

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND SETTING AS CORROLATES OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

Prof. J.O Ogunsanmi, Dr. A.T. Babalola and O.O Ogunsami (MPH)

Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Department of Public Health,
Babcock University, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State.

Abstract

The study investigated the influence of family structure and setting on sexual behavior of in-school adolescents in Southwest Nigeria. The study was a descriptive research of the survey type. The population was all senior secondary school II students in the six states of the Southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria. A sample of 1350 in-school adolescents was selected through multistage sampling technique. The research instrument was a questionnaire which was validated by the researchers. Two hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data generated were analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test analysis. Results of the analyses revealed that family structure of adolescents significantly influenced their sexual behaviour. However, family setting had no significant influence on their sexual behaviour. Based on the findings, it is recommended that both parents should live together for proper upbringing and monitoring of their children.

Keywords: In-school adolescents, Reproductive health practices, Family structure and Family setting

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of sexual exploration and incorporation of sexuality. It involves problems of risky sexual behavior that can lead to consequences such as adolescent pregnancy, abortion, rape and sexually transmitted infection. While these are of significant concern, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that sexuality is a normal part of adolescence. During adolescence, the lives of males and females become wrapped in sexuality (Sentrock, 2005). Adolescents have an almost insatiable curiosity about the mysteries of sex. They wonder whether they are sexually attractive and think about how to behave sexually.

Fasuba and Ojo (2005) examined adolescent's sexuality and family life education in Southwest Nigeria and reported that in spite of the fact that the open discussion of sex is a taboo in the Nigerian societies, the reproductive behaviour of adolescents appears to have changed. They observed that premarital sexual activities are on the increase and this is traceable to the

introduction of video films and importation of foreign cultures and habits including clothing styles. Also, that there has been an increase in incidents of pregnancy and contract of sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV/AIDS) among unmarried teenagers.

The family remains the central element of contemporary life. It is the corner stone of any society. Odimegwu, Solanke and Adedokun (2002) observed that the best an unstable family can produce is an incomplete or unsocialized child. It was observed that adolescents who had intact homes had lower rate of ever having had a sexual intercourse before marriage than those whose natural parents were separated or had one or both parent dead.

Parent-child relationship, parent control, parent-child communication, family structure, family types have all been found to be significant in adolescent reproductive health practices. Better parent child relationships are associated with postponing intercourse, less frequent intercourse

and fewer sexual partners by adolescent (Miller, Benson, Gal and Braith, 2001).

Family setting to an extent may influence sexual behaviour of adolescents. An adolescent from a monogamous family may receive adequate attention and love. There may be proper co-ordination in the affairs of such a family. Owuamanam (2003) in his study of the influence of family types on adolescents' attitude towards sexual promiscuity examined monogamous and polygamous families. It was revealed that there was a significant difference between attitude to sexual promiscuity of adolescent from the two family types. Adolescent from polygamous families showed more favourable attitude to sexual promiscuity than those from monogamous families.

Another factor that can influence adolescent reproductive health practice is the structure of the family. Adolescents from intact homes may likely not be promiscuous, as ones from broken homes where only one parent cares for the children. The attitude to promiscuity is likely to differ due to parenting style. The adolescent in a broken home may be free and hence, be influenced negatively sexually.

Many parents feel shy about discussing the topic of sex with their children. Some parents believe that discussing sexual issues will provoke sexual experimentation in their children. The culture of silence exposes the adolescents to getting and acting on wrong information. This invariably puts them at risk of engaging in unhealthy sexual behaviour. Parent often find initiating discussions about sexuality with teenagers difficult (Adegoke, 2003). Casual observations show that the society, discussions on sexuality by parents and their adolescent children are not too often a normal happening

Also, failure of parents to identify with their adolescents in their peculiar developmental stage of adolescence promotes lack of trust and unwillingness to open up to their parents. However, it appears there is a difference in the reproductive health practices of adolescents living with both parents, living with one of the parents living with siblings or family members from monogamous or polygamous families. Hence, the

study investigated the influence of family structure and setting on the reproductive health practices of in-school adolescents.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of family structure on the reproductive health practices of in – school adolescents.
2. There is no significant influence of family setting on the reproductive health practices of in – school adolescents.

