

Full Length Research Paper

Attitude of adolescents towards abortion in Ilorin Metropolis

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The study examined the attitude of adolescents in Ilorin metropolis towards abortion. The study made use of descriptive design and the instrument used was a self-constructed questionnaire titled the attitude of adolescents towards abortion. A panel of guidance counselors and psychologists established its face and content validities. Test re-test reliability of the instrument was also ensured and a reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained at 0.05 level of significant. Four secondary schools were selected through random sampling. The sample consisted of two hundred subjects, fifty from each school, selected through stratified random sampling. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested using t-test analysis at 0.05 level of significant. The results of the analysis showed a negative attitude towards abortion. Also, male and female, Christian and Muslim adolescents had the same attitude towards abortion. It was therefore recommended that since adolescents engage in activities that are perceived to be contrary to the norms and rules of society, counseling is needed and this should be adequately provided by both the counselors and the parents.

Key words: Attitude, adolescents, abortion, pregnancy, female adolescents, Ilorin Metropolis,

INTRODUCTION

The passage from childhood to adulthood is marked by a long transitional period known as adolescence. Adolescence is generally considered to begin with puberty which signals the end of childhood, results in rapid growth in height and weight, changes in body proportions and attainment of sexual maturity (Papalia et al., 2004). Adolescence is seen as a group continually seeking independence of the adult society, particularly of parents and other authority figures. This need for independence has led adolescents to take a position and views different from those of their parents and adults and to act in conformity with their peers, however unconventional the act may be (Owuamanam 1988). He is also of the opinion that adolescents of today seem to value sexual activities more than their counterparts of the

past years. Conger (1979) also believed that in all developmental events of adolescence, the most dramatic is the increase in sexual drive and the new and often mysterious feelings and thoughts that accompany it. Invariably, this has led to adolescent pregnancy over the years and in turn led to abortion. Adolescent pregnancy and abortion have become rampant all over the world. According to David (1989) in Healthcare Magazine, 45 million abortions-legal and illegal- are performed every year. A report from the International Planned Parenthood Federation said the figure has risen to 55 million abortions worldwide every year.

Abortion is a social vice which operates at a high level among women, especially the adolescence in the world and evidences had it that it resulted in teenage death. In

various hospitals, as confirmed by the researcher, are cases of adolescents' criminal abortion which have resulted in deaths or permanent damages to their wombs. Obemeta (1991) stated that as high as 500,000 unwanted pregnancies are aborted in the country every year, 14% are performed by qualified doctors while a whopping 86% went through quarks, herbalist and sundry self-styled medicine men. A World Health Organization (WHO) report according to Kigho (1991) in Times Week, 99% of the estimated 500,000 material deaths occur worldwide every year in developing countries; of this 11,500 to 20,400 result in complications from abortions performed by unqualified doctors. Allan Guttermacher Institute (2003) reported about 1.3million intentionally terminated pregnancies in the United States. In Nigeria, Oye – Adeniran (2007) established that 760,000 abortions occur in Nigeria yearly. Commenting on the age bracket and marital status of abortions seekers, he said 45% are women who are above 25 years of age while 55% are younger than 25.

Going through the literature, people seem to have different attitudes towards abortion. Olofin (1989) did not support abortion. In her article in Nigeria Tribune, she stated there is no sense in abortion because it is grief and against God's wish. She also believed it is an act of killing. Also, Oladipupo (1989), a student contributor in Nigeria Tribune, sees no reason why abortion should not be legalized because young girls are fond of getting rid of unwanted pregnancies. Writing on the view of men and women on abortion, Strong et al. (2005) believe that women are reluctant to talk openly about their abortion experiences. They believe that women committing abortion are usually selfish, loose, single, unwilling to accept family responsibilities, depressed and immoral. They believe in the abortion decision-making process; they may try to remain cool and rational, thinking that if they reveal their feelings, they will be unable to give their partners emotional support.

Religion is a sensitive issue as regards the code of conduct of people and it has a lukewarm attitude towards abortion. This could be supported by the article of 'The Catholic women's Organization, Port-Harcourt in the National Concord, 1991. They believe abortion is murder of the innocent and unwanted pregnancies and is often a product of promiscuity and a breakdown in morality and sexual indiscipline. Another sect of religions, Ahmadiyya Moslem Jama' at of Nigeria condemned abortion (The Guardian, 1992). The sect urged Nigerians to be virtuous and fear God "to achieve the much needed moral standards as a lasting solution to population control and family planning because it achieves its target at a great and moral social cost. Monaham (2004) believe abortion is not just a misguided act or unfortunate decision, it is a sin. He urged the abortionist to confess their sins and ask God to cleanse them from their unrighteous acts.

In determining the attitude of adolescents towards abortion, one research question and two hypotheses are

raised.

Research Question

What is the attitude of adolescents in Ilorin metropolis towards abortion?

Research hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female adolescent students in Ilorin metropolis towards abortion
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Christian and Muslim adolescent students towards abortion.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research design

The study was a descriptive research. This was used to allow the researcher to describe the way the adolescents perceive abortion.

Sample and sampling procedure

The subjects used for this study were two hundred adolescents randomly selected from four different schools in Ilorin metropolis. The rationale for choosing these schools was because they consisted of the category of people the research intends to cover, that is, adolescents.

Research Instrument

A self-designed questionnaire was used in eliciting information from the chosen samples. Efforts were made by the researcher to make sure that the items in the questionnaire were as simple as possible to enable the adolescents to understand the contents, thereby allowing responses to be more objective.

The instrument was divided into sections. The first section comprised the biographical data, while the second section had items generated from literature. The instrument was judged to have face and content validities by psychologists and guidance counselors. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained by using test re-test method. This was done by administering the questionnaire to a group of 30 students (15 boys and 15 girls) outside the sample used at an interval of two weeks, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. 0.80 reliability was obtained.

