

**Relationship Between the Sources of Sexual Reproductive Health Messages and the Sexual Agency of Second-Generation Migrant Ottawa Women:  
A Retrospective Cross-Sectional Study**

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## ABSTRACT

The development of sexual agency in young women is essential. Adolescence can be a confusing time for many youths as they are forging their way into adulthood. This confusion can be especially difficult for second generation migrants (SGM), a group that are often faced with different cultural spheres when discussing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) topics. This exploratory retrospective study examined the relationship between their cultural affiliations, the sources of SRH provided to SGM girls during adolescence (10-17 years old) and their subsequent level of sexual agency (18-24 years old) as young adults. The sources examined were parents, siblings, friends/peers, teachers and the media. Sexual agency was measured using the Sexual Assertiveness Questionnaire (SAQ) and the Sexual Affect Scale. A small sample of 105 respondents participated in the online survey. The participants reported the media to be their highest-ranking source of actual SRH messages and friends/peers as their preferred source. SRH messages provided by parents and friends/peers were significantly negatively correlated with the overall sexual agency of the participants. The results also present the individual associations between the 14 statements for each of the sources and the sexual agency of the participants. Not being ready for sex was the most cited reason for abstinence and was significantly positively associated with sexual agency.

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Verily, with every hardship comes ease!

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## **ACRONYMS**

**FGM** – First Generation Migrant

**HIV** – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

**PHAC** – Public Health Agency of Canada

**SAQ** – Sexual Assertiveness Questionnaire

**SGM** – Second Generation Migrant

**SRH** – Sexual and Reproductive Health

**STD** – Sexually Transmitted Disease

**TGM** – Third Generation Migrant

**WHO** – World Health Organization

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### **Background and Context**

Sexual agency is a relatively new term that has been defined differently by various scholars. The general definition outlines sexual agency as the ability for an individual to freely assert and control their sexual life which includes engaging in sexual assertiveness, participating in consensual sexual contact (Fahs & McClelland, 2016), seeking sexual pleasure and being able to initiate sex when desired (Fetterolf & Sanchez, 2014). Additionally, the development of sexual agency ensues simultaneously within the body (embodiment), within interpersonal relationships (relational) and within the environmental context that can allow for its growth or cessation (Chico, 2018). The analysis of the development of sexual agency should not negate the impact of societal norms, the dynamics of relationships, the access to resources and the cultural norms due to its critical implications and influences on the latter (Chico, 2018).

To further demonstrate the vast definitions detailing sexual agency, the concept of autonomy was raised to explain how an individual would be able to assert their control over their decisions and individual responsibilities concerning SRH matters (Bay-Cheng, 2015; Cense, 2018). A study conducted to explore the sexual agency development of Dutch adolescents found that social motivations, social status, and external expectations were fundamental influencers of sexual agency (Cense, 2018). This explains that individuals may have an easier sexual agency development due to their environment compared to others who have further constraints. She summarized sexual agency “as the strategic negotiations of an individual to situate oneself and one’s choices in a social context, maintain relationships and make sense of experiences. These strategic negotiations take place in a broader social and cultural context” (Cense, 2018, p. 250).

For this dissertation, sexual agency was conceptualized following two components: sexual affect and sexual assertiveness. Sexual affect is a component of sexual agency that is rarely discussed and analyzed (Ward, Seabrook, Grower, Giaccardi, & Lippman, 2017). It delves into the emotions, and feelings one may experience based on their sexual experiences including embarrassment, shame, guilt, pride, and comfort (Chilman, 1990; Ward et al., 2017). It has been proposed that the development of female sexuality during adolescence may be plagued with feelings of fear, guilt and shame which emanate from gendered cultural scripts that are regularly available (Martin, 2018). Those feelings and emotions can dictate the sexual story of the individual by influencing how they will negotiate certain situations to appease the feelings of shame or guilt stemming from their families or themselves (Cense, 2018). It is thus an essential component of sexual agency that should not be negated.

Sexual assertiveness refers to the ability to refuse unwanted sexual activity, to practice safer sex such as condom usage, to effectively communicate about sexual health in addition to acquiring knowledge of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) (Widman, Golin, Kamke, Burnette, & Prinstein, 2018). It also has been associated with the ability of forging a balance between internal sexual desires and outwards expression of said desires (Darden, Ehman, Lair, & Gross, 2018). It was emphasized that individuals who have that balance are better able to voice their consent when sexual encounters are desired and inversely, can refuse when sex is unwanted (Darden et al., 2018). In sum, both sexual affect and sexual assertiveness are necessary components to ensure a proper development of sexual agency in a young woman and was used as key measurements in this research project.

