

**THE MEDIA INFLUENCE ON THE SEXUALITY OF ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG  
ADULTS**

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## **Abstract**

*Sexuality is critical to the development of the adolescents and young adults as they exhibit certain sexual behaviors which tend towards expression of their sexual feelings. The negative effect of the media on sexuality is enormous that few studies have investigated the dynamics the media is taking to affect the adolescents and young adults. The study aims to examine the effects of media on the sexuality of adolescents and young adults as well as to investigate ways of promoting a positive media influence on adolescents' and young adults' sexuality.*

*The study was based on a literature search conducted across four electronic databases—PubMed, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and Wiley Online Library—covering publications from 2012 to 2022. The search yielded a total of 1,320 articles, of which only 16 met the inclusion criteria for review. Findings retrieved from the searched literatures were descriptively analyzed and presented thematically according to the objectives of the study.*

*Results showed that there is a positive correlation between the media exposure and adolescents' and adult's sexuality. Findings showed that young ones accessed sexually explicit contents such as sexual lyrics, texts, images, porn on various media such as television/radio, magazines, movie, social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp. Result showed that early exposure of adolescents and young adults to sexual contents on the media increases the likelihood of engaging in sexual activities at the early age. This thus, results in risky sexual behavior which include pre-marital sex, unprotected sex, unwanted pregnancy, unintended abortion, multiple sexual partners, promiscuity, Sexually Transmitted Infections and sexual harassment like rape.*

*The study concludes that an evidence-based intervention programs should be developed to promote a positive media influence on adolescents' and young adults' sexuality. This would help educate all stakeholders particularly the parents and teachers and also equip the youth with adequate skills on sexual health education thus, regulate their exposure to sexual contents on media.*

**Keywords:** *Adolescents, young adults, media, sexuality*

## **Introduction**

Adolescence and young adulthood are stages characterized by exploration and experimentation with behaviors showcased through the media. These stages have received a considerable attention from human psychologists and the public due to several developmental changes that accompany

the stage. The word Adolescence is a Latin word "adolescere" meaning "to grow up" (Kar et al, 2015). Adolescence represents a transition from the childhood stage to the adulthood stage. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014), adolescents are defined as individuals aged 10–19 years, while young people are defined as those aged 10–24 years. Adolescence is a stage that transforms the life of young ones (Oladeji & Ayangunna, 2017). The adolescent stage does not only mean a transformational phase but a stage whereby young ones explore and experiment with new behaviors. Adolescents and young adults explore areas like diet, driving, exercise, substance abuse and sexual activities (Park et al., 2014). Adolescence and young adulthood present opportunities to make sense of one's lives and mould it in various ways (Bell, 2016).

Steinberg (2014) delineated five major psychosocial developmental challenges that adolescents do face in the bid to make sense of their lives. These include Identity, intimacy, autonomy, achievement and sexuality. Bell (2016) explained that all these challenges are interwoven and thus should not be treated as a mutually exclusive entity. For instance, sexuality can mediate between other identified challenges especially intimacy and identity. Sexuality is referred to the fundamental quality of human life which is critical to health, happiness, development and for sustaining human existence (Friedman, 1992). Sexuality is a complex human behavior influenced by many factors which include physical appearance, social factors, psychological factors, cultural norms and past experiences (Brown, 2000).

Research has shown that adolescents and young adults constantly strive to retrieve sexual information from their parents and teachers (Akande & Akande, 2007). But most times, parents and teachers are afraid of exposing these little children to sexual contents and uncontrollable sexual behavior at the early stage of their development. Consequently, this approach does not effectively address the issue, as adolescents and young adults continue to access alternative sources for sexual information. Duru et al (2010) conducted a study among 350 adolescents in Nnewi school, Anambra state, Nigeria, findings showed that 47.2% obtained information about sexual issues from friends and peer group; 5% from schools; 10.4% from parents and 37.4% obtained their information from the media (television, 30%; newspapers and magazines, 7.4%). However, these results implied that most adolescents rely on the media for a particular kind of information to satisfy their needs.

