

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Influence of Religion on Adolescent Sexual Attitudes and Behaviour among Nigerian University Students: Affiliation or Commitment?

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Abstract

Religion plays a significant role in the life of individuals in any society. Its role as a moral builder has been variously acknowledged. This study examines the role of religion in adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviour in Nigeria. The study was conducted in two national universities in Nigeria with student population of more than 40,000. The institutions are located in the eastern and western parts of the country. Data for the study were collected from a representative sample of students resident in the universities. A total of 1,870 students were successfully interviewed but because of the age restriction for adolescents, information from 1,153 campus-based adolescents aged 10-24 years was analysed. Logistic regression model was used to do the analysis both at the adjusted and unadjusted levels. Findings are consistent with existing literature. There is a strong relationship between religiosity and adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviour, although religious commitment is more important than religious affiliation in affecting adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviours. This paper calls for further investigation to be able to disentangle the relationship between religiosity and adolescent sexuality, especially with the use of longitudinal data. Since religion affects the sexual lifestyles of adolescents, religious leaders can do a lot by mobilising their members towards supporting HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives in the country. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2005; 9[2]: 125-140)

Keywords: Adolescent, religiosity, affiliation, sexuality, HIV/AIDS

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