

INFLUENCE OF QUALITY OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND PARENTAL COMMUNICATION STYLES AMONG IN- SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The growth of STIs, early sexual initiation, unwanted pregnancy and abortion among adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Nigeria can be attributed to inadequate communication about sexuality within the family. Despite earlier studies at understanding the process of parent-child communication, peers continue to be the major source of information on sex-related matters for adolescents. This situation has resulted in distorted information about sex-related matters for adolescents which is evident in the prevalence of risky sexual behaviour and its attendant negative grave consequences among adolescents. The study investigated the influence of parent-child relationship quality on communication styles of parents with their adolescents on sex-related matters. The study was a descriptive design of the survey type. It used in-school adolescents in from the three senatorial districts in Ondo State. The sample consisted of 588 in-school adolescents from three Local Government Areas in Ondo state. Questionnaire was the instrument of data collection. Findings revealed that 56.6% of the subjects did not talk about sex with their parents while 66.7% indicated that they did get along with their parents and discussed intimately with them. Also, the quality of parent-child relationship has a significant relationship with parental communication styles. It was recommended that reorientation and

integration of parents into various intervention programmes on adolescent's sexual behaviour are needed in the society.

Keywords: Parental communication styles, Adolescents sexual behaviour, Sexuality and Sex-related matters

Introduction

Risky sexual behaviour places young people in Africa and indeed, in South Western Nigeria at an increased risk of infection with Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome virus (HIV), other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as well as the potential for unplanned pregnancy (Sunmola, Dipeolu, Babalola, & Adebayo, 2003). The reasons why young people engage in sexual risky behaviour are indeed complex and varied and have been attributed to various social context and familial factors (Wight, Plummer, Mshana, Wamoyi, Shigongo, & Ross, 2006; Boerma, Urassa, Nnko, Ng'weshemi, Isingo, Zaba & Mwaluko, 2002). Contextual factors that increase or decrease susceptibility of young people to these outcomes include gender issue in relationships and within families, household dynamics, parent-child relationship and cultural norms. In spite of the overwhelming evidence (WHO, 2007), of the need to involve parents as part of the comprehensive strategy for improving young people's health and development, there have been conflicting findings on whether parents in traditional African communities engage in sexual communication with their children and the effect of such communication on adolescents' sexual behaviour. Many parents in Nigeria still confuse sex education with encouraging children to sexual initiation. Hence, parent-child discussion on sex-related matters often tailors to mere encouragement or admonition to their adolescents to avoid pre-marital sex (Power, Langhaug, Nyamurera, Wilson, Bassett & Cowan, 2004). This further aggravates the culture of silence on sex-related matters in many homes. Studies have shown that the recent failures of previous interventions in Nigeria (Olusanya, Arijesuyo & Olusanya, 2013; Carael, Buve & Awusabo-Asare, 1997) and elsewhere (Henrich, Brookmeyer, Shrier, & Shahar, 2006; McNeely, Shew, Beuhring, Sieving, Miller, Blum, 2002) to show a positive impact on sexual behaviour of adolescents may be explained in terms of the effects of the prevailing African cultural belief about human sexuality. This is shrouded in obscurity and myths. As noted by some studies (Romer, Stanton, Galbraith, Feigelman, Black, & Li, 1999; Carael, Buve & Awusabo-Asare, 1997) determinants of sexual behaviour are not only a function of the individual but of structural and environmental factors as well. Olusanya, Arijesuyo and Olusanya (2013), had noted that a large proportion of studies mainly from developed countries have been conducted on how parents influence

adolescent sexual behaviour and that there is also a growing body of literature from sub-Saharan Africa on the role of parents in young people's sexual behaviour (Miller & Vandenhoutd, 2007; Nyalali, Remes & Wight, 2009; Omotesho, 2006; Oyefara, 2005). They, however, observed that while the above studies have shown some effects, they are too scanty to be conclusive. Nonetheless, many of these studies have suggested the need for intimate parent-child relationship as a means to enhance better parent-child communication on sex-related matters. Accordingly, this study investigated the influence of parent-child relationship quality and parental communication styles on sex-related matters among in-school adolescents in Ondo state, Nigeria. The following question and hypothesis are addressed in the study:

- i. What is the pattern of parent-child sexual communication in Ondo State?
- ii. There is no significant relationship between the quality of parent-child relationship and parent-adolescent sexual communication

Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. A total of 586 adolescents from the three senatorial districts in Ondo State were randomly selected based on gender and class using multi-stage random sampling techniques. The first stage involved a random selection of three Local Government Areas representing each of the three senatorial districts in the state. Co-educational secondary schools were purposively selected from each of the three Local Government Areas. Finally, 200 male and female students were systematically selected from the sampled schools. Altogether, a total of 600 copies of the questionnaire were administered out of which 586 were returned. Data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire titled 'Parent-Child Sexual Communication Questionnaire' (PCSCQ). Section A of the instrument elicited information on demographic data of the respondents, section B was designed to collect information on pattern of parent-child communication styles, while section C elicited information on parent-child relationship quality. The instrument was validated using experts' judgment. It was also tested for reliability. A reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. The instrument was self-administered and retrieved from the respondents immediately. Data were analysed using chi-square, simple percentages and weighted average.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

What is the pattern of parent-child communication styles among in-school adolescents in Ondo State?

