

Media influence as predictors of adolescent's sexual risky behaviour in Nigeria

Abstract

The study established the influence of media on adolescents' sexual risky behaviour. Two hundred (200) Adolescents of reproductive age were selected from five secondary schools in Ibadan Metropolis; Nigeria constituted the sample for the study. Their ages ranged from 12years to 17years with a mean age of 14.5years and standard deviation of 3.5. The two instruments used were author-constructed questionnaires with 0.64 and 0.69 reliability coefficient respectively. Data were analyzed using multiple regression and correlation statistics. Results revealed from the study indicated that, a combination of the ten independent variables significantly predicted the dependent variable $F=(1,270)$; $R=.285$, $R^2=.781$, $Adj. R^2=.017$; $P<.05$). The results also indicated that, significant relationship existed between the Internet ($B=0.052$, $T=0.689$), Facebook ($B=0.098$ $T=1.390$), Videos ($B=-0.127$, $T=-1.559$), Cell phones ($B=0.163$, $T=2.342$), Television ($B=0.027$, $T=1.444$), Twitters ($B=0.004$, $T=1.049$), Magazines/Newspapers ($B=0.014$, $T=1.208$), Computers ($B=-0.013$, $T=-0.184$), Pornography ($B=-0.003$, $T=-1.040$), and Music ($B=-0.026$, $T=-0.419$) and adolescents' sexual risky behaviours. The results further showed the significant position between dating, (r -value=0.023), oral sex (r -value=0.248), sexual intercourse, (r -value=0.324), sexual lyrics (r -value=0.282), cohabitation, (r -value=0.269), nude pictures, (r -value=0.223), condom use, (r -value -0.142), multiple sexual partners, (r -value=0.209), night parties (r -value=0.210), sensation feeling behavior (r -value= 0.211), abortion (r -value=0.321), sexual scripts (r -value= 0.201) and Adolescent's risky sexual behaviours. Based on the results of these findings, the study recommended that adolescents should be aware that the media portray more of sex inviting images that appeal to their emotion. They should spend less time with the media and Sex education should be introduced at all levels of our educational systems in Nigeria, as this will reduce the high risk the adolescents are prone to sexually and parents should be a media role model to their children.

Keywords: media, adolescents, sexuality, risky behaviour

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Introduction

Background to the study

During adolescence, young people experience a vast amount of changes in their physical, emotional, and social maturity. During this stage, outside influences are particularly capable of affecting teenagers' thoughts and behaviors. One influence that has proven to have a considerable effect on teenagers is the media. Adolescence is a time of transformation in many areas of an individual's life. It is also a time for individuals to make important decisions about their commitment to academics, family, and perhaps sexual behaviour. For many youth, adolescence marks the onset of sexual activity and experimentation. Although, this is a normal transition, sexual activity during adolescence can serve as a risk factor for an array of problematic behaviours. Perhaps most obviously, it can have immediate health consequences such as sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy, Action Health Incorporated.¹ Adolescents who constitute nearly a fourth of the population of sub-Saharan Africa are facing sexual and reproductive health problems not found anywhere in the world, Juarez, LeGrand, Lloyd and Singh (2008). For instance, adolescents in the region are often exposed to unprotected sex, leading to unwanted or mistimed pregnancy, unsafe abortion and associated complications as well as unwanted childbirth; other sexual and reproductive health problems faced by adolescents in the region include risks of STIs (including HIV) and maternal death, National HIV/AIDS and

reproductive health survey.² The most popular form of media that adolescents use is the Internet. Web sites that adolescents regularly visit include Yahoo, AOL, MSN, and Microsoft. Several of these Web sites have minimal restrictions and contain information regarding drugs, alcohol, sex, and violence.³ Television is another type of media that has become increasingly popular, as adolescent programming is now more common.³ Unfortunately, alcoholic beverages are frequently advertised during youth-oriented programming.

According to most theories of media effects, the influence of media depends largely on the content it contains. Much of the research linking media and sex particularly studies of attitudinal effects has focused on television. Television viewing remains the most common medium and platform, and it makes up the largest chunk of adolescents' media use, accounting for 4.5hours of media time out of nearly 11 total hours spent with media daily Rideout et al.⁴ Television includes a great deal of sexual content, creating the strong potential for observing such effects. A state-of-the-art content analysis of 1,154 programs representative of the content airing between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Mountain Standard Time on 10 channels in the 2004-2005 television season found that 70 percent of programs contained sexual content. Among those with such content, there were averages of five scenes with sex in each hour of programming Kunkel et al.⁵ Thus, there is great opportunity for television to influence adolescents' developing views about sex. However, adolescents use a variety of media- Jones S et al.⁶ And increasingly engage with these media on

