

Predictors of Sexual Attitudes of Senior Secondary School Students in Abeokuta Metropolis, Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study was to identify factors that predict students' sexual attitude. Participants were senior secondary school students (n=144) in Abeokuta metropolis, Ogun State, Nigeria. Using the percentage, t-test, analysis of variance and multiple regression analytical techniques, we found that no significant difference exists between male and female students in their sexual attitude. However, a significant difference was found between students from married parents and students of single parents in their sexual attitude. Results of ANOVA conducted indicated that no significant difference was found in students' sexual attitude across, class, religion, age and residency. Significant positive relationship was observed among permissiveness, birth control, communication, instrumentality and sexual attitude. With the regression analysis we found that who do you reside with, sex, age, religion, class, and parents' marital status all affect sexual attitude of students. Implications of these findings were discussed.

Keywords: Sexual attitude, Adolescent, Abeokuta, secondary school

1. Background to the Study

Now more than ever, adolescents' sexual attitude has become a major issue in global reproductive health discourse. The last decade has witnessed increase in adolescent's sexual activity at school and out of school. According to United Nations children, education fund (UNICEF) (2019), 1.2 billion adolescents aged 10-19 years constitute 16 per cent of the world's population with 75million i.e. 23 percent in the sub-Saharan Africa. Adolescents, from United Nations perspective, refer to those individuals between the ages of 10 and 19. The adolescent psychologists would describe adolescent tempt to engage in increased risk-taking behaviours such as early unprotected sexual practices, smoking, drugs, alcohol, cybercrime which more often than not result in unplanned teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted

infections including HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, nutritional disorders and sexual exploitation at workplace, especially child labour (Abdullahi & Abdulquadri, 2018; Joshi & Chauhan, 2011; Morris & Rushwan, 2015; Ugoji, 2014).

At the senior secondary school level, most students begin to undergo unusual physical, emotional and psychological changes which make them more intensely aware of their sexuality. This period is often characterized by rapid development in individuals within the age bracket 10-17years. At this period, their sex organs also witness rapid growth and development. It is also in this phase of the development that the desire to have sex sets in, as many of them learn from their peers who are already exposed. Thus, it is a very good stage where sexuality education must be introduced in order to shape their sexual attitude towards positive direction (Arop, Madukwe & Owan, 2019). Physiologically, the changes in reproductive organs that occur at this stage often serve as a motivating force in their quest to experiment with sex. Some naturally explore and take risks in many aspects of their lives, including sexual relationships. As a result, their sexual interest varied significantly depending on the motive behind such interest (Ayoade, Blavo, Farotimi & Nwozichi; Azuiké et al., 2015). In general term, sexuality among students in this category is always associated with a lot of risks because they are sexually active; and more importantly, they are likely to make decisions without making a thorough consideration of the consequences or adverse effect (Zalelem, Melkamu & Muluken, 2013).

In the process of passing through the developmental stages as stated above, most adolescent students in senior secondary school were more concerned about changes in their body system as a result of the developmental stages they are passing through. This and many other adolescence tendencies give rise to worries and anxieties among them because they do not know who to confide in. In this regard, and to some

extent, they rely on information they receive from peers, parents and media amongst others which a times could be conflicting and sometime put them into danger if care is not taken and in turn give rise to anxiety and confusion.

A substantial body of research evidence suggests that socio-demographic, economic and cultural factors influence sexual behaviour and activities among adolescents from different part of the world in literature. Finding from Lin, Tung, and Yeh (2019) study which examined the determinants of Taiwanese adolescents' sexual behavior. 521 adolescents were administered with a self-report questionnaire. A lot above the average (53%) had experienced touching, hugging, or kissing, while 15.7% reported sexual behavior. It was found that gender, number of heterosexual relationships were statistically significantly related sexual behaviors. A study conducted by [Nagamatsu, Yamawaki, Sato, Nakagawa, and Saito \(2012\)](#) in Japan examined the factors influencing early adolescents attitudes toward sexual activity. The multiple regression analysis showed that smoking, experience with sex, talking to parents about AIDS, teachers listening to participants' opinion, older dating partners, and friends with sexual experiences were all significant predictors of attitude toward sexual activity.

