



Socio-Demographic Predictors Of Sexual Abuse Among Female Secondary School Students In Gokana Local Government Area Of Rivers State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the predictors of sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. A descriptive cross sectional survey design was adopted for this study. The population of this study was five thousand six hundred and eighty seven (5687). The sample size of the study was 400 adolescents which were estimated using Yaro Yamene method for finite population. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to select the sample for the study. The instrument for collection of data was self-structured questionnaire titled Predictors of Sexual Abuse among Adolescents Questionnaire (PSAQ). The reliability of the validated instrument was 0.74 using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected was analyzed using Statistical Products for Service Solutions (SPSS) version 25.0. The result showed that there was a significant association between gender and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State ($p < 0.05$). The result indicated that there was a significant association between socio-economic status and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State ($p < 0.05$). The result revealed that there is a significant association between Parent's level of education and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State ($p < 0.05$). This study concluded that the prevalence of sexual abuse among adolescents was high and is significantly predicted based on age, gender, socio-economic status, and parent's level of education. It was recommended that sex education programme should family based activities to enlighten the parents on how to take care of the growing children especially those attaining adolescent stage. Parenting lifestyle for child rearing should be authoritative and security should be guarantee to female adolescents to reduce their exposure to violence.

Keywords: Sexual Exploitation, Preventive Behaviour, Female Adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Sexual abuse has been a global social and health issues that is more dangerous to adolescents in Nigeria and other developing nations. Places where control mechanisms are lax, corruption levels are high and fear of reprisal in reporting crimes, especially conducted by those in power are breeding grounds for parents and residents to engage in such action without regard. Sexual abuse and violence is the second most lucrative crime in the world, estimated to affect up to 5% of the general child and youth population worldwide, with increasing numbers detected globally during the past decades. The recurrent cases of sexual abuse such as raping, trafficking, exploitation, harassment, child labour among others continues to increase inspite of prohibition act against such negative behaviours. Studies of Chime, et al (2021) reported that higher proportion of victims of sexual abuse is

adolescents between the age of 12-18 years (68.1%). Additionally, Enebe, et al (2021) in their study illustrated that the overall prevalence of sexual abuse among younger children was significantly high with a proportion of 71.7% and slightly above average were domestic violence. Additionally, Manyike, et al (2015) revealed that the prevalence and one time prevalence rates of sexual abuse among adolescents in south east Nigeria was 40% and 11.5% respectively with male perpetrators. There are certain factors that predict the occurrence of sexual abuse among adolescents were gender, socioeconomic background, socio-cultural status and parent's level of education among others.

Gender is the social disposition of an individual either male or female. The extent to which male and female adolescents exposes to sexual violence or abuse may varies. The physical characteristics of female adolescents are more obvious such as development of pointed breast, enlarge buttocks or hip region and changes in facial expression tends to make them vulnerable to sexual attack from the opposite. Gabriel-Job, (2019) reported that female adolescents were over 12 times more likely to experience penetrative sexual abuse and good proportion of adult male are perpetrators of sexual abuse against the female. Manyike, et al (2015) added that there was a significance difference in sex abuse between male and female ($p=0.014$). It could be clear that most of the female adolescents are less powerful to defend themselves especially when they confine place thereby exposed to coerced sex. Ikechebel, et al (2008) put up that good proportion of female hawkers (69.9%) around 13 years had been sexually abused with sexual intercourse 28.1% were forced and 56.3% submitted willingly) while hawking of which majority (59.4%) of the sexual partners were adults. Aboul- Hagag and Hamed (2012) illustrated that the overall prevalence rate for child sexual abuse was 29.8%, with rates being higher for females (37.8%) than for males (21.2%). It could be possible that occurrence of sexual abuse among adolescent varies in regards to gender.

Age of adolescents determine the sexual debut which could be a predicting factor of sexual abuse. Younger adolescent may be maltreated and mishandle by adult which might predispose to violence than older adolescent. Aboul- Hagag and Hamed (2012) revealed that the average age of CSA for males was 9.20 years, compared to 10.03 years for female victims and also reported in higher rates in age group 10–15 years in comparison to other age groups. It could be possible because older adolescents are looking physically mature and may avoid confined place to live than the younger ones. Additionally, Elgazzar, et al (2020) illustrated that there was a statistically significant association between both the victim's and the assailant's ages and delayed disclosure ($p<0.00$). Elgazzar, et al (2020) reported in their study that anal sex was more frequent among males (91.2%) while, rape, attempted rape, and mixed assault occurred only in females with statistically significant association between gender of victim and the type of sexual assault was prevalent among adolescent aged 9.5 to 15 years. Ige and Fawole (2012) reported that good percentage of young adolescent (68.1%) had torn hymen and children >10 years more often had torn hymen ($P<0.001$). Also, Ogunfowokan and Fajemilehin (2015) revealed that all those who were sexually abused as children experienced high level of sexual abuse in adolescent stage and encounter forceful sexual interaction, romance, and actual sexual intercourse.

