

Environmental Determinants of Risky Sexual Behaviours among Secondary School Adolescents in Obollo-Afor Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria

Associate. Prof Joachim C. Omeje^{1*}, Millicent N. Ekwueme², Petronilla N. Omeje³
Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka
*Email: joachimomeje@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

The study investigated environmental determinants of risky sexual behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Obollo-Afor Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria. Three research questions and a hypothesis guided the study. The subject of the study was 150 adolescent secondary school boys and girls. The instrument for the study used in collecting data was questionnaire. Mean score and t-test statistics were used for data analysis. Results showed that what constitutes risky sexual behaviour among adolescents include watching pornographic films and pictures, indulging in sexual acts because others are doing it, having unprotected sexual intercourse, among others. The result also revealed environmental factors such as excessive intake of alcohol, being friendly with those who indulge in risky sexual behaviours and watching bad films. The result also showed that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students as regards risky sexual behaviour. The implications of the findings were highlighted and recommendations made as well.

Keywords: Environmental, Determinants, Risky, Sexual, Behaviours, Adolescents

1. Introduction

Syndromes of moral decadence such as sexual immorality have eaten up the norms, values and dedications which have been the culture of the Nigerian society in the past. The moral legacy of our forefathers has been eroded by modernization and technological advancement. James (2004) had lamented that it is pathetic to note today that the world is fast turning upside down. The author also noted too that what we used to know about virtue, morality and respect are fast fading out amongst youth (adolescents) in the society.

Adolescence is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. Eze (2005) pointed out that this period of development poses a lot of problems like moodiness rebellion, sad loss of childhood innocence, loss of interest in parental upbringing to the young adult, the home, the school and the entire society. Adolescence is also a time when risks of sexual and other forms of abuse, exploitation and violence are high, and when the drive for autonomy and self-definition often means a reduced reliance on parents and others as trusted sources of audience (Aggleton, Hurry and Warwick 2000). According to them, the period of adolescence may be long or short depending on the traditional or modern outlook or background of the adolescent. They noted that different cultures or countries determine when the period of adolescence will terminate. The modern way is more precise as the period tends to coincide generally with secondary school year or age from 11-18 plus. The interest in adolescence period is marked by the need to understand adolescents, yet there indications that adolescents are not really understood by significant ones such as parents, teachers, counselors among others who are meant to assist them. Aggleton, Hurry and Warwick noted that it is real fact when it comes to sensitive areas such as sexual and reproductive health and gender relations. According to Anda, Edwards, Felittic and Holden in Adama(2005) adolescents who are abused and neglected during childhood often exhibit offensive behaviours such as risky sexual behaviors if not properly guided by the adults.

Sexual behaviours are all those things we 'do' such as hugging and erotic touch that we consider sexual. Sexual behaviours are things we do with others like kissing, erotic touch, intercourse, oral sex, and sex and manual sexual stimulation (Robinson, 1999). According to Abah and Echodu (2004), sexual behaviour is an individual's ability to experience or express sexual feelings. In the context of this study it refers to all sexual actions and responses related to pleasure seeking.

Sexual behaviour could be healthy or risky. Risky sexual behaviour is any sexual activity that increases the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant. It includes early sexual debut, unprotected sexual activity, inconsistent use of condoms, infection drug user, survival sex (sex in exchange for money, food, drugs or shelter) or sex with a partner who has other partners or more than one partner at a time (Aral and Haffner, 1995).

Risky sexual behaviour is the major factor in the rising rate of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and adolescents are the chief shareholders of this menace. One therefore keeps on wondering whether it is the environment or the genetic make-up of individuals that constitute this like style of adolescents.

Environment in the context of this study stands for any conditions outside the individual which could affect

adolescent's behaviour and development. According to Clifford (1981) environment refers to all the complex factors, other than genetic which influence the individual's physiological, sociological and psychological growth from conception to death. Abert (2005) noted that environment has facilitated the development of risky sexual behaviours among young adults (and adolescents). The implication here is that environmental factors may be issues in risky sexual behaviours. Lending credence to environmental influences Anderson (2005) stated that both genetic and environmental dynamics are great determinants in one's behavioural pattern. Environmental determinant is considered as conditions that affect the behaviour and development of an individual (adolescent) and circumstances that happened within the time range. It is the forces and conditions that surround and influence living and non-living things (Sills 2009). The consequence of risky sexual behavior is that it increases the likelihood of contracting STIs, teen pregnancy and low self-esteem. According to Essien (1994), the measures of enhancing healthy sexual behaviours among secondary school adolescents include passing relevant information on sexual issues during morning assembly, discouraging them from watching pornographic and bad films and pasting photographs on the bulletin board to show the damaging effects of risky sexual behaviour. It has been observed by Robinson (1999) that male adolescents were more likely than females to have sex and to have more sexual partners.

