Full Length Research Paper

Family characteristics: Indices of adolescents' sexual behaviour

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This study examined the effect of family characteristics and parental status on adolescents' sexual behavior in Okun land of Kogi State. Data were obtained from male and female adolescents in ten Government Secondary Schools among the Okun-Yoruba tribe of Kogi State. The Okun-Yorubas occupied five LGAs of the state. Two schools were selected from each of the LGAs. In all, 781 copies of questionnaire were distributed and 768 were retrieved from respondents. This sample responded to a semi-structured questionnaire which contained both open and closed ended questions on sexual activities among adolescents as facilitated by family and parental background and activities. The findings reveal that adolescents' sexual behaviors are affected by their family or parental sexual life style, income and education level, tutelage, etc. Association between adolescents' sexual behavior and parental indices as mentioned above were tested using the Chi-square test. The t-test was used to determine the significance of the findings while Cramer's V value was used to test the strength of the associations. Results of the Chi-square tests were corroborated by focus group discussion and In-depth interview conducted among respondents and teachers. This allows for triangulation among responses gathered. Conclusions were drawn based on the findings and recommendations proffered.

Key words: Family, socialization, adolescents, social stratification, sexual behavior.

INTRODUCTION

An adolescent is simply defined as any person in the age range of 10 to 21 years. It is the period of time between childhood and adulthood when puberty occurs. It is best described as a transition period where the adolescent is no more a child but has now also grown enough to be addressed an adult. As the child grows, the body changes and as he enters puberty, his sex hormones come alive and he begins to experience sex drive.

Socializing adolescents in the right environment has implication on how they manage their sexual lives which has an overall effect on their sexual health. The family as a primary socializing agent is saddled with the responsibility of providing an enabling environment for the proper behavior of adolescents. This however may not be possible due to differences that cut across family characteristics.

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Characteristics like parents' level of education, number of children, parents' income level, parents' marital status and tutelage play key role in adolescents' sexual behavior (NDHS, 2008).

The overall welfare of the family has implication for behavioural pattern of children. Children of well to do parents that are educated earn more salaries and are able to afford comfortable accommodation and other luxuries afford their children and ward's needs more easily and keep them under check than children whose parents could hardly afford daily three square meals. This social inequalities or social stratification creates a kind of natural divide for children and affect their behaviours. As opined by Udubholo and Adebola (2010), social stratification can be responsible for a child's illicit sexual relationship. If parents are not wealthy enough to provide vital needs of adolescents, then such adolescents can easily be enticed to people who make such provisions for them regardless of what they have to give in exchange. In a study conducted among adolescents and young people by Olobayo (2006), it was discovered empirically that parents' marital failure has consequences on adolescents' and young persons' sexual activities cum academic performances.

Past researches (Tinuola 2009, Abu and Akerele, 2006, Amoran et al., 2005) the world over, have shown a very high correlation between family characteristics and adolescents' sexual behavior. The structure of a family provides a salient development context, in that children grow up usually having primary relationships with one or two biological parents, and with or without older and younger siblings. The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (2008) established empirically, that there is a strong relationship between parents' income and adolescents' sexual behavior because adolescents whose parents earn low income or are not empowered were found among those sleeping with older men for gifts\money. With respect to parents' marital status, many studies consistently show that living with a single parent is related to adolescents being more likely to have sexual intercourse (Miller et al., 2001). Several studies (Coley et al., 2008) show earlier onset of intercourse and less contraceptive use among adolescents in single parent families. Several investigators have also validated empirically that single or divorced parents have more permissive sexual attitudes and lesser parental supervision while parents' own dating activity help explain why adolescents in some single parent families are at increased risk of pregnancy (Biddlecom et al., 2009).

The health of the poor is generally worse than the health of the non-poor regardless of age and poverty does impact on adolescent health. Poor adolescents are likely to live in environments that do not support health-promoting activities. It is not only specific behaviours that place adolescents at risk, but also the fact that the environment in which they find themselves often precludes them from the information, motivation, skills and funds required to make healthy choices. The disadvantages of poverty are also overlaid by disparities arising from age, culture, law and gender. Many parents subject their adolescent children, especially the females to child labour and make them hawk in market places, streets and motor parks. In so doing, they expose these adolescents to sexual harassment from older males. Some parents encourage their teens into early sexual intercourse and prostitution, unknowingly, by neglecting their responsibilities toward them (Adebola, 2014).

