ROLE OF PARENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA ON ADOLESCENT SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR IN NORTH-WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

Positive sexual behaviour requires perennial leap into adolescents' sexuality by parents despite pressure to meet economic needs of the family. It is worrisome the extent to which the social media coupled with nature of parenting expose adolescents to social ills including negative sexual behaviours that could cripple their ambition for a better life in adulthood. A descriptive study was carried out through survey of some secondary school adolescents in Kaduna, North-west Nigeria where a semi-structured questionnaire was used to underscore roles of parent and social media on adolescent sexual behaviour. Findings revealed a slide margin between neglect and authoritarian parenting toward adolescents and that parents as well as the school are the main sources of sexual education amongst adolescents. Also, proper guidance from parents was significant to reduce the negative sexual influences that arose from watching negative contents on the social media. It was concluded that parents push for proper acceptance of sexual education in schools since most adolescents in North-west Nigeria had little experiences of sex and patronage of contraceptives.

Keywords: Parent, Social media, Adolescent, Sexual behaviour

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a critical time of life; a time when young people become independent, established new relationships, create social skills and learn behaviours with long time (positive or negative) consequences to their lives. The adolescents are people between ages 10 to 19 years (UNICEF, 2019). World population is over 8.2 billion people and Nigeria is ranked 6th in the world but first in Africa with an estimated population of 240.6 million and annual population change of 2.06% (worldometer, 2026). In 2021 alone about 32% of Nigeria's total population was between ages 10-24 years while 23.2% was aged 10-19 years (UNFPA, 2021). At this critical age, the adolescents need to be properly socialised into the norms and values of society which may include adolescent reproductive health and sexuality (WHO, 2021).

In this 21st century (jet age) many teenagers could be exposed to sexual related issues than expected (Khajehnoori, 2010; Biswajit and Jyoti, 2011, Arisukwu et al 2019). The media particularly the social media as well as the family setting could serve a latent function in learning of sexuality. Unfortunately, most parents (African parents) could still view children as sexually inactive agency that should not be expose to sexual education at

early age; both at home and in other social environments. Even most researches that pertain to sexual education among this category shift predisposing tent of early sexual engagement to cultural, religious factors and conventional peer influence. This could negate or pay little attention to attitudinal display by parents, the current peer system of influence and unequal adult-teenager relationship that may be promoted by the social media. It is against this backdrop that this work underscores the role of parents and social media on early sexual engagement amongst secondary school students in North-west Nigeria. Particular attention is laid on parenting style, the role of social media as well as the knowledge and use of contraceptives which could exacerbate teenage sexual escapade.

2. Literature Review

Sexuality is reflected in the total expression of human beings. It is shaped by values, attitudes, behaviours, physical appearance, beliefs, emotions, personality, likes, dislikes, and spiritual selves, as well as all the ways in which the individual have been socialized (Ugoji, 2013; Oyinloye, 2014). Sexual health is the ability to enjoy and express one's sexuality free from the risks of sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy, coercion, violence, and discrimination (Segun, 2006). According to Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS, 2008), sexual education is a lifelong process of acquiring information on sex and forming attitudes, values and beliefs. It involves sexual development, sexual and reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection and intimacy. It help them make sexual related decisions (see Amao-Kehinde 2011, Karianna 2013,Akporo, and Thupayagale-Tshweneagae 2019).

Baumrind (1989) developed a model of parenting to show how children are socialised into accepting a given family or societal norms. She identified four categories of parenting style: i) Authoritative parents who are both responsive and demanding. ii) Authoritarian parents; mostly demanding but not responsive. iii) Permissive or indulgent parents are responsive but not demanding. and, iv) Uninvolved-neglecting parents, who mostly disengaged and thus, are neither demanding nor responsive. This model has shown that parenting styles have a significant impact on children's and adolescents' development in many domains (Baumrind 1991,1996; Dusek and Danko 1994; Fletcher et al. 1995; Gray and Steinberg 1999; Lamborn et al. 1991; Maccoby and Martin 1983; Steinberg 2001, Rodrigo, Byrne, and Rodrı´gue 2012).

