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**TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF BEING
SEXUALLY HARASSED BY STUDENTS:
A CASE STUDY OF SECONDARY TEACHERS
IN SOUTH KOREA**

Faculty of Education and Culture
Master's Thesis
October 2020

ABSTRACT

Lim, Mina: Teachers' Experiences of Being Sexually Harassed by Students: A Case Study of Secondary Teachers in South Korea
Master's Thesis
Tampere University
Teacher Education
October 2020

While sexual harassment towards female teachers is rising in Korea, little attention has been paid to their experience. Previous international publications reveal that male students utilize sexual harassment to enhance their gender power, which trespasses the traditional teacher-student relationship.

To address this gap in the literature, this study explores the experience of Korean secondary female teachers being sexually harassed by male students, their responding strategies, and what support the teachers need. To highlight the subjective feelings and thoughts from the individual experiences, a qualitative case study is used, and semi-structured interviews are conducted.

The findings present sexual harassment by students as a perpetuated phenomenon in secondary schools in Korea. According to the teacher participants, the harassment ranges from sexual remarks to sex-objectification. From the routinized behaviors of male students, the teachers suffer negative feelings that lead to job-related outcomes. In responding, the teachers changed their strategies from confronting to sidestepping. Rather, they employed different teaching methods and increased self-surveillance. To combat this issue, the teachers argued the need for social changes, practical sex/gender education, and the creation of an independent response system.

The study provides useful implications and suggestions for teachers, school administrators, and teacher educators. First, it allowed teachers to speak of their experiences that have not been discussed, and thus were marginalized. This makes the problem visible and brings attention to the other subtle gender issues present in a school context. Then, it gives insights to teacher educators to design gender programs for pre-teachers or in-service teachers.

Keywords: sexual harassment, teacher, secondary school, South Korea

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1 INTRODUCTION

Although sexual harassment has been prohibited by legislation in almost 50 countries (McCann, 2005), it is continued to be experienced by many women and some men in various organizational settings. In recent years, sexual harassment and violence garnered international media attention with the appearance of the #MeToo movement. Through this movement, women from all backgrounds could open up about their experiences, revealing how widespread sexual harassment and assault are throughout the world.

Despite the momentous effort to publicize the issue of sexual harassment, not many actions have been taken to protect students and teachers in school. In South Korea (hereafter Korea), the school #MeToo movement initiated female students to speak out about their experiences of sexual harassment by male teachers. The movement started at one school in 2018 and spread quickly across the country to almost 100 schools (Choi. M., 2020). The testimonies of students disclosed that Korean schools are places where female students are vulnerable to sexual harassment. Research on sexual harassment in Korean schools has been mostly restricted to female students as victims and male teachers and students as harassers as presented in this movement. In any circumstance, female teachers' experiences have not been given serious attention.

Only a few attempts were made to investigate the experiences female teachers have of being sexually harassed by school administrators or colleagues (Kim, 2013; Kim & Lee, 2014). Still, there is another form of sexual harassment that reverses the traditional teacher-student relationship, which is that male students harass female teachers. It was not until in recent years that it is recognized as one form of sexual harassment in school (MOE of Korea, 2019). According to MOE of Korea (2018) the number of teacher harassment cases by students has been increasing in Korea. However, the long-held belief that teachers will not be the target in class marginalize this issue. For example, the

local MOE officially announced that the case of the boys' group masturbation during the class was a deviant behavior, not sexual harassment directed to the teacher (Park, 2017).

Thus, this paper will examine this unique form of sexual harassment that has gained little attention so far: the sexual harassment that teachers experience from male students. The previous research literature has revealed this form of sexual harassment is a prevalent phenomenon worldwide (Walkadine, 1990; Miller, 1997; Lahelma et al., 2000; Robinson, 2000). Robinson (2000) and Lahelma et al. (2000) explains how this phenomenon occurs based on the power theory, which is that socially constructed gender power can transcend age and institutional power. Regarding its perpetuation, Miller (1997) found female teachers tend to stay silent and attribute other causes to their own problems because society and school play the role of perpetrators of patriarchal values. Despite these international publications, no single study exists which focuses on Korean teachers' sexual harassment by male students.

Therefore, the overall aim of this research is to explore female teachers' experiences of being sexually harassed by male students in Korean secondary schools. This study will focus on their experiences of sexual harassment, responding strategies, and needed support. By opening the discussion, this study can make the silenced issue of teachers' sexual harassment more visible so that it is not considered as an individual problem anymore. Underlining the mechanism of power in sexual harassment, I will use power theory as a theoretical framework.

Since the objective of this research is looking into the details on subjective meanings from everyday experiences, a qualitative approach will help make these features more evident. To illuminate the influence of the context on the phenomenon, a case study method will be used. For the data collection, interviews are conducted with young female teachers with a few years of teaching experience in a Korean secondary school. The criteria used for selecting participants was based on the previous research from Lahelma et al. (2000) that young female teachers are more frequently sexualized and harassed by students than male teachers are.

In this study, the context of Korea is significant in understanding the case since the inequality problems in Korean society are mirrored into the school. With

the relatively short history of paying attention to gender issues, Korea has been evaluated to have huge gender gaps, manifest in economic opportunity and education attainment (World Economic Forum, 2020; OECD, 2018). In addition, sexual crimes targeting women and girls have evolved. Currently, there is a public uproar against hideous digital sexual crimes, which is called "Nth Room". This is a series of atrocious digital sex crimes targeting young women and under-aged girls. One of the rooms is the so-called "Teacher Room" where the teachers' sexual composite photos are shared (Choi, 2020). Besides, it gained public attention in that a considerable number of the involved were teenagers. This case has raised the awareness that the sexualization of women teachers has become much more overt and can be realized as a crime.

Overall, this research will proceed as follows. The next chapter will start by critically reviewing the existing researches. It will discuss the concept of sexual harassment, the phenomenon of female teachers' sexual harassment by male students, and related studies conducted in Korea. Then, it will lead to the research questions of this project and introduce the methodology of this study with the method of collecting ethnographic data. Next, findings and discussion from the collected data will be presented by analyzing with the framework introduced in the literature review. Lastly, it will conclude with the summary, limitations, and implications for teachers, teacher educators, and other school personnel.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review starts with the definition of sexual harassment, which is the key topic in this research. I will examine it from the traditional concept of sexual harassment conducted only by superiors to the broader concept that covers the perpetration by students. To explain the unique type of sexual harassment by students, a power model will be studied. It will proceed to international studies that explore teachers' experience of being sexually harassed. Especially, I will look into the factors pertaining to why the school became the place where sexual harassment is perpetuated and silenced. Lastly, this chapter closes by studying the research conducted in Korea where this study is set.

2.1 Concept of Sexual Harassment

Considering the long existence of sexual harassment, its naming and recognition were only recently established, late in the 1970s by the US radical feminist, grassroots movement (McDonald, 2012). There is still no agreed definition of what constitutes sexual harassment. To discuss sexual harassment, it is necessary to define it as well as to investigate behaviors and consequences.

One of the often-cited researchers, Fitzgerald et al. (1997b) define sexual harassment using a psychological approach. The authors define it as “unwanted sex-related behavior at work that is appraised by the recipient as offensive, exceeding her resources, or threatening her well-being” (p.15). This traditional view explains the case that male boss sexually harasses his female subordinate with the motive of sexual desire.

Berdahl (2007) broadens its concept to “sex-based harassment” putting more emphasis on sex. The author elaborates it as “behavior that derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual based on that individual's sex” (p.644) and the motive is “the desire to protect or enhance their own sex-based social status”. (p.645). Thus, this definition highlights sex (being female or male) rather than

sexual desire. Therefore, sexual harassment can constitute without sexual desire if the behavior is utilizing an insulting attitude towards individual sex according to the Berdahl (2007)'s definition.

This definition is explained through power model. Power theory has gained the most recent attention among the theories that explain sexual harassment. The author considers power as an integral component. That is because sexual harassment requires a difference in organizational, economic, physical, or social power between the harasser and the target of harassment. Although the power from social norms is less visible among the different powers, the author points out that it is no less threatening or effective as it is practiced in everyday social lives. Thus, this power model fits this study because students gain gender power which comes from social norms by utilizing sexual harassment.

As there is no universal definition of sexual harassment, which behaviors are conceptualized as sexual harassment has not been outlined clearly. McDonald (2012) found the most frequently reported ones are non-physical forms such as "sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, and comments". They include "verbal remarks about the size of women's breasts and buttocks, requests to see parts of their bodies, offensive language, comments of a degrading nature, gestures such as exposure or flashing, displays of offensive, sexual materials and intrusive questions about private life, sexual matters or appearance." (p.4) The listed behaviors above show that there is no defined set of behaviors that constitute sexual harassment, but it can take various forms on a continuum or it can take a new form according to different definitions used to discuss it.

