

# Building Resilient Campuses: A Blueprint in Proposing Safe Spaces to Address Sexual Grooming in Academia

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## ABSTRACT

*The study delves into the intricate matter of sexual grooming in academic settings and proposes a comprehensive approach to intervention and prevention. Using qualitative approaches, this study assesses the prevalence of grooming incidents, identifies recurrent themes, and investigates the repercussions on victims and educational communities. Along with providing research-based recommendations for curriculum developers, school administrators, and other interested parties, the study also critically evaluates present methods. This study aims to provide useful guidance for establishing a secure and supportive learning environment for all involved. The results of this study indicate that the respondents were not very aware of the risks associated with sexual grooming. This can lead to negative outcomes such as manipulating, exploiting, and abusing children and young people when someone establishes a relationship and gain their trust. Due to the fact that many students especially women prefer older guys, sexual grooming is becoming increasingly common in academic settings. First of all, they consider them to be more relationship-savvy, especially those who are employed or have enough money, they feel as though they are protected and can somehow care for their needs—funds taken from their stipends. Younger partners believe that because the elder partner is more experienced, s/he can mentor and teach them in a variety of areas. From the perspective of the more senior person in the relationship, they prefer dating a younger partner since they perceive themselves as the dominant party. Additionally, they think that making the "right decisions" and knowing them may improve their relationship.*

## KEYWORDS

*grooming; groomers; groomed; sexual grooming; academe; awareness campaign*

## INTRODUCTION

Sexual grooming is a serious issue, and it's crucial to create safe spaces in academia to address it. Building resilient campuses can help ensure the safety and well-being of students and faculty.

Universities must strengthen their commitment to prioritizing the safety and well-being of students and faculty members. One way to address the issue of sexual grooming is by creating safe spaces within academia where the safety of individuals is ensured, and where they can receive support and empowerment. This research study aims to propose a blueprint for developing and implementing effective strategies to prevent and respond to sexual grooming in academic institutions.

By examining existing literature, conducting interviews, and analyzing case studies, this study seeks to identify the factors contributing to sexual grooming in academia and explore the impact it has on victims and the overall campus community. Additionally, the study will investigate the current policies and practices in place to address sexual grooming and evaluate their effectiveness.

The findings of this research study will provide valuable insights into the nature and scope of sexual grooming in academia and offer recommendations for creating safe spaces and fostering resilience within educational institutions. It is hoped that the proposed blueprint will serve as a guide for policymakers, administrators, and educators in implementing proactive measures to prevent sexual grooming and support survivors.

By addressing (Survivors UK, 2020) the issue of sexual grooming head-on and implementing comprehensive strategies, academic institutions can foster a culture of safety, trust, and respect. Through the collective effort of all stakeholders, we can work towards building resilient campuses that prioritize the well-being and dignity of every member of the academic community.

Prepping is epitomized by a control differential between two or more people, and Survivors UK indicates that this could be done by a proficient who incorporates a degree of control over you, such as a specialist or a teacher. In expansion, as we investigate underneath, another characteristic is that it could be a design of behavior over time, whether weeks, months, or longer.

By differentiate, what we are calling boundary-blurring behavior are not essentially portion of a longer-term design but essentially constitute behaviors that transgress proficient boundaries. As Cooper diagrams in his work on proficient boundaries in social work, a few boundaries are exceptionally clear, such as sexual contact with a client, but others are less clear and depend on the moral affectability of the social laborer to recognize when they are being drawn nearer; it isn't conceivable to have a run the show book that covers each conceivable situation.

There has been much less discourse of proficient boundaries inside higher instruction (in spite of the fact that see Schwartz, 2012) other than in restorative instruction (see, for case, Dekker et al. 2019). There's prove that students and staff don't have a shared understanding of where boundaries lie, especially online.

It allows us to have a shared understanding of where the boundaries are, especially online. Boundary-blurring behaviors are not necessarily associated with grooming – they may simply be one-off events or indicate that boundaries are not clearly established by institutions. Yes – but grooming almost certainly involves blurring the boundaries behaviors. (Malesky and Peters, 2012).

Ladies matured 18-24 proceed to persevere three times the chance of sexual savagery. To assist ensure them, we must get it that numerous abusers utilize preparing as a control strategy to coerce youthful ladies.