Research objectives

1. To examine the influence of parents' educational background on adolescents' sexual behavior.
2. To investigate the effect of parents' marital status on adolescents' sexual behavior.
3. To investigate the influence of parents' level of income on adolescents' sexual behavior.

Research hypotheses

1. **Ho**: There exists no significant association between parents' educational background and   adolescents' sexual behaviours.
   H1: There exists a significant association between parents' educational background and adolescents' sexual behaviours.

2. **Ho**: There exists no significant association between parents' marital status and adolescents'   sexual behaviours.
   H1: There exists a significant association between parents' level of income and adolescents' sexual behaviours.

3. **Ho**: There exists no significant association between parents' level of income and adolescents' sexual behaviours.
   H1: There exists a significant association between parents' marital status and adolescents' sexual behaviours.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised male and female adolescents in 10 Government Secondary Schools in the five LGAs under study. Two schools were selected from each of the LGAs. The total sample size is determined using Table for determining Minimum returned Sample Size for a given population size for Continuous and Categorical data as developed by Barlett et al. (2001).

Following the above table, using the margin error of 0.3 (precision level) at alpha level of 0.05, the number of respondents in each of the school are as follows: In St. Barnabas' Secondary School, Kabba, with students' population of 500; 98 respondents were selected, while in Okebukun High School, Okebukun with the students' population of about 200; 78 respondents were selected. In both Iyara Community Secondary School, Iyara with students'

Table 1. Number of children in the family and adolescents' sexual behavior.

No of children in adolescents' family	Opposite sex friendship		
	AGREE	**DISAGREE**	**TOTAL**
1-3	100	117	217
4-5	137	169	306
6-7	157	36	193
8 & above	35	17	52
Total	429	339	768

χ_c^2 = 77.24 ; Cramer's V = 0.571 DF = 3 Decision rules: reject Ho if P-value 0.05
Criterion = P-value calculated .000 < 0.05, Implication, highly significant.
Decision, Ho rejected

population of 200, and Ogidi Community Secondary School with the same students' population of 200; 78 respondents were taken from each school. In Mopa-Muro LGA, ECWA Secondary School, Mopa, with students' population of 350; 92 respondents were selected, while in Illai Community Grammar School with students' population of 70; 39 respondents were selected. In Yagba West LGA, Titcombe College Egbe, with students' of 350; 92 respondents were selected while in Odo Ara Community Secondary School, with students' population of 160; 68 respondents were taken. In Yagba East LGA, Government Day Secondary School, Isanlu with students' population 320; 88 respondents were selected and in Community High School, Ejuku with students' population of 160; 70 respondents were selected respectively.

DISCUSSION

From Table 1, a number of descriptive and statistical deductions were made. Going by the statistical results derived from the table, the χ_c^2 data show that there is a significant association between the number of children in adolescents' family and whether or not they would have early association with boy/girlfriend. This decision is arrived at because the P-value of .000 is less than 0.05 at 3 degrees of freedom. Therefore by this result, the null-hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant association between the adolescents' family size and their sexual involvement is sustained. For this data, the Cramer's V statistic is .57 (57%) out of a possible maximum value of 1. This represents a high association between the number of children in adolescents' family and the pattern of their sexual activities. This further strengthens the result of the χ_c^2 test. The implication of this result is that adolescents whose parents have fewer children and are educated are not likely to engage in illicit sexual activities. During the in-depth interview conducted on the adolescents, two main reasons were separately adduced for the link between size of children in adolescents' family and whether or not they have boy\girlfriends. The two reasons commonly cited were; 'close supervision and need for extra income'. For instance, an in-depth interview of one of the adolescent respondent from small family

size, stated thus:

'I cannot dare have a boy\girlfriend because my parents always hook on me. My absence from home even for a minute attracts their attention. Because of our few numbers in the family, our parents have time for us. We move from home to school and vice-versa'.

