



# SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN VIETNAM

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### CONTEXT

Sexual misconduct is a global concern. Adolescents aged 15–19 years are at the highest risk, yet evidence on school-based sexual misconduct in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) remains limited. Moreover, few studies have explored how high school students perceive their educational institutions' role and response to sexual misconduct.

### OBJECTIVE

- To estimate the prevalence of sexual misconduct victimization—including sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence, and sexual violence—among high school students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.
- To determine the 12-month prevalence of students' exposure to information or education on sexual misconduct.
- To explore high school students' perceptions of their educational institutions' role and response to sexual misconduct.

### METHODS

A cross-sectional study among approximately 10,000 high-school students from twenty-four schools will be conducted, from May 2025 to January 2026. Students who have been enrolled into school for at least 12 months will fill in the adapted administrator-researcher campus climate consortium (ARC3).

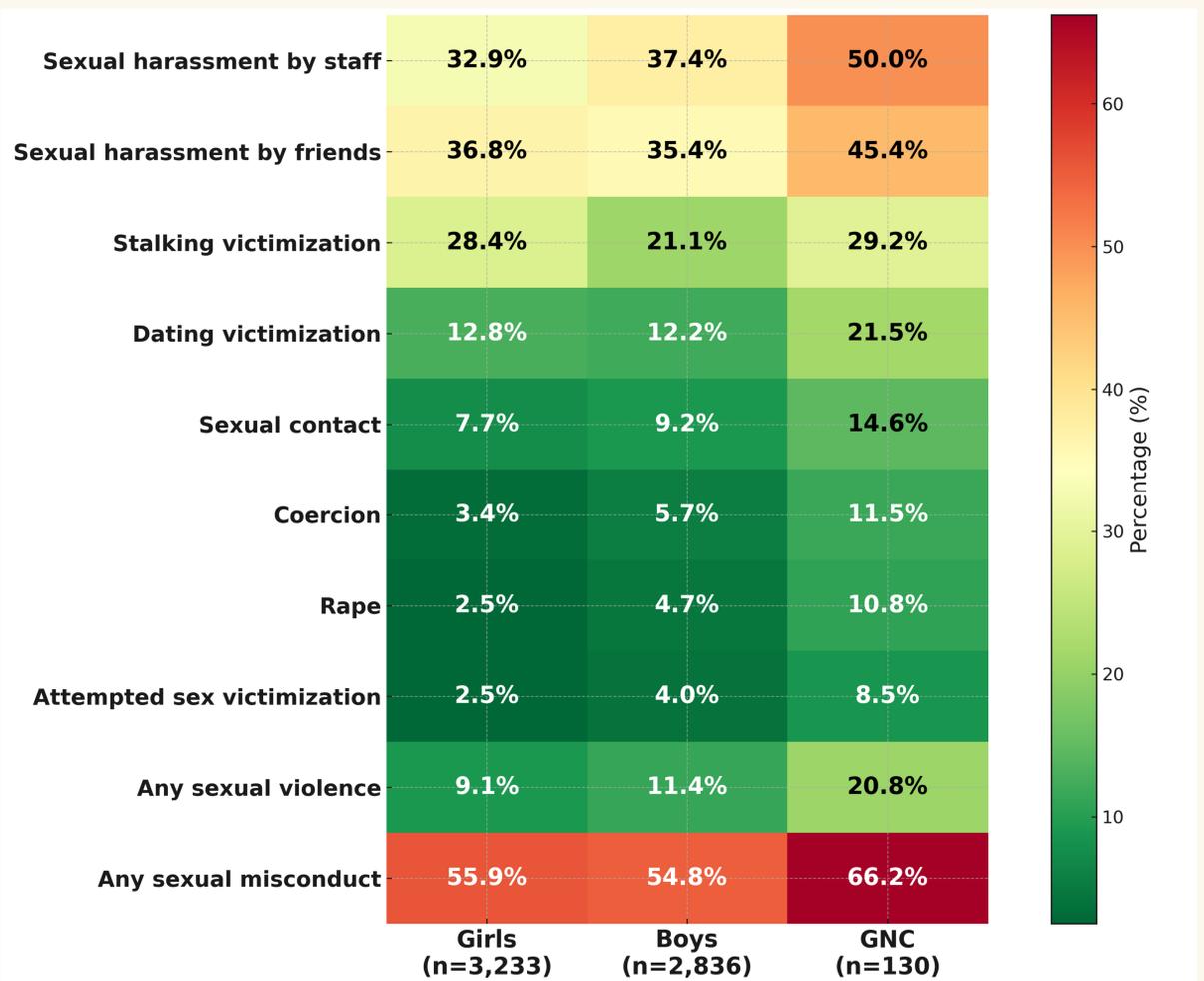
The survey was delivered to students via a secure link using the REDCap data collection system