In most Africa context, especially in Nigeria, sex education is seen as a taboo to be talked about (Ugoji, 2013). Generally, adolescents are not allowed to have access to sexual health information because the society have the perception that such exposure will corrupt the child and he or she may likely be a victim of early sexual intercourse (Ugoji, 2013; Oyinloye, 2014). The 2013 NDHS in Nigeria revealed that 68.2% of teenagers between ages 15-19 live with both parents. Yet data in the same NDHS reported that in Kaduna State alone about 54.2% of girls age 15-19 had ever had sex (NDHS, 2013). The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Education, civil societies and many other International Development Partners in 2002 drafted and proposed a curriculum on Sexuality Education for both primary and secondary schools. Such programme of action had little or no acceptance in most Northern regions particularly the North-west for reasons that may connect to

religion and culture. A study carried out in Kano state in North-West Nigeria revealed that parents have a negative perception of sexuality education in schools probably because it goes against their religious belief and socio-cultural norms and values (Eko, Abeshi, Osonwa, Uwande& Offiong, 2013, Cortez, Saadat, Marinda and Odutolu 2016).

People often believe that inculcating sexuality education helps children to freely interact with age-mates. Experiences especially in this 21st century show that young children may not necessarily exhibit the positive aspect of such education as advanced by Ogundipe and Ojo (2015). Evidence of such is seen in high rate of accidents, suicide, drug abuse, violence, and risky sexual behaviour noticeable amongst adolescents in this era (NDHS 2013, Ogundipe and Ojo 2015, Odimegwu&Somefun, 2017). Risky sexual activities could result in varying problems ranging from unintended pregnancy, to abortion, to contacting STDs including HIV, even to death (Ogundipe and Ojo 2015).

As put forward in several works like Ukpong (2002); Khajehnoori, (2010); Obono and Obono (2010); Biswajit and Jyoti, (2011), activities in globalised system promote moral decadence. The adolescents' desire freedom in living but studies showed that they lack the wherewithal to do without the guidance of parents and older people at home and in the school (see Arisukwu et al 2019, Nwogu, Igbolekwu, Nwokocha, E.E., Nwogu Nwabugo Arisukwu, 2021; Igbolekwu, Arisukwu, Nwogu, Rasak, Asamu, Osueke 2021). In the views of Okpani and Okpani, (2000) and Isiugo-Abanihe et al (2012) adolescents create a separate world for themselves using slangs, coded language, facial expressions, body language and other means that can only be understood by their peer group. Problems occur when the adolescent feel freer with their peers, trust the credibility of the information gathered from them and regard their parents as "old school" or "old fashioned." This according toIsiugo-Abanihe et al, (2012) and Okafor &Nnoli, (2010) happen because they do not want to delay sex and are hasty towards it rather than focusing of on their educational, vocational, and moral development.

3. Methodology

A descriptiveresearch design was employed to carry out this study among secondary school adolescents in Kaduna, north-western Nigeria. Kaduna State is the second most populated state in the region after Kano with a total of 23 local government councils spread across the state. Due to rising insecurity in most parts of the state and north-west Nigeria in general, quantitative data was collected in the central senatorial district where some secondary schools were relocated by the state government for security reasons. Four secondary schools were purposively selected in the metropolis for the purpose of this study. Simple random technique was further employed to draw 75 respondents (age 10-19) from SSS1 to 3 in each selected school making a total of 300 respondents. A semi-structured questionnaire containing questions related to the study objectives was designed to elicit information from respondents.