In South Africa, Amoateng, Kalule-Sabiti and Arkaah (2014) examined individual and contextual factors that affect sexual-risk taking behaviours amongst black African adolescents in a poor community of the North West Province of South Africa. Using the logistic and Poisson regression analytical techniques, the researchers found that individual and contextual factors such as gender, grade, religiosity, peer influence, parental value of children, parent-child communication, school attachment, the use of alcohol and substance like tobacco and marijuana all affect sexual risk behaviours like lifetime sex, recent sexual activity and involvement with multiple sexual partners. While in Nigeria, Ugoji (2014) study investigated the effect of emotional intelligence, self-esteem, religiosity and media on risky sexual behaviour among secondary school students within Asaba metropolis, and reported that there were significant relationships between risky sexual behaviour and emotional intelligence/religiosity. Religiosity was found to be the most potent predictor of the variables of risk sexual behaviour.

Factors such as social, environmental, psychological, psycho-social, individual, use of ICT/social media, sex education, customs, rapid urbanization, family background, peer pressure, economic situation, gender, educational background of parents amongst others have been

attributed as factors responsible for positive or negative attitudinal change in sexual attitude and behaviour of senior secondary school students as they are undergoing developmental stages in their life. The extent at which such factors could influence sexual attitude gives a worrisome outcome as some researchers found positive outcome while some other reported negative outcome under the same domain of construct. In Nigeria for example, the rate of sexual activities and pregnancies is at high level to the extent that students of ages 14, 15 or 16 who are supposed to be studying very hard to become important personality in the society are withdrawn from the school due to low level of understanding of reproductive attitudes and behavior that give rise to high risk of pregnancy, infection etc. In adverse, understanding of reproductive attitudes and behavior of young people in this category may aid in the development of educational programmes designed to combat teenage sexual activity and childbearing through sex education and proper orientation.

The impact of such factors on sexual behaviors and attitude of secondary school students have been documented by various researchers both locally and internationally. For instance, Wellings *et al* (2006) and Stephenson (2009) have found out that educational level of household has well as the geographical location of students has a significant role to play in the sexual behaviors among. Similarly, studies by Omoteso (2006), Sadgrov (2007) and Sambisa (2010) revealed that religion affiliation have a significant impact on sexual behavior and attitude among adolescents. Furthermore, Ayoade, Blavo, Farotimi and Nwozich (2015) examined sociodemographic factors as predictors of sexual behavior of secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria. The result of the Analysis of variance revealed that gender, age and sociological factors significantly determined sexual behavior of secondary school students in Lagos State.

Lee, Kim and Song (2016) examined the predictors of sexual attitudes of undergraduates by gender. It was gathered that there were significant differently exposure to sexual content in smartphone and sexual attitudes between male students and female students. Similarly, it was revealed through multiple regression analysis that sexual experience, self-understanding, exposure to sexual content in smartphone were significant predictors of sexual attitudes for male students. Also, sexual experience, opinion reflection, exposure to sexual content in smartphone were significant predictors of sexual attitudes in female students,

More so, Lawal (2010) investigated gender, religiosity and self-esteem as predictors of sexual attitudes of students in a Nigerian tertiary institution. Findings of his study revealed that religiosity independently and significantly predicted sexual attitudes. All the predictor variables jointly predicted sexual attitudes. Findings further revealed that there was no gender difference in sexual attitudes of students. Likewise, self-esteem was found not to influence sexual attitudes of students. Grigoropoulos (2012) investigated the personality traits as predictors of sexual attitudes in a sample of Greek University students. From the result of the findings, it revealed that religious fundamentalism and political conservatism were significant predictors of conservative sexual attitudes. Political conservatism was also a significant predictor of earlier sexual experience.

