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SOCIO-SEXUALITY AS CORRELATES OF POTENTIAL FOR SECONDARY ABSTINENCE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN OYO STATE

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ABSTRACT

In modern Nigerian society, concerns about sexual health and behaviors among undergraduates have become increasingly pertinent**.** This study therefore examined socio-sexuality as correlate of secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates in selected universities in Oyo State. This study adopted the survey research design. A sample of 374 undergraduates was selected through the stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using Students' Socio-Sexuality Scale and Secondary Abstinence Potential Questionnaire. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested with the use of Pearson's product-moment correlation, regression analysis and t-test at the .05 level of significance**.** Findings revealed significant relationship between socio-sexuality and secondary abstinence potentials among undergraduates ($r = .255$, $p < .0005$), significant influence of socio-sexuality was observed on secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates ($\beta = .255$; $t = 5.092$; $p < .05$), while no significant difference was reported in the potential for secondary abstinence between male and female undergraduates ($t = .544$, $p = 0.587 > .05$). It was concluded that socio-sexual behavior played a significant role in influencing secondary abstinence potential, and there was a lack of gender differences in secondary abstinence potential, suggesting that interventions aimed at promoting secondary abstinence could be equally effective for both male and female students. Hence, it was recommended, among others, that education policy makers should integrate socio-sexual education into existing abstinence programmes targeted at undergraduates.

Keywords: Socio-sexuality, secondary abstinence potential, undergraduates, universities.

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Introduction

In modern Nigerian society, concerns about sexual health and behaviours among undergraduates have become increasingly pertinent. The evolving landscape of socio-sexuality encompassing attitudes, behaviours and interpersonal relationships related to sexuality, is a subject of growing interest in academic research (Sanya, 2019; Okon, 2020). As the demographic profile of university students in Nigeria continues to shift, understanding the intricate relationship between socio-sexuality and secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates has become crucial for public health interventions and education.

Traditional norms in most Nigerian cultures demand premarital sexual abstinence until entry into marital unions; nevertheless, these values are changing rapidly, for the worse, in all ethnic groups. Studies from several parts of the country have reported high levels of sexual activity among unmarried adolescents of both sexes with progressively decreasing age of debut, risky sexual practices, including unprotected sexual intercourse with multiple partners (Ojengbede, 2018; Wallace et al., 2017). According to Asekun-Olarinmoye et al., (2020), girls usually bear the consequences of early sexual activities in unwanted pregnancies, teenage births and abortions, often by quacks. Sexually transmitted diseases occur in both sexes and when inadequately treated,

result in chronic reproductive tract infections and infertility to battle in the nearest future. Young adults are particularly prone to sexual behaviours. Emerging adulthood is a period of experimentations and possibilities (Arnett, 2016; Morgan & Van Dulmen, 2021). Sexual experiences are inherent to the socialization process celebrating autonomy and independence, so much desired by these emerging adults (Arnett, 2016). The increased sexual permissiveness in the Western culture gives young people freedom and autonomy to explore and experiment with dating and sexual relationships (Claxton & Van Dulmen, 2013).

Nigeria, with its diverse cultural and social contexts, presents a unique setting for investigating the interplay between socio-sexuality and the potential for secondary abstinence among undergraduates. The cultural diversity within the country introduces a dynamic dimension to sexual attitudes and behaviours, influencing the choices and decision-making processes of students (Ogunnubi, 2018). Furthermore, the emergence of new socio-sexual norms and the impact of globalization on sexual practices highlight the need for context-specific research to inform tailored interventions (Adepoju & Ojo, 2019).

Among the various facets of sexual behaviour, the concept of secondary abstinence, referring to the decision to abstain from sexual activities after a period of prior engagement, is a significant area of study (Ajao & Owoaje, 2018). Understanding the determinants and predictors of secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates is critical for developing targeted sexual health promotion strategies within the university setting. The importance of this research is underscored by the potential implications for individual well-being, public health and the development of comprehensive sexual education programmes in Nigerian universities. Sexual abstinence or sexual restraint is the practice of refraining from some or all aspects of sexual activity for medical, psychological, legal, social, philosophical, moral, religious or other reasons (William, 2019). Sexual abstinence is distinct from asexuality, which is a sexual orientation where people feel little or no sexual attraction. Celibacy is sexual abstinence generally motivated by factors such as an individual's personal or religious beliefs. Sexual abstinence before marriage is required in some societies by social norms, or by law in some countries. It is a part of chastity.

