



SEXUAL MISTAKES: ETIOLOGY OF SCHOOL DROP-OUT AMONG TEENAGERS IN ILE-IFE, OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

This study identified the commonly-made sexual mistakes of teenage girls and examined the academic implications of such mistakes. A total of 50 dropped-out-of-school girls who were either currently pregnant or nursing babies, whose ages ranged between 13 and 17 years were respondents in this study. They were selected using purposive sampling technique. A self-designed, validated questionnaire was the tool for data gathering. Percentage and chi-square were used for data analysis. Results indicated that common sex mistakes of adolescent are: having unprotected sex, getting pregnant and having sex too early. Majorly: 26 respondents linked their dropping out of school to the sexual mistakes made and 24 (92.31%) of them revealed that the mode of leaving school was by self-withdrawal while only 2 (7.69%) left school by expulsion. Only 7 (26.92%) of the school dropped out will want to drop-in in school, while 18 (69.23%) will not want to.

Keywords: sexual mistakes, school drop-out, teenagers, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The word 'Sex' is so short, but highly explosive when it comes to the range of activities and behaviours involved, sexual preference and dysfunctions. In normal situations (adult sex), sexual activities are meant to be enjoyable, pleasurable and fully satisfactory, but these conditions are most often reversed with teenage sex. Teenage sex is often characterized by sense of guilt, anxiety and fear of failure which are demonstrated when initiating coitus, during and after coitus. In many traditional societies, sex is treated as sacred and limited only to adult males, females within

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marriage (Alo, 2008) while United Nation Educational Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2009) stated that open discussion of sexual matters is often greeted with embarrassment, silence and disapproval. Despite this, enough evidences have proven that adolescents of nowadays are sexually active (Roterman, 2012; Guttmacher Institute, 2014) and engage in sexual misbehaviours. In their study, Oluwatosin and Adediwura (2008) found that 60.9% of males and 57.7% females said that they involved in risky sexual behaviours as against 36.4% who did not. In Abimbola (2007), as many as 85% of the sample practiced risky sexual behaviours. These results were confirmed by Charles (2010) and Adejumo (2011).

Several factors were found to be responsible for early sexual exploration and misbehaviours by many adolescents. While some are natural, some are prompted by environmental circumstances. Naturally, the period of adolescence is characterized by experimentation and exploration which are most often non-constructive and based on misinformation from peers (Anyanwu & Oparaeke, 2011). Corroborating this fact, Adejumo (2011) said that children and young people often receive conflicting and sometimes damaging messages from their peers, the media and other sources. On environmental factors, modernization (Moronkola & Oyebami, 2007), external pressures on youth including pornographic materials and effect of films and video tapes (Strasburger, Jordan & Donnerstein, 2010) are factors promoting sexual immorality among adolescents. Lakeasha (2015) looked at the motivational factor in early sexual activity of youths especially girls from the perspective of poverty or need to survive. Adejumo (2011) also confirmed the role of home type in predicting adolescents' involvement in pre-marital sex. In their review, Anyanwu and Oparaeke (2011) identified such environmental factors as poverty, ignorance, poor and depressing homes or community resources and supervision, stressful environment and mental problems which drive them into compulsive sexual behaviour based on the unconscious need to be accepted and loved. Many of the sexual activities engaged in and or behaviour exhibited by adolescents have almost always ended in regrets and lamentation of 'If I Had Known' because their results which include contraction of sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy and psychosocial impacts (Anyanwu & Opaereke, 2011) are oftentimes unexpected, unpleasant and sad. To the adolescents who fell victim of these sexual misbehaviours, the claim has always been that it was a mistake. Some of these claimed sexual mistakes are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- (a) Premature sex: Just like the U.S.A data on youth behaviour which showed that 46.7% of high school students have engaged in sex (<http://bmo.sagepu>), result obtained in Nigeria, by Unuigbe and Ogbeide (1999) and Adejumo (2011)

showed that more than half of their respondents have had sexual intercourse before 18 years. In their submissions, Knorr (2013) and Nkang & Asan-Ate (2014) stressed that media is a top source of sex information and that most teenagers involved in sexual activities are those who watch pornography.