The media function to educate, inform and communicate messages or information to influence a wide range of audiences. Media include the print (newspapers, books magazines), broadcast (television, radio), music, video game, computer, music, computer and the internet. Media also include communication channels through which news, data, education or promotional messages are delivered to the consumption. Each media type has its content and the device used to deliver the content. Researches have shown that the media have some importance which include communication, learning, children's education, creativity and socialization. However, it is very important to know that media also have some negative effects which affect the development of adolescent and young adult as it causes distraction, reduces their interpersonal relationship with people and expose them to unpalatable situations and challenges.

The media affect the adolescents and young adults' sexuality in different ways. The media have easily accessible sexual content that the young ones would want to explore. These contents are misleading, uncensored and affect the sexual life of the young ones negatively. For instance, sexually explicit contents such as pornography accessed through the internet negatively influence the way adolescents think, feel or act sexually (Lanre-Babalola, 2018). With this, they are exposed to different risky sexual behaviors and health problems such as pre-marital sex, unprotected sex, abortion, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases etc.

Nowadays, with the increasing number of social media sites, the level of exposure of adolescents and young adults to sexual content becomes high compared with what it used to be in the past. The electronic media has also transformed the dimension through which the adolescents and young adults consume sexual information. Relying on the social learning theory of Bandura (1986) which suggests that social behavior is learned by observing and imitating the behavior of others. This implies that the adolescents and young adults can easily learn and imitate any social behavior on any form of media. Sexual content ranging from flirting and romantic messages, sexual movies or videos to sexual links are shared, exchanged and received through the internet. However, many studies have been conducted on the effects of media on adolescents' and adult's sexuality but few studies have investigated the dynamics the electronic media is taking to influence the sexuality of the young ones. With the increasing negative effect of the media on adolescents and adult's sexuality, little studies have investigated the practical ways in which a positive media influence on sexuality can be promoted among adolescents and young adults. In this view, the study aims to

examine the media effects on the sexuality of adolescents and adults and also to investigate how a positive media influence on sexuality can be promoted among adolescents and young adults. From the central aim of the study, the following specific objectives are derived:

- i. To examine the various forms of media used by adolescents and young adults as well as the sexual contents they explore.
- ii. To explore the sexual behaviours adolescents and young adult are exposed to on media.
- iii. To examine the effects of media on adolescents' and young adults' sexuality.
- iv. To assess ways of promoting positive media influence on adolescents' and young adults' sexuality.

## **Methodology**

The study adopts a mixed-methods design using secondary sources of data. Previously existing data were collected and sourced from the internet, libraries, institutions, organization reports and archives. A mixed method which comprises both quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted in this study. Quantitative methods involved the use of questionnaires and survey. Statistics data on media use, prevalence of certain sexual behaviors among adolescents and young adults were presented adequately. The qualitative methods involved collecting data from already existing data gotten through the use of interviews and focus group discussion. The integration of both methods enabled the collection of relevant data that enriched the analysis

## **Search Strategy**

Four electronics databases which included PubMed, Science Direct, Google Scholar, Wiley Online Library were searched for publications from year 2012 - 2022. Specific keywords searched across these databases included “adolescents,” “young adults,” “media,” and “sexuality”.

