

Familial Variables Influencing Promiscuity among Female Students in Tertiary Learning Institutions of Abeokuta Metropolis, Nigeria

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Abstract: Sexual promiscuity is becoming a norm, especially among female students in tertiary learning institutions. The sexual behavior is largely traceable to the families from which students are brought up whether intact, separated, monogamous or polygamous. It is based on this background that this study investigated parental type, family type and age as potentials for promiscuity among female students in tertiary learning institutions in Abeokuta metropolis of Nigeria. The study employed the descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 1621 final year female students from four tertiary learning institutions in Abeokuta Metropolis. Non-proportional stratified random sampling technique was used to select 100 female students, 25 from each of the four tertiary learning institutions. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire which was developed by the researchers. Data was treated through the independent sample t- test and one way analysis of variance techniques. The findings indicate that those students from separated parents had a more potential for promiscuity than those from intact parents. Also, female students from polygamous family exhibited high level of promiscuity than those from monogamous families. It is therefore recommended that pre and post marital counselling be organized for couples to acquaint themselves with necessary adjustment and coping strategies.

Keywords: Parental type; family type; female students; promiscuity

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Introduction

Promiscuity is the practice of having casual sex with different partners or being indiscriminate in the choice of sexual partners. Sexual promiscuity is the

act of indulging or having sexual intercourse with several casual acquaintances. Thus, promiscuity depends on the environmental perspective and cultural inclination of the people. According to

Wehmeier (2000), sexual promiscuity means having many sexual partners. The term carries moral judgment if the social ideal for sexual activity is monogamous relationships. Misi (2008) opined that sexual promiscuity both in male or female is the use of one's body for the purpose of remuneration or consideration of any form. The World Health Organization (2005) views sexual promiscuity as habitual activities whereby an individual trades his or her body from one customer to another or from one place to another for financial, social and political remuneration.

Institutions of higher learning in Nigeria record cases of sexual promiscuity among students (Adeniji, 2010). Students in tertiary institutions are late adolescents and early adults who are between the ages of 17 and mid-20s. These are youths at the peak of sexuality awareness and above puberty. This has led to sexual experimentation and exploration often resulting to sexual promiscuity. Itaimata (2008) posited that with unbridled freedom, students in tertiary learning institutions began to push the limits of acceptable behavior, taking advantage of freedom bestowed on them as supposed 'adults. He made it clear that sexual promiscuity is based on the premise that students are adults that should be able to take care of themselves independent of their parents.

They therefore begin to carry out actions detrimental to their survival well-being. Sometimes young men drive to the gates of the institutions and beat prices with some male students who negotiate girls for them during weekends. Olugbile, Abu and Adelakun (2008) made it known that sexual promiscuity is very rampant in higher institutions and many students, especially female students on campuses have several networks where most of these students stand outside their hostels/ halls of residence to solicit for sex partners. The hardened ones see their campuses as too boring and do not operate inside the university campuses to achieve their deviant acts. They have a choice to take their trade directly to their customers at night at the nearby city clubs or those that will likely wish to patronize them.

Family system is considered as the center of learning and it thus suggests that individuals cannot be understood independently of their family members since families are systems which are interconnected and interdependent (Gavazzi, 2012). Through family interactions, parents may have

influence on child sexual behavior and in so doing transmit values, knowledge and attitudes about sex.

Sexuality is an integral part of any normal human development. It is a natural phenomenon which can be used by individuals in a pleasurable manner. At the onset of puberty, when the adolescents experience physical, physiological and emotional changes, it is a normal occurrence that they get attracted to the opposite sex, where they can experiment sexual matters with the opposite sex. The basic thing at this stage is mating with the appropriate partner (Freud, 1969).

Psychologists consider sex to be of significance because it leads to perpetuation of the human race through procreation, which may not be possible without the satisfaction of sexual needs. Adeniji (2013) identified integration of the function of sex as contributing to the stability of the family unit and the entire structure of the social group. The act of sex is pleasurable; through it, human race will be projected through children and family so that it will not go into extinction. Nature intended that sex could lead to self-fulfillment in marriage; it has the advantage of communicating genuine love to partners and also acts as a strong bond in human relationships.