The consequences of sexual harassment leave critical marks on the victims. When exposed to sexual harassment, targets experience negative mental, health, and occupational outcomes (Fitzgerald et al, 1997a). McDonald (2012) reviewed the individual psychological consequences from the literature: "irritation and anxiety to anger, powerlessness, humiliation, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder." (p.4) These lead the victims to have occupational outcomes such as lower job satisfaction and productivity, and even employment withdrawal (McDonald, 2012). Although there is no direct sexual harassment undertaken, "bystander" stress can be experienced when co-workers hear or observe the sexual harassment of other co-workers (Schneider, 1996).

Despite there being no one established definition, I will use the definition from Berdahl (2007). In this present study, male students' demeaning behavior is viewed as a means to enhance their gender power, and it takes place with or without sexual desire. Here it is important to note that power is at its core. With the concept of sexual harassment, female teachers as a target of sexual harassment will be explored in the next sub-section.

2.2 Phenomenon of Teachers Being Sexually Harassed

Researchers revealed that sexual harassment is a widespread practice in schooling cultures (Stein, 1995; Kenway & Willis, 1998; Murnen & Smolak, 2000; Meyer, 2008). Hill & Kearsley (2011) surveyed U.S. schools to reveal the prevalence and the negative effects of sexual harassment among students. One of the factors perpetuating sexual harassment in school comes from the belief that adolescents' sexual teasing and harassment are natural (Kenway & Willis, 1998); as such, girls and women must get used to it.

Whilst researchers shed light on the vulnerability of females to sexual harassment in specific jobs such as in male-dominated fields, few studies have looked at the teachers' experiences of being sexually harassed at school. When sexual harassment arises from power issues, it is hard to explain teachers' being sexually harassed, as teachers are traditionally known to have power over students due to an institutional structure and age difference. From the 1990s, some researchers started to reveal how teachers are frequently sexually harassed reversing the traditional teacher-student power relations (Walkerdine, 1990; Miller, 1997; Lahelma et al, 2000; Robinson, 2000). In this part, I will examine the previous work in various contexts, and focus on factors influencing why female teachers are easily being the target of sexual harassment.

Walkerdine (1990) illuminates the position of girls and women in the educational system. The study directly confronts Marxist approaches that view teachers as powerful who oppress institutionally powerless children. To research power dynamics between the teacher and the kids, the author analyzed the interchange between the teacher and four-year-old boys. In conversation, boys have power over the teacher by making explicit sexual references. The important point is that, even though the boys are not physically grown yet, they can still gain

power through language by positioning the female teacher as 'woman as sex object'. Then, it reveals that the shift of power depends on the variety of discourses.

In addition to revealing the phenomenon whereby young boys can be the harassers against teachers, Miller (1997) focuses on how teachers feel about this experience. Commonly, teachers blame their pedagogical skills when it comes to being sexually harassed. The author, however, pointed out that what makes boys have a sexist attitude towards female teachers is the cultural habits of how women are viewed in U.S. society. Furthermore, it described how the colleagues and school administrators attributed causes to the teachers' individual problems. These environmental factors led the interviewees to be silent. The author further suggests that teacher education programs need to develop strategies for responding.

Thought-provoking research was done in Finland, revealing that the Nordic country, despite being a leader in gender equality, is not an exception to the harassment dynamic (Lahelma et al., 2000). In this study, the authors discovered that female teachers have been at the center of sexual harassment, mostly by male students. The authors offer an explanatory account of the mechanisms of sexual harassment through power relations. The gender power that boys gain through sexual harassment trespasses the age and institutional power the teacher has. That is why fewer male teachers can be a target, as they can quickly shift the power relation from age or institutional positions to gender positions when confronting sexual harassment. This ability to shift the gender power is not available to female teachers. Despite this, the study proves that more and more male teachers with non-heterosexuality become targets nowadays.

Robinson (2000) conducted a study in Australia discovering the intersecting factors that particularly make teachers' experience of being sexually harassed by boys more marginalized and/or silenced. First, sexuality matters. Female teachers who are lesbians are more effective to be sexually harassed, but silenced. As in *Schooling Sexualities* (Epstein & Johnson, 1998), schooling contributes to normalizing heterosexuality. Thus, their positions of discrimination allow lesbian or gay teachers to have fewer rights to express their voice, which leads to heightened vulnerability to sexual harassment by students.

Next, women teachers who were in the casual-relief contract system were particularly vulnerable (Robinson, 2000). Their harassment experience was seen as 'poor control' as they could not take disciplinary measures or had fewer peer-support networks. These factors reinforced male students to repeat their behaviors to undermine teachers' power. This is related to another silencer, age power. Boys tend to see young female teachers as "available", and sexually accessible since the age difference between themselves and young teachers is narrow. This diminishes the women teachers' power from the students' point of view.

Lastly, female teachers being harassed by boys is often considered as simply the result of the boys' ignorance and childishness; this view concludes that 'boys will be boys' (Grauerholz, 1989). This belief led some peers to frequently revictimize harassed female teachers by considering their response as overreacting. Especially, slow-learners and lower-ability boys seem to be freer to commit sexual harassment because they are viewed as not having control over their behavior. Based on these international publications, I will research the studies of Korean teachers in the next sub-section.

2.3 Research on Teachers Being Sexually Harassed in Korea

Despite this international work, far too little attention has been paid to teachers' experiences in Korea. There have been few studies looking into teachers' experience of sexual harassment, and the focus has been more on traditional employment relations. That is because the legal definition of sexual harassment in Korea is restricted to hierarchal positions in the workplace. It defines sexual harassment as:

An employer, a superior or a worker causes another worker to feel sexual humiliation or repulsion by sexual words or actions by utilizing a position in the workplace or relation with duties, or providing any disadvantages in employment on account of disregard for sexual words or actions or any other demands, etc. (Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-Family Balance Assistance Act, 2016).

The legislation is to address disadvantages at work within the relationship between subordinates and superiors. For that reason, cases where students sexually harass teachers have not been studied extensively.

In the same context of the Korean legal definition, most studies of female teachers' experience deal with subordinate-superior relationships. One of them is by Kim (2013), which reveals that teachers being sexually harassed and silenced is a prevalent phenomenon in Korean schools. The author found 43% of Korean female teachers had been harassed verbally or physically, and 19% of them witnessed the harassment; however, 48% of teachers ignored and only a few responded proactively. In addition, Kim & Lee (2014) focus on substitute teachers' sexual harassment by a superior, which is related to power relations between the employer and employee. Neither of the researchers dealt with harassment perpetrated by students.

Amid scarce studies done in Korea, Choi et al. (2020)'s recent publication on sexual discrimination discourses is a new inspiration. The authors focus on the gender-based violence that elementary and middle school teachers experience by colleagues, parents, and students. As mentioned, the authors choose the broader term 'sexual violence' rather than 'sexual harassment' due to the restricted legal definition of sexual harassment in Korea. This study describes the current situation at school where women teachers become the target of sexual violence and how colleagues and school administrators contribute to their silence. It is a meaningful start to include the students as perpetrators. Choi et al. (2020)'s study is in the same context as this paper; however, the importance of the present study is to bridge the gap focusing on student-teacher sexual harassment cases that have not been dealt with in much detail in the previous research.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will focus on choosing the methodology. Since the aim of this study is to explore teachers' sexual harassment experience, I take a qualitative case approach to illuminate each individual's thoughts and feelings. In this chapter, I will introduce research questions, and then explain why the qualitative case approach fits this study and the procedure of data collection, and the analysis method used.

3.1 Research Questions

Looking into teachers' experience of being sexually harassed by students, the research questions were created as below:

(1) What kind of experiences do teachers report of being sexually harassed by students?

(2) How do teachers report having responded to sexual harassment perpetrated by students?

(3) What kind of support do they report to need to combat the sexual harassment issue in school?

The first research question asks about their experiences, feelings, and thoughts. The detailed questions explored issues such as the environment and the effects on their lives. Then their responding strategies and difficulties were questioned. Lastly, I went further to discuss the support that the teachers need to overcome this phenomenon. Many policy-making processes lack the voices of the subjects. That is why I include the opinion from the teachers so that it can be used as primary source material for policymakers.

3.2 Qualitative Case Study Approach

Exploring teachers' experience of being sexually harassed needs to take an approach that covers its detail and diversity, and also deals with its sensitivity. For this, a qualitative approach was used to analyze qualitative data. Looking into subjective meanings and everyday experience and practice is as crucial as the contemplation of narratives and discourses (Flick, 2018). Especially, this approach fits this study that deals with gender issue as it is derived from feminist research and gender studies (Gildemeister, 2004).