Research Method

The descriptive research design of the survey type was used for the study. The population for the study consisted of all male and female adolescents in Senior Secondary School (SSII) in Southwest, Nigeria. Southwest Nigeria consist of six states: Ekiti, Osun, Ondo, Oyo, Ogun and Lagos. The population was 130,817 students as obtained from the Ministries of Education of Ekiti, Osun, Ondo, Oyo, Ogun and Lagos states as at the time of study. The respondents were within the age range of 14 – 17 years. They were students from Senior Secondary School II (SS II) within the senatorial districts across the states, selected through multistage sampling technique. The sample for the study consisted of 1350 in-school adolescents. The instrument for the collection of data for the study was tagged 'Adolescents' Sexual Behaviour Questionnaire (ASBQ).' The instrument was adopted from a standardized instrument known as Reproductive Health, Needs, assessment of Youth's project state questionnaire.

The Face and content validity of the instrument were ensured. Using test-retest method, a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. Construct validity coefficient of 0.74 was also obtained for the instrument. These were significant at 0.05 level of significance. The research instrument was administered by the researchers in the classrooms of the respondents. Data generated were analysed using inferential statistics of t-test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of family structure on sexual behavior of in-school adolescents in Southwest Nigeria.

The hypothesis was formulated to determine whether family structure could influence sexual behavior of in-school adolescents. To test this, the mean scores obtained by respondents living with father only, adolescents living with mother only,

those living with both parents, those living with family members or siblings were subjected to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance as presented on Table 1.

Table 1: One-way ANOVA summary of sexual behavior of in-school adolescents and family structure.

Sources	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F _{cal}	F _{tab}
Between Groups	104.590	3	34.90		
Within Groups	5783.84	1163	4.97		
Total		1166		7.010*	2.60

* Significant <0.05

Table 1 reveals that F-calculated (7.01) is greater than F-table (2.60) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant influence of family structure on the sexual behaviour of in-school adolescents.

Scheffe post hoc analysis of pair wise comparison of mean difference based on family structure was also done and presented on table 2.

Table 2: Scheffe Post hoc analysis on sexual behavior of in-school adolescents based on family structure

Sexual behaviour based on family structure	Living with sibling or family member	Living with father only	Living with mother only	Living with both parents	Mean	N
Living with sibling or family member	*	*			8.9048	84
Living with father only					7.8193	166
Living with mother only					7.7738	305
Living with both parents					8.1912	612

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 2 reveals that there was a significant difference between the sexual behaviour of adolescents based on their family structure. It showed that there was a significant difference in the sexual behaviour of adolescents living with their siblings or family members and those living with father only. Similarly, there was a significant difference in the sexual behaviour of adolescents living with siblings or family members and those living with mother only. However, the mean difference between adolescents living with siblings or family members and those living with both parents was not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. The table further reveals that those living with father only, mother only, living

with siblings or family members are not statistically significant with those living with both parents.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of family setting on sexual behaviour of adolescent in southwest Nigeria.

This hypothesis investigated whether family setting of in-school adolescents could influence their sexual behaviour. To test this, the mean scores of in-school adolescents from monogamous and polygamous family backgrounds were subjected to t-test analysis at 0.05 level of significance as presented on Table 3.

Table 3: t-test summary of sexual behaviour of in-school adolescents based on family setting.

Variables	N	X	SD	t _{cal}	t _{tab}
Monogamous family	789	5.480	1.640		
Polygamous family	378	5.390	1.580		
Total	1167			0.918	1.960

Not significant at $P > 0.05$

Table 3 reveals that monogamous family setting had a mean score of 5.480 and standard deviation of 1.640, while polygamous family had a mean score of 5.390 and standard deviation of 1.580. The t-calculated was 0.918 while the table value was 1.96. The t-test analysis shows no significant result. Therefore, there is no significant influence of family setting on sexual behaviour of in-school adolescents. Thus, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant influence of family setting on sexual behavior of in-school adolescents based on family setting was accepted.

