Sex Education, Family Background and Religiosity as Predictors of Adolescents’ Sex Attitude in Ikeja, Lagos

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Abstract

Sex is one of the most sensitive issues during adolescence and several factors work together to influence the attitude that adolescents form towards such. This study sought to assess the influence of sex education, family background and religiosity on the attitude adolescents form towards sex. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design that used purposive and accidental sampling to administer 200 adolescents from 2 secondary schools in Ikeja, Lagos using structured questionnaires that contained validated scales measuring sexual attitude, religiosity and sex-education. Four hypotheses were stated and tested at .05 level of significance. Results show that sex education, religiosity and age significantly jointly account for 33.9% of the sexual attitude of adolescents [\(R^2=.339, F(3,197)=34.022, p<.01\)]; the independent contribution of religiosity and age was significant. There is a significant gender difference in adolescents’ sexual attitude \((t(195)=2.550, p<.05)\), with male adolescents \((\bar{X} =52.48, S.D=8.5)\) having more positive sexual attitude than female adolescents \((\bar{X} =49.86, S.D=5.9)\). Also, the sexual attitude of adolescents differ by family background \((t(195)=2.573, p<.01)\), with adolescents from polygamous background \((\bar{X} =55.88, S.D=3.7)\) having more positive sexual attitude compared to adolescents from monogamous background \((\bar{X} =50.91, S.D=7.4)\). Mother’s education and father’s education both have a significant influence on adolescent’s sexual attitude \[F(5,181)=2.818, p<.05)\] and \(F(4,181)=3.982, p<.01)\]. Parents of adolescents were advised to expose and motivate their children and wards towards religious commitment early in life such that it may serve as a sought of inoculation for the child against views of early sexual engagement in their adolescence, this is especially important for adolescents with parents that are not highly educated.

Keywords: Attitude, Education, Family, Religiosity, Sex

Introduction

Sigmund Freud (1923) has propounded that the two central human instincts are those that motivates one to satisfy hunger and sex. As old as this proposition is, as well as several criticisms against some of its notions, the centrality of sexual instincts can still not be undermined. Either to, one’s disposition to sexual issues might have a strong influence on the likelihood of engaging in sexual behaviour; hence, a focus on sexual attitude as measure of
individuals' tendency to engage in sexual behavior. Forward, a focus on the sexual attitude of adults might be necessary since they are the population licensed by the societal norms to engage in such behavior. However, the sexual attitude of adolescents seems to require a better attention, as this sensitive population are at a stage where their bodies are experiencing gradual periodic changes that makes them feel and look like adults, though having the mind of a child (Lucas, 2000). Hence, their tendency to engage in sexual experimentation and get lost in sexual addictions which could have detrimental effects on the life, health and future need be arrested from the thought, belief, value and affective level as a means of inoculating them against negative sexual tendencies.

Like all forms of human development, sexual development begins at birth. Sexual development includes not only the physical changes that occur as children grow, but also the sexual knowledge and beliefs they come to learn and the behaviors they show. This includes decisions to be involved or otherwise in premarital sex especially in adolescence. Adolescence is a stage in life that is considered very turbulent as the psychological and physiological changes that accompany this period predispose young people to a number of risky behaviors (Adegoke, 2003). Evidence suggests that adolescents are engaging in sexual behavior at younger age than ever before (Ramesh, 2008).

Of course, adolescents are excited about the topic of sex and are often enthusiastic about engaging in it because of the intense pleasure they derive from it. However, the negative outcomes of pre-marital sex threaten the health and social life of adolescents (10-19 years of age) much more than it does to any other age group. Such outcomes include early and unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV/AIDS, among many others. These negative outcomes seem much more prevalent among the generation of adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa who were born into the era of HIV/AIDS, widespread poverty, social conflicts and rapid societal changes (UNPF, 2007). According to the United Nation’s Population Fund (UNPF, 2007), adolescents and young adults are at the centre of HIV/AIDS as they account for the largest percentage of new infections. Various studies both in the developed world (Somers and Ali, 2011) and in the developing world (Okeke, 2016) have reported that adolescents are not only sexually active but that sexual risk behaviour is also high.
This is an indicator of a slack in the sexual education these adolescents are exposed to that is expected to form their dispositions and willingness to engage in sex.

