

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF SEXUAL COERCION AMONG FEMALE UNDERGRADUATES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN OYO CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, OYO STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the social determinants of sexual coercion among female undergraduates in Oyo State Central Senatorial District, Oyo state with a view to curbing the menace of sexual coercion in the study area. The study was guided by two research hypotheses. The descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The population for the study consisted of female undergraduates in public and private tertiary institutions in Oyo State central senatorial district, Nigeria. The sample size for this study comprised 320 female undergraduates drawn from four out of the existing eleven Local Government areas using multi-stage sampling technique. Four LGAs were sampled using simple random sampling technique. From each LGA, two tertiary institutions (totalling 8) were selected using stratified random sampling technique while 40 female undergraduates (20 public and private 20) were sampled using simple random sampling technique. A self-designed and validated questionnaire titled Social determinants of Sexual Coercion (SDSC) was the only instrument used for data collection with reliability coefficient ($r = .087$). Collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics of percentage and Spearman's rho correlation analysis. The results showed a statistically significant positive correlation between social factors of indecent dressing ($\rho = .194^$, $p < .01$); peer influence ($r = .145^*$, $p < .05$); and exposure to pornography ($r = .131^*$, $p < .05$) and sexual coercion among the female*

undergraduates in the study location. The study concluded that Social factors of indecent dressing, peer influence and exposure to pornography were found to be determinants of sexual coercion

Key words: *Social determinants, sexual coercion, and female undergraduates*

Introduction

Sex is the act of penetrative intercourse between a male and a female, which can be done for the purpose of sexual pleasure, reproduction, or both. This activity is commonly referred to as vaginal intercourse or vaginal sex. This activity entails the engagement of physical intimacy between two or more individuals and is typically pursued by humans primarily for the sake of physical or emotional gratification, hence fostering human connection. Coercion is the deliberate use of force or the threat of force to get something. Coercion is referred to as the act of use of persuasive words, threats, or emotional manipulation to compel an individual to engage in sexual behaviour against his or her will. This may entail persistent supplication, manipulation through feelings of guilt, or employing intimidation tactics by threatening negative repercussions on the relationship or inflicting injury, if the individual fails to cooperate. Sexual coercion refers to a circumstance where an individual is compelled to participate in a sexual act against their consent (Odu & Olusegun, 2019). The act of forcing someone to engage in sexual activity by the use of threats, violence, intimidation, deception, intoxication, drugs, or other types of pressure or force is referred to by the authors as sexual coercion. This conduct always results in psychological harm and may or may not result in physical harm (Apaak, et.al 2015).

Sexual coercion refers to the act of forcing someone to participate in sexual activities against his or her will through the use of threats, violence, intimidation, deception, alcohol, drugs, or other forms of pressure or force. Sexual coercion is associated with the state of being sexually aggressive and engaging in hazardous behaviours. Verbal intimidation includes behaviours such as engaging in unwelcome sexual discussions, asking sexual inquiries without consent, making unwanted sexual jokes, and verbally assaulting someone. Rape is the most extreme manifestation of non-consensual sexual activity. Other forms of misconduct include sexual molestation, sexual harassment, coerced relationships, forced exposure to pornography, persistent requests for dates, intimidating text messages, explicit questioning about arousal, and exhibitionism. Non-verbal sexual coercion among young people includes a variety of experiences, such as unwanted physical contact, kissing, touching, caressing, genital touching, attempted rape, forced penetrative sex (vaginal, oral, or anal), and any other sexually suggestive behaviour that causes the victim to feel uncomfortable. Among all these instances of interaction, sexual abuse and rape stands out as the most extreme. Unsolicited discussions of a sexual nature, inquiries about sex, unwelcome sexual humour, and verbal attacks. Engaging in any of the aforementioned forms of sexual harassment with female students by a student, teacher, or lecturer can be classified as sexual coercion (Odu & Olusegun, 2019).

One of the Holy Books sources: (Genesis 34 verses 1-2) contains a historical narrative of sexual coercion, namely the story of Dinah who was raped by Shechem. This traumatic experience caused her significant distress and anguish as she lost her virginity. Tamar, the daughter of David, was sexually assaulted by her brother Amnon, which resulted in her feeling disillusioned and sorrowful due to the loss of her virginity (II Samuel; 13 verses 1-14). In addition, Lucretia, a woman of high social status in an ancient Rome tragically took her own life following the traumatic experience of being sexually assaulted, which resulted in the loss of her virginity. According to customary practice, she was the aesthetically pleasing and morally upright spouse of the aristocrat Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus. The tragic events unfolded when she was subjected to sexual assault by Sextons Tarquinius, the offspring of Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, the despotic Etruscan ruler of Rome. Following her father and husband's pledge of retribution against the Tarquins, she committed suicide by stabbing herself. Based on research by United States Agency for International Development (USAID , 2010), over 48% of women who were 24 years old or older worldwide stated that their initial sexual experience was forced. Researches on human sexuality also revealed substantial evidences of widespread and escalating instances of coerced premarital sexual activity worldwide (Matharu, 2018).