- (b) **Unprotected sex:** This entails sexual intercourse without using any form of contraceptives. There have been contrasting findings on knowledge of youths about contraceptives use. While Adetokunbo, Oluwarotimi, Abiola, Adeniyi, Osinusi & Shittu (2011), Nsubuga, Sekand, Sempeera & Makumbi, (2016) and agreed that secondary school students have good knowledge of contraceptive methods, the authors further found that only few adolescents use contraceptives. As stated by Brown & Guthrie (2010) and Hidata, Worku & Urgessa (2015), non-use of contraceptives could be due to ignorance of the methods, assumption that pregnancy cannot occur with just a round of sex, inadequate education of mothers and misconceptions about contraceptive use.
- (c) **Unsafe abortion:** In his review, Ademiju (2010) found that two out of every five secondary school girls have had at least one previous pregnancy; 150 out of every 1000 women who gave birth are 19years old and below and that 50% of the deaths recorded in Nigeria's high mortality figures are adolescent girls due to illegally-induced abortions. In university of Ilorin Teaching Hospital (1987- 1989) in Nigeria. Adetoro, et.al. (1991) reported an abortion rate of 94.6 per 1000 deliveries and adolescents made up 74.4% of all induced abortions. Teenage girls most-times choose the option of unsafe abortions because of lack of fund, fear of being seen at the hospital and pressure from peers especially the person responsible for the pregnancy.
- (d) **Multiple sex partners:** It has also been revealed that teenagers are dominated by those who have multiple sex partners. Sexual networking was also reported. In support, Adejumo (2011) found that as many as 92 out of 186 teenagers who were sexually active had more than one sex partners.
- (e) **Forced sex:** Sex is forced when it is done against the wish or consent of either of the two that are involved in the sex act. Although, either of the two partners can be victim, but most reported cases showed that girls/women are often the victims of rape. Accurate data cannot be derived because rape is strictly under-reported in Nigeria mainly because of stigmatization.
- (f) **Team sex:** Most cases of rape on girls have been linked with team sex. Team sex occurs where more than one boy/man have intercourse with a girl in a row or vice-versa (Charles 2010).

(g) Sex trading: According to Moronkola & Fakeye (2008), teenage boys patronize prostitutes and girls too are not left out in sex trade. Radha-Krishina, et.al. (2000) revealed that some girls engage in sex with men who are known in Sub-Saharan Africa as 'Sugar Daddies' (i.e older men who seek out young girls for sex in exchange for money)

2. Sexual issues affecting non-completion of school

Quite apart from the health implications which include; sexually transmitted infections (STI) abortions, teenage pregnancy and motherhood, and irreparable cases of death (Aaron 2006; McKee, et. al., 2007; <http://www.straight.talk.org.ng>, 2008), the academic implications of sexual indiscipline on both the school system and the teenager are enormous. It is on record, that many students have been forced to leave school untimely for contracting untreatable STIs like HIV/AIDS. Infact, Olubayo-Fatiregun & Ayodele (2011) found that school stakeholders in Nigeria (principals, teachers etc.) said that they will not accept People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in their schools, and even if they accept, the affected student may not be enthusiastic about schooling for fear of stigmatization.

Many students have faced stern disciplinary actions ranging from suspension to expulsion from school for committing rape, team sex, while teenage pregnancy and parenting present the most notorious factor in teenagers' dropping out of school. Samuel (2006) stressed that teenage mothers are less likely to finish high school or become drop-out leading to loss of chance of good education. In the same vein, UNESCO (2009) revealed that Ugandan boys and girls who have early sex are twice as likely not to complete secondary schools as those who have. Additionally, child bearing places limitation on job opportunities of girls and the more reason why young mothers and their children live in poverty.

Confirming the strong relationship between schoolgirl pregnancy and school drop-out, McCary (1973) said "*the girl who has an illegitimate child at the age of 16 suddenly has 90% of her life script written for her, she will probably drop out of school, even if someone else in her family helps to take care of the baby, she will probably not be able to find a steady job that pays enough to provide for herself and her child*". However, the opinions and findings of Mensch, Clarke, Llyod and Erulkar (1999) ran contrary to these assertions as they found no significant relationship between pregnancy and school leaving when the timing of pregnancy and leaving school were considered.

It is however not disputed that there may be other reasons why girls drop out of school. For instance, condition of sickness that are divorced of sexual issues, poor academic performance, personal disinterest in schoolwork, lack of financial assistance

etc. could be relevant to dropping out of school, but the rate at which sex-related issues and especially pregnancy contribute to teenagers' inability to complete school is highest than any other known cause (Baltimore, 2009; Mangel, 2010). However, the issue of pregnancy in school dropout problem has been overstressed in researches, whereas, there is dearth of knowledge regarding many other sex issues contributing to non-completion of school, especially among males, hence this study.