Among the various options of the qualitative approach method, a case study was chosen for this study. A case study is meant for a close and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within the context (Yin, 2009). Since the understanding of teachers' harassment experience cannot be apart from its context of schools in Korea, the case study approach is suitable for this study.

According to Stake (1995), this study is an intrinsic case study. Stake divides the case study types into intrinsic and instrumental, based on whether the primary intention of researchers is a genuine interest or a goal to accomplish others through the cases. In this study, the main interest remained in the case of teachers being sexually harassed by students, so I chose an intrinsic case study. Although its primary concern was the case, it is important to note that this study can still provide insight on this issue.

For collecting the data, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Semi-structured interviews have been widely employed because they allow the interviewees to express their experience and opinions in an open interview situation rather than in a standardized interview (Flick, 2018). Since the topic of this study is a rather sensitive and private issue to the interviewees, a semi-structured type of interview provided a more comfortable environment for the subjects and the researcher to share a candid discussion.

3.3 Participants

In taking a qualitative case approach, in-depth interviews were needed for the data collection, and so as to listen to their sexual harassment experience. In this

section, I will describe the method and process of recruiting participants, and their demographic information.

To recruit participants, snowball sampling was used to select the size of five. Snowball sampling is the way that research participants recruit other participants (Goodman, 1961). This method is suitable for this research topic that is private and sensitive to each individual. Participants are female teachers who work for a secondary school in Korea.

The process of snow sampling recruiting was as follows. At first, I identified the potential subjects: a group of teachers from my network. Then I informed them of the research topic and aim and asked if anyone wanted to participate in the interview to share their experience of sexual harassment. When recruiting, I mentioned it was voluntary and assured the confidentiality of the interview. After some agreed, I asked them again to recruit anyone they knew who would be willing to share their experience. Then I contacted the teacher who was referred until I found a certain number of teachers from different schools to guarantee representativeness. All participants work at different schools and this diversity helped increase the reliability of data and the validity of the study.

Collected information on participants' occupational situations included total years of teaching experience, school types they were currently working in, and employment type. Most of the participants worked for middle schools, and the age range was from the late twenties to the thirties. This was based on previous research indicating that younger teachers are more vulnerable to sexual harassment (Lahelma et al., 2000). In Korea, secondary schools are divided into two levels: middle school (7th-9th grades) and high school (10th-12th grades). Also, there are co-educational schools and same-sex schools. Furthermore, Korean schools have two types of employment: permanent and contract-based. This information was gathered according to Robinson (2000) revealing that casual-relief teaching staff is more exposed to the harassment situation. The demographic information of teachers participating in the research interviews are presented in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1. Demographic information of participants

	School	Age	Years of Teaching	Employment Type
Kim	Co-ed Middle School A	28	5	Permanent
Park	Co-ed Middle School B	27	5	Permanent
Lee	Co-ed Middle School C	32	6	Permanent
Jang	Co-ed Middle School D	30	4	Contract
Song	Co-ed High School A	27	3	Permanent

To ensure privacy protection, the participants' names are altered, and the specific school profiles are not provided.

3.4 Procedures

The procedures for conducting interviews were divided into before, during, and after the interview. Questionnaire creation was the main focus before the interview. During the interview, it was important to build rapport and trust between the interviewer and the interviewees. After that, the interview was stored confidentially.

Before the interview, I created the questionnaire based on the main research questions. The questionnaire has three parts: 1) Experiences of harassment 2) Strategies to confront 3) Needed support. Then, I consulted with my supervisor Eero Ropo about the draft of the questionnaire. Furthermore, I contacted Elina Lahelma at Helsinki University, who researched the same topic in Finnish schools, to get advice for my research.

When the questionnaire was approved, I conducted a pilot interview. It was done through Skype with a secondary teacher in Korea. The participant was selected through my network. This time I flexibly asked questions in a relaxed mode and I tried to find out if the flow of the interview went naturally. After the pilot interview, I asked for feedback on the interview process, and if there were any uncomfortable moments or atmosphere.

After the pilot interview, the interviews were conducted in person in Korea. When the participants were selected, they chose the time and place for an interview where they would feel most comfortable. One participant invited me to her school for an interview, and the rest of them chose to meet outside of the school.

The interview procedure was as follows. Once the permission to record was approved, I started the recording and collected the demographic data. Then, the interviews proceeded with the pre-set questions; however, these were asked in a flexible sequence as it was a semi-structured interview. Thus, I managed the order of the questions or changed the questions according to facilitate the teachers in recalling their experience in more detail. As the atmosphere was very open, one of the participants brought the data from her school as evidence. It is important to note that this data will be also analyzed in the findings and discussion part. Since it is central to expressing their feelings and thoughts freely, the interview language was the teachers' mother tongue of Korean. The interviews lasted from forty minutes to ninety minutes depending on the participants.

Despite the sensitivity of the topic, the relationship between the participants and the researcher facilitated the interviews. Since the participants were recruited through snowball sampling, I could interview teachers with whom I already had a connection. The rapport between us provided the teachers with a feeling of security, encouraging them to share their experiences and feelings more openly. However, one teacher would only share one of her experiences after I stated the end of the recording, which demonstrates the culture where victims cannot confide their experiences of sexual harassment to anyone.

The recordings were copied to the computer drive to be transcribed. The interviews were transcribed one by one with the Inqscribe program. When I started to transcribe the second interview, I wrote down the memos of the shared experience and ideas among the participants. I kept adding the memos as the transcription continued. Then I created the potential categories based on the memos.

3.5 Ethics

For ethical consideration, upon informed consent, the participants were informed of their rights to know they are the subject of research, the nature of that research, and could withdraw at any point (Seale et al., 2004). The interviewees could freely decide what to answer, or reject a question, or stop the interview. The set of questionnaires were designed so as to avoid provoking distress, through recounting the trauma of participants' past experiences. The potential risk was

minimized by providing an open atmosphere. Leading off the interviews, the participants were asked permission to record the interviews and informed that the data would be strictly used for research only and stored confidentially. Then the information of the participants, such as name and place of work, were coded due to confidentiality.

3.6 Data Analysis

To analyze the data from the interviews, thematic coding was used. First, I interpreted and analyzed the first interview and named the categories through selective coding. Since selective coding aims to create thematic domains and categories for the single case at first, it does not develop a grounded core category throughout all the cases (Flick, 2018). When reading the next interview, I cross-checked the developed categories and themes related to the first one to find the patterns. I noted the shared experiences between the interviewees according to the first categories that I created. I continued comparison until the last interview transcript.

Initially, three theoretical categories for sexual harassment were created according to the research questions. Then the first category dealing with the forms of sexual harassment was categorized into two: verbal sexual abuse focusing on language, and sex-objectification involving sexual behaviors as well. The order was set according to the frequency of occurrences. Regarding the responding strategies, three types of behavioral patterns were commonly observed among the teachers. Lastly, the part about needed support was organized from the social level to the school level.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I will present the results of the interview data with my analysis. The chapter is divided into three parts according to the research questions: (1) teachers' experience of being sexually harassed by male students, (2) responding strategies, and (3) support that teachers need.

4.1 Teachers' Experiences of Sexual Harassment by Students

Here I will discuss the most frequently alleged forms of sexual harassment that teachers experience: verbal sexual remarks and sex-objectification. Although these forms are related, as sexual remarks can also involve sex objectification, the latter deals with more overt cases involving both language and behavior. By describing the findings, I will shed light on how teachers felt, and how these experiences affected their way of teaching or their lives.

4.1.1 Sexual Remarks Woven into Everyday Teaching

Sexual Remarks without Sexual Intention

Sexual remarks include the usage of sexual words or misogynistic words that put down the other gender. In this part, it is common to find that students speak out sexual comments without sexual desire. However, Berdahl (2007) emphasizes that sexual intention is not the necessary condition to constitute sexual harassment. Thus, this part will analyze the findings according to the definition from Berdahl (2007) who confirms sexual harassment is derogating behavior based on sex in an attempt to enhance the harasser's own sex.

The following were the examples experienced by Jang and Kim during the class:

'Adagio' is a musical term that means very slow. Whenever I explained this term, I did not know why the students were giggling and buzzing. Every class, it was repeated. One day, I searched on the Internet and 'Ada' was the vulgar

word to demean the woman who has never had sex. I had to face that kind of unpleasant language and misbehavior a lot. (Jang)

I was teaching the word 'hold', so I showed them a picture of a baby holding her/his father's hand. Then the male students started to giggle and asked, 'What is the meaning of hold?' 'In the picture, what is holding what?'. They were implying sexual connotation with their questions and they were giggling, looking at one another. (Kim)

Both situations show that male students made sexual remarks based on words or materials used in class and giggled around. The teachers could feel it is sexual harassment immediately when the atmosphere was changed. Jang at first could not even discern the meaning of the word, which is a demeaning word to describe the female gender's sexually. In Kim's case, the male students also made sexual jokes by relating the picture for vocabulary lessons to sexual intercourse.

