

Desirability of Social Values and Sexual Morality among Nigerian University Undergraduates: Social Studies to the Rescue

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Abstract

Many cherished social values among Nigerian societies appear to have been eroded due to some contemporary issues and problems of the society. Hence, youths are now faced with lots of behavioural problems among which is sexual immorality that is seriously affecting their future developmental aspirations. This paper therefore examined values and sexual morality among university undergraduates and how Social Studies Educators could restore the lost social values through effective teaching with a view to transforming the sexual immorality that is taking an alarming dimension among university undergraduates in Nigeria in recent times. The research adopted a descriptive research of the survey type and respondents were selected through multi-stage sampling techniques. A simple random technique was used to select three states at stage one, stratified random sampling was used to select two federal, two state and two private universities at stage two, while random sampling through the use of balloting was used to select two universities from each stratum and two hundred and sixty five students from each of the universities at the third stage. The total sample was made up of one thousand, five hundred and eighty one (1581). A self-designed instrument titled 'Values and Sexual Morality Questionnaire' (VASMOQ) was used for the study and data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as Percentage Scores, Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test. The study found a significant relationship between peer pressure and university undergraduates' social values, as well as undergraduates' sexual immorality. The study concluded by suggesting among others that educators should design a programme to introduce new contents that would incorporate relevant knowledge on social values of the society as General Studies (GST) for all university undergraduates. All hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

INTRODUCTION

Many university undergraduates in Nigeria today often engaged in sexual behaviours that adults find perplexing and absurd. It is observed that the rapid growth in the rate of social change in Nigeria in the past decades has led to certain difficulties both for parents and their children. Zulu (2002), observed that the youths and their parents seem to have grown up in different worlds socially, politically, economically and even sexually and this has brought about different behavioural changes in them coupled with the various contemporary issues in the society. For instance, the influx of pornographic films or x-ray films has greatly affected some of the societal values regarding modesty, integrity, purity and decency. This in turn may result into early initiation to sexual activities among the youths with far-reaching effects on sexual morality. Also, the socialization and peers' environment now is quite different from the past and this has in no small measure affected the erosion of the cherished societal values.

Nowadays, it is very rare, except in the rural areas, to find a family with communal child-rearing patterns where all members of the family (uncle, aunt, grandmother, father and mother) are responsible for the upbringing of the children. It is observed that most university undergraduates are in their adolescent period of life. Action Health Incorporated (AHI), (2003) noted that, this is a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood independence as members of a society. This is a period when behavioural patterns are formed and established. Many University undergraduates begin sexual relations that seem to adversely affect conformity with cherished values of the society during this period. This situation has contributed to a number of social problems such as sexual assaults, adolescent pregnancies, school dropout, sexual immorality, child abuse and emergence of baby factory centres that was unheard of before now in Nigeria but which has become a common phenomenon in many parts of the country. Bada (2008) identified other behavioural problems as the ones relating to heterosexual activities variously called sexual abuse, sexual promiscuity, sexual maladjustment and sexual assault. Adejumo (2011) also reported truancy in schools, disobedience to authorities, drug abuse, vandalism, examination malpractices, robbery and cultism as behavioural problems common among University undergraduates. One may be right to say that the pursuit of pleasure seems to have contributed greatly to immoral activities and decline in appreciation of societal values among university undergraduates in Nigeria.

Value is defined according to Nduka, (2005) as a broad preference concerning appropriate courses of actions or outcomes while Hornby (2010) sees values as ideas about what is desirable in life, what is right or

wrong and the standards by which people define or classify phenomenon as good or bad, beautiful and ugly, worthy or unworthy. Olaogun, (2012) and Ogunyemi (2014) believed that value reflects persons' sense of what is right or what is accepted principles or standard of a person, hence, it tends to influence attitudes and behaviours of individual members of the society. Omatseye, (2005) had earlier opined that when those that are expected to be paradigms of moral uprightness and custodian of a nation's values lost their own morality, they also lose their right to challenge the behaviours of others. This seems to be the bone of contention in an attempt to curtail sexual immorality among the University undergraduates since those who are supposed to check the act are themselves the promoters of immoral act.

In Nigeria society in recent times, there seems to be an erosion of such values like integrity, decency, modesty, obedience, self control, and chastity in relation to sexual behaviours among the contemporary youths in Nigeria universities. Also, the researcher is of the opinion that the attitudes of the University undergraduates towards sex are often influence by their peers and many of them may get involve in sexual immorality that may likely bring some worries to them. Thomas (2011) observed that peer pressure seems to be the most significant predictor of early initiation to sexual activities. Animashaun and Aremu (2011) in support of that assertion remarked that, peers exert a powerful influence on their members and also pressurize them to conform to groups' values and in such cases, anti-social children often join like-minded deviants peers to sustain amplified undesirable group values. This is more pronounced in a situation where children found solace in the company of their peers better than that of their family members and this may determine to a large extent the groups values and sexual behaviours the child takes after.