3. Methodology

The population for this study comprised secondary school drop outs in Ife Central LGA of Osun State. A total of 50 dropped-out-of school adolescents, selected purposively by snowballing sampling technique, and whose ages ranged between 13 and 19 years took part in this study. Using snowballing, the researcher first located seven drop outs (4 girls and 3 boys) in her neighbourhood. The seven drop outs recommended and linked the researcher up with others in their category, whose recommendations were also followed up. The follow up moves finally yielded 57 drop outs, out of which 50 (25 females and 25 males) were selected for the study. A validated and reliable ($r = .92$), 8-item questionnaire was used to gather data for this study.

The questionnaire examined the commonly made sexual mistakes among secondary school students (eg. having many sexual partners, sex trading, involvement in teenage sex, rape, unsafe sex, teenage pregnancy etc) and probed the manner in which these mistakes affected non-school completion. The instrument was administered with the help of two research assistants who contacted the respondents at their residences, market sheds and motor parks while hawking. The exercise was completed in three weeks. Percentage and chi-square were used for data analysis.

5. Results

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Class Level Where Dropping out of School Occurred

Item	Options	Responses (50) N = 50					
		Males (25)		Females (25)		Total (50)	
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
1.	a. Junior Secondary (JS I)	1	(4.00)	0	(0.00)	1	(2.00)
	b. Junior Secondary (JS II)	1	(4.00)	0	(0.00)	1	(2.00)
	c. Junior Secondary (JS III)	1	(4.00)	15	(60.00)	16	(32.00)
	d. Senior Secondary (SS I)	3	(12.00)	8	(32.00)	11	(22.00)
	e. Senior Secondary (SS II)	12	(48.00)	2	(8.00)	14	(28.00)
	f. Senior Secondary (SS III)	7	(28.00)	0	(0.00)	7	(14.00)
	Total	25	(50)	25	(50)	50	(100)

Table 1 showed that out of 50 respondents in this study, majority: 16 (32%) ; 14 (28%) and 11 (22%) respondents dropped out of school at the JSIII, SSII and SSI classes respectively, while only 1 (2%) respondent dropped from each of JSI and JS2. In addition, 7 (14%) dropped out in SSIII. While 15 (60%) out of 25 females dominated the JSSIII drop-outs, males dominated the SSII drop-outs with 12 (48%) out of 25 dropping out.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Responses on General Reasons for Dropping Out of School

Item	Options	Responses					
		Males (25)		Females (25)		Total (50)	
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
2.	a. Sickness	4	(16.00)	5	(9.80)	9	(11.84)
	b. Poor school performance	4	(16.00)	3	(5.88)	7	(9.21)
	c. No interest in schooling	4	(16.00)	1	(1.96)	5	(6.58)
	d. Parents' dictate	0	(0.00)	4	(7.84)	4	(5.26)
	e. Financial problem	6	(24.00)	12	(23.53)	18	(23.68)
	f. Family mobility	1	(4.00)	2	(3.92)	3	(3.95)
	g. Sex-related mistakes (pregnancy, rape, etc)	2	(8.00)	24	(47.06)	26	(34.21)
	h. No reason	4	(16.00)	0	(0.00)	4	(5.26)
	Total Responses	25	(32.89)	51	(67.11)	76	(100)

Data on table 2 indicated that out of 76 responses got from the 50 respondents on this item, 51 (67.11%) were from the females, while 25 (32.89%) were made by the males. Of the 76 responses, as many as 26 (34.21%) and 18 (23.68%) indicated financial problem and sex-related mistakes as reasons for dropping out of school respectively, while only 3 (3.95%) and 4 (5.26%) responses indicated family mobility and parents' dictate as reasons for dropping out of school. Out of 26 responses which indicated sex-related mistakes as reason for dropping out of school, as many as 24 were from females, while only 2 were from males. However, 4 (16%) of the responses from the males indicated that they cannot pin down their not completing secondary school to any reason.

Table 3: Types of Sexual- related Mistakes Commonly Made by Teenagers

Item	If sexual-related mistakes was your reason for dropping out of school, which of these mistakes did you make?	Responses					
		Males (2)		Females (24)		Total (26)	
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
3.	a. I had more than one sexual partner	1	(50)	13	(13.40)	14	(14.14)
	b. I engaged in sex trade (sex to earn money)	0	(0.00)	5	(5.15)	5	(5.05)
	c. I had sex too early in life	0	(0.00)	25	(25.77)	25	(25.25)
	d. I committed rape	0	(0,00)	0	(0.00)	0	(0.00)

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e. I was raped, but did not tell anybody	0 (0.00)	1 (1.03)	1 (1.01)
f. I had sex without protection	1 (50)	25 (25.77)	26 (26.26)
g. I had unsafe abortion (in unapproved way)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.03)	1 (1.01)
h. I got pregnant	0 (0.00)	25 (25.77)	25 (25.25)
i. I did not report the teacher/student who sexually harassed me	0 (0.00)	2 (2.06)	2 (2.02)
Total Responses	2 (2.02)	97 (97.98)	99 (100)

