

Parenting Styles, Peer Pressures and Adolescents Unprotected Sexual Behaviour

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Abstract:- The present study aimed to examine the impact of parenting methods and peer pressure on the engagement of teenagers in unprotected sexual conduct. The research methodology employed for this study was a descriptive survey, with the target population consisting of all adolescent students. The sample comprises 120 adolescent adolescents who were picked randomly using a basic random sampling approach. Four hypotheses were formulated and subsequently assessed at a significance level of 0.05. The instruments employed for data collection were self-constructed and subsequently validated. The instruments underwent pilot testing with a sample of forty teenagers who were not included in the main study. The reliability coefficients of the pilot-tested instruments were calculated using Cronbach Alpha estimate, resulting in values of $r = 0.70$ and $r = 0.84$. The study findings indicated statistically significant associations between the independent variables and the occurrence of unprotected sexual behavior among adolescents. Consequently, several recommendations were derived from the study. Firstly, it is advised that parents and guardians be adequately educated in order to address cultural obstacles that hinder the provision of early sexual education to adolescents. Additionally, it is recommended that sex education be integrated into the school curriculum as a means of promoting awareness. Lastly, the implementation of a comprehensive and well-structured sexual and reproductive health education program at different levels of government is advised.

Keywords:- Parenting Styles, Peer-Pressure, Sexual Behaviour.

I. INTRODUCTION

Parenting is increasingly being regarded as a vocation that necessitates the acquisition and application of several skills to effectively shape a child's behavior. Parents are widely acknowledged as the key influencers of their children's behavior, included their sexual behavior. Parents possess significant power over their children's decision to abstain, and when examining parenting styles in relation to behavior, research has demonstrated a correlation between parenting styles and teenage behavior. The study conducted by Weiss and Schwartz (1996) shown that parenting style has the potential to either enhance or lessen the effects of acceptable behavior. Previous research has indicated that the implementation of democratic parenting techniques has been linked to favorable behavioral results, including increased

autonomy, enhanced self-esteem, and improved peer relationships (Barnes, 2002).

In contrast, previous research has established a correlation between the autocratic leadership style and unfavorable behavioral consequences (Barnes, 2002; Beyers & Goossens, 2003; Pychyl, Coplan, & Reid, 2002; Scales, 2000). The correlation between the laissez-faire parenting style and delinquency has been attributed to inadequate supervision and neglect. As a result, teenagers who come from Laissez-faire households are more likely to report a greater frequency of engagement in socio-public health issues. Adolescent sexual behavior is widely believed to be significantly influenced by peers, and the impact of peers on such behavior can manifest across all levels. According to Rowe and Lunver (1995), individuals typically rely on peers of the same sex as their primary source of information regarding sexual matters. Moreover, sexually experienced acquaintances often serve as influential figures, serving as role models in this domain. Previous research has indicated a correlation between engaging with peers who exhibit deviant behavior and a tendency to initiate sexual activity at a younger age (Rowe, 1989; Whitbeck, 1999). Moreover, a significant determinant of delinquent conduct during adolescence is the association with delinquent peers, a connection that has been ascribed to the process of peer socialization (Dishion, Bullock, & Grole, 2002). According to Beyers and Goosens (2023), it can be inferred that inadequate parent-child connections may consequently heighten vulnerability to peer influence or amplify the inclination to form associations with delinquent peers.

Adolescence can be defined as the developmental phase that bridges the gap between childhood and adulthood. It encompasses a span of approximately ten years, spanning from the onset of the second decade of life to its conclusion. The transition into adolescence is a gradual phenomenon that is characterized by several stages of development. The initial phase of human development is known as early adolescence, encompassing the age range of 11 to 14 years. The second stage of adolescence is commonly referred to as middle adolescence, encompassing the age range of 15 to 18 years. Following middle adolescence is the third stage, known as late adolescence, which spans from 18 to 21 years. Enduring behavioral patterns are developed and solidified, resulting in long-term repercussions during this phase.

During adolescence, a significant number of individuals initiate sexual activity, and a subset of this population engages in unprotected sexual behaviors that may have severe and potentially life-threatening consequences. The rise in pre-marital sexual activity among adolescents, along with the prevalence of multiple sexual partners, has resulted in a higher occurrence of undesired pregnancies and sexually transmitted illnesses (STIs) (ARFH 1997). Various factors, including as family history, parental education, and the style of parental care, have been found to exert an influence on sexual behavior. Adolescents who have parental support, establish a strong emotional bond with their parents, and receive appropriate levels of supervision are less prone to early sexual exposure and subsequent pregnancy. Adolescents residing in an environment where parents exhibit sexual risk-taking behavior, such as early childbearing or a liberal stance towards premarital sex, may be more inclined to engage in early sexual intercourse. Genetic or biological characteristics can also exert an influence on teenage sexual behavior, representing another significant familial factor. The heritability of hormonal levels and the timing of puberty contributes to the influence on sexual behavior.

