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Assessment of Peer Pressure and Sexual Adventurism among Adolescents in Ghana: The Moderating Role of Child-Rearing Practices

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Abstract: The rationale of this study was to examine the influence of peer pressure on sexual adventurism among adolescents in Ghana, and as well to explore the role of child-rearing practices in this relationship. The study covered adolescents in junior high schools in Ghana within the age range of 12 to 19 years. A sample of 525 adolescents was surveyed to participate in the research using the multistage sampling approach. The main instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. Data gathered were analysed using means and standard deviation, multivariate linear regression, and three-way interaction-moderation analysis. Child-rearing practices and peer pressure significantly and independently predicted sexual adventurism. Parental discipline acted as a significant moderator in the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism. Again, only in the presence of discipline could monitoring and warmth moderate the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism. Based on the findings, parents are encouraged to incorporate reasonable disciplinary measures in shaping their children's behaviours against sexually deviant activities. Besides, guidance and counselling coordinators should plan and organize programs that centre on reducing the prevalence of peer pressure and sexual adventurism. Conclusions drawn from the study include bringing out a better understanding of the role that discipline and peer pressure play in influencing adolescents' sexual adventurism.

Keywords: child rearing; discipline; emotional warmth; monitoring; peer pressure; sexual adventurism

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1. Introduction

Adolescence, as a transitional period, is characterized by psychological, cognitive, biological, and physical development (Sigelman and Rider 2009). What is most paramount in this stage is sexual development, which is revealed in social relations (Manning et al. 2000). These individuals, thus, start to take notice of their feelings (mostly unconscious) and try to adjust to their changing functioning and appearance, physical intimacy, as well as their sexual urges (arousals) and beliefs (Manning et al. 2000; Slater and Robinson 2014). However, manifestations of certain behaviours of adolescents observed in schools, homes, and playgrounds can be used as indicators of the experiences of these adolescents. In the worst case, the effects of these behaviours and actions are seen through sexual behaviours and experimentation within their social milieu (Slater and Robinson 2014). Paramount of the effect of this experimentation is adolescent pregnancy (Jayakody et al. 2011), defined by WHO as pregnancy occurring in a girl aged 10–19 years (World Health Organization 2009).

Adolescent pregnancy is a great challenge for major stakeholders due to the increasing cases in many developing countries (Ahinkorah et al. 2019a, 2019b; Ayibani 2013). Available statistics show that in Ghana, adolescent pregnancy is endemic and on the rise among female youths of school-going age (Ahinkorah et al. 2019a, 2019b). Recent national data from Ghana Health Service (GHS) showed that in the year 2020 alone, a total of 110,000 adolescent pregnancies were recorded; 13 adolescent pregnancies were reported every 60 min, and 301 adolescents were impregnated every single day (Ghana Health Service GHS 2021). Research has shown that peer pressure is usually linked to incidents of adolescent adventuresome behaviour and consequently, teenage pregnancy since these events normally happen in the circles of agemates (Leclerc-Madlala 2013; Steinberg and Monahan 2007). Adolescents are vulnerable to peer pressure, such that they may learn some behavioural patterns from friends, which affect their attitudes, beliefs, and values (Carver et al. 2003; Louw and Louw 2007; Reese-Weber 2000; Ryckman 2008; Schultz and Schultz 2013).

Peers and parents are two contending sources of socialization for adolescents (Sennott and Mollborn 2011). The majority of adolescents engage in sexual activities due to the need for acceptance, curiosity, and peer pressure (Jayakody et al. 2011). In Bogani et al.'s (Bogani et al. 2015) view, some adolescents do not have access to accurate information, and consequently, resort to friends and family relatives. Several other pieces of research have consistently revealed that peers are a prevailing source of control for adolescents (Brechwald and Prinstein 2011; Veenstra et al. 2013). Regarding parental influence, studies have found a link between parental control and a child's sexual behaviours (Aufseeser et al. 2006; Brown and Iyengar 2008; Fehringer et al. 2013; Fletcher et al. 2008; Holborn and Eddy 2011; Kilmann et al. 2006; Miller et al. 2001; O'Sullivan et al. 2006; Spera 2005). Holborn and Eddy (Holborn and Eddy 2011), for example, found that South African parents who do not provide adequate guidance for their children were more likely to have wards who become impregnated before grade 12. Some other scholars have debated whether parents can safeguard against the effects of peer influence on sexual intent and behaviours of adolescents (Gavazzi 2012; Fasula and Miller 2006; Jacobson and Crockett 2000; Upchurch et al. 1999; Van de Bongardt et al. 2014). (Fasula and Miller 2006) revealed that poor parenting has a higher probability of enhancing the effect of peer pressure, consequently increasing the likelihood of associating with deviant peers. Other scholars, like Beyer, Veryser, and Verlee (Beyers et al. 2015), have however, found that parenting did not act as a buffer to peer influence on sexual initiation.