Another respondent on the same issue has the following to say:

'Ma, you cannot have either boy or girlfriend in our family. We are two in number in the family. The eagle eyes of our parents are always on us. We have evening tutors who come home to teach us after closing from school every day'.

Among those who claimed that they have early association with boy\girlfriend, one of them in an in-depth interview said:

'We are eight in my family. Our father lost his job some years back. Our mother is just a secondary school teacher with little income. Aside from the inability of our mother to monitor us, she cannot also provide all we need. We therefore fend for ourselves; hence, having boyfriend is one of the ways we use to get money'

The quantitative and qualitative results presented above are in line with the findings of Oyefara (2009) who found that poverty is one of the reasons why parents are not able to cater for the needs of their children. According to him, most Nigerian families live below the poverty line and as such cannot sustain their children. By extension therefore, he claimed that poor adolescents are likely to live in environments that do not support health-promoting activities. The outcome of the test of hypothesis is also supported by the 2008 empirical findings of Nigeria Demographic and Health survey. The report observed that parents, particularly poor ones often subject their adolescent children, especially the female ones to labour and make them hawk in market places, streets and motor

Table 2. Number of children in the family and engagement in sex for money.

No of children in adolescents' family	Engagement in sex for money\gift		
	AGREE	**DISAGREE**	**TOTAL**
1-3	170	47	217
4-5	284	22	306
6-7	180	13	193
8 & above	42	10	52
Total	**676**	**92**	**768**

Source: Researcher's field work, 2013.

χ_c^2 = 33.567 ; Cramer's V = 0.509
DF = 3
Decision rules: reject Ho if P-value 0.05
Criterion = P-value calculated .000 < 0.05, Implication, highly significant.
Decision, Ho rejected

parks. In so doing, they expose these adolescents to sexual harassment from older males. Some parents encourage their teens into early sexual intercourse and prostitution, unknowingly, by neglecting their responsibilities toward them. Table 2 is the second proof from which descriptive statistical deductions which confirm the validity of hypothesis 1 can be made. Going by the statistical results derived from the table, the χ_c^2 data show that the association between the number of children in adolescents' family and whether or not adolescents would engage in sex for money or other material gains is highly significant. This decision is arrived at because the P-value of .000 is less than 0.05 with 3 degrees of freedom. Therefore by this result, the null-hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant association between the adolescents' family size and whether or not they will engage in sexual behavior because of their family characteristics is sustained. For this data, the Cramer's V statistic is .51 out of a possible maximum value of 1 (51%). This signifies that there is a strong association between the number of children in adolescents' family and whether they will engage in sex for money or other material gains. What this implies is that the smaller the adolescents' family sizes the less likely is it for adolescents to be involved in sex for monetary gains. But on the other hand, adolescents with large family size are more likely to engage in sex for money or other material gains. During the Focus group discussions, some of the adolescent girls agreed to engagement in sex for monetary gain. In one of the interactive session, an S.S two student jokingly said:

'If I don't sleep with men, how will I pay my school fees? It is true. I may not like it but I have to do it because nobody sponsors me to school'.

Another girl told us during the in-depth interview that:

'It is not new that girls sleep with older men for money. 'A lot of girls do it and is not bad. I cannot blame them because in most cases most girls that sleep around like that do not have any source of livelihood. In such cases, they only use what they have to get what they want'.

The quantitative and qualitative results presented above are in line with the findings from NDHS (2008) which state that a lot of adolescents and young people do involve in sex especially with older men for financial and material gains. The study mentions this as risky as older partners are most times infected already with Sexually transmitted diseases.

