

Child Rearing Practices And Cultural Inhibitions As Correlates Of Prostitution Tendencies Among University Undergraduates in South East, Nigeria

Eke Kalu Oyeoku
Eucharia Nchedo Nwosu
Theresa O. Oforka

Abstract

The study was designed to investigate child rearing practices and cultural inhibitions as correlates of prostitution tendencies among university undergraduates in south east, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The design of the study was correlational survey. The sample consisted of 1,983 university undergraduates from two federal and three state universities in south east, Nigeria. The instrument used for the study were questionnaire titled Child Rearing Practices and Cultural Inhibitions Correlates of Prostitution Tendencies Questionnaire (CRPCICPTQ) and Focus Group Discussions Guide (FGDs) which were validated by experts and used for data collection. The data collected were analysed using Pearson correlation coefficient and t-test. Qualitative analytical procedure known as content analysis was employed to analyse the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The major findings of the study are: There is positive correlation between cultural inhibitions to discuss sexual matters with children and prostitution tendencies of university undergraduates. There is positive correlation between child-rearing practices and prostitution tendencies of university undergraduates among others. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made among which is: Sex education should be introduced and emphasised in the curriculum program of tertiary institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Prostitution is an age long phenomenon that is gradually becoming institutionalised in many countries of the world, despite its immoral undertone. According to Bullough and Bullough (2000) prostitution is the sale of sexual services, usually a specific sexual performance for a specific fee. Hornby (2004) defines a prostitute as a person who has sex for money.

Historically, in tracing the origin of prostitution, Bullough and Bullough (1987) noted that prostitution has existed at all times. Geis (2000) also revealed that one of the earliest forms of prostitution was closely connected to religion. In many ancient societies, such as Egyptian and Babylonian, it was believed that sexual relations with a priestess would

create a closer relationship with the gods. The Bible also recorded cases of prostitution. For instance, the woman, Rehab, who has her house by the gate of the wall of Jericho, and Mary Magdalene were known prostitutes recorded in the Bible but who earned for themselves a quantum of accolades for forsaking their sinful ways. Prostitution therefore is an age long phenomenon. Children who are born and reared by prostitutes may become prostitutes through environmental and parental influence. This is why parents and indeed the entire members of the society should properly socialize their children when they are born.

As soon as a child is born in a family, it is an up-hill task for the members of the family to give him/her proper socialization. This is because, the child is helpless and completely a dependent being. Socialisation according to Obasi (1988) is the process by which individual learns and internalizes the culture of the society to enable the individual adequately fit into and function effectively within the society. There are two major phases in the process of socialisation, which are, primary and secondary phases. Primary socialisation takes place at infancy and is usually provided within the home or family. In fact, according to Obasi (1988) it is perhaps the most critical phase in the socialisation of an individual. It is the foundation that is laid in the family that each child carries into later life. A child, who is born into an undisciplined, corrupt, indolent and morally decadent family will be socialised into those vices from infancy and it will be difficult to erase such influences in adult life. It is because of this that educators emphasise on proper upbringing of children through proper socialisation at home, especially during the formative years of infancy and early childhood.

Child rearing practice is a psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing style. There are many differing theories and opinions on the best ways to rear children, as well as differing levels of time and effort that parents are willing to commit. Many parents create their own style from a combination of factors, and these may evolve over time as the children develop their own personalities and move through life's stages. Parenting style is affected by both the parents' and children's temperaments, and is largely based on the influence of one's own parents and culture. Most parents learn parenting practices from their own parents — some they accept, some they discard (White, Hayes, & Livesey, 2005). These authors further stressed that one of the best known theories of parenting style was developed by Baumrind. Baumrind's study proposed that parents fall into one of these three categories: authoritarian (telling their children exactly what to do), indulgent (allowing their children to do whatever they wish), or authoritative (providing rules and guidance without being overbearing). The theory was later extended to include negligent parents (disregarding the children, and focusing on other interests). For instance parents train their children on respect for elders, good table manners, sex related issues and many others. Nnachi (2007) stated that children model grown-ups and adult members of the society copy them and do what they do. This modelling becomes more serious when the children feel that the adults are rewarded for what they do. Adults are seen by children as social pillars. What is done and approved by the adults is seen as good and acceptable by the children. In this case, parents or adults around the children who do not check the type of peers or friends their children keep or check the type of attitude being exhibited by them before the children may impact negatively on them. If parents do not mind the type of films children watch, and the type of adults that interact with the children, this may also expose the children to the dangers of deviant behaviours such as stealing, cultism, prostitution among others, Nnachi further stressed. Ojo (2007) agreed with the above assertion by stating that prostitution has acquired notoriety of being regarded as the oldest profession in the world and which can be traced to

