

Information Sources as Correlates of Valence of Premarital Sexual Activities of Secondary School Students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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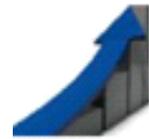
Abstract

This study was on information sources as correlates of valence of premarital sexual activities of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Three research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The correlational research design was adopted and the study further employed multi-stage sampling approach to select 1491 out of the total population of 49,730 senior secondary students in Akwa Ibom State. A fourteen-item structured questionnaire tagged. "Information sources and Valence of Premarital Sexual Activities" designed by the researcher was used for data collection for this study. The questionnaire was validated by three experts. The analysis yielded reliability coefficients that vary between .80 and .85 calculated using Cronbach Alpha Method. Simple Linear Regression was used in answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The result indicated that information sources such as parents, peer group and social media highly influences the valence of pre-marital sexual activities of secondary school students in the study area. It was recommended amongst others that family and school counsellors need to create awareness, visit families and organize workshops and seminars to sensitise parents as primary caregivers to give comprehensive sexuality education early alongside the family values and beliefs to build in self-control and skills to resist and overcome internal and external sexual pressures of the time.

Keyword: Information Sources, Valence of Premarital Sexual Activities, Adolescents.

Introduction

Information and pre-marital sexual behaviours of adolescents has become a topical discourse in recent times and culminated to dominate discussions in the media and other worldwide academic fora, as the

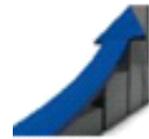


onset of sexual activities of adolescents are on the increase. There is a gradual departure from the traditional, moral and religious doctrines against illicit premarital sex on the premise of civilization. Indicating that the benefits of sexual abstinence are not held in the same respective light as they were generations ago due to the influence of pervasive, uncontrollable sexual information from diverse sources resulting in untoward consequences and school drop-out. Information sources are widely known as those agencies that communicate messages that could influence the decision-making process positively or negatively. Information sources defined in this study are those agents of information that tend to influence the socio-emotional valence of adolescent students towards pre-marital sexual activities. Information itself brings about knowledge while knowledge seemed to convey power through learning. An information source in this context may be a person, a thing or a place from which information comes from, arises, or is obtained. These sources might then inform an individual about something or provide knowledge about events, activities and other social life in one's environment (Wong, 2017).

Adolescent's valence to sexual activities in this study refers to adolescents' attitude, mind-set, predisposition or relative attraction toward sexual activities. Valence can be viewed as the degree of attractiveness an individual possesses as a behavioural goal. Adolescent student's emotional valence to premarital sexual activities is worrisome. The adolescent students may ponder about sexual practices whether to do it before marriage or not, based on the sources and the types of information that are available to them. Akinade (2014) asserted that sexual attraction is an important aspect of the sexuality of the person being observed as well as the person observing. Individuals determine the information sources and qualities they find sexually attractive. Breuner and Mattson (2018) asserted that all children and adolescents need to receive accurate and educative information about sexuality, and to understand ultimately how to practice healthy sexual behaviours. Jackson *et al.* (2012) stated that the type of information one receives may lead to health and social problems such as unintended parenthood and or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

Adam and Lang (2006) posited that premarital sex is sexual activity practiced by people before they are married. Akinade (2014) posited that sexual activity includes conduct and activities intended to arouse the sexual interest of another, such as could be learnt or acquired from the various information sources. Effiong (2012) observed that secure attachment in the parent-child relationships, attitudes; effective communication pattern and mild discipline have positive impact on the emotional health which can affect sexual behaviours of children later in life. However, parents as the first teachers and first counsellors are expected to provide helpful orientation to their children, in order to promote and establish healthy sexual living for their children.

Historically, premarital sex was considered a moral issue which was a taboo in many cultures and considered a sin by a number of religions, but since the 1960s, it has become more widely accepted, especially in Western countries. Adam and Lang (2006) reported that in recent times globally, onset of sexuality activity among the adolescents are on the increase, contrary to yester years that abstinence to

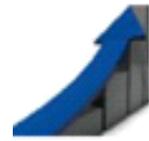


sexuality activity and getting married as a virgin were held in high esteem. Okafor and Nnoli (2010) said that secondary school students because of their developmental stage and information obtained from novels and social media change their attitudes. As adolescents, they are in a critical phase of psychological and physiological transition process to establish strong and healthy foundation in sexual development for a healthy, fulfilling adulthood and family life. Pubertal characteristics resulting from physiological development of their bodies and sexual organs are associated with sexuality challenges, such as uncontrolled sensual thoughts, feelings and intense sexual desires and urges as well as what the students read from books and watch through media. Such experiences make them curious, adventurous and apt to engage in peer selection which calls for sound information sources and sexuality education.