Azuike *et al* (2015) investigated the sexual behaviour of students in senior secondary schools in Nnewi North and South Local Government Areas of Anambra State, South-eastern Nigeria. According to them, majority of the secondary school students reported negative attitude towards sexual behaviours as more than half of them had multiple sex partners and learnt about sex from the media. Findings also revealed that more than 70% of the respondents did not use condom during their first sexual exposure and 83.3% of those who had been pregnant or got someone pregnant terminated the pregnancy. In addition, Sah, Ghimire and Parajuli (2012) find out the level of knowledge and attitude about sexual behaviour among adolescents in various secondary schools of Dhankuta district. The descriptive findings revealed that most of the students believe that safe sex is having sex with single partner. More so, it was also gathered that most of them think that HIV/AIDs can be transmitted from one person to another person from unsafe sexual contact. Most of the students believe that avoiding sex with multiple partners could prevent from getting HIV/AIDs.

Arop, Madukwe, and Owan (2019) investigated adolescents' perception management and attitudes towards sex education in Secondary Schools of Cross River State, Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that adolescents' counseling and sensitization are significantly related to their attitudes towards sex education respectively and jointly. Findings also revealed that adolescents' counselling and sensitization have a significant composite influence on their attitudes towards sex education, with adolescents' counselling being the highest predictor, followed by adolescents' sensitization

Eze (2014) surveyed the attitudes of adolescents towards premarital sex. It was gathered that adolescents have not less than 20 permissive attitudes towards premarital sex and the views of the adolescents, parents and adults on the adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex do not differ significantly. Laddunuri (2013) investigated the patterns and trends of adolescent students' sexual behaviour in Tanzania. Findings indicated that the main reasons beyond sexual debut were "just for fun" and "peer pressure". It was also gathered that parental education was the most significant association with sexual debut of adolescents and the odds ratio indicates that sexual intercourse among students is decreasing with the increasing of parental education.

Moreover, Ugoji (2014) investigated the determinant of risk sexual behaviour among secondary school students from 10 secondary schools within Asaba metropolis. The result indicated that the relationships among risky sexual behaviour and the independent variables were significant; however, the relationships between risky sexual behaviour and emotional intelligence/religiosity were negatively significant.

Adolescents constitute about 23% of Nigeria estimated 200million population. About 28% of adolescent in Nigeria are said to be sexually active. The available literature on sexual attitudes largely focuses on risky sexual behaviour of adolescents, sexual knowledge and attitudes to HIV/AIDS. Most of these studies have been focused majorly on students at the tertiary level as a result of their attributes and some level of maturity and exposure; leaving out the young adolescent at the senior secondary school level who happen to be between ages 10-17 years. This are categories of people that are at the edge of undergoing sexual transformation most often and if cares are taken, they are liable to be misled and they could be at the risk of psychological well-being that can hamper them in many ways such as been at the high risk of sexual transmitted infection (HIV/AIDs, Staphylococcus), unwanted/unplanned pregnancy, having more than one partner at a time, dropout and other immoral behaviours (Ersin & Bahar 2009; Papaharitou, Nakopoulou, Hatzichristou & Moraitou, 2011; Pettifor, DerStrate, Dunbar, Shibosky & Padian, 2004). Ayoade, *et.al* (2015) stressed that secondary school students are exposed to risky sexual behaviors that put them at certain risk of negative consequence.

There are not many studies on sexual attitudes of adolescents in urban metropolis given the accessibility to sexual materials, there is tendencies of involving in sexual activities. This study aimed at describing the sexual attitudes of adolescents and

identify the influence of gender, age class, religion, parent status, and residency on sexual attitude. Specifically, the following questions were raised to guide the study:

- What is the sexual attitude of senior secondary school students in Abeokuta Metropolis, Ogun State?
- Is there any difference in sexual attitudes and its sub-scales across sex, age, residency, religion, class, and parents' marital status?
- What is the relationship between permissiveness, birth control, instrumentality, communication and sexual attitude?
- What is the joint and relative contribution of each independent variables (Sex, age, who residency, religion, class, and parents' marital status on sexual attitudes?