Sexual education is simply the art of learning how to conform to a certain art of living by being able to reason, examine and monitor oneself in clearly defined terms. Ahi (2003) described sexual education as “a planned process of education that fosters the acquisition of factual information, the formation of positive attitudes, beliefs and values as well as the development of skills to cope with the biological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of human sexuality.” This infers how adolescents learn about the anatomy, physiology and bio-chemistry of their sexual response system which determines an adolescent’s identity, orientations, thoughts and feelings as influenced by values beliefs, ethics and moral concerns.

It is however worthy of note that the African culture places so much importance on sexual behaviour to an extent that it is not outright permitted to discuss sexual issues openly especially to young adolescents, labelling such as taboo and pervasiveness. The scarcity of such sexual information within the African context was perceived to be responsible for a low level of sexual education in times past (Adepoju, 2005). Oyinloye (2014) observed that when an adolescent carelessly talk about sex, the parents could reprimand the adolescent for talking about a subject considered sacred.

However, with the inception and advancement of information technology today, even when sexual information seem to still be scarcely discussed, information about sex as well as the pros and cons of involving in pre-marital sex is largely available for everyone, especially the adolescents of today, of which most of them are ‘IT savvies’. In fact, Esere (2006) reported that the consequence of lack of sex education related issues and questions make Nigerian adolescent boys and girls to find answers to sex related questions on their own, and often they receive answers from questionable sources that are likely to give them wrong information that might help form wrong values, orientations and beliefs about sexual behaviour. This infers that the proliferation of information about sex does not motivate adolescents to learn about the sex in the right way but rather presents them with a large variety of information, both good and bad, of which without a responsible adult figure moderating such information, adolescents might be wrongly informed and resultantly imbibe wrong values. It is believed that with an organized sex
education system, adolescents would be inoculated against forming wrong sexual attitudes and its consequential hazards (Adeboyejo & Onyeonoru, 2005).

It is very obvious that most adolescents learn the important topic of sex education in negative manners, rather than having proper sex education at home or in schools. School authorities are often prompt to blame parents for children’s deviant behaviours, because as the home is the first point of social contact, it is expected to have shaped the adolescents’ perception (Okafor & Nnoli, 2010). Hence, whatever behaviour the adolescents manifest is seen to be a reflection of home upbringing. This makes parental characteristics a very important social issue that can have significant effects on an adolescent’s sexual attitude.

However, parents could only transfer the knowledge they have acquired to their offspring. No one gives what he/she does not have. Hence, there is a likelihood that the educational level of the parents of adolescents could influence the extent of sex education they can offer to their highly inquisitive adolescent. Possibly, adolescents who get answers from home might need not consult outside sources for answers on sex related issues. But when parents are not equipped enough with information to extensively explain sexual issues to their adolescents, adolescents are at the risk of consulting other sources that might be outside the parents’ moral and ethical boundaries, sources which might be laced with dangerous information that motivates adolescents towards premarital sex. This tendency is however hypothesized in this study. In essence, to what extent will father and mother’s educational level influence the sexual attitude of their adolescence?

The family structure, ideally, provides a sense of security and stability that is necessary for children. When there is a breakdown in the family structure, it may have a tremendous impact on a child’s sexual orientation and their ability to function ordinarily or demonstrate a socially acceptable sexual behaviour. For example, adolescents who are raised in a single family home could be at risk of not reaching their full potential because they have to rely on one parent to meet most, if not all their needs (Zheng & Cheng, 2010). With limited finances, time and availability, parents are less likely to provide the adequate support a child needs to perform to the best of their ability. This is not to say, necessarily, that the parent raising them is not providing them with more than adequate love and attention, but rather the single parent model within itself
is comprised of many different factors that can affect a child’s sexual development (Lenciauskiene & Zaborskis, 2008).

Moore, Raymond, Mittlestaed and Tanner (2002) reported that family background such as the relationship between the parents and adolescents in the area of care and protection, single parenting, polygyny and the parenting style cannot be ignored in the study of adolescents’ attitudes towards premarital sex. Family has been said to be the first socializing agent that a child comes in contact with, and it goes a long way in defining and determining what the child will be. The most powerful sources of social influence are parents and family members.