Isangedighi (2007) opined that in Nigeria, cultural and religious beliefs have denied adolescents the opportunity of receiving enough information about human sexuality. This challenge needs to be identified and apprehended; hence guidance counsellors in schools are saddled with the responsibility to inform, educate and counsel students in schools on sexuality as well as encourage parents to start early to educate the younger children at home to build up inner strength for self-control. Davies and Davies (2011) stated that parents are one of the best available information sources that can affect the emotional life of their children positively, but most of them are frequently unwilling to take on the task of educating their children about sexuality. Parents see discussion about sexuality as a very sensitive issue. Some feel it will arouse their curiosity to experience sex and others are completely less concerned busy on their business provided there is food on their table and money to pay for the children's education. Parents are supposed to support their children's emotional attraction as effective source to inform them about the demerit of social media (Effiong, 2012).

Isangedighi (2007) expresses that parents' discussion on dangers of having sex before marriage rightly influence a child positively on avoidance of sex and further mentioned that some parents that warns their children not to play with opposite sex for avoidance of unwanted pregnancy always found it difficult to control them because such children would miss in the house for sometimes. The need for parents to take a proactive role in providing sexual and reproductive information and education is further justified because research confirm that many adolescents lack basic knowledge on reproductive biology and prevention methods (Federal Ministry of Health, 2015). A primary reason for this situation is that adolescents rely on mass media and peers as information sources on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH). Unfortunately, information obtained from these sources are either false or incomplete.

Okanlawon (2012) examined the parental attitude towards adolescent sexual behaviour in Ibadan North Local Government of Oyo State, Nigeria. The population of the study was not mentioned, but a sample size of 600 parents was used as respondents. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Data for this study was derived using two instruments which were a self-developed structured questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Data collected from the questionnaire were analysed using simple linear regression and Analysis of Variance. Findings of the

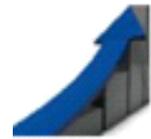


study revealed that some variables including parents were significant. The study also revealed that parents are the major information sources on adolescents' sexual activities.

Cui *et al.* (2011) conducted a study to examine the information sources that parents consider desirable to provide for their children with regards to sexuality in Japan. Descriptive survey research design was used. With population of 1,150 fathers and 1,147 mothers in four regions of Japan (mean ages: fathers = 36.7, mothers = 33.8, children = 4.4 years) documented Japanese parents' sources of advice and information about young children. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Findings show that mothers reported receiving more advice and information from more sources, compared with fathers. It is apparent that various sources of parenting knowledge can be facilitated to alleviate the stress felt by today's increasingly isolated parents.

Much of the information adolescents come in contact with may be through direct experience with peers to impinge. Cordez-Bolz (2012) noted that adolescents experience social acceptance when they are in conformity to the rules governing their peer group relations. Apparently, most of the adolescent students are lured into premarital sexual relationship by their peers who may have experienced sex in one way or the other. Okafor and Nnoli (2010) stated that some adolescents are lured into sexual relationship by their peers who may have experienced it in one way or the other. The most conclusive statement according to Ogundipe and Ojo (2015) on the influence of peers on premarital sexual activity is that friends' sexual behaviour matters on research has consistently demonstrated that friends sexual behaviour forms a powerful normative influence legitimizing the desirability and acceptability of premarital sexual behaviour for both males and females. Research that attempted to demonstrate that peers can influence adolescents to remain sexually conservative as well as influencing them to engage in premarital sexual activity are scanty (Finger, 2010). McKinnon *et al.* (2008) reported that the virgins have sexually conservative friends thus it appears that adolescents' peers have the potential to exert a powerful influence on the decision to remain as virgins.