For ethical reason, consent was obtained from the school authorities as well as the students before they were enrolled in the study. Both parties were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of adolescents' respondents and students were encourage to duly answer the questions and feel free to withdraw at any time if not comfortable with the survey. Hence, data retrieved were coded and entered into IBM SPSS version 23 software

for processing and analysis. The same software was used to validate all entries and finally, analysis was presented in frequency and percentage tables as well as charts.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the result of the study as well as recommends ways through which the phenomenon can be mitigated especially in Kaduna. It started with the socio-demographic qualities of the respondents before presenting other significant data as found in the study.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents in Kaduna North-west Nigeria

Table 1: Respondents Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Sex		
Male	85	29.0
Female	208	71.0
Total	293	100.0
Age		
10-13	17	5.8
14-16	142	48.5
17-19	134	45.7
Total	293	100.0
Religion		
Christian	210	71.7
Muslim	83	28.3
Total	293	100.0
Position in the Family		
first born	89	30.4
last born	94	32.1
first boy/girl	44	15.0
second born	29	9.9
third born	24	8.2
fourth born	6	2.0
fifth born and above	7	2.4
Total	293	100.0
Father's Occupation		
civil servant	142	49.5
self-employed	113	39.4
unemployed	32	11.1
Total	287	100.0
Mother's Occupation		
civil servant	66	22.7
self-employed	163	56.0
full-time house wife	62	21.3
Total	291	100.0
Ethnic Affiliation		
Hausa	88	30.0
Igbo	30	10.2
Yoruba	29	9.9
Fulani/ other core north-west minority Ethnic groups	22	7.5
Gbagyi/Adara	28	9.6
Chongai (Southern Kaduna)	67	22.9
Minority Ethnic groups outside North-west	29	9.9
Total	293	100.0

This study conducted among adolescents in North-west Nigeria had more female respondents than males, 71% and 29%, respectively as indicated in table1. There was a fair distribution of adolescents by age at pick of their teenage hood; about 49% within ages 14-16 years and 45.7% were age 17-19 years. Religious affiliation revealed 71.7% Christians and 28.3% Muslims which suggest that more Christians in the north-west irrespective of ethnic affiliation enrol in western education than their Muslim counterparts, probably due to variation in religious values. It was observed that the majority of the adolescents that participated in the survey were either first born (30.4%) or last born (32.1%) in their families. The majority (49.5%) of the adolescent's male parents were civil servants, while 56% female parents of the total adolescent respondents were self-employed. Data collected also revealed the Hausa ethnic group constituted the majority (30%), followed by "Chongai" ethnic group (conglomerate of southern Kaduna ethnic groups) with about 22.9% of the total adolescent respondents.

4.2 Role of Parents on Adolescents' Sexual Behaviour in Kaduna North-West Nigeria

Table 2: Distribution of Adolescents based on Parenting Style Experiences

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Authoritative		
Agree	242	82.6
Disagree	51	17.4
Total	293	100.0
Authoritarian		
Agree	247	84.3
Disagree	46	15.7
Total	293	100.0
Permissive		
Agree	147	50.2
Disagree	146	49.8
Total	293	100.0
Neglect		
Agree	253	86.3
Diagree	40	13.7
Total	293	100.0

Adolescents in table 2 revealed they experience more of neglected parenting style (86.3%) in their families. Another significant number of them affirmed that their parents are either authoritarian or authoritative toward their sexual behaviour as indicated by 84.3% and 82.6%, respectively. Permissive style of parenting with 50.2% affirmation is least experienced amongst the adolescents in the study area.

Table 3: Adolescents' Sexual Education

Extent of sexual education of Adolescents through their Parents/ Parents Attitudes to Visitors of the Opposite Sex					
Variable	**Percentage often**	**Percentage very often**	**Percentage rarely**	**Percentage not at all**	**Total number**
Sexual Education	35.8 (105)	46.4 (136)	6.1 (18)	11.6 (34)	100 (293)
Parents' attitudes toward visitors	30.0 (88)	48.1 (141)	10.6 (31)	11.3 (33)	100 (293)
Total Percent	65.8 (193)	94.5 (277)	16.7 (49)	22.9 (67)	

Adolescents in table 3 explicitly said parents teach them about sex education very often (46.4%). This was further supported by majority's revelation (48.1%) that parents often check their activities particularly when in company of visitors of the opposite sex. Data in this table shows a total of 94.5% adolescents who indicated that their parents did not only teach them about sex education very often but also watch their activities with kin interest when visited by peers especially those of the opposite sex. Only 22.9% of the total respondents stated that they were not at all taught sex education by their parents nor cared about even if visitors particularly of the opposite sex visit them at home.