Freud (1969, as cited in Oke, 2008) attempted to speculate about the significance of sexual maturity, proposing that the latency period of the elementary school years was followed by the genital stage of development. By the end of the elementary school, the child becomes quite self-sufficient and confident and is at ease with companions. Then, just as this stability becomes established, it is disrupted by the advent of puberty. With the maturation of the sex organs, adolescents experience a strong attraction to members of opposite sex. To explain this behavior, Freud proposed that human beings are born with a basic instinctual energy, the libido. He was convinced that this basic energy is characterized by a strong sexual component. The libido, according to Freud, constantly moves and flows as the individual grows and the behavior of an individual is determined by the way it is distributed. It is noted that at the genital stage, the libidinal satisfaction centers on the genital organs.

Meisher and Burnett (2010) and Musick (2013) noted that one of the ways in which adolescents' attempt to negotiate the transition from childhood to adulthood is through sexual activity and fertility. Also, they see sexual activity as a way to develop

identity. Moore and Rosenthal (2013) indicated that teens look to the opposite sex for validation and approval of the changes their bodies are undergoing. Man as a sexual being has the need to balance his thought and feelings and therefore engages in sexual intercourse for satisfaction of his emotional needs. There is no doubt that the students in tertiary institutions are conglomeration of early and late adolescents who have biological needs and tend to look for partners to satisfy their urges of sexual drives (Adeniji, 2013). The students in the process of looking for appropriate dating partner may become sexually promiscuous.

The family plays an important role in the child development and as a result, should not relent in translating socially acceptable values to the young ones and also should seek to help the youths from being influenced by deviant behaviors. When these families fail in their duties, the consequences are greater on their children in tertiary institutions. These children, especially at adolescence, are easily susceptible and vulnerable to engage in multiple sexual relationships owing to parenting styles especially those from indulgent and neglectful parents. Several reasons are associated with positive or negative sexual behavior on campuses: the influence of social class of the parents; the level of parental education, parental occupation and parental attitudes towards discipline. It is further noted that, single-parenthood, possibly due to divorce, death, desertion or never having married (i.e. single-parent family), may find it difficult to leave up to task in the fulfilment of all the needs of his/her members as it is recognized by Maslow theory of need. However, it is observed that the products of these families are the displacement of characters seen in the adolescents who eventually grow up to become nation destroyers instead of nation builder.

The type of family an individual comes from is likely to shape his/ her sexual behavior. A monogamous and intact family is most probably to set rules and monitor the activities of their children including sexual behaviors. On the other hand, the polygamous and separated family due to large family size and inability to live together may find it difficult to monitor and control the activities of their children. Intact family refers to the father, mother and children living together. On the other hand, separated-parent family is a type of family where children live with a single parent either mother or father. White (2018) said that home influence is

more powerful than any other earthly influence upon the human hearts and lives. It was further concluded by White (2018) that sexuality related behaviors in adolescence and adulthood are associated with characteristics of the family during an individual's childhood and early adolescence.

In a study of a small homogenous sample of white females younger than 22, those whose parents were divorced reported both an earlier age at sexual initiation and more sexual partners six years later than those living with parents (Devine, Long & Forehand, 2013). Again, the study revealed further that among unmarried black women, factors present in early life living in a two-parent family at age 14 and early age at first intercourse-predict multiple sexual partners in adulthood. Reasons for the unexpected relationship with living in two-parent households are unclear. These results are surprising as they run contrary to human reasoning.

Hill (2012) said that the family is crucial in development and forms the basic structure underpinning society. The disruption of this unit by marriage or relationship breakdown inevitably harms the children personality and society as a whole. It is in this context of understanding that the experience of divorce is directly related to an increased risk of teenage childbearing. Demo and Aclock (2018) found that males and females not living with both biological parents initiate coitus (sexual union between a male and a female involving insertion of the penis into vagina) earlier than their counterparts in intact families.

Hill (2012) explained that the most significant social cause of early sexual activity lies in the influence of parents and that, teenage sexual behaviors are related to parental activities and parent-child communication. Parental control of behavior as reported by adolescents is related to initiation of coitus. In a research conducted by the Family Matters Institute (2011), it was reported that prime significance is the fact that a high proportion of parents did not know that their children were sexually active. Nearly three-quarters of parents with sexually active adolescent of 13 years old girls were not aware that their daughters are no longer virgins. Of equal significance is the fact that only small proportions of parents ever discuss sexual matters with their adolescent children. They said this communication gap appears to hold the key to many of the issues surrounding adolescent sexual attitudes. It was also suggested that children who feel loved, cared for and respected by their parents

generally have emotional security; less anxiety and depression are emotionally on an increased likelihood of obeying parental guidelines. Parental guidelines on adolescent sexual behavior have been shown to be closely related to a wide range of social issues among young people, especially undergraduates in universities.