Effiong (2012) indicated that peers have a potent influence on an adolescents' sexual activity. Moreover, researchers have found that this influence can run in both the permissive or conservative directions. Researchers have believed that peers are a powerful reference group that provides normative information about the legitimacy and desirability of premarital sexual relations (Effiong, 2017). Furthermore, adolescents who associated with peers, who engage in premarital sexual behaviours should also be more likely to have had sex themselves. Hence, this influential relationship should also hold true in the opposite direction one would expect that adolescents who have peers, who have conservative sexual attitudes and are not sexually active should tend also to have conservative attitudes. Peer influence as source of information act as the perceived sexual behaviour of an adolescents peers is the rational for doing so which assumes that friends who are sexually active could provide models of behaviour which influences adolescents (Moronkola & Idris, 2010). It is postulated that peers sexual behaviour should be influenced by adolescents' sexual behaviour.

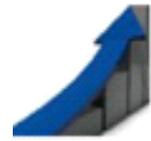


Bingenheimer *et al.* (2016) conducted a study to investigate the influences of peer group characteristics on the sexual activity of adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. The study population was 210,000 adolescents infected with HIV, prevalence at the national level stands at 1.4 percent, who were living in Krobo Districts in Ghana's Eastern Region. Data were surveyed from 1,275 adolescents as sample. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used. Self-reported sexual initiation and multiple partnerships questionnaire was used to elicit data for statistical analysis. Independent t-test and One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics were used for data analysis. The results were observed in perspectives: Sex differences in peer-context variables were small. Affiliation with antisocial peers and perceived peer norms favouring sex increased the odds of transition to first sex. Having more friends increased the odds among younger respondents of acquiring multiple new sexual partners. Among males, perceived peer norms favouring sex increased the odds of acquiring multiple partners.

Social media as asserted by Effiong (2012) is another source of information that could be used to give sexuality education as well as give information that may lure adolescent students to sexual involvement through high technology internet browsing. Pacific Tine Podcast (2010) held it that mass media as information sources can be used to give sexuality education to adolescent students through print and electronic media. Spiranee and Zonica (2010) stated that because information from social media undergoes little scrutiny, the quality of the information gained from them varies widely. However, Farkas (2011) says that the prevalent use of social media, despite quality concerns has triggered a debate over whether or not the critical evaluation of social media sources should form an important part of information literacy. As social media are becoming increasingly popular information sources, various social media platforms are qualified to be used to meet various kinds of information needs, and understanding what actions are being taken to evaluate the information from such source (Spiranee & Zonica, 2010). Social media are defined as "forms of electronic communication (as web-sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos) (Corder-Bolz, 2011).

Luo *et al.* (2012) examined social media's contribution to sexual knowledge, attitude and behaviours of adolescents in three Asian Cities. Population used was 39000. Sample of 760 adolescents and young adults aged 15-24 years were used. Research Questions and hypotheses were adopted. The study adopted a cross-cultural survey design. The researcher used face to face method of validation. To analyse the data generated from the interview, simple percentage and chi-square were used. Based on this result, it was concluded that access to and use of social media and the messages presents influential factors on sex-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of Asian adolescents, and should be considered in future research. The findings confirm the extent that social media information influence the valence of adolescents' premarital sexual activities.

This misinformation and inadequate provision of pre-marital sexuality information by parents, peer groups and social media motivated the researcher to undertake a study that determined the extent of



information sources on the valence of premarital sexual activities of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

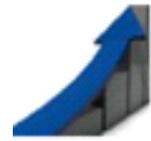
Globally early onset of sexuality activities amongst the adolescents are on the increase. Recently, there is increase in sexuality activities pressure on the adolescent students. The researcher has personally observed cases of early childhood sexual abuses and incest where some children become sexually active as early as age five and six, as well as adolescent students homosexual and heterosexual activities. There is a high level of pre-marital sex among adolescents in the area. It is estimated that about five adolescents out of ten have been involved in premarital sexual activities in the study area though there is no statistical record on this regard. Sources of sexuality information are identifiable and real, yet, there has not been a corresponding comprehensive sexuality education given early in life to equip the adolescent students with skills for a lifelong self-adjustment, informed decisions and choices on pre-marital sexual activities.

