

**PEER INFLUENCE AND PARENTAL UPBRINGING AS DETERMINANTS OF
ADOLESCENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS PREMARITAL SEX**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate peer influence and parental upbringing as determinants of adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex. Ex-post facto research design was used in the study. Two hundred and ninety six (296) respondents were selected from two universities located in Ekiti State. Appropriate standardized scales were used and the data obtained were analyzed using t-test for independent samples. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that adolescents who scored high in peer influence ($M = 52.0481$) reported positive attitude towards premarital sex than adolescents who scored low in peer influence ($M = 41.1765$), $df(255) = 7.309$, $p < .05$; adolescent with unfavourable parental upbringing ($M = 48.0667$) significantly reported positive attitude towards premarital sex than adolescents with favourable parental upbringing ($M = 42.1307$), $df(294) = -3.945$, $p < .05$; and male students ($M = 49.5492$) significantly reported positive

attitude towards premarital sex than female students ($M = 41.0230$), $df (294) = 5.849$, $p < .05$. In view of these findings, the study recommended amongst others that parents and guardians should be well informed to overcome the cultural and environmental barriers that discourage giving adolescents early sex education and training. Likewise, well articulated family values should be enshrined so that children will grow up with the right orientation and be able to choose friends who believe in such values.

Keywords: Parental upbringing, Peer influence, Adolescents' Attitude, Premarital sex, Gender

Introduction

Premarital sexual activities among adolescents has gradually become a reality that cannot be overlooked (Onyebuchukwu, Sholarin & Emerenwa, 2015). Although, sexual activity is a normal and important aspect of development which marks partly the transition to adulthood. The average age for the onset of puberty has declined in the 20th century, the general cultural expectation is that young biologically mature adolescents will delay sexual

activity. Thus, initiation of sexual activity has become for African teens an important life-course transition into adult-like roles. The first time a person engages in sexual intercourse is a "rite of passage," a transition from the adolescent world of childhood innocence into the world of adult sexuality (Bernatt, 2016). In the 1970s, there was a major transformation in sexual behaviour in Nigeria. Although this transformation presumably affected the majority of Africans, it is among teenagers that the change has been best documented and the consequences have probably been most severe.

There were two major aspects to the transformation: both females and males were becoming sexually active at younger ages and fewer teenagers were marrying. As a result, there were more sexually experienced adolescents than in earlier generations, and a more rapid increase in the incidence of premarital sex for females than males.

Until recently, nearly all the cultures around the world, particularly, Africa viewed with seriousness, the engagement in sexual

intercourse practised by unmarried males and females. With the advent of modern technology, poor economic backgrounds, freedom gained by entry into the university, there is an ample opportunity for various sexual experimentation among adolescents (Isiugo-Abanihe & Oyediran, 2004). Estimates of the proportion of teenagers who had ever engaged in premarital sexual intercourse were obtained in 1971, 1976, and 1979 in three National Surveys of Young Women (NSYW) (Steinberg & Monahan, 2017). These surveys were the first to provide national estimates of teenage sexual experience.

Nigeria ranks as one of the countries with the highest birth rate for adolescents in the world while the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections including HIV among adolescents is also gradually increasing (UNAIDS, 2000). This berates the efforts of the Nigerian government in trying to address adolescent reproductive health issues (Okonofua, 2001). Infact, most of the family planning services are concentrated on those who are married, leaving out the adolescents (Arowojolu, Ilesanmi, Robert & Okunola, 2000). The

challenge of fighting to combat the menace of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies and badly conducted abortions, untimely deaths, touting and other social vices as the result of the inexperience of these categories of population has had a devastating effect on the country in terms of loosing its virile and working population.