In many parts of the world, adolescents form a major proportion of the population. Therefore, their social development should be taken with utmost prominence for the continual existence of any nation and its people. This often times depends on the parenting styles adopted by the parents in nurturing these adolescents. Research and close observation revealed that majority of the adolescents are mal-adjusted and this is apparent in their acute moral decadence, lack of interpersonal relationship skills, communication skills, assertiveness skills and some other social skills that are required to effectively function in the society.

However, these adolescents should not be blamed for their inability to effectively function in the society since the parents also have some important roles to play. For example parents should love, care and understand these adolescents but the question has been; what is the best way to relate with them and the best type of child rearing practice that should be adopted to have a happy, productive and socially-developed adolescent. This study aims at providing answer to these questions; the major challenge confronting the adolescent is in defining an individual identity that is to be independent of their parental authority. Erickson (1990) posits that the development of identity serves as a crucial transition into adulthood, as it facilitates the integration of childhood experiences with personal aspirations, values, and choices, so enabling young individuals to assume their respective roles within society. The parenting style adopted by parents in raising adolescents plays important role in the formation of adolescents self identity. Jeffrey (2007) view identity as individual's attempt to define himself as a unique person. The adolescent struggles to attain this self-identity for the attainment of social development. Failure to achieve this usually leads to confusion and participation in anti-social behaviours.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The prevalence of adolescent pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (STIs), and HIV infections among the younger population has reached concerning levels. The heightened sexual drive experienced by adolescents sometimes leads to their involvement in unprotected sexual behaviors, such as engaging in unprotected sex, participating in premarital sexual activity, and even resorting to prostitution. It has been stated that male teenagers have been found to engage in sexual experiences starting as early as 14 years of age. Preliminary observations indicate that parents allocate an inadequate amount of time to engage with their children. Certain parents may want to travel to remote locations, thereby entrusting the care of their children to nannies and guardians. Children who lack enough parental care and attention may be at risk of developing delinquent behaviors, including engaging in early sexual activity, particularly within their own peer group.

Numerous parents expose their adolescent offspring, particularly girls, to the practice of child labor, compelling them to engage in street vending within marketplaces, streets, and motor parks. By doing so, they subject these teens to the risk of experiencing sexual harassment from adult males. Certain parents inadvertently contribute to their teenagers engaging in early sexual intercourse and prostitution by failing to fulfill their responsibilities towards them. Another issue that arises is the lack of effective communication between parents and teenagers regarding reproductive and sexual health matters. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the role of parents or guardians in influencing teenage sexual behavior.

➤ *Purpose of the Study*

The primary aim of this study was to examine the joint and relative influence of parenting styles and peer pressure on adolescent unprotected sexual behaviour.

- Assess the parenting styles of adolescent in relation to their unprotected sexual behaviour.
- Assess peer pressure of adolescent and their unprotected sexual behaviour.
- Investigate joint influence of parenting styles and peer pressure on adolescent unprotected sexual behaviour of selected secondary school students.
- To examine the effect of parental care on adolescent sexual behaviour.
- To examine the influence of heredity on adolescent sexual behaviour.
- To make plausible recommendation on what could be done to remediate unprotected sexual behaviour among the adolescents.

➤ *Research Question*

- What is the extent of the relationship among parenting styles (democratic, autocratic, laissez-affaire), peer group influence and unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents?

- Is there any relationship between parental care and adolescents’ sexual behaviour?
- What is the relative effect of parenting style on adolescents’ sexual behaviour?
- Does heredity have any influence on adolescent sexual behaviour?

➤ *Hypotheses*

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between democratic parenting styles and unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents.
- H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between autocratic parenting styles and unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents.
- H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between laissez-affaire parenting styles and unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents.
- H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between peer group influence and unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a descriptive research design of the survey type, as it aimed to investigate the association between parenting styles, the influence of peer pressure on unprotected sexual behavior among adolescents, and did not involve the manipulation of any variables.

The researcher employed a random selection method to choose five (5) Senior Secondary Schools located in the Atisbo Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. A sample of twenty students was recruited from each of the five secondary schools for the purpose of this study. A sample size of 125 adolescents was chosen by the implementation of a simple random sampling approach.