We need to talk about how college-aged girls are especially vulnerable to grooming in order to take protective measures and prevent future harm. Girls may be allowed to be hunted "legally" once they turn 18, the age at which most students enter university, but they do not become fully adjusted adults overnight. They are given little opportunity to mature in a stable and secure environment. For example, financial demands and inflexible university policies instill in young people's minds the idea that they need to start acting like full-fledged adults. But with such a small safety net, this is neither feasible nor realistic nor fair. Our society is becoming increasingly inhospitable and many students, especially young women, are being left behind.

The types of sexual misconduct described by interviewees outlined the impact of this behavior and described institutional responses. This category includes grooming and

boundary blurring, sexual communication, sexual assault, stalking and surveillance, bullying and revenge. The terms 'grooming' and 'boundary-blurring behavior' refer to behavior that allows the relationship between staff and students to move beyond the professional realm into a more intimate or personal realm. Although it was used to describe, it did not necessarily include behavior that constituted sexual harassment. This article builds on this initial data reporting and focuses in detail on these "grooming" and "boundary blurring" behaviors (Bull, 2018).

Bonanno (2012), a researcher in the field of psychology focusing on grief and loss, is often quoted in resilience science as defining resilience as "the stable development of healthy functioning in response to a clearly defined event." Individuals who demonstrate healthy functioning after trauma are able to adapt positively to adversity and cope with minimal negative symptoms without affecting their daily life. According to Bonanno (2004), most people get through trauma without affecting their daily life or ability to function. He described resilience as a process of an individual's ability to maintain stability of normal functioning, where psychopathology may be present initially, but symptoms are rare and short-lived. For Bonanno (2004), recovery can be defined as distinct from resilience, "the process by which normal functioning is temporarily replaced by threshold or subthreshold psychopathology."

Bonanno and Mancini (2011) describe the relationship between post-traumatic stress disorder and resilience, stating that a person's post-traumatic experience may initially include PTSD symptoms such as intrusive thoughts and sleep disturbances. I pointed out that there is. However, Bonano and Mancini write that people will then return to baseline function relatively quickly, such as within weeks or months, and symptoms will be minimal. Although the experience of trauma and resilience differs from person to person, resilience remains a "common response to potential trauma" (Bonanno and Mancini, 2010), as a normal process of human adaptation in the midst of trauma and adversity.

Social support is an important protective factor associated with recovery after sexual violence experiences, maintenance of positive self-esteem, and posttraumatic growth for both men and women (Collishaw et al., 2007; Harper et al., 2005; Jordan, 2009; Kia-Keating, et al., 2010; Tremblay et al., 1999).

Similar to Werner's (1993) breakthrough finding that significant adults outside the family can provide powerful support to promote resilience in "high-risk" youth, Tremblay et al. (1999) and Jordan (2002, cited in Jordan, 2009) found that nonfamily significant others provide the strongest protection against the harmful effects of childhood sexual abuse. Survivors' experiences of empathy and belief in others, as well as practical care, build resilience to reduce feelings of isolation, cope with everyday life, regain self-esteem, and restore interpersonal skills (Harvey, 1996; Kia-Keating, et al., 2010).

Social support is essential for survivors to rebuild trust and feel secure within their relationships. These recovery processes allow individuals to give new meaning to their trauma. For example, young people receiving social support may regain self-confidence and begin to let go of feelings of remorse and "broken self" as they develop personal strength and compassion (Harvey 1996).

Although not specifically focused on resilience in the context of sexual violence, school-based resilience research with at-risk youth has shown that schools are not only powerful sources of social support; , suggesting that it is a place of empowerment for young people and an opportunity to explore their own potential. Their interests are possible. Learning is empowering when it is meaningful to students, enables them to achieve their personal goals, and is conveyed through increased skills and self-efficacy (Maton, 2008)

These resilience processes foreground the interrelationships between youth skills and

agency, teacher responsiveness, and inclusive school cultures. Based on extensive international literature, Clark (2014) highlights that inclusion is an overarching cultural characteristic of schools that builds resilience and appears to support both empowerment and meaningful opportunities. Examples of inclusion include a teacher's belief that all students are capable learners, shared decision-making, and actions to ensure a safe, respectful, and equitable learning space (Kirk et al., 2015).