Furthermore, sex education among adolescents is highly controversial because parents avoid discussing issues surrounding sexuality with their children (Ekoh et al, 2003). On the other hand, Richard (2001) is of the opinion that parents are shy to educate their adolescents on sex-related matters because they fear that such discussion may stimulate their interest in sex, and also as immoral because of religious beliefs meant to discourage adolescents from pre-marital sex. The role of educating adolescents on sex and sexual behaviours has been shifted to other agents of socialization like schools and peer groups by many families, thus gradually eroding the societal moral value that was obtainable in the past (Olubayo-Fatiregun, 2012).

More than before, there are great concerns for the female child as she attains puberty. Most parents exercise fear and anxiety because the female child is viewed as vulnerable as she inherits the greater burden because she suffers the social stigma of being tagged a “second Hand” in the case of a pregnancy and ultimately has a truncated education.

Parental upbringing is the control which parents exercise over their children. Parental upbringing is being viewed as an occupation which needs a lot of skill that works in order to influence a child's behaviour. Parents are considered as the primary shapers of their children's behaviour including attitude towards premarital sex. They have great influence over whether their wards abstain and when considering parental upbringing in relation to behaviour.

Teenage pregnancy is associated with leaving school before high school graduation. An economy increasingly oriented to services, literacy, numerical skills, and similar competencies, requires satisfactory completion of high school. The

school dropout faces a loss of opportunity for future economic security. Forty per cent of teenage girls who drop out of school do so because of premature pregnancy or early marriage. Only half of the female teens who become parents before age 18 graduate from high school (Jeffrey, 2017). Early childbearing has an impact on society. When individuals cannot realize their full educational and occupational potential, society loses their economic contributions. More directly, early childbearing leads to greater use of public services, there is a direct impact on public expenditures.

Another consequence of teenage premarital intercourse is the devastating spread of venereal diseases. It was reported that the sexually active girls were significantly more apt to demonstrate a greater number of disruptive, deviant or delinquent behaviors than non-active girls. They more frequently reported incidents of fighting in junior high school and running away from home. They disobeyed parental rules more often and were more likely to use alcohol and drugs. Additionally, they acquired lower cumulative grade-point averages, skipped classes, and broke school rules more

frequently. As such, the researchers intend to examine peer influence and parental upbringing on adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex.

Theoretically, theory of reasoned action has been used in several studies to predict sexual behaviour and intentions. This is based on the assumption that a person's intention to perform a specific behaviour is a function of the attitude towards the behaviour and the influence of the social environment on the behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This theory postulates that peers and parents have an influence in shaping individuals' sexual attitudes and behaviours (Wallace, Miller & Forehand, 2008; Doswell, Braxter, Cha & Kim, 2011; Gillmore, Archibald, Morrison, Wilsdon & Wells, 2002). Another theory of note is The PBT and it consists of three independent but related systems of psychosocial components namely the perceived environmental system; the personality system; and the behavioural system. The perceived environmental system covers social influence factors such as the family and peer orientation, and also expectations regarding problem behaviours. The personality system

includes social cognitions (parents, school, and peers), individual values, expectations, beliefs, and attitudes (Jessor & Jessor, 1977). This theory has been shown to be useful in predicting adolescent sexual behaviour and intentions (Madkour, Farhat, Halpern, Godeau & Gabhainn, 2010; Forehand, Gound, Kotchick, Armistead & Long, 2005).

Peer Influence and Adolescents' Attitude towards Premarital Sex

For years, peer influence has reigned as the most important contributor to adolescent behaviour as well as other social processes. In addition is the interpersonal peer group processes such as group expectations and the development of one's social identity (Foliarian, 2013). Sternberg (2018) established that adolescents are more likely than children to take risks, as recognized by the elevated rates of experimentation with drugs, alcohol and unprotected sexual intercourse. In a related study by Miller, Benson & Galbraith (2011), peer influence was observed as a primary contextual factor contributing to adolescent's tendency to make risky decisions. Furthermore, one of the strongest predictors of delinquent

behaviour in adolescents is affiliated with delinquent peers (Dishion, Bullock & Gravic, 2012; Lawal & Idemudia, 2018). Similarly, in a National Survey of teens, adolescents cited pressure from their friends as the reason for their initial involvement in sex (Bernatt, 2016; Steinberg, Darling & Fletcher, 2015). It is therefore a long established principle of social psychology that people feel compelled to conform to the norms and perceived expectations of the group to which they belong (Folarin, 2013) and according to Petito & Cuminins (2010) there is evidence that this is true especially in early adolescence.