Parents, peer groups and social media are crucial information reservoirs that could communicate positively or negatively to adolescent students to influence their intrinsic emotional attraction towards sexual activities before marriage however, the extent to which their information helps the adolescents to delay sex until marriage may be low. In the midst of loaded resources of sexual information, the extent of relationship and attraction of the adolescents by these sources cannot be denied and the dangerous consequences of attempting pre-marital sexual intercourse such as: sexually transmitted infections and diseases, pre-marital pregnancies, teenage single parenting, unsafe abortions from unsterile procedures by quacks resulting in the complications of maternal and child deaths or school drop out to join antisocial gangs and become a problem in society. It is believed that if this trend continues the likelihood of the grave implications on the adolescents our supposed future leaders will be very inimical to national security and progress of the society. Hence, this researcher seeks to determine the extent of relationship that exists between information sources and valence of pre-marital sexual activities among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent of relationship between information sources and the valence of pre-marital sexual activities among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study specifically sought to:

- i. determine the relationship between parents' information and the valence of premarital sexual activities of students in secondary schools;



- ii. determine the relationship between peer group information and the valence of premarital sexual activities of students in secondary schools;
- iii. examine the relationship between social media information and the valence of premarital sexual activities of students in secondary schools;

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were postulated to guide the study and will be tested at .05 level of significance:

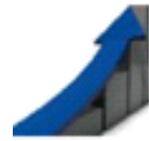
- i. There is no significant relationship between parents' information and the valence of premarital sexual activities of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between peer group and the valence of premarital sexual activities of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between social media information and the valence of premarital sexual activities of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Methodology

Design of the Study

The correlational design was used for this study. The population for this study consisted of all the 49,730 Senior Secondary Two (SSII) students in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The sample size for this study consisted of 1491 Senior Secondary Two students from the study area selected using multi-stage sampling technique. The researcher developed structured questionnaire tagged, "Information sources and Valence of Premarital Sexual Activities Questionnaire" (ISVPSAQ) was used for data collection. Content validation was carried out using factor analysis. The internal consistency approach was adopted for this study. A trial-test was conducted on 30 public secondary schools' students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria who did not take part in the main study. Cronbach Alpha method was used to analyse the data which yielded reliability coefficients between .80 and .85 for the different clusters of the instrument. One-Way Analysis of Variance was used for testing the hypotheses to determine whether the contribution of the independent variable to the changes in the dependent variable was significant at .05 level.

Results



Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between parents’ information and the valence of premarital sexual activities of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 1: Regression Analysis of Parents. Information on Secondary School Students’ Valence of Premarital Sexual Activities

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	958.386	1	958.386	4.74	.002*
	Residual	198468.162	1490	201.615		
	Total	199426.548	1491			

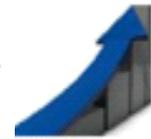
The summary of the data analysis in Table 1 indicates F-value of 4.74. This value compared with the significant value of .002 alpha level and 1 and 1490 degrees of freedom. Since the significant value of .002 is lower than the alpha value of .05 the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significance relationship between parents’ information and valence of pre-marital sexual activities of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between parents’ information on valence of pre-marital sexual activities in the study area.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between peer group and the valence of premarital sexual activities of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Peer Group Information and Secondary School Students’ Valence of Premarital Sexual Activities

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2819.693	1	2819.693	13.351	.003*
	Residual	162736.107	1490	211.187		
	Total	165555.800	1491			

Data entries in Table 2 on the relationship between peer group information and secondary school valence of premarital sexual activities shows a calculated F-value of 13.351 compared at 1 and 1490 degree of freedom and .003 level of significance. Since the calculated P-value of .038 is less than the significance level of .05 the null hypothesis which states that peer group information has no



significant relationship with secondary school students’ valence of premarital sexual activities is rejected. The implication here is that peer group information has a significant relationship with secondary school students’ valence of premarital sexual activities

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between social media information and the valence of premarital sexual activities of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

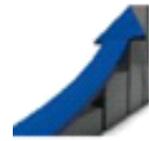
Table 3: Regression Analysis of Social Media Information and Secondary School Students’ Valence of Premarital Sexual Activities

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	2117.053	1	2117.053	.10.18	.020*
1	Residual	150715.934	1490	207.884		
	Total	150732.988	1491			

The result of the analysis on social media information and secondary school students’ valence of premarital sexual activities as presented in Table 3 shows a calculated F-value of 10.18 when compared at 1 and 1490 degree of freedom and .020 level of significance. The p-value is found to be less than the alpha level of .05. Based on this result, the null hypothesis, which states that social media information has no significant relationship with secondary school students’ valence of premarital sexual activities stands rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This implies that social media information has significant relationship with secondary school students’ valence of premarital sexual activities.

