“BROSTITUTION” CONSTRUCTING MULTIPLE SEXUAL PARTNERSHIP AMONG MALE STUDENTS AT LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract
Multiple sexual partnerships is not a new phenomenon; rather, it is in fashion and taking on several patterns in the 21st century Nigerian universities. Male students have more than one sexual partner and serially at regular interval. Although male with multiple sexual partners is believed to contribute to the spreading of HIV/AIDS, there are benefits associated with keeping multiple sexual partnerships. This paper focused on the rationale behind keeping multiple partners, coping strategies, and benefits of keeping and maintaining multiple sexual partners. This study adopted anomie, differential association, and social exchange theories. The study employed a qualitative research method. A total number of 40 In-depth interviews and four sessions of focus group discussion were conducted with participants that were purposively selected through snowballing across the faculties in the Lagos State University. Afterwards, snowballing sampling method was used. The study found that it is evident that multiple sexual partnerships are trendy in the higher institutions not only in Nigeria but around the globe. There was however no indicator that parental disciplinary traits possess an influence on ‘no sexual partnership’ or ‘one sexual partnership’. Multiple sexual partnerships is a trait learnt among friends in the school and even at home. It is seen as the ‘real deal’ and the number of partners informs the degree of respect. It is a form of competition among some friends. Multiple sexual partnerships is an indicator to high rate in the spread of STDs. The coping strategies employed include friend-zoning, maintaining multiple hostels, playing daddy among others.

Introduction
Traditional attitudes towards relationships, sex, marriage and family life, have taken a new dimension in most communities of the world, and this transformation is ongoing as a result of globalization (Odimegwu & Somefun, 2017). The family, which is the first agent of socialization, has always had a significant influence on marriage, sex and relationships (Manning, Cohen, Smock, 2011). The family has evolved in three stages (Trustee, Domestic and Atomistic), and this evolution has significantly influenced relationships and sexual behaviours (Zimmerman, 1970; Shakely, 2018). It has been estimated that about 50% of young people living in Sub-Saharan Africa are sexually active at 16-years-old and about 32% of students in secondary school have engaged in sexual activities like vaginal-penile intercourse (Morris & Rushwan, 2015; Amo-Adjei & Tuoyire, 2018). Nigeria is not spared in the social change sweeping across
the world in the aspects of family formation and sexuality. The sacredness of sexuality in Nigeria is becoming very fluid among young people. The sexual behaviours of students differ widely because of the socio-cultural or environmental differences that exist in their confined space. In sub-Saharan countries, there is significant variability in sexual behaviour, which are always considered to go together with taboos and cultures (Mayaud & Mabey, 2004). Nigeria has experienced some forms of social and structural change that are linked to long years of economic reform and growth. It led to a change in the traditional attitudes that people have towards sex, marriage and family. The conventional attitude of people to sex, family and marriage was sacred, but there has been a paradigm shift in the perspective of young people towards sex (Hu & Shi, 2001).

Monogamous relationships are the most common relationships between a man and a woman, but studies suggest that many sexually active people, including those in sub-Saharan Africa, have more than one sexual partner (Morris & Kretzshmar, 1997; Todd, 2009). A study carried out in five developed communities in Sub-Saharan Africa showed that 26.5% of males and 14.4% of females were involved in multiple sexual relationships (Lagarde, Auvert, Carael, Laourou, Ferry, Akam & Buve, 2001). Tradition cultural beliefs in South Africa suggest that manhood is defined by the number of children that a man has and the strength or ability to have multiple sexual partners (Kaufman, Shefer, Crawford, Simbayi & Kalichman, 2008).

Sexual relationship formation is among the latent function that higher institutions perform as the manifest function is to educate students. The young students in universities are considered the most promising members of all societies that constitute the next generation of leaders in any given sector (Heeren, 2015). Contemporary studies indicate that there is shocking evidence that young individuals engage in multiple sexual relationships, and the trend of this phenomenon is disturbing. Studies on young persons in Southern Africa indicates that it has become a norm and the lifestyle of young individuals to have multiple sexual partners (Alkema, 2013; Kanters, 2013).

