

Prevalence and Patterns of Sexual Violence among Nigerian Adolescents in North-Central Geo-Political Zone

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Abstract— Sexual violence occurs commonly worldwide and is particularly pervasive in the developing world. The dimension of this anomaly is not only worrisome but pervasive in West Africa especially, Nigeria. This study was carried out to explore the prevalence, pattern, determinants and perpetrators of sexual violence on Nigerian adolescents in North Central State of Kwara. A multi-stage purposive sampling technique was used to select 456 adolescents from nine local government areas across the three senatorial zones of Kwara State. They consisted of 378 female (82.9) and 78 male (17.1). The ages of the participants range from 11 to 19 years with mean age and standard deviation of the ages as 14.62 years and 12.25 respectively. Majority of the participants were single (80.9%), in-school (86.%), and Christian (51.3%). A structured interview and self-developed but well validated scale was used to collect the data. The generated data was analysed using simple percentage for demographic data and research question, and student t. test to for the generated hypotheses. The prevalence of sexual violence among the participants is 27.63, the virginal sexual violence accounted for 96%. Among perpetrators of this act, 98.41% of them were boyfriends, 63.49% were classmates and 62.7% were teachers. 22.2% of the cases were disclosed by the victims of this gruesome act. It was discovered that there was significant difference in the prevalence of sexual violence among male and female adolescent (t . calculated = 3.45, df = 454 and $P > 0.05$); there was significant difference in the prevalence of sexual violence among younger and older adolescents (t . calculated = 3.15, df = 454 and $P > 0.05$). The findings were discussed and necessary suggestions based on the outcome of the study were highlighted. This includes appropriate use of public enlightenment and sex education to reduce the prevalence of this horrible act.

Index Terms— Adolescent, public enlightenment, sex education, sexual violence.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is a common phenomenon and occurs worldwide. Data available suggests that in some countries one in five women report sexual violence by an intimate partner and up to a third of girls report forced sexual initiation [1] [2]. Sexual assault encompasses a range of acts, including coerced sex in marriage and dating relationships, rape by strangers, organized rape in war, sexual harassment (including demands of sex for jobs or school grades), and rape of children, trafficking of women and girls, female genital mutilation, and forced exposure to pornography [3] [4].

Sexual violence is a growing public health and human rights challenge indicating the most severe breach of human security in the world. Sexual violence is described as any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts of traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim in any setting, including but not limited to home and work [5].

Sexual abuse of children is the 'involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not understand, cannot give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society'. It is a violation of the rights of the child and is a social and public health concern that occurs in every country in the world across diverse social, economic and racial groups [6]. The spectrum of activities comprising child sexual abuse (CSA) includes indecent exposure of genitals to a child, inappropriate touch, and forced sexual intercourse (rape). The exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices is also a form of child sexual abuse [7].

Understanding the ramifications of sexual assault is a necessity. It describes not only a physical act, but also could be verbal or visual sexual abuse or any act that forces a person to join in unwanted sexual contact or attention [8]. Sexual assault is also not discriminatory to sex; both males and females are affected but studies have shown that the number of female sexual assault victims (and assault perpetrated by males) is far greater than male victims [9]. Studies have also documented female offenders of sexual assault whose victims may be of male or female gender including children, adolescents and adults; the motivation for the female offender being the same as that of their male counterparts: power and control [10]. It could be that "disbelief" attitude by the society and even of health professionals to the occurrence of male sexual assault and the unlikelihood of the male victims themselves to disclose sexual abuse make the subject and research into male sexual assault to lag behind that of the female.

A number of studies had reported the prevalence of sexual violence from world perspective to range between 5% and 36% [11] [12]. Studies in sub-Saharan Africa have also shown similar prevalence rates [13] [14] [15]. Although the true burden of sexual violence in Nigeria is unknown, it is estimated to vary between 5% and 38% across different parts of the country [16] [17]. The true magnitude of the problem

however remains difficult to determine. This is as a result of the culture of silence around the issue of child sexual abuse, especially in the African setting where sexual matters are not discussed in public. Non-disclosure of abuse by the victims, especially the very young, arising from fear of further harm from the perpetrator or of being blamed; feelings of shame, and cultural inhibitions also help to mask the true burden of CSV. Ineffectual prosecution of offenders in reported cases also contributes to non-disclosure of abuse. The incidence of sexual violence among Nigerian adolescents is still ravaging like a fire in the Harmattan and keeps recurring like a nasty decimal. This signifies that the end to the anomaly is not in sight and hence the research effort should not be discontinued. There is dearth of study on sexual violence among Nigerian adolescents especially in the northern part of the country. This is the gap this research intends to fill.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What is the prevalence of sexual violence among Nigerian adolescents in Kwara State?

What are the patterns of sexual violence experienced by Nigerian adolescents in Kwara State?

Who are the perpetrators of sexual violence experienced by Nigerian adolescents in Kwara State?