Discussion of the Findings

On testing Hypothesis One, the result showed that there is significant relationship between parents’ information and the valence of premarital sexual activities of senior secondary two students in Akwa Ibom State. The findings imply that parents’ information is a good predictor of secondary school students’ valence of premarital sexual activities. It is worth knowing that healthy life gives happiness and reduces stress. Students should strive to maintain balance attitude towards pre-marital sexual activities. This finding is in consonant with the finding of Okanlawon (2012) whose findings’ revealed that some variables including parents were significant. The study also revealed that parents are the major information sources on adolescents’ sexual activities. Equally, the researcher found out that



information from parents are very essential for the promotion of adolescents' sexual health and well-being.

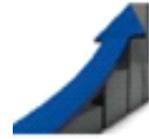
The findings of this study is in line with the finding of Cui *et al.* (2011) who examined the information sources that parents consider desirable to provide for their children with regards to sexuality in Japan and the findings showed that mothers reported receiving more advice and information from more sources, compared with fathers. Relatively few parents said that they had used professional advice. It is apparent that various sources of parenting knowledge can be facilitated to alleviate the stress felt by today's increasingly isolated parents.

The finding on hypothesis two revealed that peer group information has a significant relationship with valence of premarital sexual activities in students in secondary schools' students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between peer group information and senior secondary two students in the study area. The findings conform with the findings of Bingenheimer *et al.* (2016) who concluded that affiliation with antisocial peers and perceived peer norms favouring sex increased the odds of transition to first sex. The study shows that peer influence encourages risky sexual behaviour which has serious consequences of unwanted pregnancy, abortion, early marriage, parenthood and contacting Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Again, the study mentioned that most adolescents with sexually conservative peers are more likely to be sexually conservative themselves. The findings is in consonant with McKinnon, Potter and Garrard-Burnett (2008) who reported that the virgins have sexually conservative friends thus it appears that adolescents' peers have the potential to exert a powerful influence on the decision to remain as virgins as well as engaging in premarital sexual activity.

The findings on hypothesis three showed that there is a significant relationship between social media information and senior secondary two students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Social media changed students' information-seeking behaviours; social media platforms create laxity including the general belief that sexuality education will encourage promiscuity among the adolescents. This uninformed information drives the adolescents to imitate and put into practice whatever they watch, see, hear or read from other sources. These encourage risky sexual behaviour which has serious consequences of unwanted pregnancy, abortion, early marriage, parenthood and contacting. This is in support of Luo *et al.* (2012) who concluded that access to and use of social media and the messages presents influential factors on sex-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of Asian adolescents, and should be considered in future research.

Conclusion

Based on the results obtained from the investigation, the following conclusions were made: that parents as a source of information enhance and improve students' attitude toward sexuality activities, that



those parents who refuse to discuss sexuality issues at home harm their children's future, equally, that peer group as a source of information influences students negatively by giving room for them to indulge in sex through information gotten from their peer group. In addition, social media increases students' emotional sexuality, mostly when students watch pornographic films and read safe sex methods on books, this arouse their needs for sex.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should give sexuality education at home to their children from early childhood before they develop their sexual identity and skills to resist sexual pressures.
2. Peer counselling should be organised in schools for healthy peer-to-peer interactions to encourage proper sexual behaviours.
3. Counsellors should take advantage of the mass media to project sexuality education to the masses to equip the adolescents with knowledge on the negative effects of premarital sexual activities. School counsellors should guide the students on the need to utilise the social media for educational purposes for a better future.

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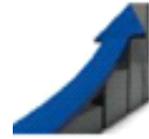
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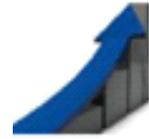
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