

Comparative Analysis of Sexual Behaviour among Secondary School Students in Ondo Metropolis, Ondo State, Based on Religious Affiliation and School Type

Morakinyo Oyewumi Oyetayo, Margaret Kehinde Soetan

Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Adeyemi Federal University of Education,
Ondo

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90400242>

Received: 25 March 2025; Accepted: 01 April 2025; Published: 08 May 2025

ABSTRACT

This study examined influence of religion and school type on sexual behaviour among secondary school students. The study adopted survey research design. The population consisted of all secondary school students in Ondo metropolis. Stratified random sampling technique was to select fifty (50) students from six (6) secondary schools (i.e. Public schools - one male, one female, two mixed and two private mixed schools) based on school type, making a total of three hundred (300) students as sample for the study. Structured questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on Sexual Behaviour among Secondary School Students (QSBSSS) was used as instrument to collect data for the study. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach’s Alpha statistics which yielded a coefficient of 0.82. Data collected was analyzed using t-test. The results showed that there is no significant difference in the sexual behaviour of Christian and Muslim secondary school students. It was also found that there is a significant difference in the sexual behaviour of students from mixed-sex and single-sex secondary schools. It was therefore recommended that every religious group should work on fighting early sexual initiation among the adolescents. Secondary school students should be exposed to the dangers of early sexual initiation and how to avoid it. Girls should be enlightened on how to be more assertive in their relationship with boys.

Keywords: Adolescence, **sexual** behaviour, religion, school type.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence or youthful period is the most remarkable and troublesome when it comes to the issue of sexual behaviour. The reason for this is that at the period, because of the pubertal changes and increase in the secretion of sex hormones in the body, many young people tend to experiment with sex (Modebelu and Omeje, 2013). They are very adventurous and always want to experiment regardless of consequences, which most often compromise young people’s sexual and reproductive health. The desire of adolescents to be regarded as being a man or a woman is responsible for most adolescents indulging in risky sexual behaviour.

Oluwatosin (2010) asserted that many adults have difficulty in acknowledging adolescents as sexual being and therefore see adolescents’ sexuality as something that must be controlled or restrained. It has been controversially represented that there is a limited amount of scientific data on adolescent sexual behaviour as a result of adults “fear” that asking young people about sex is tantamount to giving them ideas and encouragement to engage in sexual debut (Grambuaman, 2003). But in the contrary, adolescents’ nature or characteristics of sexual behaviour are very obvious in their heterosexual relationship.

According Modebelu (2010), sexual behaviour is any activity (including kissing, pecking, necking, hugging, coital relationship, anal and oral sex and also masturbation) in varying degree and forms, which satisfies one’s sexual desires and urges. Djamba (2004) reported that there is a declining age of first sexual debut, increasing number of sexually active adolescents and high-risk sexual behaviour among adolescents.

The study of Freeman (2002) has shown a high level of sexual activities among Nigerian adolescents. Many of these activities include more than one sex partners, patronage of prostitutes and masturbation when they lack

access to opposite sex. Contrary to this, Charles and Orji (1998) noted that in the past, the adolescents in the less sophisticated African society display their sexuality by engaging in many culturally acceptable methods without necessarily involving in sexual intercourse. The methods they used according to them include: boy bullying the girls, twisting their arms, shattering their scarves while the girls delight in screaming, pretentious cursing, beating the boys in the back and attempting to run away. In recent time, Soetan (2024) found sexual behaviour among secondary school students as dating a person, kissing opposite sex, having a partner for enjoyment of sexual intercourse, having experience of sexual intercourse, dating more than one person, caressing opposite sex, hugging opposite sex, masturbating among others.

In studies among adolescents in African countries, various sexual risk behaviours have been identified (Doyle, Marendzenge, Plumther & Ross, 2012). In a community survey among adolescents (15 – 19 years) in Uganda, Tanzania, Nigerian, Ghana, Eswatini, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso between 2015 and 2017, 25.9% ever had sex and among sexually active early sexual debut (<15years) was 21% among girls and 28% among boys, unprotected last sex was 46% among girls and 40% among boys, and 37% of girls reported to have been pregnant and 7% boys had made someone pregnant (Berhane et. al., 2020).

