MEDIATING ROLE OF GENDER AND SELF-ESTEEM BETWEEN PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUAL ABUSE AMONG SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN NIGERIA: A PATH ANALYTICAL MODEL

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Abstract
In recent years, the prevalence of adolescent mortality due to sexually transmitted diseases (STD), unwanted pregnancy, abortion, induced pregnancy, and related issues has been documented. These tragic events can be traced to teenagers' sexual abuse experiences. This led to an investigation on the role of gender and self-esteem as mediators between parent-child relationships and sexual assault. The study adopted correlational design. A sample of three hundred adolescents was randomly sampled from the secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Data was collected using reliable instrument (Sexual Abuse Scale α=0.87; Parental-child Relationship Scale α =0.77; Self-esteem Scale α =0.73).Three research questions were raised and tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson's product moment correlation and path analysis with Maximum likelihood estimation. It was discovered that sexual abuse positively correlated with gender (r =.681, P<0.01) but negatively correlated with parent-child relationship (r = -.449, P<0.01) and self-esteem (r = -.310, P<0.01). From the path model the goodness of fit of the model was evaluated using χ2 statistics (0.286 < 0.3) and was found a good fit. A direct effect was also found between self-esteem and sexual-abuse (β = -0.236, p<0.01), parent-child relationship and sexual abuse (β = 0.176, p<0.01). On the other hand, an indirect effect was found between parent-child relationship and sexual abuse through gender (β = 0.603, p<0.01), which indicates that parent-child relationship increases the likelihood that a male adolescent (60.3%) will engage in sexual abuse than their female (39.7%) counterparts. Among others it was recommended that parents should build a healthy relationship with adolescents as to be able to monitor and guide them against premarital sexual behaviour, Adolescents are enjoined to avoid peers who are not willing to positive contribution to their life.
Keywords: Self-esteem, Parent-child relationship, Adolescents and Sexual abuse

Introduction
Adolescence is often referred to as a stage between childhood and adulthood, this stage culminates in biological, cognitive and social change of a unique magnitude and rapidity that it is no surprise to find that it is associated with the onset or exacerbation of a number of health-related problems including depression, eating disorders, substance abuse and dependence, risky sexual behaviour, antisocial and delinquent activity and school dropout which are traceable to sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse is an unwanted sexual activity, with the perpetrators using force, making threats or taking advantage of the person or persons concerned, who are not able to give approval or consent. It is a sexual act associated with attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts of traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim in any setting, including but not limited to home and work. Perpetrators of sexual abuse could range between peers (class mates, play or age mates) and elderly individuals (relatives and neighbours); these individuals are people who are close or respected by the victims. However, the actual prevalence rate of sexual abuse in Nigeria is unknown as a result of gross underreporting (Birgisdóttir, 2015).

Nevertheless, it has been reported as the fastest growing crime in many parts of the world (Brocker, & Tocque, 2016). It has been argued that one in four female adolescent may have experienced sexual abuse by an intimate partner and up to a third of adolescent girls report their experience as being forced (Jacob, & Ravindranadan, 2017; Kim, Park, & Park, 2017). While a contemporary perspective claimed that least one in five female adolescents has been sexually abused by a man at some time in her life (UNICEF, 2017). The prevalence of sexual abuse in Nigeria is high although appeared contradictory, statistics have shown that 51.7% of female undergraduates had suffered one form of sexual abuse or another (Ward, Artz, Leoschut, Kassanjee, & Burton, 2018). This figure is higher than what was obtained in two studies from Northern Nigeria 89(13.8%, 22.2%). However, the occurrence of sexual abuse in Western

Nigeria is not on the weak side but has not recorded a superior score over other region in Nigeria. The prevalence is generally high in Africa and varied between 16% in Cameroun, 23% in Sierra Leone, 34.4% in Ethiopia, 49% in Ghana to 65.6% in Zimbabwe, and 67% in Botswana10-15 (Office of National Statistics, (2020) Considering the various statistics estimated to show the severity and prevalence of adolescent sexual abuse, it won't be an understatement to establish antecedents and precedent of adolescent sexual abuse.