boredom and idle pastimes. In line with the above observation, Uzokwe (2008) stated that prostitution is an old profession. In this study, prostitution is seen as the exchange of sexual services for money. It may be men, women or children, and the buyer of prostitute's services is usually a man and in very rare cases a woman.

In Nigeria of old families put a lot of premium on morality, honour and character. They took time to bequeath same to their wards during their formative years. There were penalties, including spanking and periodic denial of basic necessities such as provision of clothing and school supplies among others for doing things that would impinge on the family name. Vices like stealing, promiscuity, gossiping and the likes, when displayed by a member of a family, were seen as not just bad, but capable of eternally soiling the name of the family (Uzokwe, 2008). Families in the bid to make sure that their children were capable of taking care of themselves in future took the pains of sending them to school so that they would acquire the necessary tools that will enable them excel in future. However, this is no longer so due to the observable multiplicity of distractions such as cultism, prostitution, among others that exists today in the universities. It has become a citadel for cultist, cheats, armed robbers and even prostitutes (Uzokwe, 2008). Prostitution has become a way of life in many Nigerian universities. It is against this background that Olugbile, Abu and Adetakun (2008), noted that some undergraduates have resorted to full time prostitution in their campuses under the guise that they are "hustling". It is important to note that this is not limited to the female students alone. Male undergraduates are also into the business of prostituting and in some cases act as the go between among the female prostitutes and their male patrons. Johnson, (2007), reports that prostitution is so wide spread in the campuses. In a study of more than ten University campuses, he concluded that prostitution is a big menace in universities and something needs to be done to check it.

Many factors have been held accountable for prostitution tendency in University campuses. Such factors include broken homes, child rearing practices, male child preference, among others. Prostitution tendency is proneness or readiness to engage in or practice prostitution. Uzokwe, (2008) puts the blame for the proliferation of prostitution in the University campuses squarely on parents as a result of the child-rearing practice they adopt. In essence, because of the lackadaisical attitude of some parents, prostitution is on the increase in campuses.

Scholars are of the view that prostitution tendency is acquired not inherited (Ajuwom, Oladepo, Adeniyi, and Brieger, 1994). In other words prostitution is the product of various existing socio-cultural conditions. It has been argued that certain traditions and culture may enhance or promote prostitution. Beavogui, Diakite, Campeau and Albert (2000) noted that, in Guinea, West Africa, young girls are expected to have intercourse with many men in order to "gain experience" on how to make their husbands happy after marriage. In South-Eastern Nigeria, among the traditional Owerri people, there is the "Mbari" practice which enables a woman to have sexual relations with as many men as are available during the period they are enclosed in the "Mbari" house (Oparaocha, 1976). Among the Yorubas of Western Nigeria, Ajuwom, Oladepo, Adeniyi, and Brieger (1994), reported that polygamy is an acceptable practice and so may make parents not to frown when their children are dating older men since it may eventually lead to marriage. Yet in contrast, the Nigerian culture frowns against the open discussion of sexual matters and desires. According to Izugbara (2004) there is a great deal of pressure to remain quiet about sex in Nigeria. Otite and Ogionwo (2006) support the above view and stated that most Nigerian parents would never

discuss sex matters with their children and that it is unusual to speak about such matters candidly between parents and children. Consequently, sex education is virtually non-existent and as a result, many children do not even understand some of the sexual changes that take place as they grow from childhood to adolescence. Whatever information children pick up in the social environment is mostly through films, playmates and friends. Even the school as an agent of socialization does not instruct formally. Therefore, this may make many young people to want to experiment in order to find out what the secret is all about and which may ultimately predispose them to prostitution.

One other cultural factor that has been held accountable for prostitution is the extended family structure. Adesina (2006) is of the view that the peculiar nature of the extended family support arrangements of the Nigerian people encourages prostitution in order to sustain these arrangements. Adesina further stressed that this practice of looking after the 'extended family' force many young girls to engage in acts that will enable them to make more money, and one of such acts is prostitution.