A basic assumption is that during adolescence close friends become increasingly important as reference points in guiding various behaviours, including sexual behaviour (Beyers & Goosens, 2013). Peer advice regarding appropriate sexual behaviour is presumably an outcome of their own sexual experiences or the lack of such experiences. Both mechanisms of peer influence may indirectly affect the adolescent's sexual behaviour through the formation of the adolescent's own values

and preferences for sexual contact (Petito & Cuminins, 2010; Miller et al., 2011). A research project to assess which factors were important for friendship similarity with respect to sexual intercourse found evidence for racial differences. There was no similarity in sexual behaviour between adolescents and their friends for black males or black females. Both white males and white females acquire friends who are similar to themselves in terms of sexual behaviour. However, only white females appear to be influenced by their friends' behaviour (Dishion et al., 2012; Folarin, 2013). White females may be more influenced by their close female friends because female friendship is oriented toward "emotional-expressive" values while male-friendship is oriented toward "instrumental-group" orientation.

Parental Upbringing and Adolescents' Attitude towards Premarital Sex.

Peer influence works in a manner similar to the way parental influence works. When peers have low educational expectations and foresee few opportunities, the chances of teenage sexual activity, pregnancy and childbearing increase (Rowe & Luiver,

2015). Early dating and a steady relationship have been related to sexual activity. Initial sexual experiences tend to be with one partner. Adolescents may want to retain their steady relationship and may become sexually active for that reason. Having a girlfriend or boyfriend may provide opportunity for pressure toward sexual activity (Petito & Cuminins, 2010). Panel data from a junior high school was used to investigate adolescent friendship structure along the dimension of sexual behaviour. White females and white males tend to name same-sex friends whose sexual intercourse behaviour is like their own (Bernatt, 2016). Sexual intercourse is not a significant factor in accounting for adolescent friendship structure among blacks, males or females. For white females, similarity in adolescent-friend sexual behaviour appears to be due to both the influence and acquisition processes. For white males, only acquisition appears responsible for the observed homogeneity bias (Folarian, 2013; Jeffrey, 2017). The existence of a strong positive relationship between peers' sexual behaviour and the respondents' sexual behaviour was studied using friends' self-reports of their sexual

behaviour in Beyers & Goosens (2013).

Studies have shown relationship between parental upbringing and adolescent behaviour. Rowe & Luiver (2015) in their study revealed that parental upbringing can enhance or diminish acceptable behaviour outcomes. No wonder it is used to capture normal variations in parents? attempts to control and socialize their children as well as to influence, teach and control their children. It is therefore evident that parental upbringing could enhance or diminish acceptable behavioural outcomes in children (Petito & Cuminins, 2010).

An autocratic parent tend to have the final decision in the home, usually they are demanding and directive. Though they ordered environment with rules clearly stated, they are strict and as a result adolescents from such homes are often afraid of their parents and this tends to influence their decisions. Sternberg (2018) opined that boys from such homes tend to be violent while the girls cannot withstand pressure from the opposite sex and thus engage in antisocial behaviours such as alcohol, drug abuse and promiscuity. The

reason being that, this parental upbringing adheres strictly to the use of authority, punishment and do not expect the children to express disagreements with their rules but to obey without explanation (Bernatt, 2016; Petito & Cuminins, 2010).