2. Research Methodology

The design of the study was descriptive. The target population were senior secondary school students in Abeokuta Metropolis. A total of two hundred senior secondary school students were randomly selected from five schools in the metropolis participated in the study. In each school an average 30 students were selected across the three senior classes (i.e. SS I, II, III). However only 144 of the questionnaires were properly completed and were used for the analysis.

3. Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents:

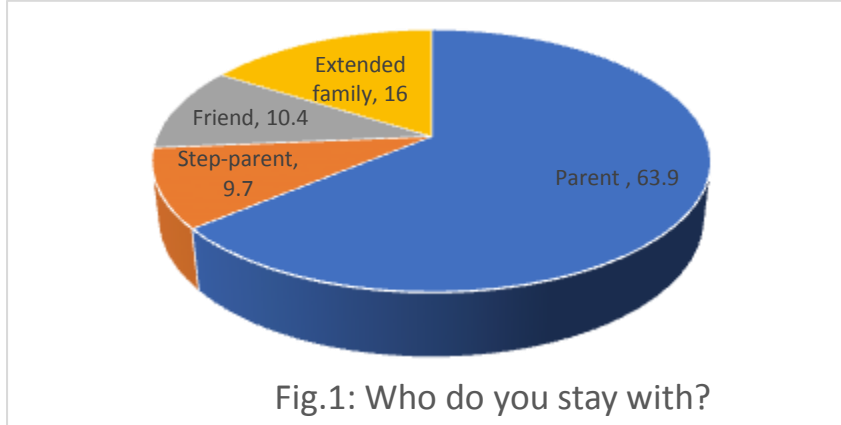
	F	%
Sex		
Male	89	61.8
Female	55	38.2
Total	144	100
Age		
10-15 years	56	38.9
16-20 years	73	50.7
Above 21 years	15	10.4
Total	144	100
Religion		
Christianity	80	55.6
Islam	52	36.1
Traditional	12	8.3
Total	144	100
Class		
SS I	47	32.6
SS II	49	34
SS III	48	33.3
Total	144	100
Parent marital status		
Married	100	69.4
Single	44	30.6

The instrument used for this survey was a 23-closed-ended items questionnaire adapted from the brief sexual attitude scale developed by Henddrick, and Hendrick (2006). The questionnaires were administered with assistance of a secondary school teachers who served as research assistants. Each assistant administered and collected the questionnaires in the selected local government areas comprising Abeokuta metropolis. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) of research instrument was measured as 0.82. The questionnaires were administered to the students in their different schools after permission have been sought from the management.

The descriptive and inferential statistics t-test, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), pearson product moment correlation, and multiple regression were used to determine difference between some independent variables and the dependent variable- sexual attitudes. Multiple regression was used to predict the relationship between some independent variables and the dependent variables. To score the completed questionnaire, the responses “strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree were assigned 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Thus, the maximum score on each item was 4. Means and standard deviations of subset scores and of the entire variable were computed to determine the nature of sexual attitude.

Majority of 50.7% of the students were within the age of 10-15years. 61.8 percent were male, their female counterparts constitutes 38.2 percent. The majority (55.6%) of the respondents were Christians, 36.1% were Muslim and 8.6% are traditionalist. All classes were equally represented, Thirty-four percent (34.0%) of the respondents were in SS II, 33.3% in SS III and 33.6% were in SS I. Almost seventy per cent of the respondents' parents were married while 30.6% were single parent (Table 1).

Fig.1 displayed the students' response to the question on place of residence.



From the fig 1, it can be observed that almost two-third (63.9%) live with their parent, while (9.7%) step-parents, (10.4%) with friends and (16.0%) of the students claimed to live with extended family.

