

Relationship among Gender Sexual Attitude, Sexual Self-Esteem and Risky Sexual Behaviours of Senior Secondary School Students in Niger State, Nigeria

¹Musa Mohammed; ²Dr (Mrs) Anthonia Ugochukwu, and ³Abdulkadir Ranfat Mamman
^{1,2,3} Department of Educational Psychology,
School of Education,
Niger State College of Education, Minna

E-mail: musanadaya@gmail.com

Abstract

The rate at which school going adolescents engaged in risky sexual Behaviours in the Country are alarming and now of serious concern. It is therefore/the focus of this study to examine the relationship among gender sexual attitude, sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviours of Senior Secondary School Student in Niger State Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling techniques were employed in selecting 290 school going adolescents from some Senior Secondary Schools in the seven educational zones of Niger State. One research question was answered using descriptive analysis of ordinary percentage and rank order, three hypotheses were tested using Pearson product-moment correlation co-efficient at 0.05 significant level. The students responded to the instrument used for data collection, the items were constructed on a 4- point likert scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree, with a total of 50 items titled "Questionnaire on the relationship among gender sexual attitude, sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviours" (QRAGSASSERSB). The result revealed that there are significant relationships among gender sexual attitude, sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behavior of senior secondary school students. Some recommendations were proffered among which is; preventive seminars and workshops were advocated for students and sex education should be integrated and properly implemented in the secondary schools curriculum.

Key words: Sex Education, risky sexual behaviour, unwanted pregnancies, Sexual transmitted disease (STD).

Introduction

Adolescents constitute the largest population globally; it is a transition period from childhood stage to adulthood, most secondary school students fall within this range. This is the period young adults are faced with numerous challenges as well as developmental problems, in that issues of sex becomes the major constraint. It is also the period adolescents are becoming more sexually active sooner than previous generation and are frequently changing relationships.

Besides, these adolescents take part in so many dangerous sexual activities without adequately considering the consequences. The general improvement of the youths are shaped by many factors, and sexual advancement is a typical and apparently crucial

piece of pre-adulthood (or adolescent stage), as it includes the physical transformations as well as the arrangement of one's point of view, dispositions, articulation of closeness as well as the characterizing of experiences within romantic and sexual structure (Adeyemo and Williams 2019).

The Nigeria Demographic and Health overview of 1999 revealed that the middle age of first encounter with sex for young ladies is a little more than 16 years. By the time they are 18 years and 20, 63 percent and around 80 percent respectively have encountered sex. Some investigations have revealed high rates of pre-marital sexual activities amongst Nigeria youths (Odewale, 2000; Omotoso, 2003; Owwamanam, 1995; Ugoji, 2008, Unuigbo and Ogbeide, 1999). In neighbourhood that are characterized by home turnover, destitution as well as the rate of crime which are seen by inhabitants to be hazardous, adolescent have a tendency to have early beginning of sexual encounters, low utilization of contraceptives, as well as high rates of juvenile pregnancy (Aneshensel, Sucoff & Levy-Storm, 1999; Miller, Benson and Galbraith, 2001; Billy, Brewster and Grady, 1994; Upchurch). Eweniyi (2013) observed that most adolescent boys and girls learn about sex and sexual activities from their peers and situations outside the home or school. Hence, most of them exhibit deviant or unacceptable sex behaviours in the public which often predisposed them to dangerous consequences.

Gender sexual attitude can be seen as the sexual values or belief system one possesses concerning others depending upon their gender. These include dissatisfaction with casual sex of the female gender or sexual activity as well as approval of male sexual permissiveness. Sexual self-esteem is the level of confidence one has in terms of sex. It could likewise also be our beliefs, feelings concerning sex that could resemble questions like, Am I competent in bed? Am I looking sexually attractive? Am I too fat? All these lead to unrealistic decisions about sex. Risky sexual behaviour are those behavior that exposes one to high risks of being infected with diseases that are sexually transmitted as well as unplanned pregnancies.

Mentioned risks linked with sex that is unprotected are strictly related to the other activities that are risky such as alcoholism and drug abuse during adolescence.

In this study, some factors proposed to influence young people's risky sexual behaviours are sexual self-esteem and gender sexual attitude.

