

PEER PRESSURE AS PREDICTORS OF FEMALE STUDENTS' SEXUAL PROMISCUITY IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION IN DELTA STATE

Dr. Peter URIEN¹, Dr. James URIEN² and Prof. (Mrs.) Grace Omojewe AKPOCHAF³

^{1&3}Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

²Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Science, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

<https://doi.org/10.54922/IJEHSS.2024.0825>

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between peer pressure and female students' sexual promiscuity. The study was guided by three research questions and hypotheses. Using a correlational method of ex-post facto research design, a total of 1,566 female students were sampled from universities across Delta Central Senatorial District. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was adequately validated by experts and factor analysis while the reliability was estimated and found adequate. Regression statistics was used to analyse the data. The result revealed that peer pressure can predict sexual promiscuity and that while age can moderate the relationship between peer pressure and sexual promiscuity, location does not. The study recommended that adolescents should be properly guided by parents, guardians and significant others on the choice of friends so that the wrong choice of friends will not be exposed to sexual promiscuity.

Keywords: Peer Pressure; Sexual Promiscuity; Location; Age.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual promiscuity is the act of indulging or having sexual intercourse with several casual acquaintances. Sexual promiscuity, according to Wehmeier (2000), is defined as having multiple sexual partners. According to Misi (2008), sexual promiscuity is defined as the use of one's body for remuneration or consideration in any manner. It may also be referred to as prostitution. Such service is usually provided by women or girls who want to make money or who are eager and are willing to do anything to reach a certain degree of wealth (Osoba, 2005). According to the findings of Olugbile, Abu, and Adalaku (2008), most undergraduate students, most especially females, engage in behaviours that suggest promiscuity on campus. According to them, being a student on campus gives them more opportunity to indulge in sex for pay because guys often prefer to patronise undergraduate students on campus than to visit sex workers in their brothels.

The situation on campus is so awful that professional prostitutes are bending over themselves to seek entrance to higher education schools. Sexual promiscuity is highly common at our institutions, according to Olugbile et al. (2008), and the average campus includes numerous networks. The majority of these students solicit business outside their hostels. Inside campuses of the universities, most students who consider their schools to be too uninteresting do not operate. They boldly take their business to their customers late at night in adjacent cities, clubs, or hot areas, giving them maximum exposure to those who might be interested in patronizing them. People may, however, be perplexed as to why promiscuity is so prevalent on university campuses. One of the reasons, according to the researcher, is a lack of good upbringing by student guardians or parents,

as well as peer pressure and poverty. Furthermore, in the view of Uzokwe (2008), with unrestricted liberty and freedom, students began to test the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, taking advantage of the freedom given on them as "adults."

What is the true cause or causes driving sexual promiscuity or sex for pay among most female undergraduate students, one would wonder? Negligence of responsibilities by parents in the opinion of Uzokwe (2008), is a factor contributing to sexual promiscuity among many others. Families in Nigeria used to place a high value on morals, honour, and character. In the olden days, African traditional parents took the opportunity to pass on these values to their children. For doing actions that harmed the family name, there were injunctions and occasional denials of basic necessities.

When a member of the family engages in vices such as promiscuity, thievery, and the like, the family's image might be tarnished. No family wants to be blacklisted or blackmailed, thus parents paid close attention to their children's moral and social well-being, sometimes intervening when poor behaviour was observed. When compared to previous generations, many behaviours that used to offend people are no longer tolerated. The opposite appears to be true. Teachers, on the other hand, no longer fulfil the vital traditional responsibilities they formerly did. Because children have acquired "wings and tails," they are no longer character builders. These children, particularly the females, believe they are safe because of their parents or lovers. As a result, young girls go through school displaying indicators of improper behaviour that develop into larger concerns in the future with no one to intervene or correct them. Those who make it into universities eventually wind up carrying on what they started in secondary school on a larger scale.