diverse platforms - Roberts DF et al.⁷ The amount of sexual content that youth encounter varies across these platforms. Looking at television, music, movies, favorite Internet sites, and magazines used by a sample of black and white youth from the South eastern United States. Pardun and colleagues found that, overall, 11 percent of these media contain sexual content. However, the content is concentrated much more strongly in music (40 percent contained sexual content) than in movies (12 percent) or television (11 percent). And only 6 percent of the Internet sites they examined contained sexual content. Other studies might produce different estimates for a given medium. The analysis did not look at a representative sample of each medium, but, rather, focused on the "vehicles" (television programs, music artists) used by a particular sample of youth. However, it does provide a rare comparison of multiple media types using the same coding scheme and metric (time presented). The wide variability in sexual content across types suggests the importance of understanding the extent and nature of sexual portrayals in newer media as well. Pictures and information promote unhealthy sexuality than the ones promoting the contrary, Wusu.⁸

Sexual talk and displays are increasingly frequent and explicit in this mediated world. A study revealed that sexual content that ranged from flirting to sexual intercourse had increased from slightly more than half of content of television programmes in 2007-2008 to more than two-thirds of the programmes in the 2009-2010 season; half of Internet resources content on sexual reproductive health, as well as one third of books on sexual reproductive health, Kunkel, Cope-Farrar, Biely, Farinola, & Donnerstein (2010). Some studies have also found that adolescents whose media diet was rich in sexual content were more than twice as likely as others to have had sex by the time they were 16. Brown et al.⁹ In a Kaiser Family Foundation study, 76 percent of teens said that one reason young people have sex is because TV shows and movies make it seem normal for teens Wolak et al.¹⁰ In addition to higher likelihoods that an adolescent exposed to sexual content in the media will engage in sexual behaviors, they are also have higher levels of intending to have sex in the future and more positive expectations of sex. Brown et al.⁹

Music continues to be a major source of sexual suggestiveness. In study, 40% of lyric lines contained sexual material, and only 6% contained healthy sexual messages. An analysis of the 279 most popular songs in 2005 revealed that 37% contained sexual references and that degrading sexual references were common, Brown et al.⁹ Teen magazines are popular with preadolescent and adolescent girls and devote an average of 2.5 pages per issue to sexual topics. Coverage of sex as a health issue in magazines is more common than on TV, but the overarching focus seems to be on deciding when to lose one's virginity, Robert.¹¹ About half of all youth reported playing a video game on the day preceding survey participation. Lenhard et al.¹² In comparison to the 17 minutes youth spend playing online games, they spend about 1.25 hours using video games on other platforms. Most of that time is spent on a game console attached to a television (36 minutes), Rideout et al.⁴ And 77 percent of teens own a game console. Lenhart.¹³ Time spent gaming on handheld players and cell phones is about equal (21 and 17 minutes, respectively). Rideout et al.⁴ Pew reports that 55 percent of teens own a handheld game player, with 67 percent of 12- to 14-year-olds owning one, compared with 44 percent of 15- to 17-year-olds. Ownership does not vary by household income or by race/ethnicity. Lenhart.¹³ Younger males are the most frequent players of offline games, though about half of older girls play. Although the use of these platforms is less social than online gaming, most teens

(76 percent) report playing games with others at least occasionally. Rideout.⁴ Videos are both downloaded and posted on the Internet, offering opportunities for participation and media creation, as well as exposure. Twenty-two percent of Americans have shot their own videos, and 14 percent of those users have posted them online. Young adults aged 18-29 years and men are the most active users of online video (70 percent and 53 percent of users, respectively). They more often receive video links, send video links to others, watch videos with others, rate them, comment about them, upload them, and post links online. Fifty-seven percent of online teens aged 12-17 watch video online, and 14 percent have posted videos online. Lenhard et al.¹² The most popular site for web videos is YouTube, with almost 5.4 billion views at most recent count. Although the use of other sites, most notably Hulu (which allows users to view television programming from all but one of the major networks, as well as other sources), is growing, 40 percent of all online video-viewing is attributable to YouTube and only 2 percent to Hulu, hence the study.

Objectives of the study

The study examined the relationship between media influence and adolescents' sexual risky behaviours. To achieve the purpose of the study, the following research questions were answered:

- i. To what extent would the various media influence adolescents' sexual risky behaviours?
- ii. What is the relative contribution of each of the factors to the prediction of adolescents' sexual risky behaviours?
- iii. There is no significant relationship between media contents and adolescents sexual risky behaviour.
- iv. Methodology

Research design

A descriptive survey research design in which questionnaires were employed in collecting data from the respondents on the variables involved in the study.