From table 3, data showed that out of 99 responses got on this item, as many as 97 (97.98%) were made by females, while only 2 (2.02) were made by males. Of the 99 responses, 26 (26.26%); 25 (25.25%) and 25 (25.25%) showed that the commonly made sexual mistakes as indicated by the respondents were that they had sex without condom; had sex too early in life and getting pregnant at teenage age respectively, whereas, 14 (14.14%) responses revealed that respondents made the mistake of having more than one sexual partners. The only female who reported rape agreed that she made the mistake of not telling anybody about it. Also, the 2 females who reported sexual harassment from teacher accepted that the mistake they made was that of not reporting to the authority.

Table 4: Reasons for Making Sexual Mistakes

Item	If you agree to these mistakes, why did you make such mistakes	Responses (%) No. = 26			
		YES		NO	
4.		N	(%)	N	(%)
	a. Poverty	18	(69.23)	8	(30.77)
	b. Ignorance of effects of the mistake	15	(57.69)	11	(42.31)
	c. Peer pressure	10	(38.46)	16	(61.54)
	d. Parent(s)' pressure	2	(7.69)	24	(92.31)
	e. No parental guide	3	(11.54)	23	(88.46)

Data on table 4 showed that out of 26 respondents who agreed that they made sexual mistakes, 18 (69.23%) respondents indicated poverty as their reason for making sexual mistake as against 8 (30.77%) who had contrary opinion. Also, while 15 (57.69%) indicated that they were ignorant of the effects of their mistakes, while 11 (42.31%) said no. of the 26.15 (57.69%) said that ignorance of effect caused their mistakes. Only 3 (11.54%) and 2 (7.69%) out of the 26 respondents said that the sexual mistakes were committed because of parents' pressure and lack of parental guide respectively.

Table 5: How Sexual Mistakes Affected School Completion

Item		Responses (%) No. = 26					
		YES		NO		Total	
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
5.	How did the sexual mistakes earlier indicated directly affected your school completion?						
	a. Mistake was against school rules and I was expelled	1	(3.85)	25	(96.15)	26	(100)
	b. It was against the school rules and I knew I will be expelled, so I personally withdrew from school	24	(92.31)	2	(7.69)	26	(100)
	c. It affected my school work (attendance, results etc)	0	(0.00)	26	(100)	26	(100)
	d. It resulted in sickness to the extent that I could not continue school	0	(0.00)	26	(100)	26	(100)
	e. I got carried away by the enjoyment and luxury got from the mistakes to the point that I felt it was needless going to school and I stopped	0	(0.00)	26	(100)	26	(100)
	f. My parents grew annoyed over the mistakes and stopped paying my school fees, so I dropped.	1	(3.85)	25	(96.15)	26	(100)
	g. I was ashamed of the mistake and felt that it was best for me to withdraw from school to save my face	0	(0.00)	26	(100)	26	(100)

Table 5 showed that majority, that is 24 (92.31%) of the 26 respondents who linked their dropping out of school to the sexual mistake they made, indicated that the mistakes directly affected their schooling because it was against the school rules and regulations and in order to save themselves of being disgracefully expelled from school, they chose to personally withdraw, whereas only 2 (7.69%) said contrary. One of the respondents (male) said that his mistake was found out and he was expelled, while another respondent (female) said that her parents grew annoyed over the mistake she made and refused to continue to pay her school fees causing her inability to continue school.

Table 6: Future Schooling Plans

Item		Responses (%) No. = 26							
		YES		NO		Can't tell	Total		
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)		
6.	Do you regret ever making such mistake(s)	24	(92.31)	2	(7.69)	0	(0.00)	26	(100)
7.	Do you still wish to drop in school if you have opportunity?	7	(26.92)	18	(69.23)	1	(3.85)	26	(100)
8.	If No to item 8, what is your main reason for not wanting to go back to school?	YES		NO					
	a. Shame	6	(33.33)	12	(66.66)	0	(0.0)	18	(100)
	b. No more interest in schooling	9	(50)	9	(50)	0	(0.0)	18	(100)
	c. Nobody to take care of my baby	1	(5.55)	17	(94.44)	0	(0.0)	18	(100)
	d. Nobody to pay my school fees	1	(5.55)	17	(94.44)	0	(0.0)	18	(100)
	e. No school will want to admit me	0	(0.00)	18	(100)	0	(0.0)	18	(100)
	f. I prefer trading/being an artisan	1	(5.55)	17	(94.44)	0	(0.0)	18	(100)

On table 5, item 6, data showed that out of 26 respondents who dropped out of school for sexual related problem, as many as 24 (92.31%) revealed that they regretted their mistakes, while only 2 (7.69) they did not.

