

DEMOGRAPHIC DETERMINANTS OF PRE-MARITAL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS' STUDENTS IN LOKOJA METROPOLIS OF KOGI STATE.

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Abstract

Adolescent reproductive health encompasses the physical, mental, and social well-being of individuals aged 10–19 concerning their reproductive system. In Nigeria, adolescents, who make up about one-third of the population, facesig nificant health challenges duetorisky sexual behaviors, peer pressure, exposure to pornography, and inadequate sexual education. These behavior sresult in adverse outcomes, such as unplanned pregnancy, poor academic performance, and sexuall ytransmitted diseases. This study, conducted among secondary school students in Lokoja, Kogi State, investigated the relationship between premarital sexual behaviour and factors such as sex education, family structure, and exposure to pornographic materials. The study used 320 respondents drawn from eight (8) secondary schools in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State usings implerandom sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire was developed and administered by the researcher to the respondents; data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The findings revealed significant correlations between these factors and premarital sexual behaviour, with family structure and exposure to pornography being particularl yinfluential. The study highlights the need for comprehensive sexual education programs, parental involvement, and responsible media consumption to mitigate the adverse effects of premarital sexual behaviour among adolescents. There commendations emphasize strengthening school- based sexual education, enhancing parental guidance, and promoting accurate sexual health information throughth emedia. These measures are crucial for improving adolescent reproductive health and ensuring the well-being of this vital segment of the Nigerian population.

Keywords: Determinant, premarital, sexual behaviour, academic performance, students.

Introduction

Adolescent reproductive health can be defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not only the absence of reproductive diseases or infirmities in all matters of the reproductive system, its functions, and processes in persons between the ages of

10 and 19 years (World Health Organization, 2011). The average adolescent is characterized by high energy levels, pursuit of adventure, dating, sexual experimentation, zealousness, radicalism, rebellion, curiosity, and risky sexual behaviour, the outcomes of which more often than not compromise his or her

sexual and reproductive health (Oke, 2016). This group, other wise known as young people, is an important segment of our Nigerian society, where they make up about a third (31.6%) of Nigeria's large and growing population (Ofole, 2014). Until recently, the Nigerian adolescent group was considered a healthy segment of the populace, receiving low priority for health services. However, biology and society have introduced additional health challenges, such as unprotected sex, teenage pregnancies, transactional sexual relationships, multiple sexual partners, and trans-generational sexual relationships (Ofole, 2014).

Different studies identified factors influencing premarital sexual behaviour. These factors include peer pressure, family background, socio-economic status, religiosity, age, exposure to pornographic materials/mass media, internet exposure, and substance abuse, among others (Mulugeta et al., 2014). According to Miyakado (2013), there is a high incidence of premarital sexual behavior among students, which can lead to social, health, and academic problems. Premarital sexual behavior among students has led to an increase in unplanned pregnancies, poor academic performance, and ultimately, school dropouts (Miyakado, 2013). However, studies in Nigeria have not investigated the influence of premarital sexual behaviour on students' academic performances. Most previous studies in Nigeria have examined factors influencing premarital sexual behaviour and its general effects on students (Adeola, 2014). Premarital sexual behavior, primarily practiced by adolescents, has been observed to carry a range of negative outcomes or consequences, including unwanted pregnancy and abortion, as well as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as gonorrhoea, staphylococcus, human papilloma virus (HPV), and precancerous changes of the cervix. Irritation of the cells in an immature cervix

and the susceptibility of the genital tract to infection trigger these conditions. Even more concerning is the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, a deadly disease that has claimed the lives of numerous adolescents in our society. Premarital sexual behaviour does not only have physical effect; psychological maladjustment and emotional effects such as feelings of guilt, embarrassment, tension, and many more are also associated with early and unprotected sexual behaviour (Adeola, 2014).

Premarital sexual behaviour of adolescent students is significantly related to their sexual knowledge and attitude and that of their parents. Generally, a traditional attitude is associated with lower risk, while a permissive attitude is associated with higher risk. According to Adeola (2014), in a survey of sex education studies in developed countries, there was no increase in sexual activity among adolescents; there was clear evidence of higher level of abstinence, a later start to sexual activity, a higher use of contraceptives, fewer sexual partners, and reduced rates of unplanned pregnancy and STD. The report also noted that sexual health programmes did not encourage sexual experimentation, and unintentional involvement in premarital sexual behaviour among students was due to misinformation and ignorance in sexual issues (Wanget al., 2012). However, reports suggest that the content of the reproductive and sexual health programme also influences the sexual behaviour of adolescents. In the USA, researchers found a significant association between earlier initiation of intercourse and instruction on biological topics or contraception, and later initiation within instruction on AIDs or resistance skills (how to say no to sex) (Algae, 2014). However, this study did not measure the timing of instrumentation or the initiation of intercourse. There continue to be controversies regarding the relationship between reproductive health

knowledge and sexual activity, in part because of the varying definitions of knowledge. In this context, Alga (2014) suggested that while sex education does not promote or deter sexual activity, it increases the likelihood of contraceptive use.

