

PERCIEVED DETERMINANTS OF RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDENTS IN ABEOKUTA

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Abstract

There is rapidly decreasing age at first sexual debut and rising population of sexually active young adults leading to high risky sexual behaviors. Young adults are experiencing an accelerated physiological maturation probably as a result of advancement in science and technology which call for public health concern. This study investigated the perceived determinants of risky sexual behaviour among College of Education students in Abeokuta. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and simple random sampling technique was used in selecting a total of 116 young adults as respondents for the study. One validated instrument tagged "Risky Sexual Behaviour Questionnaire" (RSBQ) was used as instrument to garner information for the study. Data collected were analyzed, using descriptive statistics and Multiple Regression at $p < 0.05$. The findings from the study revealed that social media and psychotropic substances are the major perceived determinant of young adults' risky sexual behaviour. Also, the findings showed that the combination of the independent variables (self-esteem, social media and psychotropic substances) is effective in predicting young adults' sexual risky behaviour ($F_{(3, 112)} = 3.260, p = 0.001$). It was recommended among others that parents should pay more attention to educating their wards on the proper use of the social media and also desist from indiscriminate use of psychotropic substances.

Key words; *Determinants, Young adults, Risky Sexual Behaviour*

Introduction

Presently, adolescents are experiencing an accelerated physiological maturation probably as a result of advancement in science and technology which call for public health concern. Naturally, delayed age of biological maturation has been gradually going down and humans have been developing at a faster rate - a development unprecedented in history. This has led to a surge in involvement in series of experimentation culminating into myriads of risky sexual behaviours among young adults whose accelerated physiological maturation is not matching up with the expected cognitive maturation (Ugoji, 2014). Adolescence is a transitional period where an individual shift from a position of dependency to self-reliance. During this period, young adults achieve highest stage of cognitive and physical development, they also strive to define their self-identity which may lead them into becoming adventurous. They develop interest in the opposite sex

and highly obsessed with physical and sexual attractiveness which make them vulnerable to frequently changing relationship and indiscriminate sexual escapade without giving any consideration to the immediate and future attendant consequences of such acts. (Alli, 2017).

Young adult's life is at risk because some of them are entering the college directly from secondary school and the increased freedom offered by living outside their parents' home provides greater opportunity to hook up with the opposite sex without considering the consequences. (Anyanwu & Okeke, 2015). Recent reports show that about 28% of adolescence in Nigeria is sexually active and the median age of sexual debut is about 15years. The average age at menarche is on a low progression throughout the world; there is a rapidly decreasing age of first sexual debut and rising population of sexually active adolescents leading to high risky sexual behaviours among them (WHO, 2011). Therefore, young people are confronted with a longer duration of time during which they are sexually matured and sexually active before wedlock (Lansford, Yu, Erath, Pettit, Bates and Dodge, 2010).

Young adults perceived the period as a time to enjoy unbridled liberty and owing to ignorance, peer influence, the media and societal latitude of acceptance on issues of sexuality; most young people embark on a journey to perdition under the guise of expressing sexuality (Ugoji, 2014). Dietrich *et al* (2013) define risky sexual behaviour as inconsistent or non-use of condoms and contraceptives coupled with having multiple sexual partners and participation in series of sexual activities.

Presently, youths engage in risky sexual behaviours such as homosexuality, having multiple sexual partners, unprotected sexual intercourse, transactional sex, casual sex, attending orgies, oral and anal sex. Others include regular use of psychotropic substances to enhance sexual prowess, involvement in cohabitation and sleep over sex, and inconsistent use of condom and many more. All these have culminated into serious sexual health-related issues among young adults with its attendant consequences as witnessed in surge in sexually transmitted infections, spread of HIV/AIDs, reckless abortion, high level of underage pregnancies, unplanned motherhood and fatherhood, pregnancy related mortality and many more. (Rodriguez, 2011).

Many factors are responsible for reckless sexual acts among young adults and these range from influence of the media, use of psychotropic substances, self-esteem, sexual urge, parental involvement and socio-economic factors.

Young adults perceive the period as a stage of self-exploration, increased social independency, emotional and cognitive development as well as sense of self and personal identity (Oladeji & Ayangunna, 2017). They make use of their mobile phones and social media to interact with known and unknown peers to establish and maintain social connections. These communication platforms are relatively easy to use to make interaction thereby fostering the development of

self-expression, identity, intimate relationship and social well-being. The aforementioned media platforms encourage the exchange of explicit contents, sharing of information with known and unknown peers, cyber bullying, sexting, online dating, exposure to pornography and erotic contents and sex violence (Asrese & Mekonnen, 2018). The social media thus serves as disinhibitory, stimulants and a means to express masculinity and sexual prowess in both sexes leading to risky sexual acts.