Statement of the Problem

Pre-marital sex and sexual interactions among senior secondary school students appears to be common. Young adult tend to experiment with risky sexual behaviour often with little awareness of the dangers inherent in it. The rate of teenage pregnancies, abortions and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are increasing everyday among secondary school students.

Young people are victims of sexually transmitted disease (STDS) including HIV/AIDS pandemic Worldwide. It was declared by National Demographic Health Survey (2008) that just below fifty percent (50%) of every youth that is sexually active report not using condom even in the case where incidence of HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies was high, in spite of the data from diverse sources regarding the pandemic. The

pertinent issue to raise therefore, "What is it that is sustaining school going adolescents' risky sexual behaviour"?

These teenagers are extremely inquisitive about the opposite sex, their sexual state of mind been seen adversely as in proper and troublesome as opposed to ordinary thinking about sex. The commonness of their unsafe sexual practices among others has risen drastically, they are found in various nook and cranny of the urban communities around the clubs, uncompleted building and schools in hidden areas at nights involving in all kinds of sexual engagements. It is against this background that the focus of this study aims at examining the relationship among gender sexual attitude, sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviour among senior secondary schools pupils within Niger State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if there are relationships among gender sexual attitude, sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Niger State Nigeria. Specifically, the study will:

1. Identify risky sexual behaviours commonly practiced among the senior secondary school students in Niger State, Nigeria.
2. Examine how gender sexual attitudes relates to risky sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Niger State, Nigeria.
3. Determine how sexual self-esteem relates to risky sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Niger State, Nigeria.
4. Assess whether gender sexual attitudes affect or influence sexual self-esteem of senior secondary school students in Niger State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the researcher to achieve the purpose of the study:

1. What are the risky sexual behaviours commonly practiced among the senior secondary school students in Niger State, Nigeria.
2. Is there any relationship between gender sexual attitude and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary school students in Niger State, Nigeria.
3. Is there any relationship between sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary school students in Niger State, Nigeria.
4. Is there any relationship between gender sexual attitudes and sexual self-esteem of senior secondary school students in Niger State, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis were tested in this study:

H01: There is no significant relationship between gender sexual attitude and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary school students in Niger State, Nigeria.

H02: There is no significant relationship between sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Niger State, Nigeria.

H03: There is no significant relationship between gender sexual attitude and sexual self-esteem of senior secondary school students in Niger State, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would help the young adult particularly in the senior secondary schools of Niger State Nigeria, to be aware of the dangers in indulging in risky sexual activities and subsequently avoid them.

Research Design

This research adopted a correlation design to determine whether or not two variables are correlated. This means to study whether an increase or decrease in one variable corresponds to an increase or decrease in the other variable.

Moreover, correlation design seeks to compare or limit empirical investigation to two key variables of different or similar nomenclature. (Gay, 1987 cited in Baji and Wachik0 2008).

Population of the Study

The population of the study are all the senior secondary school students in the two hundred and seventy eight (278) senior secondary schools in the seven (7) educational zones of Niger State Nigeria, with the total enrolment of 57,947 students. Males students are 37,064 while the female students are 20,883 (MOE/NS, 2016). The educational zones are Bida, Minna, Suleja, Kutigi, Kontgora, Rijau and New Bussa.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The samples for this study were 290 students. The students were selected using multistage sampling method. Multi-stage sampling represents a complicated form of cluster sampling in which larger clusters are further subdivided into smaller, more targeted groupings. This sampling method was used to select students from all the seven (7) educational zones in Niger State Nigeria, as follows: - (source: Mogan and Krejcie, 1970).

In the first stage, the researcher used cluster sampling to choose secondary schools from each zone. Then in the second stage, the researcher used simple random sampling to select students from each of the selected schools for the final sample to the total of 290 students (Males and Females).

Table 3.1 Distribution of Sample Selected for the Study

Educational Zones in Niger State	Number of Schools in the Zones	Number of Schools Selected	Sample of Students Selected
Bida	70	3	65
Kutigi	41	2	40
Kontagora	15	1	30
Minna	52	2	40
New Bussa	21	1	30
Suleja	60	3	55
Rijau	19	1	30
Total	278	13	290

The Research Instrument

One instrument titled Questionnaire on the relationship among gender sexual attitude, sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviour (QRAGSSERSB) was used to collect data on this study. The instrument was adapted from the following scales:- Hendricks gender sexual attitude scale (HGSAS, 2006) Multi-Dimensional sexual self-esteem (NSSQ Snell, 2001) and Youth Risky Sexual Behaviour Questionnaire (YRBQ CDCP 2015). This is because the instruments were initially developed for the European and American Adolescents questionnaire is divided in to three section A, B and C.