Multiple sexual partnerships is not a contemporary phenomenon; it is one that is in vogue and taking on several patterns in the 21st century Nigeria. Males with numerous partners are categorized as having more than a female sexual partner at a time or having sexual partners serially at a given period (Mwakagile, 2001). The patriarchy nature of the country contributed to what gives young males high morale to have more than a partner.

The behaviours of undergraduates are impacted by their attitudes towards sexual relationship and premarital sex. Undergraduates of a university in China had a preconceived notion that having sex before marriage is not abnormal (Fan, Ma, Wu, Chen, Wang & Liu, 2004). Individuals with just one sexual partner, who frequently use condoms during every sexual encounter are believed to have safe sexual behaviour and reduce the risk of HIV/STDs.

University students typically get involved in short-lived relationships that make them prone to have sex with multiple partners, thereby making them susceptible to acquire STDs as a result of unprotected sex (Mwakagile, 2001). Studies suggest that societies, where masculinity is measured based on the increasing number of sexual partners a man can be involved in, is prone to increase in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV (Leclerc-Madlala, 2009). Individuals in Sub-Saharan Africa that are sexually active are discovered to have more than a sexual partner (Todd, Cremin, McGrath, Bwanika, Wringe, Marston & Zaba, 2009).

Based on the proceeding, the study examines the rationale behind multiple sexual partnerships among male students, the strategies adopted to cope with the implicit and explicit issues associated with having and maintaining multiple sexual partnerships, and the benefits cum consequences of keeping multiple sexual partnerships.
Methods
The study was carried out using a qualitative research inquiry. With this method, the researcher and subjects had a closer rapport that proved to be more revealing. Lagos State University (LASU), Ojo Local Government Area (LGA) of Lagos State was selected for the study. Lagos State University, which presently has a total number of above ten thousand (10,000) undergraduates. Lagos State University was created in 1983 and started operation in 1984 under the dispensation of the then executive governor Alhaji Lateef Jakande. It has six faculties, three schools and a college in all. They are Social Sciences, Management Science, Education, School of Transport, School of Communication, Sciences, Law, College of Medicine, School of Engineering and Agriculture.

The study adopted the use of qualitative data collection by purposively selecting 40 male subjects that engage in multiple sexual relationship through a snowballing system, and were put through In-depth Interviews (IDI) In addition to this, the study also did four sessions of focus group discussions (FGD) with each session having at least eight participants at the concluding parts of each of the sessions. A semi-structured interview guide was used for both the IDI and FGD.

The researcher transcribed the data acquired from the In-depth interviews and Focus group discussion through the use of a recording device, and they were compared with the note taken by the note-taker during the meetings. Both the transcribed tapes and the field notes were utilised for data analysis. The content analysis of the transcribed interviews was manually done.

Findings
Perception of Multiple Sexual Partnerships among Male Students
Multiple sexual partnerships is a very popular phenomenon that has become an integral part of young people’s norms. To prove this reality, all the respondents see the phenomenon to be normal and spreading. A respondent said:

The case of having multiple girlfriends is normal and very interesting because it shows how masculine one is. I have had over 10 – 15 sexual partners, and presently, I have just four of them at my disposal. Others are just friends but who I have 'flings' with. Those know I have a main girlfriend, but they still hang around. Having several sexual partnerships is a normal thing among guys. Sometimes, it may look like a competition among us and some other times, and I just think having a girl is of no use compared to when I have 3 – 4 of them. I had my first sexual experience at the age of 16, and since then, the urges for sex would not just go. (IDI/Male/21 years)

Alkema (2013) asserted that there is shocking evidence that young individuals engage in multiple sexual relationships, and the trend of this phenomenon is disturbing. Studies show that young persons in Southern Africa indicate that it has become a norm and the lifestyle of young individuals to have multiple sexual partners (Kanters, 2013). The differential association theory explains how a person becomes what his friends are when he associates with them, and this is the case of the respondents who said:

Having several sexual partners is not a bad thing at all because sex is a biological need that we need to do practically. Almost all my friends have more than a girlfriend. The act is a competition among my circle. We use girls to count scores and to show how good we are in our clique. I have a main girlfriend who knows I mingle with other girls but not sure if I have anything intimate with the other girls. However, some of the
other girls too know my main 'babe', but it is a mutual thing. Presently, I have ten (10) of them and counting.
In most cases, I fall for ladies' faces and their body features.