While some scholars have looked at child-rearing practices and how these affect sexual behaviours of adolescents (Beyers et al. 2015; Cacodcar et al. 2015; Sonia and Amar 2012; Sneed et al. 2009), others have investigated peer pressure and its effect on sexual behaviours (Brechwald and Prinstein 2011; Carver et al. 2003; O'Sullivan et al. 2006). Findings from these studies have indicated that child-rearing practices and peer pressure independently influence adolescents' sexual behaviours. (Ugoji and Ebenuwa-Okoh 2015) further examined the joint effect of parenting styles and peer pressure on the sexual activities of adolescents and found that the two predictor variables significantly affect adolescents' sexual activities. Summarily, parents' relative attitudes on assertiveness, negotiation, protectiveness, clarity, and restrictiveness matter in shaping young people's sexual attitudes (Brannen et al. 1994; Grotevand and Cooper 1998). For instance, young people from families where parents use negotiation, dialogue, and are precise about sexual reproductive health issues and practices usually adopt risk-free sexual practices, unlike their counterparts, who thrive within authoritarian and control-prone homes (Okonkwo 2009; Slap et al. 2003).

Because majority of previous studies were conducted in western societies, their findings are likely to be less applicable in the Ghanaian context because child-rearing practices and levels of peer pressure are likely to differ between Ghana and these countries due to diverse cultures, values, and beliefs. For example, Smith and Udry (Smith and Udry 1985) revealed that differences exist in the timing and sequencing of sexual behaviours in blacks and whites. With regards to the Ghanaian context, little is known about how child-rearing

practices and peer pressure influence sexual behaviours. It has been indicated that human societies largely differ on cultural principles in terms of sexual behaviour and the enforcement of sexual drive (Upchurch et al. 2004). For instance, in some societies, premarital sex is not prohibited, whereas in other communities, premarital sex is largely unacceptable, particularly for females, since virginity is extremely cherished.

Taken together, there are peculiar context-specific sexuality-related issues that make the current study worth investigating. From a cultural-norms perspective, young people's sexual risk-taking behaviours are driven by dominant sociocultural prescriptions, perceptions, recognition, and reaction to expected rights and obligations, which manifest in many ways across Sub-Saharan African societies, including Ghana (Okonkwo 2009; Douglas and Wildavsky 1982; Gupta 2000). Hence, normative influences do shape young people's sexual risk-taking behaviours through internalisation of dominant codes. These prescriptions often determine when, where, how, and with whom to have sexual relations, including social sanctions for noncompliance (Okonkwo 2009; Gupta 2000; Weiss and Gupta 1998). For example, the dominant cultural ideals of motherhood often negate women's ability to negotiate for nonpenetrative sex, and contraceptive use and stigmatize those who do (Heise and Elias 1995). (Gupta 2000) also indicates that the socioeconomic dominance of women by men impacts their vulnerability to sexual risk taking because women resort to risky sex-related exchanges to survive. Within Sub-Saharan Africa, scholarly evidence has already documented other causes of young people's sexual risk-taking behaviours across a wide range of factors not limited to peer influence, poor bonding with and limited support from parents, inappropriate parenting roles and role models, and living in unfavourable environments (Cherie and Berhane 2012). These sociocultural practices have significantly contributed to a high prevalence of unintended sexual health outcomes, such as unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, STIs, including HIV, and causing increased morbidity as well as mortality rates in the region (Ahinkorah et al. 2019a, 2019b; Hagan and Menyanu 2013; Seidu et al. 2021; UNICEF 2016).

Given the powerful role peers play in young people's sexual orientation and parental attributes, including styles of young people's sexual behaviours, conducting an investigation on Ghanaian young people might help unearth useful information that may guide public policy on adolescent reproductive health to reduce or discourage sexual adventurism among adolescents. Specifically, a number of issues arise based on the existing literature: (1) sexual adventurism goes beyond sexual activities by including sexual attitudes, sexual intentions, and sexual experimentation, (2) most of these previous studies were qualitative, and thus, all conclusions drawn were not based on any statistical inference, and (3) there is uncertainty as to whether child-rearing practices moderate the relationship between peer pressure and sexual behaviours of adolescents. From the foregoing, the study proposed two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *The level of peer pressure is positively related to the extent of adolescents' sexual adventurism.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Child-rearing practices significantly moderate the relationship between peer pressure and adolescents' sexual adventurism.*

Based on the foregoing, a conceptual framework was developed to highlight the general idea of the research (see Figure 1).