Ogunsanmi, Ogunsanmi and Olusanya (2023) pointed out that religion appears to be a cardinal influencer of the young persons awareness of social ability level. According to perception, there are actually a variety of means by which faith might impact teenage eroticism and parent-child communication (Koleic, Landripet, Tafro, Jurkovid, Milas and Stihofner, 2021). This can affect thoughts regarding intimate relations, legal sex prior to marriage, explicit material, birth control, and other topics. Young people who grow up in religious households may accept rules proscribing sexual behaviour outside marriage. Some emphasise the importance of commitment, respect and trust before entering sexual relationships. Religion could also provide a sense of meaning in life, which in turn leads to considered decision making. Most faith-based organizations explicitly address the issue of adolescent sexuality within the context of faith through sex and abstinence education, parent-child communication (Nicholas & Durrheim, 1995).

School type could be an important factor in determining sexual behaviour among secondary school students. There may be a difference between mixed and single-sex schools in terms of interaction with opposite sex, which could have impact on students' sexual behaviour. Young people's sexual behaviour has been considered to be influenced by a number of factors such as sexuality education, sexual knowledge, type of family, peers, gender, education (Modebelu and Omeje, 2013). Oyetayo and Soetan (2024) reported that family types, father's occupation and qualification have no significant influence on sexual behaviour of secondary school students while mother's occupation have.

Considering the importance of religion in shaping human behaviour and the impact of school environment on students' life, there is a need to determine how religious affiliation and school type can make a difference in the sexual behaviour of secondary school students, in a bid to come up with recommendations for positive change; hence, this study

Objectives of the Study

This study is designed to:

1. Examine the influence of religion on the sexual behaviour among secondary school students
2. Determine the influence of school type (i.e. mixed or single-sex) on the sexual behaviour among secondary school students.
- 3.

Research Hypotheses

To guide the conduct of this study, the following research hypotheses were postulated:

1. Religion does not significantly influence the sexual behaviour of secondary school students.

2. School type (mixed or single-sex) does not significantly influence the sexual behaviour of secondary school students.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all secondary school students in Ondo metropolis. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select fifty (50) students each from six (6) secondary schools (Public schools - one male, one female, two mixed and two private mixed schools) based school type, making a total of three hundred (300) students as sample for the study. A structured questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on Sexual Behaviour among Secondary School Students (QSBSSS)” was used as instrument for the study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A & B). Section A was on personal data of the respondents while Section B consisted of items on students’ sexual behaviour with four Likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Face and construct validity of the instrument was ensured while reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach’s Alpha Statistics which yielded a coefficient of 0.82. the data collected were analysed using t-test.

RESULTS

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the sexual behaviour of secondary school students based on religion.

In testing this hypothesis, the subjects were classified into two groups based on their religion (i.e. Christianity or Islam) and scores on sexual behaviour were analysed using t-test. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Independent t-test summary of the difference between the sexual behaviour of Christian and Muslim students

Variable	Religion	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	df	t	Sig.	p-value
Sexual behaviour	Christianity	203	17.92	5.004	298	4.382	0.650	>0.05
	Islam	97	17.46	5.138				

Source: Field, 2024.

Table 1 revealed that Christians have a mean score of 17.92 and a standard deviation of 5.004 while Muslims have a mean score of 17.46 and a standard deviation of 5.138. A t-test analysis of their values yielded a t-value of 4.382 which is not significant at 0.05 level. This implies that there is no significant difference in the sexual behaviour of Christian and Muslim secondary school students. There the null is retained.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the sexual behaviour of secondary school students based on school type (i.e. mixed or single-sex).