It is believed by many that religion could be a moral builder. Religiosity, an individual’s preferences, emotions, beliefs, commitment and actions towards an existing religion, is the evidence of the extent of imbibing a religion’s moral tenets. The characteristic of this moral is a function of the mores and values acceptable in the society. Parents could be a source of transmitting this moral as an agent of religious groups they belong to. They often indoctrinate their children into their religious beliefs from childhood, forming the default orientations about ethical living that the child grows to believe in and live through. Bearing the sacredness of sex in most religions, the religious beliefs taught by parents includes the elements of their religious beliefs about sexual behaviour and forms a major component of the sexual attitude that children grow up with; a template that somewhat determines their attitude at the intellectual stage of adolescence.

At times, the adolescent does not just imbibe the tenets of the religiosity passed on by their parents, but also the actual or perceived sexual orientation of their parents. Inferably, children may learn consciously or unconsciously by listening to, imitating, or just watching their parents. Not surprisingly, high parental religiosity therefore leads on average to higher religiosity of children. This mechanism may be described as ‘social learning’ (De Roos, Iedema & Miedema, 2004) ‘sedimenting of beliefs’ (Bruce, 1999) or ‘transmission of religious human capital’ (Iannaccone, 1990). Empirical studies show that the power of this transmission is influenced by various contextual factors and by the type of values, beliefs or practices (Hoge, Petrillo & Smith 1982; De Roos, Iedema & Miedema 2004; Lindner & Moore 2002).
Especially important is the family structure of the parents, be it monogamous, polygamous, single parent, etc. For example, Lenciauskiene and Zaborskis (2008) found that adolescents living in intact families were less likely to be engaged in early sexual intercourse than those who lived in one parent families or families with a step-parent. Further, Lammers, Ireland, Reisnick and Blum (2000) found that students ages 13 to 18 attitude of not initiating sex was associated with having a two-parent family and feeling greater religiosity among others. Dimbuene and Defo (2011) outright emphasized that youth from polygamous families reported a higher risk of premarital intercourse. Hence, the combination of the factors of religiosity and family background, having originated from the same source (the parents) seem to contribute at large to the resultant sexual attitude developed by the child at adolescence.

It is observed however, that there are situations where no matter the resounding home training, exposure to sex education programmes and moral teaching by various religious groups against premarital sex, the attitude of a greater percentage of young secondary school students towards involvement in premarital sex is rather positive, increasing the likelihood of being at the risk of early pregnancy and abortion among the adolescents; a condition which could in turn truncate their educational and general future aspirations.

Therefore, it is essential for this study to explore adolescents’ sex attitudes while seeking to provide answer to the following research questions:
I. To what extent does sex education and religiosity predict adolescents’ sexual attitude?
II. How does gender and family background influence adolescents’ sexual attitude?
III. What impact does parental educational status have on adolescents’ sexual attitude?

METHOD
Design
The study is an ex-post facto design that adopted a cross-sectional survey method. The independent variables are sex education, family background and religiosity while the dependent variable is attitude of young adolescents towards pre-marital sex.

Setting and Population
The study was carried out in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State among in-school adolescents of two secondary schools: Ikeja high school (public) and Donald international college, Ikeja (private) within the range of 13 and 19 years. Ikeja Local Government was selected because it is strategically located at the industrial hub of Lagos city, with the largest shopping mall in Lagos, GRAs, the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, the ‘Femi Kuti’s shrine’, Lagbaja’s Motherlan among many others. It characterizes the metropolitan of Lagos. It is expected that poverty levels among adolescents in this part of Lagos will be quite low; hence, poverty which has been established as a major factor influencing sexual attitudes of adolescents (Adepoju, 2005) would not be a confounding variable in this study.

**Sampling**

A total number of 200 secondary school students were selected from both schools to participate in the study i.e. 100 students from each school. The researcher made use of convenient sampling technique to administer the questionnaires to the adolescents in both schools. Convenient sampling because ten (10) teachers were given the questionnaires to administer to the students on the assembly ground of both schools, such that teachers conveniently selected ten (10) students each to respond to the questionnaires under their supervision. 110 questionnaires were administered in each of the schools but only 100 were well filled and adopted for analysis from each school.

**Measures**

The research instrument employed for this study was a structured self-administered questionnaire that is made up of:

**Brief sexual attitude scale**

Hendrick and Hendrick (2006) developed the Sexual Attitudes Scale to assess multidimensional attitudes towards sex. However, the scale was abbreviated and modified to create the Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (BSAS), an instrument that is more efficient and easier to administer. The BSAS is made up of four subscales: Permissiveness, Birth Control, Communion, and Instrumentality. The 23 items are rated on five-point Likert scale that ranges from strongly agree...
and strongly disagree. The Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale had good psychometric properties reported by the developer: Permissiveness (10 items, alpha = .95), Birth Control (3 items, alpha = .88), Communion (5 items, alpha = .73), and Instrumentality (5 items, alpha = .77).