Self-esteem is an internal personal observation of one's worth, evaluation of oneself and how one feels about oneself in every situation. It is widely believed that, self-esteem is higher during childhood, lower during adolescence and gradually increases through adulthood (Mruk, 2013). Physical and hormonal changes affect self-esteem during adolescence, influenced by the social context and increases among the people with quality parental relationship and social support. Self-esteem may be classified as 'low' or 'high'.

High self-esteem connotes acceptance of responsibility for one's action, self-motivation, willingness to take reasonable risks, taking command and control of one's life including sexual behaviour (Enejoh 2016). However, individuals with low self-esteem generally lack confidence, often doubt their own works, frequently blame others for their failures, and fail to take responsibility for their behaviours. Low self-esteem inherently predisposes one to early sexual debuts, having multiple sexual partners, unprotected sex and unintended pregnancy probably stemming from socio-economic deprivation, family dysfunction and poor body image (Boden & Horwood, 2006)

Young adults are generally experimenters and easily give in to peer-pressure. Unbridled freedom among them especially in the colleges encourages the experimentation of drug use and risky sexual acts. For instance, alcohol use has been observed to be the most problematic drug for most secondary school age students (Nwagu, 2015). Abusing of illicit drugs like tobacco, alcohol, and self-medication, most likely began during adolescence and later transform to adulthood. By the time they are in colleges, almost 70 percent of the students will have tried alcohol while half will have taken an illegal drug (*National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2014*).

Other drugs of abuse by young adults include marijuana, glue, thinner, petroleum products among others, which are capable of altering their perception, thereby impairing their cognitive judgments – influencing them to engage in risky behaviors (Payne & Antonette, 2012). Availability of alcohol and other psychoactive drugs is a factor that enhances their use and abuse because they are readily available to adolescent through direct purchase, social events in attractive packages at cheaper rates (Makanjuola, Daramola & Obembe, 2007). The implication is that having got intoxicated, unprotected sex becomes easier, likely not using contraception correctly which might result into unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection with its attendant consequences of abortion and

unplanned motherhood, career derailment and educational attrition (Payne & Antonette, 2012; Nwagu, 2015).

There exists a connection between social media, self-esteem and psychotropic substance use and risky sexual behaviour among young adults in colleges which heightens the rate of HIV/AIDs risk, unintended pregnancy, premature fatherhood and motherhood.

Despite the laudable awareness and education, HIV prevalence in Nigeria is now about 1.9 million people within the ages of 15-49 years. Among this age group, young adults of ages 15 – 24 are more than three times more likely to be living with HIV and giving birth to infected children than the other age group which increase the latitude of transmission of the virus (Oleribe, Aliyu and Taylor–Robinson, 2018). The sexually active young adults are more prone to the risk of HIV/AIDs due to inherent factors highlighted above that disinhibit them from the risky sexual behaviours without taking cognizance to its attendant consequences. On these premises, this study sought to examine perceived determinants of risky sexual behaviours among College of Education, in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is college of education students in Abeokuta self- esteem perceived as a determinant factor of sexual risky behaviour?
2. To what extent has college of education students in Abeokuta perceived social media as a determinant of sexual risky behaviour?
3. To what extent is psychotropic substance perceived as determinant of sexual risky behaviour among college of education students in Abeokuta?
4. What is the composite joint contribution of perceived determinants (self-esteem, social media and psychotropic substances) of risky sexual behaviour among College of Education students in Abeokuta?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research method. The population for the study comprised all young College of Education students in Abeokuta. The simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents from the five schools in the college. Also, 24 respondents were randomly selected from each of the five schools (Science, Vocational, Art & Social Science, Education and Language). A total of 116 respondents eventually participated in the study. A self- constructed instrument tagged “Risky Sexual Behaviour Questionnaire (RSBQ) was used to garner information for the study. The instrument was validated using Cronbach alpha and the reliability of 0.73 was obtained. The instrument was personally administered on the young adults in the college by the researchers in the selected schools. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and Multiple Regression.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One: To what extent is college of education students in Abeokuta self-esteem perceived as a determinant factor of sexual risky behaviour?