In testing this hypothesis, the subjects were classified into two groups based on school type (i.e. mixed or single-sex) and scores on sexual behaviour were analysed using t-test. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Independent t-test summary of the difference between the sexual behaviour of mixed and single-sex secondary school students

Variable	School type	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev	df	t	Sig.	p-value	η^2
Sexual behaviour	Mixed	204	35.80	7.553	298	5.822	0.001	<0.05	0.134
	Single	96	27.11	4.182					

Source: Field, 2023.

As shown in Table 2, students from mixed secondary school have a mean score of 35.80 and a standard deviation of 7.553 while students from single-sex secondary school have a mean score of 27.11 and a standard deviation of 4.182 indicating that mixed schools exhibit higher engagement in sexual behaviour. A t-test analysis of these values yielded a t-value of 5.822 which is significant at 0.05 level. This implies that there is a significant difference in the sexual behaviour of students from mixed-sex and single-sex secondary schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Size of effect ($\eta^2 = 0.134$) revealed that school type has a notable effect (according to Cohen 1988 and Field, 2000 rule of thumb for size of effect) on the sexual behaviour of secondary school students; that is, school type accounted for 13.4% change in the sexual behaviour of students.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of the study showed that there is no significant difference in the sexual behaviour of Christian and Muslim secondary school students. This implies that religious affiliation does not influence students' sexual behaviour. This is in contrast to Laddunuri (2013), who found students from Muslim religion 4.424 times more sexual intercourse than students with Christian religion. Previous studies revealed that the prevalence of early marriages among Muslim students is the cause of early sexual initiation compare to Christian students (Murry, 1994, Pargament et. al., 1998). Studies have shown correlation between adolescent sexual behaviour and religious commitment. The Christian religious groups have strong opposition against premarital sex, although such opposition is more radical among the pentecostal and evangelical religious movements. While the latter can sanction their members by excommunication, the former can tolerate the offending members with the hope that they will turn a new leaf (Lehier, 2004; Thornton & Camburn, 1988; Stayton, 1985; Thornton, 1985). Odimegwu (2005) also found that religious practices of attending religious services frequently, daily exercises of bible reading and prayer, evangelization measured by preaching and distribution of religious leaflets and tracts, are critical religious indicators that affect adolescent sexual debut, attitudes to premarital sexual activity and engagement in current sexual behaviour. Ogunsanmi, Ogunsanmi and Olusanya (2023) equally reported that parental religion had a substantial impact on how teenagers communicated their sexuality. The findings of this study that showed no significant difference in the sexual behaviour of Christian and Muslim secondary school students may be due to the fact all the major religions are opposed to the expression of sexuality outside marriage among young people to serve as a deterrent to the adoption of permissive attitude to prevent sexual activity.

The study revealed that there is a significant difference in the sexual behaviour of students from mixed-sex and single-sex secondary schools. It was also found that school type has moderate effect on the sexual behaviour of secondary school students. This finding may be linked to the fact that mixed-sex school gives room for close heterosexual relationship since boys and girls are always together and this may influence their sexual behaviour as against single-sex school. The single-sex mission schools and that of the government in the past might have been premised on curtailing heterosexual relationship among the adolescents.

CONCLUSION

Religious affiliation does not have significant influence on sexual behaviour of secondary school students while school type (i.e mixed or single-sex) has significant influence. Both Christians and Muslims are against sexual risk behaviour among adolescents. Religion could be used as a tool to fight negative sexual behaviour and improve the sexual and reproductive health of young people in our society. Mixed-sex school may give room for early sexual initiation among secondary school students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Every religious group should create awareness among its followers in combating early sexual initiation among the adolescents.
- Secondary school students should be exposed to the dangers of early sexual initiation and how to avoid it.

- Comprehensive sexuality education programmes should include strategies to empower female students in interpersonal relationship.
- Establishment of single-sex secondary schools can be encouraged as in the past.
- Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education should be introduced into secondary school curriculum.