The teacher participants reported that they had to experience boys blurting out sexual comments above daily. Kim mentioned about the high frequencies as below:

It is happening literally every day, every moment. If we start intervening in all the incidents in school, then we cannot live, we will get a mental illness. That's why I think we (teachers) just overlook these offenses. (Kim)

Kim emphasized the number of occurrences is immense. Berdahl (2007) commented that the hazardous point is when sexual harassment, which seems minor, is repeated often enough, has a significant impact. All those examples take verbal forms, so some people might think they are minor; however, the teachers who spend most of their time with students have a cumulative experience that can leave critical effects on them.

According to Park, the class was not the only place where sexual harassment occurred. For the interview, she prepared Teacher Capacity Development Evaluation (Student and Parent Satisfaction Survey)¹ results as evidence. The following Table 2 shows the comments from her students:

TABLE 2. Teacher Capacity Development Evaluation Result

¹ Surveys that all students and parents can give feedback to their teachers every end of the school year on condition of anonymity, conducted by the Ministry of Education in South Korea

Item	Answer
What you want from the teacher	Feminism noooooo, ' <i>Boiroo</i> '
What you want from the teacher	' <i>Boiroo</i> ', let us use the word that starts with ' <i>bo</i> '
What you want from the teacher	You got me really pissed off.
What you want from the teacher	' <i>Boiroo</i> '
What you want from the teacher	Throw out that feminism

Firstly, the coinage from the Korean word '*boiroo*' used above can be explained by dividing it into parts. Words starting with '*bo*' have been used heavily to demean women as it is the first letter of the Korean word referring to women's genitals in a demeaning way. Kim (2015) categorizes the types of misogynistic cyber hate speech and using a part of the female body or genitals as a descriptor was one of them. The author points out that especially the words referring to female genitals are often combined or modified to be used in misogynistic expressions, such as those starting with '*bo*'. Therefore, the students' comments can be understood as misogynistic, pejorating the teacher's sex.

The data shows that the students could harass the teacher even online. During that school year, Park was aware of the meaning of that new coinage, so she tried hard to teach the students not to use it, telling them that it could be interpreted as misogynistic. No matter how hard she tried, the students proved that they could still use that word to her on the Internet.

As the students expressed their displeasure to the teacher, it was not easy for Park to enforce a rule to guide the students' use of sexual language. According to Park, the usual response that she had to face was denial. However, she described the incident that served as a momentum to remain firm on this issue:

My younger sister likes playing online games, and she told me that as soon as her gender was disclosed, the other players started to say '*boiroo*'. That's how they start sexual harassment. As you can see from this, this is used a lot to harass women sexually, not '*Bogyem Hi*' as the students claimed. (Park)

Park refuted the boys' claim that the word is not misogynistic, but it is made of the name '*Bogyem*' (the Korean Internet personal broadcasting streamer) as in the quote. Since this word gained popularity among boys and men, some schools and games have even prohibited using it. Nevertheless, the denial from the students as above was so strong that some teachers do not bother to deal with

this issue. Under this circumstance, Park pressed on with the guidance on this language use from her experience. The effects of this harassing feedback on Park will be discussed in detail in section 4.2.1.

Verbal Comments on Teachers' Appearance

Receiving unwanted comments on their appearance was another shared experience of the participants. This form is different from the previous form in that it directly talks about the teachers' face or body, not just using the buzzword or unrelated ones. For female teachers, it is common to hear about students' comments on not just their face, but also other parts of their bodies such as breasts and buttocks. Although the participants tried hard to avoid comments on their appearances, it was inescapable. That is because the workplace of teachers is a public place and their bodies are always on display (Lahelma et al., 2000).

The experience from Park shows that how the body of the teacher becomes an object to talk about:

While I was teaching, two male students started giggling at me. I asked them what happened, but they insisted they didn't say anything. I felt something wrong and unpleasant, so I called another student after class and asked what he heard. Then the student couldn't even say it out loud and asked if he could write it down on paper. It was about the size of my breasts. (Park)

The male students in her class commented on her breasts and she experienced that gaze and snickering from them during the class. Talking about breasts is a common form of sexual harassment. The boys positioned the teacher as the female body. Downs et al. (2006) stated that this type of continual objectification is toxic, leading women to regard themselves as objects and judge themselves merely on their appearance. However, the teachers have to go through these routinized comments on their appearance and be exhibited in front of the students at all times.

As in the previous section, harassment happens not only in their daily lessons but even on online. Song recalled how she suffered from the appearance comment from the online survey results:

When I opened the results of the teacher evaluation, I could not help but cry. I just cried hard. They do not think of me as a teacher, but as my appearance. (Song)

When Song read them, she found out the negative comment on her appearance. Those comments made her think that however hard she tried to escape from appearance evaluation, it is impossible to do so. Although the system automatically filters out the swear words, it cannot prevent all abusive comments. With the purpose of improvement, it provides students with the space freely to harass or comment on teachers at the same time. Despite this negative aspect, the teachers cannot just avoid reading it. That is because they must write the improvement report based on it since the evaluation was supposed to give feedback on lessons for the teachers.

Even though she emotionally collapsed, she could not take any measures to respond to it. Although there is a way to find the student who wrote a specific comment, it involves an official procedure requiring approval from the school administrators. That is because the original purpose of the survey was to protect the students' information to provide a free environment. Thus, the teacher needs to report to the school administrator to take actions. However, Song did not want to discuss her experience with other teachers and the principal because she felt shame about it. Instead, she went to meet the school counselor to get help.

Power Shift through Sexual Harassment

These common examples show that male students gain gender power through language. Robinson (2000) confirms everyday interactions between female teachers and male students often lead boys to utilize sexual harassment to gain and shift the power relation within the classroom. The boys above employed sexual jokes and remarks from everyday classroom exchanges with the teachers to shift the power relation. Traditionally, a teacher is considered to have institutional authority over students in school, and the status as an adult provides age power over under-aged students. At the moment of sexual harassment, the male students exerting gender power, however, intruded upon the teachers' authorities.

The power shift affected the teacher-student interaction in guidance. All teacher participants confessed they had a hard time disciplining the students when they were sexually harassed. Jang and Lee recalled the situation when they pointed out the students:

When I pointed it out, they did not think about their behavior, but rather responded with 'oh you know the meaning of this word?', then the situation got more and more difficult to deal with. (Jang)

When I told them not to use the word, they giggled and made me the over-sensitive person. Then I got more embarrassed. It's also humiliating to point out their words all the time. Since they denied as a group, it just left me with egg on my face. (...) Anyway, the one who wins is the majority group. (Lee)

Both cases demonstrate that the boys did not take the teachers' discipline seriously and even made the teacher more embarrassed. When male students perpetrated sexual harassment, they had already gained gender power. Thus, they were not afraid of continuing their behavior and further prompted and embarrassed the teacher even if the teacher pointed out their misuse of language.

Another factor that makes it difficult for teachers to deal with sexual harassment is that remarks from male students in public create a group power (Ferfolja, 2010). Lee felt embarrassed by the taunting atmosphere that the group of male students made. When one student starts using sexually harassing language, the male student group is influenced to have a group power to lash out at one female teacher. They treated Lee as an 'over-sensitive person' who cannot accept the joke. From their reactions, Lee felt powerless to respond at that moment. Her expression that the group of boys 'wins' implies that gender power intersecting with group power was irresistible.

Negative Mental Effects from Self-blame

Teachers' feelings can be compared with the ones from workplace harassment by their superiors. Many of the effects are those stated by McDonald (2012): anxiety, anger, powerlessness, humiliation, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Sexual harassment by students does not create milder effects than those created by superiors, even though students are younger and in a lower position of institutional power. Below is the comment from Kim about how she felt when the student blurted out sexual comments during the class.

In a moment, it ruined everything. I felt like the whole forty-five minutes of my lesson was screwed up. I felt I was wrong, and the innocent girls had to listen to them all the time. (Kim)

Kim described how just one word by a boy can affect the whole flow of the lesson, which is related to her job performance, classroom management, as a teacher. Her mood was also influenced by them unpleasantly. At the same time, she felt guilty for not being able to protect the girls from hearing verbal abuse during the class. However, the teacher had to go through the repeated experience of having complex feelings in a very short moment and repressing them to continue the lesson.