4.3 Role of Social Media on Adolescents' Sexual Behaviour in Kaduna North-west Nigeria

Table 4: Social Media and Adolescents' Sexual Behaviour

Percentage Distribution of Adolescents' Opinions					
Variable	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Agreed	Strongly Disadgreed	Total Percent
Exposure to sexually related information on					

the social media makes most adolescents to become sexually active.	47.1(138)	17.1(50)	31.1(91)	4.7(14)	100(293)
Adolescents that have access to smart phones will engage in sexual intercourse.	37.9(111)	36.9(108)	13.3(39)	11.9(35)	100(293)
Most of the adolescents that browse or watch sexually related things on the social media develop high libido for sex.	45.1(132)	11.3(33)	39.2(115)	4.4(13)	100(293)
Most of the social media contents sold to adolescents aim to help them negotiate sex better.	49.8(146)	15.7(46)	30.7(90)	3.8(11)	100(293)
Adolescents that check negative sexual contents on social media, yet, maintain positive attitude toward sex					

are properly guided on sexual related issues by their parents.	52.9(155)	6.1(18)	34.9(102)	6.1(18)	100(293)

Table 4 presents information on adolescents' perceptions on the role played by social media in early sexual engagement. About 41% of the total respondents agreed that exposing them to sexually related information on social media could result to negative sexual behaviour. However, adolescents were almost equally divided in opinion between those who agreed (37.9%) and those who disagreed (36.9%), respectively, that mere access to smart phone would make one sexually active. Despite that, adolescents believed that browsing or watching sexually related things on social media was responsible for high libido for sex amongst most adolescents as only 11.3% and 4.4% of the total adolescent respondents respectively, either disagreed or strongly disagreed with such majority's opinion. In another vain, the majority of the total respondents (49.8%) felt (agreed) that contents sold on social media aimed at helping adolescents to negotiate for sex better as opposed to only 3.8% of the total respondents that strongly disagreed with that view. It was also observed from the majority adolescent respondents (52.9%) agreement that most adolescents who check negative sexual contents on social media yet, maintain positive attitudes toward sex enjoy proper sex education or guidance from their parents. This implies that even with the proliferation of negative sexual contents on social media, parents who give time to teaching their children effective sex education would salvage them from temptations to indulge in sex early.

4.4 Knowledge of Sex and Use of Contraceptives in Kaduna North-west Nigeria

Table 5: Adolescents' Sexual Activeness, Knowledge and use of Contraceptives by percentage

Variable	Sexual activeness	Knowledge of contraceptives	Sources of Information	Ever Used	Reason for use
Yes	26.6(78)	58.7(172)			
No	73.4(215)	41.3(121)			
Parents			32.2(64)		
Social media			24.1(48)		

School			30.7(61)		
Friends			13.0(26)		
Yes				31.7(93)	
No				68.3(200)	
Guard against STIs/Pregnancy					22.2(65)
For pleasure					15.7(46)
I have never experience sex					58.0(170)
I don't know about contraceptives					4.1(12)
Total	100(293)	100(293)	100(199)	100(293)	100(293)

Table 5 examined data on several variables like sexual activeness, knowledge of contraceptives, sources of information about contraceptives, ever used of contraceptives amongst adolescents as well as the reasons why adolescents either used or not use contraceptives. Among those adolescents, only 26.6% were sexually active while 73.4% were not. Knowledge of contraceptives was prevalent amongst 58.7% as against 41.3% of the total adolescents that claimed ignorant to such knowledge. Parents were the major source of information about contraceptives followed by the school as revealed by 32.2% and 30.7%, respectively. Amongst adolescents, 68.3% stated they have never used contraceptives because they never indulge in sexual intercourse (58%) or heard about contraceptives (4.1%). However, 31.7% who said they ever used contraceptives claimed it was used for protection against STIs and pregnancy while another 15.7% believed they just used it for pleasure that is, for exploration.