What is the proportion of disclosure of sexual violence experienced by Nigerian adolescents in Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

There is no significant difference in the sexual violence experienced by male and female adolescents in Kwara State.

There is no significant difference in the sexual violence experienced by early adolescents and late adolescents in Kwara State

Methodology

Descriptive research design was employed for this study. The research data was collected from the participant without the aim of manipulating any variable. Put differently, the participants were observed in their natural environment without manipulation of any variable

Population

The population of this study consisted of adolescents in North-central State of Kwara.

Sampling Technique and Sample

Multi-stage convenient sampling technique was used. Kwara State was divided into the existing three senatorial zones of Kwara North, Kwara South and Kwara Central. Each senatorial zone was divided into local government area. A local government was randomly selected from each of the senatorial zones and adolescents who are willing and ready to participate in the study were adopted as participants. Ilorin West was selected in Kwara Central, Baruten in Kwara North and Ifelodun in Kwara South. Four hundred and fifty-six (456) adolescents were selected from three local government areas across the three senatorial zones of Kwara State. They consisted of 378 female (82.9) and 78 male (17.1). The ages of the participants range from 11 to 19 years with mean age and standard deviation of the ages as 14.62 years and 12.25 respectively.

Instrumentation

A structured interview and sex violence scale were used to collect the data. The structured interview contains four direct questions. The scale was constructed using four likert response format with response options ranging from very much like me, like me, not like me and not at all like me. The scale contained 10 items. The minimum and maximum obtainable scores are 10 and 40. The split half method was used to determine the internal consistency of the scale. The reliability analysis returned a reliability coefficient of 0.83.

Method of Data Collection

The data for this study were collected by the researchers and some research assistants by visiting each of the selected local government areas and major markets in each local government where adolescents both in-school and out-school were readily available are visited on non-school going days of Saturday and Sunday.

Methods of Data Analysis

The generated data were subjected to simple percentage for answering research question and t. test statistical procedure to test the generated hypotheses.

Demographic Information of the Participants

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Demographic Data	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	378	82.8
Female	78	17.1
Age Classification		

Early Adolescence (11–15 Years)	192	42.1
Late Adolescence (16 – 20 years)	264	57.9
Marital Status		
Single	369	80.9
Married	87	19.1
School Attendance		
In-school Adolescents	392	86
Out of the School Adolescents	64	14
Religion		
Christianity	234	51.3
Islam	222	48.7

Research Question One

What is the prevalence of sexual violence among Nigerian adolescents in the North-Central State of Kwara?

The answer to this research question is observed from the responses of the participants to the structured interview question one which was asked as thus: have you had any sexual violence experience?

Table 2: Response to the Structured Interview Question One

Options	Number	%
Yes	126	27.63
No	268	58.78
No response	62	13.6
Total	456	100

The Table2 shows the response obtained to answer research question one. From the table, it is shown that 126 participants confirmed that they have experienced sex violence, 206 participants declined by answering No to the question while 57 participants did not respond at all to the question. From this observation, it is concluded that the prevalence of sex violence in Kwara State is 32.4%.

Research Question Two

Table 3

Patterns of Sexual Violence Experienced by Adolescents in Kwara State

Type	Number	%
Kissing	80	63.49
Touching Private Part	116	92.1
Showing Pornographic films	75	59.52
Virginal Sex	121	96
Anal Sex	47	33.3

This Table3 shows the responses to structured interview question two. The responses were used to answer research question two. From the table, it is shown that kissing (80, 63.49%), touching private part (116, 92.1%), showing pornographic films (75, 59.52), virginal sex (121, 96) and anal sex (47, 33.3). All these indicate the pattern of sexual violence experienced by adolescents in Kwara State. The three most experienced sexual violence patterns by the

What are the patterns of sexual violence experienced by adolescents in Kwara State?

The answer to this research question is obtained from the responses of the participants on the question two which was asked as thus: which of these sexual violence act have you experienced? Kissing, touching of private part, showing pornographic films, virginal sex and anal sex.

adolescents are virginal sex, touching of private parts and kissing.

Research Question 3

Who are the perpetrators of the sexual violence experienced by Adolescents in Kwara State?

The answer to this research question is obtained from the responses of the participants to the question asked as thus: who are the perpetrators of the sexual violence experienced by adolescents in Kwara State

Table 4: Perpetrators of the Sexual Violence Experienced by Adolescents in Kwara State

Options	Number	%
Relatives	34	26.98
Neighbour	40	31.75
Domestic Help	28	22.22
School Mate	80	63.49
Boy Friend	124	98.41
Teachers	79	62.7
Strangers	68	53.97

Table 4 shows the responses obtained from asking structure interview question three. The responses were used to answer research question three. From the table, it is shown that the perpetrators of sexual violence among adolescents in Kwara State include relatives, neighbour, domestic help, school mate, boyfriend, teacher and stranger.

