

SEXUALITY EDUCATION AMONG NEGLECTED ADOLESCENTS: The Case of Out-of-School Female House-Helps

EZEBUNWA E. NWOKOCHA

&

PATRICIA TAIWO

University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

Adolescent sexuality constitutes one of the most unattended aspects of young people's development in Nigeria. Consequently, reproductive health mishaps such as sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancies, abortion, maternal morbidity and mortality are common features among different categories of women. This study which anchored on Social Action and Rational Choice Theories investigated sexuality education among out-school female adolescent house-helps in Ibadan as a way of understanding the culture of silence that characterises young people's sexual orientation. Data were collected through 1020 questionnaires administered on employers of house-helps selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. In-depth Interviews were conducted among 27 respondents - 21 house-helps and 6 house-help employers. In addition, 2 case studies were undertaken among house-helps. Findings reveal that although a large majority of adolescents do not receive sex education from parents and guardians, house-helps are disproportionately more disadvantaged. Some house-helps are given sexuality education not primarily for their personal benefit but as a means to indirectly educate guardians' biological children since these employers' comfort levels are low to personally do that. Prioritising sexuality education among adolescents and house-helps in particular can go a long way in demystifying unnecessary insensitivity that pervades sexuality discourses among Nigerian youths.

BACKGROUND

Studies have repeatedly shown that sexual orientation for young people in Nigeria poses a challenge due to unwillingness of parents and guardians to undertake the responsibility (Isiugo-Abanihe 2011; Madunagu 2007). This non-responsive attitude is explained by reasons such as low comfort level among older family members to engage in sexuality discourses with adolescent

(Nwokocha 2011), preoccupation with economic activities at the expense of young people's sexual orientation (Isiugo-abanihe 2005), lack of experience (Utomo and McDonald 2009) and the belief that ignorance will bolster chastity (Madunagu 2007; Rosen, Murray & Moreland 2004), while sex education will encourage sexual exploration (Oyediran, Isiugo-Abanihe & Isiugo-Abanihe 2006). As a result, sexual orientation among adolescents is either not prioritised or virtually not given by older family members. Yet, sexual activities begin early in Nigeria especially among women with more than 15 per cent of girls having had sex by age 15 (NPC & ICF, Macro 2009).

A significant number of adolescents in Nigeria are not aware of issues related to menstruation, ovulation, breast development, self-esteem and assertiveness (Isiugo-Abanihe and Isiugo-Abanihe 2007). Interestingly, most of these young people are sexually active (Olugbenga-Bello 2009), even when parents find it hard to admit that some of these adolescents are involved in voluntary sexual intercourse (Bankole and Malarcher 2010). To be sure, sex education is beneficial to all categories of adolescents. Among adolescent virgins, such knowledge will likely promote efforts at avoiding premarital sex, which is already de-stigmatised in several youth-quarters (Nwokocha 2007). For adolescents who, for some reason, have already had sex, the orientation is also necessary for future sexual reproductive health decisions.

Indeed, the consequences of sexuality related ignorance, which include early premarital sexual debut, unplanned pregnancy, abortion, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and maternal morbidity and mortality (Nwokocha 2010), are enormous. Adolescents' vulnerability to poverty, neglect, hunger and diseases explains the quantum of academic investigations on this category of young people. However, literature is disproportionately skewed towards in-school adolescents while neglecting the out-of-school cohort. This study focuses specifically on female adolescent out-of-school house-helpers ranked among the most neglected of all adolescent groups with regard to sexuality education. Unlike adolescents with other potential sources of sexuality information, out-of-school house-helpers are not given the opportunity of receiving sex education from teachers, social advocates and counsellors. Gaining such knowledge therefore is unilineal and depends on the disposition of household members who might themselves be ignorant or shy to do so.

The major aim of this research is to explore the predisposition of employers of house-helpers towards sexuality education of the latter with reference to Ibadan city. Specific issues to be examined include those related to house-help employers' knowledge of sexuality, determinants, patterns and consequences of not educating these young adolescents on such a crucial

aspect of human development and the policy implications with a view to re-orienting relevant stakeholders on the increasing need of comprehensive sex education for young people in an era of youth disconnection from family and community values.

THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Weber's Social Action and Coleman's Rational Choice Theories. The action theory examines the cause and effect relationship in human interactions within a given social context. Weber views social action as people's behaviour and reactions that take into cognisance those of others. This presupposes that individuals act on the basis of the meaning attached to a given situation that should ordinarily derive from a thought process. As such actions should not be products of reflex, but generated out of motives or intentions. In the same light, guardians and employers that give sex education to their house-helps may do so for a particular motive. This individualised approach to understanding the motives of individual actors though severely criticised as situating the perspective within the domain of psychology rather than sociology (Ritzer 2008; Macionis & Plummer 2005), is relevant in explaining the subjectively attached meanings among guardians with regard to sexuality education of house-helps.

To be sure, the influence of group norms and culture on guardians has negligible impact on their involvement in sexuality education among young people generally. Although most cultures and family values in Nigeria are silent on sex orientation of young people, risky sexual behaviours are however condemned in most quarters not only due to the health implications but also the likely resultant socioeconomic consequences. As such, individual subjectivity and conviction are more crucial in understanding sex education or lack of it for young household members. Weber's *means-ends rationality* focuses on the expectations of the actor that supposedly take into account other people in the environment, as a condition for attaining rationally calculated ends. For instance, a guardian may either withhold sex education from adolescents if s/he is convinced that it will not only expose them to damaging information but also to peers that they may come in contact with.

These guardians could also, on the contrary, de-mystify sex education by giving such orientation to adolescents convinced that it will equip them with assertive skills and necessary knowledge to cope with issues related to sexuality that would find expression in making informed decisions. Such parental boldness at orientating young people could translate to indirect education of a host of other adolescents, through peers, in the community. In addition, the

situation could be explained within the context of *value rationality* which views action as a product of conscious belief in its ethical, aesthetic or religious value irrespective of its likelihood for success (Ritzer, 2008 citing Weber 1921/1968). Thus, some parents or guardians may educate young people on sexuality not necessarily for the use that such knowledge will be put into, but as a moral responsibility and social requirement or expectation. The implication inherent in the latter rationality is that in settings where pervasive silence characterises sexuality discourses, the issue of morality does not arise; therefore ignoring that responsibility does not evoke any form of guilt.

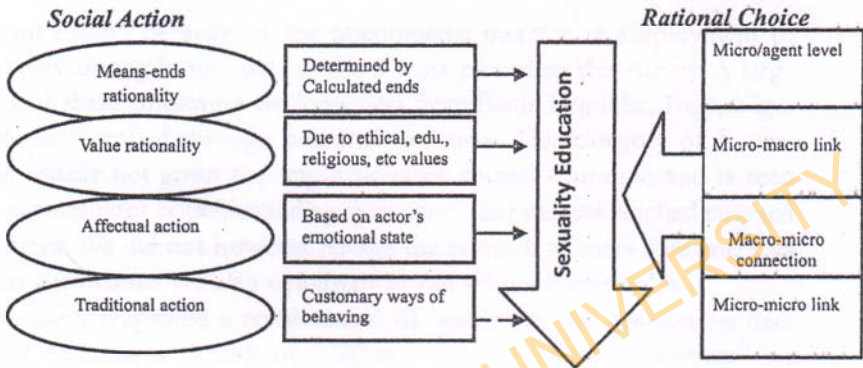
The *affectual* action is determined by an actor's emotions and psychological dispositions (Haralambos, Holborn & Heald 2004). Thus, even when an action is necessary, in this case sexuality education, undertaking such will not depend on its use or ethical value but the potential actor's mindset. Perhaps, this over-emphasis on the actor without a corresponding focus on other individuals or the group explains Weber's less concern with this type of action. The *traditional* action is less relevant in explaining sexuality education among adolescents in Nigeria particularly out-school house-helpers as explained in the conceptual framework (see Figure 1).

The Rational Choice Theory also emphasises the primacy of the micro or individual level for social analysis. The position of this perspective is that individuals act purposively towards their goals or desires; doing so to maximize utility which is tied to values and preferences (Ritzer 2008). Therefore, educating adolescents on sexuality or avoiding it would depend on whether the prospective educator perceives the act as necessary to enable young people avoid risky sexual behaviours that could culminate in consequences such as unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and mortality. Thus, avoidance of such act could be translated to mean shielding young people from harmful information which ordinarily could make them promiscuous. Whichever way, the actor tries to justify his/her action. The justification may however contradict the behavioural structures or expectations of other individuals in the system.

