



Perception of the Non Consensual Sex among Secondary School Students in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the perception of the Non Consensual Sex (NCS) among secondary school students in Rivers State. A sample of 1161 secondary school students was selected for this study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in the study. 3 research questions were answered. The Questionnaire; titled perception of NCS was used to collect data. It was made of sections A; socio-demographic characteristics and B: perception of non-consensual sex items. The study adopted the descriptive cross sectional survey research design. Percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions. The study found out that secondary school students in Rivers State have positive perception towards non-consensual sex, perception of NCS differs among respondents based on age (10-14 years, mean 22.63, 5:72) and (15 and above, mean 19.33, SD:5.05) and that gender, Male (16.16, SD,5:72) and female (Mean 21.17, SD: 4.03). Based on the study finding some recommendations were made such as; reviewing the school curriculum for health, physical, home management and related subjects to emphasize NCS Perception to improve on those with negative perception towards NCS. Intensifying health awareness campaigns at all levels and enforcing the extant laws on NCS.

Keywords: Perception, Non-consensual sex, secondary school students Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

Perception refers to individual's view or interpretation of something or phenomena. This runs out of one's power of observation, understanding and experiences of the phenomena. Perception of non-consensual sex among most African society is that of a double standard, whereby men can or are free to have multiple sexual partners whereas women are men are free to become sexually coercive on females whereas females should accept any form of sexual approaches against their will, ranging from unwanted touching, threats and intimidation attempted rape and rape. Gender is held as a strong factor for explaining matters non-consensual sex. It is generally held that women are always victims of non-consensual sex and the perpetrators are the male especially in the African society. This could be that men do not report non-consensual sex at them. In the African setting, Nigeria alike, females are perceived to be recipient of non-consensual sex by their male counterparts.

Cook, Gidez, Koss and Murphy (2011) reported that more women than men had experienced non-consensual sexual activity. The secondary school students in Rivers State are made of male and female who may have non-consensual sexual experiences and may differ between the male and the female students. Being male or female further has a correlation to knowledge and perception of so many phenomena including non-consensual sex. Erulka (2004) reported that female involvement, knowledge and perception of non-consensual sex far outweigh that of the males. Secondary school students in Rivers State could have the contrary since social and cultural practices have changed in recent times. Hence student in Rivers State may not differ in knowledge and perception of non-consensual sex with respect to gender. However, apart from age and gender, the educational level of

the guardian/parent or who the students' live with, could have a strong part to play on students experiences, knowledge and perception of non-consensual sex.

Studies by Ajuwon, Akin-Jimoh, Olley and Akinlola (2011) has it that public discussions of sexually related issues are not common among the Yorubas in Nigeria, Direct mention of sexual intercourse is generally taboo and euphemisms are used instead e.g. Won b' are Won Sun (they slept with each other) Wonni Ayose Poo (They had something together). More recently, young people have begun to use the English word "fun" to describe sexual activity. The research further reported that there exists gender based double standards among the study population that multiple sexual partners are tolerated for males and that gender norms tolerate sexual coercion of women. Thus, it is considered acceptable for man to force a woman whom he likes, or has spent money on or is proximate to when he so needs sexual activity. Another reason given for the acceptance of coercion by men was the wearing of clothes that the man perceived to be suggestive of sex. Sexual aggression or coercive sex on women is seen as related to anger on the part of the male to which the female must accept or as a result of negative attitude towards women which should be seen as a consequence of proximity to people of the opposite sex (Dilillo & Degue, 2004). Imaledo et al (2012) research on perception of non-consensual sex relayed that it was wrong for a partner/girl or boy friend to beat his/her partner for refusing sexual contact, and that it is not right for a man to force his partner (girlfriend) to have sex with him. Further reports on reporting indicated that it was perceived as wrong for a man to report if he is forced to have sex by his girlfriend to the authority and that it is also not proper for the girl to report non-consensual sex either. The findings of Telljohann, James, Jodi, Everett and Casler (2009) also have it that only one in three students perceived that male was totally at fault. When a girl is dressed very sexy and gets raped. One in five believed that females who dressed sexy should expect sex, and also to in no small wise expect sex if he spends money on her.