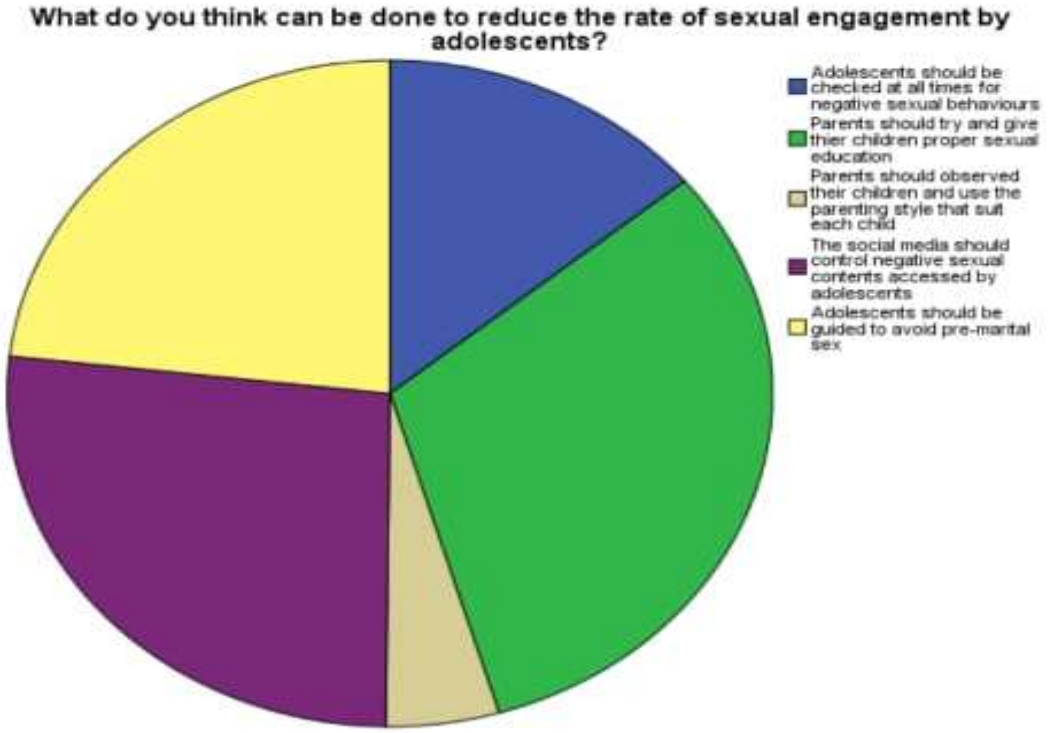


Figure 1 result showed that most adolescents (31.4%) believed children will develop positive sexual behaviour if parents often educate them on sexual related matters. This was further supported by another significant number (23.2%) who believed stakeholders should guide adolescents against pre-marital sex, watch their children to observe any negative changes in sexual behaviour. Similarly, some (26.6%) suggested that controlling negative sexual related contents viewed on social media by the teenagers was significant to reducing the rate of early sexual engagements.

4.5. Discussion

Parental role from adolescents' perspectives revealed that most of the adolescents in this study experience neglect parenting style in north-west Nigeria. Yet, the family is expected to be the first unit where the child learns accepted patterns including sexual behaviours. Orientation differs among families across societies leading to differences in behavioural outcome (Rahman, Xu, Lippa, (2020). Although a significant number of adolescents experienced authoritarian and authoritative styles of parenting, it is however worrisome that many of the adolescents reported that some parents neglect their children particularly in sexually related issues. This also corresponds with the findings of Arisukwu, Igbolekwu, Efugha, Nwogu, Osueke, & Oyeyipo, E. (2020; Jiaojiao, Shulan, 2020; Jo-Annie, Monique, 2019; NDHS 2013; Ogundipe and Ojo 2015; Odimegwu & Somefun, 2017).

