



SELF-CONCEPT AND ACCEPTANCE OF LESBIANISM TENDENCY AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL GIRLS IN OWWIE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF DELTA STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study stems from the observation that lesbianism is fast creeping into Girls' secondary schools in Nigeria. Using the ex-post facto research design, the study examined the influence of self-concept (moral and academic) on the acceptance of lesbianism tendency among 218 senior secondary school girls in Ovwie Local Government Area (LGA) of Delta State, Nigeria with a population of 2,112 senior secondary school girls. The respondents were randomly selected. The three research hypotheses formulated to guide this study were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The instrument for data collection was the Self-concept and Acceptance of Lesbianism Tendency Questionnaire (SALTQ). The data were analyzed with the population and independent t-tests as the statistical tools. The results showed that the level of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls in the study area was significantly high while a significant influence of moral and academic self-concepts on acceptance of lesbianism tendency was found to exist among the girls. Based on the findings, it was recommended that efforts should be made by the stakeholders of education to reduce the level of lesbianism among the senior secondary school girls by instituting programmes that sensitize them on the need to develop proper self-concept, the word of God and motivational talks can be appropriately used to encourage the development of moral concepts among the students, and self-concept enhancement programmes should be introduced in schools to enhance academic self-concept.

KEYWORDS: Moral self-concept, Academic self-concept, Acceptance, Lesbianism tendency, Students.

INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that lesbianism is fast becoming a common occurrence among secondary school females. Related to its prevalence among secondary school students is the issue of acceptance in society. Lesbianism tendency refers to females developing sexual desires for their colleagues of the same sex.

As a sexual relationship between two females, it is often perceived as a deviation from the more common situation of a sexual relationship between a male and a female. Odiogor (2014) asserted that the idea of men and men having carnal knowledge while women and women do the same is generally seen as an aberration and deviant behaviour that society abhors for centuries. Odiogor (2014) further charged that

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the experience of Sodom and Gomorrah in the bible is a reminder that no one should violate the natural order of sexual relationships. Gay and lesbian youth are regarded as belonging to the sexual minority, and thus, their environment often reacts adversely to them.

Having a sexual minority status connotes sexual attraction (relating to the gender to which one is attracted), behaviour (relating to one's sexual partners), and identity (the label assigned to oneself). Uzoeshi (2019) for instance, has pointed out that sexual relationships should normally be between people of the opposite sex, but evidence abounds that many female adolescents go into lesbianism or same-sex relationship. This is suggestive of the fact that while some people perceive lesbianism as an acceptable way of life, some others see it as a social vice or cankerworm. Drake (2013) reported the result of two Pew Research Centre surveys on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender adults (LGBT) and the American Public. The report revealed that 92% of LGBT adults viewed society as becoming more accepting of lesbianism over the last decade, while continued discrimination in various forms was also reported. The public, however, was reported to be strongly opposed to same-sex marriage with religious beliefs as a major factor; just under 45% of Americans viewed engaging in homosexual behaviour as a sin. Generally, however, the public acceptance of LGBT is changing in favour of LGBT.

In recent times, acceptance of homosexual acts and relationships is gradually growing. According to Adamczyk (2017), the Pew Research Centre's 2013 Global Attitudes Survey revealed a broad acceptance of homosexuality in North America, the European Union, and much of Latin America, but equally widespread rejection in predominantly Muslim nations and in Africa, as well as in parts of Asia and Russia. The survey also revealed that the acceptance of homosexuality is particularly widespread in countries where religion is less central in people's lives, and these are also among the richest countries in the world. Poorer countries with high levels of religiosity have only very little acceptance of homosexuality. The Global Divide on Homosexuality (2013) revealed that age is also a factor in several countries, with younger respondents offering far more tolerant views than older ones, while in countries with prevalent gender differences, women are consistently more accepting of homosexuality than men.