The preference for male children in Nigeria is considered by Izugbara (2004) as one of the strongest cultural factors that could lead to prostitution. According to him, male children are less likely to suffer rejection, prejudice, discrimination, and abandonment than female ones. They are also more likely to be sent to school. Therefore it is likely that some of the girls who force themselves into the University do that on self sponsorship and one way of providing for this self sponsorship is prostitution. Ejikeme (2002) has found evidence that during emergencies and disasters, many Nigerian parents selectively attend to the male child while Bullough and Bullough (1997) are of the belief that prostitution has often represented the only way some women in a male dominated world have been able to survive. Prostitution is often seen by many as crime against ones body. This is predicated on the belief that prostitution has a lot of negative effects on the human being. It is generally believed that girls who engage in prostitution not only endanger and destroy their bodies but also spoil the image of the country. It can equally affect the academic performance of undergraduates.

This is because often times these undergraduates leave their hostels and lectures and move to the streets and hotels of Nigerian cities in search of clients. This has become a major cause of the high rate of truancy and the associated poor academic performance among these University undergraduates. Consequently, serious questions have been raised as to whether these undergraduates are still the future leaders of this great country, Nigeria. It is, therefore, the above situation and its negative consequences for the educational system that has given impetus to the present study which ask: What are the child rearing practices and cultural inhibitions that promote prostitution tendencies among University undergraduates in South-East Nigeria?

Research Questions

The following two research questions guided the study:

- 1) What is the relationship between cultural inhibitions and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates?
- 2) What is the relationship between child-rearing practices adopted by parents and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates?

Hypotheses

The following two null hypotheses were formulated and tested

- Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between cultural inhibitions and prostitution tendencies of University Undergraduates.
- Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between child-rearing practices adopted by parents and prostitution tendencies of University Undergraduates.

Methodology

The design of the study was correlational survey. It is a design that seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables being investigated. Usually, such studies indicate the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables, (Nworgu, 2006).

The study was carried out in South-East States of Nigeria. South-East geo-political zone is made up of five states namely, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. This geo-political zone is Igbo speaking area. There are a total of nine Federal and State universities in the zone. These universities include: The Federal University of Agriculture, Umudike; Federal University of Technology (FUTO), Owerri; Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Awka and University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) for the Federal Universities. The state universities include: Abia State University, Uturu; Anambra State University, Uli; Ebonyi State University, Abakiliki; Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani and Imo State University, Owerri. The universities in these areas share similar features in culture, politics, social development and education. This is one of the reasons why the researcher selected the area for this study.

The population of the study was 30,816 made up of all the final year undergraduates from Federal and State universities in South-East geo-political zone of Nigeria. It comprised of 16,672 males and 14,104 females. The sample of the study consisted of 1983 respondents. To compose this sample, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed. First, the universities were stratified into Federal and State universities. Then proportionate sampling technique was applied to use 50% from each of the stratum (from four Federal universities, two were selected and from five State universities three were selected). To arrive at the subjects for the study, the respondents (students) in each of the universities were stratified into male and female and a proportionate sample of 10% was used to select the subjects from each of the selected universities based on the strata (male and female). The choice of 10% was based on the premise that if the population is about a few thousands, a sampling size of 10% would be accepted, (Nwanna, 1981). Also, a Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) was conducted using 10 students drawn from University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

The researchers designed structured questionnaire with 19 items, titled Child Rearing Practices and Cultural Inhibitions Correlates of Prostitution Tendencies Questionnaire (CRPICPTQ) and Focus Group Discussions Guide (FGDs) were used to collect the data for the study. The CRPICPTQ has three sections. Section A contained the demographic information of the respondents, while Section B addressed the relationship between cultural inhibitions affecting discussions on sex matters with children and prostitution tendencies among University undergraduates, then Section C sought information on the relationship between child-rearing practices adopted by parents and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates. The response format for Sections B and C was a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The Focus Group Discussions Guide had eight questions and was made for the discussants.

To determine the face validity of the CRPCICPTQ and FGDs, initial copies of the instruments with purposes, research questions, hypotheses and the questions for Focus Group Discussions were given to five experts. One of the experts was in Measurement and Evaluation, one in Sociology of Education, one in Educational Administration and Planning and two in Guidance and Counselling. They were specifically requested to assess the adequacy of the items in getting the required information, the quality of its language and the logicity of its arrangement. They made very useful inputs that guided the final production of the instrument.

