

## HETEROSEXUAL BEHAVIOUR OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN OGBADIBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF BENUE STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*The heterosexual behaviour of secondary school adolescents in Ogbadibo Local Government Area was investigated to find out the sexual relationship of schoolboys and girls. The survey research design was utilized for the study and the instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Data were collected from a sample of five hundred adolescents students. Five hundred copies of the questionnaire were distributed, out of which data from 450 heterosexual active respondents were used for the analysis. Simple percentage was used for the analysis of the data collected. The findings of the study showed that some adolescents experienced their first heterosexual intercourse before the age of twelve years, and had one life-time heterosexual partner. Some never used condom while most of them use condom during heterosexual intercourse. There were also findings on school adolescent's sex sales. Further more, the study revealed that age and school type influenced the adolescent's patterns of heterosexual behaviour. Some recommendations were also made.*

**Keywords:** Heterosexual, Behaviour and Heterosexualism

### INTRODUCTION

The problems and consequences of heterosexual behaviour of adolescents in secondary schools in the country particularly Ogbadibo Local Government of Benue state is alarming. For this obvious reason many developing countries including Nigeria had seen the need to include sex education in the school curriculum.

Heterosexual behaviour has been condemned by most religious and cultural groups. Onwuamanam (1982) noted that in Nigeria adolescents no longer adhere to the cultural regulations regarding sex and virginity at marriage which was traditionally regarded as a virtue.

Heterosexual behaviour according to Anderson *et al.* (1991) includes the possession of multiple sexual partners and engagement in unprotected sexual intercourse. Selling or buying of sex and early initiation of intercourse are also components of heterosexual behaviour.

Anderson (1980), considered adolescent as a stage when the desire of the opposite sex becomes an extremely powerful urge which results in tension consuming. According to Anderson, hunger for food and desire for sexual union are two of the strongest drives human being can experience.

Katz (1995) view heterosexuality as a sexual orientation characterized by romantic love or sexual desire exclusively for member of the opposite sex or gender, contrasted with homosexuality and distinguished from bisexuality and asexuality. In addition to referring to a sexual orientation, the terms heterosexuality or heterosexual may also refer to sexual behaviour or sexual activities between people of the opposite sex. Some people identify themselves as heterosexual even though they may engage in sexual activity with both men and women (whether occasionally or regularly). Most people in most societies around the world had mostly experienced

heterosexual attraction and engaged in predominantly heterosexual behaviour.

Heterosexualism is sometimes used as a synonym for heterosexuality, that is, a sexual orientation or behaviour. However, heterosexualism (not heterosexuality) is also used in a different sense, to refer to heterosexism (the idea that heterosexuality is superior or normal).

"Heterosexual" was first listed in Merriam-Websters' New International Dictionary as a medical term for "morbid sexual passion for one of the opposite sex", but in 1934 in their second edition, unabridged it is "manifestation of sexual passion for one of the opposite sex; normal sexuality" (Katz, 1995).

Heterosexual behaviour is accompanied with various risks like contraction of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, gonorrhoea, and syphilis. Numerous studies have found college students to possess relatively low level of knowledge concerning HIV/AIDS transmission risks and preventive techniques (Fennel, 1990; Anderson and Christenson, 1991; Dorman and Rienzo, 1991). Such low level knowledge has been implicated on the impairment of students' ability to undertake effective risk reduction behaviour (McDomott *et al.*, 1987).

Heterosexual behaviour also leads to teenage pregnancy, abortion or illegitimate children, poverty and dropping out of school. Since adolescents in secondary schools are sexually active, it is therefore worth while studying heterosexual behaviour of adolescent particularly that of Ogbadibo Local Government Area of Benue State.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was designed to find out heterosexual behaviour adopted by secondary school adolescents. The study was specifically directed at:

1. Identifying the pattern of heterosexual behaviour common to secondary school adolescent.
2. Identifying age difference at their heterosexual behaviour.
3. Comparing the adolescences heterosexual behaviour according to school-type.
4. Identify possible problems arising from adolescents' first heterosexual intercourse.