**Brief Family Relationship Scale (BFRS)**

Brief Family Relationship Scale (BFRS) is a 19 item scale adapted from the 27 item Relationship dimension of the Family Environment Scale-FES (Moos & Moos, 1994), consisting of Cohesion, Expressiveness, and Conflict subscales. These subscales measure support, expression of opinions, and angry conflict within a family respectively; it measures a person's perception of the quality of their family relationship functioning. The scale has good psychometric properties as reported by the author: Cohesion (M=15.73, SD=2.70, α = .83), Conflict (M=13.06, SD=2.51, α = .80), Expressiveness (M=5.97, SD=1.47, α = .65) and for the full scale BFRS (M=34.76, SD=5.53, α = .88).

**The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)**

The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) is a measure of the centrality, importance or salience of religious meanings in personality. It was developed by Huber (2007). It measures the general intensities of five theoretically defined core dimensions of religiosity; public practice, private practice, religious experience, ideology and the intellectual dimensions can together be considered as representative for the total of religious live. There are very high correlations between the CRS and self-reports of the salience of the religious identity, which are traditionally applied as one item scales for religiosity. They amount to 0.83 in a students’ sample and 0.73 in the international Religion Monitor (Stefan Huber, & VolkhardKrech, 2009). Furthermore, there are also high correlations between CRS values and self-reports of the importance of religion for daily life, with coefficients of 0.78 in a students’ sample and 0.67 in the international Religion Monitor.

**Sex Education Confidence Scale (SECS)**
The SECS contains three broad sections: demographic information, true/false and multiple choice questions designed to assess knowledge about sexual health issues; and question regarding confidence in teaching sexual health topics (Tietjen-Smith, Balkin, & Kimbrough, 2008). The knowledge questions covers three broad areas: sexually transmitted infections/diseases (STI) (18 question), birth control (BC) (11 questions) and anatomy/physiology (AP) (3 questions). The SECS has shown strong estimates of reliability and validity (Tietjen-Smith et al., 2008). The confidence section contained 20 topics related to sexual health. Participants were asked to respond to each item regarding their confidence in their own ability to talk about the topic in the context of classroom teaching, using the following likert scale: 5- confident with a little time for preparation; 4- not sure I could do it; 3- would not want to teach it; 2- do not think it is an appropriate topic; and 1- prefer not to answer. Cronbach’s alpha was used to compute reliability coefficients for the three subscales thus; \( \alpha = .96 \), \( \alpha = .92 \) and \( \alpha = .97 \) respectively.

**PROCEDURE**

The researchers visited the selected schools within the study area with letters of introduction from the Department of Psychology, University of Ibadan to the school authority and parents informing them of the details and purpose of the study. Verbal consent of the participants was obtained before questionnaire administration. During questionnaire administration, an introduction to the study was made as well as verbal instructions for completing the questionnaires. Participants were encouraged to make clarifications about the instructions given. They were also assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. Administration was done in the classrooms of the candidates. Enough time was allowed for all the respondents to complete and return their questionnaires.

**HYPOTHESES**
1. Sex education, religiosity and age will significantly jointly and independently predict the sexual attitudes of in-school adolescents in Ikeja, Lagos.

2. Male adolescents will have a significantly more positive sexual attitude than female adolescents.

3. Adolescents from polygamous family background will have a significant more positive sexual attitude than adolescents from monogamous family background.

4. There will be a significant main and interactive influence of mother’s education and father’s education on adolescent sexual attitude.

RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation Matrix Showing Relationship between the Dependent Variables and Independent Variables of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sexual attitude</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sex Education</td>
<td>-.148*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>-.563**</td>
<td>.375**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.246**</td>
<td>.247**</td>
<td>-.123</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. p < 0.01  
*. p < 0.05
Result from table 1 shows that sexual attitude among in-school adolescents has a significant positive relationship with age (r = .246, p < .01) but a significant negative relationship with sex education and religiosity [(r = .148, p < .05) & (r = .563, p < .01)]. This infers that the more sexually educated and religious in-school adolescents are the more negative their sexual attitude would be. Also, the older in-school adolescents are the more positive their sexual attitude would be. It generally infers that adolescents who are exposed to sex education and those that are very religious would have negative view towards involvement in sex behaviour. However, as these adolescents grow older, their disposition to sex becomes more positive and liberal.