A study by Adeyemi (1996) in Imaledo et al (2012) reported that if a boy has spent money on a girl, then pressure from the boy to engage in sex was acceptable. Reports by Jaya et al (2006) in urban India reveals that the adolescent surveyed perceive non-consensual sex as a common occurrence and so do not complain of non-consensual sexual attempts at them. According to Jejeebhoy (2007), many factors determine whether young persons perceive an incident as non-consensual sex. Young people who yield to their partners' demands against their will with regards to non-consensual sex as an expression of commitment may be described the incident as coercive.

Studies by Rarnakrishna, Karott and Murthy (2003) reported that boys in India were perceived talking about sex talk with adults as okay, if the adult can be trusted. Secondary school and street children out of or not in school use the word sex" when talking of sex related matters/themes. The surveyed group perceived sex as "work" (Khelsa). Masturbation is referred to as kakhelsa, oral sex as mouth work (baikhelsa) and anal sex as buckrk (hinde khelsa). Generally, street boys perceive sex as a bad work or dirty work. Overall, the study documented negative perception of boys to same sex forced intercourse, but consensual sex with girls was perceived as most pleasurable followed by non-consensual sex with girls (rape). When asked how they knew that rape was pleasurable, they replied that men in movies seem to enjoy it.

Studies by Ajuwon, Fawole and Kayode (2011) reported that the reasons for high level of violence in Nigeria is that, males generally perceive that a girl who refuses to accede to a request for friendship or sex is arrogant and rude and should be punished through rape. Similarly, Larry, Katebilila, Macaulay and Mbwanbo (2004) reported that in Tanzania, boys believed that young girls are "used to being forced" to have sex or that it is okay to beat a partner who refuses request for sex. Boyer and David (1992) documented perception of boys revolves around the erroneous belief that they have the right to have sex with any girl who has agreed to be their girlfriend. Ajuwon and Olaleye (2011) reported that in Nigeria, there exists a general perception which has turned a norm, that women are expected to play perceived roles in sexual relationships, deferring to men the decision regarding when, with whom and under what conditions to have sexual relationships. The study further reported that the perception that non-consensual sexual experiences are experienced by the female folk is not true and that efforts to address victims of non-consensual sex in the society at any setting; schools, churches, mosques, workplaces should concentrate on both the males and females.

Statement of the Problem

Students at the secondary school level in Rivers State have been engaging in non-consensual sex experiences without seeing it as a matter of no serious consequence in African societies, the study

area inclusive. Generally, non consensual sex is as being that of the male perpetrating and the female as recipient. This view makes it difficult to report offenders amidst the much paraded impunity of perpetrators in the public domain. The consequences of Non Consensual Sex (NCS) on the victim range from inability to socialize, inferiorly complex depression, obsessions attempted suicide, suicide HIV/AIDS among others. This study concentrated on the perception of students in Rivers State concerning non-consensual sex.

Purpose of the study

This study investigated the perception of non-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Question

The following research questions were asked to guild the study.

- 1) What is the perception of NCS among secondary schools students in Rivers State.
- 2) What is the perception of NCS among secondary schools students in Rivers State based on Age
- 3) What is the perception of NCS among secondary schools students in Rivers State based on gender

Significance of the study

This study has so many significant dimensions to it. The finding of this study is beneficial to students, guidance counsellors in schools, Health educators, schools administrators, Researchers and the media stations.

Research design

This study adopted the description survey cross sectional research design. The researcher collected data on the perception of NCS among secondary students in the Rivers State and analysed data collected without manipulating any variable in the study.

Area of the study

The study was carried out in Rivers State which is made of 247 schools, spread across 23 local government areas. Rivers State has boundaries with Akwa Ibom, Abia and Imo in the East, Bayelsa in the West, in the South Delta Sate and the Atlantic Ocean bounds it.

Population for the study

The population for the study consisted of 118, 903 secondary school students in Rivers State.