Self-esteem can be referred to as individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself (Gesinde, 2018). Self-esteem is a set of attitudes and beliefs that a person brings with him or herself when facing the world. It includes beliefs as to whether he or she can expect success or failure, how much effort should be put forth, whether failure at a task will "hurt," and whether he or she will become more capable as a result of difficult experiences (Adigeb & Mbua, 2015; Chinawa, Obu, Manyike, Obi, Israel, & Chinawa, 2015). Adolescents with high self-esteem are characterized with self-love, courage, value for self and determination. It transcends to boasting adolescents sexual self-esteem which could be termed as the elegance of womanhood, but the interruption of individual on adolescents' sexual personality could damage their self-esteem. On this premise, adolescents' self-esteem could be damaged due to their exposure to sexual abuse; this might trigger feelings of disgust and shame, leading to deterioration of her sexual self-esteem. When self-esteem declines, it creates range of psychological and behavioral consequences, as well as a potential restructuring of one's self concept. Psychological consequences associated with damaged self-esteem include: depression, anxiety, shame, suicidal ideation, isolation, decreased interested in sex, difficulties with sexual function, and fear of males (Henriques, & Shivakumara, 2015).

Parent-child relationship can be conceptualised as emotional exchanged between parents and their adolescent offspring: Some of these exchanges involve positive and healthy behaviors and others involve the opposite; some of the outcomes for adolescent development of these exchanges reflect good adjustment and individual and social success, whereas other outcomes reflect poor adjustment and problems of development. As is true for all facets of human development, there is then diversity in the nature and implications of parent-child relations in adolescence. Parent-child relationship if healthy creates trust, confidence, and sense of safety in adolescents. Adolescents who grew up under healthy parent-child relationship gets early maturity as they share most issues that appears strange or confusing with their parents for clarifications purpose. Parent-child relationship gives adolescents luxury of benefits, such as guidance about: life issues, sexual development, and relationship with individuals and self-defense. While parents who have time for their children saves them from falling victim of sexual assaults. Adolescents who by chance were sexually abused are often easily liberated from the jinx of the event instead of been a slave to it. For instance, support has been associated with better school grades and scholastic self-concept (Grose, Chen, Roof, Rachel, & Yount, 2020); with perceiving that social relationships could be more beneficial to one's development than risky (Bleidorn, Arslan, Denissen, Rentfrow, Gebauer, Potter, & Gosling, 2016); with being more satisfied with one's life (Latzman, Casanueva, & Dolan, 2017); and with a decreased likelihood of involvement in drinking, delinquency, and other problem behaviors (Park, Lee, & Jun, 2017).

Certainly, receiving support from one's parents due to close relationship might elicit in the young person feelings of positive regard, or emotions characterized by a sense of attachment. When such emotions occur in adolescence, positive outcomes for the youth are seen. For instance, parent child relations marked by attachment are associated with high self-perceived competence, especially across the transition to junior high school, and with low feelings of depression or anxiety (United Nations, 2019). In addition, attachment is linked to feeling cohesive with one's family (Buntinga, Davidsona, McCartanb, Hanrattyb, Bywatersc, Mason, & Steils, 2018). Other research has found also relationships among attachment, a positive sense of self, and low levels of problematic behaviors/emotions, such as depression (Kelly, & Millar, 2017; Meinck, Cluver, Boyes, & Loening-Voysey, 2016).

According to the world health organization (WHO), there were an estimated 57,000 deaths attributed to homicide among children under 15 years of age in 2013. Global estimations of homicide suggest that infants and very young children are at greatest risk with rate for the 0-4 year old age group more than double those of 5-14 years old. The risk fatal abuse for children varies according to the world for children

under 5year age living in high income countries, the rate are 2.3 time higher 6.1 per 100,00 for boys and 5.1 per 100,000 for girls. The lowest rates are seeing in high income countries in the world health organization European, eastern- Mediterranean and western pacific regions. On the other hand, sexual abuse practices are the various acts perpetrated by parents, guardians, friends and other people against the child which literarily affects his or her psychological, physical, moral development and self-esteem. The child welfare league Nigeria (WLN) has reverted that about five million children are abused annually in Nigeria, resulting in rampant cases of stunted mental and physical growth of such children (David, Ezechi, Wapmuk, Gbajabiamila, Ohihoin, & Odeyemi, 2018).

Purpose of the Study
This study generally intends to investigate mediating role of gender and self-esteem between parent-child relationship and sexual abuse. Specifically, it intends to;
i.   Investigate the relationship between parent-child relationship, self-esteem and adolescents sexual abuse.
ii.   Estimate the significant pathways indicating direct and indirect effects of parent-child relationship, gender, self-esteem and sexual abuse among secondary school students?

Research Question
The following are to be tested at 0.05 level of significance.
i.   What is the relationship between self-esteem, parent-child relationship and adolescent sexual abuse?
ii.   What are the significant pathways indicating direct and indirect effects of parent-child relationship, gender, self-esteem and sexual abuse among secondary school students?