From Table 3, a number of descriptive and statistical deductions can be made. Going by the statistical results derived from the table, the χ_c^2 data show that there is high significant association between parents' educational status and whether or not adolescents would have early association with boy/girlfriend. This decision is arrived at because the P-value of .000 is less than 0.05 with 5 degrees of freedom. Therefore by this result, the null-hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant association between the parents' educational status and whether or not adolescents will have early association with boy/girlfriend is sustained. For this data, the Cramer's V statistic is .41 out of a possible maximum value of 1 (41%). This implies that though there is a medium association between parents' educational status and whether adolescents would have opposite sex friend or not, the association is not too strong. What this implies is that the more educated adolescents' parents are, the less likely that they would have early association with boy\girlfriend. But on the other hand, adolescents whose parents have low\no education are more likely to be associated with having early boy\girlfriend relationship.

One important reason pointed out as responsible for illicit relationship is level of education of parents. During

Table 3. Parents' educational status and adolescents' opposite sex friendship.

Parents' educational status	Opposite sex friendship		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	TOTAL
Degree	40	11	51
ND, NCE, NURSING	33	15	48
Secondary education	53	86	139
Pre- Secondary education	82	53	135
No Formal education	72	50	122
No schooling	149	124	273
Total	**429**	**339**	**768**

Source: Researcher's field work, 2013.

Using Pearson Chi-Square to calculate the P-value

χ_c^2 = 33.47 ; Cramer's V = 0.409

DF = 5

Decision rules: reject Ho if P-value .000

Criterion = P-value calculated .000 < 0.05, Implication, highly significant.

Decision rules: reject Ho if P-value 0.05.

Table 4. Parents' Marital Status and having opposite sex friendship.

Parents' marital status	Opposite sex friendship		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	TOTAL
Divorced	68	34	102
Married	316	203	519
Separated	56	18	74
Single parent	36	10	46
Widowed	19	8	27
Total	429	339	768

Source: Researcher's field work, 2013.

Using Pearson Chi-Square to calculate the P-value

χ_c^2 = 65.53 ; Cramer's V = 0.603

DF = 5

P-value =.001

Decision rules: reject Ho if P-value 0.05.

the focus group discussions, when asked about parents' involvement in friendship pattern of respondents, those who said their parents have keen interest in their friendship pattern are those whose parents have high level of education. It is discovered that those with higher education has fewer children and so are able to control them better. One of the respondents, whose parents has no secondary education said:

'We are seven in our house and I am number four, my father is a bricklayer and when he goes out in the morning he does not come until evening and my mum is a market woman. So whether you keep a boyfriend or not is not their business'.

On the other hand, a respondent whose parents have

university degrees told us that:

'It is impossible in our family to keep opposite sex friends. Since we are three our parents take us to school and collect us after closing. The monitoring is very high and we dare not try it or we will pay dearly for it'

The quantitative and qualitative results above agree with Jegede (1998) who asserted from his findings that education promotes sexual health because the more education a couple gets, the less likely is it for them to have many children and more likely to take good care of the few children they have. From Table 4, a number of descriptive and statistical deductions can be made. Going

by the statistical results derived from the table, the χ_c^2

Table 5. Parents' marital status and engagement in sex for money.

Parents' marital status	Engagement in sex for money		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	TOTAL
Divorced	57	22	79
Married	313	206	519
Separated	45	12	57
Single	54	13	67
Widowed	32	14	46
Total	676	92	768

Source: Researcher's field work, 2013.

Using Pearson Chi-Square to calculate the P-value

χ_c^2 = 3.564   ; Cramer's V = 0.048

DF = 5

P-value =.004

Decision rules: reject Ho if P-value 0.05.

data show that there is highly significant association between parents' marital status and whether or not adolescents would have early association with boy/ girlfriend. This decision is arrived at because the P-value of .001 is less than 0.05 with 5 degrees of freedom. Therefore by this result, the null-hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant association between the parents' marital status and whether or not adolescents will have early association with boy/girlfriend is sustained. For this data, the Cramer's V statistic is .60 out of a possible maximum value of 1 (60%). This represents a strong association between parents' marital status and whether adolescents would have opposite sex friend or not. This further strengthens the result of the χ_c^2 test. This implies that parents' marital status has significant effect on the likelihood of adolescents' early association with boy\ girlfriend.

