



Parenting Style and Self-Esteem as Predictors of Attitude toward Sexual Abuse among Adolescence in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This is a survey research method which examined parenting style and self-esteem as predictors of attitude toward sexual abuse among adolescence in Jalingo, Taraba State, Nigeria. A total of 250 secondary school students which consist of 117 male and 133 female from three selected school public school secondary school in Jalingo Local government area of Taraba state participated in the study. A simple randomize sampling technique was used and survey research method was adopted for this cross-sectional research design. “Self-esteem scale, Parenting style and attitude toward sexual abuse scale ATSA” was used. Three hypotheses were formulated using correlation matrix, multiple regression and independent t-test to test the formulated hypothesis. The result of the findings confirmed the stated hypothesis for this study. The finding of the study revealed that, there is significant relationship between parenting style and attitude towards sexual abuse among adolescence ($r=.419$, $df(248)$, $P<.01$) but no relationship was established between self-esteem and attitude towards sexual abuse ($r=-.123$; $df(248)$; $P>.05$). The study also indicated that self-esteem and parenting style jointly and significantly predicted attitude towards sexual abuse among adolescence ($R^2 = .175$, $F=26.26$, $P<.01$]. The predictor variables accounted for 17% of the total variation on attitude towards sexual abuse. Lastly, self-esteem has significant influence on attitude towards sexual abuse among adolescence; even adolescents with low self-esteem significantly and favourably dispose to sexual abuse than their counterparts with high self-esteem ($t=1.277$; $df= 248$; $P<.01$). Effective parenting style and behaviour modification were recommended for the study.

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Self-esteem, Parenting style, Child Sexual Abuse, Attitude and adolescence

INTRODUCTION

Sexual abuse occurs when adults use children or adolescent for sexual gratification or expose them to sexual activities. Sexual abuse may begin with kissing or fondling and progress to more intrusive sexual acts, such as oral sex and vaginal or anal penetration. Sexual abuse seen in childhood or adolescence is a debilitating event that can have serious, long-term physiologic and psychosocial effects (Elizabeth, Sandra, Lara, 2013). The impact of adolescent sexual abuse is well documented; it contributes immensely in poor school performance, substance abuse, delinquency, prostitution, sexual dysfunction, mental illness, suicide, and transmission of abusive behavior to subsequent generations (Rutter, Taylor, Hersov, Smith, & Bentovim, 1994; Goodwin, 1988; Kendall-Tackett, Meyer Williams & Finkelhor, 1993). It has been noted that over the past two decades, prevalence estimates of child sexual abuse among adolescents ranges between 6% and 62% for females and 3% and 31% for males (Rowan & Foy, 1993). Incident-Based Reporting System, which provided a data on sexual assault reported to law enforcement agencies, indicates that sexual assault is most prevalent among adolescents in contrast to any other age group, with 33% of all victims falling within the ages of 13years –17years (Rennison, 2002). It is important to note, though, that prevalence rates based on reported incidents are likely underestimates of the problem; only half of all adolescent victims will tell anyone about the incident (Davis & Lee, 1996) and only 6% will report the incident to authorities (Ackard & Neumark, 2002). The concept of parenting has become very relevant in the study of adolescents behaviour. Researchers have provided convincing evidence that parenting behaviour during adolescence period is an important determinant of offspring behaviour, Green (1995) stated that the family is the first setting that is capable of affecting children’s ability to function effectively in the society and even the coping strategies they

adopt in relationship emerge from their interaction with their parent. The effects of the quality of the dyadic mother-child-and-father-child experience are obviously manifested in the way the children perceived their parents role of childcare.