Peer influence is prevalent on campus, according to Olugbile (2008), where everyone aspires to be like others and ends up prostituting. The more conservative girls are gradually corrupted by the bad girls who accept prostitution. If one student, for example, had three cell phones and wore flashy clothes, some of the other students would want to do the same or more. Some of those who are likely not from wealthy families are forced to do otherwise. In addition, certain universities are contributing to the problem. Their fees are so high that it's difficult to see how they expect students to pay them. They turn to prostitution because they are in a terrible financial situation and need money to pay their school costs. Misi (2008) further state that politicians and public servants are mostly not immune to the problem of sexual promiscuity often observed among female undergraduate students. According to him, whenever these politicians and government officials come to town for official business, the pimps recruit young university ladies for their leisure and enjoyment, after which they pay them large sums of ill-gotten money. According Olugbogega (2008), as a result of crave for wealth among most female students, some of them do whatever it takes to fit in by engaging in promiscuity.

Peer groups create and maintain a culture separate from home in which adolescents are raised. Many young people spend more time with peers than with parents or other family members (Gara, 2006). Peers can exert extraordinary influence over each other into the formation of certain behaviours, among which is sexual promiscuity (Yeh, 2006). From traditional communities to modern societies, peer group influence has been acknowledged as a major socializing factor (Tizifa, 1993). It was further observed that negative peer influences contribute a lot to increased sexual promiscuity in the tertiary institution and world at large (Johnson, O'Malley, & Bachman, 2000). Peer group influence is a common source for the involvement in negative activities for adolescents and friends' influence is a major factor in adolescence's sexual promiscuity (Berndt, 1996).

Peer groups are influential throughout one's life, but they are especially crucial during the formative years of adolescence. During adolescence, there is often a debate concerning the influence of a peer group against parental influence. When family relationships aren't close or helpful, the power of the peer group becomes even more crucial. If their parents are generally inaccessible, their children may seek emotional support from their peers. The majority of children in this situation are not picky about the group they join. Even if the group is involved in illegal or bad actions, they will often turn to a group that accepts them. For some young people, the desire for belonging or connection is often more important than the desire to "do the right thing" (Barbour, Barbour & Scully 2002).

Peers are thought to have a significant social influence on teenage sexual behaviour, and peer effects can occur on multiple levels. Same-sex peers are frequently the source of sex-related information, and sexually experienced acquaintances are frequently used as role models (Davis & Harris 2009). (Rowe & Lunver 2001). Associating with deviant peers has been associated to earlier intercourse initiation in studies (Rowe et al, 2009; Whitbeck et al, 2008). Furthermore, connection with delinquent peers is one of the biggest predictors of delinquent behaviour in adolescence, an association that has been related to peer socialization (Dishion, Bullock & Grole 2002). The consequence is that poor parent-child connections may increase vulnerability to peer pressure or the likelihood of interacting with deviant peers (Whitbeck, Conger & Ilaio 2007).

According to Rowe & Lunver (2001) student's location such as urban or rural, significantly seems to have effect on female undergraduate students' sexual promiscuity. Girl child sexual behaviour in rural context" and among other things that the social norms of the rural areas value, place, community and family over other more distinct national priorities influence the female undergraduate sexual promiscuity. In the study of Himelein, Vogel and Wachowiak (1994) it was reported that age is associated with adolescents' sexual behaviour. Younger age at first intercourse was related to the increased number sexual promiscuity among undergraduate female students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity?
2. What is the moderating impact of location on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity?
3. What is the moderating impact of age on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity
2. There is no significant moderating impact of location on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity
3. There is no significant moderating impact of age on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity

2. METHOD

This study will employ the 'ex-post facto' design and it is correlational in nature. The target population of this study will be made up of all female students in tertiary institution in Delta Central Senatorial District with a population of about 15,660. (Sources: School visitation) There are Eleven (11) tertiary institutions in Delta Central Senatorial Districts, name. From Eleven (11) tertiary institutions in Delta Central Senatorial District, eight (8) tertiary institutions were sampled using balloting and stratified random sampling technique. The strata to be used are Urban and Rural tertiary institutions. A total of 1566 female undergraduate students will be drawn to represent the total population. This is 10% of the target population. Thereafter, disproportionate random sampling technique was used to sample the female students from each of the eight (8) tertiary institutions in Delta Central Senatorial District. This is to ensure that all female students in tertiary have equal opportunity of being selected.