On the other hand, the democratic style gives the adolescent a free hand to regulate their behaviour. They succumb to the child, giving few rules and avoiding confrontation, as a result the adolescent lacks initiative and discipline and expects everything to be done for them. Although, the parent here expects maturity from the child, by maintaining their position and respecting the child's opinion which in turn gives the child freedom of speech (Steinberg & Monahan, 2017). Adolescents from such homes view sex as an expression of mature love. The Laissez-faire parents tend not to interfere with the child's independence; thus demands little obedience and respect for authority (Steinberg et al., 2015). On the contrary the involved parent is much as the worst because there are no rules and no guidance towards the direction of the child's behaviour. Parental upbringing no doubt

has been found to predict child wellbeing arising from the conclusion that adolescents of autocratic parents tend to lack social competence in dealing with other people and tend to withdraw from social contact, they hardly use their initiative rather they depend on authorities to decide what is correct because they are used to adhering strictly to rules without being allowed to express their own opinion (Beyers & Goosens, 2013). Conversely, children of democratic parents have more self-control, while those from Laissez-faire parents exhibit immature behaviour and have difficulty accepting responsibility for their own actions.

Carlson & Tanner (2006) believed that parents are expected to exhibit differences in perceiving the sexual behavior of their adolescents. According to them, they found out that authoritarian and authoritative parents had more negative attitude towards adolescents' pre-marital sexual behaviour, than neglecting or indulgent parents that is, they had the most favorable attitude towards abstinence compared to neglecting parents.

**Gender and Adolescents' Attitude
towards Premarital Sex**

Among 15-19 year old women living in metropolitan areas, the percentage reporting premarital sexual activity rose from 30.4 in 1971 to 43.4 in 1976 and to 49.8 in 1979, an increase of 64% over the period (Beyers & Goosens, 2013).

Among males as well as females, children whose parents know all or most of their friends are less likely to be sexually experienced, although the association reaches statistical significance only among females (Jeffrey, 2017). Sons whose parents tended to listen and to discuss decisions with them are somewhat less likely to be sexually experienced, but no effect was found for daughters. Two-thirds of the adolescent females reported discussions with parents about sex while only one-sixth of the males reported such discussions. In the Rowe & Luiver (2015) study, the parents were divided into groups according to whether or not the family attitudes expressed by the parent were traditional or non-traditional. For daughters, parental traditionality was clearly associated with a lower prevalence of sexual activity. Those

adolescent females whose parents expressed traditional attitudes about marriage and family life were only one half as likely to report having engaged in sexual intercourse as those with less conservative parents (9% versus 20%) (Steinberg & Monahan, 2017). Among white males, however, parental attitudes were not found to be associated with the reported prevalence of sexual experience. This may have occurred because the parent interview was often completed by the mother rather than the father; the mother's attitudes may be less relevant for sons than for daughters.

However, it may also be that parents do not express their attitudes as readily or as explicitly to sons as to daughters. Only 17% of the sons reported discussing sex with either parent, compared with 67% of the daughters. In addition, parental communication appears to have little impact on sons, regardless of parental attitudes (Rowe & Luiver, 2015). Given that no significant homogeneity bias was obtained for males after race and grade are controlled for, it can be concluded from this study that males neither influence one another's sexual behaviour nor selected

each other on the basis of having or not having intercourse. But for females, sexual intercourse was a strong and pervasive factor in adolescent friendship structure. It appears that intercourse is more salient for females than males in terms of being a criterion for friendship selection or behaviour to be imitated or reinforced. The reason for this differential salience may be the different reputational consequences for males and females who have engaged in sexual intercourse (Steinberg & Monahan, 2017).

Odimegwu (2005) in his study found out that 50% of the male and 34% of the female students had initiated sex. Likewise, boys initiated sex earlier than the girls (17 years for the boys and 19 years for girls) and the female students had more regular sexual partners than the boys because the girls keep some of the men who could meet their financial needs while still keeping another for social outing. He concluded that initiation of sexual activity was higher than current sexual behavior with clear cut differences in gender and the differences were statistically significant because more of the male students in the various religious

categories had initiated sex, reported been currently sexual active, and had more sexual partners than female respondents.