The research by Baumrind (1968, 1979, and 1991) delineated major pattern of parental behaviour using personal observation and standardized ratings. He described the major patterns of behaviour as authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and rejecting-neglecting. These four parenting styles were based on two important dimensions of parenting as described by Baumrind which are demandingness and responsiveness. She described demandingness to mean the claims parents made on adolescents to become integrated into the family whole by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys. Responsiveness according to her is the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive and acquiescent to the children's special needs and demand. Childhood sexual abuse is a social problem that is known worldwide and can have various adverse effects on people especially adolescent. Studies show that sexual abuse can have a negative effect on self-esteem for instance; Cortes Arboleda, Canton Duarte and Canton-Cortes (2011) compared a group of sexually abused victims to a group of individuals without a history of sexual abuse. Their results showed that female college students who had been sexually abused had lower self-esteem, had more negative attitude towards life, were less assertive, and had higher depression and anxiety scores than women in the comparison group. However boys who had been sexually abused only had higher anxiety levels compared to boys in the comparison group. Similarly Priebe, Hansson and Svedin (2010) and Pérez-Fuentes and colleagues (2013) did studies where sexual abuse was observed among adolescents. Their findings showed that history of sexual abuse was significantly correlated with lower self-esteem. Furthermore, according to Lam (2015) childhood sexual abuse significantly predicted lower self-esteem and more internalizing behaviour among adolescents. Some adolescents were exposed to sexual cruelty as result of the style of parenting used by their parents and some is as a result of their self-esteem. Parenting style, Child and Adolescence's sexual abuse is a one of the major social problem observed in the northeast of Nigeria, specifically Jalingo area of Taraba State. Hence, the need to probe into the attitude of adolescence towards sexual abuse this study as predicted by parenting style and self-esteem. The theoretical framework is based on the ecological model, Finkelhor's four pre-conditions model of sexual abuse and integrated models and framework. Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model of human development includes four interacting systems and these interacting systems have influence on child history of sexual abuse. The interacting systems of a child using Bronfenbrenner's ecological model are; Micro-system which is with the relationship between a child and his/her immediate environment e.g family, meso-system which is the interrelations among various immediate settings of the child, the exosystem which comprises the formal and informal social structures of the child such as school this settings may otherwise impose upon or encompass the child's immediate settings) and the macrosystem which is the cultural values and belief systems that influence the other setting or system (micro-, meso- and exosystems). Belsky (1980) on the other hand gave a model concerning the etiology of child maltreatment within the family based on Bronfenbrenner's model for example childhood histories of abusive parents or caregiver, the microsystem (the family/settings where the abuse takes place), the exosystem including formal and informal social structures such as social support systems, social economic status, neighbourhood that did not impinge the abused child but exert an impact upon his or her growth and development and, lastly, the macrosystem including larger cultural belief and values in the society for example, the societies' attitudes towards abuse, maltreatment, violence, corporal punishment, and children as a whole. The ecological model is used by international organisations such as WHO and ISPCAN in the context of policies, programmes for child maltreatment prevention and victim services (WHO, 1999; WHO & ISPCAN, 2006). Heise (1998) following Belsky's model developed an integrated ecological framework concerning violence against female, women or children, which can be applied to both individual and in cross-cultural levels. Based on Bronfenbrenner's, Belsky's and Heise's work, Grauerholz (2000) also developed an ecological approach to understand sexual re-victimization. Her model discovers how sexual re-victimization is being multiplied and determined by some factors associated to the victim's personal history for example history of child sexual abuse which may lead to the occurrence of the re-victimization for example inability or dwindled ability to resist unwanted sexual advances from the abuser, the community of the victim unavailability of social support from the community, lastly, cultural background of the victim which can be blaming the victim's attitude for such an occurrence

Finkelhor's four pre-conditions model of sexual abuse advanced four pre-conditions model of sexual abuse which is an effort to bring together various factors that have been discovered to pay a dominant role in the occurrence of sexual abuse among children both within and outside the family. This model has a high level of generality and is intended to be adaptable to all types of sexual abuse (Finkelhor, 1987). Finkelhor (1987) stated four preconditions that must be achieved before sexual abuse can take place which are: Motivation to abuse children so as to either satisfy an important emotional need, sexual arousal or blockage in the alternate means of sexual gratification. Secondly to overcome internal self-consciousness against acting on the motivation like using way to carry out such illicit behaviour such as alcohol, stress, cultural taboos and personality factor for example impulse disorder. Thirdly, the external impediment to acting on the motivation; external impediments may prevent sexual abuse, but these are weakened when children are poorly supervised. Lastly, When children are emotional insecure, lack of knowledge about sex, fear, having a cordial and trust relationship with the abuser can undermine child's resistance to sexual abuse.

The following hypothesis was raised for the purpose of this study:

1. There will be significant relationship among self-esteem, parenting style and attitude towards sexual abuse.
2. Self-esteem and parenting style will jointly and independently predict attitude towards sexual abuse.
3. Adolescents with low self-esteem will be significantly and favourably dispose to sexual abuse than their counterparts with high self-esteem.