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of scores on the dimensions and sexual attitude

		Permissiveness	Birth control	Communication	Instrumentality	Sexual Attitude
Statistic	N	144	144	144	144	144
	Minimum	11.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	30.00
	Maximum	38.00	11.00	18.00	16.00	80.00
	Mean	22.708	6.729	12.069	11.007	52.514
	Std. Dev.	5.209	1.937	2.793	2.582	10.033
	Skewness	.346	-.365	-.367	-.075	-.036
Std. Error	Kurtosis	-.155	-.545	-.613	-.993	-.514
	Skewness	.202	.202	.202	.202	.202
	Kurtosis	.401	.401	.401	.401	.401

The results in Table 2 indicated that participants have low permissiveness ($\bar{x} = 22.708 \pm 5.209$). However, they are high on birth control ($\bar{x} = 6.729 \pm 1.937$), communication ($\bar{x} = 12.069 \pm 2.793$), instrumentality ($\bar{x} = 11.007 \pm 2.582$) and general attitude ($\bar{x} = 52.514 \pm 10.033$).

Research Question One: Is there any difference in sexual attitudes and its sub-scales across sex, age, residency, religion, class, and parents' marital status?

Results in Table 3 showed that no significance differences existed for permissiveness, birth control, communication, instrumentality and general attitude by gender, parents' marital status, class and where residing. However, while no significance differences existed for permissiveness and birth control by age, significant differences were observed for communication, instrumentality and general attitude. This finding is in line with previous results of Eze (2014) that adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex do not differ significantly. However, it negative Lee, Kim and Song (2016) finding that there were significant different in sexual attitudes between male students and female students.

Table 3: Differences in permissiveness, birth control, communication, instrumentality and general attitude by gender, parents' marital status, age, class and where residing

	Permissiveness		Birth control		Communication		Instrumentality		Attitude	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sex										
Male (n = 89)	22.393	5.282	6.663	1.936	12.124	2.490	11.124	2.558	52.303	9.8294
Female (n = 55)	23.218	5.094	6.836	1.951	11.982	3.246	10.818	2.632	52.855	10.438
Statistics	t(142) = -.923 ^s		t(142) = -.521 ^{ns}		t(142) = .295 ^{ns}		t(142) = .689 ^{ns}		t(142) = -.319 ^{ns}	
Parents' Marital Status										
Married (n = 100)	22.650	5.336	6.530	1.909	12.120	2.882	10.910	2.644	52.210	10.063
Single (n = 44)	22.841	4.965	7.182	1.944	11.955	2.605	11.227	2.448	53.205	10.045
Statistics	t(142) = -.202 ^{ns}		t(142) = -1.877 ^{ns}		t(142) = .326 ^{ns}		t(142) = -.678 ^{ns}		t(142) = -.547 ^s	
Age										
10-15yrs (n= 56)	22.196	4.878	6.804	2.169	11.339	2.651	10.250	2.524	50.589	9.823
16-20yrs (n= 73)	22.795	5.434	6.589	1.770	12.247	2.813	11.301	2.442	52.932	10.045
21yrs above (n= 15)	24.200	5.321	7.133	1.846	13.933	2.314	12.400	2.746	57.667	9.271
Statistics	F(2,141) = .894 ^{ns}		F(2,141) = .555 ^{ns}		F(2,141) = .761 ^{**}		F(2,141) = 5.376 ^{**}		F(2,141) = 3.165 [†]	
Class										
SSI (n = 47)	22.553	4.169	6.745	1.787	12.085	2.292	10.511	2.302	51.894	7.648
SSII (n = 49)	22.429	5.248	6.490	2.042	12.041	3.304	11.061	2.794	52.020	10.812
SSIII (n = 48)	23.1458	6.09146	6.9583	1.978	12.083	2.728	11.438	2.584	53.625	11.302
Statistics	F(2,141) = .258 ^{ns}		F(2,141) = .709 ^{ns}		F(2,141) = .004 ^{ns}		F(2,141) = 1.559 ^{ns}		F(2,141) = .440 ^{ns}	
Where Residing										
Parents (n = 92)	23.196	5.307	6.620	1.960	12.141	2.823	10.913	2.716	52.870	10.112
Step-parent (n = 14)	22.000	5.670	6.857	1.562	12.071	2.336	11.286	2.268	52.214	10.599
Friend (n = 15)	22.667	4.981	6.933	2.187	11.667	3.109	11.333	2.582	52.600	10.848
Extended family (n =23)	21.217	4.631	6.957	1.965	12.044	2.868	11.000	2.316	51.217	9.366
Statistics	F(2,141) = .983 ^{ns}		F(2,141) = .276 ^{ns}		F(2,141) = .123 ^{ns}		F(2,141) = .172 ^{ns}		F(2,141) = .168 ^{ns}	

