the work on sexual harassment among peers: incidence and emotional reaction in a sample of students of 4 [grades] of compulsory secondary education by Vicario-Molina et al. (2010), which expressed that boys in more significant proportion than girls have mentioned having been victims of sexual harassment, at 86% and 80.5% respectively. It notes that the authors point out that this difference is not significant.

Another study by López et al. (2020) determined that 13.5% of students reported experiences of sexual harassment by other students, with greater frequency among male students, said at least one type of sexual victimization during the last month; the most frequent was kissing without consent, reported by almost 10% of female students.

In other research, results confirmed that female learners were sexually harassed in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district in the Free State of South Africa, which revealed that 96.2% of the 165 female learners who participated had experienced verbal or nonverbal sexual harassment perpetrated by peers, educators, principals and parents (Matselane, 2021).

In Shute's (2021) study, nonparametric analyses supported five of the seven hypotheses derived from the theory: boys bullied others more often, more often bullying girls, and boy-on-boy bullying was the most frequent, girls bullied girls of the same sex more often than boys, and boy-on-girl bullying was the least regular. However, contrary to the theory, same-sex bullying between boys was less frequent than between girls and bullying between girls was as threatening to the victims' perception of safety as bullying between boys.

For their part, Llanto et al. (2023) used a descriptive quantitative research design using purposive sampling techniques whose results showed that students agreed with different types of sexual harassment but were unaware of verbal and nonverbal behaviors. The results also showed that students received little educational information about sexual harassment from parents and institutions. Specifically, in the only mixed research found on school mistreatment in Paraguay, but in 2014 by López et al. (2014), which occurred between 2008 and 2012, situations of abuse were reported in which teachers or administrators were responsible for the harm under the category of sexual violence, which included: sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual coercion, and statutory rape, in 52 cases out of the 122 cases registered.

Ek-Karlsson et al. (2023) research sought to understand how Swedish female students perceived and coped with sexual harassment online and in person when exposed to violence. Three main categories of strategies used by the girls were problem-focused

behavioral strategies, emotion-focused cognitive strategies, and emotion-focused behavioral strategies. Results indicate that girls employed different strategies depending on whether the bullying occurred online or face-to-face and whether the bully was known or unknown. In addition, problem-focused cognitive strategies were used mainly in specific contexts, whereas emotion-focused cognitive strategies were primarily applied when the aggressor was an acquaintance.

All these results differ significantly from those yielded by the study by Silva et al. (2016), in which boys report bullying in 16% versus 38% of mentions by girls. Several speculative explanations address these unexpected results. Among them, these findings related to dynamics linked to customs or stereotypes of upbringing. In this context, various factors expose boys more to bullying than girls. A tentative explanation could lie in the greater freedom of behavior generally granted to boys and differential supervision by caregivers.

### **School Sexual Harassment by Zone**

The research has shown that the percentage differences between zones are very marked, almost doubling the urban proportion to 4% and the rural to 2.1%. For this indicator, there was no specific bibliography on the subject that has been identified.

The search for recent research on school sexual harassment differentiated by rural and urban areas was limited. However, the work of Zhang et al. (2022) on sex differences between urban and rural areas cites the relationship between childhood sexual abuse and mental health among Chinese university students. The results revealed a high prevalence of childhood sexual harassment (CSH) in both sexes, and males were more vulnerable to the adverse effects of CSH. In addition, they also found that college students growing up in rural and suburban areas were more vulnerable to the negative psychological impact of CSH.

In another study from 2001, the authors analyzed crime report data from rape crisis centers in the 67 counties of Pennsylvania in the United States, indicating that sexual victimization rates were higher in rural counties compared to urban counties, with high levels of abuse by offenders known to the victim (Ruback, & Ménard, 2001).

A speculative interpretation of these research findings could point to the potential existence of stronger social cohesion in rural areas. It is conceivable that it interprets certain practices as not sexual harassment within this environment. Furthermore, it is plausible that in rural culture, it is perceived as dishonorable to admit to being a victim of harassment.

### **Sexual Harassment by Quintile**

It observes that the quintiles with the highest levels of sexual harassment are in the

higher strata. The progression of Q1=1.9%, Q2=2.9%, Q3=3.2%, Q4=4.1%, and Q5=4.6% was observed. Based on literature searches on the internet, there were no contrasting materials.

This disparity could be due to the more significant social diversity in the upper quintiles as a possible speculative explanation for these results. Various socio-cultural factors come into play within these strata, such as dress, affiliation, income levels, and cultural outreach. It is in the fifth Quintile where the most extraordinary breadth of diversity encompasses everything from independent professionals to significant shareholders of transnational trusts.

Moreover, it is feasible to consider that these social differences could intrinsically link to power dynamics and high-handed attitudes. The study by Lopez et al. (2020) determined that 13.5% of students reported experiences of sexual harassment by other students, with higher frequency among male students, 5th and 6th-grade students, and students with lower socioeconomic status.