METHODS

The research method adopted for this quantitative research was cross sectional design using survey research method, a total number of two hundred and fifty (250) adolescence which consist of one hundred and seventeen (117) male and one hundred and thirty-three (133) female were selected from Government College, Government secondary school and Government science secondary school in Jalingo Local government area of Taraba State using stratified sampling techniques. The researcher adopted already developed instruments, “. Rosenberg Self-esteem scale, Parenting style scale and attitude toward sexual abuse (ATSA) scale.” Three hypotheses were formulated using correlation matrix, multiple regression and independent t-test.

RESULTS

Table 1: Pearson correlation matrix showing relationship parenting style, self-esteem and attitude towards sexual abuse

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Parenting Style	52.29	11.97	-		
2. self-esteem	27.11	4.96	-.297**	-	
3.attitude towards sexual abuse	45.61	11.32	.419**	-.123	-

**p < .01; *p<.05

The result of the findings confirmed the stated hypothesis for this study. The finding of the study revealed that, there is significant relationship between parenting style and attitude towards sexual abuse among adolescence ($r=.419$, $df(248)$, $P< .01$) ; no relationship between self-esteem and attitude towards sexual abuse ($r=-.123$; $df(248)$; $P>.05$) but significant negative relationship was established between parenting and self-esteem ($r=-.297$; $df(248)$; $P<.05$).

Table 2: Summary of Regression analysis showing the influence of self-esteem and parenting style on attitude towards sexual abuse.

Model	R	R ²	F	P	β	T	P
Constant	.419	.175	26.26	.01			
Self-esteem					0.02	.026	N.S
Parenting style					.419	6.927	<.01

Dependent Variable: Attitude towards sexual abuse

Predictor Variables: self-esteem and parenting style

The study also indicated that self-esteem and parenting style significantly predicted attitude towards sexual abuse among adolescence [$R^2 = .175$, $F=26.26$, $P<.01$]. The predictor variables accounted for 17% of the total variation on attitude towards sexual abuse. Self-esteem did not have significant influence on attitude towards sexual abuse among adolescence ($t=.026$; $df= 248$; $P>.05$) but parenting style predicted attitude towards sexual abuse ($t=6.927$; $df= 248$; $P<.01$).

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Table 3: Showing Summary of Independent t- Test of Gender on Psychological Wellbeing

Attitude towards sexual abuse	Self-esteem	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	T	P
	Low	138	46.43	9.79	248	1.277	>.01
	High	112	44.59	12.93			

This result also revealed that there is significant influence of self-esteem on attitude towards sexual abuse such that adolescents with low self-esteem significantly and favourably dispose to sexual abuse than their counterparts with high self-esteem. (Low=46.43, High= 44.59, $t = 1.277$, $P>.01$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study examines parenting style and self-esteem as predictors of attitude towards sexual abuse among adolescence in Jalingo, Taraba state. The study revealed that self-esteem did not correlate with attitude towards sexual abuse but parenting style correlated with attitude towards sexual abuse among adolescence; it can be deduced from the findings that both parenting style and self-esteem predicted attitude towards sexual abuse and the predicted variable accounted for 17% of the variance. While parenting style predicted attitude towards sexual abuse, self-esteem did not predict attitude towards sexual abuse but it can be revealed that adolescent with self-esteem were dispose to sexual abuse compare to their counterparts with high self-esteem and this supports the findings of Cortes Arboleda, Canton Duarte and Canton-Cortes (2011); who found out that female college students who had been sexually abused had lower self-esteem, had more negative attitude towards life, were less assertive, and had higher depression and anxiety scores than boys who had been sexually abused. Priebe, Hansson and Svedin (2010) and Pérez-Fuentes and colleagues (2013) revealed that history of sexual abuse was significantly correlated with lower self-esteem while Lam (2015) asserted that childhood sexual abuse significantly predicted lower self-esteem and more internalizing behaviour among adolescents.

Thus, the study concluded that parenting style and self-esteem significantly predicted attitude towards sexual abuse among adolescence. The researchers therefore suggested that parenting would be effective if parents are actively involved in the overall development of their children, best parenting approach/style should be used to nurture their children and adolescent with low self-esteem should ask for the service of a behavioural therapy for behaviour modification and adolescence who has been sexually abused should consult any available government agencies or Non-government organization with specialty in child/adolescence sexual abuse related matters in their locality for help. Lastly government should provide and create adequate body responsible for cases of abuse of any forms, kinds or types especially in the rural areas.

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