Table 1: Self-Esteem as Perceived Determinant Factor of Sexual Risky Behaviour among College Of Education Students in Abeokuta

	Statement	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	\bar{x}	SD
1	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	66 (56.9%)	40 (34.5%)	5 (4.3%)	5 (4.3%)	2.56	.772
2	At time, I think I am not attractive enough for the opposite sex	17 (14.7%)	21 (18.1%)	53 (45.7%)	25 (21.6%)	2.26	.961
3	I have negative attitude towards myself	34 (29.3%)	20 (17.2%)	32 (27.6%)	30 (25.9%)	2.50	1.168
4	I love to socialize with my peers	40 (34.5%)	27 (23.3%)	26 (23.3%)	23 (19.85)	2.59	1.059
5	I do not believe I am beautiful/handsome	27 (23.3%)	25 (21.6%)	34 (29.3%)	30 (25.9%)	2.42	1.112
6	I can't say no to sex when am in the mood	22 (19.0%)	23 (19.8%)	47 (40.5%)	24 (20.7%)	2.37	1.018
7	Most time I give in to sexual pressure	22 (19.0%)	22 (19.0%)	48 (41.4%)	24 (20.7%)	2.36	1.016
8	I feel sexually excited when I see the nude of the opposite sex	22 (19.0%)	33 (28.4%)	37 (31.9%)	24 (20.7%)	2.46	1.025
Weighted Mean = 2.44							

A – Always; S- sometimes; R- rare and N- never.

Table 1 revealed respondents' perception of self-esteem as determinant factor of sexual risky among students of College of Education, Abeokuta. From the table, it was observed that items 1, 3 and 4 had mean value of $\bar{x} = 2.56$, 2.50 and 2.59 respectively which is above the criterion mean value of 2.50 which indicates that the respondents strongly accept the statements. This implies that the respondents had positive and healthy sexual self-esteem. However, mean value of $\bar{x} = 2.26$, 2.42, 2.37, 2.36, and 2.46 was observed in items 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8 which is below the criterion mean value, this implies that the respondents disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, 40.5% of the respondents indicated rarely and 20.7% ranked never they do not believe they are beautiful/handsome while 23.3% indicated always and 21.65 ranked sometime. The mean value of 2.42 shows rejection of the statement. Also, majority of the respondents further had contrary

view on the item that they could not say no to sex while 19% indicated they could not say no to sex always. Based on the weighted mean value of $\bar{x} = 2.44$ which is below the criterion mean value of $\bar{x} = 2.50$, it can be inferred that young adults' self-esteem is high toward sexual risky behaviour. This finding corroborates the findings of Bieda (2008) that healthy sexual behaviour had a moderate positive relationship to self-esteem while risky sexual behaviour had a moderate negative relationship with self-esteem. This indicated that greater healthy sexual behaviour affects young adults after their first casual sex experience was correlated to higher self-esteem, whereas more risky sexual behaviour correlated to lower self-esteem. Furthermore, the finding is in agreement with the finding of Björnsdóttir (2015) that improving body image and self-esteem among both male and female adolescents could be beneficial and cause a reduction in overall risky sexual behaviour. The finding also supports the finding of Ethier *et al.* (2006) that low self-esteem among females was related to low frequency of condom use and having first sexual intercourse at a young age. However, this finding contradicts the finding of other scholars (Bessenoff, 2006; Trampe, Stapel, & Siero, 2007) that those who have liberal attitudes and fewer casual sex partners report lower self-esteem because those individuals may have a low self-image, thereby causing them to feel as though they could not have casual sex because no one would want to have sex with them.

Research Question Two: To what extent has college of education students in Abeokuta perceived social media as a determinant of sexual risky behaviour?

Table 2: Social Media as Perceived Factor of Sexual Risky among College of Education Students in Abeokuta

	Statement	A	S	R	N	\bar{x}	SD
1	The use of social media enhanced my sexual health promotion	37 (31.9%)	35 (30.2%)	19 (16.4%)	25 (21.6%)	3.24	1.060
2	My exposure to sexual content in the media has been linked to early sexual initiation, risky sexual behaviour	54 (46.6%)	18 (15.5%)	22 (19.0%)	22 (19.0%)	2.61	.970
3	Sexual media exposure broadening my sexual engagement among friends	41 (35.3%)	27 (23.3%)	23 (19.8%)	25 (21.6%)	2.68	1.052
4	I am exposed to sexual health messages specifically related to HIV, STDs, and pregnancy prevention via social media	43 (37.1%)	29 (25.0%)	22 (19.0%)	22 (19.0%)	3.32	.762