Social Studies as a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary study draws its contents, generalization, skills, values and attitudes from all forms of knowledge in an attempt to solve the ever-evolving social problems in the society. (Osalusi, 2011). Also, it is considered as a school subject that exposes the learners to the inter-relationship that exist in all society, thus making social and moral values awareness possible when learners are directly guided to see the development of the change. Awoyele, (2007) believe that this would stimulate learners to make intelligence social decision on how to control the direction of change as applicable to sexual morality.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is any significant relationship between social values and university undergraduate's sexual morality. To also find out whether there is any significant relationship between peer pressure and university undergraduate's sexual morality. It is also to determine the relationship that exists between Social Studies contents and the development of social moral value attitudes among University undergraduates.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were postulated and tested in this study.

1. There is no significant relationship between compliance to social values such as Modesty, Chastity, Integrity, Assertiveness, Self-control and university undergraduates' sexual morality.
2. There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and university undergraduates' sexual morality.
3. University undergraduates' social values will not significantly predict their sexual morality.

Method

The research design used in the study was a descriptive research of the survey type and respondents were determined through multi-stage sampling techniques. The sample which was selected through simple random sampling techniques was made up of one thousand, five hundred and eighty one (1581) university undergraduates of between the age of 14 and 24 years old. This consisted of 750 males and 831 females with 265 from each of the six universities in the three selected states in Southwest Nigeria.

Research Instrument

A self-designed instrument titled "Social values and Sexual Morality Questionnaire" was used for the study and data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as Percentage Scores, Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test. The instrument contained 25 items which sought information on the level of university undergraduates conformity or non conformity to social values of the society. It also contained 35 items which sought information on the sexual morality behaviours of university undergraduates. To ensure reliability, the researcher carried out a test-retest using 40 students from one university outside the sampled institutions. The scores were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation and the calculated value of 0.92 was obtained and this was considered suitable for use for this study.

Data Analysis

Data collected for the study were analysed using frequency count, mean, standard deviation t-test, Pearson product moment correlation and Multiple Regression analysis. All the hypotheses generated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between social values and University undergraduates' sexual morality.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores on the social values and university undergraduate sexual morality were computed and subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Pearson correlation of social values and university undergraduates' sexual morality.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r_{cal}	r_{tab}
Social values	1581	61.87	9.671		
Sexual Morality	1581	64.68	20.679	0.260*	0.062

*P<0.05

Table 1 shows that Social values recorded a mean score of 61.87 and Standard Deviation of 9.671 while Sexual Morality obtained a mean score of 64.68 and Standard Deviation of 20.679. Therefore, r_{cal} (0.260) was greater than r_{tab} (0.062) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there was significant positive relationship between Social values and university undergraduates' sexual morality.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and University undergraduates' sexual morality.

Scores relating to university undergraduates' sexual morality and peer pressure were computed and subjected to t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson correlation of university undergraduates' sexual morality and peer pressure

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r_{cal}	r_{tab}	P
Peer pressure	1581	10.84	3.447			
Sexual morality	1581	64.68	20.679	0.655*	0.062	0.000

*P<0.05

Table 2 shows that peer pressure recorded mean score of 10.84 and Standard Deviation of 3.447 while University undergraduates' sexual morality obtained a mean score of 64.68 and Standard Deviation of 20.679. The ($r=0.655$; $P<0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was a significant relationship between peer pressure and university undergraduates' sexual morality.

Hypothesis 3: University undergraduates' social values will not significantly predict their sexual morality.

In order to test this hypothesis, scores on university undergraduates social values were regressed on sexual morality at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Multiple Regression analysis showing University undergraduates' social values as predictors of sexual morality.

Model	B	Std	Beta	t	Sig. T	R	R ²	F
Constant	26.509	2.398		11.056	0.000	0.709*	0.502	318.065*
Integrity	2.713	0.134	0.427	20.264	0.000			
Modesty	2.024	0.127	0.325	15.903	0.000			
Chastity	-0.386	0.128	-0.071	-3.020	0.003			
Assertiveness	-0.724	0.148	-0.126	-4.887	0.000			
Self-control	0.965	0.134	0.147	7.207	0.000			

*P<0.05

Table 3 revealed that University undergraduates' social values jointly predict their sexual sexuality ($F=318.065$, $P<0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that University undergraduates' social values significantly predicted their sexual morality. University undergraduates' social values accounted for 50.2% ($R^2 = 0.502$) of the variance in sexual morality. The remaining 49.8% unexplained variance in sexual morality could largely be due to other factors outside the regression model. The composite relationship between University undergraduates' social values and their sexual morality is high, positive and significant at 0.05 level ($r = 0.709$, $P<0.05$).