Sexual activities is so rampant and devastating among adolescents such that they engage in risky sexual behaviours either as a result of what they see around them, things they read from papers, movies they watch or from their peers and even what they copy from adults. From literatures, it has been observed that young people see adults having multiple sexual partners, engaging in sexual intercourse under the influence of alcohol and ladies expose their nakedness in the name of fashion and go scot-free. The adolescents follow suit in doing these. Yet there has not been works on environmental determinants of risky sexual behaviour among secondary school adolescents. One is therefore faced with the problem of identifying risky sexual behaviours among adolescents, the extent of risky behaviours exhibited among them and the environmental factors that influence adolescent's risky sexual behaviours. The finding of this study will benefit the parents, counsellors, educators, social workers and caregivers by enabling them to realize their expected roles towards the upbringing of tomorrow's leaders.

The finding of the study will also increase teacher's awareness of risky sexual behaviours among adolescents and the environmental factors that influence adolescents' risky sexual behaviours.

The study thus investigates environmental determinants of risky sexual behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Obollo-Afor Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

2. Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study:

1. What constitutes risky sexual behaviours among adolescents?
2. To what extent are risky sexual behaviours exhibited among adolescents?
3. What are the environmental factors that influence adolescent's risky sexual behaviours?

3. Hypothesis

A hypothesis guided the study and was tested at 0.05 level of probability.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents with regards to what constitutes risky sexual behaviours among adolescents

4. Method

The design is descriptive survey. The study was conducted with secondary school adolescents in Obollo-Affor education zone of Enugu state, Nigeria. The population of the study comprises 4800 students, made up of all the senior secondary school students in SSI and II Post-Primary School Management Board (PPSMB)(Obollo-Afor Zone, 2013). Stratified random sampling was employed to select two schools from the three local government area of the zone from which 150 students emerged as respondents using simple random sampling technique.

Instrument for data collection was questionnaire titled Adolescents' Risky Sexual Behaviours Questionnaire. It has two sections. Section A sought for information about the students personal data, while section B contained 26 items built on a Likert type scale measure of a five point rating responses sought that information from the students about what constitutes risky sexual behaviours, the extent the behaviours were exhibited by student and the environmental factors that influence adolescents' risky sexual behaviours. It has three clusters. The face validity of the instrument was determined by giving out draft copies to three experts, one from measurement and evaluation and two from guidance and counselling in faculty of education university of Nigeria, Nsukka.

The reliability of the instrument was determined in a preliminary trial-testing among 20 SS I and SS II students in Nsukka education zone using Kuder-Richardson 21 reliability co-efficient. The Kuder-Richardson 21 was computed based on clusters A, B, C and the average result of the reliability co-efficient of the internal consistency was 0.87. Copies of the instrument were distributed to the respondents personally using three

research assistants. Mean score statistics was used to analyze research questions, while the only hypothesis that guided the study was analyzed using t-test statistics.

5. Results

Mean Responses of what Constitutes Risky Sexual Behaviours Among Adolescent Students.

From table 1, the rated highest mean 3.27 of item 7 which indicates that watching of pornographic films and pictures constitutes adolescents risky sexual behaviours. The mean score of 3.09 in item 5 also shows that adolescents engage in having unprotected sexual intercourse. Based on the analysis of the table where the grand mean is 2.87 which is above the average cut-off point of acceptance (2.50), it is established that all the items in the cluster constitute to large extent adolescents' risky sexual behaviours.

Mean Responses of the Extent to which Adolescents Exhibited Risky Sexual Behaviours.

The analysis of the research question on the extent to which adolescents exhibit risky sexual behaviours indicated a grand mean score of 2.79. This shows that every item on it has been rated high and so meet the agreed criterion mean of 2.50. Based on the analysis, it is agreed by the respondents that adolescents exhibit risky sexual behaviour to a high extent. However item 7 in this cluster with mean score of 3.31 is identified as a risky sexual behaviour which adolescent exhibit at a very high extent. Engaging in sexual act such as hugging as societal norm with the mean score of 2.49 has the least mean score in this cluster.

Mean Responses on the Environmental Factors that Influence Adolescents Risky Sexual Behaviours.

The data on table 3 shows that among the expected environmental factors that influence adolescents risky sexual behaviour is having friends that indulge in risky sexual behaviours, adolescent being influenced negatively among others. This is because it has the highest mean score of 3.57. In the table also other items mean scores show that all environmental factors listed influence adolescents risky sexual behaviour. The conclusion drawn is that environmental factors influence adolescent's risky sexual behavior.

t-test Analysis of the Significant Difference between the Mean Rating of Males and Females Adolescents on what constitute Risky Sexual Behaviours.

The data on table 4 above show that the mean for male is 3.12 while that of female is 3.0. The data were further subjected to t-test analysis in order to ascertain whether there is a significant difference between the ratings of the two groups. The result of the analysis shows that significant difference was not found between their ratings as it concerns adolescent's risky sexual behaviours. This was because the t-calculated of 1.49 is less than t-critical of 1.65.

6. Discussion

The result of what constitutes risky sexual behaviours among adolescents showed that watching of pornographic films and pictures, having unprotected sexual intercourse, taking part in sexual acts such as kissing opposite sex partner among others implicated risky sexual behaviours among adolescents. This findings is in consonance with Ibe (2000) who opined that sudden changes adolescents experience in their body often pose a stress in them because they are not aware of what is happening around them.