The conceptual framework that follows represents a synthesis of the two perspectives adopted in this analysis. Figure 1 shows the connection between social action and rational choice theories, which though are located within the realm of sociological analysis, have strong individual components as basis of human action. Both social action and rational choice theories explain sex education among out-of-school adolescent house-helpers at four levels. The *means-ends* rationality equated to *micro/agent* level focuses wholly on the individual without emphasis on the system. At the second level, the community

is gradually introduced through an actor's consideration of other individuals beyond perceived utility of an intended action such as sexuality education for young people. We note that ethics, religion, education among other social issues exist only to the extent that a group of individuals are involved.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Nwokocha & Taiwo 2012

Unlike the first two stages, the third and fourth levels of these theories are not closely related in explaining the thematic phenomenon. For instance, while *affectual* action is purely individualistic, the *macro-micro* connection indicates the impingement of community norms and values on actions of individuals. The *micro-micro* link focuses on how an individual's behaviour could influence another. A neighbour could be persuaded to introduce sexuality education for adolescents in his/her household simply because someone had consistently done it and achieving enviable results. Little emphasis is paid to *Traditional* action given that sexuality education for adolescents is not a customary way of behaving among a large majority of Nigerian parents and guardians as literature has repeatedly shown (Utomo and McDonald 2009; Madunagu 2007; Isiugo-abanihe 2005). The broken arrow represents the fallacy of such action leading to sexual orientation of young people and adolescents in particular. The customary way rather has been the avoidance of sexuality discourses over generations, what Nwokocha (2010) aptly describes as culture of silence.

The framework also indicates that the flow of sexuality education is unidirectional – top to bottom. This will likely remain the trend in the guardian/house-help relationship considering that these employees are usually not considered capable of contributing meaningfully to such and other issues. The situation would not be the same when these adolescents are biological

children. In the latter context, Nwokocha (2011) suggests a bottom-top approach wherein due to exposure of young people to more information, they should rather take sexuality orientation to parents, guardians and other uninformed adults. A strategy that would surely demystify such important but neglected discourse.

METHODS

We chose Ibadan because of the phenomenal increase in employment of house-helps among households in the 5 years preceding this survey. A large majority of these employees are foreigners from Benin Republic, Togo, Niger and Liberia recruited through informal networks. This category of house-helps is usually not given the opportunity of formal education and is seen purely as employees notwithstanding their ages. That way, we reached targeted respondents. We did not however restrict the research to these foreigners, as Nigerian adolescents are also employed as out-school house-helps.

The study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. A total of 1020 questionnaires were administered on employers of at least one out-of-school female house-help; 27 In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) were conducted among house-helps and their employers/guardians. In addition, 2 case-studies were undertaken on selected house-helps identified through key information. Fieldwork started with IDIs which provided the preliminary insight that necessitated design of the quantitative instrument. A sample questionnaire was designed and pre-tested in locations other than those selected for the data collection. The final questionnaire included 52 closed and open-ended items addressing house-help employers' knowledge, attitude and behaviour towards sexuality education, implications of ignorance among others.

Field Assistants, a large majority of whom were females, were trained in a one-day workshop. Sampling procedure for selection of questionnaire respondents started with clustering of Ibadan into 11 districts to reflect Local Government Areas (LGAs); three clusters were selected through the simple random method. The selected districts were further clustered into small units for inclusiveness. The final stage involved use of purposive sampling technique to choose respondents, at household level, who had employed at least one out-school house-help prior to the study.

In-depth interviews were conducted with 21 house-helps of different categories which included seven in each of the selected areas. Attempt was made to ensure balance between the statuses of interviewees on the basis of employers' occupation wherein two categories were emphasised – civil service

and trading groups. In addition, six IDIs were conducted on the basis of prior categorisations that emphasized location and occupational activities. Each IDI lasted for 60-75 minutes. Interviews with house-helpers ascertained their sexuality knowledge and sources of information, their limitations to such data and use of knowledge gained. Interviews with house-help employers were aimed at eliciting information on their sexuality knowledge, their comfort level in discussing sexuality with young people and coping strategies. Two case studies were undertaken by employing the life-history approach. This method entailed identification of two house-helpers with divergent histories, particularly as house-helpers. One of the cases had stayed in a household for not less than five years, consecutively, and largely acculturated into employer's family values. The other was engaged in at least three households, with varying orientations, in the five years preceding the study.

Ethical considerations were emphasized throughout fieldwork. The consent of both respondents and participants was sought prior to their participation in the study; the right to withdraw at any point or withhold information perceived to impinge on their privacy was fully acknowledged and respected. In addition, their confidentiality was guaranteed to the extent that information would never be traced to these participants. In the course of sampling, a large number of men declined participation, which although a marked limitation of the study was respected in line with ethical expectations.