A study by Chi and Hawk (2016) investigated the attitude of Chinese university students towards

same-sex attraction and behaviour, the socio-demographic correlates of these attitudes, and the potential gender differences in both tendencies and correlates. A total of 2,644 Chinese University students (49.7% of males, mean age 20.27 years) indicated generally negative attitudes toward same-sex attraction and behaviour with males reporting negative attitudes than females.

Most studies on the acceptance of lesbianism tendencies among the youth reveal that although the acceptance of lesbianism in many countries of the western world is increasing, many cultures still do not accept it. Thus, Meyer (2003) in the Minority Stress theory opined that many gay and lesbian persons experience unique stressors related to their sexual orientation. Heinz and Horn (2014) listed the stressors to include homophobic prejudice, social rejection, discrimination, and harassment. Harper (2007) reported that many scholars in western countries have addressed attitudes related to same-sex attraction and behaviour, and policymakers have aimed at reducing discrimination and contributing to a generally positive social atmosphere, the reason being that well-being among gay and lesbian individuals is a significant public health concern. Non-western countries, however, are yet unfamiliar with this trend because research in this area is scarce.

Nigeria is one of the countries with little acceptance of lesbianism. In a social perception survey on lesbians, gay, and bisexual rights by the Initiative for Equal Rights (2017), it was revealed that most Nigerians (91%) do not believe that people were born homosexual. 83% of the respondents indicated an unwillingness to accept a lesbian, gay or bisexual family member, while 90% of Nigerians support the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA). Eighty-three per cent (83%) of the respondents claimed not to have any family member, friend, or even know their community member that is a homosexual. In terms of associating with homosexuals, 90% of the respondents opined that Nigeria is better off without homosexuals, while 70% said they would not want to have anything to do with homosexuals. 56% of Nigerians want homosexuals to be denied access to public services like healthcare, housing, education, and others, while 39% think they should have access to public services.

This perhaps is the reason Edozor and Ekechukwu (2015) feel that lesbianism is an abnormality that can cause problems of personality maladjustment, and therefore, not

acceptable. Those who do not accept lesbianism, thinking that it is a vice suggest that young female adolescents get into it through social media either by watching sexually illicit movies, reading articles posted by negative role models, reading, and viewing pornographic magazines and pictures, and so on. Henry (2013) and Osamanga (2017) have among other things listed learning disappointment, fear of pregnancy, inability to relate with the opposite sex, environment, moral laxity, negative self-concept, nymphomania, separation, seduction, and school type as things that could cause lesbianism.

Several investigations have been done on self-concept and acceptance of lesbianism among adolescents. In a longitudinal study of 197 gay and lesbian youth, Vincke and Van Heeringen (2002) discovered that when a youth's environment which consists of family, friends, and confidants, who are aware of their sexual identity are supportive and nurturing, gay and lesbian youth scored higher on self-concept measures. Snapp, Watson, Russel, Diaz, and Ryan (2015) studied 245 LGBT youth and revealed that a positive and supportive environment (such as family, friends, and community) was associated with higher self-esteem in youth ($r=0.37$) and with a more positive attitude toward their sexual identities ($r=0.36$). Wilkerson, Schick, Romjnders, Bauldry, and Butame (2017) in a more recent study examined a sample of 108 sexual minority youth and revealed an association between a supportive social environment (such as family, friends, and LGBT youth organizations) and youth's self-esteem. These studies, therefore, point to the fact that a higher self-concept relates to acceptance of lesbianism tendency.