The SRH of adolescents is important as it is the age in which individuals normally embark on the exploration of their sexual relationships which can greatly influence their sexual

perceptions and health outcomes later in life (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2014). It is believed that sexual agency is essential to promote positive SRH outcomes such as contraception usage and pregnancy prevention (Bell, 2012). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), sexual health refers to:

A state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence (Collumbien, Busza, Cleland & Campbell, 2012, p.6).

Additionally, sexual health is a term that englobes many variables including STDs, contraception, pregnancy, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), gynaecology, sexual assault, sexuality and reproduction (French, 2009). Reproductive health refers to “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters related to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes” (Collumbien et al., 2012, p.6).

Nationally representative data found that 30.9% of Canadian youth between the ages of 15-24 disclosed having sexual intercourse with more than one partner within the past year of the survey (PHAC, 2014). Further, condom usage was reported in 63% of females engaging in sexual intercourse within the past year of the survey (PHAC, 2014). Youth between the ages of 15-24 are at a greater risk of contracting STDs than any other age group due to behavioural, biological, and cultural factors (CDC, 2019). In Canada, chlamydia has been recorded as the STD affecting the greatest number of females between the ages of 15-24 (Allen & MacDonald, 2014). Thus, this age group needs attention.

Based on the most recent Canadian census, there are 2.2 million adolescents between the ages of 15-19 as well as 2.4 million young adults between the ages of 20-24 residing in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2018a). First generation migrants (FGMs) or first-generation Canadians are individuals who are born abroad, and they make for 21.9% of the Canadian population (Census, 2019). Third generation migrants (TGMs) or third generation Canadians are individuals born to Canadian-born parents. They make for 60.7% of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2018b). SGMs or second-generation Canadians are individuals born in Canada who have at least one parent born outside of Canada. In fact, 17.8% of the Canadian population are comprised of SGM; 54.8% of them have two parents who are born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2018b). SGMs are the focus of this research dissertation.

There is empirical evidence supporting the claim that a SGM's own culture and customs merged with that of the host country are associated with the sexual actions of the individual (Kramer, van Veen, op de Coul, Coutinho, & Prins, 2013). The underlying factors responsible for the shift in behaviours were interrogated with many assuming acculturation or generational gaps as the main reasons explaining these differences (Coleman-Minahan, Chavez, & Bull, 2016; Kramer et al., 2013; Woo, Brotto, & Gorzalka, 2010). Although sexual behaviours have been assessed in SGMs, sexual agency is a topic that is less explored. There is an apparent gap in knowledge related to how the sexual agency is influenced and internalized in SGM women. The empirical data stemming from the SRH messages provided by their environment such as their family, friends/peers, media and school and the subsequent relationship on their sexual agency are scarce. The reported level of sexual agency may differ based on the source(s) and the types of messages received which warranted further examination.

## **Problem Statement**

It is fundamental for adolescents to receive proper SRH messages as adolescence is an age in which sexual exploration begins and can be viewed as intimidating and confusing (Kar, Choudhury, & Singh, 2015). The repercussions and hardships that can ensue from receiving inadequate SRH messages can reduce an adolescent's ability to attain positive sexual agency (Bell, 2012; Klein, Becker, & Štulhofer, 2018). Sexual agency may develop in part due to the social world around the individual, not solely on their autonomous decisions (Cense, 2019). As a result, the exploration of the sources that provide SRH messages to SGM adolescents and their cultural environment were thus imperative to discern. This includes the examination of which source(s) would the participants rather receive SRH messages from compared to the source(s) that convey those messages. There are gaps in knowledge on how SRH information is internalized for SGMs as it is a multicultural and diverse group faced with different potential cultural barriers that may be difficult to navigate and overcome. This is especially apparent for SGM women in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. Hence, the nature of the relationship between the sources of SRH messages received during adolescence, the level of cultural affiliation and the perceived level of sexual agency as young adults were essential to assess.

## **Research Objectives**

This research project sought to examine the relationship between the sources of SRH messages received by female SGM adolescents (10-17 years old) and their sexual agency as young adults (18-24 years old). The sources assessed in this research include parent(s), sibling(s), friends/peers, media and school teachers. It also examined the relationship between the cultural affiliations of the participants during their adolescent years and their sexual agency as young adults. Additionally, the study sought to determine the actual source(s) of SRH messages provided to SGM and their preferred source(s).