Section a, sought information on personal data of respondents; while section B sought responses of adolescence on the risky sexual behaviour commonly practiced in senior secondary schools. Section C is further divided into parts. Parts A sought information on gender sexual attitude of adolescences in senior secondary schools (18 items). Part B sought information on sexual self-esteem of adolescence in senior secondary schools (15 items) and part C sought information on risky sexual behaviour of adolescents in senior secondary schools (17 items) making a total of 50 items. The items were constructed on a 4-point Likert scale of strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and strongly disagree.

Validity of the instrument

Content validity was established for the instrument. This was done by giving the instrument to five experts in guidance and counseling, test and measurement from Ibrahim Badamasi University Lapai, to ascertain its relevance. The recommendations they gave, such as the number of items should be reduced and the word. "I" should be avoided, which were incorporated into the final draft and it was found to be valid and sufficient to elicit the required information from the respondents, therefore, the current researcher accepted it as valid for this study.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test re-test techniques on 40 students drawn from 2 senior secondary schools in Zuba Federal Capital territory Abuja who were not part of the study population. The test was administered on the same group of students twice after 2 weeks interval under the same condition. The results obtained at both the first and second test for each person in the group were then correlated statistically using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Co-efficient statistics to determine the extent to which both scores are related. The reliability index obtained was 0.94. This was considered high enough for this present study.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher with the aid of two research assistants. The research assistants were trained before the commencement of the study. In before the administration of the instrument. Participants were briefed about the objectives of the study and what the questionnaires are meant for. The researcher also offered to clarify any of the item on which they sought more clarification. The instrument was retrieved immediately after completion. The administration of the instrument lasted for a period of 4 weeks. A total of 290 copies of the questionnaire were administered for the whole sample of the study.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis of ordinary percentage and rank order was used to analyse the students responses on risky sexual behaviours in the research question. The research hypotheses were tested by using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistics at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS Version 20.0.

DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents the outcome of the data collected from the field work. The analysis of the data are presented in various tables below.

Research Question one

What are the risky sexual behaviour commonly practised among the senior Secondary School Students in Niger State Nigeria?

Table 4.1 Showing percentage and rank order distribution of various risky sexual behaviour commonly practice among the senior secondary school students in Niger State Nigeria.

Risky sexual behaviours	N	%	Rank
Sex at an early age	153	52.76%	1 st
Having multiple sexual partners	55	18.97%	2 nd
Unprotected vaginal and oral sexual intercourse	28	9.66%	3 rd
Inconsistent and incorrect use of condoms	22	7.59%	4 th
Sex under the influence of alcohol and drugs	13	4.48%	5 th
Sex with same gender	9	3.10%	6 th
Total	290	100%	

Table 4.1 shows that sex at an early age is the most common risky sexual behaviour practised by senior secondary students in Niger state with 153 respondents at (52.76%). This is followed by having multiple sexual partners with 55 respondents at (18.97%), unprotected vaginal and oral sexual intercourse followed with 28 respondents at (9.66%), next is inconsistent and incorrect use of condoms with 22 respondents at (7.59%) while sex under the influence of alcohol and drugs has 13 respondents at (4.48%) and the least was sex with same gender with 9 respondents at (3.10%).

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

HO: There is no significant relationship between the gender sexual attitude and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary school students in Niger State Nigeria.

Table 4.2 Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics on the Relationship between Gender Sexual Attitude and the Risky Sexual Behaviours of Senior Secondary School Students in Niger State.

Variable	N	Df	Mean	SD	r	Sig (P)	Remarks
Gender Sexual Attitude	290		68.74	9.40			
		288			0.04	0.05	Significant
Risky Sexual Behaviours	290		54.12	12.64			

Table 4.2 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation results of relationship between gender sexual attitude and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary school students in Niger state. From the table, the mean response of students on gender sexual attitude was 68.74 with standard deviation of 9.40 while the mean response of students on risky sexual behaviour was 54.12 with standard deviation of 12.64 respectively. The correlation index r obtained was 0.04 which was significant at $P=0.05$. Therefore, null hypothesis one was rejected. This implies that there is a weak but positive relationship between gender sexual attitude and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary students in Niger state.