Table 2: Summary table of multiple regression analysis showing joint and independent influence of Sex- Education, Religiosity and Age on Attitude of Adolescents to Sexual Attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex Education</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>-.380</td>
<td>&gt;.05</td>
<td>.591</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>34.022</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>-.551</td>
<td>-8.462</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>.591</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>34.022</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.174</td>
<td>2.789</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>.591</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>34.022</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from table 2 shows that Sex-Education, Religiosity and Age significantly jointly influenced the sexual attitude of adolescents [(R² = .339; F (3,197) = 34.022; p < .01)]. This infers that Sex-Education, Religiosity and Age jointly accounted for about 33.9% of the variance observable in adolescents’ sexual attitude. Further, the independent contribution of religiosity and age was significant [(β = .551; t = 8.462; p < .01) & (β = -.174; t = -2.789; p < .01) respectively] while that of sex education was not significant (β = -.025; t = -.380; p > .05).

Table 3: T-Test Showing Gender differences in Adolescents’ Sexual attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual attitude</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>52.48</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>195</td>
<td>2.550</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results from table 3 shows that there is a significant different between male and female adolescents’ sexual attitude (t (195) = 2.550, p <.05), such that male adolescents (\( \bar{X} = 52.48, S.D= 8.5 \)) have a more positive sexual attitude than female adolescents (\( \bar{X} = 49.86, S.D= 5.9 \)).

Table 4: T-Test Showing differences in Sexual Attitude with reference to Family background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV</th>
<th>Family background</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual attitude</td>
<td>Polygamy</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>55.88</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monogamy</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>50.91</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in sexual attitude among adolescents form polygamous and monogamous family backgrounds (t (195) = 2.573, p<.01), such that adolescents from polygamous background (\( \bar{X} = 55.88, S.D= 3.7 \)) have a more positive sexual attitude sex compared adolescents from monogamous background (\( \bar{X} = 50.91, S.D= 7.4 \)).

Table 5: Summary table of 2x2 analysis of variance showing the influence of Mother’s and Father’s education on adolescents’ Sexual Attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>MS²</th>
<th>F ratio</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother's</td>
<td></td>
<td>485.402</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>97.080</td>
<td>2.818</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6: LSD Multiple comparison table of mother’s education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>59.14</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>54.52</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NCE/OND</td>
<td>7.01*</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52.13</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>HND/BSc</td>
<td>6.78*</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52.36</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>9.20*</td>
<td>4.57*</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>49.95</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>-5.78*</td>
<td>-5.55</td>
<td>7.97*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>57.92</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. p< 0.05
* . p< 0.01

### Table 7: LSD Multiple comparison table of father’s education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>54.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>-1.94</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.nigerianjsp.com
Results from table 5 reveal that mother’s education and father’s education both have a significant main influence on their adolescent’s sexual attitude [(F (5, 181) = 2.818, p <.05) and (F (4, 181) = 3.982, p <.01) respectively], but have no significant interactive influence (F (6, 181) = .779, p >.05). Further results of multiple comparison from table 6 reveals that adolescents whose mother has a Masters’ degree (X = 49.95, S.D= 8.9) have a more negative sexual while those whose mother has only primary school education (X = 59.14, S.D= 1.5) have a more positive sexual attitude. Multiple comparison from table 7 also reveals that adolescents whose father has a Masters’ degree (X = 44.23, S.D= 8.6) have a more negative sexual attitude while those whose father has a secondary school education (X = 56.64, S.D= 4.8) have a more positive sexual attitude.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study was set to examine young adolescents’ sexual attitudes as influenced by variables such as sex education, family background, and religiosity. Four hypotheses were stated to test the objectives.