Research Question 4

Table 5: Proportion of the Sexual Violence among Adolescents in Kwara State Disclosed

Option	Number	%
Yes	28	22.2
No	98	77.8

Table 5 shows the responses of the participants to structured interview question four. These were used to answer research question 4. From the table, it is shown that out of 126 adolescents that have experienced the sexual violence in Kwara State, 28 participants which 22.2% reported the

What is the proportion of the sexual violence among adolescents in Kwara State disclosed?

The answer to this research question is obtained from the responses of the participants the question which was asked as thus: did you report the incidence of sexual violence to anybody?

incidence while 98 participants which constitute 77.78 did not report the incidence.

Research Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the sex violence experienced by the male and female adolescents in Kwara State.

Table 6: t-Test Table Showing the Differences in the Sexual Violence Experiences of Male and Female Adolescents in Kwara State

V.	N.	Mean	S. D.	Df	t. Cl.	t. Cr.	P.
Male	78	16.46	9.35				
Female	268	26.84	15.75	454	2.58	1.96	**

** Significant at 0.05 critical level.

Table6 shows the result observed in testing hypothesis one. From the table, it is shown that t. calculated = 2.58, degree of freedom = 454 and t. critical = 1.96. Since t. calculated (2.58)

is greater than t. critical (1.96), the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the sexual violence experiences of male and female adolescents in Kwara State.

Table 7: t. Test Table Showing the Sexual Violence Experiences of Younger and Older Adolescents in Kwara State.

V.	N.	M.	S. D.	Df.	t. C..	t. Cr.	P
Y. A.	218	21.48	12.28				
O. A.	238	25.17	13.06	454	2.06	1.96	**

**Significant at 0.05 critical region

This table shows the results obtained from testing hypothesis two. From the table, it is shown that t. calculated = 2.06, degree of freedom = 454 and t. critical = 1.96. Since t. calculated (2.06) is greater than t. critical (1.96), the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the sexual violence experiences of younger and older adolescents in Kwara State.

adult and want to be independent, without knowing that they are exposing themselves to unfortold hardship.

It was observed that patterns of sex violence among the adolescents in Kwara State include kissing, touching of private parts, showing pornographic films, virginal sex and anal sex. This findings are in line with the previous finding of [13] and [8].

III. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted to estimate and document the sexual violence experiences of adolescents in Kwara State. It was observed the prevalence of sexual violence experiences of adolescents in Kwara State was 27.63 percent. This is similar to the observation of [18] which reported the prevalence of the adolescent sexual abuse to be 27.5 in their study. This shows that the menace of sexual violence among adolescents in Nigeria is alarming.

It was observed in this study that the main perpetrators of sexual violence among adolescent in Kwara State include boyfriends (98.41%), school mates (63.49%), teachers (62.7%) and strangers (53.7). This buttresses the observation by authors that child sexual abuse is usually perpetrated by someone known to, and trusted by the child [18] Ogunfowokan, 2015). This is in contrast to [21] which reported that in some Asian cities, notably Bangladesh and Japan, strangers make up the majority of child sexual abuse perpetrators. This discrepancy may mean that environment or culture or both may influence perpetration of child sexual abuse.

The age range of the participants of this study is between 11 and 19 years. This also corroborates the position of a number of studies on sexual violence. It was observed that the age of initiation of sexual abuse was between 9 years and 12 years in a higher proportion of the cases [7] [19]. The reason for this may not be unconnected with the fact that secondary sexual characteristics begin to emerge during this age group, bringing the children to the unwholesome attention of potential abusers, while they still remain very vulnerable to abuse as a result of their level of physical and intellectual development. Also the adolescents at this stage feel they are

This study revealed that among the 126 participants that were victims of adolescent sexual violence, only 28 (22.2%) had disclosed the sexual violence. This means that the greater proportion of the sexual violence remain undisclosed.

It was also found that sexual violence among adolescents in Kwara State is gender biased. This is observed from the finding that shows that there was a significant difference in the sexual abuse of male and female adolescents in Kwara State. The implication of this is that more female adolescents experienced sexual violence than their male counterparts.

It was also found that older adolescents (15 years and above) experienced sexual violence than their younger colleagues. This is based on the finding that discloses the significant difference in the sexual violence experienced by younger and older adolescents.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that government and all stakeholders in adolescents upbringing should be able to make apparent the contribution of the known persons in this dreadful act. This will enable parents and guardian to be cautious of whom they allow their adolescent wards to stay with.

It is recommended that there is more need than ever to fully implement the existing laws on sexual violence and new laws can be enacted to fully address the horrifying anomaly. This will reduce if not exterminate the lackadaisical attitude of sexual violence. Public health education, advocacy and an introduction of sexual abuse prevention education in schools and colleges is recommended to reduce the burden of psychological trauma and ill health associated with adolescent sexual violence. Parents and wards should be educated on the dangers of adolescent sexual violence and encouraged to report cases not only to serve as deterrent to the perpetrators but to available the victim of opportunity to receive therapy.

The government, parents and practitioners have important roles to play during this transition by providing the right education, counselling services, social support and safe environment.

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