Sample size and Technique

The sample size consisted of 1161 senior secondary school students in Rivers State., which was arrived at by using the Taro Yemen formula for minimum sample size. Applying the formula 383 was arrived at, which was multiplied by 3.033 to better represent the population for the study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in the study, which was made of stratified, simple and proportionate sampling technique to select the sample size for the study.

Instrument for Date collection

The instrument for the data collection was the questionnaire titled perception of NCS, developed by the Researcher. The instrument is made of section A; Socio-Demographic characteristics of respondents and B. Perception of NCS; on a polychotomous response option.

Validation of the instrument

The instrument was validated by 5 experts in health education, reproductive, health sex socio-psychology and statistics.

Reliability of the instrument

The reliability of the instrument was tested using 67 students selected from those different from the sample. Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability and a coefficient value of 0.78 was gotten, which is high enough and was used for the study.

Method of data analysis

Data collected were analysis using mean, percentage and standard deviation.

RESULTS

Results are presented in tables 1 to 3

Research question 1: *What is the perception of non-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Descriptive statistics analysis showing perception of non-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers State

Perception	N	Mean	St. Deviation
A man should not refuse sex with his partner if he does not want.	1161	1.4686	.83310
It is good for a woman to refuse sex with her partner.	1161	2.4935	.94513
It is proper for a male to force a female to have sex.	1161	2.4332	1.16895
It is acceptable that boys should always report forced sex by a female.	1161	2.3290	1.58612
A woman is allowed to beat up a man for refusing sexual advances.	1161	2.8639	1.27864
Men are allowed to beat up a woman for refusing sexual advances.	1161	2.5917	1.19931
Women should touch men at the buttocks or breast against their wish.	1061	2.8340	1.07533
Men should touch women at the buttocks or breast against their wish.	1161	3.0241	1.16609
Total	1072	2.50475	1.156584

Table 1 showed descriptive statistics analysis of perception of non-consensual sex secondary school students in Rivers State. The result showed that the respondents strong indicated that men should touch women at the buttocks or breast against their wish (M = 3.02, SD = 1.16). This was followed by the fact that they perceived that a woman is allowed to beat up a man for refusing sexual advances (M = 2.86, SD 1.28) whereas women should touch men at the buttocks or breast against their wish (M = 2.83, S[] = 1.07) and men are allowed to beat up a woman for refusing sexual advances (M 2.59. SD. 19).

Research question 2: *What is the perception of non-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers State based on age?*

Table 2: Descriptive statistics analysis showing perception of non-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers State based on age

Age	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean %	Decision
10-14yrs	22.6301	173	4.16542	70.72	Excellent
15 and above	19.3289	988	5.04750	60.40	Very good

Table 2 showed the descriptive statistics analysis showing perception of non-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers State based on age. It showed that the mean perception of students under the age bracket of 10-14 years was M 22.63, SD = 4.17 while those in the age bracket of 5 years and above had a mean perception of M 19.33, SD 5.05.

Research Question 3: *What is the perception of non-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers State by gender?*

Table 3: Descriptive statistics analysis showing perception of non-consensual sex secondary school students in Rivers State based on gender

Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean %	Decision
Male	16.1565	313	5.72705	50.49	Good
Female	21.1733	848	4.02875	66.16	Very good

Table 3 showed that the mean perception of non-consensual among male secondary school students in Rivers State was 16.16, SD = 5.72 whereas the mean perception of non-consensual among female secondary school students was 21.17, SD = 4.03. The mean percent of male students (50.49%) over perception of non-consensual sex was good whereas that of female students was 66.16% which means very good or positive perception overall.

DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What is the perception of non-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers state?

The results in table 1 indicate that secondary school students in Rivers state have positive perception concerning non-consensual sex, since overall. Mean 2.50475, and standard deviation = 1.156584. However, specific instances of poor perception of non-consensual sex persists such as, unwanted touch and being allowed to beat victims who refuse. The result that students in the study area have positive perception concerning non-consensual sex is not surprising due to the fact that they seem to have experienced all the items of non-consensual sex identified by the researcher and so may have learnt from: e4etience the deleterious effects of non-consensual sex on the victims, hence their positive perception of non-consensual sex.