On adolescents' perceptions of the role played by social media in early sexual engagement, the study posited that social media influences the manner adolescents

indulge in early negative sexual behaviour. This study found out that sexual related information, such as viewing negative sexual contents can negatively affect adolescents' sexual behaviour; although many of the respondents did not agree that mere owning phone can lead to sexual activeness. However this study argues that recent advancements in digital technology has resulted to the increase in adolescents possession of gadgets such as phones, televisions, laptops among others, which has resulted to increased exposure to pornographies and other sexually induced programmes that may have negative influences on adolescents. This is also consistent with the findings ofYoga, Martini, Martini, (2020).

More than half of the respondents know about contraceptives but only few had ever explored sexual intercourse. This supports Akpor and Thupayagale-Tshweneagae (2019) studies where 46/80 respondents said most adolescents in Nigeria have good knowledge of contraceptives yet, believe that teenagers should not be encourage to indulge in sex and use of contraceptives. This supported Cortez, Saadat, Marinda and Odutolu (2016) study in Karu Aerial Council, Abuja, Morhasan-Bello et al (2008) findings in Ibadan. However, it debunkOkpani and Okpani (2000) and Isiugo-Abanihe*et. al* (2012) generalisation that most adolescents in Nigeria had ever experienced sex.

Again, the use of contraceptive was found to be low among adolescents in this study, parents and the school environments were the main sources of sexual reproductive Health information. The contribution of the social media was also observed to be important as such, should not be negated since adolescents can learn positivefrom sexual behaviour through such medium. This findings added to Akpor and Thupayagale-Tshweneagae (2019) as well as findings from(Arisukwu et al 2019; Nwogu, Igbolekwu, Nwokocha, E.E., Nwogu Nwabugo Arisukwu, 2021), Igbolekwu, Arisukwu, Nwogu, Rasak, Asamu, Osueke 2021).

As notice in the North-west, parents have a great role to play in instilling morality or discipline in adolescents. In spite of the spread of negative contents in social media, parents can employ some measures to regulate how and what their children view on social media. According to Akpor and Thupayagale-Tshweneagae (2019), findings asserted that parent-child communication, sexuality education in school and at home, controlled social media and good role models are significant strategies to control adolescents' sexuality.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1Conclusion

Social media and Parents are essential to children's reproductive health behaviour. As leaders of tomorrow stakeholders must do everything legally to ensure proper socialisation of adolescents into acceptable pattern of life in society. From the study one can suggest that where teenagers spend most of their time can largely influence their actions whether positive or negative. Results in this study reveal that adolescents mostly learn sexual education in school, at home or when left in company of social media and sometimes friends. Since many adolescents in the north-west are yet to experience sex and use of contraceptives, it is imperative for parents and other stakeholders to push for

acceptance of sexual education particularly in schools. It would encourage adolescents to avoid risky sexual lifestyle and if possible, abstain from pre-marital sex.

5.2 Recommendations

i. Parent whose adolescents have access to social media should work hard to control the content the view.

ii. Most importantly, children should be socialized into positive aspect of the media especially when it comes to what they watch. This will help them develop positive attitudes to media contents even in the absence of their parents.

iii. Both parents and teachers need to develop a web of relationship including feedback mechanisms in other to monitor behaviours of adolescents at home and in schools.

iv. It is not just enough to include sexual related contents into school curriculums, adequate monitoring and evaluation is also needed to ensure positive influences on the adolescents.

v. It is also important that parents especially in this 21st century become more receptive to their children sexuality to guide them were necessary.

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