The best predictor of University undergraduates' sexual morality is integrity with a Beta weight of 0.427. This is closely followed by modesty (Beta weight= 0.147), assertiveness (Beta weight = 0.126), while chastity (Beta weight = 0.071) is the least predictor of University undergraduates' sexual morality. The effect of integrity ($t = 20.264$, $P<0.05$), modesty ($t = 15.903$, $P<0.05$), chastity ($t = 3.020$, $P<0.05$) assertiveness ($t = 4.887$, $P <0.05$) and self-control ($t = 7.207$, $P <0.05$) on University undergraduates' sexual morality was significant at

0.05 level in each case. The regression equation is given as: $Y = 26.509 + 2.713 X_1 + 2.024X_2 - 0.386X_3 - 0.724X_4 + 0.965X_5$ where: $X_1 =$ Integrity, $X_2 =$ Modesty, $X_3 =$ Chastity, $X_4 =$ Assertiveness, $X_5 =$ Self-control, $Y =$ Sexual morality.

Discussion

The findings show a significant relationship between compliance with social values such as modesty, integrity chastity, self- control and sexual morality. The result recorded low compliance of University undergraduates with integrity and modesty. Awoyele, (2007) attributed this to erosion of social values among the youths. Brezina and Piquero, (2007) believed that some of the youths abstained from immoral behaviours because of their level of social values' appreciation. The study also revealed that the more social values University undergraduates comply with the less of their involvement in sexual immorality or vice-versa. This finding agreed with previous studies conducted by Thomas (2011), Wodi and Dokubo (2014), Wilson (2014). They discovered that University undergraduates' social values significantly predict their bad behaviour as their choice of dressing has a far greater influence on their lifestyle. This study is also consistent with Ghani et al (2014) who discovered that there is a significant relationship between social values and sexual activity that youths are involved in.

The issue of the relationship between peer pressure and University undergraduates' social values reported a positive significance. This implies that there was a significant relationship between peer pressure and University undergraduates' social values. The study was consistent with the theory of Catalano and Hawkins (1996) on Social Development Theory in which individuals adopt the values of the social unit to which they are bonded. This is a period when the peers are more bonded to their age mates. At times, there are things they discuss with their peers often than with their parents, because the peer rewards are more salient. This finding agreed with Falade (2001) who discovered that due to peer pressure, some youths imbibe and display new values that is in variance with those given by their parents. Therefore, what parents do not do or teach their children, peers do as well as teach them. (Brym, 2001). Animashaun and Aremu (2011) discovered that peer exert very powerful influence on their members and also pressurises them to conform to group's values. The implication of this is that, if a child complies with societal values devoid of sexual immorality, automatically, such a child would likely be a friend to other children who also conform to such values.

The findings further revealed that there was a significant relationship between peer pressure and University undergraduates' sexual morality. This agreed with the result of the study carried out by international team of researchers as reported by Scutti (2014). According to him, they examined 58 published and unpublished studies with data on 69,638 youths in 15 countries. It was discovered that adolescents/youths tended to be more sexually active themselves if they perceived their peers as more sexually active; more approving of sex and exerting more pressure on them to have sex. They concluded that youths who think that their peers engage in sex are more likely to engage in sex themselves.

Research clearly indicates that University undergraduates who interact with peers who engage in anti-social behaviour are more likely themselves to engage in such behaviour (Farrell & White, 1998; Franenglass, Rough, Pantin & Mason, 1997). Such research suggests that failure to monitor youths, lack of interest in their whereabouts and youths' autonomy appear to be parental qualities associated with youths' engagement in antisocial behaviours. Omumi and Jerome (2007) concluded that peer pressure was found to significantly predict youths' sexual behaviour whether right or wrong.

Conclusion

Based on the findings the following conclusions were drawn:

There is a significant relationship between peer pressure and University undergraduates' social values and the level of compliance of University undergraduates to social values such as modesty, chastity, integrity, assertiveness and self-control resulted into moderate level of sexual morality. However, integrity was discovered to be the best predictor of University undergraduates' sexual morality. Therefore, effective dissemination of Social Studies Education which is embedded with value laded contents seem to be the solution that could transform University undergraduates students' attitudes towards positive moral development in Nigeria.

The following recommendations are made to facilitate social values conformity and reduce peer pressure on university undergraduates:

1. Parents should intensify the inculcation of right type of social values to discourage their children from engaging in illicit sexual acts.
2. Parents and guardians should be more involved in the proper upbringing of their wards and closely monitor them to know whom they keep as friends.
3. University undergraduates should also be vey watchful and be bold enough to cut off any ungodly relationship that may lure them to engage in premarital sexual acts.
4. Researchers and educationists should designed programmes that will assist University undergraduates to maintain and conform with societal cherished social values.

5. Proper dissemination of Social Studies contents by qualified Social Studies teachers is essential to achieve desired objective of developing and inculcating desirable social values in learners at all levels therefore the aspect of the course of societal values need to be made compulsory for all undergraduate students as general studies required for graduation in our universities.

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