According to Grossman (1997), lesbians or sexual minority youth may perceive themselves as disconnected from the socially accepted majority heterosexual group, resulting in a lack of opportunity to take advantage of self-esteem built on membership in that group. Rotheram-Borus, et al., (1995) asserted that homosexuality and deviance from expected gender-typed behaviours may lead to marginalization and may prevent the development of a positive and healthy self-concept. Higgins, Hoffman, and Martins (1987) revealed that individuals aim at aligning their self-concept with their socially learnt standards and ideals and failure to meet these expectations predisposes them to feelings of fear, shame, rejection, and guilt. A high self-discrepancy may result in low self-esteem and a negative self-concept. This means that tensions exist in

developing a lesbian self-concept in a heterosexual society. Shuck and Liddle in Hossain and Ferreira (2019) studied 66 gay, lesbian, and bisexual adults and revealed that over 66% of the participants reported friction between their sexual and religious identities. Sherkat (2002) in his study, reported that of the 2500 religious' movements in the United States, almost all disapprove of non-heterosexual orientation, which leads to a frustrating, judgmental, and conflicting moral self-concept for lesbians and gays.

Azubuko (2019) indicated the common observation that out of a cluster of 20 girls, one or more lesbians will likely be present. Duruamaku-Dim (2019) investigated the level of lesbianism tendency of senior girls in same-sex secondary schools in Cross River State and revealed that it is significantly high. The finding by Duruamaku-Dim however, disagreed with the work of Seigler (2015) on the level of lesbianism tendencies among females which revealed that the rate of lesbianism in Nigeria is very low, even though the acceptance of lesbians, gays, and bisexual people in Nigeria is gradually increasing.

Self-concept is a general term used to describe how someone thinks about or views himself or herself. It covers how we see ourselves physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually, morally, and academically. This study concentrated on moral and academic self-concepts. Moral self-concept is related to the traits of the prototypically moral person such as caring, compassion, helpfulness, hard work, friendliness, fairness, generosity, honesty, and kindness (Azubuko, 2019). Moral self-concept measures people's satisfaction with their conduct, it is related to the sense of being able to control one's impulses and behaviour. Dahl and Galliher (2010) in their study on moral self-concept and lesbianism revealed that moral self-concept which initiated significant positive effects such as perceiving God as being kind and forgiving is increased with low acceptance of lesbianism. Academic self-concept is the individual's assessment of his or her ability to learn or perform in academic matters. It is the personal beliefs of individuals about their academic abilities or skills (Trautwin, Ludike, Marsh & Nagy, 2009). Kertzner, Meyer, Frost and Stirrat (2009) did a study of the mental health effects of added burden related to the academically disadvantaged status, of lesbians, gays and bisexuals, using a community sample of 396 self-identified lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) adults. A significant relationship between

academic self-concept and LGB orientations was revealed among other findings. Purvis (2017) examined whether perceptions of discrimination, coming-out, and academic self-esteem levels predict lesbianism tendencies, anxiety, and depression. A snowball sample of 105 self-identified lesbians from the United States of America was used, and hierarchical regression was used as a statistical tool. The results revealed that frequency and stressfulness of sexual discrimination, coming-out, and self-esteem levels predicted depression, and anxiety, with academic self-esteem as the only significant predictor of lesbianism tendencies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Gay and lesbian youths face some problems in schools. Being of minority status, they face victimization and stigmatizations of various forms and a lack of needed support. These can predispose them to drug or alcohol abuse, dropping out of school, unsafe sexual practices, and abandoning their homes. On a more serious level, they could experience low self-concept, depression, and may toy with the idea of committing suicide.

A school is a place for moulding learners to be useful to themselves and their society. It should not be a place for stigmatization or victimization, therefore whatever can be done to ensure that the school pushes everybody in the right direction is very necessary. The researchers, therefore, wonder if the self-concept of students could be contributory to the acceptance of lesbianism tendencies among the students. The problem of this research, therefore, is to investigate the moral and academic self-concept and how they influence the acceptance of lesbianism tendencies among secondary school girls in Ovwie Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The area of the study is the Uvwie Local Government Area in the Delta State of Nigeria. The ex-post facto research design was employed for this study. From the study population of 2,112 senior secondary school girls, a sample of 218 senior secondary school girls was selected through the simple random sampling technique. The Self-concept and Acceptance of Lesbianism Tendency Questionnaire (SALTQ), comprising two sections, A and B was the instrument for data

collection. Section A provided demographic data while section B with 30 items was used to collect data on the variables of the study. A four-point scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD) and which was weighted 4,3,2 and 1 respectively for the positively worded items and vice versa for the negatively worded items, was used to measure the items.