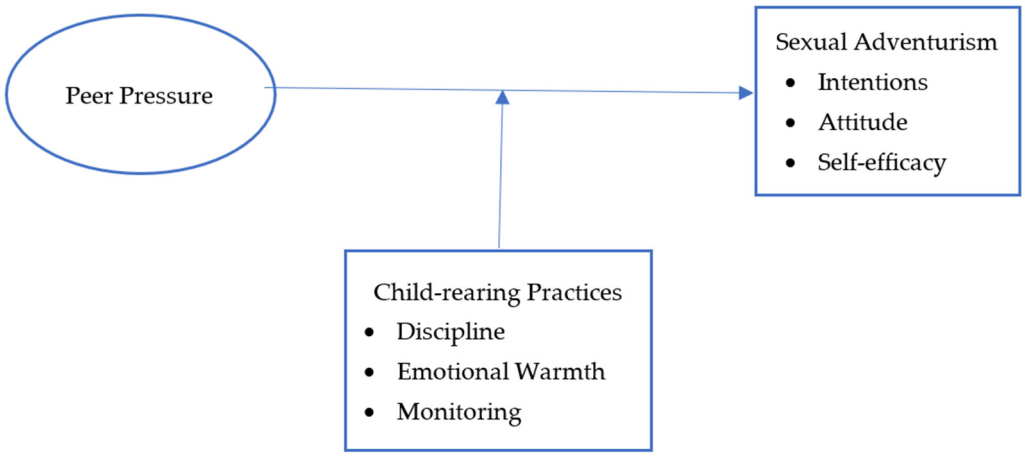

Figure 1. Conceptual framework showing the moderating role of child-rearing practices in the link between peer pressure and sexual adventurism.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Population and Sample

The study surveyed adolescents within the age range of 12 and 19 years in junior high schools (JHS) in Ghana. The study was targeted at nine public schools in the Central Region, where there was a high incidence of cases of teenage pregnancy. The total number of students within these nine schools was 2492. The sample was determined based on the estimate provided by Creswell (Creswell 2012) that for survey research, a minimum sample of 350 should be used to achieve some level of representativeness. Other pieces of literature have, however, asserted that adjustment must be made to sample size in cases where the sample consists of several subgroups (Israel 1992). In this case, a 50% increase in the sample (as proposed by Creswell) was adopted based on Israel's observation (Israel 1992), resulting in a sample size of 525. This estimation is important as an increase in sample size improves the generalisation of the findings from the sample to the population. The sampling procedure started with purposefully selecting JHS in the Cape Coast Metropolis because of the high rate of recorded teenage pregnancy cases in the metropolis (Ahinkorah et al. 2019a, 2019b). The stratified sampling technique was then used to select the schools, using the six circuits as strata. Based on the proportions of schools within each circuit, 2 schools each were randomly selected from three of the circuits, whereas a school each was randomly chosen from the remaining three circuits. The number of students selected from each of the nine schools was determined using proportions based on the student population. In each school, the list of students was obtained, and a systematic sampling procedure was adopted to select the individual participants. The youngest respondent was 11 years old, and the oldest was 19 years old. The mean age was 15 years, with a standard deviation of 1.29. Nearly 13.3% of the respondents were 11–13 years old, 77.4 % were aged 14–16 years, and 9.3% were between the ages of 17 and 19 years. The percentage of female respondents was 54%, and that of male respondents was 46%.

2.2. Study Variables and Their Measurements

The study included three variables, namely peer pressure, child-rearing practices, and sexual adventurism.

2.2.1. Predictor Variable

Peer Pressure: The peer pressure scale was developed and validated by the authors based on existing literature on peer pressure (Carver et al. 2003; Brechwald and Prinstein 2011; O'Sullivan et al. 2006; Ugoji and Ebenuwa-Okoh 2015). A 22-item scale was developed to measure the level of peer pressure among adolescents. Two of the items were deleted after the factor analysis due to low factor loadings of 0.34 and 0.32. The items were measured

on a four-point Likert-type scale (untrue of me-1, somewhat untrue of me-2, somewhat true of me-3, and true of me-4). The results from the confirmatory factor analysis revealed that, apart from two items, all the other items had factor loadings from 0.56–0.89. The two deleted items were (1) "I feel loved when I am in the company of my peers" and (2) "When I don't want to have sex, my friends say I am not matured". An average variance-extracted (AVE) value of 0.59 provided evidence of convergent validity since the AVE value was greater than 0.50 (Hair et al. 2010). The discriminant analysis (coupled with the exploratory factor analysis) showed that the scale was unidimensional, with a Cronbach Alpha estimate of 0.79. The final sample of items includes: "*I feel obliged to engage in sexual acts to please my friends*", "*My friends offer me plans on how to involve in sexual behaviours with the opposite sex*", and "*My friends introduced me to sexual activities*".