Qualitative data analysis involved the use of ethnographic summaries and content analysis. The procedure began with the translation and transcription of tape recordings of IDIs. These were followed by the examination and, later, thematic isolation of various responses that threw light into study objectives. By adopting this method, responses from in-depth interviews complemented questionnaire survey. Quantitative data were edited and cleaned to eliminate inconsistencies that could undermine validity and reliability. Data generated from pre-coded, open-ended and fixed choice questions were entered using Microsoft Access software in order to minimize data entry error and to ensure effective data management. These data were finally exported and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) at univariate and bivariate levels to indicate percentages and test of associations.

RESULTS

Table 1 which shows the socio-demographic profile of respondents reveals that about 70 per cent are female, while the rest are male. Slightly over 75 per cent of respondents are within ages 18-45, however the least frequencies for age categories are among those age 18-25 (5.8%) and 56 years and above

(6.3%). Respondents whose ages ranged from 26-45 years had the highest frequency, representing more than 69 per cent of the total. Over 80 per cent of the respondents are either married or cohabiting while others, for some reason, were not married at the time of survey. A large majority of the respondents are Christians (78.4%) and slightly over 79 per cent had more than secondary school education. These education attainment statistics are exceptionally high considering that in the Southwest where the study was conducted, the NDHS (2008) revealed an average tertiary education attainment for males at 12.7 per cent and females 9.9 per cent.

Table 1
Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 1,020)

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Sex		
Male	301	30.2
Female	695	69.8
Age in groups		
18-25	57	5.8
26-35	357	36.5
36-45	322	32.9
46-55	180	18.4
56+	62	6.3
Marital Status		
Single	141	14.0
Married/cohabiting	816	81.0
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	50	5.0
Religion		
Christianity	792	78.4
Islam	210	20.8
Traditional/ others	8	0.8
Highest Educational level		
No formal	22	2.2
Primary	21	2.1
Secondary	133	13.1
Tertiary	808	79.3
Occupation		
Civil servant/professionals	522	52.2
Trader/Business	321	32.1
Private company	74	7.4
Students	67	6.7
Unemployed	4	0.4
Retired	11	1.1

These differences are likely a function of the specific areas of data collection, wherein Ibadan was not only purposively selected but also Ibadan-North Local Government Area (LGA) where Nigeria's premier University and a state polytechnic are situated. In addition, the LGA hosts the University College Hospital (UCH) arguably the biggest public health facility in West Africa and the Oyo State secretariat with 17 ministries. Clearly, most stakeholders in these establishments especially as employees have some level of tertiary education.

Table 1, also reveals that about 92 per cent of the respondents were involved in one employment activity or the other, while the rest were not actively engaged in economic activities either as students, unemployed or retired. The majority of the respondents are civil servants and professionals such as bankers, doctors and accountants among others. Table 2 indicates the reasons for engaging house-helpers, by guardians, with about 64 per cent identifying assistance in house chores as the main reason. The second most important reason for employing house-helpers is for them to stay with family members (17.1%) including children. As such, their level of sexuality knowledge, attitude and behaviour will have implications for what happens to young family members.

Table 2
Reasons for Employing House-helpers

<i>Reasons (multiple response)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Assist in house chores.	651	63.9
Assist in business	55	5.4
Keep one's company	15	1.5
Stay with children/family members	174	17.1
Assist house-helpers' parent	5	0.5

The least identified reason for engaging adolescent house-helpers is using it as a means to assist their parents through the wage that the latter receive for their wards' activities. Table 3 deals with respondents' knowledge of sexuality education. Table 3 shows that over 70 per cent of the respondents received some form of sexuality education in their youth; this result is a deviation from the established notion of intergenerational neglect of sexual orientation and secrecy that shroud matters relating to sexuality (Utomo & McDonald 2009; Egbochukwu & Ekanem 2008; Esere 2008). Although, most of the respondents are literate at the level of tertiary school education, studies in Nigeria and elsewhere have demonstrated a lack of association between parents' level of education and sexual orientation of young people; cultural perception

and family values are rather more definitive in shaping people's attitude to such education (Nwokocha 2011; Buckley *et al.* 2004).

More than 55 per cent stated that adolescents should receive such education, indicating a 15 per cent difference between the number of parents/guardians who received sexual orientation as young persons (70.4%) and their views about adolescent eligibility for sexuality education. Interestingly, 39 per cent of these respondents stated that such education should be for everybody, alluding to the view that several adults are also ignorant about these issues.