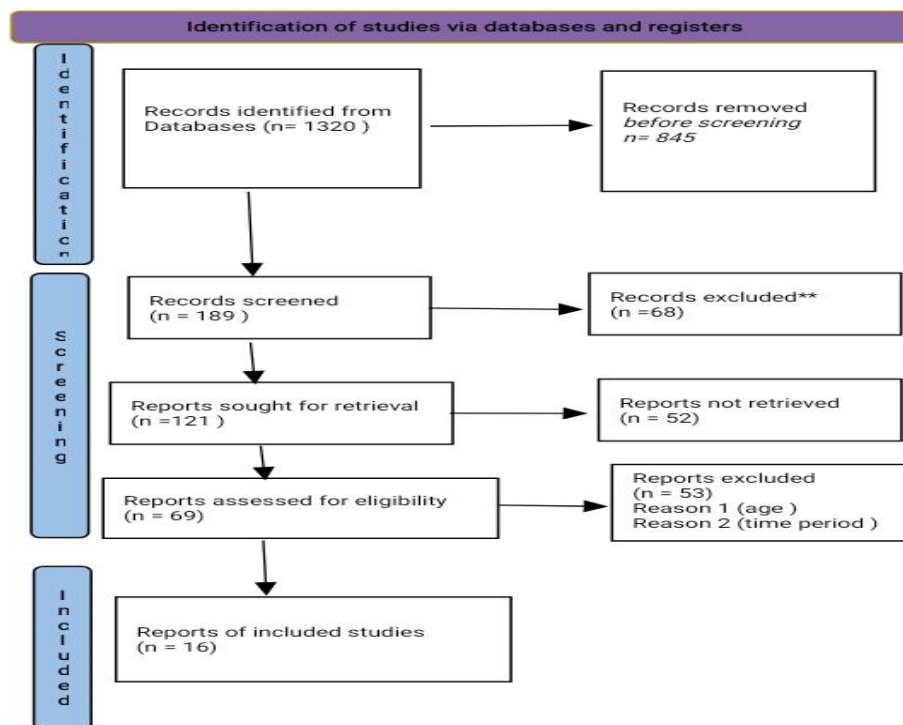
## **Selection criteria**

The inclusion criteria used were (i) timeframe between 2012-2022 (ii) study population age between 12 and 25 years. This is in tune with WHO's definition of Adolescence as age between

10 and 19 years while for young adult is 15 and 24 years. (iii) study involving any forms of media either traditional or new media. (iii) quantitative and Quality studies. The excluded articles are those that fall outside the specific year (2012-2022) and outside the population age (adolescents and young adults).

## Data extraction

1320 studies were screened based on title and 845 records were excluded based on. The remaining 189 records were screened based on abstract and 121 studies were retrieved while 68 records were excluded. A full-text reviews were assessed for eligibility and 16 studies were included in the review while 53 studies were excluded because they did not fall within the adolescents and young adults' age as well as the timeframe of the study.



**Figure 1:** PRISMA flow chart for the search strategy

## Data analysis

Findings retrieved from the searched literatures were descriptively analyzed and presented thematically according to the objectives of the study.

## **Results**

### **Types of media and sexual contents accessed by adolescents and young adults**

There are various media and sexual contents young ones are exposed to. Mekam et al (2021) found out that adolescents are exposed to multiple media to fulfil their information needs and these media include television, internet and print media. In the study conducted by Asekun-Olarimoye et al (2013) among young adult of an average age of 23 years, result showed that most participants accessed various forms of media which include radio, television, films, newspapers, magazines, home videos and the internet. The study further found out that the internet and radio/television were the frequently accessed for information or on sexual issues. However, the internet has increased the engagement of the adolescents and young adults with social media. Amoo et al (2020) identified the most popular types of social media exposed to and these are social networks (Facebook and LinkedIn); media (YouTube, Instagram and Flickr) and micro blogging (Twitter). The study of Collins et al (2009) revealed that most prevalent social media platform used by adolescents and young adults is Facebook while the least is YouTube.

In Mekam et al (2021)'s study, result showed that 10% of boys and 1% of girls browsed porn sites on internet for sexual contents. Oladeji and Ayanguna' s (2017) found out that most adolescent program watch program with sexual contents on television, listen to sexually explicit lyrics on radio and viewing sexually explicit messages online. In Oguntuyi's study (2014) among adolescents in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria found out that "printed materials containing sexual explicit images of nude girls or couple in the act of sodomy, lesbian or homosexual practices which are publicly available to adolescents and young ones for consumption".

Collins et al (2017) revealed some of the sexual contents the traditional media expose the adolescent and young adults to. They found out that Television, music, movies and magazines expose the adolescents and young adults to emotions, messages associated with sexual activity such as pregnancy, birth control, sexually transmitter infections (STI) and condom use. The study further revealed that magazines publish stories characterized by jokes and innuendo that explains how to 'drive your partner wild' and other activities depicting how to engage in sexual intercourse.

In the meta-analyses conducted by Mori et al (2021), the result revealed that adolescents and young adults are exposed to sexually explicit materials such as sexual images or pictures, videos and text. They further reported that out of the 23 studies assessed, 8 studies assessed pictures, videos and text which represents 34.8% of the studies captured; 5 studies assessed pictures and videos (21.7%) only; 6 studies assessed pictures only (26.1%); 1 study assessed text only (4.3%) while 1 study assessed sexually explicit message.