**Research Questions**

1. From whom do SGM adolescents receive SRH messages?
2. Which source(s) would SGM adolescents prefer to receive SRH messages from?
3. What is the relationship between the cultural affiliations of the participant during adolescence and their level of sexual agency as a young adult?
4. What is the relationship between the sources of SRH messages received by the participant during adolescence and their level of sexual agency as a young adult?

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual Framework

As previously mentioned, the definition of sexual agency is vast and includes multiple variables. The broadness of the term can render the conceptualization of sexual agency difficult. Researchers have sought to conceptualize female sexual agency by analyzing the effects of media advertisement on the objectification of women (Gill, 2008), by evaluating the sexual pleasure and the coercion in heterosexual relationships (Tirone & Katz, 2019) and by analyzing the gendered scripts propagated in the media (Seabrook, Ward, Cortina, Giaccardi, & Lippman, 2017). The latter proves to be quite impactful as young girls are regularly plagued with generated scripts that detail the sexual norms that are expected of them, in conjunction with the neoliberal views of sexual expression endorsing individuality and autonomy (Bay-Cheng, 2015).

These views on sexual agency are impactful as they can influence the sexual experiences and behaviours of a young girl. They nonetheless are non-encompassing as they do not dive into the many definitions of sexual agency. Cense (2019) explored the conceptualization of sexual agency by developing a theory including internal and external factors. This was done based on the notion that individual (or autonomous) motivations were not the principal factor dictating the ‘choice’ to either engage in sexual activity or not. Rather, it was theorized that social motivations and the desire to not disrupt or rupture interrelationships with peers, family or partners were the main components responsible for sexual decision-making (Cense, 2019). The method of conceptualizing sexual agency was thus introduced. The *Integrated Model of Four Components of Sexual Agency in Social Context* is detailed below:

Embodied Agency: Subjectivity was found to be an essential component to the conceptualization and formation of sexual agency. This refers to the development of the self based on engagements in sexual activities, comparing oneself to others and analyzing how they

may differ from the social norms (Cense, 2018). It includes pressures from peers, which refers to the social pressures imposed on an individual to morph their thoughts or behaviours, that may follow a gendered script (Cense, 2018; Macleod & Jearey-Graham, 2015). The media might also influence a woman's sexual agency by pushing a social narrative around sex (Cense, 2018). Cense (2018) emphasized the important influences of social norms and gendered scripts on the embodied agency of an individual.

Bonded Agency: In order to negotiate the roles and expectations that must be met by the individual, Cense (2019) articulated the different ways in which they can maintain their relationships by mitigating their actions and implementing strategies and negotiations. Parental and cultural expectations can place an enormous burden on the youth due to the conflicts between *personal desires* and *interpersonal dynamics* (Cense, 2019). It was noted that minority ethnic youth are reported to have greater conflicts and stress based on parental expectations (Cense, 2019). Bonded agency seems to follow the definition outlined by Bell (2012), whereby he defines sexual agency as “processes where young people become sexually active and the strategies, actions and negotiations involved in maintaining relationships and navigating broader social expectations” (p. 284). Additionally, the merging of different sexual cultures might be necessary to appease the expectations of individuals in divergent social spheres (Cense, 2019).

Narrative Agency: The following component emphasizes the life story that one constructs to understand themselves. It describes how they narrate their own lives and that of others (Cense, 2019). She mentions the value placed on the various contexts that surround young individuals and how they morph and view themselves based on their environment. It also considers the divergent narratives that can create conflicts on the choices made by the person. There are social limitations that can hinder the negotiation aspect for women such as the views

that women are vulnerable, dependent or that they have sexual responsibilities in addition to the taboo nature and silencing of sexual topics (Cense, 2019).

Moral Agency: The last component of this framework enables the moral reflection that an individual may position herself in. It alludes to the desire of not bringing shame or pain on other individuals in their life story (Cense, 2019). This includes being wary of the opinions and the discourses that may play a role in the choices of the individual. The moral reflection may evolve as time goes on based on the contexts of a given situation (Cense, 2019).