School processes are important for fostering resilience and vulnerability. Schooling can be a more global catalytic or cascading force that enhances students' ability to strengthen their resources, skills, competencies, relationships, and self-determination with particular relevance to recovery and growth from sexual harassment and abuse. It is multifaceted because it provides resources for resilience, including the elements. Institutions can influence perceptions of campus resources both through internal messaging and by changing campus practices to reflect a more victim-centered approach. Broader improvements in student perceptions of campus climate may lead to more people seeking help. Because students with positive perceptions of campus climate are six times more likely to formally report an assault to their university.

The following are indicators that a youngster might be being groomed. Some indicators of grooming to look out for are as follows:

1. An adult who overindulges in the child's life constantly requests time alone with them and is jealous of other adults.
2. A child has an abrupt unwillingness to divulge information regarding their relationships or actions.
3. Has a huge age gap relationship with an individual and this individual isolates the child from friends, family, or social activities.
4. Accepting cash or presents from an adult without getting a good reason for it.
5. Displays of age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behavior.
6. Display unusual communication behavior, particularly when it comes to private or covert online chatting.
7. Spending their time away from home or going missing for some time and sudden decline of interest in school.

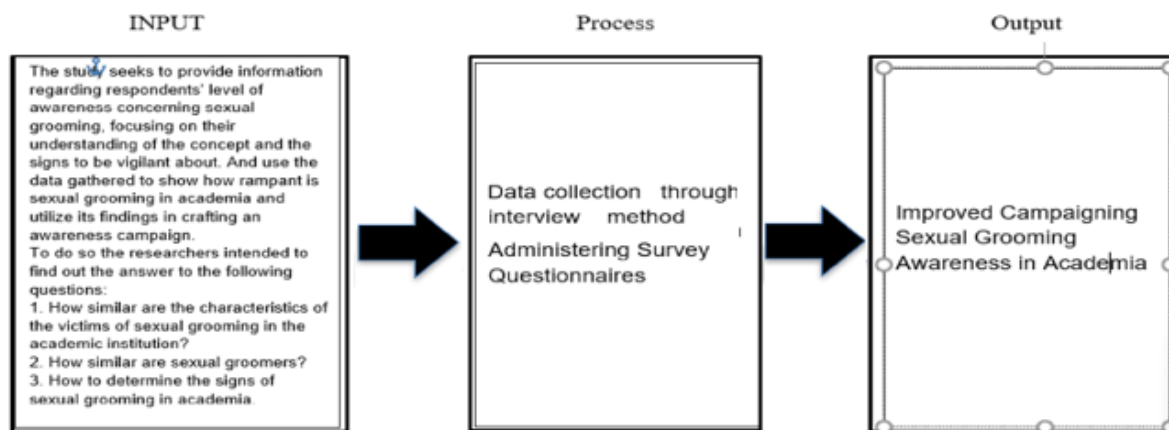
While initiatives and efforts are being made to address the issue there are still a lot of Educators who are not familiar with what sexual grooming is and how it happens and affects learners.

To raise awareness, this research will gather information as to how aware the faculty members, staff, and administrators are when it comes to the topic. What are the precautionary steps taken by the educational institutions?

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A Theory-Based Approach to Understanding Sexual Behavior According to Milhausen et al. We examined the unique context of Mardi Gras using the Triandis Model of Interpersonal Behavior (TIB). Situational conditions related to Mardi Gras culture predicted anal sex behavior. Using the TIB as a framework to guide research highlights the importance of cultural context in developing sexuality-related interventions implemented in specific settings such as Mardi Gras.

## Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1.** Research Paradigm

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study, which consists of three main variables: characteristics of sexual grooming victims and similarities of sexual grooming in academic institutions and the signs of sexual grooming in academia that have been explored to establish facts that can be used for awareness initiatives. The ultimate goal is to use the knowledge from the responses to develop strategies and build safe spaces in academia.

The research delved into the characteristics of the victims of sexual grooming to identify and understand the vulnerable segments of the student population. The demographic, psychological, and situational factors that may contribute to students' susceptibility were taken into consideration. Likewise, it is vital to unveil how sexual groomers are similar in terms of common tactics they use or how they establish trust with their victims, etc. to see the signs that might indicate that someone is being groomed.