Similarly, Murray, Zabin, Dreves & Charath (2000) found that of the young men and women in their study, 31% and 21% respectively had ever had sex with the median age of first intercourse been 15 years for women and 14 years for men. Likewise, those who thought most of their peers were sexually experienced, were all more likely to have ever had sex.

Objective

The main objective of this study is to bridge the gap regarding adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex by focusing on deliberate parental upbringing across the different gender. This is achieved by the results of the tested research hypotheses in the study.

Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that peer influence and parental upbringing will significantly influence adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex. Furthermore, it is of paramount interest to find out the

significant influence of gender on adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex.

Method

Research Design

Ex-post facto research design was used which is a type of non-experimental research design, in which the effect of independent variables on dependent variable has occurred prior to the time of carrying out the study; thus, active manipulation of variables was not done by the researcher. The independent variables were peer influence and parental upbringing, while the dependent variable was attitude towards premarital sex.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State. Two universities were used, a State university and a Private University. These universities were used because focus was on undergraduates in Ado-Ekiti.

Participants

The participants were full-time undergraduates in the two universities. Two

hundred and ninety-six (296) students were sampled in the study using convenience sampling technique. Demographic characteristics of participants include gender, with 122 (41.2%) males, and 174 (58.8%) females. Respondents level of study showed 64 (21.6%) for 100 level students, 62 (20.9%) for 200 level students, 108 (36.5%) for 300 level students 60 (20.3%) for 400 level students and 2 (0.7%) for 500 level students. Parents' educational background include 6 (2.0%) for Not educated parents, 19 (6.4%) for Primary education, 54 (18.2%) for secondary education and 217 (73.3%) for tertiary education. Parents' marital status include 46 (15.5%) for single parents, 200 (67.6%) for married intact, 14 (4.7%) for divorced parents, 26 (8.8%) for widowed or widower and 10 (3.4%) for separated parents.

Measures

Adolescents' Attitude towards Premarital Sex Questionnaire (AATPSQ): This scale is an adapted and modified form of Adolescents' Attitude towards Premarital Sex Questionnaire (AATPSQ) developed by Nwankwo (1997). The scale consists of

21 items based on a five-point Likert scale. The Cronbach alpha gave 0.93. has a Cronbach alpha 0.83.

The Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI): This is one of the most well-validated measures of peer pressure which was developed and validated by Brown, Clasen & Eicher, (1986). This scale was designed to assess the perception of peer pressure in a number of domains, including peer social activities, misconduct, conformity to peer norms, involvement in school, and involvement with family. The internal reliability for PPI has a Cronbach alpha of 0.88.

Parental Practices Scale for Children: This scale, developed by (Hernández-Guzmán et al., 2003) is a 27 item questionnaire grouped in five dimensions, answered by children: Rejection composed of 7 items, punishment and responsiveness, each composed of 6 items, and warmth and support, each composed of 4 items. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert type response format ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Although the scale was designed to report on both father and mother, in the present study, children informed only about their mother. The internal reliability of the scale

Statistical Analysis

The study data were subjected to analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 2.0. Demographic characteristics of respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages. The hypotheses were tested with inferential statistics. Specifically, t-test for independent samples.

