

FACTORS INFLUENCING LESBIANISM AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS IN RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated some factors responsible for lesbianism among female students of Rivers State University of Education Port Harcourt. The population consists of all the female students of the three campuses of the university. The sample size comprised of one hundred and fifty (150) female students from the university. Simple random sampling was employed to select the sample. A fifteen item structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher to collect data. The research questions and responses were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The results of the analysis revealed that majority of the female students agreed that lesbianism was practiced as the only way to prevent pregnancy, marital disappointment, venereal disease, and poor family upbringing respectively. Recommendations were made among others that Rivers State Government should recruit and deploy professional counseling psychologists to all three campuses of the university for proper counseling of the female students which will include explaining the spread, the effects and prevention of the menace called lesbianism.

Keywords: Adolescence, lesbianism, female students and menace.

INTRODUCTION

The Concept lesbianism, which has become a pandemic practice, has eaten deep into the fabrics of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Etiologically, lesbianism started in the early sixties in United States of America.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, lesbian is a woman who is sexually attracted to other women. Lesbianism therefore simply means a sexual orientation of women to women. In other words, it has to do with sexual intercourse between women rather than men and women (heterosexual intercourse). Simply put lesbianism means female homosexuality. That is making love to a person of the same sex. Indulgence in this practice could lead to personality maladjustment because of its abnormal nature. It is natural that a male sex is normally attracted to the female sex and vice versa, but the reverse is the case when it comes to lesbianism. Hence this is why it is seen as abnormality on the part of the practitioners – the lesbians.

Lesbianism commences mostly during the on-set of adolescence and its unwanted wide dissemination is overwhelming as it is spreading like wild fire especially in Nigeria. The researcher having meticulously observed a handful of female students in Rivers State University of Educations, it appears to him that some of the observed students are deeply involved in this unwelcome and unwholesome menace. The researcher further noted with dismay, that there are some reasons behind the practitioners' indulgence in the practice of lesbianism.

Some of those reasons as noted by the researcher includes but not limited to the followings; civilization and urbanizations, disappointment, arrogance, poverty, family upbringing, moral laxity etc. It was also noted during the study that some individuals who indulge in this practice did not go into it on their own volition, rather, they were cajoled and hired into the practice by those individuals' who are more experienced in it, while some voluntarily waded into the practice in order to perfect the rudimentary experience they had during or while in their secondary education through school mother and daughter, but maybe, did not go deep into it for fear of their teachers who may convey the information to their parents and guardians. Hence, the experience is perfected when admitted into tertiary level of education where they have enough freedom coupled with the fact that more experienced persons are there to aid them.

According to Sigmund Freud (1922 and 1959), homosexuality occurred as a result of appropriate identification with the opposite sex parent during development. That is, to say that inappropriate identification of the two opposite sexes gave rise to homosexuality. But Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martins and Gebhard (1953), reported that 33% of girls admitted that they had engaged in homosexual play prior to the onset of adolescent stage. Apart from personality maladjustment occasioned by lesbianism, another critical effect of this abominable act on its subscribers is that of creating or making them to develop poor heterosexual life, which from all indications will definitely affects their marital or matrimonial relationship.

In other words, a woman who has over-indulged in this practice will surely find it difficult to perform her obligatory roles in her matrimonial home. One will notice a great deal of negligence when it comes to sexual functions to her husband and which could lead to marital disharmony and carious in the family, or even separation and divorce, as a resultant effect.

It is therefore, astonishing that humans rather than abhor sinful acts, take sins and crimes as necessity of life. It is also battling that people can continue to wallow in ignorance for a long period of time despite its aversive outcomes, like running one's sense of reasoning and behaviour. Lesbianism practices have plunged many girls and women into sexually backwardness and inferiority complex before their opposite sex partners yet most people have refused to give heed to the pieces of advice. From those who understood the dangers and implications associated with the act.

Inspite of the above mentioned implications, there are other associated effects such as HIV/AIDS and other dangerous transferable disease and infections into the body of the practitioners. This is because those who may not be able to afford some of the expensive materials used for the practice of lesbianism like; vibrators, robots, artificial pennies etc, may resort to the use of cheap materials like; sticks, candles, bananas, biro-pens that they can lay their hands on. These materials mentioned above (When in use) can cause bruises and abrasions as they scrub them hard on their clitoris, thereby making way through which infections can be contracted. There is also the tendency that sexually transmitted diseases and infections can be contacted during the act when the partners come vulva to (tribadism) because of unprotected nature of the practice or act. So while in this kind of practice, bruises abrasion can also occur as they grind harder against each other to achieve satisfaction, thereby transmitting from the infected to the uninfected person. The practice of lesbianism can take any of the following methods to achieve its goal; tribadism, cunniligus, analingus, breast play, anal penetration, fisting etc.