## **Sexual Agency**

### Sexual Affect

As previously mentioned, sexual affect refers to the emotions and the feelings associated with an individual's sexual experiences (Chilman, 1990). A negative sexual affect has been thought to increase casual sexual partner seeking which in turn, may create emotional negative experiences (Wesche, Walsh, Shepardson, Carey, & Carey, 2018). Whilst a direct association was not determined, Jardin, Sharp, Garey, and Zvolensky (2016) found that experiencing a negative affect is correlated with an increased impulsiveness which may increase risky sexual behaviours. Sexual behaviours may increase or decrease the sexual affect as demonstrated by Shulman et al. (2019) where adolescent casual sexual behaviours increased the negative sexual affect during young adulthood. Sexual regret is a recurring emotion that is prevalent in women who exhibit shame and self-blame for participating in casual sexual behaviours (Paul & Hayes, 2002). Experiencing a negative sexual affect, such as worrying, was also associated with feeling more sexual regret after a casual sexual encounter (Kennair, Wyckoff, Asao, Buss, & Bendixen, 2018). There is evidence indicating that negative sexual affects in young girls are associated with lower sexual self-esteem, higher affirmation for abstinence beliefs, increased negative

anticipated emotions and greater perceived maternal disapproval (O'Sullivan, Meyer-Bahlburg, & McKeague, 2006). For these many reasons, Seabrooke et al. (2017) emphasized the importance of including sexual affect when studying or assessing the sexual agency of an individual.

In ethnic minority individuals, shame is a prevalent documented emotion that can stem from secrecy and cultural taboos (Ussher et al., 2017). It was noted that secrecy, shame, and silence impeded sexual knowledge and influenced their behaviours, ultimately affecting the sexual agency of the woman, and causing distress (Ussher et al., 2017). Women may experience shame for acquiring contraception or for discussing stigma-strong topics such as STDs, which can result in fear of judgement from family members and peers (Fallon, 2012). Shame and perceived stigmatization have been shown to reduce medical treatment-seeking for STDs in female adolescents (Cunningham, 2002). Also, high sexual shame was correlated with reduced sexual satisfaction (Marcinechová & Záhorcová, 2020). Equally, a research study found that negative menstrual attitudes were correlated with increased body shame, measured by more body self-consciousness, and reduced body comfort, which was also associated with less sexual assertiveness and condom use efficacy (Schooler, Ward, Merriwether, & Caruthers, 2005).

Whilst a negative sexual affect has been researched moderately, the dynamics between the positive feelings and emotions on the overall level of sexual agency are less explored. The term sexual self-concept was developed to understand how an individual evaluates their emotions and their actions based on their sexual perceptions (O'Sullivan et al., 2006). It was found that young women who have a positive sexual self-concept, referred to as greater sexual agency, sexual arousal and less negative sexual affect, were less likely to protect their sexual health (Pai, Lee, & Yen, 2011). Furthermore, positive sexual messages from peers were

associated with increased levels of negative sexual affect (Fletcher et al., 2015). These associations indicate that further exploration on the relationships between the messages received and the sexual affect of the individual is needed.

### Sexual Assertiveness

Sexual assertiveness refers to various components including the ability to refuse unwanted sex, to initiate sexual contact when desired, to seek sexual satisfaction and to communicate with partners about their sexual history (Loshek & Terrell, 2014; Widman et al., 2018). A study conducted on African American youth evaluated how parents and peers communicated various gender-based discourses with the youth and how that subsequently affected their sexual assertiveness (Fletcher et al., 2015). Parents and peers who conveyed sex positive messages to the youth increased their level of sexual assertiveness; it allowed them to feel more empowered about sex which can increase sexual negotiations (Fletcher et al., 2015). Contrarily, the sexual assertiveness of Latino women was increasingly influenced by messages provided from peers rather than parents (Manago, Ward, & Aldana, 2014). The researchers commented that the perceived values and norms regarding recreational sex of peers can greatly influence the sexual assertiveness of the individual (Manago et al., 2014).

Media representation of sexual topics has granted consumers examples of how to behave sexually with partners (Brown & L'Engle, 2009; Jozkowski et al., 2019). In fact, it is argued that in cultural environments lacking sexual socialization, media consumption of sexually explicit content may be used as a tool for adolescent sexual exploration (de Haas, Hutter, & Timmerman, 2017). Sexual and gender roles represented in the media have also been shown to affect the sexual agency of young women (Seabrook et al., 2017; Ward, Jerald, Avery, & Cole, 2019). The gender-based scripts depicted are claimed to reduce sexual entitlement, satisfaction, and

functioning, thus restoring women to the passive gender role they are expected to portray (Ward et al., 2019). In sum, affirming the gender stereotypes portrayed in the media forecasted lower levels of sexual assertiveness (Ward et al., 2019).