### RESULTS

#### Descriptive characteristics

	Total n=6199	Girls n=3,233	Boys n=2,836	Gender-non conforming (n=130)	P value
<b>1. Grade</b>					<b>0.05</b>
Grade 10	34.3	33.5	35.0	36.9	
Grade 11	33.1	34.8	31.2	32.3	
Grade 12	32.7	31.7	33.8	30.8	
<b>2. Gender</b>					
Woman	52.15				
Man	45.75				
Genderqueer/gender non-conforming/Non-binary/Transgender	2.1				
<b>3. Sexual orientation</b>					<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Gay	2.9	0.4	5.3	11.5	
Lesbian	2.2	2.9	1.0	13.1	
Heterosexual	77.1	73.7	83.8	18.5	
Bisexual	8.2	13.0	2.4	17.7	
Asexual	3.7	3.8	3.4	7.7	
Pansexual	3.3	4.0	1.8	16.9	
Queer	1.2	1.5	0.7	6.2	
Self-described	1.4	0.8	1.7	8.5	
<b>4. Living situation</b>					<b>&lt;0.001</b>
With parent(s)	94.8	95.1	95.0	83.1	
With relatives	2.1	2.0	2.3	2.3	
Dormitory	0.4	0.2	0.4	4.6	
Alone/with friends	0.5	0.3	0.6	3.9	
Others	2.2	2.5	1.8	6.2	
<b>5. Alcohol use</b>					<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Never	75.1	77.8	72.4	67.7	
Monthly or less	21.1	19.1	23.4	18.5	
More than monthly	1.1	0.5	1.5	8.5	
Missing	2.7	2.6	2.7	5.4	

#### Prevalence of Sexual Misconduct by Gender



\*All differences were statistically significant (p < 0.05) gender

### CONCLUSION

- Sexual misconduct is highly prevalent, with more than half of students experiencing at least one form of victimization.
- Sexual harassment by school staff was alarmingly high, emphasizing urgent gaps in safeguarding, reporting systems, and accountability within schools.
- Results showed that gender non-conforming students were the most affected group.
- Boys experienced higher rates of sexual harassment and sexual violence than girls.



### IMPACT OF THE STUDY

- This is the first large-scale study in Vietnam to examine the prevalence of sexual misconduct among adolescents, covering a wide range of behaviors including sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence, and sexual violence.
- These findings indicate a need to shift prevention efforts—which traditionally focused mainly on girls—towards inclusive programs that protect both girls and boys, and especially gender-diverse students.
- The study will help parents, school administrators, and youth have a more precise look about sexual misconduct and to raise their awareness about it to build strategies to protect their child.
- This study provides a foundation for future intervention research, including the development of school-based prevention and education programs on sexual misconduct.
- The project built strong partnerships with school leaders, many of whom expressed interest in continuing collaboration on future prevention initiatives.
- The project generated interest among colleagues to engage in school-based violence prevention and gender-related research. Two graduate students and one undergraduate student developed their theses based on the project.