The responses that will be gathered will undergo a thorough evaluation to derive insights into the dynamics of sexual grooming in academia. These insights will serve as a guide for developing and spearheading awareness campaigns to ensure that the students have enough knowledge about sexual grooming. Ultimately, it hopes to serve as a guide for a deeper understanding of the situation for policy formulation, preventive measures, and establishing support systems for the victims to create safe spaces in the academy.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study seeks to provide information regarding respondents' level of awareness concerning sexual grooming, focusing on their understanding of the concept and the signs to be vigilant about. And use the data gathered to show how rampant is sexual grooming in academia and utilize its findings in crafting an awareness campaign.

To do so the researchers intended to find out the answer to the following questions:

1. How similar are the characteristics of the victims of sexual grooming in the academic institution?
2. How similar are sexual groomers?
3. How to determine the signs of sexual grooming in academia.

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

In the fast-evolving landscape of education, there is a pressing need to address sexual grooming in academia, as the process within schools significantly influences an individual's resilience and vulnerability. The benefits of education are multifaceted,



offering resources for resilience that are particularly pertinent to healing and development following sexual abuse and grooming as well as more universal catalytic or cascading elements that can improve students' abilities, relationships, empowerment, and opportunities. This study employed the qualitative descriptive type research design that was used to conduct this research effectively. The said method best fits the nature of the topic proposed by the researcher because the respondents have similar cases or experiences. To collect the required data, the researcher used descriptive methods.. Other information was gathered from the relevant literature, and cases that support the gathered findings.

### ***Research Design***

This Study used the Interview method and Descriptive Qualitative Research Design to ensure the proposed safe spaces in addressing the sexual grooming schools in Manila. The design of the study involves 10 students in different schools in Manila. The researchers used interview methods in gathering the data.

### ***Population and Sampling***

To make this study successful, it incorporates the valuable insights and observations of the 10 high school and college students as they are the ones who can answer questions that can derive answers related to sexual grooming. They were purposively chosen based on predetermined criteria. The schools are in the City of Manila.

### ***Research Instruments***

This research employed open-minded interview questions to answer the questions in addressing sexual grooming. This study also filtered the respondents to ensure that only qualified respondents were qualified to participate in the study.

### ***Data Gathering***

The data collection of this study was conducted through an actual survey, utilizing printed questionnaires. The researcher personally distributed the survey questionnaire to the respective institutions of the respondents. Also, using this approach the researcher ensured that only qualified respondents were involved in this study.

### ***Data Analysis***

The researcher used an interview method to gather the data needed for the study.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

This research ensures the ethical considerations among the respondents of this study, such as obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, risk, voluntary, and benefits. Those ethical considerations were intended to uphold their privacy and confidentiality. The participants were informed that their answered survey forms would be stored securely.



## QUESTIONNAIRE

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

School (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Can you share your thoughts on relationships between individuals in different educational stages, such as high school and college?
2. How did you meet your partner, and what attracted you to each other?
3. Can you discuss the age difference between you and your partner and how it impacts your relationship?
4. How do your different educational environments (high school and college) affect your relationship?
5. Are you open about your relationship with friends, family, and peers? How do they react to your relationship?
6. How do you navigate communication and decision-making considering the differences in your academic responsibilities and experiences?
7. Have you discussed your plans together, especially considering potential changes in educational paths?
8. What challenges, if any, have you encountered as a couple due to the difference in educational levels? Conversely, are there any benefits?
9. How do you navigate legal considerations, given that there may be age of consent laws that apply to your relationship?
10. How do you ensure that your relationship is consensual and respectful, considering the potential power dynamics associated with differences in age and educational stages?
11. Do you feel that peer influence from your respective educational environments impacts your relationship?
12. How has being in this relationship influenced your personal growth and development during this stage of your life?
13. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences or insights regarding your relationship?

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the knowledge of the respondents in sexual grooming?

The respondents don't have any idea that they are being groomed, for them, it is love that they feel toward each other. This means that youth are not aware of these spaces in addressing sexual grooming in schools, this may imply a lack of information and dissemination of authority at home.

### Definition and Nature

Sexual Grooming is a common strategy used by people who sexually abuse kids. It includes deceptive activities meant To access potential victims, coerce consent to abuse, and reduce harm the likelihood that they would be discovered. Although these strategies are most frequently employed against kids who are smaller, vulnerable adults and teenagers are equally at risk. Online or in-person grooming is both possible. Usually, a family member or another trusted individual in the victim's circle of relationships such as a coach, teacher, youth group leader, or others employs it.