(IDI/Male/24 years)

Another respondent said:
I have dated over 15 girls, but not I cannot even mention how I have. I have a standby girlfriend, but there are others we usually call 'sarewa' (They just come for sex and go). I started having multiple girlfriends before I gained admission into LASU. It is a form of competition among my friends, and we use it to brag. I have sex whenever I am emotional or stressed.
(FGD/Male/24 years)

Factors Responsible for Multiple Sexual Partnerships among Male Students
In South Africa, traditional cultural beliefs that define manhood through the number of children that a man has increased the acceptability of men having multiple partners (Kaufman, Shefer, Crawford, Simbayi, & Kalichman, 2008). Accordingly, it has been argued that these cultural practices and beliefs provide justification and tolerance for multiple sexual partners, which contribute to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV (Leclerc-Madlala, 2009). There are various factors responsible for this phenomenon and its dissemination. They range from peer group influence on lust, hurt from previous relationships, material benefits and even poverty. A respondent said:
My friends are not influence to me having multiple sexual partners. In my family, once you are 18 years of age, you are permitted to go into a relationship primarily for the males. My mummy approves it that I have a girlfriend and even take her home to her. The other girls do not make it to my house, and I only take them to the hostel. One of the reasons I get down with numerous girls was as a result of a girl that broke my heart while I just started my relationship. Since then, I have developed a changed mindset towards ladies. I also get attracted to fine ladies with brains. I am religious, but I do not attend any fellowship on campus.
(IDI/Male/21 years)

Another respondent said:
My status as a student union executive increased the numbers of sexual partners I have. Most girls fall for students with political powers and will not mind be being a side chick as far as they are identified with the person. I am not the type that keeps lots of girls, but the habit started when I stayed with my friend in 100 level who fell in love with a girl but begged me to help him ask out. I took the step to tell the girl, but the girl agreed to date my friend if only I would date her friend too. If my daddy were to be alive, I would not have met the friend I stayed with because he would have provided my apartment. I had my first sexual experience at 16. One of the factors responsible for this problem is greed. I open up to other girls when my girlfriend is unavailable. I do not scope ladies, they scope me instead, and that’s not because I am handsome or rich but because I am into politics and the president of my faculty.
(IDI/Male/19 years)
To operationalize the anomie theory of Merton’s and especially the retreatism aspect that explains why some people reject both the societal norms and societal goal due to experience or the strain attached to abiding by the norm. A respondent said:

*My reason for multiple girls is to stay off the 'hurt zone'. If I am to stick to a lady, and she starts getting attracted to another guy, I get emotionally disturbed and lose focus instantly. So, I get a pack of them and play them well.*

(FGD/Male/25 years)

The differential association theory would also explain how peer group influence serves as a factor in the phenomenon under study. A respondent said:

*If you have not been deflowered, your friends (especially when they are sexually active) would see you as a 'bolo' (novice). My friends used to disrespect me; they used to refer to me as a small boy until I had sex. Their respect for me grew as I began to have many girlfriends and especially, I had sex with Calabar students in the hostel.*

(FGD/Male/23 years)

**Coping Strategies Adopted by Male Students with Multiple Sexual Partnerships**

There are various coping strategies male students use in keeping their several girlfriends. There are no planned strategies used. In most cases, different strategies are employed for different girls based on how relevant they are in the relationship. In this regards, a respondent said this:

*The most useful strategy is attention. Females like attention a lot, and I am very good at giving them. I give attention and never get tired of that. I do not spend on them except on few occasions and such spending are token. My time is what I spend and this I do especially on WhatsApp. I use my voice to make them never get tired of me because I sing very well. My strategies are very effective and there has never been a time when two of my girlfriends met at my place or anywhere. I play for my games perfectly well.*

(IDI/Male/20 years)