### **Sexual behavior that adolescents and young adults are exposed to**

Considering the sexual behavior exhibited by young people, Oladeji and Ayanguna (2017)'s study among the adolescents of ages between 12 and 17 years revealed some of the sexual behavior that the media expose the adolescents to and these include dating, oral sex, sexual intercourse, cohabitation, multiple sexual partners, sensation feeling behavior, sending nude pictures, engaging in abortion, sexual scripts, sexual lyrics and night parties. Study conducted by Amoo et al (2020), 26.2% of the adolescents engaged in sexting which happened to be the second most prevalent activities performed by adolescents and young adults on social media after greetings/talking to friends. Sexting is common among the youth and it is the exchange of sexual contents such as texts or images through any technologically devices such as phones or the internet (Mori et al, 2022). The finding of Amoo et al (2020) showed there is the sending and receiving of sext between the adolescents and young adults. In the study conducted by Lu et al (2021) among the early adolescents of age below 14 years, findings showed that 3.7% of the study participants was pressurized to send sext; 3.7% had intentionally sent sext; 20.5% had received an unsolicited sext, while 18.6% had been asked to send sext by someone. This shows that most adolescents are fond of exchanging sexual images especially nude pictures, explicit messages or text online and this is made possible through the use of the internet.

Similarly, Wakoli (2018) found out that majority of the study participants in secondary school in Kenya strongly agreed that nudity habit was adopted by most adolescents when they realized that such sexual behavior was glorified on social media sites. This shows that having seen people showcasing their nude pictures on social media, they also engage in the same act to gain social acceptance in the social world. Another aspect of the sexual behavior the adolescents and young adults are exposed to is having multiple sexual partners. In the study conducted by Wakoli (2018), a large percentage of the respondents (51%) agreed that most secondary school students in Kenya inculcate the habit of having multiple sexual partners. The research further revealed that most of



the study participants got their partners through mass media most especially at the movie, on Facebook or pen pal in magazine.

Oguntuyi (2019) found out that there is a positive correlation between the exposure of adolescents to the mass media and sexual activities. This means that the more they come in contact with mass media, the increase the chance of engaging in sexual intercourse. This was supported by the findings of Asekun-Olarimoye et al (2014)'s among undergraduates in Osogbo Metropolis, Southwestern Nigeria, that the young adults of an average age of 23 years were exposed to sexual intercourse. The study further pointed out that among the 226 students that are exposed to sexual intercourse, all (100%) practiced coitus, 37 (16.4%) practiced oral sex, 31(13.7%) practices masturbation while 10(4.4%) practices anal sex. Ward et al (2017) also found out in their study that the most common sexual behavior explored by young ones include sexual dance, flirting, caressing and groping of the genital area.

However, Aleke et al (2018)'s study found out that adolescent and young adults engage in what is called 'sexual solicitation' in their study, a situation whereby youth get sexual messages online that encourage them to discuss about sex, share personal sexual information with each other even without requesting for it and practice sex related behavior.

### **Effect of media on adolescent' and young adults' sexuality**

Considering the effect of media on adolescents and young adults' sexuality, Asekun-Olarimoye et al (2014)'s study revealed that media could have both positive and negative effects on the sexuality of young ones. The multivariate analysis conducted by Asekun-Olarimoye et al (2014) revealed that sourcing for sexual materials from the internet increased the likelihood of being sexually active at early ages. Similarly, Lin et al (2020) found out that adolescents that were exposed to sexually explicit materials in early adolescence were more likely to engage in both sexual intercourse and unsafe sex before the age of 17. Lanre-Babalola (2018) also investigated the effect of media use on the sexual behavior of adolescents in selected schools in Ede, Osun state of Nigeria and findings showed that a larger percentage of participants reported they got sexually aroused when seeing love scenes on the television or movies. Furthermore, the study also found out that a large percentage (21.1%) reported that they would be turned on sexually by websites that have sexual contents.