2. How prevalent is sexual grooming in academia?

Sexual grooming in academia is becoming more prevalent as many students, especially women, prefer older men. First, because they view them as more mature in handling relationships. They also feel like they are being protected and somehow can provide what they want especially those who are already working or have enough.

money from their allowances. Younger ones in a relationship feel like the older one is more knowledgeable thus s/he is capable of teaching and guiding him/her in many things.

From the point of view of those older ones in the relationship, they like to have a relationship with a younger partner because they feel like they are the ones dominating the relationship. They also believe that knowing the “right things/decisions” can make their relationship work. Likewise, they like the thought and feeling that their younger partner is dependent on them and can’t survive without them.

3. How may findings be utilized in crafting an awareness campaign?

The findings of this study tell us that there is no strong awareness among the respondents about sexual grooming, this may have a negative result when someone builds a relationship, trust in his/his partner, and also a connection with the child or young person, therefore, the result is to manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, sexual grooming is a deeply concerning and manipulative behavior that can have devastating consequences for victims. It is crucial to understand that grooming is a deliberate process used by perpetrators to gain the trust and control of their victims, often intending to engage in sexual exploitation. However, based on the research and survey we've conducted on the topic of sexual grooming, it can be concluded that while the effects may not always be severe, they are still concerning. Sexual grooming refers to the process by which an individual builds a relationship to exploit tension by exploiting them sexually.

Although the effects may vary depending on the circumstances and individuals involved, it is important to acknowledge that any form of sexual grooming is harmful and should not be taken lightly. Even if the impact is not immediately apparent or severe, it can still have long-lasting emotional, psychological, and social consequences for the victims.

It is crucial to address sexual grooming and raise awareness about its potential dangers, regardless of the perceived severity of the effects. By educating individuals about the signs of grooming and promoting open dialogue, we can better protect vulnerable individuals and prevent further harm.

## **Recommendation**

1. Based on the findings of the study, every **SCHOOL CAMPUS** should conduct a comprehensive research study on sexual grooming within academic settings, with an emphasis on finding trends, risk factors, and preventive factors regarding sexual grooming. Also to examine the effects on victims, evaluate current regulations, and suggest workable plans for making classrooms safer.
2. **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS** are recommended to be involved in implementing comprehensive research such as this given to every school campus. School administrators should research the most effective methods for avoiding and handling cases of sexual grooming by examining current procedures, staff and faculty development initiatives, and how well regulations work to create a secure reporting environment and evaluate how well preventive steps are being put in place to keep students safe.
3. **CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTERS** are recommended to investigate ways to handle and prevent grooming by including comprehensive sexual education in the academic curriculum and assess the success of teacher preparation programs, and age-appropriate modules.



4. **TEACHERS** are encouraged to do studies to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher training programs that are specifically designed to help them identify, stop, and deal with sexual grooming.
5. **STUDENTS** should be knowledgeable and aware of what sexual grooming is by providing them with the tools they need to identify and report instances of sexual grooming such as age-appropriate awareness campaigns and digital literacy instructions. They should be encouraged to voice their worries and ask for assistance at all times when it comes to sexual abuse and sexual grooming.
6. **FUTURE RESEARCHERS** To follow the long-term impacts of anti-grooming interventions in academic contexts, future researchers should concentrate on longitudinal studies. Examine new patterns, developments in the use of technology, and changing approaches to prevention and work together with interdisciplinary groups to introduce new ideas and promote an all-encompassing strategy for dealing with sexual grooming in school settings.

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To the Filipino Learners. The study will provide information concerning the effect of interactive digital instructions that help to improve their academic performance.

To the Teachers. It will help them to be more aware with regards to the utilization of interactive digital instruction in their daily teaching process that could improve their students' outcomes. Also, this study will provide collective information that can be used to improve teaching and learning materials.

To the School Heads and Administrators. This study will help the administrators to plan and develop a strategic framework for integrating interactive digital instruction that could benefit the teachers and students in Culturally Responsive Teaching. For the students to attain full potential in learning, the students must have certain vocabulary acquisition which will serve as the foundation for understanding other unfamiliar words and the more complex context of reading materials. For the students to ensure complete.

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