2.2.2. Moderating Variable

Child-Rearing Practices: The parental rearing style (PRS) questionnaire, which was developed and validated by Gerlsma, Arrindell, van der Veen, and Emmelkamp (Gerlsma et al. 1991), was adapted for this research. The original PRS scale is multidimensional with 4 subscales: rejection, emotional warmth, overprotection, and favouring. The "favouring" dimension was excluded from this study because it had a low reliability during the initial development of the scale (Gerlsma et al. 1991). The rejection and overprotection dimensions were renamed to discipline and monitoring because the names of the variables sounded negative. It is important to note that renaming the scales did not have any impact on the items or the validity of the responses. Confirmatory factor analysis (i.e., factor loadings, average variance extracted) and reliability analysis (i.e., Cronbach Alpha) were also conducted to ensure that the instrument reflected the context of the research. After validation, the 49 items for the rejection, emotional warmth, and overprotection dimensions were reduced to 32 items. The Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates for discipline, emotional warmth, and monitoring were 0.73, 0.76, and 0.70, respectively. Samples of items comprised: "*My parents punish me for the little wrong things I do*", "*I am able to discuss my personal issues with my parents*", "*My parents are not friendly or welcoming*", and "*My parents want to know whatever I am doing at any point in time* (e.g., *playing with friends*)".

2.2.3. Criterion Variable

Sexual Adventurism: The Youth Sexual Intention Questionnaire (YSI-Q), which was developed and validated by Muhammad, Shamsuddin, Amin, Omar, and Thurasamy (Muhammad et al. 2017), was adapted and used to measure sexual adventurism. The Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates were as follows: sexual intention (5 items), 0.93; attitude construct (5 items), 0.89; social norms construct (6 items), 0.94; and self-efficacy construct (4 items), 0.90. All values were greater than 0.70 (Matsunaga 2010). The "social norm" subscale was excluded in this research because its items did not reflect the term "sexual adventurism" (Guilamo-Ramos et al. 2008). The adaptation process led to the addition of more items, and the modification of existing items for age-appropriateness and to fit the study context. The items were measured on a four-point Likert-type scale (untrue of me-1, somewhat untrue of me-2, somewhat true of me-3, and true of me-4). The Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates for the subscales (with the data obtained in this study) were: intention, 0.89; efficacy, 0.85; and attitude, 0.89. Some examples of the items include: "*I desire to engage in sexually-related activities*", "*I constantly look for opportunities to engage in sexual acts*", and "*I am unable to control myself when I feel for sex*".

2.3. Data Collection and Ethical Consideration

The data were collected on school grounds after permissions were sought from appropriate authorities. Before this, ethical clearance was provided by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, with a reference number of UCC/IRB/A/2016/298. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, the researchers together with the trained research assistants visited the schools and had an interaction with the

students prior to the data collection. This approach was to create a good rapport with the respondents to ensure that the participants provided accurate information as possible. During the data collection process, the researchers ensured the protection of vulnerable participants (Creswell 2012). Participants were guaranteed their anonymity because their identities were not linked to their responses. For participants who were below the age of 18 years, written assent was taken from their parents (Creswell 2014). The questionnaire was administered to the students in a reserved classroom in each school where all the selected participants were assembled. Due to the sensitive nature of the questions, the students were spaced in terms of seating arrangements, were not allowed to communicate among themselves, and were prohibited to have a glance of the responses of others. The participants were assured of confidentiality and were, thus, encouraged to provide honest responses as possible.

2.4. Data Analyses

The data were assessed for their completeness after the data gathering. The questionnaires were then numbered chronologically by giving each a serial number (e.g., 001, 002, 003, ...). The data were then coded into Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS version 25) computer software. Data entry errors were screened, and corrections were made where necessary. For all the variables, a mean (of means) value above 2.5 (criterion mean for a 4-point Likert scale) depicts a greater presence of the construct measured, whereas a mean (of means) score less than 2.5 shows otherwise. Taking the discipline variable, for example, a mean above 2.5, such as 3.4, shows that discipline was reported to be high. On the other hand, a mean estimate of 2.1, which is less than 2.5, shows that discipline was reported to be low. The rest of the variables followed similar interpretations. The first hypothesis was tested using multivariate linear regression analysis (Gravetter and Wallnau 2007), whereas the second hypothesis was tested with a three-way interaction-moderation analysis (Hayes PROCESS) (Hayes 2013). Prior to testing the hypotheses, four assumptions were tested. They included multivariate normality, multivariate outliers, autocorrelation, and singularity. The moderation analysis was conducted using 5000 bootstrap samples.

