

Understanding Sexual Relations between Marital Partners: A study of *Ogu* Families, Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examines control over sexuality between marital partners. Using a multi-stage sampling procedure, structured questionnaires were administered among 900 married men and women in the study area to generate quantitative data; 9 focus group discussions were also organized to elicit contextual information. The analysis reveals that there is pleasure in sex that makes both partners naturally to desire it. While men are culturally conditioned to make direct demand for sex, women employ indirect erotic strategies to initiate sex. The consent of both partners is required for the encounter to give maximum pleasure. Sexual relation between marital partners in the study area is characterized by politics and less of any partner having dominance. Logistic models show that urban residence and frequent spousal communication are likely to promote gender equality in the control over sexuality between marital partners. Hence sexual health programmes should focus on both partners and not just men.

Introduction

In a paper presented at a seminar organized by the IUSSP Committee for Reproductive Health, Dixon-Muller (1999) attempted a classical disintegration of reproductive health goals into measurable components. Two of the reproductive health goals she articulated include: freedom from unwanted sexual relations and harmful or unwanted sexual practices, including violence and coercion within sexual relationships; and the capacity to enjoy and sustain sexual relations in a spirit of affection and partnership. These components set sexuality as an integral part of reproductive health. Needless to mention sexual and reproductive health are directly related to the attainment of the millennium

development goals (MDGs), especially with respect to improving maternal mortality and combating HIV/AIDS (Mba, 2006).

The WHO (2004) defines sexuality as “a central aspect of being a human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender, identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction”. In the context of this definition, this paper focuses on sexual relations among marital partners in order to re-examine aspects of age-long stereotypical myths on sub-Saharan African sexuality. The main objective is to empirically examine the context of sexual relation in the family and gender differential in the control over sexuality between partners in the study setting. The main question addressed in the study is, do men actually dominate decisions on when to have sex within unions?

The field of sexuality is largely understudied in sub-Saharan Africa even though it is at the centre of our very existence (Undie and Benaya, 2006; WHO, 2004; Vance, 1999). The examination of the existing literature on sexuality by Undie and Benawa (2006: 3) “revealed undeniable tension in the emergent body of sexuality literature”. Quoting Okami and Pendleton (1994), they affirmed the existence of a contradiction between “empirical data gathering and hypothesis testing and postmodern, post positivist constructionist scholarship/science” on African sexuality. Locally, only a few researchers have delved into this all important area. Among the few studies, there has been over-concentration on male sexuality with emphasis on extra-marital affairs to an almost total neglect of the control over sexuality between husband and wife (for instance, Orubuloye *et al.*, 1995; Boroffice, 1995). In addition, majority of the available studies on sub-Saharan Africa do not focus directly on sexuality per se but on the African family system

and the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Undie and Benaya, 2006). As a result most of the theories constructed on African sexuality are quite tenuous and have been highly criticized (Ahlberg, 2007; Undie and Benaya, 2006). Perhaps this accounts for the prevailing mystification of sexuality, and especially control over sexuality, between married partners.

The literature is replete with assertions that because African society is largely patriarchal, men dominate family decision-making. The extension of this reality to sexuality appears to fuel some discord in the literature on who really determines when and the frequency of sex between heterosexual married partners. Some studies report that men dominate control over conjugal sexuality more than their female counterparts (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994; Oyekanmi, 1999), and that women cannot resist sexual advances from their husbands even when they perceive their health is at risk (possibility of contacting STIs) (Bammeke, 1999; Adewuyi, 1999). In essence the position established by these scholars and others indicates that women have little control over their sexuality but their husbands are the major determinants.

However some other studies have indicated that women exact considerable control over their sexuality in marriage. Orubuloye (1995: 231) observed that “Yoruba women would increasingly refuse to have sex with partners that are infected with HIV/AIDS”. This was attributed to “their economic independence, the ease with which they could break up marriages and return to their families of origin, and the traditional expectation that it is primarily women who are responsible for ensuring sexual relations do not take place during pregnancy and the post-partum period”. Again, in a study conducted by Orubuloye *et al.* (1997) in Ekiti, it was reported that about 70 percent urban

and 75 percent rural women claimed to have the right to resist sexual advances by their partners, particularly when they suspect that their husbands are misbehaving. Also Ogunjuyigbe and Adeyemi (2005) observed in a study carried out in Lagos metropolis that women have some control over their sexuality in Africa, especially during breastfeeding, pregnancy, menstruation and sick period. In view of these discordant voices on the subject matter in Nigeria, more studies are needed. This justifies the present study.