A respondent who had a different view about strategies for managing girls said:

*Do I have a strategy? No! I do not even ask them out. It is the other way round. I have more partners that walk up to me than the ones I walked up to. I don’t make extra effort to get a girl. They come naturally. The strategy is to be wise. I have had ‘network jams’ several times. Some girls barge into my hostel without prior notice and on few occasions, it had led to minor quarrels or fight between the girls and I still calm them down later with sweet words.*

(IDI/Male/24 years)

A respondent said:

*Ladies are like robots; they believe whatever one tells them. My strategy is caring for them in a way that they fall for it, and even when I stop, they will not back out of the relationship. I play my cards well with ladies and I go for the best ones with my specifications. I once fell in love for one and I became the victim of the relationship because I was more in the relationship than she was. Ever since I have decided never*
to fall for any lady. I do not date two girls in a faculty. I make sure there are gaps. I see them off at time, but I am very calculative.
(FGD/Male/23 years)

Preventive Measures used by Male Students with Multiple Sexual Partnerships
There has been a drastic change in the relationship patterns among students in the higher institutions in Nigeria, which has affected the values placed on sex. The change in the relationship patterns among students has led to an increase in the transmission of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and as such poses a threat to sustainable development (UNAIDS, 2007). Almost all the respondents argued that they do not use condoms with their main partner but use with the other girls. This is, however, not a safe practice as the main sexual partner may not be faithful. In this regard, this is what a respondent has to say:

'I don’t like condoms when I sleep with any of them, but I have been contemplating how to start because I have friends who have contracted STIs. I have never contracted any sexually transmitted disease, but my friend once played a prank on me that I had contracted it when I was sick.'
(IDI/Male/22 years)

The response of another respondent validates the facts of previous studies that students engage in unsafe and risky sexual activities.

'I hate using condoms. I select the type of girls I have sex with, and I have never contacted any STDs, but I get scared to go to the hospital for check-up.'
(FGD/male/ 19 years)

Another respondent said:
The girlfriends hate condoms. They only get scared of unwanted pregnancy which to me is not a problem. I enjoy it more without condoms. I have never been diagnosed with any form of sexual diseases in my life. I know those I sleep with well enough.
(IDI/Male/22 years)

Benefits and Risk Associated with Multiple Sexual Partnership
In line with the literature and social exchange theory, most relationships are entered into because of the benefits involved in them.

'Dating lots of girls is enterprising, especially when they are rich, or their main boyfriends are working-class people or stay abroad. Nice treatments are attached to them. Dating them gets me abundant gifts. Some of them even connect me to their friends for patronization. The only consequences I believe is involved is that when they know I am a player; they may tarnish my name and reputation in the school and block the avenue to have a new girlfriend in the future.'
(IDI/Male/25 years)

Social exchange theory opined that mutuality comes when both parties have something to offer. This process is known as ‘I scratch your back; you scratch my back’. A respondent corroborated this assertion by saying:

'I gain a lot then I give it to them. There are times I do not get hungry for weeks and I do not spend a dime. They bring food to my hostel and in most cases, I go there to eat. There is a girl who gets me shirts and
boxers (pants) each time I made her enjoy sex. Also, I get financial aid from few of them whenever I am broke or need to get something important. The risk attached to this act is sexually transmitted disease and I am afraid of that.

(IDI/Male/21 years)

Another respondent corroborated the above by saying:

‘There are financial benefits and constant sexual satisfaction when sexual urges arise. Even a mother of one once lured me to sleep with her, and I did. Ever since we do it occasionally and she gave me things. I stopped when I gained admission into LASU. The risk in this is that you will always need to be calculated, smart, use a lie to back up a lie, and must have a retentive memory. The truth is it is very stressful and time/energy-consuming. It does not affect my academics. The only problem I have with my academics is that I am too playful and in fact, multiple sexual partnerships help me to some extent as I sometimes teach some of the girls in my department.’