REFERENCES

1. Berhane, Y., Canavan, C.R., Darling, A.M., Sudfeld, C.R., Vval, S., Adanu, R., & Fawzi, W.W. (2020). The age of opportunity: Prevalence of key risk factors among adolescents 10-19 years of age in nine communities in Sub-saharan Africa. *Tropical Medicine and International Health*, 25.1: 15-32.
2. Charles, M., Anikweze, C.M., & Orji, A.S. (1998). A concern for adolescent with special education needs. In A.S. Orji & C.M. Anikweze (eds.), *Adolescent Psychology*. Ibadan: De – Ayo Publishers.
3. Djamba, Y.K. (2004). Determinants of risky sexual behaviour of adolescents in contemporary Sub-sahara Africa. <http://www.Mellenpress.com/mellenpress,cfm>
4. Doyle, A.M., Mavedzenge, S.N., Plummer, M.L., & Ross, D.A. (2012). The sexual behaviour of adolescents in Sub-saharan Africa: Patterns and trends from national surveys. *Tropical Medicine and International Health*, 17.7: 796 – 807.
5. Freeman, R. (2000). Do family planning programme affect fertility reference? A literature review. *Studies in Family Planning*, 28: 1-13.
6. Grambuaman, J.H. (2003). *Youth risk behaviour surveillance – United States 2000*, Atlanta: National Culture for Disease Control and Prevention.
7. Kolic, G., Landripet, I., Tafro, A., Jurkovid, L., Milas, G., Stihof, N. (2021). Religious faith and sexual risk among adolescents and emerging adults. A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Social Science and Medicine*. 6.5: 1079 – 1089
8. Laddunuri, M.M. (2013). The sexual behaviour of secondary school adolescent students in Tanzania: Patterns and trends. *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 6.3: 472-484.
9. Lehrer, E.L. (2004). Religion as a determinant of economic and demographic behaviour in the USA. *Population Development Review*, 30.4: 707-726.
10. Modebelu, O. J. & Omeje J. C. (2013). Correlate of sexual behaviour among undergraduates in university in South-Eastern Nigeria. *The Lagos Counsellor*, 6.1: 39 – 44.
11. Modebelu, O. J. (2010). Correlate of sexual behaviour among undergraduates in universities in Southeastern Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
12. Murry, U. (1994). Black adolescent females: A comparison of early versus late coital initiators. *Family Relations*, 43: 342 – 48.
13. Nicholas, L., & Durrheim, K. (1995). Religiosity, AIDS, sexuality, knowledge, attitude, beliefs and practices of black South African first year university students. *Psychol. Rep.*, 77.3: 1328 -1330.
14. Odimegwu, C. (2005). Influence of religion on adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviour among Nigerian university students: Affiliation or commitment? *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 9.2: 125-140.
15. Ogunsanmi, J. O., Ogunsami, O. O., & Olusanya, O. A. (2023). Parents' religion as a determinant of communication on adolescents' sexuality in Southwest Nigeria. *Journal of Professional Counselling*, 6.1: 80-85
16. Oluwatisin, S.A. (2010). Perceived parenting style, sexual abuse and risky sexual behaviour among undergraduate students of public universities in Southwestern Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.
17. Oyetayo, M. O., & Soetan, M. K. (2024). Comparative analysis between family variables and sexual behaviour among secondary school students in Ondo metropolis, Ondo state, Nigeria, *Zanfara International Journal of Education*, (ZIJE), 4.4: 324 – 329.
18. Pargament, K.I., Smith, B.W., Koenig, H.G. & Perez, L. (1998). Patterns of positive and negative religious coping with major life stressors. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 37.4: 710-11.
19. Soetan, M. K. (2024). A study of sexual behaviour among secondary school students in Ondo metropolies, Nigeria: Implications for counselling. *African Journal of Studies in Education*, 18.2: 142 – 150.

-
20. Stayton, W.P. (1985). Religion and adolescent sexuality. *Sem Adolescent Medicine*, 1.2: 131-137.
 21. Thornton, A. (1985). Reciprocal influences on family and religion in a changing world. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 47.2: 381-394.
 22. Thornton, H., & Camburn, D. (1988). Religious commitment and adolescent sexual behaviour and attitudes. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 51.3: 641-653.