

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEER PRESSURE, PORNOGRAPHY AND ATTITUDE TO PREMARITAL SEX AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between peer pressure, pornography and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents in Lagos State. Two research hypotheses guided the study. 250 randomly selected participants from selected senior secondary schools in Lagos State formed the sample size. A 25 item researcher-made questionnaire titled Peer Pressure, Pornography and Attitude to Premarital Sex (PPPAPS) was used for data collection. The data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings indicated that peer pressure and pornography exert significant relationship with attitude to premarital sex among adolescents. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that sexuality education should be compulsorily incorporated into the school curriculum so as to teach adolescents healthy sexual behaviours early in life.

Keywords: Peer pressure, Pornography, Attitude, Premarital sex, Adolescents

Introduction

Premarital sexual activities among adolescents can be seen as a cankerworm that is eating deep into our society. Some of these adolescents tend to engage in premarital sexual activities with little or no information on the consequences of engaging in premarital sex. Researchers agree that there has been a high rate of negative sexual and reproductive health practices among adolescents and that they account for the majority of unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion complications, and sexually transmitted diseases among others which negatively affect their social, educational and psychological well being (Ikpe, 2004; Okonkwo, Fatusi, and Ilika, 2005; United Nations, 2006). Adolescence is a period of sexual maturity that transforms a child into a biologically mature adult capable of sexual reproductions and the potential consequences of that sexual activity (Durojaye, 2009). Thus, their challenges are predominantly behavioural, characterised by their quest for identity formation, experimentation and self discovery which sometimes exposes them to peer pressure, pornography and may affect their attitude towards premarital sex. Osiki and Adebisi (2015) stated that adolescents' quest for adventure have made them become sexually active at a younger age. In the traditional Nigerian society, parents and other significant adult members of the society such as the teachers and religious leaders find it difficult discussing sex related matters with the adolescents because some of them see that as a taboo or have the negative belief that providing such information will make them sexually active early in life. Thus, they resort to their peers for information which sometimes may be negative. Peers may play a role in adolescents' sexual socialization which is the process through which adolescents adopt attitudes and norms regarding sexual behaviours and relationships (L'Engle & Jackson, 2008).

The importance of peer influences for adolescents' sexual behaviours is not surprising, given key characteristics of this developmental period because most adolescents' pubertal development and concomitant sexual desires occur during a developmental period that is also marked by identity development processes (Kroger, 2003), an increasing reliance on peers for emotional support and acceptance (Harter, Stocker & Robinson, 1996), and a strong interest in engaging in behaviours that may increase popularity

among peers (Cillessen, Schwartz & Mayeux, 2011). Again, there has been extensive interest and curiosity in premarital sexual activities among adolescents due to their exposure to sexual stimuli in magazines, television and the movies more than before. The trend is due to the advancement in the information technology which promotes globalisation and technological development thereby creating a general trend towards liberated attitude and values that encourage pornography and open discussion on sexuality. Pornography is fast rearing its ugly head on adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex. This distorted sexual imagery is gradually corroding and damaging the reproductive health of the young ones to the extent that a better part of their lives in academic and healthy relationships can be negatively affected. Struthers (2009) opined that while pornographic viewing creates momentary intense pleasurable experiences, it ends up leading to several negative lingering psychological experiences, thereby affecting adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex.

All manners of pornography are highly loaded in the handsets of adolescents in such a way that the only thing they need to do is just to configure and subscribe. The accessibility of the handset is such that it is very portable, therefore has become the most active and easiest access and agent of pornography to the adolescents in the secondary schools thereby affecting their attitude towards premarital sex. Several studies have shown clearly that sexual content is prevalent on television and the Internet has also been said to make sexually explicit materials more accessible to youth than ever before (Davis and Mares, 1998; Kunkel, Cope and Biely, 1999) Pornography evokes, upset and distress when one is not psychologically able to process the images (Manning, 2008). Pornography is voyeurism because it teaches men to view women as objects rather than to be in relationships, thus, adolescents with either multiple sexual partners or a history of sexually transmitted infections have a higher rate of using books and other information resources that depicted women as sexual objects (Eruesebefe, 2005; Pamela, 2012).

Despite the fact that parents and schools tend to act as positive promoting agents that help adolescents' development of positive attitude towards premarital sex, mass media and peers may serve as agents that increase adolescents' negative attitude towards premarital sex (L'Engle, Brown, & Kenneavy, 2006). Sexual immorality (including watching blue films, pre-marital sex, and unwanted pregnancy) were listed among the eleven categories of indiscipline among secondary school students (Eregha, 2002). In addition, peer group influence can also be a major cause of pornographic viewing. Peer group influences adolescents' value orientation and behaviours and can affect their personal values. Adolescents whose peers have had sex are more than twice as likely to report having a high intention to initiate sexual intercourse early (Kinsman et al., 1998).

Researchers agree that sexual revolution in the Western world has glorified and commercialised sex, and all types of behaviours such as nudity, homosexuality, premarital sex among others were being experimented on and in some cases, even legalised pornographic magazines, novels and videos (Armstrong, 1972; L'Engle, Brown, & Kenneavy, 2006). Cline (2003) reported that pornography has negative effects on people who view them by increasing their tendency for developing sexually deviant tendencies. Ekanem (2003) pointed out that truancy, immorality and sexual harassment are some of the effects of pornography. Pornographic exposure is one important factor contributing directly to the development of sexually dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours such as deviant tendencies, committing sexual offences, experiencing difficulties in one's intimate relationships and accepting rape myth, thus, pornographic use and sexual violence are significantly correlated. Pornography shapes attitudes and influences behaviour, making sexuality more exciting than expected since it is primarily a fantasy (Fordham, 2006). Onyemelukwe (1993) explained that in

contemporary time, Nigerian youths have joined in the sex revolution in Europe and America. The impact of alien ideas and cultures, mass communication and conditions of urban life on the behaviour and attitude of Nigerian adolescents cannot be over emphasized. Based on the aforementioned, there is need to investigate the relationship between peer pressure, pornography and attitude of adolescents towards premarital sex in Lagos state.