Including Kim, the teachers' negative feelings were affected by their self-blaming attitudes. Most of the interviewees considered the sexual harassment issue as their individual problems:

If I were a male teacher who is charismatic, they would not use that to me. They would not like that much sexually harassing me. They would not speak out the word that was in their mind. (Kim)

Do I behave like a pushover to the students? Did the students do that because I said something wrong? (Song)

Was I too easy-going? Would they do the same thing to the other teachers? Even though that is not a fact, I continually repeat it through my mind. (Lee)

The teachers commonly thought this is not going to happen to other teachers because it happened to them due to their attitude towards the students. They even regret if they were too kind or too permissive to the students. For that reason, they tend not to express their feelings against the perpetrators, but towards themselves. For example, they reported feeling more of guiltiness, frustration, and humiliation than anger.

Sexual harassment is linked to job-related factors. Song explained how sexual harassment experience affected her way of coping with her job:

I feel like I survive day by day. Just to try to avoid any harm. I feel it (the day) was okay if nothing happened to me. I became a teacher for a cause, but ...I got lax in teaching my subject (Song)

She described 'living a day at school' as "surviving". As there are a myriad of harassment cases happening in school, she felt relieved if the day passed without her being harassed. Her goal in staying at school is to not be damaged by anyone, which is far from the original goal she dreamed of when becoming a teacher. As

she mentioned, she could not concentrate on teaching as she had before. Thus, it naturally resulted in lowering her job performance and motivation as well.

From these everyday harassments, teachers suffer from being uncomfortable, unpleasant, shamed, annoyed, to helpless. The teachers confessed that they even felt powerless to stop boys from continuing to speak out those words in front of them or of other students. Furthermore, when they disciplined the students, they felt again embarrassed due to the situation itself and the boys' attitudes as well. They got frustrated and felt discouraged to discipline them and felt helpless as there was no effective means of stopping the harassment. This demonstrates that sexual harassment yields job-related outcomes as well as low motivation and low job satisfaction.

4.1.2 Being Viewed as a Sex Object

In this study, the teacher participants were aware that they can be sexualized at any time by male students. This part will focus on the overt cases where boys see their teachers as a sex object, often with sexual intention. Teachers who experienced sex objectification by male students expressed more intense negative feelings and talked about their trauma and anxiousness in daily life. This part will illuminate the stories from two teacher participants. For a better understanding of the relation between the teachers' experience and effects, I will introduce the examples one by one.

Jang recalled her experience in class as below:

As usual, I was demonstrating playing a recorder, and the students started making a commotion. I thought 'oh, again' and I heard 'it's getting horny, it's getting horny' from the corner. Then the male students started to giggle and laugh, so I thought it was impossible to continue the lesson and told him to stand up, and then he looked confused. (Jang)

Jang was a music teacher and she thinks demonstrating how to play the instrument is a necessary part of her class; however, every time she played in front of the class, she had to hear sexual comments or witness the sexual gesture describing oral sex from male students. The student above could not stand up because he had an erection. They sexualized the teacher's movement while she showed them the demonstration. The boys spoke out several times, and so that the teacher could hear, saying that the teacher made them aroused. Furthermore,

they even made fun of erections during the class when other girl students were there.

The boys could make fun of an erection in front of the class since the dynamics of power had moved from the teacher to the boys. It did not seem that he meant to display it, considering that he did not stand up; however, the atmosphere that brought the class attention to this sexual teasing had the same effect as a display. With the verbal sexual harassment and the display effect, the students made the teacher lose control of the class.

Unlike Jang's case, Park had an accumulated experience, which led her to think it is a sex-objectification issue. She recalled her first memory with a certain male student:

During the seventh-grade class, I was giving a lesson as usual and then I noticed one male student's weird movement. I was thinking, What is it? What he is doing, but I could not stop the lesson. I came closer to him to see what he was doing, and he covered his hands and legs with the training clothes and put his hands between his legs, and there was a movement. Our eyes met, but he didn't put his hands out. I had to teach the rest of the class for other students after that but felt so crappy, and it caused me a lot of thinking. (Kim)

This was the first time Kim noticed that that student was masturbating in her class, and she was feeling perplexed at that time. Even though she made eye contact with him and tried to get him to pay attention to the class, he did not stop it. At that time, Kim could not relate his behavior to her, but still, she could not tell her colleagues about this issue because she felt so ashamed. She talked to the school counselor and asked her to counsel the student.

Later, the same student did masturbate again in her class. It happened after the counseling, and Kim heard from the school counselor that the boy denied his action at all. Kim expressed her feelings:

I felt dirty. It was not even once. I had to interact with that student for three years until he graduated even if I did not teach him. (Kim)

When it happened twice in Kim's class, she started to think that he had sexualized Kim. She confessed how traumatic it was for her to run into him. Kim describes another experience with the student that made her feel anxious:

Suddenly, he was on my friends' recommendation list in my messenger app. Probably he found my number from the emergency contact in the teachers'

room. Whenever I thought of him, it reminds me of that incident, so I changed my phone number within a week after I noticed he knew my number. It got me thinking that he would sexualize me. (Kim)

Kim found him not just at school, but on her private cell phone. That student took Kim's number without her consent. Again, he denied he got her number illegitimately. Kim could not stand watching him whenever she opened the messenger because it reminded her of that scene. Kim gave up the number that she had been using for a long time.

Even though this happened five years ago, Kim remembered it so clearly and showed resentment:

At that time, I was thinking, If I involve him more in the class, would he not do that then? and seventh graders don't have heads on their shoulders, so maybe he did it since he didn't know where and when to do it. Anyway, I was blaming myself a lot, so I tried hard to get past this as if there was no such incident, mind-controlling myself. However, it remains a trauma. That scene keeps coming up, and I still remember his face, and that crappy feeling, too.

She experienced two times watching her student masturbating during her class and found the fact of stalking when he took her private phone number. Kim could not erase the scene from her mind. Like other participants, Kim also self-blamed herself for lacking pedagogical skills and tried to convince herself that the behavior was a result of the boy's immaturity.

Kim is still worried all the time at school about being treated as a sex object. She stated how it affects her daily life as below:

Even nowadays when we live our everyday life, we have anxiety that there could always be something, like a spycam, whenever we use the public toilets. Although there is no one in the toilet, I open every door to check and turn the trashcan to the opposite side as I heard the micro-small spy cam can be installed there. And it happens in schools, as we can see from the media. The students can install spy cams whenever they decide to. That's why I am so worried even if I use the toilet here. (Kim)

I have a fear that at any time students can spy cam me with their cell phones. Another fear comes when male students are watching something together on their phones. It got me thinking, Are they watching something sexual? at least once. When they gather, it causes me anxiety. Would the male teachers think like me? I guess not. (Kim)

She has experienced the male student treating her as a sex object, and the incidents reported in the media cause her more stress, making her think that her school is not an exception. As spy cam porn is an issue in Korean society, the

participant could not be free from this worry at school. Therefore, she could not even use the toilet without worries. In addition, male students' use of cell phones causes strain and nervousness. This shows how being sexualized leaves women with a long-term negative effect on their mental health.

Kim questioned whether male teachers worry about sexual harassment as female teachers do. It was not a question only posed by Kim, but also by other participants. In the quote above, Kim commented male teachers would not have the fear of a spy cam as much as she has. This again proves the claim from Lahelma et al. (2000) that female teachers are not in the same position in harassment issues as male teachers.

In addition to gender, their age affects the two teachers' vulnerability to sex objectification. Robinson (2000) reinforces that discourses of masculinity are prevailing in schools, which yields female teachers perceived as relatively powerless. When gender is intersected with age, boys even perceive young female teachers as being 'available' and 'sexually accessible' because of the proximity of age. Jang and Kim are in their late twenties or early thirties, so they are in junior status at school due to their year of experience. For those reasons, the male students could consider them to have even less power than other female teachers, so it was easier for them to treat them as sexual objects.

In conclusion, sexual remarks and sex objectification both mark teachers with serious psychological effects. Through the teachers' shared experience, it became obvious that various forms of sexual harassment are perpetrated by boys frequently in and out of class in Korea. The next chapter will discuss the responding strategies that teachers used to deal with sexual harassment done by students.

4.2 Responding Strategies

Despite the difficulties that the teachers faced, most of them reported that they have tried to confront the sexual harassment issue. However, the level of intervening was different based on each teacher's philosophy or personality. Some dealt with the situation on the spot to correct the problem because they believe it is an important issue for both students and the teacher. On the other hand, some did not intervene in the situation since they think harassment by

students is not a serious case to deal with. In many cases, all teacher participants showed the tendency to change their strategies, from sidestepping to confronting, as they experienced more time in school.

This section will discuss the three types of responding strategies: sidestepping, changing teaching methods, and strengthening self-surveillance. The first part explains what affects the teachers to shift the responding strategies from confronting to sidestepping. After that, two strategies will be discussed that teachers used to make a change at an individual level.