Methodology
The study adopted correlational design. This design is appropriate because the researcher does not have control over the concomitant variables as their manipulation had already occurred. The population for this study consists of all senior secondary school adolescents in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo state. Ibadan North local government area is the largest local government area in Oyo state. The L.G.A has about 26 secondary schools within it geographical coverage. Multistage sampling was adopted for this study. The first stage involves a random selection of 15 secondary schools from the entire population. The second stage involved the selection of 20 adolescent students from the senior secondary school students (SS2). In the whole a sample of three hundred (300) adolescent students were randomly selected. This was used as a representative of the population. A questionnaire was used for data collection because of the literacy level of study population. The adaptation was made after extensive review of literature. The scale were piloted a week before the real administration to certify that the scales are fit and does not have ambiguous items. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The sections are: A, B and C.

The Sexual abuse self-report scale (CASRS) is designed to measure adolescents' rate of experiencing abuse. It is rated on 4-point response format ranging from Never (coded as 1) to Always (coded as4). It has 38 items initial findings has strong internal consistency psychological sub-scale had the highest level of internal consistency 0.95 and sexual abuse sub-scale had a moderate level of internal consistency of 0.87. Sexual Abuse scale is a 19 item scale under the sexual abuse scale. The result of two times administration of the (CASRS) showed test-retest reliability of 0.82 to 0.80.

A 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. It was adopted from the work of Rosenberg (2008), the scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scale recorded a reliability coefficient of 0.74 using Cronbach alpha.

20-item Parent-child relationship Scale was adapted from Small and Kerns (1993). It measures adolescent experience of parent-child relationship. Samples of the items reads: 1) "my parent(s) know where I am after school"; 2) "If I am going to be home late, I am expected to call my parent(s) to let them know". Students choose from out of five possible responses ranging from: 1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Cronbach's alpha for the 10-item scale was .84. The scale has been shown to have construct validity as evidenced by Dix's (2001) review of the scale: "The Parent-child relationship Scale has been used in at least three studies involving nearly 6,000 adolescents higher levels of parental guidance have been related

to lower levels of adolescent risk-taking and sexual activity. The scale recorded a reliability coefficient of 0.77 using Cronbach alpha.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the participants in their various schools. Having obtained permission from the head of their department through the letter of introduction collected from the department of Counselling and human development studies. The participants were adequately briefed on the need to cooperate with the researcher. They were also assured of confidentiality of their responses. The data collection spread over two weeks, during which about 300 questionnaires were administered, and returned. These were scored and the data obtained were subjected to data analysis.

The data was collected and analysed with the aid of Pearson product moment correlation and path analysis with maximum likelihood estimate. The computation was done through SPSS version 26 and AMOS verion 24 to answer the two research questions. The goodness of fit of the model was evaluated using χ^2 statistics [χ^2/degrees of freedom (df)] and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). If the χ^2/df was <3, the model would be regarded as a good fit; if it was between 3 and 5, the model would be considered an acceptable fit. Furthermore, if the RMSEA value was <0.05, it would indicate that the model had reached a close fit, and if the value was <0.08, the model would be counted as a good fit. Additionally, fit indices were the comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and normed fit index (NFI). If the CFI, GFI, and NFI values were 0.90 or higher, it would indicate that the model achieved a good fit.

Results
This segment presents various findings drawn from the study. The following results presented are based on the research questions raised, which the study has sought to answer.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between independent variables (parent-child relationship and self-esteem) and adolescents' sexual abuse?

Table 1:Correlation matrix showing the relationship between study variables

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev	1	2	3	4
Sexual abuse	45.9180	4.61707	1.000			
Self-esteem	53.8860	5.13375	-.310**	1.000		
Parent-child relationship	55.8190	7.36406	- .449**	-.232	1.000	
Gender	.5360	.49970	.681**	-.053	.360**	**1.000**

*Correlation is significant at 0.05(2-tailed)

Table 1 reveals the relationship that exists between the independent variables (parent-child relationship, self-esteem and gender) and the dependent variable (sexual abuse). Sexual abuse positively correlated with gender (r =.681, P<0.01) but negatively correlated with parent-child relationship (r = -.449, P<0.01) and self-esteem (r = -.310, P<0.01). This implies that high parent-child relationship and self-esteem will reduce the tendency of sexual abuse among school adolescents. While gender uniqueness have prospect of increasing adolescent sexual abuse.

Research Question 2: What are the significant pathways indicating direct and indirect effects of parent-child relationship, gender, self-esteem and sexual abuse among secondary school students?