Parent's level of education is the extent of academic achievement of parent that determines their understanding, familiarities and awareness of condition such as sexual abuse. It could be clear that adolescent from less educated parents might be expose to violence such as sexual abuse due to lack of understanding than those from educated family background. This is because educated parents tend to understand the need of providing protective care to the young children in order to build their self-esteem and self-concept. Abodunrin et al (2020) reported that adolescents fro, parents with secondary and tertiary level of education were less likely to experience sexual abuse than the less educated ones. In other words, Yahaya, et al (2012) put up that level of education showed a contrasting association with the rate of exposure to sexual abuse among adolescents. David, et al (2018) suggested that proper education of parent and children at various levels may reduce child abuse and sexual violence. Chime, et al (2021) father's and mother's education, and father's occupation were statistically significant ($p<0.05$). Level of education tends to improve the standard of living and social status of the family including the children especially through empowerment of the girl child.

Socioeconomic background of adolescents could be another that predicts sexual abuse. The socioeconomic background involves family income, standard of living, parents' occupational status, place of residents among others. Adolescents from poverty stricken background might tend to support

their parents thereby launch into economic sexual abuse. Enebe, et al (2021) revealed that good proportion of adolescents who are expose to sexual violence, child labour or abuse are providing financial assistance to their parents. It could plausible that most of this adolescent especially the female ones may take the wrong decision by accepting sexual intercourse to get money so that they can provide financial support to their parents. Enebe, et al (2021) revealed that the adolescents from low income family were predicted to experience sexual abuse. Adolescents from low income homes or single parent family could encounter early sexual debut due to lack parental guidance and protection making them more vulnerable to sexual abuse or exploited sexually. Similarly, Manyike, et al (2015) reported that there was a significance difference among adolescents at different social class ($p=0.233$). Although no unified global definition of child sexual exploitation (SE) exists, it is considered a subtype of human trafficking. Definitions commonly include the actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust over adolescents and children for sexual activity (online and/or offline) in exchange for something of value (eg, gifts, money, substances, or developmental needs, including shelter, food, and protection). Power imbalance between a perpetrator and young person is often characterized by age differences; however, age cutoffs vary greatly, making SE difficult to clearly define and identify, (United Nations Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 2017). The fact is exploitation can be done by both women and men. Without proper attention and care, it can cause severe psychological trauma that can last a victim's lifetime, Sexual abuse chooses no age, race, or gender. On a global scale, it is even estimated that up to between the ages of 2 to 17 have experienced some form of unwanted sexual activity. To aid victims in their journey to recovery, it is essential to be aware of the psychological conditions they may carry over their lifetime (Makati Medical Center 2021). It is important to avoid the blanket application of the concept of "vulnerability" to large categories of children (e.g. street children, female-headed households, working children).

However, particular economic, social, political or cultural circumstances can imply increase vulnerability for certain children to a variety of exploitative practices. Conflict and displacement, compounded by an erosion of traditional values and cultural norms, create situations where children are at increased risk of exploitation - for example, under-age recruitment, trafficking and smuggling, and exploitative female labor. Some aspects of exploitation may be relatively "hidden" to personnel working in refugee contexts, such as refugee children recruited into armed forces, or drawn into the labour markets of cities (e.g. working and/or living on the street, prostitution and domestic work). It would be especially important to know if there was any organized exploitation - for example, trafficking which may be disguised as children crossing borders as "domestic workers", when in fact they are being sold into the sex trade. It may be helpful to consider what factors in the situation(s) under consideration result in children being exploited. In many contexts, the presence of certain risk factors and the absence of certain protective factors may heighten the child's vulnerability to other risks. So, for example, separated children may be at increased risk of sexual exploitation, while sexual exploitation may serve to heighten the risk of recruitment into armed forces. As well, poverty is a major cause of child work such as domestic labour, and a child domestic worker may be at increased risk of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse against female adolescents has been routine media news both on mass media and social media which has contributed to health and psychosocial implications. Sexual abuse has been link with domestic violence, child labour and trafficking as another form of criminal act that is punishable under the law. In spite of the effort of government to ameliorate the act sexual abuse reports continue to linger. Current report showed that female adolescents constitute large number of victims of rape, trafficking, and exploitation. Several reports on print media and social media indicated the occurrence of sexual violence and trafficking revealing the prevalence of sexual abuse. The study was irritated because despite the information about this evil happening (sexual abuse) the case has never been control and cease. Hence the study on socio-demographic predictors of sexual abuse among female secondary school students in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was investigating the socio-demographic predictors of sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. In specific terms, this study sought to:

1. examine if age predict sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State;
2. determine if gender predict sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State;
3. ascertain if socioeconomic background predict sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State;
4. determine if parent's level of education predict sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant association between age and sexual abuse among adolescents in in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State;
2. There is no significant association between gender and sexual abuse among adolescents in in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State;
3. There is no significant association between socioeconomic background and sexual abuse among adolescents in in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State;
4. There is no significant association between parent's level of education and sexual abuse among adolescents in in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

Research design: A descriptive cross sectional survey design was adopted for this study. This design carefully describes, explain and analyze the attitude and behaviour of the sample based on the events in a natural situation.

Population: The population of this study of adolescents in this was five thousand six hundred and eighty seven (5687) (National Population Commission, 2006).

Sample and sampling techniques: The sample size of the study was 500 adolescents which was estimated using Yaro Yamene method for finite population.

$$\text{Formula: } n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

N = total number of population from each selected local government area.

n = sample size

e = level of significance (0.05)

A multi-stage sampling procedure was implemented for the study in three stages.

Stage one: Simple random sampling technique was used to select two major parts of Gokana Local Government Area which was upland and riverine by balloting without replacement.

Stage two: Simple random sampling technique was used to select ten political wards from both upland and riverine areas of the Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. This was done balloting without replacement.

Stage three: purposive sampling technique was employed to select 500 adolescents in Gokana Local Government Areas which are at high risk of sexual abuse as it interests the researchers.

Method for data collection: The instrument for collection of data was self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire titled the Predictors of Sexual Abuse among Adolescents Questionnaire (PSAQ) which comprised of section A, B, and C respectively.

Validity and reliability of the instrument: The instrument was presented for face, content and constructs validity from the supervisor and three other experts from the department of Human Kinetics Health and Education safety. All corrections were implemented. Copies of the questionnaire alongside with the research questions and null hypotheses were given to aforementioned experts for moderation, criticism, and correction. All corrections were incorporated in designing the final copy of the instrument. Hence, the instrument was valid and use for the study. The instrument was considered reliable as the internal consistency coefficients of 0.76 was obtained and above which is more than half of one. The closer the reliability is to one, the more reliable the instrument is adjudged to be.

Method for Data Analysis: Data collected was analyzed using Statistical Products for Service Solutions (SPSS) version 25.0. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency count, percentage such

as chi square was employed test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The return rate of instrument was 100% and was used for the data analysis.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant association between age and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State;

Table 1: Chi-square test showing significant association between age and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State

Variables	Prevalence of sexual abuse		Total Freq (%)	X ² -value p-value df
	High Freq (%)	Low Freq (%)		
Age				
less than 10 years	10(12.5)	70(87.5)	80(100)	185.714
11-15 years	20(11.1)	160(88.9)	180(100)	0.000
16-20 years	50(35.7)	90(64.3)	140(100)	2
Total	80(20.0)	320(80.0)	400(100)	

*Significant. $p < 0.05$.

Table 1 showed the chi-square test of significant association between age and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. The result showed that there was a significant association between age and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State (X^2 -value= 185.714; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant association between age and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant association between gender and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State;

Table 2: Chi-square test showing significant association between gender and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State

Variables	Prevalence of sexual abuse		Total Freq (%)	X ² -value p-value df
	High Freq (%)	Low Freq (%)		
Gender				
Male	0(0.0)	176(100)	176(100)	78.57
Female	80(35.7)	144(64.3)	224(100)	1
Total	80(20.0)	320(80.0)	400(100)	0.000

*Significant. $p < 0.05$.

Table 2 showed the chi-square test of significant association between gender and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. The result showed that there was a significant association between gender and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State (X^2 -value= 78.57; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant association between gender and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State was rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant association between socio-economic status and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State;

Table 3: Chi-square test showing significant association between socio-economic status and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State

Variables	Prevalence of sexual abuse		Total	X ² -value p-value df
	High Freq (%)	Low Freq (%)	Freq (%)	
Socio-economic status				
Low	80(51.3)	76(48.7)	156(100)	156.410
Middle	0(0.0)	204(100)	204(100)	0.000
High	0(0.0)	40(100)	40(100)	2
Total	80(20.0)	320(80.0)	400(100)	

*Significant. p< 0.05.

