

ABSTRACT

The dissertation focuses on the exploration of the phenomenon of sexual harassment in Czech higher education environment, particularly on harassment of students by teachers. The sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome, inappropriate and offensive behavior that constitutes an abuse of power based on gender and formal structure. It comprises both less explicit forms of gender harassment (known as the "hostile environment") and more explicit forms of sexual (referred in the legislation as "quid pro quo"). The dissertation is based on a study of selected faculty of Prague university conducted in the turn of 2008 and 2009. It took a mixed research design combining quantitative questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews with students. The dissertation focuses on three main realms: i) students experience of sexual harassment, ii) the definition and perception of sexual harassment, and iii) coping strategies and solutions of sexual harassment. Quantitative survey showed that 67 % of respondents on the selected faculty have encountered some form of harassment during their studies. Students have mostly experienced the less explicit forms, i.e. gender harassment, however the more explicit forms of harassment, e.g. unwelcome sexual attention or unwanted physical contact, were no exception. Despite the high level of prevalence of the sexual harassment only a small proportion of students labeled their experiences as sexual harassment. In the context of extreme power imbalance between students and teachers and regarding the insufficient treatment of the problem at Czech universities students have a very limited opportunity to defend themselves against the harassing behavior. The less assertive strategies, such as a silence or evasion of initiator of the harassment proved to be main students coping strategies.