Table 3
Employers' Knowledge of Sex Education-(N = 1020)

<i>House-help Employers' response on sex education</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Received any form of sex education as a young person		
• Yes	711	70.4
• No	299	29.6
Who should receive sex education		
• Adolescent	532	55.4
• Adults (married couples)	18	1.9
• Children	23	2.4
• Females	14	1.5
• Everybody	374	38.9
Understanding of sex education (multiple response)		
• Teaching about dangers of pre-marital sex	774	76.0
• Teaching about opposite sex	130	12.8
• Teaching about puberty/sex organs	136	13.3
• Teaching about protective/preventive measures	51	5.0
• Teaching about sexual diseases	23	2.3
Perceived importance of sex education		
• Prevent STIs, HIV/unwanted pregnancy/abortion	451	44.2
• Aware of pre-marital sexual consequences	145	14.2
• Safeguarding marriage and preventing harassment	230	22.6
• Better understanding of opposite sex	267	26.2
• Promote good health	28	2.7
• Gives sense of belonging/confidence	20	2.0
• Reduces immorality in the society	4	0.4

Table 3 also reveals that a large majority of respondents identified teaching about the dangers of premarital sex (76%) as the major issue in understanding sex education. The least emphasis was placed on awareness of sexually transmitted diseases (2.3%). These responses go a long way to show gaps in respondents' knowledge; we observe that all aspects are as crucial as others in

ensuring comprehensive sexual orientation among adolescents. In addition, equipping malleable youth with assertive and negotiation skills were not identified by respondents. These skills are synonymous with practice or behaviour that interrogates adolescents' acquaintance with what was learned and their level of preparedness to contend with sexuality and sex (Egbochukwu & Ekanem 2008). Surely, comprehensive sexuality education will not only promote abstinence but also the ability of young people to resist pressure for unwanted coitus (Rosen *et al.* 2004).

Indeed, without developing a firm attitude towards making the right decisions such as 'saying no' to dangerous sexual advances, the theoretical component and mere knowledge of sexual issues among adolescents amount to efforts in futility. For instance, respondents identified prevention of STIs, unwanted pregnancy and abortion (44.2%) as the single most important reason for sexuality education among adolescents and house-helpers in particular. Achieving this goal will require appreciable level of assertiveness and negotiation capacity that should culminate in deferring sex to adult years and within marriage. This has become a rarity among young people in Nigeria even when public opinion indicates that premarital sex is dangerous (Olubunmi 2011). As Nwokocha (2007) observed, being a virgin evokes stigma and discrimination among some category of young females who, also, readily use stereotypic labels to discredit a rather enviable virtue. It has been revealed that an estimated one million Nigerian teenagers become pregnant yearly (Isiugo-Abanihe 2011), which clearly shows failure to prioritise sex education. One of the IDI respondents demonstrated non-prioritisation or outright condemnation of sex education by stating:

Am not sure you know what you are asking me to do... I cannot imagine calling my house girl and discussing what... I do not even do that with my own children, talk less of that girl. I believe at the right time they would learn from their older school mates as we did during our youth days. Am not sure any parent would want to do that, we are not *Oyibo* (meaning white people) that hardly respect elders.

The tone and passion exhibited by this respondent against sex education for adolescents translate to equating it with taboo. This explains her uniform application of silence to adolescents including biological children and the house-help. Two possible reasons for this attitude are the conception of adolescents as too young to be so educated and its negation of cultural values and practices. However, Table 3 also reveals that as high as 22.6% of the respondents stated that sexuality education is important and as a means for preparing adolescents for stable marriage later in life. Another 26.2% noted

that it is essential for a better understanding of the opposite sex. While these may be long term and remote goals of sexuality education, the proximate importance of the activity rather relates to the ability of young people to understand themselves and how to confront the challenges of physiological changes and sexual advances from peers especially the opposite sex. The capacity of adolescents, particularly girls, to cope with sexual pressures is undermined by rape and childhood sexual abuse which are common occurrences in Nigeria (Olley 2008; Biddlecom, Gregory, Lloyd, Mensch 2008).

The patterns of out-school sexuality education contexts were highlighted by house-helpers. One of them stated during an in-depth interview:

I was never taught anything like that ... my madam would always shout and beat me at the slightest provocation. In fact, I tremble at the sight of her because of her persistent threat. The fear that her voice emits would not even let me learn if she decided to talk about sexual issues. I would rather think that she, giving the unusualness that such action would convey, was seeking an avenue to bully me as is customary.