Hill (2012) again pointed out that adolescent boys and girls whose parents exert greater supervision of their dating, report less sexual activity and are less likely to become promiscuous and that male and female undergraduates from separated family were nearly twice as likely to be involved in underage sex as those living with intact parents.

There have been many students produced in recent years that have all pointed to the same conclusion that family breakdown lies at the root of the social disadvantage experienced by a large number of children and young people and that is a major factor in juvenile antisocial behavior, juvenile crime and a wide variety of social issues that have unfavorable outcome for young people (Adeniji, 2010).

Bauman and Udry (2018) explained that in a single parent family system, children and young people miss love and security of parents who are committed to each other and to their children. It should be noted that in order to strengthen and promote faithful and committed relationships in marriage, strong and positive steps must be taken by the family. Consequently, families will see a reduction in the anger and frustration that drive many university undergraduates from fragmental families to crimes of violence and antisocial behaviors.

Furthermore, Thorston and Camburn (2017) noted that the act of sexual promiscuity is as a result of social influences from parents, peers and media on adolescent sexuality. The parents have major influence on their adolescent sexuality because they are regarded as the primary socializers of their children, with influence over a variety of beliefs and behaviors. The study poses the following questions: How do parents translate their own feelings about sexuality into messages they give to their children? What influence do parents have on the sexual beliefs and behaviors of young people and how are these influences manifest on adolescent sexual behavior? These questions need to be pondered in the context of the following factors: (1) Parental attitudes regarding adolescent sexual behaviors which may influence adolescent attitudes. (2) The

marital and child-rearing behavior of parents, including experiences with divorce, remarriage, living arrangements and apparent behaviors towards the opposite sex which may provide and support role models for young people. (3) The religious environment of the home which may affect adolescent attitudes to sex and likely have experiences of sexual guilt. (4) The education and work experience of the parents which may influence attitudes and present opportunities for sexual experiences when the parents are away from home

The increasing rate of promiscuous behavior among students in tertiary learning institutions is alarming and its psychological and social results in the society require urgent and immediate attention of all stakeholders, namely, government, society, parents and the school systems. This is because of increase rate in the number of drop outs due to unplanned pregnancy, high rate of abortion and risk of venereal diseases such as HIV/AIDs and other related sexually transmitted diseases. This study therefore examined parental type, family type and age as potentials for promiscuity of female students in tertiary learning institutions. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there any difference in promiscuity level of female students in tertiary learning institution in Abeokuta metropolis due to parental type in terms of intact and separated marriages?
2. Is there any difference in promiscuity level of female students in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis due to family type in terms of monogamous and polygamous?
3. Is there any influence of ages of female students in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis on their level of promiscuity?

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Aggarwal (2008) defines the descriptive survey design as the method of research which concerns itself with the present phenomena in terms of conditions, practices, beliefs, processes, relationships or trends. This design is appropriate for this study because it gathered information about family and parental types along with the ages of female students in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta Metropolis for the purpose of describing and interpreting their potentials for promiscuity. It utilized the participants' responses in describing

their perspectives with regards to sexual promiscuity.

Population and Sampling

The target population comprised of 1620 final year female students from four tertiary learning institutions in Abeokuta Metropolis. The distribution of the population and sample is as presented in table 1. The sample consisted of 100 female students randomly selected with non-proportional stratified sampling technique.

The sample included 25 female students from final year students from each of the Federal University of Agriculture, Federal College of Education, Moshood Abiola Polytechnic and Crescent University Abeokuta. Other characteristics of participants included age categories (16- 20 years, N= 36; 21- 25 years, N= 48; 26–30 years, N= 10 and 31 years, N= 6). For Parental type, the study included participants from intact homes= 69 and separated homes= 31. For type of family, those from monogamous family = 63, while polygamous were 37.