**Study Area:** The study was carried out in Ogbadigbo local government area of Benue State. Five hundred students from Junior Secondary III and Senior Secondary II were sampled using closed ended questionnaire as instrument for data collection. All data were reported using percentages.

## RESULTS

The data in Table 1 showed that the highest proportion of adolescent females (18.8 %) and males (16.8 %) had their first heterosexual intercourse when they were 16 and 13 years respectively. The result also showed that 5.8 %, 11.2 %, 5.4 % of adolescent female experienced their first heterosexual intercourse at the ages of 12, 15 and less than 12 years respectively.

**Table 1: Age of Adolescents at their First Heterosexual Intercourse**

Age	Girls' School (n = 224)		Boys School (n = 226)	
	F	%	M	%
Less than 12 years	12	5.4	30	13.3
12 years	13	5.8	38	16.8
13 years	27	12.1	42	11.5
14 years	37	16.5	26	15.9
15 years	25	11.2	36	11.1
16 years	42	18.8	27	5.8
17 years	38	16.1	13	5.8
18 years	30	13.4	12	5.3

The results further showed that 11.5 %, 11.5 %, 5.8 % and 5.3 % of adolescents male had their first heterosexual intercourse at the ages of 14, 16, 17 and 18 years respectively. The lowest proportion (5.4 %) females and 5.3 % males had the first intercourse at 12 and 18 years respectively.

Table 2 above indicated that (15.3 %) adolescent males and (13.3%) adolescent females had used condom during heterosexual intercourse. Furthermore, (20 %) male adolescents and (18.7%) female adolescents indicated that they never used condom during their first heterosexual intercourse. The table also showed that 20 % males and 22 % females indicated that they do not know if they used condom during their last Heterosexual intercourse. The table also showed that 13.3 % males and 16.7 % females respectively indicated they had not use condom at their first heterosexual intercourse. Furthermore, while 16 % males and 16 % females indicated they had used condom, 16.7 % males and 14.7 % females indicated they had not used condom during heterosexual intercourse.

Table 3 above showed that 26.7 % in school adolescents do collect money before, during or after heterosexual intercourse and 37.3 % do not collect materials reward before, during or after heterosexual intercourse. The table also showed that about 34 % do not know if they receive favour or promise, before, during or after heterosexual intercourse. The table also showed that 36.7 % adolescents receive favour or promise, 36.7 % collect material reward before, during or after heterosexual intercourse. Generally, the highest proportion (40 %) claimed they do not know whether they collected material rewards while the least proportion (26 %) claimed they do not know whether they collected money before, during or after heterosexual intercourse.

Table above showed that there are differences in the age at first heterosexual intercourse among the various age groups of school adolescents. There are also differences in the age groups in terms of the ages at which majority of them had their first heterosexual experience.

The result also showed that 16.1% of females and 16.1 % of males aged 12-14 years had their first heterosexuals intercourse at the age of 12 years. The table further showed that 6.4 % females and 7.1 % males of those aged 15-17 years had theirs at the age of 15 years. The results also showed that 9.4 % female and 7.4 % had their first heterosexual intercourse at 18 years and above. The result, however, remarkably showed that the least proportion (3.4 %) females and (2 %) males had their first heterosexual intercourse at the age of 12 and 18 years respectively.

The result in Table 5 revealed little or no age difference in the responses of the adolescents regarding collection of money for heterosexual intercourse. The data indicate that 12.5 %, 14.9 %, 11.5 % and 20.1 % of those aged below 12 years, 12-14 years, 15-17 years and 18 years and above respectively showed that they had not collected money for sex.

The table also indicated differences between the various age groups of female adolescents only in their responses regarding collection of material rewards for sex. The table also showed that 10.2 %, 11.5 % and 12.1 % of those aged. 12-14 years, 15-17 years, 18 years and above respectively received favour or promise of favour before, during or after sex. Even though the research work is studying both sexes, the table indicated that only female were responsible for the various forms of sex sale.