Table 1: Parents-child communication styles among in-school adolescents in Ondo state.

| S/N | Items | Agree | | Disagree | |
|-----|--|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| | | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| 1 | My parents and I talk about anything | 375 | 64 | 211 | 36 |
| 2 | My parents and I do not talk about sex | 332 | 56.6 | 254 | 43.4 |
| 3 | My parents usually get literature on sex education for me | 292 | 49.9 | 294 | 50.1 |
| 4 | Do not get along very well with my parents, we do not discuss intimately | 195 | 33.3 | 391 | 66.7 |
| 5 | Satisfied with how I and my parents talk on sexuality | 342 | 58.4 | 244 | 41.6 |
| 6 | My parents participate & supervise my social activities | 433 | 73.8 | 153 | 26.2 |

The result in Table One showed that frequency counts of 375(64%) subjects agreed they could discuss anything with their parents. While 211(36%) noted that they could not discuss anything with their parents. In respects of whether parents do not talk about sex, frequency counts showed that 332 (56.6%) indicated ‘agree’ while 254 (43.4%) indicated ‘disagree’. Regarding parents provision of literatures on sex education 292 (49.9%) of the subject agreed while 294 (50.1%) disagreed. Regarding if adolescents do not get along well with their parents and do not discuss intimately with them, frequency counts of respondents showed that 195 (33.3%) indicated ‘agree’ while 391 (66.7%) respondents disagreed. On whether adolescents are satisfied with how their parents talk on their sexuality, 342 (58.4%) respondents agreed, while 244 (41.6%) respondents disagreed. Also, frequency counts of 433 (73.8%) respondents agreed that parents participated and supervised their social settings and activities, while 153 (26.2%) respondents were to the contrary.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between parent-child relationship and parental communication styles among in-school adolescents in Ondo state.

To test the hypothesis, Pearson Correlation was used to analyse the scores obtained from the frequency counts of parents-child relationship and parents’ communication styles on sexual behaviour of in-school adolescents.

The level of significance was set at 0.05. Table 2 presents the result of the analysis

Table 2: Pearson Moment Correlation of Quality of Parent-Child Relationship and Parental Communication Styles

| Variable | N | Df | r cal | r table |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|---------|
| Quality of Parent-Child Relationship | 586 | 584 | 0.364 | 0.195 |
| Parents' communication styles | 586 | | | |

Significant at $P < 0.05$

The result revealed that the r-calculated was 0.364 while the table value was 0.195. The r-calculated 0.364 is greater than r-table value of 0.195. Hence, the null hypothesis, which says that there is no significant relationship between the quality of parent-child relationship and parental communication styles among in-school adolescents in Ondo state, was rejected. This implies that the quality of parent-child relationship is significantly related to parents' communication styles on sexual matters with their in-school adolescents in Ondo State.

The descriptive analysis showed that 64% of the adolescents could discuss anything with their parents, but, 56.6 % noted that their parents talked about sex with them. This is an indication that while parents may discuss freely with their adolescents they talk less about sex-related matters. Also, the majority 66.7% opined that they do get along well with their parents and most of the adolescents 58.4% are satisfied with how their parents talk on their sexuality. This is an indication intimate and cordial parent-child relationship fosters parent-adolescent communication on sex-related matters among in-school adolescents in Ondo State. The finding further revealed that adolescents are likely to get well along with parents when parents participate and get involve in their children social settings and activities. This is because the majority 73.8% of these adolescents noted that their parents participated and supervised their social settings and activities

The result of the hypothesis revealed that there was a significant relationship between parents' communication style and the quality of relationship they had with their adolescents. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Fisher (2004) and Miller, Benson and Galbraith (2001). In fact, general parenting style and parent- child relationship had long been repeatedly linked to lower level of risky adolescent sexual behaviour (Santrock, 2005).

A probable explanation for this result is that the process of urbanization, coupled with the influences of Westernization has witnessed growth and prevalence of the nuclear family system over the extended family system in Africa and Nigeria. This situation is prevalent in the urban areas in

most African countries including Nigeria. The nuclear family system allows for more intimate relationship between parents and their adolescent children. Nevertheless, it must be noted here that this is not always the case due to deplorable economic situation, which has pushed both parents and children out of the home in search of means of making ends meet.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study revealed that quality of parent-child relationship influences parental communication styles on sex-related matters among in-school adolescents in Ondo State. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Parents who are the major stakeholders in the upbringing and development of their children must be close and friendly in the giving sexuality education to their children, especially adolescents.
2. Guidance counsellors should understand the implication of the findings of this study to be able to give and execute proper guidance programmes, especially for parents to become more open and receptive in discussing sex-related matters with their children.

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