Although the practitioners of lesbianism can use any of the above methods to derive their sexual satisfaction, initiating a sexual relationship is never an easy task. (Schwartz and Blumsteiny, (2006) rightly observed that initiating sexual relationship on female homosexuality is very difficult. This is because the society conditions women to respond to sexual initiation rather take the lead. In other words without familiar cues of “being pursued”, women may not be aware of mutual attraction, each is waiting for the other person to take first step to demonstrate interest and consequently, the sexual relationship may not even begin.

Share, Hite (2003) also reported that greater sexual satisfaction between women may occur because “lesbian sexual relationship tends to be longer and involve more all over body sensuality”.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Lesbianism has no doubt, and remains a problem because it affects (the practitioners) both physiologically and psychologically. Physiologically because they don't associate with their opposite sex as was the case in heterosexual relationship. Some of the female adolescent students found themselves in the dirty act of lesbianism because of poor inter-social behaviour between them and their opposite counterparts. Psychologically, because they do not have interest in their opposite sex counterparts which may affect them in future marital relationships. It makes them to develop deviant behaviours such as inferiority complex amongst other deviant temperaments. It is a distortion of biological and psychological component of the body and a threat to ultimate survival of human race, a dehumanizing act, making mockery of divine image originally made.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does fear of contracting venereal diseases lead to lesbianism?
2. Does peer-group influence cause lesbianism?
3. Does poor family upbringing lead to lesbianism?
4. Does fear of becoming pregnant cause lesbianism?
5. Does disappointment from men lead to lesbianism?

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The target population is 1500 which comprise all female students in the three (3) campuses of the university namely:- St. John-Iwofe, Ndele and Rumuolumeni campuse respectively.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The target sample to be used will consist of one hundred and fifty (150) female students that will be randomly drawn from the three campuses of the university mentioned above. The study will employ simple random sampling method to select the one hundred and fifty (150) female students in the main Rumuolumeni campuses, St. John Iwofe and Ndele campuses of Rivers State University of Education, Port Harcourt.

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The research instrument used for the study is called (FILQ) Factors Influencing Lesbianism Questionnaire, it is a four (point) likert scale questionnaire. The questionnaire is suitable because it is a non-cognitive test that need not be amenable to a correct answer. The questionnaire contain fifteen (15) structured items.

VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

After developing the questionnaire it was given to the experts in the department of psychology, guidance and counseling who are experienced in measurement and evaluation to assess its validity and relevance to the work. The corrections made were integrated into the final version of the instrument.

RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

The reliability of the instrument was done through the test-retest method. Copies of the instrument were administered twice to the sample after two weeks interval. The scores on the two administrations of the test were correlated using spearman correlation statistics and the result indicated coefficient value of 0.75 which was judged high enough to be reliable for the instrument.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

For statistical purpose, the responses derived from the respondents were tactfully organized and analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS

Research Question I

Does fear of contacting venereal diseases lead to lesbianism?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation analysis of respondents on whether fear of contacting venereal disease lead to lesbianism.

S/N	Items Statements	No. of Respond	S A	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Standard Deviation	Criterion Mean	Remark
1.	Some female students go into lesbianism to avoid venereal diseases.	150	77	43	16	14	3.22	0.98	2.5	Accepted
2.	Lesbianism are more expected to venereal diseases than non lesbians.	150	76	42	18	14	3.20	0.99		Accepted
3.	Lesbians are free from venereal disease.	150	21	79	40	10	2.74	0.78		Accepted

From the above table, it is shown that items 1, 2, and 3 which have respective mean scores of 3.22, 3.20 and 2.74 were accepted. This is because their scores are above the criterion means of 2.5.

It is therefore, taken that the respondents agreed that fear of contacting venereal diseases leads to lesbianism.

Research Question 2

Does peer group influence cause lesbianism?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation analysis of respondents on whether peer group influence cause lesbianism.