Ethical Consideration

Approval to carry out this study was granted by the Ethics and Research Committee of the participating Universities. In line with standard ethical procedures for conducting research, this study solicited the consent of the participants before they participated in the study. The participants were well informed about the objectives of the research. They also had the right to choose to either participate or decline the request for participation from the researchers. Participants were informed that any information collected was to be kept confidential. No identifying information

was obtained from any of the participants. Researchers were mindful of the sensitivity of the topics discussed and ensured that the research was undertaken in such a way as to establish a warm, empathetic relationship with the participants. We were careful to maintain confidentiality and show respect towards participants' responses. Participants were not coerced to reveal their risky sexual practices. The study was conducted while assuring the participants about the confidentiality of every information provided to the researchers. The researchers did everything possible to avoid revealing information given by the participants and protected the information

given by the participants from any third party. The questionnaires were administered to participants anonymously without requiring the names of these respondents. This went a long way in making it almost impossible for the researchers or any other interested fellows to be able to match the participants' information to the participants who filled the questionnaire.

Results

Table 1: Summary of t-test analysis showing the difference in attitude towards premarital sex of participants with high and low peer influence.

Peer influence	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Low	153	52.05	11.66	255	7.31	<.05
High	104	41.18	11.76			

The results in table 1 revealed a statistically significant mean difference in attitude towards premarital sex, $t(255) = 7.31$, $p < .05$) between high and low peer influence. These results indicate that participants with high peer influence ($M = 52.05$, $SD = 11.76$) reported significantly positive attitude towards premarital sex than those with low

peer influence ($M = 41.18$, $SD = 11.66$).

Table 2: Summary of t-test analysis showing the difference in attitude towards premarital sex of participants with favourable and unfavourable parental upbringing

Parental Upbringing	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Favourable	176	42.13	11.46	294	-3.95	<.05
Unfavourable	120	48.07	14.35			

The results in table 2 revealed a statistically significant mean difference in attitude towards premarital sex, $t(294) = -3.95, p < .05$) between favourable and unfavourable parental upbringing. These results indicate that participants with favourable parental upbringing ($M = 42.13, SD = 11.46$) reported significantly positive attitude

towards premarital sex than those with unfavourable parental upbringing ($M = 48.07, SD = 14.35$).

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis showing the difference in attitude towards premarital sex of males and females.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Males	122	49.55	13.07	294	5.85	<.05
Females	174	41.02	11.81			

The results in table 3 revealed a statistically significant mean difference in attitude towards premarital sex, $t(294) = 5.85, p < .05$) between males and females. These results indicate that males ($M = 49.55, SD = 13.07$) reported significantly positive attitude towards premarital sex than females ($M = 41.02, SD = 11.81$).

low on peer influence. This result implies that there is a significant influence of peer influence on attitude towards premarital sex. Therefore, hypothesis one was confirmed in the study. This is in line with the findings of Miller, et. al. (2011) who found that peer influence was a primary contextual factor contributing to adolescent's tendency to make risky decisions. Furthermore, one of the strongest predictor of delinquent behaviour in adolescents is affiliated with delinquent peers (Dishion, et al., 2012). Similarly, in a National Survey of teens, adolescents cited

Discussion

The result of hypothesis one showed that adolescents who scored high on peer influence reported positive attitude towards premarital sex than adolescents who scored

pressure from their friends as the reason for their initial involvement in sex (Bernatt, 2016; Steinberg, et. al., 2015). Peer advice regarding appropriate sexual behaviour is presumably an outcome of their own sexual experiences or the lack of such experiences. Both mechanisms of peer influence may indirectly affect the adolescent's sexual behaviour through the formation of the adolescent's own values and preferences for sexual contact (Petito & Cuminins, 2010; Miller et al., 2011).

Peer influence works in a manner similar to the way parental influence works. When peers have low educational expectations and foresee few opportunities, the chances of teenage sexual activity, pregnancy and childbearing increase (Rowe & Luiver, 2015). Initial sexual experiences tend to be with one partner. Adolescents may want to retain their steady relationship and may become sexually active for that reason. Having a girlfriend or boyfriend may provide opportunity for and pressure toward sexual activity (Petito & Cuminins, 2010).