Table 1: Study Population and Sample

Institutions	Population	Sample
Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	331	25
Federal College of Education, Abeokuta	611	25
Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta	596	25
Crescent University, Abeokuta	82	25
Total	1620	100

Table 2: Comparison of female student's promiscuity from intact and separated parents

Parental Type	N	M	St Dev	df	t	Sig
Intact	69	46.21	5.51	98	14.24	0.00
Separated	31	30.26	5.06			

Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers tagging Sexual Promiscuous Scale (SPS). It was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A sought information on bio-data of the respondents such as name of institution, department, course of study, level, age, parental and family type while section B with 20 items measured level of promiscuity of the respondents. When administered along with sexual permissiveness questionnaire (SPQ), the concurrent validity was 0.81. Sexual Promiscuous Scale had a test re-test reliability of 0.89 when administered to 20 female students of a University in Ijebu Ode, Ogun State twice within an interval of four weeks.

Procedures

The copies of the questionnaire were personally administered to the participants by the researchers. To address the ethical considerations inherent in this effort, the researchers sought the approval of the heads of the institutions and the Dean of students at the four institutions surveyed. The intention and the overall benefits of the study were clearly explained to the prospective participants. Respondents were assured of strict compliance to the principle of confidentiality with the information they are likely to supply.

Descriptive data was analysed through means and standard deviations while hypotheses were tested through t-test. For decision on sexual promiscuity, the higher the mean score, the lesser the potentials for sexual promiscuity, while the lower the mean score, the higher the tendency for sexual promiscuity. The Sexual Promiscuous Scale (SPS) had probable maximum score of 80 and probable minimum score of 20. All the 20 items were negatively worded but scored positively to avoid faking and desirability of responses.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis was guided by three research questions which yielded hypotheses for testing.

Research Question 1: Is there any difference in promiscuity level of female students in tertiary learning institution in Abeokuta Metropolis according to parental type in terms of intact and separated marriages?

This research question yielded a hypothesis tested in Table 2 which states:

There is no significant difference in promiscuity level of female students in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis due to parental type in terms of intact and separated marriages. In this study, intact family is defined as the female students whose parents are staying together while separated

family refers to those whose parents are not staying together either divorce, death or work.

From table 2, it is observed that the value of $t=14.24$, $df=98$, $p=0.00<0.05$. This result is significant and thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that those girls from separated parents had potential for promiscuity than those from intact parents. The higher the mean score the lesser the potentials from sexual promiscuity, while the lower the mean, the higher the tendency for sexual promiscuity. This result is in line with the finding of Bankole (2015) which indicated that sexual promiscuity of female adolescents with single parents was more compared to female adolescents living with both parents. The probable reason for this result is that most families where only one parents take care of children, such home may lack discipline. In most cases where only male parents take care of the children, they will lack care of the mother. The assistance needed from their mother most especially from the outset of puberty will be lacking. Consequently, female children from separated parents may be more liberal than their counterparts from intact parents. Children from

single parents are also prone to living a promiscuous life style than those from two parents.

Research Question 2: Is there any difference in promiscuity level of female students in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis due to family type in terms of monogamous and polygamous?

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in female students' level of promiscuity in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis due to type of family in terms of monogamous and polygamous.

The data in table 3 shows that $t=5.48$, $df=98$, $p=0.00<0.005$. This result is significant and therefore the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in female students' level of promiscuity in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis due to type of family in terms of monogamous and polygamous is rejected. By implication, female students from polygamous families exhibited high level of promiscuity than those from monogamous families. The higher the mean score the lesser the potentials from sexual promiscuity, while the lower the mean the higher the tendency for sexual promiscuity.

Table 3: Comparison of level of promiscuity of female students, from monogamous and polygamous family

Type of family	N	Mean	Std.	df	T	Sig.
Monogamous	63	39.26	8.28	98	5.48	0.00
Polygamous	37	30.38	7.61			