(IDI/Male/23 years)

Discussion of Findings

In addendum, the prevalence of multiple sexual partnerships among male students is high and institutionalised among young people due to patriarchy. Moodley (2008) found that multiple sexual partnerships are more dominant among students aged between 19 and 25 years. Many of the respondents said multiple sexual partnerships is a phenomenon that is not only practiced in the school but everywhere and as it is, it is a trend that cannot stop although it is created for sharp guys.

There are various factors responsible for multiple sexual partnerships among male students based on the accounts of the students. Eleazar (2009) found that multiple sexual partnerships are influenced by different factors, including lack of good parental supervision and location of residences they are renting some that may be near drinking places and night clubs.

The coping strategies adopted by male students with multiple sexual partnerships was also examined, and the study found that at different times, male students employed various strategies to cope with multiple partners and prevent the conflicts associated with multiple sexual partnerships. The coping strategies are:

1. **Tender Loving Care (TLC):** Showing too much love and affection would stop the girl from seeing so many other things that the male student does.

2. **Father/Daughter:** This is a form of simulation of the role of Daddies in a girl’s life. This usually happens between an older male student and a younger female student. The girl is overwhelmed by the materials and the wisdom of the male student.

3. **Hypnotism/Programming:** This is founded on the belief that female sexual partners will continue to trust what you say for as long as you keep the line of communication open. That way, the male student input all he needed to put in her mind himself and stop other individuals from doing same.

4. **Multiple Rooms and Hostel:** This is a Repo Man’s style. Having many apartments gives the male student many identities and a good cover for his ventures.

5. **Friend-zoning:** This is a very recent trend that seems to overshadow all other strategies. Despite being involved in sexual relationship, the male student and his partner will present to the others the belief that they are just friend or better put, call themselves “besties”. This is also called “friendship with benefits”. This situation allows the male student to have other girlfriends without necessarily hiding them from the girl.

6. **Authoritarianism:** This is a slave/owner relationship. The male dominates her and may at times use violence to keep her silent. Out of fear, she does not even mention her suspicions.
The study by Mutinta (2012) suggests that students living in rented houses away from their controlling parents in addition to coming from rural backgrounds make them susceptible to risky sexual behaviour, including having multiple sexual partnerships. The benefits derived from involving in multiple sexual partnership were material-based on the part of the male and the female alike.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

From this study, it is evident that multiple sexual partnership is trendy in the higher institutions not only in Nigeria but around the globe as researches from different countries have carried out different studies in this area. There was, however no indicator that parental disciplinary traits possess an influence on ‘no sexual partnership’ or ‘one sexual partnership’. From the data gathered, it was deduced that multiple sexual partnership is a trait learnt among friends in the school and even at home (before they were admitted). It is seen as the real deal and the number of partners informs the degree of respect. It is a form of competition among some friends.

All the males involved in this study claimed to benefit more from the ladies they are dating except for the ones they call their main lovers. They benefit more than sex from some unsuspecting girls who may believe they are the only ones attached to them. There are some ladies that deliberately date male students even when they know they have girlfriends. Among all the other things they need from these male students is sex, and they pay them handsomely with material substances and support them financially.

The issue of Multiple sexual partnership needs to be addressed at Lagos State University. The following are recommendations as to how this practice can be reduced:

- There is a need for to communicate the risks associated with multiple sexual partnerships and the dangers of having more than one sexual partner at a time, or of having a partner who has more than one partner.
- Male dominance syndrome among youths must be addressed. This would also help in correcting some males who believe females are toys and could be played at any given time.
- Encouragement of consistent and correct condom use.
- There is a need to address gender dynamics, with the aim of empowering women and raising their status in the university and the society in general.

The school should make available facilities that will engage the students actively rather than going about amassing sexual partners. Extra-curricular activities will put the minds of the students off. The school should create awareness on this issue and spell out the implications of having more than a sexual partnership. Abstinence should be preached in the school and its environs. This will reduce the cases of teenage pregnancies among female students and of which is seen to be at play almost every semester at various faculties.

The family, on the other hand, should inculcate stricter morals in their wards. Although, the study shows that there is no relationship between parents’ disciplinary style and multiple sexual relationship that their children get involved in, but frequent monitoring and check-up should be done to ensure conformity.

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