On item 7, data showed that majority; 18 (69.23%) of the 26 respondents did not wish to go back to school, even if they have opportunity to do so, as against only 7 (26.92%) respondents who wished to return to school.

Further question on why the dropped-outs will not want to go back to school, as many as 9 (50%) out of 18 who did not want to go back to school said that they have lost interest in schooling while the remaining 9 (50%), said contrary. Also, 6 (33.33%) respondents said that they will not go back to school because of shame. Other reasons like nobody to take care of my baby, pay my school fees and no school will admit me were rarely mentioned as reasons for not wanting to drop in school.

6. Discussion of Findings

The results of this study which indicated that girls most often dropped out of school in JSIII class for sexual-related reason could be linked to the fact that the girls most often began their sexual escapade when they were in this class, because most of the girls in this study claimed that they were first timers who were not yet conversant with protection against pregnancy. It was also suspected that this class marks the end of the first half of their secondary school education when they have the false belief that they are already an adult (Senior) and are now free to carry out their sexual exploration at will. Also, in order for them to live to expectation (eg. dress, make up and pose like seniors), they need more money than what the parents have been affording and so explore other avenues like having boyfriends, and even sugar daddies who have free sex with them for money.

The results of this study which showed that financial problem was a major cause of dropping out among adolescents was earlier confirmed by Baltimore (2009) and Mangel (2010). Currently in Nigeria, a woman has an average of 6 children and a good proportion of them live below poverty line. In addition, the findings of this study which indicated that females dominated the respondents who dropped out for sex-related reasons was expected. In line with this finding, Baltimore (2009) and Mangel (2010) agreed that though there are other relevant issues in dropping out of school, but the rate at which sex-related issues and especially pregnancy contribute to teenagers' inability to complete school is highest than any other known cause.

It was found out in this study that many of the adolescents who dropped out of school for sex related reasons agreed that they made the mistake of having sex too early

in life and had sex without protection. This finding was earlier confirmed by Unuigbo and Ogbeide (1999) and Adejumo (2011) that more than half of their respondents have had sexual intercourse before 18 years. Also, non-use of contraceptives was confirmed by Adetokunbo, Oluwarotimi, Abiola, Adeniyi, Osinusi & Shittu (2011) who agreed that secondary school students have good knowledge of contraceptive methods, but only few adolescents use them because of ignorance of the methods, assumption that pregnancy cannot occur with just a round of sex, educational status of mother and misconceptions about their use (Brown & Guthrie (2010) and Hidata, Worku & Urgessa (2015). To the girls, the greatest mistake they claimed they made was allowing themselves to get pregnant, because, it is this factor that had been responsible for their not continuing school as found in this study. For one, pregnancy quickly manifests if it is not aborted, quite unlike other mistakes like rape, having premature sex etc. which if not talked about may not lead to termination of school. From this study, majority of those who dropped out for sexual-related reasons, personally withdrew from school knowing well that if they do not, pregnancy will manifest and she will eventually be expelled. To them, the shame and disgrace will be too much for them to bear than if they withdraw before the pregnancy manifests. At least, if they can be under cover during the time of pregnancy and baby nursing, they can come back to tell the story that they were sick, travelled and so on. Withdrawing from school unannounced by pregnant girls have often underline the inability of the school to keep records of girls in such category as found in schools today.

One will expect that the respondents will express regret over the sexual mistake which led to their dropping out of school, but the result of this study indicated that two girls did not show remorse for their mistakes. It could be speculated that their supposed husbands (who probably is rich, needed a child) have promised to marry and take proper care of her, else, a teenager should have some regrets if only for termination of school.

7. Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of this study, it was concluded that most teenagers regretted the sexual mistakes including premature sex, unsafe sex and pregnancy among girls and rape among boys were linked to non-completion of school.

8. Recommendations

Considering the results and the conclusion from this study, the following recommendations were made to ensure dissemination of adequate information on sex-related issues that can help them modify their sex behaviours and lives.

- (1) Reproductive health education in school as a separate school subject in the curriculum.
- (2) Home-school collaboration on dissemination of sex information
- (3) Mounting of Sex behaviour modification programmes, e.g. seminar, workshops etc
- (4) Establishing special schools for victims of sexual mistakes where they can continue their school work, write same examinations and have results as their non-pregnant counterparts but in highly conducive environment, in order to limit drop-out rate

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