The above house-helper was never taught and even if she were to be, the likelihood of understanding the issues was remote. Considering that sexual discourses are sensitive, the most effective way of conveying it to young people is by patience, appeal and persistent engagement with the issues. Unnecessary toughness, as exhibited by the employer above, would rather discourage learning.

Another narrated:

It is only when there is an incident especially when madam hears that some girl was pregnant, involved in abortion or contracted sexually transmitted diseases or that a house girl was caught in immoral acts that she comes home to shout and recount the story as though I was the culprit. Ordinarily, our relationship is defined by the house-hold activities she would want me to do and nothing more.

This situation is synonymous with *ad hoc* and indirect conveyance of sexuality message. To be sure, such mood-dependent and tension characterised discourses hardly contribute to learning. Moreover, recounting, alone, what happened elsewhere does not speak to the nitty-gritty of sexuality education such as physiological changes and their implications, the essence of assertiveness and right judgements. In addition, one of the case-study respondents stated:

This is my fifth employment as a house-helper. Apart from one family where my madam advised on the dangers of sex outside marriage by telling me

that as soon as a boy touches me I will be pregnant, I never had of that in any other place that I have worked including the present one. I try to keep to myself and once madam's nephew attempted touching me beside the garage I reported to her immediately.

The implication of frequent change of house-holds by adolescents referred to as floating house-helpers (Nwokocho 2011) is that they are not able to consolidate what was learned before these relocations take place. Perhaps, this set of house-helpers is the most disadvantaged given variations in experiences and the challenges that accompany new assignments. We note that prompt reporting of advances alone does not translate to adequate knowledge of sexuality issues; such reaction could also have resulted from personal conviction about its wrongness rather than from carefully inculcated assertiveness. The case of one IDI respondents was quite different and unusual, she narrated:

Oga's wife had on several occasions tried to talk to me about the dangers of sex with the boys especially pregnancy... she always asked me to extend what she discussed to her three daughters as she did not know how do that directly... she encouraged them to be close to me but never told them the reason. I did as she suggested and am sure they are getting the message. I am treated well by the family and have been promised that I will start schooling as soon as their young son is enrolled into a kindergarten.

The above scenario is a confirmation of low comfort levels among Nigerian parents and guardians. Although the pattern, whereby family elders keep some distance away from adolescents on matters related to sexuality but do undertake that responsibility by proxy, is not encouraged, our position is that it is better than nothing. The inherent limitations of such delegated responsibility include the chances of not conveying the messages exactly as intended, lack of opportunity to elicit feedback on issues that bother one's own children and possibility of calculated mischief to get back at employers for previous wrong treatment, among others.

Table 4 shows that level of education does not have significant relationship-p with perception of sex education among adolescents and house-helpers in particular. Although respondents with tertiary education presented the highest frequency among those that perceived it as largely important the level of significance (.775) clearly reveal lack of association.

The summary of Table 4 is that all other variable remaining constant, the extent to which sex education is perceived as important is not affected by respondents' level of education. We contend that the experiences of a prospective educator rather than the level of education would play more role in determining perception towards the importance of sex education for

Table 4
Education and Level of Importance Attached to Sex Education

	<i>Extent to which sex education is important</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Large extent</i>	<i>Low extent</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	
No formal education	16	1	0	17
Primary school	14	3	0	17
Secondary school	97	7	1	105
Tertiary	626	40	2	668
	Pearson's Chi-square [df] 5.648 [9]*			
	Significance Value 0.775			

adolescents. For instance, a highly literate person who may not have had negative experiences resulting from non-sexual education of young family members is likely to ignore such education. This would be unlikely for an illiterate whose experiences are the exact opposite. Indeed, the latter is more likely to seek solutions, which could include family reorientation and information gathering, to forestall future occurrences.

Table 5 interrogates the link between respondents' level of education and the relationship with perception of appropriateness of a unified sex education content for both biological children and house-helpers. Again, the table indicates that respondents' level of education did not necessarily affect their perception of the appropriateness of using the same sex education content for both categories of adolescents.

Table 5
Level of Education and Appropriateness of Unified Content of Sex Education

	<i>Whether it was considered appropriate to give both biological children and house-helpers same content of sex education</i>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
No formal education	19	3	22
Primary school	19	1	20
Secondary school	116	11	127
Tertiary	729	44	773
	Pearson's Chi-square [df] 3.765 [3]*		
	Significance Value 0.288		

The lack of association is shown in the level of significance (.288), suggesting that factors outside respondents' educational level influenced perception of appropriateness. Community norms and values, family

orientation, childhood experiences and place of residence among others may individually and/or collectively affect perception of respondents.