S/N	Items Statements	No. of Respond	S A	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Standard Deviation	Criterion Mean	Remark
4.	Some female students become lesbians because they were influence by their friends.	150	33	64	30	23	2.71	0.98	2.5	Accepted
5.	Some Female students become lesbians because their roommates lured them into the act.	150	50	70	20	10	2.89	0.93		Accepted
6.	A course mate can influence one to be a lesbian.	150	10	80	100	10	2.27	0.68		Rejected

Table 2 above shows the responses of the respondents on whether peer group influence causes lesbianism. From the table, items 4 and 5 have mean scores 2.71 and 2.89 respectively. This means that the respondents to those items accepted that peer group influence causes lesbianism, while item B has a mean score of 2.27 and was rejected.

Research Question 3

Does poor family upbringing lead to lesbianism?

Table 3: Means and standard deviation analysis of respondents on whether poor family upbringing leads to lesbianism.

S/N	Items Statements	No. of Respond	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Standard Deviation	Criterion Mean	Remark
7.	Poor family upbringing can lead to lesbianism.	150	80	62	5	3	3.41	0.71	2.5	Accepted
8.	Family negligence can lead to lesbianism.	150	110	30	9	1	3.66	0.62		Accepted
9.	A girl from Christian family cannot be a lesbian.	150	90	40	15	5	3.43	0.81		Rejected

In the table above, the responses of the respondents to the items were analyzed, and from the table, it was seen that item 7 has a mean score of 3.41, item 8 has a mean score of 3.6, while item 9 has a mean score of 3.43. Based on this, it is taken that the items were accepted, and this implies that poor family upbringing can lead to lesbianism while a girl from Christian family cannot be a lesbian.

Research Question 4

Table 4: Does fear of becoming pregnant causes lesbianism?

S/N	Items Statements	No. of Respond	S A	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Standard Deviation	Criterion Mean	Remark
10.	I want to be a lesbian because I don't want to be pregnant.	150	30	40	50	30	2.47	1.03	2.5	Accepted
11.	Lesbianism is the only solution to avoid pregnancy.	150	88	32	20	10	3.32	0.94		Accepted
12.	Lesbians are not afraid of pregnancy.	150	80	55	10	5	3.40	0.75		Rejected

In the table above, the responses of the respondents on whether fear of becoming pregnant causes lesbianism were analyzed. And it was seen that items 10, 11 and 12 have respective mean score of 2.47, 3.32 and 3.40 respectively. This means that all the items were accepted, and it therefore implies that the respondents agree that fear of becoming pregnant causes lesbianism.

Research Question 5

Does disappointment from men leads to lesbianism?

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation analysis of respondents on whether disappointment from men leads to lesbianism.

S/N	Items Statements	No. of Respond	S A	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Standard Deviation	Criterion Mean	Remark
13.	You have been disappointed by many men.	150	30	80	25	15	2.83	0.86	2.5	Accepted
14.	Some female students became lesbians because the men who promised them marriage disappointed them.	150	5	15	110	20	1.93	0.46		Rejected
15.	Some female students became lesbians because they want to avoid disappointment from men.	150	50	10	80	10	2.67	1.01		Rejected

Table 5 above shows that item 13 has a means score of 2.83 and item 15 has a means score of 2.67 respectively. This means that the two items were accepted as causing lesbianism. While item 14 on the same table was rejected with a mean score of 1.93. By this, the item was not seen as causing lesbianism among female students.

DISCUSSIONS

All the results obtained from this study were tactfully summarized and presented as follows:-

1. Fear of contacting venereal disease can lead to lesbianism.
2. Peer group influence can lead to lesbianism.
3. Poor family upbringing can lead to or cause lesbianism.
4. Fear of becoming pregnant can lead to lesbianism.
5. Disappointment from men can cause or lead to lesbianism.

Hence, it is quite obvious that the researcher tend to agree to the fact that poor family upbringing is one of the leading factors that would lead to lesbianism. Parents failure to play their moral and financial roles in the family to support their children spiritually, mentally and psychologically, could enable the child/children to meet up their demands by accepting such conditions that may lead them to lesbianism due to fear of what the future might portend.

More so, children should be loved by their parents who brought them into the world. Parents should always listen to both verbal, non-verbal attitudes of their children so as to know where to come in to support them, rather than, calling them names or abusing them which could instigate inferiority complex in those children. This is in accordance with the assertion of Onomodike and Echebe (2010), where they accepted that most adolescent problems may be traced to their families. When children are not loved or are discriminated against in the home, when children are beaten up without any just cause or where more is demanded from children than they could cope with, the children may become a problem to not only the family but also to school and the society at large.