Igbokure (2007) documented instances of female students in Nigerian tertiary institutions, including Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, University of Calabar and University of Lagos, who protested to the then Minister of Education Dr. Ezekwesili, regarding the sexual harassment they were enduring from their male lecturers. The students implored the Minister to inform the male teachers that their purpose of attending school was to acquire knowledge, not to be subjected to sexual harassment and intimidation. In Nigeria, adolescents face a significant number of reproductive health issues. This claim was backed by surveys which revealed that nearly half of Nigerian females aged 15-19 (46.2%) and approximately one-quarter of males (22.1%) in the same age group have engaged in sexual intercourse (National Demographic Health Survey in 2013). In a study conducted among university students in Ibadan by Ajuwon, et.al. (2010) on sexual coercion of university students, it was found that 15% of the students reported instances of forced sexual penetration, 27% reported attempted forced sex and 44% reported experiencing other unwanted sexual activities. These findings highlighted the significant prevalence of sexual coercion among female students in universities.

Females that are mostly coerced were subjected to situations, resulting in significant traumatic experiences including health, emotional, psychological, and social consequences (Heise, et. al, 2016). It has the potential to harm students' emotional and intellectual well-being, tarnish their reputation, and intensify conflicts among students, ultimately creating a hostile learning environment. Nevertheless, young women who consume alcohol exhibited a greater likelihood of reporting instances of sexual violence compared to those who abstained from alcohol. The majority of cases (78.5%) involved attackers who were familiar to the victims. Merely 3.3% of incidents of sexual violence were officially reported to law enforcement organizations, and a mere 13.1% of the

individuals who experienced such abuse sought medical assistance from healthcare practitioners. Sexual coercion typically affects children, adolescents, and females, while sexual coercion is often linked to socio-economic circumstances.

Social factors such as peer pressure, exposure to pornography, and indecent dressing have been identified as influential factors in sexual coercion. However, there has been a heated debate specifically regarding the role of indecent dressing. While Barnett, McCausland, and Cloulson (2016) strongly supported the idea that indecent dressing is a significant factor, others argued against it, questioning the association between indecent dressing and sexual coercion. Some people believe that it is important to focus on holding the perpetrators accountable rather than blaming the victims' clothing. The study conducted by Barnett, et.al. (2016) investigated the correlation between clothing choices and instances of sexual harassment among female university students and the results suggested that there was a correlation between perceptions of immodest attire and increased instances of sexual harassment. Nevertheless, it is imperative to address this subject with tact and recognize that assigning blame to the victim is inappropriate. The act of wearing provocatively and exposing oneself, particularly by female students, tends to elicit emotional or sexual responses among male students or teachers. Research by Barnett (2016) indicated that a portion of students wear inappropriate attires, both on and off school grounds. Some individuals dress in a provocative manner, revealing their hips, thighs, and breasts, with the intention of enticing and manipulating susceptible male pupils into engaging in sexual coercion. Regarding the issue of indecent attire and exposure, a participant expressed that the manner in which certain students dressed for school, revealing their intimate body parts, contributed to instances of sexual harassment from those of the opposite gender, ultimately resulting in sexual coercion.

A study carried out among the students in Ibadan, Nigeria by Ajuwon et. al (2010) established that 86% of the students' testified instances of forced sexual penetration, attempted forced intercourse, and other forms of verbal and physical coercion. These are indicating that the incidence of sexual coercion in Africa is generally high, According to Okoye (2014), the prevalence rate was 67% in Botswana, 65.6% in Zimbabwe, 49% in Ghana, 34.4% in Ethiopia and 23% in Sierra Leone.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2018, almost 36% of women worldwide and in sub-Saharan Africa had encountered non-partner sexual violence at least once in their lives. The data further indicated that worldwide, about 27% of the total women have been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime. The prevalence of sexual and/or physical violence from an intimate partner was higher in sub-Saharan Africa, with 33% of women affected.

Specifically, WHO (2018) found countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (47%), Liberia (43%), Uganda (45%), Gabon (41%), South Sudan (41%), Zambia (41%), Burundi (40%), and Lesotho (40%) experienced particularly high rates of this type of violence. Approximately 15 million adolescent females between the ages of 15

and 19 experienced instances of coerced sexual activities worldwide. According to Okoye (2014), adolescents and young women residing in impoverished communities, as well as those with physical or intellectual disabilities, experienced a higher level of exposure to and impact from sexual coercion.