Hypothesis Two

HO2: There is no significant relationship between the sexual self-esteem and the risky sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Niger State Nigeria.

Table 4.3 Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics on the Relationship between Sexual Self-Esteem and Risky Sexual Behaviours of Senior Secondary School Students in Niger State, Nigeria

Variable	N	Df	Mean	SD	r	Sig (P)	Remarks
Sexual Self-Esteem	290		63.56	8.54			
		288			0.49	0.05	Significant
Risky Sexual Behaviours	290		54.12	12.64			

Table 4.3 presents Pearson Product Moment Correlation results of relationship between sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary school students in Niger state. From the table the mean response of students on sexual self-esteem was 63.56 with standard deviation of 8.54 while the mean response of students on risky sexual behaviour was 54.12 with standard deviation of 12.64 respectively. The correlation index r obtained was 0.49 which was significant at $P=0.05$. Therefore, null hypothesis two was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary students in Niger state.

Hypothesis Three

H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between the gender sexual attitude and the sexual self-esteem of senior secondary school students in Niger State Nigeria.

Table 4.4 Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics on the Relationship between Gender Sexual Attitude and Sexual Self-Esteem of Senior Secondary School Students in Niger State, Nigeria.

Variable	N	Df	Mean	SD	r	Sig (P)	Remarks
Gender Sexual Attitude	290		68.74	9.40			
		288			0.01	0.05	Significant
Sexual Self-Esteem	290		63.56	8.54			

Table 4.4 presents Pearson Product Moment Correlation results of relationship between sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary school students in Niger state. From the table the mean response of students on gender sexual attitude was 68.74 with standard deviation of 9.40 while the mean response of students on sexual self-esteem was 63.56 with standard deviation of 8.54 respectively. The correlation index r obtained was 0.01 which was significant at $P-0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis three was rejected. This implies that there is a weak positive relationship between gender sexual attitude and sexual self-esteem of senior secondary students in Niger state.

Summary of Findings

1. Students of senior secondary schools in Niger state were found to engage in various risky sexual behaviours such as sex at an early age, having multiple sexual partners, unprotected vaginal and oral intercourse, inconsistent and incorrect use of condoms, sex under the influence of alcohol and drugs, sex with same gender.
2. The result revealed that there is a weak but positive correlation which connotes, relationship between gender sexual attitude and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary students in Niger State, Nigeria.
3. It was found that there is a significant relationship between sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary students in Niger State, Nigeria.

4. It was observed that there is a positive but weak relationship between gender sexual attitude and sexual self-esteem of senior secondary students in Niger State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Results

The only research question of this study sought to find out the commonly practised risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary students. The result indicates that students of senior secondary schools in Niger state were found to engage in the risky sexual behaviours such as sex at an early age, having multiple sexual partners, unprotected vaginal and oral sexual intercourse, inconsistent and incorrect use of condoms, sex under the influence of alcohol and drugs, sex with same gender. This finding corroborates the findings of Spring (2000) that 4 out of 5 college students reported that they have had sexual intercourse during their life time; one in four have had six or more sexual partners; less than 38% reported using a condom during their last intercourse experience.

This finding is supported by Abodunrin (2019) who observed that majority of these teenagers over express their sexual desires; engage in a spectrum of sexual behaviours ranging from fantasy and self-stimulation to various forms of intercourse. They confront their emergency sexuality at younger ages than their peers do and are more likely to be pursued by older peers in social settings because they appear physically older than their chronological age.

Another finding of the study shows that there is a weak but positive relationship between gender sexual attitude and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary school students in Niger state, Nigeria. The finding agrees with Shearer, Hosterman, Gillen, and Lefkowitz (2005) who conducted a study regarding the possible associations between traditional gender role attitudes and risky sexual behaviour. Condom related behaviours were a particular focus for risky sexual behaviours. But this finding disagrees with Letamo, (2011) who revealed that the selected gender role attitude variables were not significantly associated with risky sexual behaviour.