Table 2: Path Coefficient (Beta weights) of the adjusted sexual abuse model

Pathways			Unstandardised Estimate (B)	Standardized Estimate(β)	S.E.	C.R.	P
Gender	<---	Parent-childR	.024	.360	.004	6.085	***
Self-esteem	<---	Parent-childR	-.162	-.232	.043	-3.766	***
Sexual-abuse	<---	Parent-childR	.111	.176	.029	3.850	***
Sexual-abuse	<---	Gender	5.594	.603	.414	13.518	***
Sexual-abuse	<---	Self-esteem	-.213	-.236	.039	-5.508	***

Parent-child R: Parent-child relationship
Table 2 reveals that there is a significant direct effect of parent-child relationship on gender (male coded 1 and female coded 2) (β = 0.360, p<0.01), implies that   parent-child relationship is likely to increase the male adolescents dispositions by 36%. A significant direct effect of parent-child relationship on adolescent self-esteem was found (β = -0.232, p<0.01) in the model. It indicated that 1% increase in parent-child relationship will account for 23% reduction in the self-esteem of adolescent students. It was also shown in the table that gender recorded a significant direct effect on sexual abuse (β = 0.603, p<0.01), indicating that being a male gender adolescent increases the likelihood of engaging in sexual abuse by 60.3%. More so, a direct effect was also found between self-esteem and sexual-abuse (β = -0.236, p<0.01), which suggests that weak self-esteem promotes sexual abuse among adolescents by 23.6%. More importantly, a direct effect was found between parent-child relationship and sexual abuse (β = 0.176, p<0.01). This implies that parent-child relationship promotes the likelihood that adolescents will engage in sexual abuse by 17.6%.

On the other hand, an indirect effect was found between parent-child relationship and sexual abuse through gender (β = 0.603, p<0.01), which indicates that parent-child relationship increases the likelihood that a male adolescent (60.3%) will engage in sexual abuse than their female (39.7%) counterparts. Furthermore, an indirect effect was found between parent-child relationship and sexual abuse through self-esteem (β = -.236, p<0.01). This suggests that parent-child relationship could reduce sexual abuse when the self-esteem of the adolescent is on the increase.
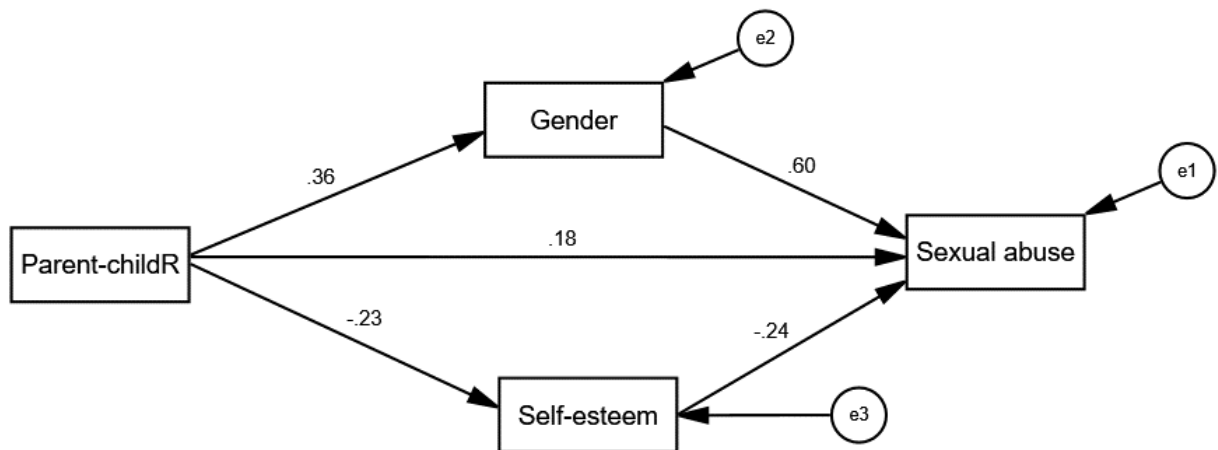

Figure 1: Adjusted path model of sexual abuse

Table 3: Maximum Likelihood Estimate showing Goodness of Fit Index of the sexual abuse model

Model	X^2	Df	P	GFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Benchmark			>0.05	>0.90	>0.95	>0.90	**<0.06**
Initial Model	.621	2	.000	.892	.544	.566	**.041**
Adjusted model	.286	1	.593	.906	.999	.999	**.000**

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; NFI, normed fit index; CFI, comparative of fit index; df, degree of freedom; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation.