DISCUSSION

The participation of far more females than males in this study resulted from the latter's decline and their position that sexuality falls within the domain of feminine discourse. However, considering that patriarchal ethos still defines spousal communication and decision making, we consider the views of these women as reflections of household positions with men as leaders. To be sure, respondents' levels of education contradict the reality of most communities in Nigeria irrespective of status as urban or rural. Although likely justifications for this anomaly have been adduced, we are persuaded to suggest that undertaking a comparative analysis of two significantly different locations would give a better picture of reality.

It is clear from the findings that although respondents readily identified some important reasons for sexuality education among house-helpers, their knowledge of what should constitute such orientation was incomplete. At best, what was mainly emphasised related to the theoretical such as the consequences of premarital sex, abortion and to a less extent HIV/AIDS. No mention was made of assertiveness and negotiation skills that actually translate to practical application of what was learned. This lack of comprehensiveness aligns with the views of 39 per cent of the respondents that suggested the need for sexual orientation for every family member. Indeed, the desired goal of sex education can only be realised in contexts that emphasise the melding of the theoretical and practical. From the point of view of *means-ends* rationality (Ritzer 2008; Macionis & Plummer 2005), engaging every family member would create fora for robust engagement with sexuality issues and in a way demystify perceived taboos and *Traditional Action* that undermine information flow.

Among the four patterns of sex education identified by the study namely, silence, *ad hoc* or occasion provoked indirect-statements approach, floating status and contradictory orientation and indirect education through house-helpers to biological children, indirect education that finds expression in shyness or low comfort level is most beneficial. Although the limitations have also been pointed out, the merits and value component are in the fact that some education takes place and the house-helpers saddled with such responsibility are treated more humanely relative to a large majority of others that are perceived almost as sub-humans. In the long-run, such house-helpers are likely to be more educated with regards to sexuality than biological children. Yet,

such shrouded approach would mean sustaining the culture of intergenerational silence (Nwokocha 2010) which has accounted for deliberate avoidance of this important aspect of human knowledge and development. Studies reveal that withholding sexuality education information from young family members end up exposing them to dangerous peer education, (Sauvain-Durgerdi, Gakou, Berthe, Dieng Ritschard & Lerch 2008; Bankole, Biddlecom, Guiella, Singh & Zulu 2007; Henslin 2007).

This study has revealed that education does not have association either with how important sex education is perceived or appropriateness of a uniform sexuality education content for biological children and house-helps. By implication, other factors related to norms, values, beliefs, practices, community characteristics and personal convictions play important part in determining an individual's disposition to sexuality education. Thus, a combination of *Affectual* and *Traditional* Actions (Haralambos, Holborn & Heald 2004) shapes the actor's attitude and behaviour more than educational status.

CONCLUSIONS

Studies on adolescents are numerous and interdisciplinary probably due to the complexity of the stage and malleability of the individuals. Sociological, medical and psychological data are replete with events that characterise this important period of transition from childhood to adulthood. Yet, negligible attention has been paid to house-helps within this age category not only in terms of sexuality but also their other welfare requirements necessary for realisation of inherent potentials. Although they rank among the most neglected adolescents, out-schools house-helps are disproportionately disadvantaged within the cohort. The present analysis therefore focused on this subgroup not only to highlight their most challenging existential reality but also to provoke academic attention and policy.

We contend here that adolescent house-helpship is both a contradiction and a reflection of a failed society, particularly, considering its links with mortgaging the future not only of the victims but also the entire community. Its antithetical feature suffices more vividly when considered as a household norm in Ibadan and other areas of Nigeria. Whereas, helping in households is undertaken by relatively aged persons in most industrialised countries, the reverse is the case in Nigeria where some of the adolescents are nationals from neighbouring countries whose citizens are incapacitated by extreme poverty. The conditions in which these house-helps operate should necessitate intervention from governments, agencies and communities. We propose introduction of stiff penalties for employment or engagement of house-helps

without at the same time getting them enrolled into schools. Success of such efforts will depend largely on the strategies put in place for implementation. Without a deliberate policy, the impunity of dehumanisation will continue unabated to the detriment of individuals and societies.