During the in-depth interview, reasons why marital status may affect adolescents' sexual behavior were stated thus: single parenthood, divorce and lack of commitment on the part of married couple. A school principal in one of the schools told us that:

'What is responsible for all these problems with our teenagers today is because the family is not what it is suppose to be. A situation where parents can no more endure but get divorced at the least provocation, what do you expect? Single parenthood is now the order of the day. So nobody controls the children. That is why they easily have boy\girlfriend'.

Another teacher who was interviewed said:

'As a J.S.S three class form-master, I have a lot of boy\girlfriend cases on my hands every time. I accredit this to parents' non-chalant attitude towards child training.

Some of the boys in senior class, who disturbs the girls in junior classes, are from homes where they are not under control. They talk anyhow and even threaten teachers who stand in their way. There is huge indiscipline among our students these days he added'.

The quantitative and qualitative findings above is corroborated by the findings from the past research work of Miller et al. (2001), who found that living with a single parent is related to adolescents being more likely to have sexual intercourse early. Thornton and Cambum (1987) also show earlier onset of intercourse and less contraceptive use, among teens in single parent families. They argued that this situation is because single or divorced parents have more permissive sexual attitudes and lesser parental supervision for their wards.

From Table 5, a number of descriptive and statistical deductions can be made. Going by the statistical results derived from the table, the χ_c^2 data show that there is a significant association between parents' marital status and whether or not adolescents would engage in sex for money. This decision is arrived at because the P-value of .004 is less than 0.05 with 5 degrees of freedom. Therefore by this result, the null-hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant association between the parents' marital status and whether or not adolescents will engage in sex for money is sustained. For this data, the Cramer's V statistic is .48 out of a possible maximum value of 1 (48%). This represents a medium association between parents' marital status and whether adolescents would engage in sex for money. This further strengthens the result of the χ_c^2 test. What this implies is that parents' marital status affects the sexual behavior of adolescents. During the in-depth interview, it was discovered that respondents whose parents are more educated, seems

Table 6. Tutelage and engagement in sex for money\gifts.

Tutelage	Engagement in sex for money\gifts		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	TOTAL
Both Parents	439	36	475
Father only	50	16	66
Mother only	128	29	157
Guardian	47	9	56
Self	12	2	14
Total	676	92	768

Source: Researcher's field work, 2013.

Using Pearson Chi-Square to calculate the P-value

χ_c^2 = 25.37 ; Cramer's V = 0.382
DF = 5
P-value =.000
Decision rules: reject Ho if P-value 0.05.

to have better jobs with good income than those parents who are either not educated or those with low education. For instance, a 14 year old student in S.S two said that:

'What will I use such money for? My mother supplies all we ask for. Our school fees are paid usually before we resume every term'.

This however is at variance with two other students who categorically agreed to making money through sleeping with men. From Table 6, a number of descriptive and statistical deductions can be made. Going by the statistical results derived from the table, the χ_c^2 data show that there is a significant association between adolescents' tutelage and their engagement in sex money. This decision is arrived at because the P-value of .000 is less than 0.05 with 5 degrees of freedom. Therefore by this result, the null-hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant association between adolescents' tutelage and whether they engaged in sex for money is sustained. For this data, the Cramer's V statistic is .38 out of a possible maximum value of 1 (38%). This represents a medium association between adolescents' tutelage and their engagement in sex for money.

During the in-depth interview conducted on the adolescents, one main reason linked to adolescents' involvement in sex money is; 'lack of parental training and close supervision. For instance, an in-depth interview of one of the adolescent respondent who is under the tutelage of both parents said:

'How do I even get the opportunity to sleep around? My parents are teachers in my school. We all leave and come back to the house together. When we finish our homework, we serve the siesta and wake up to prepare for church. You see that it is very difficult to stay on your own'.

In one of the schools visited, the vice-principal (administration) said that:

'What we see these days is different from what was obtainable at child's training in those days. Today, adolescents are left to live on their own and some even fend for themselves. This is quite worrisome. Why would such a student not sleep around'?