While studies on sexual abstinence often focus on primary abstinence (abstaining from sexual activities before initiation), secondary abstinence has received less attention in the literature.

Exploring the potential for secondary abstinence among undergraduates is particularly relevant in the Nigerian cultural context, where socio-cultural influences and individual beliefs play significant roles in shaping sexual behaviours (Ajao & Owoaje, 2018). The sexual landscape among university students in Nigeria is dynamic and multifaceted, influenced by various socio-cultural, psychological, and individual factors. One dimension that adds complexity to this landscape is the concept of secondary abstinence potential, a phenomenon that has garnered attention in recent scholarly discourse on sexual behaviour (Ajao & Owoaje, 2018). It is an important aspect of sexual health that goes beyond the traditional focus on initiation into sexual activity. Secondary abstinence represents a deliberate choice to refrain from further sexual engagement, reflecting an individual's re-evaluation of their sexual practices and priorities (Usain, 2019). The term "secondary abstinence potential" in this study refers to the likelihood or propensity of undergraduates to abstain from sexual activities after a previous period of sexual engagement. This concept acknowledges the fluidity of sexual behaviours and recognizes that individuals may actively choose to abstain from further sexual activities based on a variety of personal, cultural, or situational factors

In the context of university settings, where the exploration of relationships and sexual experiences is common, understanding the factors influencing secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates becomes paramount. Undergraduates may encounter diverse circumstances that prompt a reconsideration of their sexual behaviours, leading to the potential adoption of secondary abstinence.

Abstinence may be voluntary (when an individual chooses not to engage in sexual activity due to moral, religious, philosophical, or other reasons), an involuntary result of social circumstances (when one cannot find any willing sexual partners), or legally mandated (e.g. in countries where sexual activity outside marriage is illegal, in prisons etc.). Sexual abstinence is defined as refraining from sexual activities for a long period. The sexual abstinence could be primary, when a person has never had sexual intercourse, or it could be secondary, when a person has had previous sexual intercourse but is now refraining.

The proportions of sexual abstinence are high up to 83.6% in men older than 60 years but are favoured by public health experts because of the potential negative outcomes of sexual intercourse (sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancies, and comorbidities with other risky

behaviours (Olowu, 2019). However, the small role of sexual abstinence in controlling STIs and unwanted pregnancies has been recognized, along with the underlying negative psychosexual impacts on young men (Ogunboye, 2020).

Sexual abstinence may be intentional or affected by other factors such as aging, medical (e.g., sexual dysfunction, painful intercourse, poor general health, and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases) lifestyle (eg, not using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs), behavioural (e.g., low sexual desire disorder, asexuality, and homosexuality), psychological (e.g., personal beliefs, low sexual self-esteem, feeling nervous, fear to drop out of school or concentrate on education, guilt and feelings of being used, low sexual satisfaction, painful intercourse, performance anxiety, and depression), relationship with partner (e.g., quality of relationship with partner, not comfortable with partner, partner not enjoying sex, and practicing faithfulness), family and friends (e.g., sexually inactive friends, family encourages abstinence, non-familial role model, living alone with single parent or other guardians), religious (e.g., prohibition on extramarital and premarital sex), sexual education (sex education and virginity pledges or less education about birth control and STIs) or socioeconomic (e.g., low or no education, parents highly educated, unemployment, low income, high income of parents, avoiding unwanted pregnancies).

Today, young adults in the Western culture believe it is necessary to explore the different possibilities available to them (Arnett, 2016). Online dating applications seem to facilitate or even incite and encourage these experiences and possibilities (Sumter et al., 2017). In such a context, condom use is one of the most effective ways to prevent STIs.