3. Results

3.1. Preliminary Data Management and Analysis

Four assumptions underlying the use of the statistical procedures were checked. The results demonstrated that the assumptions about multivariate normality, outliers and autocorrelation were satisfied. The distribution of data points for each of the cells was centroid in nature; this confirmed the non-violation of the multivariate normality and autocorrelation assumptions. The data points also suggested no evidence of multivariate outliers. The linearity assumption was also tested, and no violation was detected.

3.2. Descriptive Statistics on Peer Pressure, Sexual Adventurism, and Child-Rearing Practices

Table 1 showed that emotional warmth and monitoring practices were reported as high among adolescents. The discipline dimension was, however, reportedly low. Sexual adventurism, intentions, attitude, and efficacy were reported as highly prevalent among the participants. Similarly, peer pressure was reported as predominant.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the variables.

Variable	Sub-Dimension	No. of Items	Mean	SD
Child-rearing practices	Discipline	10	2.26	0.40
	Emotional Warmth	12	2.87	0.38
	Monitoring	10	2.92	0.60
Sexual Adventurism	Intentions	9	3.20	0.76
	Attitude	10	3.25	0.81
	Efficacy	11	3.19	1.05
Peer Pressure	None	20	3.11	0.35

Source: Field Survey (2020).

3.3. Relationship between Peer Pressure and Adolescents' Sexual Adventurism

This research examined the relationship between peer pressure and adolescents' sexual adventurism. A multivariate linear regression analysis was therefore conducted. The predictor was peer pressure, and the criterion variable was sexual adventurism (sexual intents, attitude towards sex, and self-efficacy). The details of the results are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Multivariate analysis.

Effect	Value	F	df	Err. df	Sig.
Intercept	0.101	18.719 *	3	500	0.000
Peer Pressure	0.527	185.327 *	3	500	0.000

Overall Model: $F(1, 502) = 460.430$, $p < 0.001$. $R^2 = 0.521$; * Significant, $p < 0.001$.

Table 3. Univariate analysis of the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism dimensions.

Criterion	Predictor	B	Std. Error	T	Beta	Sig.	R^2
Sexual Intent	Intercept	−14.79	2.047	−7.22 *		0.000	0.477
	Peer Pressure	0.78	0.036	21.46 *	0.87	0.000	
Attitude	Intercept	−7.36	2.066	−3.56 *		0.000	0.427
	Peer Pressure	0.71	0.036	19.40 *	0.77	0.000	
Efficacy	Intercept	−10.59	2.43	−4.37 *		0.000	0.428
	Peer Pressure	0.83	0.043	19.45 *	1.06	0.000	

Source: Field Survey (2020); * Significant, $p < 0.001$.

The multivariate analysis, which highlights the effect of peer pressure on the composite of sexual adventurism, is shown in Table 2. The overall model was found to be significant, $F(1, 502) = 460.430$, $p < 0.001$. The results revealed that peer pressure is a significant predictor of sexual adventurism, $F(3, 500) = 185.327$, $p < 0.001$. Further analysis revealed that 52.1% of the variation in sexual adventurism was explained by peer pressure ($R^2 = 0.521$).

Table 3 presents the results of the univariate analysis of the relationship between peer pressure and the dimensions of sexual adventurism. Peer pressure was found to be a significant predictor of adolescents' intentions to engage in sexual activities, $t(500) = 21.46$, $b = 0.78$, $p < 0.001$. About 47.7% of the variation in adolescents' intentions to engage in sexual activities is accounted for by peer pressure.

Further analysis revealed that peer pressure significantly predicted adolescents' attitude towards sexual activities, $t(500) = 19.40$, $b = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$. Approximately 42.7% of the variance in attitude towards sexual activities was explained by peer pressure. Peer pressure was found to be a significant predictor of adolescents' efficacy to engage in sexual activities, $t(500) = 19.45$, $b = 0.83$, $p < 0.001$. The analysis indicated that peer pressure accounts for 42.8% of the variation in adolescents' efficacy to engage in sexual activities.