Conceptual Framework

A number of conceptual perspectives have been advanced on global sexuality namely psychoanalytic theory, learning perspective, script theory and evolutionary psychology (Padgug, 1999). The emphasis of these perspectives ranges from conceiving sexuality as a powerful drive to the shaping effect of culture and society on human sexuality. There is no doubt that these existing theories are characterized by limitations as outlined by Undie and Banaya (2006). In this study we propose a bio-cultural conceptual framework for understanding sexuality in the African marital context (fig. 1).

This approach stipulates that an inseparable interaction exists between biology and culture as determinants of sexuality between marital partners. There is a biological basis of sexual feelings which is common to both sexes. As Padgug (1999: 18, 19) observes, “biological sexuality is the necessary precondition for human sexuality”. The biological aspect of culture is rooted in the fact that every normal man or woman (boy or girl) possesses the sexual instinct acquired from nature to desire sexual satisfaction or pleasure as from puberty. This is universal and it has nothing to do with inequality in the

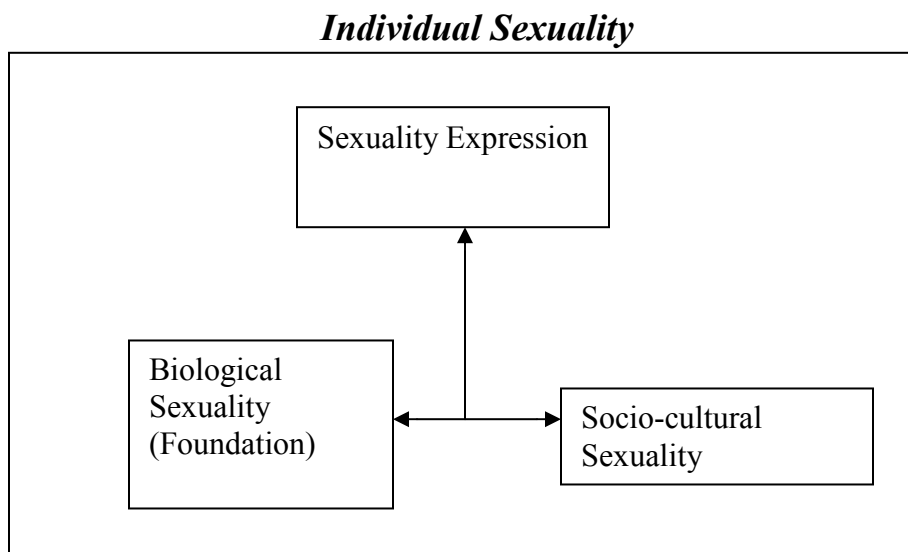
access to resources. This suggests that married women are gifted with this sexual drive as are their husbands, and this is natural and cross cultural (Foster, 2000).

However, in human society, culture works upon the biological sexuality to provide a framework for its operations. This brings in the aspect of culture in sexuality. Again, Padgug (1999: 19) observes that “biological sexuality is only a precondition, a set of potentialities, which is never unmediated by human reality, and which becomes transformed in qualitatively new ways in human society”. Culture is thus a human creation in society that shapes and spells out socially acceptable utilization of sexual drive inherent from by biology. Then human biology and culture are both necessary for creation of human society. “It is as important to avoid a rigid separation of nature and culture as it is to avoid reducing one to the other, or simply uniting them as an undifferentiated reality” (Padgug, 1999: 19). Thus culture and biology are equally important in human sexuality. As observed by the WHO (2004), sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biology, psychology, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, historical, religious and spiritual factors. Sexual urge is amendable to culture and this is why mode of sexual expressions is culture-specific. While the foundational biological sexuality is cross-cultural, the culture-specific aspect which provides operational framework is not universal. Let us consider marital sexuality in this framework.