Data analysis

The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and t-test.

RESULTS

The analysis of the data is presented as follows.

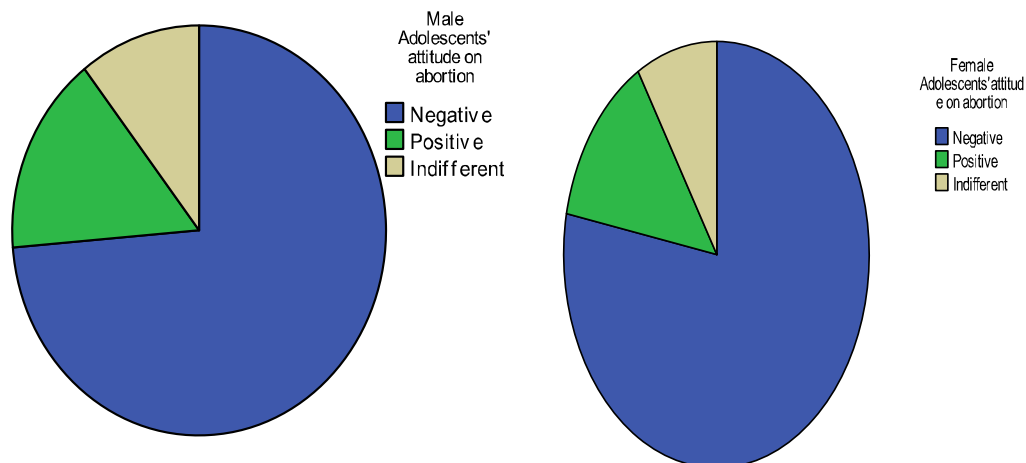


Figure 1. Pictorial representation of adolescents' towards abortion based on sex.

Table 1. T-test analysis of male and female adolescent students towards abortion.

Group	No of cases	Mean	S.D	t-cal	t-table	df
Male	95	1.37	0.669	0.698	1.960	198
Female	105	1.30	0.622			

P<0.05.

General question

1. What is the attitude of adolescents in Ilorin metropolis towards abortion based on sex?

Research hypotheses

1. Is there any difference in the attitude of adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis based on sex?
2. Is there any difference in the attitude of adolescent in Ilorin metropolis based on religion?

Figure 1 shows that a large percentage of the male and female adolescents have negative attitude towards abortion. Also in relation to both gender, there are more people who exhibit positive attitude towards abortion than those that are indifferent.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female adolescents in Ilorin metropolis towards abortion

The finding from Table 1 shows that the calculated t-value is .698 while the critical value is 1.960. Thus, the calculated t-value is less than the table value which shows there is no significant difference in the attitude of

male of female adolescents towards abortion. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female adolescence towards abortion is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the attitude of Christians and Muslims adolescents towards abortion.

The calculated t-value in Table 2 is+ 0.796 while critical value is 1.960. Therefore, the calculated t-value is less than the table value, which means the null hypothesis that states there is no significant difference in the attitude of Christian and Muslim adolescents towards abortion is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The result of the descriptive analysis on the research question raised in this study showed that majority of the adolescents had a negative attitude towards abortion while few of them had a positive attitude and are indifferent to it (abortion). This could be as a result of negative belief of people generally towards abortion. Olofin (1989) did not support abortion. She believes it is an act of killing. Monaham (2004) was of the opinion that abortion is not a misguided act or unfortunate decision, it

Table 2. T-test analysis of the attitude of Christians and Muslims adolescents towards abortion.

<i>Group</i>	<i>No of cases</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D</i>	<i>t-cal</i>	<i>t-tab</i>	<i>df</i>
Christian	75	1.11	0.421			
Islam	125	1.06	0.330	.796	1.960	198
Total	200					

P>0.05.

is a sin. Oladipupo (1989) had a contrary opinion. He believes since young girls are fond of getting rid of unwanted pregnancies, it should be legalized.

Hypothesis 1 revealed there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female adolescents towards abortion. The hypothesis was accepted. This could be because adolescents behave alike during their period; therefore, their attitude could be the same thing. This is in line with the views of Strong et al. (2005). They believe that men and women have roles to play in the process of committing abortion. Also from the literature, it is established that male and female adolescents behave alike, seeking independence. This may contribute to the same attitude towards abortion. It is also revealed in hypothesis 2 that there is no significant difference in the attitude of Christian and Muslim adolescent students towards abortion. This may be due to the fact that the scriptures which could be said to be tools for both Christian and Muslim adolescents hold the same belief towards abortion. This could be supported with the view of 'The Catholic Women's Organization. They believe abortion is murder of the innocent and unwanted pregnancies. Also the Muslim sect, Ahmadiyya Moslem Jama'at of Nigeria condemns abortion (The Guardian, 1992).

Conclusion

Majority of the adolescent students had a negative attitude towards abortion. From the findings, it was revealed that both male and female adolescents did not support abortion. Therefore, the adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis are against abortion.

Implication for Counseling

The importance and role of guidance and counseling should not be over-emphasized in the society. The essence of counseling is to help individual live a balance, well adjusted and meaningful life. In view of this, much of counseling is desired in school settings and outside the school. The study is on attitude of adolescents towards

abortion, and adolescent period is seen as the period in which adolescents engage in activities that are perceived to be contrary to the norms and rules of society. Therefore, a lot of counseling is needed and this should be adequately provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is recommended that guidance counselor in each school should work with the teachers and parents to discourage sexual activities among the adolescents in schools so that the negative belief of the adolescents towards abortion would be more established. Religious bodies should be more involved in counseling adolescents in decision making on matters relating to sex, pregnancy and abortion since they have a common belief towards abortion.

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