3.4. Moderating Role of Child-Rearing Practices in the Relationship between Peer Pressure and Sexual Adventurism

The study also investigated the moderating role of child-rearing practices in the relationship between peer pressure and adolescents' sexual adventurism. A three-way interaction-moderation (moderated moderation) analysis was conducted. Moderation analysis was conducted to find out if a third variable (i.e., child-rearing practices) could strengthen or weaken the relationship between a predictor (i.e., peer influence) and an outcome variable (i.e., adolescents' sexual adventurism).

The moderators were discipline, monitoring, and warmth. The predictor was peer pressure, and the criterion was sexual adventurism. The analysis used 5000 bootstrap samples, using a 95% confidence interval. The analysis highlighted six different models. In the first three models, single moderators were used. The last three had double moderators (i.e., (1) warmth and monitoring, (2) monitoring and discipline, (3) warmth and discipline). Details are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Model summary.

Model	Moderator	R	R^2	MSE	F	df1	df2	*p*-Value
1	Monitoring	0.723	0.523	199.443	182.694 *	3	500	0.000
2	Warmth	0.723	0.523	199.528	182.544 *	3	500	0.000
3	Discipline	0.728	0.530	196.344	188.208 *	3	500	0.000
4	Monitoring * Warmth	0.726	0.527	199.296	78.979 *	7	496	0.000
5	Monitoring * Discipline	0.746	0.556	187.128	88.723 *	7	496	0.000
6	Warmth * Discipline	0.736	0.542	192.982	83.882 *	7	496	0.000

Source: Field Survey (2020), * Significant, $p < 0.001$.

The results, as shown in Table 4, showed that all the models unveiled were significant. For model 1, monitoring was used as the moderating variable, warmth was used as the moderating variable for model 2, and in model 3, discipline was used as the moderator. Both monitoring and warmth were used as the moderators for the fourth model, whereas monitoring and discipline were the moderators for the fifth model, and warmth and discipline were the moderators for the sixth model. Table 5 presents the details of each model.

Table 5. Moderating role of child-rearing practices in the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism.

Model		Effect	Boot SE	t	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
1	Constant	−42.60	35.69	−1.268	−117.510	23.830
	Peer Pressure (PP)	2.40	0.62	4.060	1.252	3.655
	Monitoring (MO)	0.35	1.26	0.301	−2.075	2.903
	PP * MO	−0.003	0.02	−0.141	−0.047	0.039
2	Constant	−92.752	47.518	−2.192	−189.683	−3.612
	Peer Pressure (PP)	3.366	0.818	4.474	1.842	5.034
	Warmth (WH)	1.761	1.428	1.433	−0.924	4.613
	PP * WH	−0.031	0.025	−1.410	−0.080	0.015
3	Constant	−175.96	86.045	−2.692	−342.891	−5.306
	Peer Pressure (PP)	5.136	1.472	4.440	2.243	8.016
	Discipline (DP)	9.760	5.734	2.234	−1.496	20.882
	PP * DP	−0.192	0.098	−2.477	−0.384	−0.001

Table 5. *Cont.*

Model		Effect	Boot SE	t	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
4	Constant	257.02	310.85	0.991	−382.34	840.934
	Peer Pressure (PP)	−2.480	5.447	−0.539	−12.765	8.691
	Monitoring (MO)	−11.886	10.332	−1.352	−31.538	9.543
	PP * MO	0.200	0.181	1.281	−0.174	0.543
	Warmth (WH)	−8.908	9.864	−1.127	27.082	11.271
	PP * WH	0.145	0.173	1.034	−0.210	0.464
	MO * WH	0.360	0.324	1.360	−0.309	0.974
	PP * MO * WH	−0.006	0.006	−1.270	−0.017	0.006
5	Constant	−502.47	197.36	−2.546	−890.23	−114.71
	Peer Pressure (PP)	10.600	3.55	2.989	3.63	17.568
	Monitoring (MO)	252.58	134.71	1.875	−12.094	517.26
	PP * MO	−4.294	2.38	−1.804	−8.97	0.383
	Discipline (DP)	33.392	13.17	2.535	7.52	59.27
	PP * DP	−0.601	0.24	−2.533	−1.067	−0.135
	MO * DP	−18.00	9.02	−2.00	−35.72	−0.290
	PP * MO * DP	0.314	0.16	1.967	0.01	0.628
6	Constant	363.69	240.99	1.48	−116.75	847.13
	Peer Pressure (PP)	−3.84	4.058	−0.89	−11.94	4.25
	Warmth (WH)	−162.49	79.40	−2.28	−318.79	−5.74
	PP * WH	2.71	1.34	2.17	0.065	5.32
	Discipline (DP)	−28.31	16.22	−1.70	−61.28	4.05
	PP * DP	0.45	0.27	1.55	−0.09	1.00
	WH * DP	11.44	5.31	2.38	0.99	22.00
	PP * WH * DP	−0.193	0.09	−2.29	−0.369	−0.018

Source: Field Survey (2020).