From the foregoing, men and women in marital relationship in any human society are biologically and culturally sexually active—both husband and wife have sexual needs and desires in any society. The expression of this innate biological sexuality is culture specific and subject to changes. In African context, it is common for men in patriarchal setting to initiate sexual relations and to openly express their sexual desires. This may not

imply the unrealistic female subjugation explanation that has dominated African gender debate and reproductive health literature (Ahlberg, 2007; Undie and Banaya, 2006). It should also be noted that sexual pleasure is common to both male and female in marital relationships, however culture defines its expression (Undie and Banaya, 2006). It is within this framework that the present paper empirically examines sexuality among the *Ogu*.

Fig. 1: Bio-Cultural Framework of Sexuality



Source of Data and Methods

The study was conducted among the *Ogu* of southwestern Nigeria, who are found mainly in Lagos and Ogun states. The people constitute a minority ethnic group settled in hamlets, villages and towns scattered along Yewa Creek (now Badagry creek) in both Lagos and Ogun states. Specifically, the *Ogu* are found in four local government areas in the two states: Badagry (Lagos state), Ipokia, Ado-Odo and Yewa (Ogun state).

The present study is based on quantitative and qualitative data collected in 2001 and 2002. A sample survey was conducted between September 2001 and February 2002 to elicit quantitative data. To achieve a sample size of 900, the study utilised a multistage sampling approach. This approach was adopted as a consequence of the non-existence of any reliable sampling frame. Thus, decision was made in favour of an approach that will enable the development of a sampling frame and still guarantee the scientific quality of the data collected. Two different levels of this approach were carried out: One in the urban area and another in the rural areas. In essence, a stage-by-stage procedure was followed in locating the sampling units in the study setting.

Badagry Township is the only settlement predominated by the *Ogu* that could be regarded as urban with an estimated population of 32, 812 people using the 1991 Nigerian census. Although substantial proportions of the population of the township are engaged in farming and fishing, the township is considered as an urban area based on the population size and some emerging modern social attributes in the population.

The sampling exercise in the township followed these stages. First, a list of the major streets (called quarters) in the township was prepared. There are eight of such streets, namely. *Ahofiko, Asago, Awhajigo, Boeko, Ganho, Jegba, and Posuko*. Second, through simple random process, four of these major streets were selected. Third, at this stage, a census of the buildings in use on each of the streets selected was conducted. Fourth, because the aim was to get 50 percent of the respondents from the urban area and to interview eligible respondents in two households in every building selected, a total of 113 buildings were systematically selected in the chosen quarters. The sampling fraction was 113/597 (approximately 1/5). After choosing the first building randomly, every fifth

building was included in the sample. Finally, in each of the buildings so selected, eligible male and female members of the households, selected via simple random process, were interviewed until 50 percent of the sample size was achieved.

In the rural areas, a list of all the villages inhabited by the *Ogu* that are at least 20 kilometers away from the headquarters of respective Local Government Areas, was first prepared with the assistance of two field assistants. There are 77 of such villages. Second, 50 percent of these villages were chosen using tables of random numbers. In all, 38 of the villages were chosen. Because these villages are typically small hamlets, in each of the selected villages all the buildings were included in the sample. Third, one household was selected in each dwelling unit through a simple random process. Finally, eligible members of the chosen household in each building were interviewed. A total of 442 respondents were interviewed in these rural hamlets.

A partly pre-coded questionnaire was constructed and administered in the study sample. It contained sixty-seven close-ended and open-ended questions that were categorised into four groups, viz: background characteristics, household information, family and reproductive health decision-making, and contraceptive knowledge and use. The background characteristics section was designed to elicit basic social, economic and demographic data; household information category of questions were prepared to collect data on type of family structure and household information relevant to the study objectives; the section on family and reproductive health decision-making contained questions designed to capture general family decision-making process and specific reproductive decision-making process; the section on contraceptive knowledge and use measured contraceptive attitude and prevalence in the sample population. Ten copies of

the instrument were administered at the pre-test stage in the study population. This afforded the researchers the opportunity of revising or rewording few questions before the survey proper.

Nine focus group discussions were conducted between August and November, 2001 to generate qualitative data on perceptions of the Ogu about sexuality. This source of data was considered appropriate for this study because of two cogent reasons. First, there is no doubt that survey data provide a very good means of demonstrating quantitative evidence in scientific research, but there are themes or variables that are not adequately measured in quantitative form, simply because they cannot be expressed in figures (for instance, underlying values and norms cannot be expressed in statistical terms). Second, FGDs tend to give better information on general societal views or perceptions on specific issues. Typically, in an FGD, any outlandish view or views that do not conform to societal norm or wisdom is usually refuted by other members of the group (Bankole, 1992). FGD yields complementary data to the survey and aids in deeper comprehension of the subject matter.