➤ *Research instrument*

The research instrument employed in this study consists of a self-generated questionnaire designed to assess several aspects of sexual behavior, peer group influence, and parenting approaches. The instrument was partitioned into

two distinct portions. Section A encompasses the demographic characteristics, including gender, age, level of study, and faculty of study. Section B of the instrument comprises a total of 20 items, each of which is evaluated on a 4-point scoring scale ranging from "strongly agrees" (SA) to "agree" (A), "disagree" (D), and "strongly disagree" (SD). The items were evaluated using the Likert scale, where SA (Strongly Agree) was assigned a weight of 4, A (Agree) was assigned a weight of 3, D (Disagree) was assigned a weight of 2, and SD (Strongly Disagree) was assigned a weight of 1.

➤ *Validity Instrument*

The questionnaires used for this study were thoroughly scrutinized and were checked by the experts in the field of test and measurement for prevision and usability.

➤ *Reliability of Instrument*

The instruments were pilot tested within two weeks among forty adolescents who were not part of this study using test-re-test reliability. The reliability co-efficient obtained ranged between $r = 0.78$ to 0.84 which was considered to be reasonable over time hence acceptable for use in this study.

➤ *Method of Data Analysis*

The statistical tools employed for analysis of data gathered from the respondent is multiple regression (MRA), at 0.05 level of significant.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1 Correlation Matrix of Relationship between Parenting Styles and Unprotected Sexual Behavior

Variable	Mean	SD
unprotected sexual behavior	2.68	1.104
Democratic parenting styles	2.33	1.091
Autocratic parenting styles	2.38	1.083
Laissez-faire parenting styles	2.90	0.962
Peer group	2.66	1.055

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

Table 2 Presents the Results of the Regression Analyses with which the 4 Null Hypotheses were Tested

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	R ²	R ² (adj)	F	Sig.
Regression	9.909	5	1.982	.087	.049	2.281	.051
Residual	103.403	119	.869				
Democratic parenting styles	113.312	124					
Regression	7.168	4	1.792	.063	.032	2.026	.095
Residual	106.144	120	.885				
Autocratic parenting styles	113.312	124					
Regression	10.791	6	1.798	.095	.049	2.070	.062
Residual	102.521	118	.869				
Laissez-affaire parenting styles	113.312	124					
Regression	9.519	5	1.904	.084	.046	2.183	.061
Residual	103.793	119	.872				
Peer group	113.312	124					

➤ *Hypothesis 1:*

Table 2: The above table shows that democratic parenting styles are not significant predictor of unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents. The regression analysis computed produced $f = 2.281$, $df\ 5/119$, $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The table also reveals the R^2 value which is .087 (8.7% effect size) and R^2 adjusted value of .049 (4.9% effect size). This signifies that democratic parenting styles are not significant predictor of unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents. However the null hypothesis (H_0) be expected while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is rejected.

➤ *Hypothesis 2:*

Table 2 for hypothesis 2, the regression analysis computed yielded $F = 2.026$, $df\ 4/120$, $p < 0.05$ level of confidence. The result shows that there was not a significant relationship between autocratic parenting style and risky behaviour among adolescents. The table also reveals the R^2 value which is .063 (6.3% effect size) and R^2 adjusted .032 (3.2% effect size). Hence the null hypothesis (H_0) will be accepted. The conclusion drawn therefore is that there was not a significant relationship between autocratic parenting style and unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents.

➤ *Hypothesis 3:*

Table 2: As shown in table 3, the regression analysis computed produced as $F = 2.070$, $df\ 6/118$, $P < 0.05$ level of confidence. The results from the table indicate that laissez-faire parenting styles are not significant predictor of unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents. This is further confirmed by the R^2 value of .095 (9.5% effect size) and R^2 adjusted of .049 (4.9% effect size). This further shows that the factor contributed 4.9% effect size to the variance of unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents. Hence the null hypothesis (H_0) will be accepted.

➤ *Hypothesis 4:*

Table 2; The results from the above table shows that peer group influences are not significant predictor of unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents, $F = 2.183$, $df\ 5/119$, $p < 0.05$ level of confidence. The indications that peer group influence cannot significantly predict unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents were also confirmed by the R^2 value of .084 (8.4% effect size) and R^2 adjusted .046 (4.6% effect size). Hence, the null hypothesis (H_0) which stated that peer group influence cannot significantly predict unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents is accepted.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study investigated the predicting capabilities of democratic parenting style, autocratic parenting style, laissez-faire parenting style, and peer group influences on the occurrence of unprotected sexual behavior among adolescents. Based on the analysis conducted for the first research hypothesis, the findings indicate that there is no significant predictive relationship between democratic parenting methods and the outcome variable. The results of

the second hypothesis indicate that there is no statistically significant association between autocratic leadership style and engagement in unprotected sexual behavior. According to Utti (2006) and Okorodudu (2010), the findings of the initial hypothesis are supported by evidence. They explain that the flexible, democratic parenting style is defined by a combination of parental demandness and responsiveness. According to the author's perspective, adolescents who have parents that exhibit demanding and responsive behaviors tend to display higher levels of social competence compared to those from homes characterized by laissez-faire and democratic parenting styles.

