

## The Relationship Between Adolescent Perception and Attitude to HIV/AIDS Prevention Among Students in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State: Implication for Counseling

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**Abstract:** *This study investigated perception of and attitude towards HIV/AIDS prevention among students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. A sample of 900 students was purposively selected from the randomly selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State. A 20-item questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. Data were analyzed using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The result showed that a significant relationship exist between adolescents perception of and the attitude to HIV/AIDS prevention. Some counselling implications were proffered as the way forward.*

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### 1. Introduction

The information that HIV/AIDS is transmitted through sexual intercourse with an HIV/AIDS infected person, blood transfusion, contaminated needles, sharp infected objects, etc has gone round the globe for some years now. There have also been several campaigns as well as sensitizations on the need to observe HIV/AIDS preventive measures. Oshotimehin (2003) and Akpama (2007) noted that many adolescents are well informed about HIV/AIDS and have also been sensitized severally on HIV/AIDS prevention. This being the case, the adolescents' perception on HIV/AIDS should be based on the level of information disseminated on them. Human beings attend to issues based on the perception information the issues contain. When adolescents are quite knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS, the knowledge so acquired will help the adolescents to develop positive attitude towards the preventive measures. What the adolescents know and feel about HIV/AIDS prevention will determine their attitude towards HIV/AIDS preventive measures (Akpama 2007; Omotosho, 2004; Odey, 2004; Olayinka & Osho, 1997). Momoh (2004) discovered in his study that in spite of the high level of teachers knowledge of HIV/AIDS, their knowledge and not compliment their behaviour which include: refusal to use condom with irregular sex partners (65.4%) and having sex with more than one sex

partners (55.2%). Momoh (2004) also noted that of the knowledge of teachers, who are often time regarded as role models does not compliment their behaviour, the students may likely emulate their teachers. Imenda (2001), Akpama (2007) and Akpede (2003) agreed that students do not only need basic information on HIV/AIDS prevention, but focus should be on the adolescents group behaviour change. This to some extent will help curb the spread of HIV/AIDS. Akpama (2007) noted that the Nigerian educational system especially the tertiary institutions can play a positive role on adolescents' perception of HIV/AIDS prevention through seminars and film shows organized across the campuses on weekends. This study investigates adolescents' perception of HIV/AIDS prevention as it relates to the adolescents attitude towards HIV/AIDS prevention.

## 2. The problem

The zeal for this study came about as a result of the researchers concern for the youths in tertiary institutions and their contribution in nation building. Much research has been conducted on adolescents' perception on HIV/AIDS, peoples' attitude towards those living with HIV/AIDS, adolescents' attitude towards HIV/AIDS, etc. Not much has been done on how adolescents' perception of HIV/AIDS prevention can affect adolescents' attitude towards HIV/AIDS prevention.

The researchers believes that even though psychosocial correlates such as age, sex, self-concept, family socio-economic status, peer influence, location of schools, etc affect adolescents perception of and attitude to HIV/AIDS prevention, a relationship exists between adolescents understanding and their reaction to prevention. The researchers also believed that a thorough education on HIV/AIDS prevention will enhance the adolescents' higher perception and positive attitude towards prevention of HIV/AIDS.

The following questions underlie this study: Do student react negatively to what they know is harmful to their existence? Would a thorough knowledge of adolescents on HIV/AIDS prevention affect their reactions towards HIV/AIDS prevention?

## 3. Purpose

The purpose of this study was to find out whether a relationship exists between adolescents perception of the HIV/AIDS prevention and their attitude towards HIV/AIDS prevention. The result of this study will proffer a solution to the drastic reduction of the dreaded pandemic HIV/AIDS.

## 4. Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between adolescents' perception of HIV/AIDS prevention and their attitude towards HIV/AIDS prevention

## 5. Methodology

The ex-post facto research design was used in this study to observe those events that had already taken place. The independent variable could not be manipulated but evaluated.

## 6. Population and sample

The population comprised mainly all the undergraduates drawn from three (3) tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The institutions include: College of Education, Akamkpa, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar and the College of Health Technology, Calabar. These three tertiary institutions were randomly selected. A total of 900 undergraduate students were also randomly selected from the three tertiary institutions with an even distribution of 300 randomly selected adolescents per tertiary institution.

## 7. Instrumentation

A 20-item questionnaire with a 4 point likert type rating scale ranging from strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD) was administered on the respondents. The administered questionnaire on the respondents in the three tertiary institutions were collected and analyzed.

## 8. Result

The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient test statistics was used in testing for significance. The respondents' scores on perception of HIV/AIDS prevention were correlated against their scores on attitude to HIV/AIDS prevention. The result is presented in the table below.

Pearson correlation of the relationship between adolescents perception of and attitude to HIV/AIDS prevention (n = 900)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r
Perception of HIV/AIDS prevention (x)	20317	501429		
			535382	0.113*
Attitude to HIV/AIDS prevention (y)	22820	618880		

\* Significant at 0.05; df = 898; critical r = 0.113

The result of the analysis in the above table showed that the calculated r-value of 0.487 was higher than the critical value of 0.113 at 0.05 level of significance with 898 degree of freedom. This shows that there is a significant relationship between adolescents' perception of HIV/AIDS prevention and adolescents' attitude to HIV/AIDS prevention

## 9. Discussion

The result showed a significant relationship between adolescents' perception of HIV/AIDS prevention and their attitude to HIV/AIDS prevention. It was discovered that adolescents have 100% knowledge of HIV/AIDS preventive measures and this in turn determined positive attitude to HIV/AIDS prevention. This discovery is in line with Akpama (2007), Odey (2004) and Omotosho (2004) findings that adolescents' knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention guided their behaviour towards HIV/AIDS prevention.

The result from this study also confirmed Oshotimehins (2003) and Akpedes (2003) finding that the decline in HIV/AIDS is as a result of the high education level of HIV/AIDS which improved the behaviour of adolescents towards HIV/AIDS prevention.

It was further discovered from this study that the attitude of adolescents towards HIV/AIDS prevention depended on their level of understanding of HIV/AIDS prevention. This the researchers discovered, accounted for the significant relationship between the two variables.

## 10. Counselling implications

The findings of this study have some implications that require prompt attention by the government, the authorities of tertiary institutions, parents and school counsellors, if the pandemic disease must be brought to its barest minimum.

Oshotimehim (2003) suggested that since the youths spend most of their time at school, the counsellors should be adequately informed about HIV/AIDS prevention. Oshotimehin (2003) explained that the school counsellors are in a better position to educate the students better on HIV/AIDS prevention. The authorities of

the tertiary institutions should ensure that all faculties have faculty counselor. This will bring counselling closer to the students. When students are well informed about HIV/AIDS prevention, it will enhance their positive attitude toward HIV/AIDS prevention.

Since students believe so much on peer pressure, the counsellors should embark on group counselling for students behaviour change.

The government should encourage close parenting. A blend of authoritative and authoritarian styles and a drift from the permissive parenting style, will help inculcate good moral values on the children.

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