Hence, the reverse will be the case when the children are given adequate love and care which they deserve from their parents. This will go a long way to boost their ego and create a sense of belongingness in them. It is believed that when the children or adolescents have adequate moral and psychological as well as financial support, they will be well equipped and consequently, all the efforts and pressures of their peers and the chronic lesbians regarding the practice will be futile and abortive.

Offir (2008) also concurred to this notion when he said that experiences within the family have long been considered an important contributor of lesbianism, but a growing number of researchers are exploring the possibility that a biological predisposition may play a central role. John Gagan (2005) believes in his own opinion that much of the interest in what causes lesbianism is based less on scientific interest than on social and political debate over whether lesbianism is morally right or wrong. Gagan is suggesting that even if the cause of lesbianism were determined, people would still find social, political or religious reasons to discriminate against lesbians.

However, Hass and Dreyer (2006) argued that public acceptance of lesbianism has increased significantly during the past several decades, largely due to the political and educational efforts of the women's liberation and gay rights movements. This acceptance acknowledges the right of individuals to freely practice their own sexual orientation and life-styles and to be protected from discrimination. Approximately, two thirds of adolescents interviewed approve in principle of same sex contacts.

According to Paul (1982), until the early 1970s, the majority of psychologists and psychiatrists considered lesbianism/ homosexuality to be abnormal because it seemed to

interfere with a person's psychological functioning and well being. However, in 1998 and 2001, the American psychiatrist and psychological associations respectively, declared that lesbianism was not an abnormal behaviour. They made this change because many studies showed that lesbianism was not necessarily maladaptive and that there were lesbians who were as happy and well adjusted as their heterosexual counterparts. Hence, because of these findings, lesbianism is now regarded as a normal variants of human sexual behaviour by both mental health organizations.

There has also been a steady increase in the acceptance of lesbianism/homosexuality by Americans due to these two mental health organizations changes in the policies of religions organizations, publications of data showing that lesbians are as mentally healthy as heterosexuals, and that gay movement, which has actively campaigned for legal, economic and social acceptance.

CONCLUSION

Lesbianism which has become pandemic has been on the increase in Nigeria higher institution. Making love to a person of the same sex is an abnormal behaviour that could lead to personality maladjustment. Hence, introducing stiffer measures as a way to check lesbianism could be a welcomed development. This is especially true because, youths today are parents and leaders of this nation tomorrow. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to cleanse the youths from this unwelcome and unwholesome menace called lesbianism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher proffers the following recommendations:-

1. Rivers State government should introduce stiffer measures that will help to check lesbianism among female students especially in Rivers State University of Education Port Harcourt.
2. The Government of Rivers State should in order to help this situation and to minimize the spread of this menace recruit and deploy more qualified guidance counselors to all the three (3) campuses of Rivers State University of Education, Port Harcourt. This is for proper counseling of the female students, which will include, explaining the spread, the effects and the prevention of this menace called lesbianism to the students so that they will be better/well informed before hand, thereby being on their guard as regards the kind of friends they keep.
3. Teachers and parents as well as other significant individuals should be good models by trying to lead exemplary lives that can be emulated by their children, wards and students.

IMPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS FOR COUNSELLING

Counselors or therapists can apply the technique of Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), propounded by Albert Ellis to help lesbians who have the desire to change in applying the technique of RET and CBT. Counselors and/or therapists should first of all accept the lesbians as normal beings and then try to recognize their perception in viewing lesbianism as a sexual deviation which the Nigeria culture generally forbids.

The counselors can also use aversive therapy to help the lesbians to suppress their deviant sexual aroused (libido) and behaviour. The therapists should encourage lesbians to engage in heterosexual activities like; drama, sports, parties, dance, picnics etc which will help them associate with their opposite sex counterparts. Pastoral counseling can also be employed by the counselors which will be done by citing some relevant portions of the Bible that condemns lesbianism and also the consequences that will follow those who indulge in the dirty act.

Finally, the counselors can through seminars, news talk, symposia etc, educate parents who have adolescent girls to monitor their behaviour and then friends they keep. This is especially important because, when lesbianism is detected earlier, there is the probability that it can be controlled.

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