Table 5 presents results on the moderating role of child-rearing practices in the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism. In model 1, monitoring was not found as a significant moderator in the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism, $b = -0.003$, $SE = 0.02$, $BootCI$ $(-0.047, 0.039)$. Similarly, warmth (model 2) was also not found to be a significant moderator in the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism, $b = -0.003$, $SE = 0.025$, $BootCI$ $(-0.080, 0.015)$. Discipline (model 3), however, significantly moderated the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism, $b = -0.192$, $SE = 0.098$, $BootCI$ $(-0.384, -0.001)$. In model 4, warmth and monitoring together could not moderate the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism, $b = -0.006$, $SE = 0.006$, $BootCI$ $(-0.017, 0.006)$. Additional analysis revealed that for warmth (model 5) to significantly moderate the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism, discipline had to be present (PP*WH*DP), $b = -0.006$, $SE = 0.006$, $BootCI$ $(-0.017, -0.007)$. Again, for monitoring (model 6) to significantly moderate the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism, discipline again had to be present (PP*WH*DP), $b = -0.193$, $SE = 0.09$, $BootCI$ $(-0.369, -0.018)$.

Further analysis was done on the conditional focal predictor at values of the moderator. This procedure was done as a post hoc analysis for the significant moderation effect of discipline in the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism. The details are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Conditional focal predictor at values of the moderator.

Discipline	Range	Effect	Boot SE	t-Value	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Low	10–24	2.45	0.120	20.39	2.209	2.681
Moderate	25–34	2.25	0.101	22.38	2.055	2.451
High	35–40	2.06	0.134	15.40	1.798	2.324

Source: Field Survey (2020).

Table 6 highlights the details of the mediating role of discipline in the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism. The analysis automatically generated levels of discipline using scores from 10 to 24 for low discipline, 25 to 34 for moderate discipline, and 35 to 40 for high discipline levels. These scores were generated from the 10 items measuring discipline on a four-point scale. It was found that the effect of peer pressure on sexual adventurism was large for low discipline compared to moderate and high discipline, $b = 2.45$, $SE = 0.120$, *BootCI* (2.209, 2.681).

4. Discussion

The rationale of this study was to examine the influence of peer pressure on sexual adventurism among adolescents in Ghana, and as well to explore the role of child-rearing practices in this relationship. The findings of this research revealed that peer pressure is a significant predictor of adolescents' level of sexual adventurism. Evidence from this study has shown that peer pressure affects adolescents' intentions to engage in sexual activities, their attitudes towards sexual behaviours, and their efficacy to engage in sexual activities. This underscores the dangers of peer pressure in influencing adolescents to be sexually adventurous. This finding is consistent with Leclerc-Madlala's (Leclerc-Madlala 2013) study, which found adolescents to be susceptible to peer influence in the area of sexually risky behaviours. Generally, adolescents at this stage are prone to making a lot of friends in schools, churches, and in their immediate surroundings, and they as well love to listen to their friends or peers (Slater and Robinson 2014). Consequently, the activities of these adolescents centre on their friends, who usually influence them to engage in certain health-compromising behaviours (Manning et al. 2000). Taking a clue from the results, it appears adolescents' sexual adventurism is likely to be on the rise only if peers of the adolescents influence them to engage in sexual activities. It is believed that peer pressure exists in these contemporary times, with an increasing rate of usage of social media and other digital technology further exacerbating adolescents' engagement in some risky behaviours, including the sharing of sexually seductive materials (Schultz and Schultz 2013).

Adolescents' social relationships with their family, peers, and associates of their social circles play a critical part in their social development (Steinberg and Monahan 2007). This relationship explains why adolescents were found to be at high risk of peer influence and parental influence affecting their sexual lives. It is worth noting that the adolescent stage itself makes them vulnerable to sexual experimentation and exploitation. Louw and Louw (Louw and Louw 2007) argued that developing sexuality during the adolescent stage poses ultimate challenges, which comprise regulating changing functioning and appearance, strong sexual urges, sexual values and attitudes, sexual experimentation, and assimilating these attitudes, experiences, and feelings into the development of a sense of self (Manning et al. 2000). The changing scene of sexual desires and urges at this stage, coupled with peer influence, could account for the increasing sexual behaviours among adolescents in this study. (Brechwald and Prinstein 2011) also found that peers were identified as a great source of control for adolescents in terms of their sexual behaviours. Other studies have confirmed this notion of the negative effect of peer influence on adolescents' sexual behaviours (Carver et al. 2003; Louw and Louw 2007; Reese-Weber 2000; Veenstra et al. 2013).