Statement of the Problem

Sexual coercion is a distressing encounter that has been verified to have significant psychological impacts on female victims. Non-consensual sexual practices, as stated by Moynihan (2015), have led to physical injuries, sexually transmitted illnesses, unwanted pregnancies, chronic health problems, and even death. Survivors frequently encounter Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), sadness, anxiety, diminished self-worth, and several other psychological conditions. In this study's location, the researcher noted a growing concern about sexual coercion, particularly in tertiary institutions. Male lecturers of all ages and ranks, regardless of their degree of authority, have suffered disciplinary consequences such as suspension or termination of employment for sexually coercing their female students with the intention of influencing exam results or obtaining higher grades. Compounding the issue, the majority of these victimized students were adolescents, and a significant number of these adolescents were manipulated and used during their academic pursuits at universities, often by acquaintances of their professors.

Regrettably, due to cultural and societal factors, many of them encountered challenges when it came to reporting to the school administration. Despite organizations taking measures such as establishing anti-sexual harassment committees, providing information and conducting campaigns, and meeting out stringent punishments on offenders, the problem of sexual coercion persists. There were reports of sexual coercion leading to apprehension, trial and conviction of culprits. Unfortunately, in developing countries, for fear of stigmatization, forced sexual activities on females are under-reported and the ill consequences of sexual coercion which ranged from psychological trauma and depression leading to poor academic performance and eventual school dropout cannot be overlooked. Therefore, more statistical data especially on the etiology of sexual coercion are needed to effect any workable intervention. Unfortunately, in Nigeria and especially in Oyo State, such academic-based data are scanty; hence, this study.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between indecent dressing and sexual coercion among female undergraduates in Oyo central senatorial District area of Oyo state.
2. There is no significant relationship between peer influence and sexual coercion among female undergraduates in Oyo central senatorial District area of Oyo state.
3. There is no significant relationship between exposure to pornography and sexual coercion among female undergraduates in Oyo central senatorial District area of Oyo state.

Methodology

This study was adopted a descriptive survey research design. The populations for this study comprised all female undergraduates in Oyo Central Senatorial District. A total of 320 female undergraduates were selected using multi-stage sampling procedures. Out of the eleven (11) Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the study area; four (4) were selected using simple random sampling technique. From each LGA, two (2) tertiary institutions were selected using stratified random sampling technique with school type as stratum making a total of eight institutions. A total of 40 female respondents (20 public and 20 private) were selected using a simple random sampling technique. A self-developed questionnaire tagged “Social Determinants of Sexual Coercion Questionnaire (SDSQ) which was tested for reliability using a test –re-test approach which yielded ($r = 0.87$). Data was analysed using appropriate descriptive and Spearman’s Roh correlation analysis was used in testing the hypotheses formulated for the study at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Responses on Social Factors that Determine Sexual Coercion among Female Undergraduates

Item s	Factors	SA (%)	A (%)	Total (%)Agre e	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (%)Disagr ee	Grand Total
1	Indecent dressing	208 (65)	81 (25.3)	289 (90.3)	18 (5.6)	13 (4.1)	31(9.7)	320 100
2	Peer Influence	173 (54.1)	124 (38.8)	297 (92.8)	17 (5.3)	6 (1.9)	23(7.2)	320 100
3	Exposure to Pornography	156 (48.8)	101 (31.6)	257 (80.3)	40 (12.5)	23 (7.2)	63(19.7)	320 100

Table 1 revealed that out of 320 respondents in this study, 289 (90.3 %) agreed that indecent dressing is a factor influencing sexual coercion, whereas 31 (9.7%) disagreed. However, out of 320 respondents in this study, as many as 297 (92.8%) identified peer influence as determinant of sexual coercion while 23 (7.2%) disagreed. Majority of the respondents 257 (80.3%) agreed that exposure to pornography is an influencing factor for sexual coercion, whereas 63 (19.7%) disagreed.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between indecent dressing and sexual coercion among female undergraduates in Oyo central senatorial District area of Oyo state.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis between Indecent Dressing and Sexual Coercion

			Sexual coercion	Indecent dressing
Spearman's rho	Sexual coercion	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.194*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	320	320
	Indecent dressing	Correlation Coefficient	0.194*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	320	320

N = 320, * $p < .05$

The results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between indecent dressing and sexual coercion among the female undergraduates ($r = .194$, $p < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀₁) is rejected. This means that indecent dressing caused females susceptibility to sexual coercion.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between peer influence and sexual coercion among female undergraduates in Oyo central senatorial District of Oyo State.