Aleke et al (2018) found out that "adolescents' pornographic activities through the internet are higher than that of any other medium". The study revealed that pornographic videos or images assessed through the internet increases the sexual desires of most young ones and this results in risky sexual behavior. The result of Lin et al (2020) showed that there is a significant correlation between risky sexual behavior and both physical problems (unwanted pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections) and mental problem (e.g. depression). Similarly, Oguntuyi (2019) found that that what the exposure of adolescents and young adults to media implies is that the population involved are exposed to sexual problems such as unwanted pregnancies, unplanned marriage, induced abortion etc.

Sexual harassment is one of the risky behavior adolescents and young adults are exposed to through the media as pointed out by Aleke et al (2018). In their study, findings showed that "some students are slaves of sexual harassment due to the social media involvement through sexual chatting, texting and demands among their teachers and seniors at school". In fact, the study revealed that the highest level of sexual harassment among the young boys and girls are coercive sex, forceful sexual act and forceful dating accompanied with violence. This results in serious health problems.

Oguntuyi (2019) takes another dimension to the investigation of the effect of media on adolescents' sexuality by revealing that exposure to media weakens the traditional norms and customs which are provided to guide against pre-marital sex. Aleke et al (2018)'s study also showed that young boys and girls engage in casual sex through hooking up or campus couple which are developed through the social media sites. The study showed that social media act as a platform of dating and discussing sexual activities which result in premarital sex which can be accompanied by unintended pregnancy, STI e.g HIV/AIDS, school dropout and poverty and eventually leads to death. When sexting is practiced among adolescents and young adults, a friend may demand pictures from the opposite sex or may be sent intentionally without any request. Aleke et al (2018)'s study revealed that the effect of sexting on the youths is that the picture sent could be transferred to other friends or the public. This implies that the nakedness of the youth is exposed and could lead to depression, suicide or death.

Furthermore, Aleke et al (2018) found out that the level of immorality and promiscuity is on the rise in Nigeria as a result of the widespread or sharing of nude and sexual pictures by young people.

This implies that multiple casual partners are attracted through this which results in having unprotected sexual intercourse with them especially in exchange for money or other benefits which may increase the chances of contracting HIV.

### **Promotion of positive media influence on adolescents and young adults' sexuality**

Considering the numerous negative effects the exposure of adolescents' and young adults to media on their sexuality, there is an urgent need to assess ways of promoting a positive media influence on this population group. Many studies have provided parent-centred ways to promote a positive media influence on adolescents' and young adults Sexually. Rahmadhani et al (2022) in their study advised that there should be good parenting patterns for children in the sense that parents should give proper attention and close monitoring to their children in the use of social media to perform various activities.

Wakoli (2018) was of the view that schools should organize a sensitization program for parents to educate them on ways of regulating the exposure of their children to mass media. Collins et al (2017) suggested in their study that there should be innovative, evidence-based interventions development which would extend media literacy beyond the classroom. For example, Kennedy (2019) recommended that a framework like the Parent Internet Mediation Guidelines of Livingstone, Mascheroni & Staksrud, 2015) can be adopted in the society. The framework outlines the needs to educate the major stakeholders especially the parents, educators and children on social media use and other online activities. Kennedy (2019) identified three programs which are suitable to promote the education on social media use both within the community and in homes and these are Common Sense Media, START and New York's Department of education. According to Kennedy (2019), "all programs aim at understanding and outlining boundaries for social media use, appropriate use of social media as well as coping strategies for both adults and children".

In addition, the study conducted by Scull et al (2022) revealed that organizing a Media Aware program has proven effective in promoting a positive media influence on adolescents and young adults' sexuality through the adoption of the media literacy education approach. Findings showed that 80.12% of the participants who received the program said it is a good program for young ones to learn about sexual health while 79.5% said they preferred the program to having a teacher teaching sexual health and 80.06% said they gained ample knowledge on sexual health. The study found out that Media Aware program provides young ones with health communication and coping

skills which improve their critical thinking about media messages as well as provide them with accurate and adequate health information that can deconstruct some media messages especially those ones associated with sexual activities and romantic themes. Oguntuyi (2019) added that most adolescents and young adults engage in some sexual behaviors exposed to due to the fact that they lack proper knowledge about reproductive health. Thus, Oguntuyi (2019) suggested that every policy making initiation and implementation on reproductive health should focus and address the issue of sexual behavior of adolescents and young adults.