Result shows that sex-education, religiosity and age significantly jointly influenced the attitude of adolescents to pre-marital sex. Also, the independent contribution of religiosity and age was significant while that of sex education was not significant; increase in age produced a more positive disposition to sex while increase in religiosity produced a more negative disposition to sex. In terms of magnitude, religiosity was shown to have the highest influence on attitude of adolescents to sex.
This result actually infers that, for this population of adolescents living in metropolitan centre of Lagos city, having access to all information through information technology, sex education is not a major determinant of their sexual attitudes, but could only comorbid other factors like religiosity and age to determine adolescents’ sexual attitudes. However, the influence of age is well accepted in that, as adolescents grow, their information base is expected to expand. Also, the society somewhat approves an open disposition to sexual issues with increase in age. For example, mothers of female adolescents might start allowing them chats with boys as they grow older, ignore sexual gestures that may frown at when they were younger and even, for lenient parents, ask for their boyfriends and advise them on issues of menstrual cycles and unwanted pregnancies. It appears as though the stringency attached to sexual issues is reduced as the adolescent ages.

It is however worthy of note that religiosity is a major predictor of sexual attitudes as indicated in the findings of this study. Hence, establishing a God consciousness in adolescents from childhood might be the best vaccine against pre-marital sex. This way, the adolescent does not form his/her attitude just as a reason of what he/she sees in the environment, nor the influences of peers, but allows all these be filtered by his perception of the approval of a higher unseen authority, who is believed to have the highest authority over life choices and will judge all acts and intentions. To this end, even when the adolescent is experiencing sexual urges, desiring adventures, attracted to the opposite sex and pulled/pushed by peer pressure, the level of commitment to the ‘God-factor’ determines the willingness/tendency to act in the direction of the sexual pressures.

In essence, this result agrees with Lammers, Ireland, Reisnick and Blum (2000) and Kuet al., (1993) in their studies that examined the influence of religiosity on adolescent sex. They reported that religious individuals have first sex at a later age than those who are less religious and that more frequent intercourse was correlated with adolescents’ decreased religiosity. Also, Zaleski and Schiaffino (2000) found that greater intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity was associated with less sexual activity and condom use among adolescents. Hill, Cleland and Ali (2004) in their study in Brazil, examined the relationship between religious affiliation and extramarital sex among men and found that non-evangelical men were significantly more likely to report having
had extramarital partners as well as unprotected extramarital sex when compared with members of evangelical religions.

Result also showed that there is a significant different among male and female adolescents’ sexual attitude, such that male adolescents had a more positive attitude to sex than female adolescents. This might be traceable to the variation in the risk associated with pre-marital sex which appears to be higher for females than males, especially the risk of unwanted pregnancy, abortion or becoming early mothers and dropping out of school, among others. Male adolescents only consider the pleasure of the sexual moment, but female adolescents do consider not just the momentary pleasure but also the resulting pressures that might remain with them lifelong. The label, stigma and truncation of future career plans that may ensue seem to weigh more for the female adolescent, hence tending their sexual attitudes towards negativity than it is for the male adolescents. Also, the fact that the Nigerian culture is patriarchal might also be responsible for the positive attitude of male adolescents. Patriarchy puts the female at a disadvantage position in sexual issues, such that the blame and abuse of the consequences of premarital sex is mostly heaped on the female than it is on the male adolescent.

This finding aligns with those of Odimegwu (2005) that examined adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviours in two Nigerian university communities and found out that 50% of the male and 34% of the female students had initiated sex. Boys initiated sex earlier than the girls (17 years for the boys and 19 years for girls). The female students had more regular sexual partners than the boys. Zheng and Cheng (2010) in their study conducted among university students found 17.6% of males and 8.6% of females were sexually active. Kaljee, Green, Riel (2012) found that in six provinces of Vietnam, youths aged 15–21 years reported rate of premarital sex as 6.2% and 1.7% among boys and girls, respectively.

Murray, Zabin, Dreves and Charath (2000) carried out a study on the gender differences in factors influencing first intercourse among urban students in Chile. Their findings showed that 21% of the young women and 31% of the young men had ever had sex with the median age of first intercourse been 15 years for women and 14 years for men. They discovered that the father’s absence from the home was significantly associated with early sexual initiation among female students but not male.
Results further show that there is a significant difference in sexual attitude among adolescents from polygamous and monogamous family backgrounds such that adolescents from polygamous background have a more positive sexual attitude compared to adolescents from monogamous background. It is however unclear if it is polygamy itself that motivates these adolescents toward pre-marital sex or the offshoots of polygamy. Could it be the perception of rivalry, instability and lack of an intact family structure that motivates the adolescent towards a positive disposition towards premarital sex? Could be a desire to get a personal connection with an opposite sex that might not be available in the father or mother to fulfill cravings similar to that of Oedipus and Electra complexes as described by Psychoanalysts? Or are there other components of the polygamous family structure that increases the vulnerability of adolescents brought up in such families towards having a positive disposition towards pre-marital sex. These questions are germane to understanding the connection between parental family structure and adolescent sexual attitude. The findings of this study however did not delineate this aspects; a venture that should be embarked by future studies, probably using a qualitative method of data collection.