Discussion

The study examined the influence of family structure and family setting on the sexual behavior of in-school adolescents in Southwest Nigeria. The findings revealed that family structure significantly influenced sexual behavior while family setting did not have a significant influence on sexual behaviour.

Findings of this study revealed that family structure of in-school adolescents significantly influenced their sexual behaviour. This result agrees with the study of Capera (2011) that revealed that youths whose parents are unmarried or whose parents' marriages had been dissolved were more likely to be sexually active and have had more sexual partners. Similarly, Pearson, Muller and Friscor (2006) reported that family structure had been constantly found to be an important predictor of teenagers' sexual debut. Also, they found that adolescents living with single or remarried parents tend to initiate sex earlier than those living with both biological parents. The underlying factor for this finding could be as a result of the possible parental monitoring of adolescent living with both parents. Parents who are single or divorced may possibly not be a positive role model to be emulated and their children sexually. Living with older siblings who are sexually active may influence adolescents

living with siblings. Similarly, older members of the community may exploit adolescents who are living with single parents, family members or siblings due to financial constraint. They may exploit such situations persuade or coerce adolescents, especially the female ones into having unprotected sexual contact.

The analysis of hypothesis two revealed that family setting did not significantly influence the reproductive health practices of in-school adolescents. The finding contradicts the findings of Owuaniamam (2003) that revealed differences between monogamous and polygamous families, toward sexual promiscuity of adolescents. However, the findings agree with the study of Bello et al (2005) who reported that about 20% of adolescents from monogamous family were sexually active. This is probably due to the fact that all adolescents, irrespective of their family setting engage in various forms of sexual behaviour, since sexuality is a natural phenomenon.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of data and interpretations of the findings of the study, the following conclusion could be drawn from the study.

1. Family structure of in-school adolescents influences their sexual behaviour.
2. Family setting does not influence in-school adolescents' sexual behaviour.

Counselling implications of the findings and recommendations

The family remains the central element of contemporary life and the family structure and setting forms are significant factors in the behaviour of individual members of the home, especially in-school adolescents. There is a need for the establishment of private counselling clinics in communities, where parents could seek help at their convenience. Effective school guidance

programme and the establishment of clinics are inevitable in-schools and the society. Public health messages, through which in-school adolescents, their parents and siblings would be enlightened about safe sexual health practices are essential in schools and communities.

References

- Capera, E. A. (2011). Family influences on adolescents sexual and contraceptive behaviour. *Journal of Sex Research* (39), 22-26.
- Dittus P. J. & Jaccard J. (2000). The Relationship of Adolescent Perceptions of Maternal Disapproval of Sex and Mother-Adolescent Relationship to Sexual Outcomes. *Manuscript, Department of Psychology*. State University of New York, Albany, N.Y.
- Fasuba O.B. & Ojo D.O (2005). Adolescent Sexuality and Family Life Education in South Western Nigeria: *Responses from Focus Group Discussion*. *Journal of Social Science*, 10(2), 111-118.
- Miller, B. C., Benson, B & Falbraith, K. A. (2001). Family Relationships and Adolescent Pregnancy Risk: A Research Synthesis. *Development Review*, (21), 1-38.
- Odimegweu C. O., Solanke, L. B. & Adedokun, A. (2002). Parental Characteristics and Adolescent Sexual Behaviour in Bida Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Reproductive Health, Women Health and Action Research Centre*. 95-106.
- Ogunsanmi, J.O., Olusanya, O. A. & Olusanya, M. (2014). Influence of quality of parent-child relationship and parental communication styles on sexual behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ondo State, Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal*, 10 (16), 373-379.
- Owuamanam, T. O. (2003). Dangers of Premarital Sex and Early Marriage. *Nigerian Journal of Counseling and applied Psychology*. 1(1), 49-55.
- Pearson, J., Miller, B. C. & Frisco, M. (2006). The relationship between family structure and adolescents' sexual behaviour. www.familyfact.org/fo/pdf
- Sentrock, J. W. (2005). *Adolescence*. New York: McGraw Hill.