Educational level is one of the social factors that could influence violent behaviors such as sexual harassment. In a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in Ghana on students' experiences of sexual harassment in an educational institution, it was statistically significant that the level of education of the student was associated with the knowledge of sexual harassment ( $\chi^2 = 10.950$ , p-value <0.00) and with the perception that sexual harassment was a problem among students ( $\chi^2 = 13.376$ , p-value <0.01).

### **Sexual Harassment by Type of Educational Institution**

Private institutions have higher levels of sexual harassment, with 4.3%, exceeding public and subsidized institutions by a third. Here again, it was not possible to identify contrasting studies. The same is in the socioeconomic strata discussion as a speculative explanation. Private schools are generally attended by students from families belonging to the upper quintiles, so explanations derived from economic and social diversity can be applied.

### **Sexual Harassment and Academic Performance in Guarani, Spanish, and Mathematics**

Sexual harassment increases as academic performance decreases. Although no studies provide a description as detailed as the one in this paper, it can be affirmed based on several studies that one of the consequences of sexual harassment is precisely low academic performance. In this line, we find the work entitled: Relationship between psychological well-being, academic performance, and harassment in University Students by Franco Cedeño et al. (2019). Or the work of Castañeda Eugenio, Espinoza Tarazona, &

Manrique de Lara Suárez (2017), entitled: *Influencia del acoso sexual en el rendimiento académico de la población estudiantil de la UNHEVAL - Huánuco*, who surveyed 566 students of the Universidad Nacional Hermilio Valdizán on the effects of sexual harassment on various aspects of life. This study shows that 34,7% of those surveyed who have been victims of sexual harassment have reported poor academic performance in addition to other mishaps. Here, it notes that the population does not coincide in the same educational level and even less in age range, so the results differ.

### **Sexual Harassment by Territorial Organization**

Five departments have values well above the average: Capital, Central, Amambay, Alto Paraná, and Alto Paraguay. As in previous cases, no identified works serve as a precise contrast on sexual harassment; only the result of López, Gómez, & Meza (2014) that refers to cases in general of school mistreatment registered from 2008 to 2012 by department Caaguazú (34 cases), San Pedro (21 cases) and Central (20 cases).

As a speculative explanation, we can suggest that the results could be related to the characteristics of Asunción, Central, and Alto Paraná departments since they are the country's most populated, prosperous, and complex.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we can mention the achievement of the research objective since the phenomenon of sexual harassment in 9th-grade students in Paraguay has been described based on data from the 2018 NSEEP Test in comparative terms. Other results highlights are related to the higher proportion of students who report being victims of bullying in subgroups in which such a phenomenon we would not expect from common sense. For example, compared to girls, boys have higher economic strata than lower economic strata, and urban areas, compared to rural areas, have a higher proportion of subjects who claim to have been victims of this aberrant fact.

As a limitation of the research, we can mention that the database only presents one reagent on sexual harassment, which does not allow obtaining specific information on the type of sexual case, knowing that manifested sexual harassment is in different ways, degrees, and severities. In addition, this item only collects information from the last month before sampling. The results cannot give an adequate picture of the actual levels of harassment in this grade since it does not contemplate events occurring before this period. The lack of contrasting research is another limitation of the study, which restricts the richness of the discussion. Another limitation is that only some groups to which the NSEEP test is applied, such as 3rd and 6th grade of elementary and 3rd year of middle school, have been considered.



As a recommendation for future research, it would be interesting to deepen the study with inferential designs of comparison and correlation that would allow us to affirm that the differences and relationships are statistically significant. It would be interesting to assume other grouping variables such as the size of the Institution, contact with different grades, shifts, how the family nucleus is integrated if they attended kindergarten and preschool, if their parents support them in homework, the level of education or any of the more than 1000 variables of the test.

Also, grouping studies can identify which institutions present the most cases individually. Research on the specificity of dealing with data related to the study of school sexual harassment by urban and rural geographic space, type of educational Institution, and territorial organization of students in other grades of elementary and middle school can be undertaken through research with a qualitative approach and focused on case studies.

Another recommendation could be to expand the sample to the population of the two remaining groups of the NSEEP: 3rd and 6th grade of elementary school and 3rd year of middle school. As recommendations to the technical teams that have applied the test, the Directorate of Educational Research and the National Institute of Statistics include in future NSEEP surveys reagents that delve deeper into the types of harassment (taking care not to re-victimize the victims) in places where the event occurred, if perpetrated by acquaintances, classmates, or members of the academic staff or others. Another recommendation could be to give more quality to the periods consulted: b) last year and c) the previous three years.

As recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Culture and to the Ministry of Children and Adolescents, they continue to promote the prevention of these cases with practical and feasible policies, plans, and projects based on scientific data.

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