This is in agreement with the findings of Bankole (2015) which revealed the fact that sexual promiscuity of female adolescents from polygamous families was higher than for female students from monogamous families. This result is not surprising because expectedly, polygamy in the practical sense is nothing but promiscuous in nature. It should be noted that children especially females when they get to institutions of higher learning are likely to need educational and personal material things for necessary adjustment all of which require money. Those from polygamous families may also likely to have large family size and by implication, the parents may not be able to meet up with their financial responsibilities. The resultant effect may be for the children to be promiscuous so as to gain financial reward to meet up with school and personal commitment. This result is significant and therefore the null hypothesis which stated that

there is no significant difference in female students' level of promiscuity in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis due to type of family is rejected. This means that there was a significant difference in promiscuity level of female students in tertiary institutions due to family type. By implication, that female students from polygamous family exhibited high level of promiscuity than those from monogamous family. The higher the mean score the lesser the potentials from sexual promiscuity, while the lower the mean the higher the tendency for sexual promiscuity. The finding of the second hypothesis revealed that there was a significant difference in promiscuity level of female students in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis due to type of family. This result is in agreement with the findings of Bankole (2015) that revealed the fact that sexual promiscuity of female adolescents from polygamous families was higher

than for female students from monogamous families. This result is not surprising because expectedly, polygamy in the practical sense is nothing but promiscuous in nature. It should be noted that children especially females when they get to institutions of higher learning are likely to need educational and personal material things for necessary adjustment all of which require money. Those from polygamous families may also likely to have large family size and by implication, the parents may not be able to meet up with their financial responsibilities. The resultant effect may be for the children to be promiscuous so as to gain

financial reward to meet up with school and personal commitment.

Research Question 3: Is there any influence of ages of female students in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis on their level of promiscuity?

The last hypothesis speculates that there is no significant influence of ages of female students in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis on their level of promiscuity level. One- way Analysis of Variance statistical technique was used for data analysis as seen in table 4.

Table 4: F-test of Influence of Age on their level of promiscuity

Source	Type III sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Corrected model	572.2359	3	190.942	3.299	.024
Intercept	64806.099	1	64806.942	1119.571	.000
Age	572.825	3	190.942	3.299	.024
Error	5556.935	96	57.885		
Total	126400.000	100			
Corrected total	6129.760	99			

a. R squared= .093 (Adjusted R squared = .065)

Table 5: Fisher's Least Significant Difference Test of Multiple Comparison

Ages	N	X	SD
16-20 years	36	33.91	6.08
21-25 years	48	36.23	6.11
26-30 years	10	40.70	7.82
31 years and above	6	42.63	6.45

Table 4 shows that the result is significant ($F = 3.299$, $df = 3/96$, $p = 0.02 < 0.05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant influence of ages of female students in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis on their level of promiscuity level is rejected. That means there was a significant influence of ages of female students in tertiary institutions in Ogun state on their level of promiscuity.

To determine where the differences lie in ages among the groups, post hoc analysis was done using LSD for multiple comparisons. The result is as presented in table 5.

Results show that there was a significant difference in promiscuity level of female students between the ages of 16 – 20 years and 26 – 30 years. Similarly, when the ages of 21 – 25 years were compared with 26 – 30 years, there was a significant difference. The younger the female students, the higher the potential to promiscuity. The finding indicates that there was a significant influence of ages of female

students in tertiary institutions in Abeokuta metropolis on their level of promiscuity. The possible explanation for this result is that majority of the female students in tertiary institutions nowadays are relatively young who are still in the stage of adolescence. More often, they want to explore the new environment they have found themselves coupled with interaction with friends and peer who often exert more pressure and influence on their decisions. Similarly, being in tertiary learning institutions may be the first time of leaving their parents and thus have unlimited freedom which may make them to be loose and thus making them to be promiscuous and not essentially for financial gains. On the other hand, the older female students may have been emotionally matured and perhaps know the consequences of their action. This result corroborates the finding of Alimi (2010) that female promiscuity in Lagos state is dependent on the ages and family structure.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

On the basis of the results, it is concluded that parental type (separated and intact parents) is a determining factor for female students' level of promiscuity, the more critical being the female students from separated parental type. Furthermore, family type (monogamous and polygamous) is a determining factor for promiscuity level, the more critical factor being female students from polygamous family type. Finally, age of female students determined the potential for promiscuity, the more critical age being between 16 and 20 years.

Recommendations

Based on conclusions in this study, it is recommended that pre and post marital counselling should be organized for couples to acquaint with necessary adjustments and coping strategies to avoid marital breakup. Tertiary learning institutions should have functional counselling centers and run them effectively. Polygamous marriages should be discouraged since they influence promiscuity. Parents and lecturers should be encouraged to live acceptable moral standards for their children to emulate especially when their ages are relatively younger. Finally, female students in learning institutions should be made to understand the detrimental implications of promiscuous life style for them to shun the practice.

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