Three criteria were applied in forming the discussion groups: location, sex of participants and age. Four FGDs were conducted in urban (Badagry Township) and five in rural locations (selected villages). Five discussions groups were organised among women and four among men. In Badagry Township, two each of male and female groups were organized, and three female and two male groups were organised in five villages. Due to the small size of most of the villages, some FGDs groups were organised among participants drawn from two villages to get the desired minimum number of participants.

The groups were organised among purposefully chosen members of the study population. There are two categories of the members in terms of their socio-demographic background. First, groups among members between 20 (or below) and 30 years of age with similar socio-economic background (4 groups). Second, those members above 30 years of age of comparable socio-economic characteristics (5 groups). In all, five of the groups fell into the former category while the latter had four group discussions. This was done to avoid the problem of inhibition in expression of opinion and in interaction among the participants, which may adversely affect the discussions.

In order to maximize the quality of data, the FGD guide was designed in line with the study objectives as leading questions in the discussion. In addition, the moderator follow up important leads with probes through which more rounded views were generated. The moderator controlled and kept under check individuals who manifested the tendency to dominate group discussion. By this, every member of the groups was encouraged to contribute in every segment of the discussions. This was also facilitated by the fact that all the discussions were carried out in the general dialect spoken among the *Ogu*. To ensure that no view expressed in the group discussions were lost, the discussions were taped, after obtaining permission from participants.

The analysis of the quantitative data comprise of univariate, bivariate and multivariate procedures. The multivariate analysis involved logistic regression models constructed to explain control over sexuality in conjugal unions. The Logistic regression model is generally given as:

$$\text{Logit}q_i = b_0 + b_i x_i$$

Where q_i is the probability of the outcome given the array of independent variables x_i ; b_0 is a constant; and b_i is the series of unknown coefficients to be estimated via maximum likelihood. The independent variables are included in models as dummy variables. The odds ratios and coefficients derived from the logistic regression models are interpreted in relation to theoretically determined reference category in each independent variable. The focus group discussions were analysed manually using the content analysis approach.

Results

Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 provides the selected socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The sample included 49.5 percent of males and 50.5 percent of females. The slight difference is attributable to polygyny. About 46 percent and 54 percent of the sample were respectively located in rural and urban places of residence. The relative lack of parity between the two places of residence is largely due to logistic problems experienced in the rural areas characterised by widely dispersed villages and hamlets. The age distribution indicates that husbands are, on the average, 5 years older than their wives, a function of the fact that men in this culture generally marry women who are relatively younger. A similar result was reported for the larger Yoruba group by Oyediran(2002) and Bankole(1992).

The data indicate that the majority of the respondents have had some formal education. However, in term of quantity and quality, men are better educated than their female counterparts. Male years of schooling is about 7.8 relative to 6.2 years for females. In spite of this difference, the level of education among women appears to have risen appreciably in the

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by selected socio-demographic characteristics and mean values, by sex

Characteristics	Male % n=440	Female % n=449
Age		
<20	10.9	20.3
20-24	14.3	14.6
25-29	29.0	30.0
30-34	21.6	11.8
35-39	11.0	9.9
40-44	8.0	7.6
45+	5.2	5.8
Mean	38.19	33.47
Education		
No Schooling	12.0	24.3
Primary	35.0	31.8
Secondary	32.3	30.3
Post Secondary	20.7	13.6
Mean years of Schooling	7.75	6.23
Religious Affiliation		
Catholic	13.4	13.4
Protestants	59.5	68.2
Muslim	10.2	8.5
Traditionalist	16.8	9.8
Occupation		
Housewife/unemployed	15.2	36.7
Agric/Fishing	30.2	16.7
Petty Trading	8.6	20.7
Private Business	26.8	14.3
Government Worker	19.1	11.6
Income Level		
< 500	40.2	55.9
500-10,000	29.8	24.7
10,001-15,000	14.5	10.5
15,001+	15.5	8.9
Mean	12,232.14	7,152.04
Marriage Forms		
Monogamy	70.7	76.8
Polygyny	4.1	6.2
Divorced/Separated	21.3	12.9
Widowed	3.9	4.1
Age at Marriage		
<15	21.1	25.8
15-19	15.9	22.5
20-24	21.1	29.0
25-29	36.4	21.8
30+	5.5	0.9
Mean	24.22	20.48