Sex outside romantic relationships (casual sex) is becoming more common in society, and scholars have consequently drawn more attention to the study of uncommitted sexual relationships (Fahs & Munger, 2015; Vanderdrift et al., 2012). A key aspect in the field of casual sex is socio-sexuality, a psychological construct defined as people's disposition toward casual sex that contributes to explain mating mechanisms in the social environment (Grollman, 2020). Socio-sexuality refers to differences in individuals' implicit prerequisites to entering a sexual relationship. According to Grollman (2020), it refers to individual differences in attitudes, behaviours, and desires for casual sex. These individual differences represent a continuum that ranges from the unrestricted socio-sexual orientation to the restricted socio-sexual orientation. The former orientation is characterized

by the predisposition and willingness to engage more easily and more often in uncommitted sexual relationships. The latter orientation is characterized by the need to have more time, stronger attachment, commitment, and closeness with romantic partners before willing to engage in sexual intercourse with them. Recently, the society has been inundated with complaints about sexual permissiveness and immorality among adolescents and young people. However, there is a low level of research on socio-sexuality and secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates in Nigeria. This study therefore seeks to fill this crucial gap in the existing literature. By investigating the intricacies of secondary abstinence potential among undergraduate students in selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria, the study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform evidence-based interventions and contribute to the broader discourse on sexual health among undergraduates in Nigerian universities.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant relationship between socio-sexuality and potential for secondary abstinence among undergraduates in selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria
2. There is no significant influence of socio-sexuality on potential for secondary abstinence among undergraduates in selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria.
3. There is no significant difference in the potential for secondary abstinence between male and female undergraduates in selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research Design: This study adopted the survey design which enabled the researcher to collect data from a cross-section of the target population without manipulating any of the predictor variables (socio-sexuality) but measuring them as they pre-exist among the participants in this study.

Population: The population of this study comprised of all undergraduates in selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria, namely, University of Ibadan and Lead City University, Ibadan. The availability of resources and expertise and the alignment with personal interests are part of the

reasons for selecting these two universities. Also, the proximity of the case study to the researcher's residence is another major factor. There are 13,790 undergraduates in the universities according to data obtained from the Registry Department of the institutions.

Sample and Sampling Technique: A sample of 375 students was determined through the Cochran's formula were selected from the population through the stratified random sampling technique. The choice of Cochran's formula for sample size determination gives a sample size large enough to sufficiently represent the entire population. Three hundred and seventy-five students were then selected from the two selected universities through the stratified random sampling technique which gives every student an equal probability of being selected. The sampling procedure involves an initial selection of two universities, made up of one public and one private university, namely University of Ibadan and Lead City University, through the simple random sampling technique which gives each university an equal opportunity of being selected. These two universities are considered as strata and stratified random sampling technique is then used to select 375 students from the two universities in such a way that the number of students selected from each university is proportional to the relative number of students in the university. The number of undergraduates in the University of Ibadan and Lead City University are 10,250 and 3,540. Three hundred and seventy-five students will then be selected from each of the universities in proportion to its relative frequency.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample proposed for this study.

Table 1: Distribution of the Sample

S/N	University	Population Size	Sampling Fraction	Sample Size
1	University of Ibadan	10,250	0.7433	279
2	Lead City University, Ibadan	3,540	0.2567	96
	Total	**13,790**		**375**

Instrumentation: The following instruments were used for data collection in this study

Students' Socio-Sexuality Scale: The Students' Socio-Sexuality Scale was developed by the researchers in line with the objectives of the study to measure socio-sexuality. It contains 13 Likert-type items with 5 points and responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree and the total scores on the scale range from 65, showing very high socio-sexuality to 13, indicating very low socio-sexuality.

Secondary Abstinence Potential Questionnaire: The Secondary Abstinence Potential Questionnaire (SAPQ) was developed in line with the objectives of the study to measure secondary sexual abstinence potential among the undergraduates. It contains 12 Likert-type items with 5 points and responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree and the total scores on the scale range from 60, showing very high secondary sexual abstinence to 13, indicating very low secondary abstinence.