Table 3 reveals that the initial (hypothesized) model recorded a moderate fit; $X^2(2)$ = .621, p<.001, However, on the adjusted model gained a little improvement. The adjusted model recorded $X^2(1)$ = .286, p<0.01. This implies that the model is relatively fit. Based on the recommendation by Cohen, (2000) and Tabachnik and Fidel (2007) the p-value notwithstanding the lesser the chi-square value the better the model. To further ascertain the increased fitness of the adjusted model over the initial model other fit indexes were considered: Normed fit index (NFI) = .999 > .95; Comparative fit index (CFI) = .999 > .90; Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .000 <.06. This implies that the adjusted model gained an incremental fitness over the initial (hypothesized) model, however, the adjusted model can be said to have a good fitness to the data.

Discussion

This study discovered that sexual abuse positively correlated with gender but negatively correlated with parent-child relationship and self-esteem. This indicates that high parent-child relationship and self-esteem will reduce the likelihood that an adolescent will engage or be a victim of sexual abuse while gender uniqueness have prospect of increasing adolescent sexual abuse. This result is consistent with previous studies who argued that low sexual self-esteem is associated with victimization, and risk recognition is correlated with sexual assault (Henriques, & Shivakumara, 2015; Park, Lee, & Jun, 2017; Meinck, Cluver, Boyes, & Loening-Voysey, 2016). Thus, it is possible that sexual self-esteem may precede risk recognition which directly affects victimization. Specifically, women with low sexual self-esteem are likely to have poor risk recognition, increasing their risk of sexual assault. On the other hand, parent-child relationship negatively correlated sexual abuse. This result agreed with Kim, Park, and Park, 2017) who found that secure attachments mediated psychological distress in adolescents with a history of child sexual abuse (CSA). Similarly, United Nations, 2015) identified the mediating effect of attachment. In this study, CSA did not predict psychological adjustment (i.e., depressive symptoms, dissociation, and dysfunctional sexual behavior) when attachment was controlled meaning that although CSA is predictive of attachment, attachment style can mediate the negative outcomes of CSA.

A direct effect was also found between self-esteem and sexual-abuse (β = -0.236, p<0.01), which suggests that weak self-esteem promotes sexual abuse among adolescents by 23.6%. This result further corroborates Sawyer, Azzopardi, Wickremarathne, and Patton, (2018) sought to determine 1. the type of violence to which women were exposed during childhood and adulthood and 2. the relationship the self-esteem of married Turkish women and their exposure to domestic violence. Sawyer and colleagues found a negative relationship between scores on the Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale (RSES) and scores on subscales of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (i.e., emotional abuse, emotional neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. Specifically, women with more childhood trauma were more likely to report lower self-esteem than women with less childhood trauma. The relationship between self-esteem and childhood trauma suggests that, due to negative past experiences, women continue to feel victimized years after the abuse. Although feelings of victimization are not readily apparent to the individual, this can have a negative association with interpersonal functioning.

The result of this study also revealed that a significant direct effect of parent-child relationship on adolescent self-esteem was found (β = -0.232, p<0.01) in the model. It indicated that 1% increase in parent-child relationship will account for 23% reduction in the self-esteem of adolescent students. This further suggests that increased parent-child relationship could reduce sexual abuse occurrence. This result is in tandem with Mutavi, Obondo, Mathai, Kokonya, & Dako-Gyeke, (2018), who reported that parent-child relationship and adolescent sexual activity to have a complex relationship. Low levels of parent-child relationship are associated with a variety of risky behaviors, including unprotected sex, drug use, and drug trafficking. This implies that parent-child relationship could reduce adolescents' experience of sexual abuse.

Conclusion

This study investigated the mediating role of gender and self-esteem between parent-child relationship and sexual abuse. The study discovered that sexual abuse positively correlated with gender, but negatively correlated with parent-child relationship and self-esteem. This implies that high parent-child relationship and self-esteem will reduce the tendency of sexual abuse among school adolescents. While gender uniqueness have prospect of increasing adolescent sexual abuse. The mediation model suggests that an indirect effect was spotted between parent-child relationship and sexual abuse through gender, is a pointer proposing that parent-child relationship increases the likelihood that a male adolescent (60.3%) will engage in sexual abuse than their female (39.7%) counterparts. Furthermore, an indirect effect was found between parent-child relationship and sexual abuse through self-esteem. This advocates that parent-child relationship could reduce sexual abuse when the self-esteem of the adolescent is on the increase.

Recommendations

Based on the findings drawn from this study the following were the recommended

i. Parents are encouraged to develop healthy relationship with the adolescents by spending time together to discuss about issues of life which can go a long way in helping them to speak their mind.

ii. Adolescents are encouraged to trust their parents rather than their peers in resolving personal-social matters.

iii. Adolescents are enjoined to visit the school counsellor on their social-personal issues which they might not be able to discuss with their parents.

iv. School counsellors should orientate adolescents on the danger in sexual abuse such as HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases (STD).

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