Participants

The participants for the study comprised 200 adolescents of reproductive age selected from five secondary schools in Ibadan Metropolis; Nigeria constituted the sample for the study. The participants were drawn from Junior Class Three (JSS 3) and Senior School Class One (SS 1). Their age range was between 12-17 years with a mean age of 14.5 years and standard deviation of 3.5.

Instrumentation

Two instrument(s) were used in data collection.

- i. Self-Administered Media Influence Questionnaire (SMIQ).
- ii. Adolescents' Sexual Risky Behaviour Inventory (ASRBI).

Self-Administered Media Influence is a four-point likert-scale questionnaire in which participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement on each statement raised on the various media and media contents. It contains 30 items response format anchored - Strongly Agreed, Agreed, and Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed. It has 0.62 and 0.67 as the internal consistency and revalidation reliability respectively. Adolescents' Sexual Risky Behaviour Inventory is a 20 items inventory administered to the participants on Adolescent

Sexual Behaviour and anchored from Very True to Very Untrue. The test-retest reliability of the inventory was found to be 0.64 and 0.69 respectively. The two instruments were author-constructed.

Procedure for data collection

The participants for the study were administered the two questionnaires in their various locations with the help of two research assistants. The administration of the questionnaires to the participants took the researcher three working days to complete. The collected questionnaires were scored and the data obtained from them were analysed to answer the research questions. On the whole, 200 copies of the questionnaires were distributed and 200 copies were returned fully filled giving a return rate of 100%.

Data analysis

The data collected were analyzed using Multiple Regression, and Correlation statistics to establish the influence of media on Adolescents' sexual risky behaviours.

Results

- i. Multiple R=0.285
- ii. Multiple R-Square=0.781
- iii. Adjusted R-Square=0.017
- iv. Standard Error=0.580

To what extent would the various media influence adolescents' sexual risky behaviours? Table 1 above showed a combination of independent variables (Television, the Internet, Computers, Pornography, CD/MP3 player, Twitters, Cell-phones, Facebook, Videos, Music/Radio, Magazines and Newspapers.) that predicted Adolescents' sexual risk behaviours yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of 0.781 accounting for 78.1% of the variability in adolescents' sexual risk behaviours. The table also showed that analysis of variance for multiple regression data produced an F-value of 1.270 which was significant at 0.05 alpha levels. This implied that the contribution of a combination of the various media had a significant relationship in adolescents' sexual risk behaviours. The results showed a significant relationship with the findings of^{9,14} that, exposure to pornography predicts sexual uncertainty, uncommitted sexual exploration, earlier oral sex, earlier intercourse, sex negotiation

Table 1 Multiple regression analysis showing relationship between the combinations of various media which the adolescents are exposed to and adolescents' sexual risk behaviours

Analysis of variance							
S.No	Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Remark
1	Regression	4.269	10	0.427	1.27	0.253	S
2	Residual	48.402	144	0.336			
3	Total	52.671	154				

and sexually transmitted diseases & diseases^{9,15,16} assert that, the internet provides a relatively safe space for teens to explore and define themselves as sexual beings.

The results of multiple regression analysis in Table 2 showed that the contributions of the various media which adolescents are exposed to such as the Internet (B=0.052, T=0.689), Facebook (B=0.098 T=1.390), Videos (B=-0.127, T=-1.559), Cell phones (B=0.163, T=2.342), Television (B=0.027, T=1.444), Twitters (B=0.004, T=1.049), Magazines/Newspapers (B=0.014, T=1.208), Computers (B=-0.013, T=-0.184), Pornography (B=-0.003, T=-1.040), and Music (B=-0.026, T=-0.419) had significant relationship with adolescents' sexual risky behaviours. Also, 8.1% (R Square=0.081) of the variability in adolescents' sexual risky behaviours can be explained by the contributions of the various media the adolescents are exposed to. Based on the above findings, there was a significant relationship between the various media the adolescents are exposed to and adolescents' sexual risky behaviours. The significant relationship of the results above was in agreement with the findings of African population studies, 2008;^{17,18} Taylor, 2004;^{1,15,19,20} observed that, media foster safe sex negotiation, depiction of the possible risks or responsibilities of early, unprotected sexual behavior.^{10,19,21} Exposure to such content is related to sexual outcomes, ranging from body dissatisfaction, to earlier sexual intercourse, less contraceptive use, and even pregnancy.²²