The results in table indicated age differences in the adolescents' responses on their age at first heterosexual intercourse based on their school type. The data showed that 14.2 % adolescent's girls had their first heterosexual intercourse at the age of 17 years. The table showed that a higher proportion of adolescent females and males of mixed school (7.6 % and 8.4 %) had their first intercourse at the age of 12 years and 18 respectively.

**Table 2: Condom use Among Adolescent of Ogbadigbo LGA, Benue State**

Condom use	Yes (n=150)				No (n = 150)				Do not know (n = 150)			
	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%
Intercourse	23	15.3	20	13.3	30	20	28	18.7	10	6.7	23	15.3
During last Heterosexual Intercourse	28	18.7	31	21.7	20	13.3	25	16.7	35	23.3	19	12.7

**Table 3: Sale of Sex Among Schooling Adolescents of Ogbadigbo LGA, Benue State**

Forms of sex sale	Yes (n=150)				No (n = 150)				Do not know (n = 150)			
	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%
Collecting of money before during or after heterosexual intercourse	-	-	40	26.7	-	-	50	33.3	-	-	39	26
Collecting of materials reward before, during or after heterosexual intercourse	-	-	55	36.7	-	-	56	37.3	-	-	60	40

**Table 4: Age at first Heterosexual Intercourse Among the various Age Groups of Adolescents (n = 450)**

Groups at first heterosexual intercourse	Below 12 Years (n=8)				12 – 14 years (n = 156)				18 years and above (n = 149)							
	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%
Below 12 years	4	50	4	50	10	7.3	11	8.0	14	9.0	12	7.7	10	6.7	9	6.1
12 years	-	-	-	-	22	16.1	22	16.1	12	7.7	11	7.1	5	3.4	5	3.4
13 years	-	-	-	-	25	18.2	24	17.5	11	7.1	14	9.0	10	6.7	11	7.4
14 years	-	-	-	-	12	8.8	11	8.0	12	7.7	11	7.1	10	6.7	3	2.0
15 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	6.4	11	7.1	12	8.1	10	6.7
16 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	5.8	9	5.8	11	7.4	14	9.4
17 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	6.4	10	6.4	7	4.7	7	4.7
18 years & above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	9.4	11	7.4

Furthermore the mixed school adolescent boys and girls had their first heterosexual intercourse at the age of 17 years. The data in Table 7 showed that adolescent males (18.2 %) recorded the highest percentage with three life-time heterosexual partners. The highest number of lifetime heterosexual partners for females (10.7 %) and males (9.3 %) in mixed schools were six. The table also indicated that boys school adolescent (9.8%) males recorded lesser number "one" heterosexual partner. The data generally indicated that mixed school adolescent boys and girls had more number of heterosexual partners.

The results from the Table 11 showed the existence of some degree of differences in the responses of the school adolescents from the two-school type (boys' school and girls' school) on condom use. The results indicated that a higher proportion of the adolescent females (36.4%) and (34.2%) for males (34.2 %) in girls' schools and boys' schools respectively indicated higher use of condom during sexual intercourse.

The table also indicated that 33.8 % of male and 33.2 % female adolescent indicated not using condom in boy's school and girls' schools respectively.

Furthermore, 32.0 % males and 30.2 % females indicated they do not know if ever they used condom in boy's school and girl's school respectively.

The data from Table 9 revealed no wide difference between the responses of adolescents in girls' schools and mixed schools. The results showed that while 12 % of adolescents in girls' school reported collecting money for sex, 11.1 % adolescent females in mixed schools also indicated collecting money before, during or after intercourse. The results also showed that adolescents in the girls' schools were almost the same with those in the mixed schools on their responses to the collection of material rewards for sex. The results showed that while 11.1 % of those in the girls' schools reported collecting material rewards for sex, 11.6 % of those in mixed schools also reported collecting material rewards before, during or after sex.

Furthermore, the result showed that the high proportions (33.3 %) of mixed schools adolescent females indicated receiving favour or promise of favour, 8.9 % of those females in the same mixed school indicated that they do not know if they receive favour or promise of favour during heterosexual intercourse.