The results of the study demonstrate that there is no statistically significant correlation between autocratic parenting style and unprotected sexual behavior. These findings suggest that autocratic parenting style is characterized by high demands and low responsiveness. Additionally, the film has elements of parental strictness, physical hostility, and disciplinary measures. This conclusion contradicts the perspective put forth by Colberts (1994), who posited that adolescents raised under an authoritarian parenting style exhibit limited social competence due to the expectation of rigid adherence to parental regulations without providing explanations for these laws to the children. This phenomenon has been found to contribute to the development of abusive tendencies and increased vulnerability to engaging in unsafe sexual behavior among minors.

The results obtained from the third hypothesis indicate that there is not a statistically significant association between laissez-faire attitudes and unprotected sexual behavior in adolescents. The present discovery aligns with Folarin's (2013) study, which demonstrated that laissez-faire parenting contributes to an increase in delinquent behavior due to the permissive approach in child-rearing. Several more research, such as Utti (2006) and Okorodudu (2010), have reported findings that are similar to those of the third theory. The results of the current investigation, however, were not consistent with the findings of the two prior studies. Utti (2006) and Okorodudu (2010) have documented that the laissez-faire parenting feature is characterized by emotional detachment, a lack of clearly defined goals, and a passive participation in the upbringing of children. These youngsters develop a lack of self-control, exhibiting carefree and reckless behavior, which ultimately leads to maladjustment both within themselves and throughout society as a whole. Therefore, based on past research, it may be inferred that the laissez-faire parenting style is more closely associated with the prediction of unprotected sexual behavior in adolescents.

The study's findings indicate that there is not a statistically significant correlation between peer influence and unprotected sexual behavior in teens. This finding is inconsistent with earlier research (e.g., Jeffrey, 2007; Steinberg & Mondass, 2007), which found that peer influence plays a significant role in promoting unprotected sexual behavior. In contrast to the findings of the current study, Jeffrey (2007) observed that peer pressure has a

significant role in shaping teenage behavior, as it stems from group expectations and the formation of social identity. Moreover, Dishion, Bullock, and Granic (2002) have asserted that the early engagement in sexual activity is primarily influenced by peer pressure. The results of this study suggest that the observed association, as demonstrated by the R values in tables 2 and 3, is not a random occurrence but rather a consequence of the predictive capacity of the variables pertaining to democratic parenting styles, autocratic parenting styles, laissez-faire parenting style, and peer influence factor.

VI. CONCLUSION

The variables of the present studies are essential in predicting unprotected sexual behaviour among adolescents. Although, the findings from the study showed that parental upbringing plays significant role in children's behaviour, however the findings have provided a better understanding of variance in the predictive power of the variables as the variance showed that democratic parenting style, autocratic parenting style, laissez-faire parenting style and peer pressure influence could not predict unprotected sexual behaviour among the adolescents. The variance might be as a result of other factors influencing human behaviour such as environmental factors and educational needs of the adolescents. Overall, the evidence from the study suggested that in order to avoid serious implications of risky behaviour among adolescents, a comprehensive sex education programme will be of much importance in schools. Parents should also take their parental roles with all seriousness and make home conducive for adolescents to live.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the aforementioned observations, the present study suggests that it is imperative for parents and guardians to possess adequate knowledge in order to effectively address the cultural obstacles that hinder the provision of early sexual education to teenagers.

In order to foster awareness, it is imperative to integrate sex education into the formal educational curriculum.

The effective execution of a meticulously designed sexual and reproductive health education program across different tiers of governmental administration.

Effective communication between parents and teenagers is crucial, especially when addressing negative attitudes. Engaging in counterproductive behaviors such as shouting, screaming, belittling, displaying emotional detachment, and being unreasonable can exacerbate conflicts rather than fostering cooperation.

Parents should actively promote and foster a culture of participatory problem-solving among their children. The involvement of adolescents in problem-solving is of significant importance.

It is recommended that counseling units be established and adequately supported in all local government areas. These units would be responsible for conducting seminars and workshops focused on sexual education and adolescence-related issues.

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