Source: Fieldwork, 2002

study population. This is largely a product of the compulsory and free education programme, which has existed for decades in the western region of the country. The religious affiliation of the respondents indicates that the majority of both male and female respondents are Protestants. This is the direct effect of recent expansion of Christianity in the area, whereby churches are planted in every nook and cranny of the communities.

The occupational distribution of the sample population reveals that the majority of them are in self employed economic activities. Men are more likely to engage in agriculture-related occupations and private domestic activities, while their female counterparts are mostly housewives or engaged in petty trading. Only about 19 percent of males and nearly 12 % of females are engaged in white-collar jobs.

The income level of the respondents is generally low, but it is lower among females; mean income for men is N12,232 while females is N7, 152. The marriage type indicates that monogamy is more prevalent in the study population owing to the changing social and economic environment that does not encourage polygynous marriages. Boroffice (1995) has reported that polygyny is declining in the setting mainly due to the spread of Christianity. Marriage is early and universal in the population; the data indicate that by age 30 years virtually all the females have married; only 5.5 percent of the men married after age 29.

Ogu Marital Sexuality

This is the core subsection of this research paper. It discusses attributes of control over sexuality among sampled marital partners in the study setting. An attempt is made to explain this phenomenon using qualitative and quantitative data.

Qualitative Evidence

The evidence from the focus groups indicates the majority of the participants were of the opinion that men initiate sexual demands. Of course, this is understandable considering the social and cultural climate of the society that has preconditioned women's mind to always wait for men to initiate sex. In fact, most of the participants stated that women seldom demand for sex, and that if they must make such a demand, they do so discretely and indirectly such as touching sensitive parts of their husbands' bodies. So the issue is not that men dominate control over sexuality in the family but that men are only culturally bound to initiate sex in their matrimonial homes. The response of a man in one of the FDGs to the question, who initiates sex between spouses buttresses this position:

Men initiate sex because women don't reveal their desires, even when they are interested they would never initiate sexual demand. In some cases they may request sex indirectly by touching the bodies of their husbands.

This was the general view in all the FGDs including the female groups. It is inappropriate and bad manners for women to initiate sex. Other ways women send out erotic messages is through preparing delicious dishes for their husbands, dressing elegantly and being extra-nice to their husbands. In all the FGD sessions, members unanimously agreed that there is nothing like force in sexual relation between a man and his wife. They stated that a woman could resist or reject the sexual advances of her husband, if they are not favourably disposed. Some male participants mentioned the importance of being polite and wise in such situation.

Most of the members of the groups opined that there is joy in sex and this pleasure will either diminish or be totally absent when force is applied in it. This view is

consistent with Foster (2000), who stated that there is joy in sex makes both sexes to mutually desire it in the family. So among the Ogu a woman waits for her husband, who is culturally expected to initiate sex, to do so; and she will generally oblige provided the husband has been responsible and considerate. Hence, sexual decision-making in families is a mutual exercise between husband and wife. Below are some of the responses of participants on initiation of sex between husband and wife.

Men initiate sex but their wives may politely refuse when they are not really interested. Men do not force their wives into sex.

(A woman from Badagry)

The notion that men control sexuality in the family is not true. Men do not force their wives into sex, women can object only that it must be done wisely.

(A woman from Badagry)

Men are not the sole initiator of sex; rather it is a mutual thing.

(A woman from *Iyafin*)

Anytime the husband needs the wife sexually, it is normal for her to make herself available because it is entrenched in the holy books.

(A woman from *Ijotun*)

If a man is a real man, where there is love and real care, anytime he demands for sex, the wife will always be willing.

(A woman from *Ijotun*)

The above views stress the cultural underpinnings of conjugal relations of roles and mutuality. Men and women are expected to play their respective roles even in sexual initiation. Men are expected to initiate sex, and such moves are rarely refuted if they are responsible. In fact a woman who consistently rebuffs her husbands sexual demand runs the risks of having a co-wife in a culture that permits polygyny. Also such deprived men may be forced to keep concubines.