4.2.1 Confronting to Sidestepping

Ambiguous Definitions of Sexual Harassment

While there are teachers who do not want to deal with the sexual harassment issue, some teachers who used to intervene reported that they eventually came to lose the power to confront the abuser. Jang and Park show two different responding attitudes. In the below, Jang explained how she defines sexual harassment:

It's ambiguous. It could be like the case of my friend when the student asked, "Can I kiss?" and the teacher said "No", but the student continued, "Can I do the next thing after a kiss?". If my case were more direct and sexual like this, I could have disciplined them. But the problem was that I felt unpleasant, and the students insisted I did it for fun! so then ... (Jang)

In the interview, Jang reported more sexual harassment cases than other teacher participants; however, she chose not to directly face the perpetrators after the incidents. She could not conceptualize her experience as sexual harassment even though she was offended by the students' sexual comments and behaviors. She mentioned her experience did not involve sexual desire towards the teacher directly as in her friend's experience. Furthermore, it is not always clear whether sexual harassment was directed at the teacher especially when the group of students denied.

Regarding her silence, it is assumed that the contract system Jang had with the school could have affected her response. She used to work on a contractual basis, unlike other interviewees. As Robinson (2000) pointed out, new teachers or casual-relief staff are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment. They are perceived by boys to be okay to mess around with since they are new to school,

so it is not easy for them to take disciplinary measures and they lack a strong peer support network. In her case, it might have been difficult to take disciplinary measures while adapting to the new school culture and colleagues.

However, it is important to note that it is not just about Jang's status, but it is also about the Korean culture of dealing with sexual harassment. Some other teachers keep silent from the beginning regardless of their contract type. First, sexual harassment in the Korean legal definition is narrower than other widely-used definitions (EEOC, n.d.). For example, the Korean Ministry of Government Legislation (n.d.) states 'misogynous or patriarchal remarks' are not sexual harassment while EEOC (n.d.) includes them as sexual harassment. Therefore, the common misogynistic remarks by students do not constitute sexual harassment under Korean law. Furthermore, teachers are not specifically informed of this form of sexual harassment as this is admitted recently. Therefore, it is natural for teachers to have uncertain feelings when responding to sexual harassment. This environment might have led Jang to think her experience does not constitute sexual harassment in its social and legal definition.

Discouragement from Students' Response

Despite this social context, some teachers have their own philosophy to address the sexual harassment issue. However, they stated that they also became passive as time went by. Park was one of the teachers who actively engaged in disciplining students' perpetrating sexual harassment. However, Park ended up changing her responding strategies to sidestepping eventually. Here it shows how her pedagogical philosophy was changed:

When I heard students speaking bad words about me, I pretended that I did not hear, and I did not say anything. I made up my mind after reading the results (Students Satisfaction Survey). When I move to another school, I will never deal with this issue anymore. It changed me. (Park)

When she got the result from the Students Satisfaction Survey, there was negative feedback on her guidance and sexual harassment from the students. It hurt her so much that she made up her mind to take a step back in dealing with the sexual harassment issue. Although some students wrote that they supported Park's guidance, it could not prevent her from changing her educational philosophy.

Likewise, Lee shared a similar experience that led her to turn a blind eye:

I used to stop them, telling them that I felt uncomfortable. The boys never took it seriously though. Even though I kept a straight face, it never worked. Then, from some point, I pretended I did not hear anything. I am still worried about their behaviors becoming routinized. (Lee)

Unlike Park, Lee did not experience the specific occasion that triggered her to make up her mind; it was enough for her to have everyday moments of frustration. In the beginning, Lee tried to teach the boys that this was obvious sexual harassment, not a joke; however, they did not even pretend to listen. When the situation was repeated, Lee decided to stop pointing out the problems. However, concern sits heavily on her from her sidestepping. Lee changed her strategies from the accumulated experiences of feeling discouraged in the discipline.

Lack of Support from Colleagues and Administrators

In addition to the discouragement from students above, the colleagues' attitudes contributed to their sidestepping. The teachers shared the experience of feeling the indifference of their colleagues. Song recalled one anecdote that happened in the teachers' room:

In the class, they talked about who the most beautiful teacher was. And that teacher came to the teachers' room and told me, "You are ranked the second, you are the second-class teacher!" She said that as a compliment because the second is high ranked but saying "you are beautiful" is itself based on their evaluation. (Song)

From the quote above, the teacher who came to Song did not appear to think the behavior of ranking women teachers is objectifying them. In the previous part, the teacher interviewees confessed that they wanted to escape from routinized appearance evaluation from the students; however, some colleagues even go along with them. Thus, when cases happened, Song did not take any measures, such as asking advice from colleagues, to deal with the sexual harassment issue. That is because she could not expect them to understand her experience based on their behaviors above. In the end, she would rather choose to remain silent.

Worse than indifference, some teachers reported male teachers spoke sexually harassing comments in front of female teachers. Kim recalled the situation when she was called to a get-together after work:

It was a drinking session, and they were talking about how many times they have been sex trafficking like it was nothing. This was a joke for them because they were drunk. Then, I was thinking about what if the students learned from them because they would tell students this is not a strange or bad thing to do. On top of that, when students witness how the male teachers treat female teachers like this, they learn it naturally. (Kim)

The male teachers from the quote were bragging to the female teachers about their experiences with prostitutes. At that time, Kim thought that those teachers would not prevent the students from perpetrating sexual harassment, but they would rather justify it to the students. This experience gave her the lesson not to ask for help from her colleagues.

Neither could Lee report to the principal due to the concern he would blame her. In order to deal with the issue at the school level, the teachers have to report to the school administrators. However, Lee expressed her worries when she was thinking of reporting the issue:

The principal would blame my outfit. Also, there would be no response at all from the school administrator even if I reported the cases, so it would be better to talk with my colleagues. (Lee)

Blaming teachers' outfits for the teachers being harassed was one of the common responses from the school administrators (Miller, 1997). When they attribute the problems to the female teachers, it easily makes sexual harassment by students the teachers' own problem of dressing. Then, teachers again stay in silence rather than being harassed a second time, by their administrators. Not only their own experience but also the experience of witnessing other teachers being blamed for their outfits also strengthened their decision to stay silent.

Despite this challenging attitude, some teachers took the courage to ask for advice from their colleagues. The interesting part was that some teacher mentioned that the response was different by genders:

When I asked advice from colleagues back then, the response from female and male teachers was different. When I talked to young female teachers, some of them felt their blood run cold, mad at the situation like me and gave me advice on how to deal with this. Meanwhile, the male teachers sitting around us while I was talking during lunchtime said, "Everybody does things like that!" and "All the boys at that age are supposed to do things like that". So, I remember I was thinking, Is it true that all of them are like this? (Jang)

When Jang talked about this issue with women teachers, they related to Jang's situation and tried to help her. Even though Jang did not ask for advice, the male teachers there overheard and interrupted the conversation to justify the boys' sexualization with the "boys will be boys" discourse. The male teachers tend to attribute the sexual harassment of female teachers to the boys' 'ignorance, stupidity, awkwardness, or childish games' (Grauerholz, 1989; Robinson, 2000). This reaction revictimized the teacher by considering her as too sensitive to bring up the issue.

4.2.2 Changing Teaching Methods

Another shared response from the teacher participants was changing teaching methods. In an attempt to remove all the factors that might provoke sexual harassment, the teachers became more cautious in preparing their lessons. The teachers below shared their experiences of changing their teaching methods:

I got more cautious and I screen thoroughly before giving them hints or I just don't give any hints. (Lee)

I taught them with videos or other materials rather than giving a demonstration myself. In addition, I screened the materials at least several times to see if any content has the possibility of provoking the students sexually or not. I do not call out the answers, but I just quickly show them the answers from the slides. (Jang)

The teachers thought in a sense that they might provoke the male students to blurt out sexual comments from their teaching methods or materials. Thus, they wanted to remove all the possibilities that students might relate to any kind of sexual connotation by screening the materials. For example, Jang stopped giving students demonstrations, which she believed an integral part of the lesson. Furthermore, she did not even speak out the words when checking answers to prevent them from making sexual comments about it. After sexual harassment experiences, the teachers became more passive in teaching by minimizing speaking or reducing the teaching materials.

The teacher participants criticized the ineffectiveness of this excessive screening:

It was a good picture to explain. It was very intuitive, but I cannot use any pictures for the vocabulary lesson that I want to use. (Park)

It's such a waste of time. I could have improved the quality of teaching for this time. (Kim)

Screening the materials before the lesson is the teachers' responsibility. However, the cases above are not about checking if it is educational but guessing whether it might lead to sexual responses. Even though the teacher found a good match for the lesson, she would not use it if she found a hint that lets the students perpetrate sexual harassment. This is minus for both the teacher and the students. When the teacher loses the chance to improve the quality of teaching, the students cannot get the best lesson.