From Eleven (11) tertiary institutions in Delta Central Senatorial District, 50 female students will be sampled from each of the eight (8) tertiary institutions using balloting and stratified random sampling. A total of 400 female students in tertiary will be drawn to represent the total population. Thereafter, disproportionate random sampling technique will be used to sample female students from each of the eight (8) tertiary institutions in Delta Central Senatorial District. This is to ensure that all female students in tertiary have equal opportunity of being selected.

The Instrument for this study is a self-constructed questionnaire titled "peer pressure and sexual promiscuity (PSPS)" The instrument has two sections (section A and B). Section A will seek biographical information about location of school, schools, level studies, age and nature of family. Section B comprise is divided into two sub-scales measuring peer pressure and sexual promiscuity. Sexual promiscuity scale 13 items while peer pressure had 9 items. For the purpose of scoring, a Likert type rating scale of four (4) response options of "strongly agree" (SA), "Agree" (A), "Disagree" (D) and "Strongly Disagree" (SD), was adopted in scoring. The positive word items in the questionnaire were scored 4, 3, 2, and 1. While all negative word items were scored 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively.

The instrument was given to the experts for the purpose of correction. Some of the items were modified to suit the view of the respondent on peer pressure, parenting styles and socio-economic status as predictors of female undergraduate students' sexual promiscuity. The face validity of the instrument was considered adequate by expert judgment. For content and construct validity of the instrument factor analysis was used. The principal component analysis was used to estimate the content validity. The extraction method, the total cumulative variance was obtained as expressing the content validity of the instrument. The values indicate the percentage or amount of contribution made to the Sexual Promiscuity of 63.63% and Peer Pressure of 60.95%. These values are the content validity of the total number of items that measuring the variables domain which also indicated the percentage or amount of contribution made to the peer pressure, parenting styles and socio-economic status as predictors of female undergraduate students' sexual promiscuity that explains the total cumulative variance.

However, the construct validity was estimated by using the rotated factor loading matrixes. The Eigen values were used to select factors that genuinely measures similar constructs. The items

in the instrument that measures psychological traits had loading matrixes that ranged between 0.55 and 0.84 for sexual promiscuity and 0.54 and 0.83 for peer pressure. The range of rotated factor loading matrixes is high. Hence, the instrument was concluded that the instrument was construct valid. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by using Cronbach’s alpha for estimating internal consistency of the instrument. This yielded for the Sexual Promiscuity Scale alpha = 0.84 and Peer Pressure scale alpha = 0.76. Hence, it was concluded that the scales had good psychometric properties of the reliability.

The questionnaire was administered by the researchers personally and was retrieved immediately. This was to ensure that all or almost all the copies of questionnaires were retrieved. It also afforded the researchers to explain where necessary aspects of the questionnaire which were not understood by the respondents. The statistical tool that was used to analyze data collected was regression statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates’ sexual promiscuity

Table 1: Regression analysis of the relationship between peer pressure and female students’ sexual promiscuity

Model	SS	df	MS	F	p
Regression	26.112	1	26.112	134.253	.000 ^b
Residual	205.004	1054	.195		
Total	231.116	1055			

Coefficients					
Model	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	1.826	.058		31.262	.000
Peer Pressure	.232	.020	.336	11.587	.000

$\alpha = 0.05, R = 0.336, R\text{-Square} = 0.113$

- a. **Dependent Variable:** Sexual Promiscuity
- b. **Predictors (Constant):** Peer Pressure

Table 1 shows a regression analysis of the relationship between peer pressure and female students’ sexual promiscuity. The result shows that (1, 1054) = 134.253, $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and female students’ sexual promiscuity. The beta value of 0.34 showed that peer pressure accounted for 11% of the variance in female students’ sexual promiscuity.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant moderating impact of location on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates’ sexual promiscuity

Table 2: Multiple regression analysis on the moderating impact of location on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates’ sexual promiscuity

Model	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Peer Pressure	.230	.020	.333	11.445	.000
Location	.037	.027	.039	1.346	.179