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, the CRPCICPTQ was trial-tested on 30 final year undergraduate students in Kogi State University comprising 15 males and 15 females. This University is outside the study area. Cronbach Alpha method was adopted to estimate the internal consistency coefficient of the questionnaire CRPCICPTQ. This is based on the recommendation of Borg and Gall (1983), on using the Cronbach Alpha for instruments likely to yield multiple scored responses and having different sections that require section by section reliability. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient values obtained were .86 for CRPCICPTQ as a whole, .84 for Section B, and .86 for Section C which were considered to be sufficiently high to confirm the reliability of the instrument.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyse the data gathered for the study. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to answer the two research questions while the hypotheses two were tested using t-test of relationship between two variables.

Qualitative analytical procedure known as content analysis was employed to analyse the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). All the statements made by discussants were adequately interpreted. The transcripts were studied, extracted and used as excerpts.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between cultural inhibitions and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates?

Table 1: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) for the relationship between cultural inhibitions and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates

		Tendency	Cultural Inhibition
Prostitution Tendency	Pearson Correlation	1	.73
	N	1983	1983
Cultural Inhibition	Pearson Correlation	.73	1
	N	1983	1983

In Table 1 data reveal that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) for the relationship between cultural inhibitions and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates is 0.73. This implies that the relationship between cultural inhibitions and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates is positive and high. This means the more inhibitions the higher the prostitution tendencies.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between child-rearing practices adopted by parents and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates?

Table 2: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) for the relationship between child-rearing practices adopted by parents and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates

		Tendency	Child-rearing
Tendency	Pearson Correlation	1	.65
	N	1983	1983
Child-rearing	Pearson Correlation	.65	1
	N	1983	1983

Table 2 shows that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) for the relationship between child-rearing practices adopted by parents and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates is 0.65. This implies that the relationship between child-rearing practices adopted by parents and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates is positive and high. This implies that as long as parents fail to give their children proper upbringing and necessary financial provisions, the children may find alternative ways to make-up for the shortfalls and hence predispose to prostitution.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This section discusses the results of this study in line with the findings as reported above. The discussion is done in accordance with the main issues addressed in the study namely cultural inhibitions as correlates of prostitution tendencies and relationship between child-rearing practices and prostitution tendencies of university undergraduates.

Cultural Inhibitions as correlates of prostitution tendencies among University undergraduates.

The results show positive correlation between cultural inhibitions to discuss sexual matters with children and prostitution tendencies of university undergraduates. This means the more inhibitions the higher prostitution tendencies. The finding is understandable based on the fact that there is a great deal of pressure arising from many communities to remain silent on discussion of sex matters in Nigeria. The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) which was conducted using some university undergraduates revealed that when parents refuse to educate their children on sex matters, it has a negative effect because their ignorance might make them fall into the hands of predators; the truth is that knowledge is power. Knowledge of an issue makes somebody wise. When someone is not well informed about the implications of an issue, there is always the likelihood of making a mistake. On the other hand, knowledge of the consequences of an act or an urge or pressure from what has been told helps to avoid mistakes. This finding is in line with the view of Ottite and Ogionwo (2006) who reported that most Nigerian parents never discussed sex matters with their children. They argued that whatever information children pick up in the social environment is mostly through films, playmates and friends. Buttressing the above point Izugbara (2004) observed that they are great deal of pressure to remain quiet about sex in Nigeria. The author further stated that words commonly used to depict sexual desires, parts of the body, sex, masturbation, and menstruation in many Nigerian cultures are often ambiguous and indirect,

reflecting the cultural inhibitions expected on sexual matters. These tend to support the fact that there are cultural inhibitions to discuss sex issues at home and this invariably affects the university undergraduates. Therefore, the finding that cultural inhibitions to discuss sexual matters with the children and prostitution tendencies of undergraduates is positive and high is not surprising because the more the inhibitions the higher the prostitution tendencies.

The findings further indicated that there is significant relationship between cultural inhibitions to discuss sexual matters with children and prostitution tendencies of university undergraduates (15.51, 0.000). This implies that due to cultural inhibitions to discuss sexual matters in the home, there may be high tendency of increase in prostitution in the campuses since the students come from the home. It may be due to these cultural inhibitions to discuss sexual matters with children that some of these university undergraduates want to indulge in sex to know what it is and consequently find themselves in prostitution.