The result of the study also showed that adolescents exhibit risky sexual behaviour to an extent. However it was equally discovered that by watching pornographic films and pictures, adolescents exhibit risky sexual behaviour at a very high level. This is in line with Adama (2005) that adolescents who were abused and neglected during their childhood age by adults often exhibit risky sexual behaviour at a high extent. From the findings of the study it was also discovered that one of the environmental factors that influence adolescents risky sexual behaviour most is having friends that indulge in risky sexual behaviours. Thus supporting the observation of Daniel (1996), that adolescents engage in risky sexual behaviour either as a result of what they see around them or from what they copy from peers and adults. Further the result showed that there is no significant different in the mean ratings of males and females as it concerns adolescents risk sexual behaviours.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is important to note that the way our young ones are brought up matters a lot in their adjustment and social interactions with people of same or opposite sex. The method of upbringing also influences their sexual behaviours either positively or negatively. It has been discovered that adolescent's risky sexual behaviours have long been ignored. This makes this study imperative.

The implication of the findings of this study is that risky sexual behaviour among adolescents affects everybody in the society. Parents should therefore note that every child naturally wants to be loved and counseled by parents and significant others around them. This is because as was indicated from the study, one of the environmental factors that influence adolescents' risky sexual behaviour is loose handling of children by parents. This study was limited by the fact that most of the respondents were reluctant to fill the questionnaire except on the ground that they are cleared on what the result is going to be used for at the end of the exercise. The

researchers then suggest that government schools organize awareness lectures for adolescents from time to time, especially on sexual issue. Also counsellors should be encouraged to organize seminars, counselling sessions and use photographs to discourage risky sexual behaviours among adolescents.

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- Joachim .C. Omeje B.E.D, M.E.D and Ph.D. (Nigeria) Associate Professor of Guidance and Counseling, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Joachim teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Educational Guidance and Counselling, Supervises both undergraduate and postgraduate theses in the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Joachim organizes workshop, seminars and conferences, and articulates research proposals that have funding prospects, functions as a professional in education in planning, producing and or implementing educational research projects, evaluation and book development initiatives. Joachim's research interest spans a wide range of Education, social and Environmental issues in the areas of Education and Development, Human Sexuality, Counseling, Genders, Cultural Issues, Family and Adolescence.
- Joachim's Educational background is this:
 University of Nigeria, Nsukka-B.E.D Guidance and Counseling 1992.
 University of Nigeria, Nsukka-M.E.D Guidance and Counseling 1996
 University of Nigeria, Nsukka-PhD Guidance and Counseling 2000
 Petronillaand Millicent are postgraduate students in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their research interest are in the areas of adolescence development and sexuality.

Tables

Table 1: Mean Responses of what Constitutes Risky Sexual Behaviours Among Adolescent Students.

S/N	Items Descriptions	Mean (X)
1	Indulging in sexual acts because others do it	2.85
2	Having multiple sex partners	2.99
3	Engaging in indiscriminate sexual acts such as erotic touching	2.82
4	Taking part in sexual acts such as kissing opposite sex partners	3.00
5	Having unprotected sexual intercourse	3.09
6	Engaging in sexual acts such as hugging	2.39
7	Watching of pornographic films and pictures	3.27
8	Read literatures that dwell on sexual acts	2.52
	Total	22.93
	Grand Mean	2.87

Table 2: Mean Responses of the Extent to which Adolescents Exhibited Risky Sexual Behaviours.

S/N	Items Description	Mean
1	Indulging in sexual acts because others do	2.97
2	Having multiple sex partners	2.83
3	Engaging in indiscriminate sexual acts such as erotic touching	2.79
4	Taking part in sexual acts such as kissing opposite sex partner	2.50
5	Having unprotected sexual intercourse	2.78
6	Engaging in sexual act such as hugging as a societal norm	2.49
7	Watching pornographic films and pictures	3.31
8	Reading literatures that dwells on sexual acts	2.61
	Total	22.28
	Grand Mean	2.79

Table 3: The Mean Responses on the Environmental Factors that Influence Adolescents Risky Sexual Behaviours.

S/N	Items Description	Mean (X)
1	Lack of discipline in school contributes towards adolescents risky sexual behaviours	3.31
2	Having friends that indulge in risky sexual behaviours would help in making one behave the same	3.51
3	Excessive intake of alcohol contributes in adolescents risky sexual behaviours	3.09
4	Watching of bad films	3.42
5	A home that lack love contributes in helping adolescents to develop risky sexual behaviour	2.56
6	Adolescents exhibit risky sexual behaviour if the society is not moral	3.10
7	Parents inability to meet their children's' needs	3.12
8	Feeling timid to say no when sexual advance is made	2.88
9	Loose handling of children by parents	3.34
10	The urge for material gratification	3.17
	Total	31.49
	Grand Mean	3.15

Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Significant Difference between the Mean Rating of Males and Females Adolescents on what constitute Risky Sexual Behaviours.

Group	\bar{x}	SD	No	Df	T-cal	T-crit	Level	decision
Male	3.12	0.9243	153	298	1.49	1.65	0.05	Accepted
Female	3.00	1.0498	1.47					

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