The instrument was face-validated by submitting it to one expert in guidance and counselling and one in test and measurement for scrutiny. The instrument was subjected to a trial test using 20 students selected from two secondary schools in the Local Government. These were not part of the study participants, but they had similar characteristics to them. A Cronbach alpha reliability estimate of between 0.73 and 0.85 for the instrument was established; the instrument was deemed reliable. The instruments for data analysis were one sample or population t-test and an independent t-test. To be able to use the independent t-test, the respondents for this research were divided into two groups viz high and low based on whether they scored above the average score or below the average score. From the weighting of the instrument, the highest expected score and lowest expected score by a respondent are 20 and 5 respectively. The independent variables were measured by five items each. The average score was derived as follows:

$4 \times 5 + 3 \times 5 + 2 \times 5 + 1 \times 5 = 20 + 15 + 10 + 5 = 50$. 50 divided by 5 (items used to measure the independent variables) = 10. Therefore, a respondent that scored 9 and below was categorized as low while one that scored 10 and above was categorized as high.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: The level of lesbianism tendencies among secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria is not significantly high.

Variable: Lesbianism tendency

Statistical tool: One sample t-test (or population t-test).

The population t-test was chosen as the statistical tool for data analysis because it was only one variable (lesbianism tendency) that was continuously measured that was involved in this null hypothesis. The hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance and the result of this analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of one sample t-test result showing the level of lesbianism tendencies among senior secondary school girls among secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria.

Test mean value=25

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal.	Sig
Lesbianism tendencies	218	20.52	8.374	7.893**	0.000

Significant at the 0.5 level; df=217; Mean difference=4.48

The analysis in Table 1 gave a mean rating of 20.52 for the lesbianism tendencies of senior secondary school girls which is less than the test mean value of 25. This shows that lesbianism tendency in the study area is below the expected value with a mean difference of 4.48. The p-value of .000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05 at 217 degrees of freedom, implying that the observed mean difference of 4.48 is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis that the level of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria is not significantly high was rejected. This implies that the level of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls in South-south Nigeria was significantly high.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of Moral self-concept on acceptance of lesbianism tendencies among senior secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria.

Independent variable: Moral self-concept (High and low)

Dependent Variable: Acceptance of Lesbianism tendency; Statistical tool: Independent t-test

This hypothesis was tested using the independent t-test as the statistical tool since the independent variable, (moral self-concept) was categorized into two independent groups high and low, while the dependent variable, Acceptance of lesbianism tendency was measured continuously. The hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance and the result of this analysis was presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of moral self-concept on acceptance of lesbianism tendencies among senior secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria.

Group: Moral self-concept	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	Sig
High	117	15.18	4.567	13.946**	.000
low	101	26.71	7.476		

** Significant at .05 level; df=216; Mean difference=11.53.

The results of the analysis in Table 2 revealed that 117 respondents had high moral self-concept while 101 had low moral self-concept. The students with high moral self-concept had a mean score of 15.18 while those with low moral self-concept had a mean score of 26.71 in their responses towards acceptance of lesbianism tendencies. This result indicates that the acceptance of lesbianism tendency is higher among senior secondary school girls with low moral self-concept than those with high moral self-concept with a mean difference of 11.53. The result in Table 2 further revealed a p-value of .000 which is less than the .05 level of significance at 216 degrees of freedom. Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was concluded, therefore, that there is a significant influence of moral self-concept on acceptance of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary

school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant influence of academic self-concept on acceptance of lesbianism tendencies among senior secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria.