It was also found that there is a significant relationship between sexual self-esteem and risky sexual behaviours of senior secondary students in Niger state, Nigeria. This finding is supported by Spencer, Zimet, Aalsma, and Orr (2002) who conducted a study about adolescent gender differences in sexual self-esteem and its potential impact on risky sexual behaviour and observed that boys with high self-esteem at time 1 (seventh grade) were 2.4 times more likely to initiate intercourse than boys with low self-esteem at Time 1. Conversely, girls with high sexual self-esteem at Time 1 were three times more likely to remain virgins than those girls with low sexual self-esteem.

It was found in the study that there is a weak but positive relationship between gender sexual attitude and sexual self-esteem of senior secondary students in Niger state, Nigeria. This was supported by DeGaston and Weed (1996) who revealed that there is gender difference in the level of permissiveness of sexual attitudes and activities as well as negativity toward outcomes of sexual behaviours. The findings further showed males

were twice as sexually active as females. The study indicated females were more committed to abstinence and had less permissive attitudes regarding premarital sex.

This finding also corroborates the findings of Vanwesenbeeck (1998) who found gender differences in interaction behaviour and competence. In particular, females were found to be more defensively controlling of sexual situations and more anxious in terms of a lack of control of the situation. Males were found to be more pro-active in their controlling what they want and get involved in a sexual situation. In regard to sexual meaning, males scored higher for being sexually compulsive and sensation seeking (self-esteem).

However, the study also revealed that the students felt more active to have masculine traits than feminine ones. Student with the lowest level of masculinity also had the lowest level of sexual self-esteem, while student with higher level of masculinity also had the higher level of sexual self-esteem.

Conclusion

It is evident that there are so many risky sexual behaviours students of senior secondary schools in Niger state, Nigeria engaged in. They include sex at an early age, having multiple sexual partners, unprotected vaginal and oral sexual intercourse, inconsistent and incorrect use of condom, sex under the influence of alcohol and drugs, sex with same gender, without minding the consequences. Sex at an early age is the most common risky sexual behaviour practised among senior secondary school students in Niger state, Nigeria.

It was also noted that there is more pressure on boys to have sexual relation than the girls. This pressure remains a risk factor for sexual initiation, number of sexual partners and the level of contraceptive use by adolescents during sexual encounter. Furthermore, it was also noted that adolescents' sexual self-esteem has influence on their risky sexual behaviour. This is as a result of liberal sexual attitude of women towards sex and their traditional stereotype.

Counselling Implication of the Findings

The study has highlighted the risky sexual behaviour students in senior secondary schools of Niger State Nigeria engage in, the need for functional guidance and counselling is imperative for senior secondary school students.

1. Counsellors need to put in place routine health guidance teaching or information programme dissemination into the school programmes. Counsellors could adopt the regular classroom encounter to provide valuable information on risky sexual behaviour and its consequences.

2. Counsellors could organise workshops and seminars for students on sexual behaviours and practices, using models, health experts, sociologist, counsellor and psychologists. Film clips about how to make less risky sexual choices could be shown to develop skills of abstinence, prevent condom failure and reduced cases of sexually transmitted diseases.

3. Counsellors should develop in students the principle of self-concept, by allowing them to know their true strength and weakness and also help them to improve their sexual self-esteem and allow them to appreciate the qualities they have and respond to others in a positive and productive way.

4. Counsellors should consider developing guidance curriculum based on the standards and comprehensive school counselling model. This should include awareness of our own body and making decision that could help the students stay healthy and active while avoiding factors that may trigger risky sexual behaviours.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is therefore recommended that:

1. Functional guidance and counselling clinic should be established in all the secondary schools in order to provide counselling services on adolescent's sexuality and also offer individual and group counselling.

2. School management should always provide fund for counsellors to organise seminars and workshops for students on sexual behaviours and practices.

3. School administrators should avoid unnecessary interference in counselling activities and allow the counsellors to do their job, strictly guided by the ethics of counselling profession.

4. Parents should be enlightened on the need to support and encourage their children to seek sex education and knowledge to guide them in their development.

5. Students should be provided with comprehensive sex education and HIV/AIDS prevention programmes. They need to be assisted to acquire in-depth knowledge about concepts like love, lust, platonic relationship and premarital sexual intercourse and its consequences.

6. Government should support full integration and implementation of sex education in our secondary schools curriculum with well trained and dedicated staff and time allocated for the interaction.

7. Government should also enact a law that will banned indecent dresses particularly in our secondary schools.

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