Table 3 showed the chi-square test of significant association between socio-economic status and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. The result showed that there was a significant association between socio-economic status and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State (X^2 -value= 156.410; df =2; p<0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant association between socio-economic status and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State was rejected.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant association between parent’s level of education and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State;

Table 4: Chi-square test showing significant association between Parent’s level of education and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State

Variables	Prevalence of sexual abuse		Total	X ² -value p-value df
	High Freq (%)	Low Freq (%)	Freq (%)	
Parent’s level of education				
None	0(0.0)	40(100)	40(100)	115.686
Primary	0(0.0)	96(100)	96(100)	0.000
Secondary	40(19.6)	164(80.0)	204(100)	3
Tertiary	40(66.7)	20(33.3)	60(100)	
Total	80(20.0)	320(80.0)	400(100)	

*Significant. p< 0.05.

Table 4 showed the chi-square test of significant association between parent’s level of education and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. The result showed that there was a significant association between Parent’s level of education and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State (X^2 -value= 115.686; df =2; p<0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant association between parent’s level of education and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of this study in table 1 indicated that there was a significant association between age and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State (p<0.05). This is expected because younger adolescent may not the strength to withstand force from the older person thereby could not resist forced sexual intercourse. The result of this study is in line with studies of

Chime, et al (2021) that the higher proportion victim of sexual abuse is adolescent between 12-18 years. Manyike, et al (2015) affirmed that about 11.5 % of adolescents were victims of sexual abuse but was insignificant. Hurst (2021) buttressed sexual abuse was high among younger children. Kumar, (2017) added that adolescent aged 15 years are the major victim of sexual exploitation than older ones. Olofinbiyi, et al (2020) added that the prevalence of sexual assault and intercourse was significantly associated with age ($p < 0.001$). Furthermore, Durowade, et al (2017) revealed that the prevalence of sexual debut and abuse was high among adolescent aged 11 years and above. Elgazzar, et al (2020) agreed that there was a statistically significant association between both the victim's and the assailant's ages and delayed disclosure ($p < 0.00$). It is plausible that frequency of sexual abuse were predicted by age variation among adolescents. Hence, age predict sexual abuse among adolescents.

The result showed that there was a significant association between gender and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State ($p < 0.05$). The result of this study is expected because the body physique of female is attractive to male which may trigger indecent sexual behaviour. Gabriel-Job et al, (2019) buttressed that good percentage of female (61.9%) were sexually abused that male of about 35.6% and was statistically significant with penetrative sexual intercourse. Elgazzar, et al (2020) affirmed that there was significant association between gender of victim and type of sexual abuse/assault and females were at high risk than male. David, et al (2018) put up that the proportion of female victims of sexual abuse was high as compared with male folk and statistically significant

The result showed that there was a significant association between socio-economic status and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State ($p < 0.05$). Hurst (2021) illustrated that children from families seeking financial assistance were over 2 times more likely to suffer for child labour and sexually abused. Chime, et al (2021) added that fathers' occupation affect the standard of living of the family and adolescents are likely to assist the financial status. It is pertinent to that adolescents from low socio-economic background might be lured into sexual activities such as commercial sex and trafficking which are symptomatic to sexual abuse. Meinck, et al (2016) supported that adolescents who live with caregivers and guardians were at risk of sexual abuse and violence as compared with others.

The result showed that there was a significant association between parent's level of education and sexual abuse among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State ($p < 0.05$). Chime, et al (2021) affirmed that level of education of parents was statistically significant predicting sexual abuse and the prevalence of sexual abuse was high. Kumar, (2017) buttressed that children from parents low level of sex education are likely to be sexually abuse and exploited. Abodunrin et al (2014) supported that adolescent from parent with only secondary and tertiary education were less likely to be sexually abuse than less educated parent. Bugaje, et al (2012) summed up those adolescents aged over 12 years who are attending secondary school are at lower risk of sexual abuse. Level of education of parents plays a major role in child security and up bearing as a means of building the future of the children. As of the time of this study, there were no prior studies that contraindicate with outcome of this study.

CONCLUSION

Based on the outcome of this study, it was concluded that socio-demographic predictors of sexual abuse among adolescents were age, gender, socioeconomic background and parent's level of education. There is need to secure the future of the children who are growing into adulthood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In regards to the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Government should organize symposium and seminars for parents on ways of child rearing so as to prevent evil happening on the adolescents.
2. Governmental efforts should be made to educate children and their parents on various ways to reduce child sexual abuse and its consequences.
3. Government should make laws against perpetrators of sexual abuse and violence and punishment should be given to prevent the condition.

4. Adolescent should avoid confined places to prevent the risk of sexual violence.

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