5	Social media influence my sexual risk-reduction behaviours	54 (46.6%)	22 (19.0%)	17 (14.7%)	23 (19.8%)	3.23	.923
6	Sexual text as coded as referring to sexual activity or as sexual language on social media	21 (18.1%)	15 (12.9%)	50 (43.1%)	30 (25.9%)	2.20	1.081
7	The use of social networking sites subject one to unwanted sexual socialization	17 (14.7%)	15 (12.9%)	52 (44.8%)	31 (26.7%)	2.20	1.081
8	I have more friends due to sexual reference on my profile	26 (22.4%)	24 (20.7%)	41 (35.3%)	25 (21.6%)	2.44	1.066
Weighted Mean = 3.02							

A – Always; S- sometimes; R- rare and N- never.

Table 2 reveals the social media as perceived factor of sexual risky behaviour among college of education students. The responses to the items show that social media is one of the determinants that influence the respondent sexually. The respondents' opinion on items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with mean value of $\bar{x} = 3.24, 2.61, 2.68, 3.32,$ and 3.23 respectively indicated that social media has significant influence on respondents sexual risky behaviour. However, the respondents disagreed with the statement that sexual text as coded as referring to sexual activity or as sexual language on social media and the use of social networking sites subject one to unwanted sexual socialization $\bar{x} = 2.20$ respectively indicating the rejection of the statement. This implies that the use of social networking sites subject one to unwanted sexual socialization. Based on the result and the weighted mean value of $\bar{x} = 3.02$, it can be inferred that social media is one of the perceived determinants of young adults' sexual risky behaviour. The implication of the finding shows that the social media has significant influence on risky sexual behaviour among students of the College. The finding is in line with the finding of Wusu (2013) that information and pictures on the social media promote unhealthy sexual behaviour rather than promoting the contrary. Likewise, the finding gives supports to the finding of Oladeji & Ayanunna (2017) that series of media (Facebook ,twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, pornography and many more) in respect to length of time and attractive features also attributed to risky sexual act among adolescents .Furthermore, the finding is in tandem with the finding of Molebe (2016) that teens developed a string network of sex arrangement on social media using the aforementioned social platforms to negotiate physical visits and arrange for sexual intercourse.

Research Question Three: To what extent is psychotropic substance perceived as determinant of sexual risky behaviour among College of Education Students in Abeokuta?

Table 3: Psychotropic Substance as Perceived Determinant Factor of Risky Sexual Behaviour among College of Education Students

D	Psychotropic Substances	A	S	R	N	\bar{x}	SD
1	Alcohol use is associated with promiscuity and sexual harassment	40 (34.5%)	37 (31.9%)	20 (17.2%)	19 (16.4%)	2.69	.872
2	Appropriate use of condom becomes impossible for young adult who are drug abuser	45 (38.8%)	36 (31.0%)	13 (11.2%)	22 (19.0%)	3.10	.972
3	Hard drug induces uncontrollable sexual urge	49 (42.2%)	39 (33.6%)	16 (13.8%)	12 (10.3%)	3.01	.946
4	Sexual assault is common with young adults who are drug users	44 (37.9%)	47 (40.5%)	15 (12.9%)	10 (8.6%)	2.90	.936
5	The herbal mixture can cause congenital malformation	54 (46.6%)	39 (33.65)	9 (7.8%)	14 (12.1%)	2.94	.878
6	School liberty can predispose young adult to become drug users.	47 (40.5%)	38 (32.8%)	11 (9.5%)	20 (17.2%)	3.03	.941
Weighted Mean = 2.95							

A – Always; S- sometimes; R- rare and N- never.