Table 3: Correlation analysis between Peer Influence and Sexual Coercion.

			Sexual coercion	Peer influence
Spearman's rho	Sexual coercion	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.145*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.015
		N	320	320
	Peer influence	Correlation Coefficient	0.145*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.
		N	320	320

N = 320, * $p < .05$

The results indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between peer influence and sexual coercion among the female undergraduates ($r = .145$, $p < .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis (H₀₂) is rejected; this suggests that peer influence is a factor triggering sexual coercion.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between exposure to pornography and sexual coercion among female undergraduates in Oyo central senatorial District area of Oyo state.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis between Exposure to Pornography and Sexual Coercion

		Sexual coercion	Exposure to pornography
Spearman's rho	Sexual coercion	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.028
		N	320
	Exposure to pornography	Correlation Coefficient	.131*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.028
		N	320

N = 320, *p < .05

The results indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between exposure to pornography and sexual coercion among the female undergraduates ($r = .131$, $p < .05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected; implying that exposure to pornography affects sexual coercion among female undergraduates in the specified area.

Discussion

The study examined the social determinants of sexual coercion among undergraduates in Oyo Central Senatorial District. The findings of this study which confirmed that social factors were strong determinants of sexual coercion among female undergraduates revealed that indecent dressing as a factor was contested in many cultures, because it was seen as being subjective and varies across cultures and contexts. These findings agreed with those of Barnett, McCausland, and Coulson (2016) that there was a correlation between the way people dress and the frequency of sexual coercion incidents. For instance, in certain societies, there is a perception that revealing or provocative clothes could provoke sexual interest or aggression from others. This belief has been found to contribute to victim-blaming attitudes, where individuals who experience sexual coercion are unfairly judged based on their attire rather than on the actions and choices of the perpetrator. This can perpetuate a culture where the responsibility for preventing sexual coercion is shifted unto victims rather than addressing the behaviour of perpetrators, but the question is, if revealing dresses is a notorious factor in sexual coercion, why then do mad women go nude on the streets without men sexually harassing them? What about female children of 3, 4, 5 years old who were sexually harassed by their fathers and other relatives? Can we say the baby did not dress well? To this researcher, the issue of sexual coercion is far beyond external factors like indecent dressing, but simply a psychological issue needing urgent medical attention (Barnett McCausland, and Coulson 2016).

This study result was in line with the findings of Hébert, et.al (2018) that revealed a positive correlation between peer pressure and perpetration of sexual aggression. In the same vein, this study result agrees with the results of this study of Wright (2016) that the consumption of pornographic contents through internet, television, and social media platforms significantly contributed to the occurrence of sexual coercion among students. Pornographic videos images and movies, across various media platforms including their phones, books, magazines, newspapers, and television, were found to effectively heighten sexual desire in both males and females to help the situation, majority of students currently possess smartphones, including those running on the Android operating system, which provides access to several pornographic websites where they view explicit films. These students have developed a strong dependency on consuming explicit visual pornographic contents and neglecting their academic materials. Olumide and Ojebende (2016) Researches also revealed that these videos stimulate individuals' sexual desire, leading them to engage in the behaviours they observed, not minding whether or not the pictures are relevant to healthy lifestyles,

Conclusion

The study concluded that (indecent dressing, peer influence, exposure to pornography) were social determinants of sexual coercion in the study Area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made in order to minimize the occurrence of sexual coercion among female students;

- a) Compulsory Sex education in schools: Implement comprehensive sex education programme in the school curriculum that go beyond basic anatomy and contraception to include discussions on consent and healthy relationships, These programme should start early and be tailored to suit the age and developmental stages of students.
- b) Punishment and Rehabilitation for Perpetrators: Advocate for strict punishment for perpetrators of sexual coercion is being made, coupled with rehabilitation programme aimed at addressing underlying issues such as attitudes towards gender and power dynamics. This can serve as a deterrent while also addressing the root causes of coercive behaviour.
- c) Orientation Programme; There must be proper orientation about the consequences of sexual coercion for both male and female undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Integrate orientation programme for incoming students that explicitly address issues of sexual coercion, consent, and respect for boundaries. These programme should be mandatory and interactive, encouraging dialogue and fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding. Both governmental and non-governmental organizations should provide wide publicity about the psychological effect of sexual coercion not only on the victims but also on the perpetrators and the wider community. Highlight the psychological, emotional, and legal consequences of such actions to deter potential offenders and encourage bystander intervention. Religious institution (Churches and Mosques) should

intensify effort in educating youth in high moral standard by utilizing religious leaders as advocates for positive behavioural change and as sources of support for victims.

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