Quantitative Evidence

The survey data indicate that 54.4 percent of the male respondents agreed that when they make sexual demands, the willingness of their spouses determines whether they would succeed or not. The proportion of men who agreed that their spouses can resist their sexual advances with the level of education, an indication of more egalitarian conjugal relation among better educated couples. Also wives in urban areas and those living in homes where there is frequent interpersonal communication are more likely to resist sexual advances from their spouses. Men who get married after age 30 and those currently in marriage are somewhat more likely to report that their spouse can resist sexual advances.

Table 2: **Percentage distribution of respondents reporting spouse having the right to resist sexual advances from the partner by selected characteristics**

Characteristics	Male (Yes)		Female (Yes)	
	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL
Education	n = 440		n = 449	
No Schooling	49.1	53	35.8	109
Primary	51.9	154	39.2	143
Secondary	51.4	142	50.0	136
Post Secondary	70.3	91	60.7	61
	$\chi^2 = 10.72^{**}$		$\chi^2 = 13.12^{**}$	
Age At first Marriage				
< 15	53.8	93	23.3	116
15-19	47.1	70	46.5	101
20-24	58.1	93	48.5	130
25-29	53.8	160	61.2	98
30+	83.3	24	75.0	4
	$\chi^2 = 10.04^*$		$\chi^2 = 34.75^{**}$	
Family Structure				
Extended	55.0	254	42.6	239
Nuclear	54.1	129	48.6	143
	$\chi^2 = 0.09$		$\chi^2 = 1.46$	
Spousal communication				
Frequent	62.3	239	50.4	238
Less frequent	51.9	54	47.9	73
Rarely	46.0	137	34.4	128
	$\chi^2 = 12.50^{**}$		$\chi^2 = 13.86^{**}$	
Place of residence				
Urban	61.4	254	59.9	227
Rural	46.8	186	28.8	222
	$\chi^2 = 9.31^{**}$		$\chi^2 = 43.90^{**}$	
Marriage form				
Monogamy	55.9	311	44.3	345
Polygyny	33.3	18	44.3	28
	$\chi^2 = 3.66$		$\chi^2 = 3.15$	

Source:: Fieldwork 2002

* - significant at $P < 0.05$;

** - significant at $P < 0.01$

Also, the table shows that it is possible for women to make sexual demand. At least 23.3 percent of female respondents indicated that their partners might resist sexual advances they make. This position is relatively higher among those with post secondary schooling, who married at 20 years and above, of urban residence, nuclear and single parent family structures as well as those who practise regular inter-spousal discussion. In addition, the chi-square values show that the right of a spouse to resist sexual advance from his or her partner is significantly related to education, spousal communication, place of residence and age at first marriage.

Table 3 presents the odds ratios of two logistic regression models (male and female) examining the right of a spouse to resist sexual advances made by marital partner. The dependent variable, spouses' right to resist, is coded 1 for "Yes" and 0 otherwise. The model examined the effect of the independent variables on a change from 0 to 1 in the dependent variable. It is obvious that place of residence and spousal communication are related to the right of a spouse to resist sexual demands emerging from the partner.

According to the table, the male model shows that place of residence and spousal communication are significantly related to the right of a woman to resist sexual demand by her spouse. Urban residence is twice as likely to enhance this right as rural residence. While the practice of frequent spousal communication is 2.5 times more likely, less frequent inter-spousal discussion is 93 percent more likely, to enhance women's right to resist sexual demand from their spouses than rare practice of spousal communication. So,

with respect to the male respondents, frequent practice of spousal communication is an important factor that can enhance women's control over their sexuality.