The result of hypothesis two showed that

adolescents with unfavourable parental upbringing significantly reported positive attitude towards premarital sex than adolescents with favourable parental upbringing. This finding is supported by a study carried out by (Owuamanam & Bankole, 2013) that adolescents from favourable parental upbringing shows positive attitude towards sexual promiscuity than those from unfavourable parental upbringing. This result implies that there is significant influence of parental upbringing on attitude towards premarital sex. Therefore, hypothesis two was confirmed in the study. Likewise, Oluyemi, Yinusa, Abdullateef, Kehinde & Adejoke (2017) in their study also found a significant relationship between parental communication and participants' sexual behaviour. This is in line with previous studies that parents' closeness with their adolescent children can go a long way to help postpone sexual intercourse and a more consistence contraceptive use by them (Weinstein & Thornton, 1989; Jaccard, Dittus, & Gordon, 1996; Resnick et al., 1997).

Furthermore, this result is also consistent

with the result of the study of Miller et al., (2001) which concluded that there existed a strong association between parent-child closeness with reduced adolescent pregnancy risk through abstinence from sex, having fewer sexual partners and using contraception more consistently. *Fostering parent-child closeness by having good family relationships reduces the likelihood that youth will engage in premarital sex. Also, moderate parental control discouraged premarital relationships more effectively than lesser or greater degrees of control (Farahani, Cleland & Mehryar, 2011).*

The result of hypothesis three showed that males significantly reported positive attitude towards premarital sex than females. This result implies that there is a significant gender difference in attitude towards premarital sex. Therefore, hypothesis three was confirmed in the study. In support with this finding, Jeffrey (2017) opined that children whose parents know all or most of their friends are less likely to be sexually experienced, although the association reaches statistical significance only among females. Two-

thirds of the adolescent females reported discussions with parents about sex while only one-sixth of the males reported such discussions.

Conversely, the extent of mother-daughter communication on sensitive issues were lower among students who reported experiencing premarital friendships or sex than among others. Furthermore, having had a boyfriend or having had sex was more common among young women whose parents were well-off, were well educated, had liberal family values and had relaxed attitudes toward premarital relationships, and among young women who reported a poor family atmosphere (Oluyemi, Yinusa, Abdullateef, Kehinde & Adejoke, 2017).

Parental traditionality was clearly associated with a lower prevalence of sexual activity for daughters. Those adolescent females whose parents expressed traditional attitudes about marriage and family life were only one half as likely to report having engaged in sexual intercourse as those with less conservative parents (9% versus 20%) (Steinberg & Monahan, 2017). Likewise, Rowe & Luiver

(2015) concluded that parental communication had little impact on sons, regardless of parental attitudes. Furthermore, Wong, et al., (2012) advanced that male adolescents who lacked the confidence to resist peer pressure and also perceived that one half or more of their friends have already engaged in premarital sex were higher than their female counterparts.

Conclusion

This study confirmed the importance of peers and parental upbringing in the attitude towards premarital sex among adolescents, even across gender. Parenting is an important endeavour which should be taken with all seriousness. The study also revealed that unsafe sexual behaviors of adolescents is a source of worry considering the consequences of unplanned pregnancy, dropping out of school, unsafe abortion and sexually transmitted infections that results from it. As a result of this, comprehensive sex education and counselling should be carried out at all levels to encourage more responsible sexual behaviors.

Recommendations

In view of the above, the study therefore recommends that:

Parents and guardians should be well informed to overcome the cultural and environmental barriers that discourage giving adolescents early sex education and training. Likewise, parents and guardians should also ensure that they screen carefully the friends of their children and be close with their children so that they can be free to discuss issues intimately. In the same vein, well articulated family values should be enshrined so that children will grow up with the right orientation and be able to choose friends who believe in such values. Conversely, parents and guardians should desist from making the mistake that it is only the girl child that should be focused on. The male child also needs to be properly guided too so that they can exhibit responsible sexual behaviour. Lastly, government should take deliberate steps to incorporate sexual and reproductive health education into the school curriculum in Nigeria.

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