4.2.3 Strengthened Self-Surveillance

Sexual harassment experience reinforced teachers' self-surveillance. The teachers self-censored their appearance and behavior to avoid harassment. Park mentioned what she did after she got a comment about her body:

It kept reminding me, whenever I saw that student, and it was so stressful that I changed the whole underwear that I had. (Park)

Due to the stress, she even threw out all her bras to change it for other garments. Even though it was not her problem, she could not take any other action than changing herself. Her experience of being body objectified resulted in increasing her self-surveillance on her appearance.

Like Park, most teacher participants pay attention to the clothes they wear at school. One reason is that they want to look more professional so that they can be seen as a teacher, not a woman, to their students. Another one is that they cover all the body parts so that they can avoid unwanted male gaze from the students. For example, Kim reported how hard she tries to escape from sexual harassment through clothing:

Not to let them think of me as an adult woman, I put an extra effort into my clothing, which makes me stressed every morning. Since I think they will objectify me as a woman, I never wear what I want to wear and always wear long clothes. Despite that, it still makes me uncomfortable walking up the stairs. (Kim)

For her, every morning was stressful, trying to find clothes that have zero possibility of looking sexual. Dressing 'neutrally' is an essential strategy for female teachers so that they can avoid sexual harassment from male teachers and students (Walkadine, 1990). Thus, wearing conservative clothing is their own way to de-eroticize their body. However, Kim still expressed her concerns even though she wore clothes that cover all parts of her body. That is, no doubt, because the way of dressing cannot guarantee her from not being harassed. It restricted her choice of clothes and everyday movements.

4.3 Needed Support

The teacher participants further suggested the support they would need to combat the sexual harassment issue in the school environment. First, they accentuated the importance of society as they believe the change should start there. Next, the necessity of gender education was emphasized. Lastly, they argued the need for an independent response system that deals with the teachers' sexual harassment.

4.3.1 Changes in Society

The teacher participants claimed changes from society are crucial since school heavily reflects society. They said when the sexual harassment issues are silenced and marginalized in Korean society, it can happen in school and be dealt with there in the same way as in society. Kim emphasized the influence of society:

Most of all, if society does not change, the school can never change at all. People in society commit sexual harassment, rapes, and they even kill women. After all that crime, they only get a few years of a sentence like five years? There are so many crimes, but so little punishment for them. (...) So it happens the same in middle school just as sexual harassment and prostitution are going on every day in society, but silenced. That's why the students lose the sensitivity to committing these crimes. (Kim)

She thinks that students witness that sexual crimes are silenced in society and the offenders get light sentences. For example, the school #MeToo movement in Korea, mentioned before in this paper, ended up with only a few male teacher perpetrators getting criminal punishment despite the huge number of accused cases (Hangyeore, 2018). In this environment, Kim believes society led students

to think sexual harassment is not a serious issue. Furthermore, there is no penal code to punish sexual harassment in Korea. Thus, the conception that sexual harassment should be dealt with legally is not strong in the public view. Other than the light punishment for sexual crimes, Lee criticized the social atmosphere:

Male students comment sexually harassing remarks or upload photos of women in group chat, saying that it's just a joke. Even though the victims do not know, it's still a crime. However, the social atmosphere is that those activities are accepted. Especially in Korea, society has a permissive atmosphere towards this. In TV programs, people demean the other gender. (Lee)

Lee pointed out this attitude can be seen from the media using demeaning words for women easily. Many cases were overlooked under the name of "joke". The teacher was criticizing how society provides a permissive atmosphere to commit sexual harassment, which result in contributing to school cultures in the end.

4.3.2 Practical Sex/gender Education

The teacher participants hoped that students could raise gender sensitivity through practical sex/gender education. They agreed that nowadays school sex education is so superficial that it has few educational effects on students.

I don't think 'sex education' itself is done in school at all neither in the school, I was working before nor this school I am working now. (Lee)

Showing a video telling them 'Don't harass people' has no meaning. (Kim)

Sexual harassment prevention education in school has been little more than a formality. Students just listen to the instructors one-sided, which is not a practical education, just a waste of time. (Song)

According to the quotes, sexual harassment prevention education is done by either showing videos or distributing printed materials. The teachers do not think the students take that type of education seriously. It was easy for them to see some students watching the video and giggling together. In addition, the teachers noted the amount of time should be increased to improve the educational effects with frequent and regular education. Currently, sex education, including sexual harassment prevention education, is only a few hours a year in total, and the teachers think it is not enough time to cover the practical cases and to discuss with students.

Lee suggests what to include in students' gender education:

It should be very concrete like indicating this kind of behavior is problematic and this type of remark is problematic. We should bring them to the table to talk that out so that students can have opportunities to discuss among themselves. Those misogynous words from single-person media can be understood differently depending on the person. That's why the students use them without thinking and say "It's a joke, it's a buzzword" even though I feel so unpleasant. (Lee)

She argued the need for the discussion of their language use. By doing this, they believe students can learn what to say and what not to say to the opposite sex. Most of the teacher participants agreed that single person media nowadays affects the students' language use heavily. Since some streamers from YouTube or Afreeca TV (a Korean platform for a live-broadcasting video online) are so popular among teenagers, they imitate the words that they are using and consider the language as just buzzwords. However, the problem is that those platforms are overloaded with misogynous words, which can affect students' gender sensitivity, and online language use of hate speech is extended to their daily lives. The students are exposed to the new content, but the gender education material does not reflect on the new content nor is it updated.

Kim & Youn (2019) explained why online broadcasting platforms are overloaded with misogynous words, but there is little regulation. The authors found out that misogynous words used in the main content, titles, and thumbnails resulted in sponsoring their profits and advertising revenues. Thus, the business of hate speech made it flooded with misogynist "buzzwords". In school environment, therefore, it is more significant to give opportunities for both teachers and students to discuss the harmfulness of such language.

In Korea, sex education has been done at a superficial level as sex itself is still tabooed in a sense. Thus, even in an educational setting, it is hard to have the opportunities to openly discuss sex and gender issues. Furthermore, the history of gender equality education is quite short in Korea. The first one was from the sixth curriculum edition, which was made in 1992, to abolish gender discrimination in education. Here is another opinion on the need to talk about gender education for teachers, not just for students:

There's a lack of education for teachers as well. The awareness is so low, and some teachers do not even know what is wrong with it. I think probably

it can be the starting point where the problem started. ... We just learned something like educational philosophy at school. There is a total absence of how to deal with it in practice. (Park)

Park claimed that there has been little gender education done in the teacher education program. What Park commented on is the lack of gender sensitivity education and the responding strategies as well. Hur (2006) also points out the need for teacher gender education was raised for the last twenty years but is still lacking. According to him, there are some programs developed for teachers; however, ninety percent of in-service teachers answered that they had not learned gender education during their teacher education program. This gap creates another reason why gender equality programs for students cannot be actualized by teachers (Hur, 2006).

However, one teacher expressed the need of implementing a gender education program for teachers. That is because it can shift the responsibility to the teachers for being harassed, which leads them to attribute the problems to themselves even more.

4.3.3 Establishing an Independent Response System

The Ministry of Education in South Korea (2019) published the *Response to Sexual Harassment/Violence Guideline for School* in 2019. It states that this is the first guideline on sexual harassment/violence issued by MOE. According to this, the sexual violence rate against female teachers by male students is on the rise, and it officially started to recognize male students as the potential perpetrators sexually harassing their teachers.

While it progresses to have the official guideline for schools, teachers have low awareness of its existence and pointed out the present procedure to deal with sexual harassment is too complex to be of practical use. The procedure is called the Teachers' Right Protection Committee and covers all incidents related to teachers. The purpose of this committee is to provide proper assistance to teachers and give sanctions to students. Park criticized the long and burdening procedures to engage with the committee:

The procedure is too complicated. When I report the case, the committee should be called to convene, and the minutes should be written and obtain approval. All of them considered this a bothersome job. (Park)

According to Park, holding a committee meeting itself requires efforts involving a lot of paperwork to obtain approval from school administrators.