Independent variable: academic self-concept (High and low)

Dependent Variable: Acceptance of Lesbianism tendency; Statistical tool: Independent t-test

The independent t-test was used as the statistical tool to test this hypothesis because the independent variable, academic self-concept was categorized into two independent groups high and low, while the dependent variable, acceptance of lesbianism tendency was measured continuously. The hypothesis was

tested at the 0.05 level of significance and the result of this analysis was presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of academic self-concept on acceptance of lesbianism tendencies among senior secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria

Group: Academic self-concept	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	Sig
High	124	17.35	7.422	7.280**	.000
low	94	24.92	7.696		

** Significant at .05 level; df=216; Mean difference=7.57.

The results of the analysis in Table 3 revealed that senior secondary school girls with high academic self-concept (N=124) had a mean score of 17.35, while those with low academic self-concept had a mean score of 24.92 in terms of acceptance of lesbianism tendencies, respectively. This result implies that acceptance of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls was greater among those with low academic self-concept than those with high academic self-concept with a mean difference of 7.57. The result in table 2 further revealed a p-value of .000 which is less than the .05 level of significance at 216 degrees of freedom, hence the null hypothesis was rejected. It was concluded, therefore, that there was a significant influence of academic self-concept on acceptance of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following findings were revealed by the data analysis

1. The level of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria is significantly high.
2. There is a significant influence of moral self-concept on acceptance of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria There is a significant influence of academic self-concept on acceptance of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A in Delta State, Nigeria

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

Findings on hypothesis 1 revealed that the level of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls in South-south Nigeria is significantly high. This finding is in line with the finding of Duruamaku-Dim (2019) that the level of lesbianism tendency of senior girls in same-sex

secondary schools in Cross River State is significantly high. The finding however disagrees with the work of Seigler (2015) which revealed that the rate of lesbianism in Nigeria is very low, even though the acceptance of lesbians, gay and bisexual people in Nigeria is gradually increasing. The result from hypothesis 2 shows that there is a significant influence of moral self-concept on acceptance of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls in South-south Nigeria. Girls with high moral self-concept are less likely to accept lesbianism than those with low moral self-concept. This finding is in line with the finding by Dahl and Galliher (2010) that moral self-concept which initiated significant positive effects such as perceiving God as being kind and forgiving, is increased with low acceptance of lesbianism.

Findings on hypothesis 3 revealed a significant influence of academic self-concept on acceptance of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls in South-south Nigeria. Senior secondary school girls with high academic self-concept demonstrated lower acceptance of lesbianism than those with low academic self-concept. This finding suggests that an individual's view of the academic activities around her may affect her chances of becoming a lesbian. This finding is in line with the results of the study by Kertzner et al (2009) which revealed a significant relationship between academic self-concept and lesbianism tendencies. The findings of the study by Purvis (2017) which revealed academic self-esteem as a predictor of lesbianism tendency, corroborates this finding.

Conclusion

This study is an investigation of the influence of moral and academic self-concepts on the acceptance of lesbianism tendencies among senior secondary school girls in Ovwie LGA of Delta State. Through a simple random sampling technique, a sample of 218 respondents was selected. The data collected was analysed using a population t-test and an independent sample t-

test. From the findings of this study, the level of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls is significantly high, and there was a significant influence of moral and academic self-concepts on acceptance of lesbianism tendency among senior secondary school girls in Ovwie L.G.A of Nigeria. This implies that senior girls with low moral self-concept and academic self-concept are more likely to become lesbians than those with high moral and academic self-concepts. It is needful to ensure that secondary school girls are encouraged to develop appropriate self-concepts which will enable them to have a balanced perception of lesbianism tendency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

- i. Efforts should be made by the education stakeholders to reduce the level of lesbianism among senior secondary school girls by instituting programmes that sensitize them on the need to develop proper self-concept.
- ii. The word of God and motivational talks should be appropriately used to encourage the development of moral concepts among the students.
- iii. Self-concept enhancement programmes should be introduced to enhance academic self-concept.

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