Table 2 shows the result of the moderating impact of location on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity. The beta weights of 0.333, $t = 11.445$ for peer pressure; and 0.039, $t = 1.346$ for location are indicators of the degree of correlation between each variable of peer pressure and location with sexual promiscuity. From the result, peer pressure is significant at an alpha level of 0.05, but location is not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that there is no significant moderating impact of location on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant moderating impact of age on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity

Table 3: Multiple regression analysis on the moderating impact of age on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity

Model	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Peer Pressure	.232	.020	.335	11.563	.000
Age	-.057	.027	-.060	-2.068	.039

Table 3 shows the result of the moderating impact of age on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity. The beta weights of 0.335, $t = 11.563$ for peer pressure; and -0.060, $t = -2.068$ for age are indicators of the degree of correlation between each variable of peer pressure and age with sexual promiscuity. From the result, peer pressure and age are significant at an alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there is a significant moderating impact of age on relationship between peer pressure and female undergraduates' sexual promiscuity.

3. DISCUSSION

The finding of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and female students' sexual promiscuity. This finding implies that individuals who are susceptible to peer pressure can easily be influenced by their promiscuous friends to indulge in sexual promiscuity. At such age of development, their attachment to their friends is usually stronger than what they have with their parents. Moreover, majority of the undergraduate students who are in school are usually outside the control of their parents. Hence, the tendency to conform to peer traditions is strong. This finding is in line with the finding of Endilik (2014), which revealed a statistically significant relationship among positive attitude to the behaviour, peer pressure, freedom from parental control, financial problem, and the desire for material possession and promiscuous sexual behaviour. The finding also agrees with Ugoji and Ebinuwa-Okoh (2015), who in their study, found that peer group influence is a significant predictor of risky sexual behaviours such as sexual promiscuity.

The finding also showed that there is no significant moderating impact of location on the relationship between peer pressure and female students' sexual promiscuity. This finding implies no matter the location of the students, peer pressure can influence individuals into indulging in sexual promiscuity. Whether urban or rural areas, undergraduate students who are susceptible to peer pressure may likely indulge in sexual promiscuity, especially when most of their friends are sexually promiscuous. This finding seems to be at variance with the study of Odii, Atama, Igwe, Idemili-Aronu and Onyeneho (2022), which revealed that undergraduate students that were raised

in rural areas indulged in unprotected sex. The finding also disagrees with Yusran, Astina, Sabilu, Sety, Akifah and Rezal (2022), whose study found a significant difference in premarital sexual behaviour among teenagers in rural and urban setting.

The finding further revealed that there is a significant moderating impact of age on the relationship between peer pressure and female students' sexual promiscuity. This finding implies that as individuals grow older, their susceptibility to peer pressure may increase, which may also affect their sexual behaviour such as indulgence in sexual promiscuity. This finding is consistent with the finding of van de Bongardt, Reitz, Sandfort and Dekovi (2018), which showed that age moderate the influence of peer norms on adolescents' sexual behaviour. The finding also supports Steinberg and Monahan (2007), who in their study, found that between the ages of 14 and 18, resistance to peer pressure rises in a linear fashion.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that peer pressure can influence female undergraduate students into indulging in sexual promiscuity. female students who are easily influenced by their peers are more likely to engage in sexual promiscuity that those who are not easily influenced by their peers. The relationship is moderated by age but not by location. As individuals grow older, the tendency for them to be easily influenced by their peers increased and vice versa. On the basis of these findings, the study recommended as follows:

1. Adolescents should be properly guided by parents, guardians and significant others on the choice of friends so that the wrong choice of friends will not be exposed to sexual promiscuity
2. That parents should be mindful of the age of the children since as they adolescents grow older, their tendency to be promiscuous increases.