^{ns}p > .05; [†]p < .05; ^{**}p < .01

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between permissiveness, birth control, instrumentality, communication and sexual attitude?

Table 4: Correlation matrix of the bivariate relationships among dimensions of, and overall scores of study variable

	Permissiveness	Birth control	Communication	Instrumentality	Sexual Attitude
Permissiveness	1	.249**	.620**	.655**	.908**
Birth control	.249**	1	.204*	.184*	.426**
Communication	.620**	.204*	1	.735**	.829**
Instrumentality	.655**	.184*	.735**	1	.838**
Sexual Attitude	.908**	.426**	.829**	.838**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Results in Table 4 revealed that there is significant relationship between permissiveness, birth control, communication, instrumentality and sexual attitude. Dimensions of sexual attitude are variously significantly positively related.

Research Question 4: What is the joint and relative contribution of each independent variables (Sex, age, residency, religion, class, and parents’ marital status) on sexual attitudes? Table 4 shows that the joint effect of independent variables (Sex, age, residency, religion, class, and parents marital status) on sexual attitudes was not significant ($F(6,137) = 1.388$; $R = 0.239$, $R^2 = .057$; $p > 0.05$). About 57% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables. Thus, the six variables are good predictors of sexual attitude.

Table 4: Summary of regression analysis among independent variables and sexual attitudes

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	45.020	4.568			9.855	.000
Age	3.549	1.455	.228		2.439	.016
Sex	.441	1.752	.021		.252	.802
Religion	-.615	1.343	-.040		-.458	.647
Class	-.173	1.133	-.014		-.153	.879
Parents marital status	2.876	2.135	.133		1.347	.180
Residency	-.937	.836	-.108		-1.120	.265

($F(6,137) = 1.388$; $R = 0.239$, $R^2 = .057$; $p > 0.05$)

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude

b. Predictors: (Constant), Residency, sex, age, religion, Class, parents’ marital status

Furthermore, the results in Table 4 show the relative contribution of each of the independent variables on the dependent variables. With regard to the most potent contribution, the results indicate that who the students reside with is the variable that best predict students’ sexual attitude. Findings are consistent with existing literature. There is a strong relationship between religiosity and adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviour, although religious commitment is more important than religious affiliation in affecting adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviours. Rathus *et al* (2013) studied adolescents in 32 countries, and showed that sexual behavior was influenced by sociocultural, ethnic, gender, and racial differences.

4. Conclusion and Implications

In this study attention has been drawn to factors that might assist in predicting adolescent sexual attitudes in Ogun State metropolis. With regards to the difference in sexual attitude across socio-demographic characteristics of the students, the study has shown that the students from married parents

possessed better sexual attitude than students of single parent. This is a pointer to the importance of parent-child relationship, in promoting sexually responsible behaviours in the adolescents.

The findings of this study have important implications for social studies educators who teach human sexuality and family life. In contemporary world with access to internet adolescents’ sexual attitudes deserved close attention.

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