Table 3: **Odds ratios from two logistic regression models examining the effect of selected characteristics on spouse's right to resist sexual advances by partner.**

Characteristics	Odds ratios			
	Male		Female	
	Odds.....	S.E.....	Odds.....	S.E.....
Education				
Primary	1.56	0.34	1.29	0.29
Post Primary	1.68	0.35	1.05	0.29
No Schooling (rc)	1.00	-	1.00	-
Family Structure				
Nuclear	1.07	0.24	0.63	0.24
Extended (rc)	1.00	-	1.00	-
Age at first Marriage				
20 – 24	0.89	0.23	1.33	0.24
25 +	2.62	0.61	2.23	1.19
< 20 (rc)	1.00	-	1.00	-
Place of Residence				
Urban	2.06**	0.23	3.55**	0.25
Rural (rc)	1.00	-	1.00	-
Spousal Communication				
Frequent	2.48**	0.26	2.66**	0.26
Less Frequent	1.93	0.37	3.44**	0.35
Rarely (rc)	1.00	-	1.00	-
Marriage form				
Monogamy	0.89	0.24	0.71	0.25
Polygyny	1.00	-	1.00	-
-2 Log likelihood	573.10		550.83	
Model chi-square	32.05**		66.26**	

* - significant at $P < 0.05$; ** - significant at $P < 0.01$, rc – reference category

In the female model, place of residence and spousal communication are significantly associated with men's right to resist sexual demand made by their partners. With respect to spousal communication, while frequent inter-spousal discussion is 1.66 times more likely, less frequent spousal communication is over twice more likely to

promote husband's right to resist sexual advances their partners make. Urban residence is 2.55 times more likely to enhance men's control over their sexuality than rural settlement

Although family structure is not significantly related to control over sexuality, among the male respondents, nuclear family structure is 7 percent more likely to promote women's right over their sexuality than extended family. In a similar vein, higher age at first marriage has higher likelihood to enhance the right of a spouse over his/her sexuality among both male and female respondents.

Conclusions

The control over sexuality is a crucial issue in reproductive and sexual health decision-making. The result of the present study raises a crucial question. Do men actually dominate decisions on sexuality in the family? There is no controversy over the fact that men are culturally conditioned to initiate sex, albeit women too do initiate sex indirectly. Thus both men and women in marital relationship possess biological sexuality (sexual drive) but culture differentiates style of expression between partners. Women generally adopt indirect means of expression owing to cultural influence.

That men are the ones who initiate sex may have nothing to do with the popular women subjugation and their supposedly disadvantageous economic position relative to men. This may be more a function of biology as has been observed in the sexuality of some animals. For instance, when female pigs are on heat they are obviously violent and expressly aggressive. As soon as an active boar is introduced, rather than make direct attempt at wooing the boar into sex, the female pig waits for the boar to initiate sex even though she is manifesting a high demand for sex. Clearly the boar does not initiate sex

because it is economically stronger than the female pig? It is a function of the innate biological structure. In a similar vein, men are biologically structured and culturally conditioned to usually initiate sex it is not women subjugation or their relative economic disadvantage that hinder them from making sexual advances

Do women have any right to resist sexual advance made by their husbands when they are not favourably disposed? The present study suggests that because the joy of sex is maximized when the consent of the two partners is involved, no partner has the total control over when to have sex. In fact, the majority of the male respondents indicated that their spouses have the right to say 'no' when they make sexual advance. On the one hand, this finding is consistent with the conclusions of Orubuloye (1995), Orubuloye *et al.*, (1997), and Ogunjuyigbe and Adeyemi (2005); and on the other hand, it contradicts much earlier findings, essentially rooted in western myth of sexuality in sub-Saharan Africa (Undie and Benaya 2006). The conclusions of those studies may be attributed to the inability to distinguish between sexuality in a couple and that of unmarried sexual partners. Unmarried heterosexual partners may be prone to force as a result of the fact that they tend to take advantage of each other anytime opportunity arises. In a couple's sexual relation, coercion may not be a 'norminal' practice given that they are mutual relationship and essentially determined to satisfy the biological needs of each other.

The present study also found that men with high level of schooling tend to possess more positive conjugal attitudes which consequently enhance the right of their wives to turn down their sexual advances without engendering friction. The logistic odds ratios also show that regular spousal communication and urban residence significantly enhances the right of a woman over her sexuality.

However, through socialization process, men are more sexually expressive than women, and are therefore more likely to initiate sexual advances in a union. Women who reject advances are rarely 'forced' into sex, since sexual intercourse is viewed as an act which give mutual pleasure to both partners, and such pleasure is maximized when partners are in agreement to have sex. That urban residence and more egalitarian conjugal relations enhance a woman's right over her sexuality is expected in view of the liberating influence of modernization and social change. As more people embrace such change, spousal equality is enhanced, and more become less passive in initiation of sexual relations within the home.

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