Relationship between child-rearing practices and prostitution tendencies of university undergraduates.

The results show that the relationship between child-rearing practices adopted by parents and prostitution tendencies of University undergraduates is positive and high (0.65). This implies that when a proper training is not accorded to children in the early stages in life the tendency to manifest prostitution may be high. Furthermore, report of F D Gs carried out by the researcher shows that the university undergraduates are of the opinion that some parents are so interested in their career that they never take good care or visit their children in the university. To this effect, these children are more likely to behave any way they like. Hence, one of such behaviours is taking to prostitution. Secondly, another discussant reported that some children are involved in prostitution because their parents spend long hours in office. The discussant stated that a woman, 40 – 50 years of age was interviewed in Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and reported that most times as a growing girl her parents were not around, a man was always carrying her on his laps and spoil her as a child. Another discussant said that a cousin introduced him to prostitution. This finding is in line with the observation of Uzokwe (2008) that most working class parents do not appear to have time to socialise and interact with their children. When this is the case, these children choose whatever they feel is right for themselves to the detriment of their future. The study further noted that prostitution has been on the increase because of child-rearing practices of some parents. Hence, some parents of young girls see their children coming home with multiple and expensive cell phones they did not buy, flashy and expensive clothes, they did not purchase and never asked “my child how manage you have all these items?”. Obasi (1988) stated that some parents gladly take gifts from their daughters knowing fully well that they do not work. Furthermore Ejikeme (2001) reported that the male child is often and simply the more preferred child in many Nigerian cultures. Often times, parents are more likely to send them to school and catered for them than most female children. It is against this background that most Nigerian girls resort to prostitution to be able to cater for themselves in their institutions.

The findings further reveal that there is a significant correlation between child-rearing practices adopted by parents and prostitution tendencies of university undergraduates. This means that the way children are trained determines their tendencies to prostitution. In cases where the parents are disciplined, insist on good behaviour, their children will rarely

get involved in prostitution, but where the parents are indisciplined and laissez-faire, the children are most likely to indulge in prostitution.

Conclusion

Drawing from the result of the study, one can conclude that there is relationship between cultural inhibitions to discuss sexual matters with children and prostitution tendencies among university undergraduates. It is therefore imperative that parents should learn not to shy away from discussing sexual matters with their children so that these children will not seek such information from unauthorised sources which may be misleading thereby exposing them to prostitution tendencies.

The study also indicates that there is a correlation between child rearing practices adopted by parents and prostitution tendencies of university undergraduates. It is important that parents should give their children proper upbringing and necessary financial provisions so that they will not look for alternative ways to make up for the shortfalls and hence be predisposed to prostitution tendencies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings of this study:

- Parents of undergraduates should put in more efforts in teaching their children the norms and values of the society. During such teachings, the evil effect of prostitution should be exposed.
- Culture of the people should allow open discussion of sexual matters with children, and not see it as a taboo
- Sex education should be introduced and emphasised in the curriculum programme of tertiary institutions.

REFERENCES

- Adesina, O. A. (2006). **Between culture and poverty: The queen mother phenomenon and the Edo international sex trade.** *Journal of culture and African women studies.*
- Ajuwon, A. J., Oladepo, O., Adeniyi, J D. Brieger W, R. (1994). **Sexual Practices That May Favor the Transmission of HIV in a Rural Community in Nigeria,** *International Quarterly of Community Health Education, 14(4),* 403 – 416
- Assessment *Ethics, 90, (3),* 335-366.
- Beavogui, N., Diakite, S.L., Campeau, D., and Albert, L. (2000). **Gender issues, traditional culture and STD/AIDS prevention with women prostitutes: Case of Guinea-Conakry.** Guinea: *International Conference on AIDS.*
- Borg, W.R, and Gall, M.D. (1983). **Educational Research: An Introduction.** (4th ed), New York: Longman.
- Bullough, B. & Bullough V.L. (2000). **Prostitution.** In Collier's Encyclopaedia. New York.19, 424 – 425.
- Bullough, V. L. & Bullough B. (1987). **Women and Prostitution, A Social History.** New York: Prometheus Books.