The quantitative and qualitative results presented above are in line with the findings made by the Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey which revealed that adolescents' girls who are responsible for themselves sleep with older men so as to get money for 'make-up and show fashion in vogue. This has severe implication for their sexual health as most of these older men may have been infected and would not allow such girls to protect themselves during sexual intercourse. Table 7 is another χ_c^2 test to validate the effect of adolescents' tutelage on their sexual behavior. A number of descriptive and statistical deductions can be made therefore from the result. Going by the statistical results derived from the table, the χ_c^2 data show that there is a significant association between adolescents' tutelage and their being forced into sex. This decision is arrived at because the P-value of .003 is less than 0.05 with 5 degrees of freedom. Therefore by this result, the null-hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant association between adole-scents' tutelage and whether they are being forced into

Table 7. Tutelage and ever forced in to having sex.

Tutelage	Ever forced in to having sex		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	TOTAL
Both Parents	387	88	475
Father only	55	11	66
Mother only	140	17	157
Guardian	50	6	56
Self	10	4	14
Total	642	126	768

Source: Researcher's field work, 2013.

Using Pearson Chi-Square to calculate the P-value

χ_c^2 = 17.956 ; Cramer's V = 0.592

DF = 5
P-value =.003
Decision rules: reject Ho if P-value 0.05.

sex is sustained. For this data, the Cramer's V statistic is .59 out of a possible maximum value of 1 (59%). This represents a strong association between adolescents' tutelage and their being forced into sex. This further strengthens the result of the χ_c^2 test. This implies that who trains a child has a significant effect on the child's sexual behavior. During the in-depth interview conducted on selected teachers in schools visited, one main reason given why adolescents' are being forced into sex is tutelage. One of the principal told us that:

'In my 23 years of service, I can count more than 12 cases of either rape or forceful sexual intercourse. Some of these cases happen with girls who are usually under the tutelage of a relation or their family friends. A pathetic one that we just handled recently is about a 15 year old girl who the parents released to her uncle for sound education but this 'supposed' uncle have forcefully been engaging in sex, threatening that if she ever talk he will kill her. The girl however could not cope any longer and narrated her ordeal to her classmate friend who called our attention to it'.

Another teacher who attested to the above assertion spoke thus:

'I have the case of a J.S.S2 student, who the step - father has been forcefully sleeping with. These things we see in films and think they are unimaginable are truly happening. We must be extra careful especially with girl children'.

The quantitative and qualitative results presented above are in line with the findings of NDHS (2008) which asserted that the girl child is more vulnerable to sexual molestation because of circumstances they may find themselves and because they have no power in decision making process. Oyefara (2009) also corroborated this from his findings. He attested to how a girl child is made an object of sex ant later left alone to bear the brunt. This he said does not only have implication for the girl or her family but the nation.

Conclusion

It has been observed empirically from this research work and other corroborated ones mentioned in this study that adolescents need good parental care to behave well especially with regards to their sexuality. Since children and adolescents are a product of the social world, the way of life of those training and tutoring them is inevitable. Parents' life style, education, marriage, income level, residence, number of children etc, all have significant effect on the sexual well-being of the child/ adolescents. Good parental relationships should be given optimum attention so as to help adolescents live decent sexual lives and help them delay sexual activities until they are matured enough to handle such sensitive issues.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Appendix. Barlett, Kotrlik & Higgins' Table determining minimum returned sample size for a given population.

Population size	Sample size					
	Continuous data (margin of error = .03)			**Categorical data** (margin of error = .05)		
	alpha =.10 t = 1.65	alpha =.05 t = 1.96	alpha =01 t = 2.58	p =.50 t = 1.65	p =.10 t = 1.96	p =.50 t = 2.58
100	46	55	63	74	80	87
200	59	75	102	116	132	154
300	65	85	123	143	169	207
400	69	92	137	162	196	250
500	72	96	147	176	218	286
600	73	100	155	187	235	316
700	75	102	161	196	249	341
800	76	104	166	203	260	363
900	76	105	170	209	270	382
1000	77	106	173	213	278	399
1500	79	110	183	230	306	461
2000	83	112	189	239	323	499
4000	83	119	198	254	351	570
6000	83	119	209	259	362	598
8000	83	119	209	262	367	613
10000	83	119	209	264	370	623