Method of Data Collection: In order to effectively collect data for this study, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Department of Education, Babcock University, Ilisan-Remo, and trained a research assistant on how to conduct the administration of the instruments. The assistant was somebody who is familiar with selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. The introduction letter was tendered to the Dean at each of the selected faculties. After seeking and obtaining approval, the researcher and her assistant met with the student, in one of their lecture halls, intimated with the purpose of the exercise, informed that they are free to participate or not to participate in the study and seek their informed consent. Undergraduates who volunteer to participate were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of information they may give in order to prompt them to give truthful and sincere responses to the questionnaire items. The researcher and the assistant thereafter physically administer the questionnaires to the students who indicated their desire to take part in the study. To guarantee the integrity of data collected, the researcher closely monitored the administration of the instruments and give further clarifications and explanations where necessary. The completed questionnaires were collected immediately. The researcher then appreciated the participants and Dean for their cooperation and participation in the study.

Method of Data Analysis: The demographic data of the participants were analyzed using the descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage. The first hypothesis was tested using the Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis; the second hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression analysis; and the third hypothesis was analyzed by means of independent t-test. All tests were carried out at the .05 level of significance and executed by means of Version 26 of the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

RESULTS

Table 2: Correlation Matrix relationship between socio-sexuality and the potential for secondary abstinence

		Socio-sexuality	Secondary abstinence
Socio-sexuality	Pearson Correlation	1	.255**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	374	374
Secondary abstinence	Pearson Correlation	.255**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	374	374

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 revealed significant results (r = .255, p < .0005). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that there is a significant positive relationship between socio-sexuality and potential for secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates in selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Model Summary of the Regression Analysis for the influence of socio-sexuality on potential for secondary abstinence among undergraduates

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	24.114	2.128		11.334	.000
socio-sexuality	.288	.056	.255	5.092	.000
Source of variation	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F-Ratio**	**P**
Regression	632.888	1	632.888	25.930	.000[b]
Residual	9079.692	372	24.408		
Total	9712.580	373			

R = 0.255; Multiple R = 0.065; Multiple R^2 (Adjusted) = 0.063; SE = 4.940

a. Dependent Variable: socio-sexuality

b. Predictors: (Constant), secondary abstinence potential

The results in Table 3 revealed the strength of causation of the predictor variable on the criterion variable. Socio-sexuality was found to be a potent predictor of secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates (β = .255; t = 5.092; p = .000). Additionally, when the predictor variable (socio-sexuality) entered into the regression model, it influenced the secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates (R = .255; R^2 = .065; Adj. R^2 = .063; F (1, 372) = 25.930; p = .000). This showed that the predictor variable (socio-sexuality) accounted for 6.3% of the variance in the

secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of socio-sexuality on secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates was rejected by this finding. This implies that there is a significant influence of significant influence of socio-sexuality on secondary abstinence potential among undergraduates.

Table 4: Independent t-test of difference in the potential for secondary abstinence between male and female undergraduates

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	T	Sig.
Male	177	34.718	5.062	372	.544	.587
Female	197	35.005	5.148			

The results presented in Table 4 showed that there is no significant difference in the potential for secondary abstinence between male and female undergraduates in selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria (t = .544, p = 0.587 > .05). Therefore, the earlier set null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate one is sustained.

Discussion of Findings

The outcome of the first hypothesis revealed a significant positive relationship between socio-sexuality and potential for secondary abstinence among undergraduates in selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between socio-sexuality and secondary abstinence potential. This relationship suggests that students who exhibit higher levels of socio-sexuality are more likely to consider or exhibit secondary abstinence. One possible explanation is that students with a higher socio-sexual orientation may be more reflective and deliberate about their sexual choices, leading them to recognize the benefits of secondary abstinence. Additionally, this group may also be more responsive to interventions promoting sexual health and responsible sexual behaviors.