Most of the time, many cases are just glossed over to avoid reputational damages for schools. They tend to solve the situation internally. If that kind of harassment happens again, I will take legal action. I will never go easy like that. (Kim)

Kim argued that the administration-level personnel tends to avoid holding the committee or scale back the cases. That is because they are afraid of losing face, not just due to the complex process. Her willingness to take legal actions rather than asking to hold a committee shows her distrust of the current response system. Park recalled the moment when she could not refer to the committee:

So that was a bigger incident than this one because I had Hyperventilation Syndrome, so I went to the emergency room. Nevertheless, the Teachers' Right Protection Committee was not held. Then I thought, Would they be willing to hold the committee for this case? (Park)

Her previous experience discouraged her to report the case to the school. She thinks it would be helpful to have an advisory body that is independent of the school. One of the reasons she thinks this is because it is hard to use the current system as the committee held in school requires other teachers on duty to process the paperwork. Because teachers do not want to burden other teachers, teachers try to downplay their harassment issues.

In addition to the procedure to hold a committee, another difficulty was pointed out by the teachers, the online sexual harassment response. For example, on the satisfaction survey, the students could write sexually harassing comments in anonymity. If the teacher wants to deal with this issue, the official procedure must be taken that requires from the approval from school administrators to other paperwork. This again results in teachers' being silent.

5 CONCLUSION

This section will revisit the research objectives and summarize the findings on the experience of female teachers' sexual harassment. Then, it will confirm the relation to the existing literature. Next, it will highlight the implications of this research on Korean education. Lastly, the limitations of the study and the suggestions for future research will be discussed.

5.1 Summary

The motivation for this study comes from my personal experience working as a secondary school teacher in Korea. Pursuing the master's degree, I had a chance to research the teacher's identity regarding gender, and I reflected on my experiences in a school, of being sexually harassed by students and also my colleagues. It was an eye-opening moment when I found out that there have been studies conducted for thirty years on teachers being sexually harassed (Walkerdine, 1990) whereas Korea lacks studies on this topic. For that reason, I made up my mind to address Korean teachers' experiences of sexual harassment by their students. To explore the teachers' experiences, the research questions below were created:

(1) What kind of experiences do teachers report of being sexually harassed by students?

(2) How do teachers report having responded to sexual harassment perpetrated by students?

(3) What kind of support do they report to need to combat the sexual harassment issue in school?

To answer these questions, a literature review was initiated. First, the definition of sexual harassment was examined as there is no agreed concept yet.

Considering its unique form, which is not a traditional form of sexual harassment perpetrated by superiors, I chose Berdahl (2007)'s definition. It fits the study as it defines sexual harassment as derogating behavior based on sex to protect the perpetrators' social status even without sexual desire. From the international publications, it is found that harassment is silenced and marginalized, and that teachers face gendered harassment in daily practices. This phenomenon has been often analyzed through power theory where male students shift from age and institutional power to gender power when they utilize sexual harassment. The researchers found that colleagues and school administrators tend to blame the teachers' lack of pedagogical skills and trivialize the cases, which contributes to teachers strengthening self-surveillance.

To look into Korean teachers' subjective feelings and perceptions about their experiences of sexual harassment, a qualitative case study was used as a methodology. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews so that participants could share their experiences in an open atmosphere with low pressure. Interview participants were recruited through snowball sampling to find five Korean secondary teachers who had experienced sexual harassment by students.

Most of the teachers' shared experiences in Korea resonated with previous international studies. The interviewees confessed that male students blurting out sexual comments during the class is a routinized behavior. The remarks often lack sexual desire but are still derogating or misogynistic as in Berdahl (2007)'s definition. Other than those verbal abuses, male students demean women teachers through objectification. The hazard of the teachers' experience is that they are exposed to harassment numerous times, which has cumulative consequences for their mental health. The negative effects ranged from frustration to post-traumatic distress, and which are not less than the effects of the traditional form of sexual harassment by adults.

In terms of vulnerability, teachers' gender, age, and type of employment were significant. Gender is assuredly the most compelling factor in a school context where masculinity rules. As the previous literature proves, age also affects as young female teachers are more vulnerable to sexual harassment. Especially, it is found that the contract-based teacher took more passive responding strategies.

The distinctive part of the findings in Korean schools was that sexual harassment happened online. Some teacher participants experienced sexual harassment from the anonymous satisfaction survey by students. This is a new form not documented in previous international literature. Not being able to use proper responding strategies, the teachers experienced more negative effects from this experience.

In responding, most of the teachers reported having gone through changes in their strategies from confronting to sidestepping. In the beginning, they tried to intervene in sexual harassment. However, they were having a hard time disciplining the students to deal with the boys exerting their gender power. Moreover, as in the previous research, the teacher interviewees in Korea also pointed out the lack of support from colleagues and school administrators as the barrier to confront the situation. The interviewees shared their difficulties and fears arising from the indifferent and blaming attitudes from other staff. Considering those factors that made teachers silent, it is assumed that there will be more teachers' sexual harassment cases than the actual number of cases reported to MOE in Korea. Rather than taking measures that directly face the cases, the teachers chose to change their teaching methods and materials. Furthermore, the teacher participants strengthened self-surveillance on their clothing and appearance, trying to look non-gendered.

Lastly, the teachers discussed what support they need to combat the problems. First, a change in society is crucial since students copy the engrained attitudes of Korean society. Second, practical sex/gender education should be implemented. All teachers often mentioned how superficial gender education is nowadays. They asserted that students and teachers should be given the opportunity to discuss gender issues. Lastly, it is important to arrange an independent response system so that teachers can get help to deal with sexual harassment. The teachers think the current system in school burdens other teachers, so they avoid using it.

Overall, the research objectives of studying teachers' experiences are achieved through the qualitative approach. I was able to find eligible interview participants from the network. Even though it is a private and sensitive topic, the teachers were willing to share their experiences, hoping to make progress on this issue. The findings show the phenomenon of teachers being sexually harassed

by students perpetuate in Korean schools even after years of international studies.

5.2 Implications

This is the first study in Korea that focuses on the experiences of female teachers' sexual harassment by male students. The implication of this study is to give teachers a chance to speak out about their experiences which have been marginalized so far. Robinson (2000) and Lahelma et al. (2000) confirm that if sexual harassment and sexualization issues are not discussed, it is easy to perceive that problem as an individual one. In Korea, the traditional teacher-student relationship was so hierarchical that people maintain the belief that teachers cannot be victims of sexual harassment. That makes it more difficult for teachers to open up about their experiences and contributed to them attributing the problems to themselves. Through this study, the teachers could put their experiences into words, and start to see the root issue rather than regarding the issue as an individual problem.

Catalytic validity (Lather, 1986) can be obtained as teacher participants would have a better understanding of the prevalent phenomenon of teachers' sexual harassment at school. Their consciousness on that issue can be altered from individual problems to complicated social problems. It is hoped that this research will contribute to raising the awareness of female teachers' harassment by male students.

In addition, this study provides insights into dealing with gender issues in a school context. While the literature I refer to was researched decades ago, near the millennium, it was surprising to see how the phenomenon resonates with the teachers' experience nowadays in 2020. It implies there is still a long way to go to make gender-sensitive cultures for society and schools. Furthermore, this can lead to focus attention on the other subtle gender issues in a school context.

The shared teachers' experiences prove the necessity of teacher education in gender perspectives and more discussions of the school environment. From the interviews, it can be concluded that female teachers themselves were not prepared to deal with this issue, and it was even hard for them to get support from other teachers. The issue requires a gender program that promotes gender

sensitivity, and responding strategies in pre-service teacher education, and in-service teacher education as well. The changes in education will require a major collaborative effort among the decision-makers, teachers, and students.

Not only does this research add to the scarce literature in the Korean context, but it is also beneficial for both interviewees and the researcher. As a teacher who shared similar experiences with the interviewees, I was relieved to face the problem and have a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. At the same time, I hoped the interviewees experienced the same by speaking of their experiences.

5.3 Limitation and Suggestions for Future Research

This study includes meaningful findings that give insights to teachers and policymakers; however, it has some limitations. First, the size of the data collection, which is five, was small. Thus, it is hard to generalize all the secondary teachers in Korea. Second, the writer is not 100% bias-free from interpreting the data as I share similar experiences with the participants as a teacher. Since I was aware of this, I put more effort into removing the bias by reviewing the contents from a different point of view.

This research opens up the discussion of female teachers' experience of being sexually harassed. While female teachers are the only focus for this study, as Ferfolja (2010) claims, the harassment experience becomes more complicated when it is intersected with sexuality. Although female teachers are the targets of sexual harassment more often, male teachers who are gay also become victims in a school context that normalizes heterosexuality. In the future, gay or lesbian teachers' experiences can be researched as they can be more vulnerable to sexual harassment.

Furthermore, sexual harassment perpetrated online is another suggestion for future study. Distinctively, the teachers' experiences in Korean schools displayed online sexual harassment through the survey, which is done anonymously. Besides, as in the mentioned digital sex crime "Nth Room", the sexualizing body image of female teachers is getting spread in online space. Therefore, it would be meaningful to look into the digital sexual harassment experience of teachers in the era of technology.

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