It is commonly perceived that family structure has an important influence on premarital sexual behaviour. Living in a family with both parents implies the availability of support, supervision, relationships, communication, and behavioral control in many aspects of adolescent students' lives. Previous studies have commonly suggested that adolescent students in two-parent families are less likely to risk premarital sexual behavior (Oluwatosin & Adediwura, 2010). In their study of sexual behavior among secondary school adolescent students in Nigeria, Slapetal. (2013) discovered that premarital sexual behavior is more prevalent among adolescent students from polygamous families, single-parent households, broken homes, and those with deceased parents. Also, Hallman (2004) and Togun (2012) found that teenagers living in single parents or reconstituted families (that is, families with step parents) had higher risks of premarital sexual intercourse compared to those whose two parents are living together or those that have intact families.

Adewale (2010) found that the high rate of premarital sex among youths can be attributed to exposure to pornographic materials, specifically television, film, radio, and video. What adolescents watch on screen determines their behavior and character. Every product that is advertised on television seems to promote sex. Infact, most home videos promote sex (Adewale, 2010). The study by Dingetaetal. (2012) noted that exposure to pornography contributed to the high-risk sexual behavior of adolescent students. They concluded that exposure to pornographic materials in traditional media and intentional exposures to internet nudities

significantly influence the sexual behaviour of adolescent students. Also, Collins, Martino, and Rand (2011) in their study found that those exposed to pornographic materials through a variety of media (including internet pornography) and traditional media (i.e., films and magazines) were subsequently more likely to report permissive sexual attitudes (e.g., acceptance of premarital sex) than students with less exposure. Finally, studies have shown that books and magazines that contain sexual stories and pictures stimulate the adolescent students to always think about sex; having read these books and magazines, adolescents do become restless until they have put into practice what they learned in the books and magazines (Adewale, 2010).

Research Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant relationship between the knowledge of sex education and premarital sexual behaviour among secondary school students in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between family structure and premarital sexual behaviour among secondary school students in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between the exposure to pornographic materials and premarital sexual behaviour among secondary school students in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State?

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design. This design was used because it is best suited for data collection, organization, presentation, and analysis for the purpose of describing the occurrence of an event or phenomenon within a specified group. The population of the study consisted of all public secondary school students in Lokoja metropolis of

Kogi State. The sample consisted of three hundred and twenty (320) respondents who were selected from the population. From the public secondary schools in the metropolis, eight (8) schools were randomly selected for the study, and from each school, simple random sampling was used to select forty (40) students that participated in the study. The instrument used for the collection of data was a self-

designed questionnaire, which was validated by three experts in the field of Human Health Education. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through test-retest method within two-week interval, and the scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient of 0.75. to analyse the data collected, inferential t-test was used.

Results

Table1: Relationship between knowledge of sex education as a determinant of premarital sexual behaviour among secondary school students in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Dev. Error	r-value	P
Knowledge of Sex education	320	3.4637	0.48015	0.00897	-4.705	0.000
Premarital sex	320	3.500	0.0000	0.000		

* $p < 0.05$

Table 1 shows that the computed r-value (-4.705) is significant at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between knowledge of sex education as a determinant of premarital sexual behaviour among senior secondary school students in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State. The study also examines the

relationship between religious belief and family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Ekiti State. The study found a moderate and statistically significant negative correlation between the knowledge of sex education and premarital sexual behavior among senior secondary school students in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State.

Table 2: Relationship between family structure and premarital sexual behaviour among secondary school students in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	r-value	P-value
Family structure	320	3.8537	0.54178	0.01012	0.409	0.000
Premaritalsex	320	3.500	0.0000	0.000		

* $p < 0.05$

Table 2 shows that the computed r-value (0.409) is significant at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between family structure and premarital sexual behaviour among secondary school students in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State. The correlation between family structure and premarital

sexual behavior among secondary school students in the Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State is moderate and statistically significant in a positive direction. The positive, or direct, correlation implies that lines of family structure will enhance premarital sexual behavior among secondary school students and vice versa.