This present findings however agrees with the study of Lenciauskiene and Zaborskis (2008) that found that adolescents living in intact families were less likely to be engaged in early sexual intercourse than those who lived in one parent families or families with a step-parent. Young et al. (1991) in their study of adolescents from Black and White families in the United States found that, for males, the two-parent family was related to less sexual activity and older ages at first intercourse. For females, however, the effect of a two-parent household was not as important as race in influencing sexual behaviour. Upchurch et al. (1999) found that teenagers living in reconstituted families (i.e., families with stepparents) had higher risks of sexual intercourse compared to those from two-parent or intact families.

Similarly, Lammers et al. (2000) found that students ages 13 to 18 attitude of not initiating sex was associated with having a two-parent family, feeling greater religiosity and believing parents care and hold high expectations for their children. Council of Economic Advisors (2000) indicated that among teenagers who did not feel close to their mother and/or father, 70.6% had sex by the age of 17 to 19 compared to 57.9% who felt close to mother and/or
father. According to Dittus and Jaccard (2000), teens who reported being highly satisfied with their relationship with parents were 2.7 times less likely to engage in sex than teenagers who had little satisfaction with their parental relationships.

Result further revealed that mother’s education and father’s education both have a significant main influence on their adolescent’s sexual attitude, but have no significant interactive influence. Further results reveal that adolescents whose mother has a Masters’ degree have a more negative sexual attitude while those whose mother have only primary school education have a more positive sexual attitude. Also adolescents whose father have a Masters’ degree have a more negative sexual attitude while those whose father have a secondary school education have a more positive attitude to premarital sex.

This would infer that the less educated an adolescent’s father or mother is, the more positive his/her disposition to sex will be. Of course, increase in parental education increases their ability and confidence to speak with authority with their children, especially at adolescence when most adolescent are almost more informed than their baby boomer parents. Hence, adolescent children of well-educated parents must have been educationally empowered on methods to adopt in channelling sex-education to their adolescents more easily. Also, educational level has always been used as a measure of socio-economic status by World Health Organization. Hence, it could be assumed that adolescent children of parents with low educational level would at the bottom of socio-economic status, and low socio-economic status has been shown to be connected with higher tendencies towards pre-marital sex in several studies (Amoran, Onadeko, & Adeniyi, 2005; Slap, Lot, Huang, Daniyam, Zink, &Succop, 2003; Omariba& Boyle, 2007).

The result is in line with by Kiragu and Zabin (1993) who indicated in their study that family characteristics such as parental status and fathers and mothers’ educational status have significant association with experience of premarital sex among adolescents. Inazu (1995) reported that family characteristics such as parental status, father’s and mother’s educational status, religion and sources of family income and peer characteristics such as peer sexual behaviour have significant association with experience of premarital sex of the boys. Also, Eke
(1999) who noted that parental education is significant factor in promoting healthy family background, and healthy family background is possible when parents adapt to the culturally defined roles of parents to the needs of the changing young generation through sex education put in place by the parent which is strongly associated with higher level of education of the parent.

In other words, it is rather wise for parents to expose and motivate their children and wards towards religious commitment early in life so that this might serve as a sought of inoculation for the child against views of early sexual engagement in their adolescence. Since the traditional African family is quite religious, it might have been the drift towards a much more liberalistic and modernized family system that focuses less on the religious orientation of the growing child that is responsible for the liberalistic views of sex that has currently ensued in and among adolescents today. Having the picture of a being higher than the authorities around might help adolescents manage their sexual dispositions in respect of that being even in the absence of their parents and guardian.

It seems also that adolescents with parents who have a low level of education are disadvantaged in sex education has noted in this study and others corroborating. This however should not have been an issue for these adolescents since they have been enrolled in schools; meaning that their responsibility of educating the child has been transferred to the schools in order to cover for their own inabilities. Hence, the low sex education and the resultant positive attitude to sex at adolescence is an indicator that the schools have not been efficient in the task transferred to them.

References