Statement of the Problem

Premarital sexual activities tend to be prevalence among adolescents in secondary school which often lead to teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and further leading to dropping out of school. This ugly trend is worrisome and of great concern to stakeholders because it may negatively affect adolescents' educational, vocational and psycho- social well being. There is public concern on adolescents characteristics based on their physical and sexual growth, quest for independence, identity formation, experimentation and self discovery which sometimes exposes them to peer pressure, pornography and may affect their attitude towards premarital sex. Again, there is dearth in literature on the relationship between peer pressure, pornography and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents. Earlier studies were on how they affect their academic performance, thus, there is need to investigate the relationship between peer pressure, pornography and attitude of adolescents towards premarital sex in Lagos state.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between peer pressure, pornography and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents. Specifically, the study is designed to:

- i. Examine whether there is any relationship between peer pressure and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents.
- ii. Determine whether there is any relationship between pornography and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses gave direction to the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents.
2. There is no significant relationship between pornography and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents.

Methodology

Research Design: The study adopted a survey research design.

Population of the study: The population of the study comprised all students in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

Sampling and Sampling Technique: Simple random sampling technique was used to select 5 Education Districts out of 6 Education Districts in Lagos State and 1 senior secondary schools from each of the 5 Education Districts making a total of 5 schools. Multistage sampling method was used to select 50 SS2 students from each of the 5 schools. The total sample size was 250 SS2 students.

Research Instrument: A 25 item researcher-made questionnaire titled Peer Pressure, Pornography and Attitude to Premarital Sex (PPPAPS) was used for data collection.

It has two sections: Section A contained the bio-data of the participants such as age, sex, class while section B was structured using Likert four point rating scale. The reliability coefficient of the instrument is 0.75.

Results

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents.

Table 1: PPMC test of relationship between peer pressure and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	Df	P
Peer Pressure	250	62.51	16.96	.669	248	Sig
Attitude to Premarital Sex	250	47.18	12.37			

This table shows that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents, $r(248) = .669, P < .05$. Thus, the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between pornography and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents.

Table 2: PPMC test of relationship between pornography and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	Df	P
Pornography	250	62.51	16.96	.485	248	Sig
Attitude to Premarital Sex	250	35.24	10.69			

This table shows that there is a significant relationship between pornography and Attitude to Premarital Sex, $r(248) = .485, P < .05$. Thus, the hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between peer pressure and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents. The result of hypothesis one showed that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents. This significant relationship between peer pressure and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents may be due to the fact that their challenges are predominantly behavioural, characterised by their physical and sexual growth, quest for independence, identity formation, experimentation and self discovery which sometimes exposes them to peer pressure and affect their attitude towards premarital sex. This result is consistent with the findings of Hallman (2004) and Alexander, et al (2007) who submitted that students' premarital sexual behaviour was linked to peer influence, primarily through relationships, communication, interaction connections and control within peer groups. They noted that peers often provide important models of attitude and behaviour for adolescent students and that student whose peers have had premarital sexual experience tend to engage in the same behaviours. In line with this finding Adhikari (2013) observed that the effects of peer sexual behaviour increase the likelihood of students engaging in premarital sexual behaviour because peer role is known to change personality, attitude and behaviour of students. Okonkwo, Fatusi and Ilika (2005) opined that adolescent students who sought information from their peers were sexually experienced compared to those

who sought information from parents, teachers and other sources such as media, religious centers, and adults. It is also in line with the findings of Amoran, Onadeko & Adeniyi (2005) who observed that most friends in the social context of Nigerian students would likely respect the final choice of their peer to engage in premarital sexual behaviour than that of their parents. Therefore, there is a correlation between peer group and adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex.

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between pornography and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents. The result of hypothesis two showed that there is a significant relationship between pornography and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents. This significant relationship between pornography and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents may be due to adolescents' quest for adventure and access to internet had made them become addicted to pornography thereby correlated with their attitude towards premarital sex. This finding is in line with the findings of Cline (2003) who reported that pornography has negative effects on people who view them by increasing their tendency for developing sexually deviant tendencies. It is also in consistent with the findings of Struthing (2009) who stated that while pornographic viewing creates momentary intense pleasurable experiences, it ends up leading to several negative lingering psychological experiences, thereby affecting adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex.

Conclusion

The study has established that there is a correlation between peer pressure, pornography and attitude to premarital sex among adolescents in Lagos state. Thus, parents and other significant adult members of the society such as the teachers and religious leaders should be free in discussing sex related matters with the adolescents so as to avoid getting wrong information from their peers and through pornographic materials.

Recommendations

- Sexuality education should be incorporated into the school curriculum so as to teach adolescents their body chemistry, how to select friends, events, places and experiences that are safe and healthy sexual behaviours early in life in order to avoid pornography and deceptive situations that may lead to premarital sex.
- There is need for effective intervention strategies such as assertiveness training and abstinence so that adolescents' will be encouraged to avoid negative peer pressure and pornographic materials which may lure them to premarital sex.
- All stakeholders in education such as parents, teachers, religious leaders, communities and institutions need to work in partnerships in teaching children values, norms, morals, taboos and cultural heritage so as to avoid the negative consequences associated with peer pressure and pornography towards premarital sexual behaviours such as unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, rapes and other related challenges thereby promoting social change and healthy living.

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