**Table 5: Reported Sale of Sex Among the Adolescents According to the Age of Students n = 450**

Forms of Sex Sale	Below 12 years (n = 8)												12 – 14 years (n = 137)											
	Yes		No		Do not know		Yes		No		Do not know		Yes		No		Do not know							
	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%				
Collection of money before during or after heterosexual intercourse	2	25.0	-	-	1	12.5	-	-	1	12.5	-	-	10	7.1	-	-	20	14.6	-	-	20	14.6	-	-
Collection of material reward before, during or after heterosexual intercourse	1	12.5	-	-	2	25.0	-	-	1	12.5	-	-	12	8.8	-	-	15	10.9	-	-	25	18.2	-	-
Receiving a favour or promise of a favour during or after heterosexual intercourse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	10.2	-	-	15	10.9	-	-	6	4.4	-	-

  

Forms of Sex Sale	15 – 17 years (n = 156)								18 years and above (n = 149)															
	Yes		No		Do not know		Yes		No		Do not know		Yes		No		Do not know							
	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%				
Collection of money before during or after heterosexual intercourse	-	-	18	11.5	-	-	15	9.6	-	-	10	6.7	-	-	30	20.1	-	-	15	10.1	-	-	-	-
Collection of material reward before, during or after heterosexual intercourse	-	-	14	9.0	-	-	19	12.2	-	-	22	14.8	-	-	10	6.7	-	-	25	16.8	-	-	-	-
Receiving a favour or promise of a favour during or after heterosexual intercourse	-	20	12.8	-	-	18	11.5	-	-	18	12.1	-	-	10	6.7	-	-	9	6.0	-	-	-	-	

**Table 6: The Adolescents Age at First Heterosexual Intercourse According to School**

Age at first heterosexual intercourse	Girls school (n = 225)				Mixed school (n = 225)			
	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%
Below 12 years	29	12.9	-	-	10	4.4	11	4.9
12 years	28	12.4	-	-	18	8	17	7.6
13 years	30	13.3	-	-	12	5.3	13	5.8
14 years	26	11.6	-	-	16	7.1	15	6.7
15 years	31	13.8	-	-	13	5.8	12	5.3
16 years	25	11.1	-	-	15	6.7	16	7.1
17 years	32	14.2	-	-	14	6.2	9	0.4
18 years & above	24	10.7	-	-	15	6.7	19	8.4

**Table 7: Reported Number of Life-time Heterosexual Partners According to the Adolescents School Type**

Age at first heterosexual Partners	Boys school adolescents (n = 225)				Mixed school adolescents (n = 225)			
	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%
One	-	-	22	9.8	9	4	20	8.9
Two	-	-	34	15.1	21	9.3	10	4.4
Three	-	-	41	18.2	23	10.2	20	8.9
Four	-	-	25	11.1	18	8	15	6.7
Five	-	-	39	17.3	12	5.3	17	7.6
Six	-	-	27	12.0	24	10.7	17	7.6
More than six	-	-	37	16.4	6	2.7	9	4

**Table 8: Condom Use Among the Adolescents According to their School Type**

Age at first heterosexual intercourse Condom use	Boys school (n = 225)				Girls school (n = 225)			
	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%
Yes	-	-	77	34.2	75	36.4	-	-
No	-	-	76	33.8	82	33.3	-	-
Do not know	-	-	72	32.0	68	30.2	-	-

**Table 9: Reported Sale of Sex Among the Adolescents According to their School Types**

Forms of Sex Sale	Girls' School students adolescent (n = 225)												Mixed school students adolescent (n = 225)											
	Yes				No				Do not know				Yes				No				Do not know			
	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%
Collection of money before during or after heterosexual intercourse	27	12	-	-	27	12	-	-	28	12.4	-	-	25	11.1	-	-	26	11.6	-	-	28	12.4	-	-
Collection of material reward before, during or after heterosexual intercourse	25	11.1	-	-	25	11.1	-	-	25	11.1	-	-	26	11.6	-	-	25	11.1	-	-	76	33.8	-	-
Receiving a favour or promise of a favour during or after heterosexual intercourse	22	9.8	-	-	23	10.2	-	-	23	10.2	-	-	75	33.3	-	-	74	32.9	-	-	20	9.9	-	-

Generally, it was noted that only female adolescents collect money, receive material reward or receive favour or promise of favour, before, during or after sex, while the female adolescents in mixed schools reported the highest sale of sex.