References

- Bankole, A.; Biddlecom, A.; Guiella, G.; Singh, S. and Zulu, E. (2007). "Sexual Behavior, Knowledge and Information Sources of very Young Adolescents in Four sub-Saharan African Countries". *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 11(3): 28-43.
- Bankole, A. and Malarcher, S. 'Removing Barriers to Adolescents' Access to Contraceptive Information and Services'. *Stud Fam Plann* 2010; 41(2): 117-124.
- Biddlecom, A.; Gregory, R.; Lloyd, C. B.; and Mensch, B. S. (2008). "Associations between Premarital Sex and Leaving School in Four sub-Saharan African Countries". *Studies in Family Planning* 39(4): 337- 350.
- Egbochukwu, E. O. and Ekanem, I. B. (2008). 'Attitude of Nigerian Secondary School Adolescents towards Sexual Practices: Implications for Counselling Practices'. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, 22(2): 177-183.
- Esere, M. O. (2008). 'Effect of Sex Education Programme on at-risk Behaviour of School-going Adolescents in Ilorin, Nigeria'. *African Health Sciences*, 8(2): 120-125.
- Haralambos, M.; Holborn, M. and Heald, R. (2004). *Haralambos and Holborn Sociology themes and Perspectives, Sixth Edition*. London: Collins.
- Henslin, J. M. (2007). *Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach (eight edition)*. Boston: Pearson.
- Isiugo-Abanihe, I. M. and Isiugo-Abanihe, U. C. (2007). 'Adolescent Sexuality and Reproductive Health in two Oil Producing Communities in Imo and Rivers States, Nigeria'. *African Population Studies*, 22(2): 47-76.
- Isiugo-Abanihe, U. C. (2011). 'Adolescents' Sexuality and Sexual behaviour: What we know and do not know'. In F. E. Okonofua (ed), *Identifying Priorities for Research and Documentation on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health in Nigeria*. Benin City: VAC Communications.
- Isiugo-Abanihe, U. C. (2005). 'Sociocultural Aspects of HIV/AIDS Infection in Nigeria'. *African Journal of Medicine and Medical Science*, (34): 45-55.
- Macionis, J. J. and Plummer, K. (2005). *Sociology: A global introduction, 3rd edition*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- National Population Commission (NPC) and ICF Macro. (2009). *Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2008*. Abuja, Nigeria.
- Nwokocha, E. E. (2011). 'Adolescents' Socio-economic and Cultural Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other STIs – Research needs and Priorities'. In F. E. Okonofua (ed), *Identifying Priorities for Research and Documentation on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health in Nigeria*. Benin City: VAC Communications.

- Nwokocha, E. E. (2010). "Factors Influencing Sex-education for in-school Adolescents in Ibadan, Nigeria" *Ibadan Journal of the Social Sciences*, 8(1).
- Nwokocha, E. E. (2007). "Transactional Sex in Nigerian Universities: Social and Demographic Implications" *Unilag Sociological Review*, Vol. 8: 57-82.
- Madunagu, B. (2007). *Women's Health and Empowerment: Speeches, Essays and Lectures*. Calabar: Clear Lines pub.
- Olley, B. O. (2008). 'Child Sexual Abuse, Harmful Alcohol use and Age as Determinants of Sexual Risk Behaviours among Freshmen in a Nigerian University'. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 12(2): 75-88 .
- Olubunmi, A. G. (2011). 'Impact of Family Type on Involvement of Adolescents in Pre-marital Sex'. *International Journal of Psychology and Counselling*, 3(1): 15-19.
- Olugbenga-Bello, A. I., Adebimpe, W. O. and Abodunrin, O. L. (2009). 'Sexual Risk Behaviour among in-school Adolescents in Public Secondary Schools in a Southwestern City in Nigeria'. *International Journal of Health Research*, 2(3): 243-251.
- Oyediran, K.; Isiugo-Abanihe, I. M. and Isiugo-Abanihe, U. C. (2006). 'Introducing HIV/AIDS Education in Primary Schools: Views of Nigerian Parents and Guardians'. *African Journal of Educ. Research*, 10(1-2): 94-107.
- Ritzer, G. (2008). *Sociological Theory, seventh edition*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Rosen, J. E. (2004). 'Sexuality Education in Schools: The International Experience and Implications for Nigeria'. *Policy Working Papers Series* No. 12.
- Sauvain-Durgerdi, C.; Gakou B.; Berthe F.; Dieng, A. W.; Ritschard, G. and Lerch, M. (2008). "The Start of the Sexual Transition in Mali: Risks and Opportunities". *Studies in Family Planning* 39(4): 263-280.
- Utomo, I. O. and McDonald, P. (2009). 'Adolescent Reproductive Health in Indonesia: Contested Values and Policy Inaction'. *Studies in Family Planning*, 40(2): 133-146.