There is no significant relationship between the media contents and adolescents' sexual risky behaviour. Table 3 showed the variables associated with media contents and Adolescent risky sexual behaviours. The results revealed the significant positions of each of the variables to Adolescent risky sexual behaviours follow: dating, (r-value=0.023), oral sex (r-value=0.248), sexual intercourse, (r-value=0.324), sexual lyrics (r-value=0.282), cohabitation, (r-value=0.269), nude pictures, (r-value=0.223), condom use, (r-value -0.142), multiple sexual partners, (r-value=0.209), night parties (r-value=0.210), sensation feeling behavior (r-value=0.211), abortion (r-value=0.321) and sexual scripts (r-value=0.201). The results stated above is in agreement with the findings of²³ that, exposure to pornography predicts sexual uncertainty, uncommitted sexual exploration, earlier oral sex, earlier intercourse, sex negotiation and sexually transmitted diseases & diseases^{8,16,17,24,25} assert that, the internet provides a relatively safe space for teens to explore and define themselves as sexual beings.²⁶⁻³⁰

Table 2 Multiple regression analysis showing relationship between the various Media the adolescents' are exposed and Adolescents' sexual risky behaviours

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Remark
(Constant)	1.815	0.314		5.789	0	
Television	0.027	0.06	0.042	1.444	0.657	S
The internet	0.052	0.076	0.069	0.689	0.492	S
Twitters	0.004	0.076	0.005	1.049	0.961	S
Facebook	0.098	0.071	0.141	1.39	0.167	S
Videos	-0.127	0.081	-0.164	-1.559	0.121	S
Magazines/Newspapers	0.014	0.069	0.02	1.208	0.836	S
Cell phones	0.163	0.07	0.212	2.342	0.021	S
Computers	-0.013	0.069	-0.018	-1.184	0.855	S
Pornography	-0.003	0.074	-0.004	-1.04	0.968	S
Music	-0.026	0.061	-0.041	-1.419	0.676	S

Table 3 Correlation analysis between media contents and Adolescents' risky sexual behaviours

S/N	Variable descriptions	Correlation	Coefficient of determination (r ²)	Percentage determination	Significance
1	Dating	0.023	0.049152	5.46	S
2	Oral sex	-0.248	0.061504	6.15	S
3	Night parties	0.21	0.04991	6.01	S
4	Sexual intercourse	0.324	0.104976	10.4	S
5	Sexual lyrics	0.282	0.079524	7.9	S
6	Cohabitation	0.269	0.092361	7.2	S
7	Nude pictures/videos	0.223	0.05912	6	S
8	Condom use	-0.142	0.041764	4.1	S
9	Multiple sexual partners	0.209	0.05412	5.4	S
10	Sensation seeking behavior	0.211	0.049943	5.5	S
11	Occurrence of abortion	0.321	0.101234	9.34	S
12	Sexual scripts	0.201	0.02317	4.61	S

Conclusion

The study in its findings was able to establish that, parameters such as, spending much time with the media, watching adult oriented videos, viewing sexually explicit messages online, watching programmes with sexual contents on the televisions, listening to sexually explicit lyrics have been confirmed to contribute to increase in adolescents' sexual risky behaviour. In this context, there is need to counsel and educate adolescents on the proper use of the media and the effect of the sexual contents on Adolescent behaviours.

Recommendations

The relationship between adolescent's exposure to sexual content of the media and their sexual health behaviour appears inconclusive and a source of concern to those in the helping professions. Since the

media has a great influence on adolescents' sexual risky behaviours, the following recommendations are given.

- i. The adolescents should be aware that the media portray more of sex inviting images that appeal to their emotion thus; they should spend less time with the media.
- ii. It may be impossible to shield children and adolescents from exposure to all media messages that adults consider inappropriate or potentially harmful, yet it is possible to be aware of those messages and to balance them with appropriate facts and beliefs. It is possible to help children and adolescents learn how to distinguish messages that are designed to sell products, messages that are products in themselves, and messages that are informative or entertaining. It is possible to guide children and adolescents to media messages that encourage safety and good health and

away from messages that promote unhealthy or high risk sexual behaviors.

- iii. Sex education should be introduced at all levels of our educational systems in Nigeria, as this will reduce the high risk the adolescents are prone to sexually.
- iv. Parents should be a media role model to their children. They should be aware of what they are watching and/or playing when their child is present. Know that even if their child may not understand the content, the sexual information may still affect them. For adolescents, many music videos/lyrics, TV shows, video games and magazines contain inappropriate or glamorized sexual images and behaviors that may negatively impact their views on sex, love and relationships. Co viewing/listening can often help lead to discussions about media portrayals of sex and consequences of sexual behavior with children.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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