## DISCUSSION

The finding of the study indicated that the highest proportion of the school adolescents' boys and girls had their heterosexual intercourse when they were 13 and 16 years respectively. Earlier studies actually indicated that young Nigerian's were heterosexually active but none indicated anything close to the proportion found in the present study. For instance, the Federal Office of Statistics (1992) indicated that nationwide, the median age at first heterosexual intercourse for women aged 30 – 40 years was 16.3 years, in an earlier study. Makinwa (1991) indicated that between 7 and 8 % of young Nigerian girls, had reported having their heterosexual debut before the age of fifteen years. It is, therefore, surprising how things had changed within such short a period of time with regard to the sex life of young Nigerians. However, knowing that the present study covered only twenty-five secondary schools in Ogbadibo Local Government Area, one may argue that the picture in this Local Governments may still look-alike as the one reported by the Federal Office of Statistics (1992) and Makinwa (1991).

Much of those reporting selling of sex were in the majority. In the same vein, Adedoyin and Adegoke (1995) had

earlier observed that whenever young girls sell sex in any form they tend to lose the power to negotiate for condom use.

There were previous studies stratified according to school type, upon which to compare the present findings. The finding which compared girls' school with mixed school students indicated that mixed school students (boys and girls) experienced debut at the age of 17 years while girls school students experienced their heterosexual debut at the age of 18 years and above.

Galli (1978) had severally indicated that education and information per se could lead to the acquisition of knowledge, but the knowledge may not always translate to change in behaviour. The evolution of the intervention programme from an empirical study of the students' patterns of heterosexual behaviour was in line with the suggestion of WHO (1992).

**Implication of the Study:** One of the findings of this study was that the students exhibited certain behaviours which are common to them. They debuted heterosexually at a very tender age of about less than twelve years, kept one life-time heterosexual partner and some did not use condom. Others maintained that they sold sex. The implication of these in relation to sexual transmitted diseases (STD) and AIDS prevention is that intervention work needs to be done on this population. This is so because most of the behaviour listed above pose great danger to the students as far s STD/AIDS transmission is concerned. Their behaviours call for urgent intervention.

The findings that age and school type significantly influenced the adolescents' heterosexual behaviour patterns suggest the need to execute the STD/AIDS intervention programme designed in the course of the study with a lot of attention on the various independent variables as they affect the adolescents. For instance, it suggests the need to recognize that more young adolescents, that their older counterparts use condom so that in the course of executing the programme, extra effort would be made to get the younger adolescents change this pattern of behaviour

**Conclusion:** On the basis of the findings and discussion the following conclusions were reached:

1. Patterns of heterosexual behaviour common to secondary school adolescents' boys and girls are that they had heterosexual intercourse too early in life, they kept at least one life time heterosexual partner, use of condom with their sexual partner and selling of sex was common behaviour among them.
2. The school adolescent patterns of heterosexual behaviour differed significantly between the various age groups.
3. Remarkable differences existed among the school types in terms of their patterns of heterosexual behaviour.

**Recommendations:** There is need to introduce, to and intensify innovative sex education programme in primary to tertiary institutions to enable the young ones acquire appropriate knowledge and behaviour about sexual relationships so that they can escape reproductive and sexual problems.

1. A national campaign and series of advertisements should be carried out and such should strive to make adolescent aware of the dangerous consequences of early sexual intercourse.
2. There is need to avoid all those films that advertise on the sale and exhibition of pornographic materials since it encourages younger ones into sexual activity without appropriate knowledge of control.
3. Moral education should be one of the teaching subjects in primary and secondary schools to reinforce the traditional and religious norms regarding sexual behaviours.

4. Adults should serve as a model to the younger ones in their sexual behaviour.

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