This finding supported those of several scholars who carried out related investigations. These include Baumeister & Vohs (2014) who examined the concept of sexual economics and its influence on sexual behavior and found a significant relationship between socio-sexual orientation and sexual decision-making, supporting the idea those individuals with higher socio-sexuality are more deliberate about their sexual choices, supporting the finding that higher socio-sexuality correlates with a higher potential for secondary abstinence. This finding also corroborated Penke

& Asendorpf (2018) who explored the impact of socio-sexuality on courtship and romantic relationships and found a significant relationship between socio-sexuality and sexual behavior, with individuals who have higher socio-sexuality being more reflective about their sexual decisions. This supports the idea that students with higher socio-sexual orientation may be more likely to adopt secondary abstinence (Ayodele et al., 2015).

The results of the second hypothesis showed a significant influence of socio-sexuality on secondary abstinence potentials among undergraduates in selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. This finding is noteworthy because it highlights the importance of inclusive health programs that address the young adult's sexual needs and behaviors. It also underscores the changing dynamics in sexual behavior and attitudes among young adults. This suggests that social and sexual factors play a role in shaping individuals' ability to maintain secondary abstinence. The fact that socio-sexuality accounted for 6.3% of the variance in secondary abstinence potential highlights the importance of considering socio-cultural influences when addressing abstinence behaviors. This finding corroborated Ajao & Owoaje (2018) who found that socio-cultural influences and individual beliefs played significant roles in shaping sexual behaviors. This finding also agreed with those of several authors (e.g., Muggleton & Fincher, 2017; Rodrigues & Lopes, 2017; Treger, 2015) who found that socio-sexuality positively influenced sexual behaviors. This finding also agreed with Sprecher & Treger (2015) who found that the decision to adopt secondary abstinence, especially among undergraduates, may be influenced by individual differences in socio-sexuality.

The third hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference in the potential for secondary abstinence between male and female undergraduates in selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested and found to be supported by data. It was subsequently upheld, leading to the conclusion that there is no significant difference in the potential for secondary abstinence between male and female undergraduates in selected universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. This finding agreed with Peterson & Hyde (2020) who examined the extent of gender differences in various aspects of sexuality and found that gender differences in sexuality are smaller than commonly assumed, particularly in contemporary contexts. This is supported the finding that there is no significant difference in secondary abstinence potential between male and female undergraduates. Additionally, this finding was supported by Lefkowitz & Gillen (2016) who investigated changes in sexual behaviors and attitudes among college students over time and found

no significant gender differences in sexual behaviors and attitudes, including secondary abstinence, over time. However, this finding contradicts the findings Ayodele & Akindele-Oscar (2014) who explored the moderating effect of gender on psychological inclinations associated with adolescents' sexual behavior and found significant gender differences in psychological inclinations associated with adolescents' sexual behavior. Male adolescents were found to have higher quality of relational esteem, internal control, relational motivation, and relational satisfaction, while the female higher on relational preoccupation, consciousness, anxiety, assertiveness, depression, monitoring and fear.

Conclusion

It was concluded that socio-sexual behavior played a significant role in influencing secondary abstinence potential, and there was a lack of gender differences in secondary abstinence potential, suggesting that interventions aimed at promoting secondary abstinence could be equally effective for both male and female students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Education policy makers should integrate socio-sexual education into existing abstinence programmes targeted at undergraduates. This can help individuals understand how socio-sexual factors impact their decisions regarding abstinence and equip them with the necessary skills to navigate these influences effectively.
2. Governments, school authorities, counselors and other stakeholders should design interventions to address specific socio-sexual factors that influence students' attitudes and behaviors towards abstinence. This might involve addressing peer pressure, societal norms, media influence and other socio-sexual determinants through targeted educational campaigns and support services.
3. University authorities, counselors and other stakeholders should adopt gender-neutral approaches in abstinence promotion. Rather than focusing solely on gender-specific messaging, interventions should aim to create inclusive environments that cater to the diverse needs and experiences of all students, regardless of gender.

4. Support systems for abstinence promotion should be enhanced within university settings. This could involve establishing peer support groups, counseling services and access to resources that provide students with the necessary support to maintain secondary abstinence despite socio-sexual pressures. Additionally, creating a supportive campus culture that values and respects individuals' choices regarding abstinence can further strengthen these efforts.

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