Table 3 shows the perceived influence of psychotropic substance as determinant of sexual risky behaviour among the respondents. From the table above, it was observed that all the respondents strongly indicated that psychotropic substance is perceived as determinant factor on sexual risky behaviours among the respondent. Also, the result further revealed the degree of the agreement on the items, all the items with mean value of $\bar{x} = 2.69, 3.10, 3.01, 2.90, 2.94$ and $\bar{x} = 3.03$ indicated that the respondents' view on the influence of psychotropic substance was statistically significant since the weighted mean value of all the items are above the criterion mean value of $\bar{x} = 2.50$. Hence, it can be deduced from the result that psychotropic substance interference was perceived as a determinant factor of sexual risky among young adults. The above finding is consistent with the finding of Kandel & Jessor (2002) that psychotropic substance is used as a gateway for indulging in other health damaging behaviours, particularly risky sexual behaviours. It is also in line with the finding of (TosevskiL, Milovancevic, & Gajic, 2010; Ajayi, Owolabi & Olajire, 2019) that students see the school years as a time to experiment the various habits they see in their environment, and they sometimes engage in alcohol use for social identity, to improve sexual performance or deal with stress accompanying academic activities. In the same vein, the finding support the finding of Fisher, Cook, & Kapiga (2010) who submitted that excessive intake of alcohol beverages

stimulates one but disinhibits the body system and reduces self-control which could lead to unprotected sex and ill health.

Research Question Four: What is the composite joint contribution of perceived determinants (self-esteem, social media and psychotropic substances) of Risky Sexual Behaviour among students of College of Education, Abeokuta?

Table 4: Regression Summary and ANOVA of Young Adults Sexual Risky Behaviour by Self-Esteem, Social Media and Psychotropic Substance.

Analysis of Variance					
Source of Variance	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	233.598	3	77.866	3.620	.001 ^b
Residual	2409.187	112	21.511		
Total	2642.784	115			

Table 4 shows that the multiple correlation coefficients (R) of all the combined independent variables of the respondents sexual risky behaviours is 0.297. The adjusted R², which estimates the variance accounted for in the combined independent variables to the dependent variable measure is 0.064 which translates to 6.4% variance in students sexual risky behaviour, this was accounted for by the three independent variables (self-esteem, social media and psychotropic substances). The table in addition shows the regression equation ($F_{(3, 112)} = 3.260$, $p = 0.001$), this implies that the combination of the independent variables (self-esteem, social media and psychotropic substances) is effective in determining young adults risky sexual behaviour since it is significant at $p < 0.05$ which indicates that the obtained regression resulting from a set of three predictors (self-esteem, social media and psychotropic substances) allows reliable determination of sexual risky behaviours among students of College of Education, Abeokuta.

The above finding is in consonance with the finding of Boden and Horwood (2006, and Enejoh et al. (2016), that young people with low self-esteem generally lacks confidence, blames others for their own failure and do not believe in themselves which may lure them to risky sexual behaviors such as early sexual debut, unprotected sex among others. This may indicate that the respondents in the study have high esteem of themselves. The academic environment in which the study was carried out may have played a role in this observation. The impacts of social media on exposure to risky sexual behaviours were highlighted by Asrese & Mekonnen (2018).

Young adults are now exposed to pornography and uncensored sexual contents on the internet which they tend to practice with one another and this predispose them to other risky sexual behaviors which pose more health danger to them. Similarly, the finding in the present study showed a positive correlation between the use of psychotropic substances and exposure to risky sexual behaviour. This is due to the ability of these substances to alter their cognition and also encourage them to act abnormally. Furthermore, the finding is collaborates with the finding of National Institute of Drug Abuse (2014) that psychotropic substances including cocaine, heroin, morphine, alcohol and so on are drugs of abuse which may also lead to mental ill health, increased risk of contracting infectious diseases.

Conclusion

Young adults perceived the period of adolescence as a time of exploration to enjoy unbridled freedom and liberty within the college which exposes them to psychotropic drugs, social latitude of acceptance of social media and self-esteem which disinhibits them from various risky sexual behaviors. Based on the findings of this study, social media, psychotropic drug exposure predicts young adults' involvements in risky sexual behaviors. It can therefore be concluded that social media, psychotropic substances may be viable determinant of sexual risky behaviors among students of Colleges of Education. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were put forward to minimized or reduced risky sexual behaviour among young adults;

- i. The government should direct the operators of the various social media to censor the contents which are being published and exchanged on their platforms as well as providing stricter measures on drug pushers and vendors to discourage their exposure on young adults.
- ii. The health educators should continuously sensitize young adults on the use of social media and psychotropic substances at all levels of educational systems as this will reduce the high-risk behaviour that they are prone to sexually.
- iii. The parents should also properly educate their wards on the advantages and also more importantly the inherent dangers in the indiscriminate use of the social media and psychotropic substances which may ruin their lives.
- iv. The individuals should spend their time on profitable exercises as time lost could never be regained and also desist from risky sexual acts so as to promote healthy and productive living.

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