REFERENCES

- Barbour, C., Barbour, N.H., & Scully, P. A. (2002). *Peer Group Influence*, retrieved October 28, 2018 from [http://www.education.com/reference/article/peer-group influence/](http://www.education.com/reference/article/peer-group%20influence/)
- Berndt, T. (1996). *Transition in friendship and friend's influence: Transitions through adolescence*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc, Publishers.
- Davis, S. M.,& Harris, M. B. (2009). Sexual knowledge, sexual interests, and services of sexual information of rural and urban adolescents from three cultures. *SAGE journal of Adolescence*, 17, 471-492.
- Dishion, T. J., Bullock, B. M.,&Gravic, I. (2002). Pragmatism in modeling peer influence: Dynamics, outcomes, and change processes. *Journal of Development and Psychopathology*, 14, 969-981.
- Endilik,J. (2014). *Magnitude and Risk Factors of Promiscuous Sexual Behaviour among Students in Addis Ababa University and Kotebe University College*. Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Addis Ababa University.
- Gara, P. (2006). Peer group influence & academic aspirations across cultural groups of high school students. *Center for research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence*. [University of Hawaii Manoa](http://www.hawaii.edu/education)Honolulu.

- Himelein, M. J., Vogel, R. E., & Wachowiak, D. G. (1994). Nonconsensual sexual experiences in precollege women: Prevalence and risk factors. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 72, 411–415.
- Misi, O. K. (2008), Nigeria: *When University Become Brothers*, Retrieved July 26, 2018 from [http://www.Africanloft.com/ University-orbrothel](http://www.Africanloft.com/University-orbrothel) .
- Odi, A., Atama, C. S., Igwe, I., Idemili-Aronu, N. J., & Onyeneho, N. G. (2022). Risky sexual behaviours among adolescent undergraduate students in Nigeria: does social context of early adolescence matter? *Pan African Medical Journal*, 37(188). 10.11604/pamj.2020.37.188.22968
- Olugbile, S., Abu, E., & Adalakun, U. (2008), The Punch: Prostitution takes a New Garp on campuses. *Punch on line Web*. Retrieved October 25, 2008 from [http://www.punching.com/article.aspx? theatricart](http://www.punching.com/article.aspx?theatricart),
- Olugbogega, D. (2008), Selling sex, female street Prostitution, & *HIV risky behaviour care*, <http://www.searchlife.com>.
- Osoba, P. (2005). *Be in Good Health*. Benin: Osaba Publications.
- Rowe, D. & Luiver, M. (2001). Smoking and addictive behaviours: Epidemiological, individual and family factors. In J. Turner and L. Cardion (Eds). *Behaviour genetic approaches in behavioural medicine: Perspectives on Individual Differences* (pp.67-84). New York: Plenum.
- Rowe, D. C. Rodgers, J. L., Meseck-Bushey, S., & St. John, C. (2009). An epidemic model of sexual intercourse prevalence for black and white adolescents. *Social Biology*, 36, 127-
- Steinberg, L., & Monahan, K. C. (2007). Age Differences in Resistance to Peer Influence. *Developmental Psychology*, 43(6), 1531–154.
- Tizifa, J. M. (1993). *Influence of the peer groups on academic performance in selected Day secondary schools in Kampala District*. Unpublished work, BA Dissertation, Makerere University, Kampala.
- Ugoji, F.N., & Ebinuwa-Okoh, E.E. (2015). Parenting Styles, Peer Group Influence as Correlate of Sexual Behaviour among Undergraduate Adolescents. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, 2(8), 103-110.
- Uzokwe, A. O. (2008), *Nigerworld, Prostitution in Nigerian campuses* (part I) Retrieved October 21, 2018 from <http://www.yahoo.com>.
- van de Bongardt, D., Reitz, E., Sandfort, T., & Dekovi, M. (2018). A meta-analysis of the relations between three types of peer norms and adolescent sexual behaviour. *Pers Soc Psychol Rev.*, 19(3), 203–234. doi:10.1177/1088868314544223.
- Wehmeier, S. (2000). *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English*, sixth edition, Oxford University Press.
- Whitbeck, L. B., Conger, R. D., Simons, R. L. & Kao, M. (2007). Minor deviant behaviours and adolescent sexual activity. *Youth and Society*, 25(1), 24-37.
- Yeh, M. Y. (2006). Factors associated with alcohol consumption, problem drinking, and related consequences among high school students in Taiwan, *Journal of Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, 60, 46-54.
- Yusran, S., Astina, Sabilu, Y., Sety, O. M., Akifah, & Rezal, F. (2022). Premarital Sexual Behaviour Among Urban-rural School Teenagers in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia: Comparative Study. *Unnes Journal of Public Health*, 11(1), 65-74.