## **Discussion**

The study investigated the influence media have on the sexuality of the adolescents and young adults. The study investigated the common media types and the sexual contents young ones are exposed to. The study identified that adolescent and young adults accessed both the traditional (print media) and the new media (social media) for sexual contents. The common traditional media they accessed include television, radio, magazines, movies while the social media include various forms of social networking sites which include Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter. This is similar to the study of Aleke et al (2018) that revealed that there is a high rate of use of social media such as YouTube, LinkedIn, facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, Twitter, 2go and Pinterest among the adolescents in Nigeria.

The study also found out that adolescents and young adults mostly access the social media and source for sexual contents than the other types of media. The reason for this is not far-fetched as higher percentage of adolescents and young adults make use of smart phones and the advancement of technology through the use of internet has made it easy to access sexual contents online. This is in consistent with the view of Anderson & Jiang (2018) that reported that in 2015, like 95% of teens had access to a smartphone. So, with the fast rate of technological advancement coupled with need for the adolescents and young adults to satisfy their information needs, almost all would have access to a smartphone by now.

The study found out that the major sexual contents adolescents and young adults are exposed to include sexually explicit lyrics on radio, nude pictures, sexually explicit messages online on different social media platforms, sexual jokes or innuendo in magazines, sexually related programs on television such as program on family planning, pregnancy, birth control, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI). However, this exposure to these sexual contents spread faster among adolescents

and young adults due to the ability to connect and communicate with friends as well as peer pressure to access contents.

The sexual contents adolescents and young adults accessed on the social media exposed them to certain sexual behaviors. The study found out that there is a positive correlation between the exposure of the adolescents to social media and sexual behaviors. The adolescents engage in sexting which involves the exchange of sexually explicit images and texts through the internet. Different types of sexting were pointed out and these include pressurized sexting, consensual sexting and unsolicited sexting. Most adolescents and young adults initiate sexual talks online through text which leads to the urge to exchange nude pictures among themselves. Peer pressure could be attributed to a driver of sexting as peer wishes to satisfy sexual urge by engaging the opposite sex in sexual talks. This is what Ybarra et al (2007) regarded as sexual solicitation which is another form of sexual behavior exposed to on social media, whereby sexual online encourage young ones to discuss more about sex as well as share personal sexual information with or without request. Most times, sharing of nude pictures or images among young ones is common nowadays because it is a sexual behavior being glorified on social media and this makes others to do it in order to be socially accepted in the media world. This was in support of Cookingham & Ryan (2019)'s view which explained that the high-risk behaviour displayed on different social network sites may encourage others to imitate such behavior and makes them endorse such behaviour as 'normal'.

There is no doubt that as different sexually explicit contents are exchanged among adolescents and adult youth online, a sexual urge is developed which arouses their body to experiment with sex and other sexual activities. The study found out that adolescents and youth are exposed to various kinds of sexual behaviors which range from dating to oral sex to sexual intercourse to coitus to cohabitation etc. Multiple sexual partners is also associated with sexual behavior learnt from exposure to mass media. This is because as adolescents and young adults engage in some sexual related behavior, they tend to experiment and explore with many partners thus, attract multiple casual partners. This corroborates with the view of Parks & Flyods (1996) that there is an increased access to partners that are more experienced in some sexual behaviors and this facilitates an extensive discussion on sex due to the perceived privacy of the social media.

The effects of media exposure are enormous on the adolescents' and young adults' sexuality. The study found out that accessing sexual contents on media exposes adolescents to sexual activities at the tender age. At this early age, engaging in some sexual activities is unsafe for these population group as they are not physically and psychologically fit for the acts. The study also found out that those that are sexually active at the tender age have higher propensity to engage in risky sexual behaviors such as unprotected sexual intercourse, masturbation which result to both physical and mental problem such as unwanted pregnancy, unplanned marriage, induced abortion, contracting HIV/STI, depression and suicide.