The findings of this study are in consonance with the reports of Imaledo et al (2012) who relayed that it was wrong for a boy/girl to beat up his/her partner for refusing sexual contact among university of Port-Harcourt students. Studies holding contrary opinion to the finding of this study are Ajunwon et al (2001) who reported negative perception of non-consensual sex among adolescents in Yoruba land. Jaya et al (2006) in urban India, Jejeebhoy (2007), Ramakrishna et al (2003), Larry (2004), Boyer and David (1992) and Ajuwon and Olaleye et al (2011) all reported negative perception concerning non-consensual sex, sexual coercion and rape.

Studies reviewed indicates that most of the studies on perception reported negative perception of non-consensual sex, this could be due to the fact that such studies may have been in places where health awareness campaign on the consequences, effects and problems inherent in non-consensual sex are not made public. Another reason for poor perc5tion could be due to the fact that non-consensual sex experiences are not reported (swept under the carpet) and so perpetrators and victims could still live with the erroneous view that it is not matter of serious impact.

Research Question 2: What is the perception on non-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers state based on age?

Table 2 shows that those aged 10-14 years had a mean = 22.63, SD = 4.17. Hence, (70.72%) whereas those aged 15 and above had mean = 19.33. SD 5.05 hence 64.40%. Further result on table 2 shows df = 11.59. T-value 8.130, P 0.00 at 0.05 significant alpha.

Hence, there is a significant difference in the mean perception of ion-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers state based on age. This result indicates that secondary school students aged 10-14years have a better perception of non-consensual sex as against those aged 15years and above. This could be due to the fact that most of those aged 15 and above seem to have had more cases or experienced more o non-consensual sex compared to those below that age, the fact that they would have had more experiences of non-consensual sex may have made them develop “learned helplessness” and perceive it as a regular or usual occurrence as against those who are below age 15. It will be pertinent to note that to the best of the researchers’ knowledge no scholar/researcher has documented any work on perception and age of respondents.

The researcher could conclude by saying that the higher the age the poorer the perception of non-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers stat.

Research Question 3: What is the perception of non-consensual sex among secondary school students in Rivers state based on gender?

Table 3 shows that M 16.16, SD = 5.72 for male students and that of female: M 21 .17, SD = 4.03, with a mean percent of 50.49% and 66H6% for male and female respectively. Table 3 further shows that df = 1159, T-value 16.676. P = 0.00 at 0.05 alpha level. Hence, significant result above indicates that there exist a significant difference in perception of non-consensual sex based on gender. Whereas table 3 shows that females have better perception of non-consensual sex compared to their male counterparts. Results by Imaledo et al (2012) reported that more females (58.6%) than males (41.4%) have positive perception about non-consensual sex among university undergraduates. Converse to this results are by Ajunwon et al (2001) reported that there exist gender based double standard such that multiple sex partners are tolerated for males and that females should accept coercion, hence a negative perception based on gender TeI1johnn et al (2009) further supported this study findings in their repo that 1 in 3 students perceived that the male was at fault to sexually coerce a female, as against I in 5 females who believed that females who dress sexy should expect sex. Adeyeme (1996) in Imaledo (2012), Jejeebhoy (2007) and Jaya el al (2006) reports a standard of accepting non-consensual sex

from the males whereas the female should yield to such advances irresistibly. These results with contrary opinions on perception of non-consensual sex based on gender could be due to hasty conclusion without subjecting such declarations to statistical tool for analysis to verify the postulation/declaration held by the researchers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The health, physical, home management and sex education curriculum should be repositioned by curriculum planners to include perception of non-consensual sex which will eventually modify the perception of the populace concerning NCS.
2. Intensifying health awareness campaigns by health educators at all level on the need to change erroneous perceptions of society concerning NCS.
3. The mass media should air more of convictions of sex offenders rather than the current trend giving impunity more attention.
4. Guidance counsellors should counsel beyond academic to probing into experience of NCS and helping clients in schools to redefine their perception of NCS.
5. The enforcement of NCS offences should be given more force by punishing sex offenders in accordance with the stipulated of the laws.

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