Table 3: Relationship between the exposures to pornographic materials as a determinant of premarital sexual behaviour among secondary schools students in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	r-value	Sig.
Exposure to Pornographic materials	320	3.785	0.56907	0.01063	0.479	0.000
Premarital sexual behaviour	320	3.500	0.0000	0.000		

* $p < 0.05$

Table 3 shows that the computed r-value (0.479) is significant at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between exposure to pornographic materials and premarital sexual behaviour among secondary school students in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State. The correlation between family structure and premarital sexual behavior among secondary school students in the Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State is moderate and statistically significant in a positive direction. The positive, or direct, correlation implies that lines of family structure will enhance premarital sexual behaviour among secondary school students and vice versa.

Discussion

This study discovered a variable of lack of accurate knowledge on sexual reproductive health issues among the respondents on items presented. Note that the majority of the questions regarding respondents' knowledge of reproductive health issues concentrated on reproductive anatomy and physiology. This could have potentially influenced the study's results. However, despite their lack of knowledge, there was evidence that senior school students had engaged in premarital sexual contact. Wangetal. (2012) agree that misinformation and ignorance about sexual issues led to students' unintentional involvement in premarital sexual behavior. Sujay (2019) found that students in secondary schools are particularly vulnerable to unexpected consequences from sexual activity, as they often engage

in premarital sexual behaviour without sufficient knowledge about human reproduction. Conservative societies commonly reported and regarded this knowledge deficit as a complex issue.

The study also revealed that family structure significantly influences senior secondary school students' premarital sexual behavior. The study shows that students from polygamous families, divorced families, and students who lack parent-child relationships are likely to engage more in premarital sexual behavior. In alignment with these findings, Slapetal. (2013) and Defo (2013), in their study on sexual behaviour of secondary school adolescent students in Nigeria and Cameroon, found that premarital sexual behaviour is more common among adolescent students from polygamous families, one parent, broken homes, and whether a parent was dead. Hallman (2004) and Togun (2012) also agreed with these findings, stating that teenagers living in single parents or reconstituted families (i.e., families with step parents) had higher risks of premarital sexual intercourse compared to those whose two parents are living together or those who have intact families.

The exposure of students to pornographic materials significantly influences the determinants of premarital sexual behaviour in this study. Massmedia, both electronic and print, was the major source of information about sexual and reproductive health issues for a majority of the students. In line with these findings, Algaa (2014) and Dingeta (2012) stated that the influence of modernization,

western culture, changes in the market economy, wide spread availability and use of electronic appliances, and communication technology have changed the cultural values among people in developing countries. Also, the finding of this study tends to be in agreement with Adewale (2010), who reported that adolescents would always want to follow Western concepts presented in media without going deeper into the underlying issues, like culture, personal values, and family norms, as well as pregnancy and other consequences of unsafe sex.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn from the result of the study:

1. The results of the present study show that family structure has an effect on premarital sexual behavior among senior secondary school students.
2. The study's outcome reveals a highly significant influence of respondents' opinions on the impact of exposure to pornographic materials on premarital sexual behaviour among senior secondary school students in Nigeria. In other words, respondents were able to establish strong link between exposure to pornographic materials and premarital sexual behaviour.
3. Finally, the study concludes that various factors, such as knowledge on sexual and reproductive health, were not significant to the likelihood of secondary school students' premarital sexual behavior. The study's results suggest that family structure and exposure to pornographic materials likely play a major role in influencing premarital sexual behavior among secondary school students in Lokoja metropolis of Kogi State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the present study:

- i. Students have clearly prepared sources of information for various aspects of sexual and reproductive health, so strengthening the current school-based sexual education program is necessary to address all aspects of sexuality and reproductive health, including the consequences of premarital sexual behavior.
- ii. Parents have a considerable role to play in ensuring that their children lead healthy sexual and reproductive lives. Parents should focus their efforts on influencing their children's reproductive health and sexual education. Additionally, parents should make sure their behavior aligns with societal sexual standards, setting a positive example that can positively impact their children's sexual development. Additionally, parents and other adults responsible for students should actively monitor their children's friends, especially regarding habits such as alcohol consumption and early indications of sexual activity.
- iii. The mass media should focus its efforts on ensuring the correct and appropriate dissemination of information on sexual and reproductive health issues. Mass media outlets that are popular with adolescents should place more emphasis on the dissemination of correct information about reproductive issues. Parents should also counsel and monitor their children to ensure that the materials they view on television and the internet at home are not detrimental to their sexual health or future.
- iv. The study also recommends that schools enrich health guidance so that students learn every thing they need to know as a protective factor.

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