The results of this study also revealed that only discipline was able to act as a moderator in the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism. Further indications showed that the effect of peer pressure on sexual adventurism was larger for low discipline and smaller for high discipline. This finding suggests that adolescents can easily be influenced by friends to engage in sexually adventurous behaviours when discipline is low (Gavazzi 2012). However, whenever discipline is high, the effect of peer pressure on sexual adventurism is small. This finding is supported by the (Van de Bongardt et al. 2014) study, who discovered that parental discipline acted as a buffer between peer influence and sexual behaviours of Dutch adolescents. Other studies, like that of (Beyers et al. 2015), revealed that parental style did not moderate the effect of peer influence on sexual initiation. The

variations in the results can be attributed to cultural diversity (Upchurch et al. 2004). For example, in some western societies, parents have little control over the affairs of the child, whereas the situation is different in Africa, where parental control is dominant over what children do (Holborn and Eddy 2011).

The results further revealed that monitoring and warmth can only moderate the relationship between peer pressure and sexual adventurism in the presence of discipline. This finding reiterates the assertion that no matter the level of parental monitoring and emotional warmth, the prevalence of peer pressure can affect sexual adventurism in the absence of discipline. The finding corroborates previous studies showing that parental discipline is associated with adolescent sexual activity. Scholars like Jacobson and Crockett (Jacobson and Crockett 2000), in their research, discovered that child discipline is related to delayed engagement in sexual intercourse, even when peer influence is high. This notion has also been supported by Upchurch and colleagues (Upchurch et al. 1999), who also found that a high level of parental discipline led to a higher likelihood of reducing sexual activities among adolescents in Los Angeles.

4.1. Strengths and Limitations

This research makes a significant contribution to the field of literature on explaining the contribution of peer pressure and child-rearing practices to a wide range of adolescent sexual behaviours. The study is highly relevant, bridging the literature gap on the range of social domain for adolescents in Africa, and Ghana, to be specific, as they try to cope with the unique challenges associated with the adolescent stage. The research outcome contributes to the understanding of the significant role parents play in rearing their children while reducing the effect of peer pressure and sexual adventurous behaviours of these adolescents in the African context.

Despite these strengths, this study is not without limitations. First, investigating issues about sex and its components (such as sexuality) is delicate, and as such, collecting data could be challenging. Participants might feel uneasiness in providing explicit answers to the questions. Nevertheless, efforts were made by the researchers to create a serene environment so that participants felt comfortable responding to the questionnaire. Furthermore, the study was limited to adolescents who were still in school. Therefore, adolescents who were not in school or had dropped out at the time of data collection did not participate in the study. Caution should be taken in generalising the findings of the study.

4.2. Practical Implications

The findings of the study could be beneficial to parents, elucidating the influence of peer pressure on their adolescents in the domain of sexual adventurism. This study provides useful information to parents on the type of child-rearing practices that draw adolescent children to sexual adventurism. The research offers enlightenment to major stakeholders (e.g., the Ghana Education Service and curriculum developers) to develop sexuality education programs to minimize adolescents' sexual adventurism. These promotion programs would help provide appropriate health education to adolescents in school to help them understand their developmental stage. The outcomes of the study serve as an invaluable source of information to guide school counsellors and other stakeholders in the discharge of their duties and guide public policy realignment of issues related to adolescent sexuality and reproductive health in Ghana.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study highlights the significant role of peer pressure and child-rearing practices (especially the discipline dimension) in explaining sexual adventurism among adolescents in school. Importantly, adolescents who are well disciplined and have less peer pressure influence are less likely to have the intention, attitude, and efficacy to experiment with sexual activities. For situations where peer influence is dominant in a child's life, discipline serves as a potential control mechanism to reduce sexual adventurism in adolescents.

Hence, a reduced rate of discipline in schools and homes can contribute to an increased rate of sexual activities among in-school adolescents. The findings of the study suggest that parents and guardians should incorporate reasonable disciplinary actions in taking care of their children to enhance the proper upbringing of their adolescent children. Educative platforms and/or initiatives at home, school, and in the media could create awareness about peer pressure and sex-related issues among in-school adolescents. Additionally, school guidance and counselling coordinators should develop strategies that enable adolescents to channel their sexual energies into a productive venture, such as physical activity, life-skills training (e.g., creative arts and design), and reading of non-sexual storybooks.

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