Sexual harassment is also a common effect of media exposure on adolescents and young adults' sexuality. The study explained that sexting and sharing or transfer of personal sexual image like nude pictures could get leaked to the public which could damage the identity of the victim. This can lead to great depression, suicide or death. This kind of act is mostly done when an individual wants to harm another person online. This is in consistent with the view of Aleke et al (2018) who regard this as a form of cyberbullying whereby assaultive texts, images are sent to others through mobile phone to harm a particular person.

Furthermore, the level of immorality keeps rising as adolescents and young adults that are exposed to the media engage in sexual promiscuity. They upload nude pictures to attract opposite sex online who in turn have sexual intercourse with them in exchange for money or other benefits. This act is being imitated by other adolescents as a result of peer pressure to practice sexual promiscuity. Lastly, the study revealed that exposure of adolescents and young adults to media has changed the traditional conceptualization of adolescents' sexuality as the traditional norms and customs that are designed to guide sexuality are weakened.

The study found out that there is need to promote a positive media influence on the adolescents and young adults' sexuality. The study emphasized the role of the parent in promoting a positive media influence on adolescents and young adults. The study revealed that there is need for parents to give more attention to their children and monitor their activities on social media. This would help regulate the exposure of their wards to the social media. As Dittus and Jaccard (2000) noted, parental monitoring can cause a delay in exposure to sexual intercourse at early stage. An innovative technology such as an app designed for sexual health and health-seeking behavior can be used by parents or suggested to children to regulate their interaction with sexual contents on the

social media (Landry, 2017). An example of this technology-based app is Hablemos which helps to bridge the gap between Latino parents and their children, thus, enhances easy discussion of sexual related issues like contraception and sexuality (Landry, 2017).

The study also revealed that an evidence-based intervention would promote a positive media influence on adolescents' and young adults' sexuality. One of the evidence-based intervention found out in the study is the Parent Internet Mediation Guidelines which is driven by some programs which include START, Common Sense Media and the New York's Department of education. This framework integrates education to all stakeholders both within and outside the community. This educates parents, teachers and students on social media use, helps to monitor social media activities and also promotes media literacy that derives an appropriate use of social media among young ones. Media Aware program was also identified in this study as an evidence-based intervention program which equips or empowers the young ones with adequate skills to retrieve accurate health information and deconstruct any sexual contents that can affect their sexuality negatively. This exposes the young ones to the right way of thinking and utilizing the social media contents. This is similar to the view of Scull et al (2022) who pointed out that those that received the program had enough valid sexual health information that could help them deal with any sexual messages they come across.

Finally, the study also drew attention to the policy makers that they should always consider the issue of adolescents' and youth sexuality and social media at both initiation and implementation level. This is in consistent with the view of Moreno (2009) that policy makers and public health professionals should organize programs that can encourage the adolescents to remove or limit the sexual contents on their various social media profiles.

## **Conclusion**

The study revealed that the sexuality of many adolescents and young adults is increasingly influenced by media exposure, with evidence suggesting a growing prevalence of negative effects. This situation has been exacerbated by advancements in technology, particularly the emergence of the internet and the proliferation of social media platforms, which have transformed the traditional

role of the media. This poses a lot of risks on both the physical and mental wellbeing of the young ones as they engage in sexual relationship early without protection which results in risky sexual behaviors. This underscores the importance of parents and teachers being proactive in guiding adolescents and young adults on the responsible use of media and the possible negative consequences of exposure to sexual content. Experts in sexual health education should also take this as a point of duty to protect the lives of these young ones from the snare of the media misuse. This would help promote a positive media influence on the sexuality of adolescents and young adults.

Albeit the significance of this study, it is without no limitations. Firstly, the study could not gather data on the effect of social media on adolescents' and adult's sexuality across different regions of the world due to the time constraint. Also, there are enough data on social media and sexuality but carrying out the analysis and synthesis is tedious and time consuming. However, many studies have dwelt much on the effects of the various forms of media on the sexuality of adolescents and young adults. Despite these significant negative effects, it is neither practical nor desirable to discourage adolescents and young adults from using media particularly social media to meet their information needs. In this view, future studies should investigate how media can be harnessed to promote healthy sexual attitudes and behaviors among adolescents and young adults. Although this study explored some strategies for promoting positive media influence on the sexuality of adolescents and young adults, future research should focus on developing and evaluating evidence-based intervention programs to further enhance such positive influences.

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