An equally important component of sexual assertiveness is the ability to communicate about sexual and reproductive topics with sexual partners, family members and friends. It is hypothesized that the sexual and reproductive topics communicated by family members are instrumental to the sexual socialization of the individual during their emerging years (Levin, Ward, & Neilson, 2012; Rossetto & Tollison, 2017). A study found that African American parents who negate communication with their child about sexual topics may reduce the adolescent's use of contraception, negotiation of contraception and communication with their sexual partners (DiClemente et al., 2001). Additionally, SRH communication can be impeded by shame and secrecy involved in the cultural sphere of the individual, such that inquiring about sexual intercourse, pregnancy or menstruation can be seen as shameful or dirty and may generate labels like "whore" or "vulgar" which can directly minimize the overall sexual agency of the woman (Ussher et al., 2017). Therefore, the sexual assertiveness of the youth is malleable and should be addressed as it can create negative health consequences for the individual.

### **Types of Sexual and Reproductive Messages**

This section will provide an overview of the different types of messages that may be provided to young women. As previously mentioned, adolescents receive various SRH messages from their social and cultural environment. Granted, they do not encompass the large array of messages that may be provided to youth and is thus not limited to the types of messages discussed in this section.

## Gender-Based Messages

Young women receive sexual gender-based messages that might allude to sexual scripts, for instance, women are meant to be passive and are seeking to protect their worth whereas men are the initiators of sex (Greene & Faulkner, 2005; Sanchez, Fetterolf, & Rudman, 2012). These types of detrimental feminine ideologies or double standards are directly associated with reduced sexual agency, notably for reduced sexual knowledge and less confidence in sexual advocacy (Curtin, Ward, Merriwether, & Caruthers, 2011). Furthermore, women who endorse these gender-based norms are more likely to experience fewer positive emotions and increased negative emotions due to reduced sexual autonomy and sexual self-esteem (Emmerink, van den Eijnden, Vanwesenbeeck, & ter Bogt, 2016). They are also more likely to report less sexual satisfaction (Kiefer & Sanchez, 2007; Sanchez, Phelan, Moss-Racusin, & Good, 2011) and have higher rates of negative sexual affect (Seabrook et al., 2017). Equally, they may be less knowledgeable on sexual risks, less condom efficient, less sexually assertive, and more self-conscious and uncomfortable during sexual activities (Curtin et al., 2011).

Both the advancement of technology and the neoliberal sexual revolution of women, such as the introduction of the contraceptive pills, has generated prominent changes for women's sexual health (Kelly et al., 2016). Nonetheless, this newfound neoliberal stance has arguably shifted the responsibility and blame for sexual abuse and has create conflict instead of providing women with autonomy and freedom (Bay-Cheng, 2015; Burkett & Hamilton, 2012). An agentic stance implies freedom of choice even when undesirable actions occur; this narrative suggests that women may be responsible for negative outcomes due to their own decisions preceding the event (Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008; Katz & Tirone, 2015). This logic may imply that women who are raped are responsible based on their own autonomous decisions (Bay-Cheng &

Eliseo-Arras, 2008; Katz & Tirone, 2015). Arguably, this narrative is harmful to their sexual agency as young women may explain away the negative feelings, e.g., regret or confusion, associated with the act of engaging in unwanted sex by assuming responsibility and shifting the blame on themselves (Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008). The double standards and the passive narratives that are inflicted upon women still linger today as some women are aware of these concepts and yet, are unable to alter their gender roles for fear judgement from others (Kelly et al., 2016).

### Sexual Abstinence

The idea that sexual abstinence, a message delivered to many adolescents, is an absolute reflection of sexual agency is inherently flawed (Averett, Benson, & Vaillancourt, 2008; King, 2014). Undoubtedly, women who choose abstinence from sexual activities until they're ready are exhibiting sexual agency (Averett et al., 2008). Contrarily, women who are forced to conform to an external source's expectations of sexual abstinence may experience conflicts between expectations, internal desires and their autonomous choice, which can negate their sexual agency (Averett et al., 2008). Many abstinence-based programs educate youth based on a moral standing and put forth the statement that sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage (de Haas et al., 2017) and that it is the only undeniable way to reduce teen pregnancy and STDs (Thomas, 2000). Many supporting this view are afraid that teaching and communicating with youth on sexual topics may entice them to engage in sexual activities, although this stance may in fact encourage adolescents to supplement their lack of sexual and relational information by consuming pornographic content (de Haas et al., 2017).

In opposition, there is evidence indicating that abstinence-based teachings can be internalized in a sexually agentic way. After young women were polled for their decision to

choose abstinence, their reasoning included that they were not ready to engage in sexual intimacy, that they would only engage in sexual intercourse after marriage, and that they were personally liable for any consequences that may arise from sex (E. S. Mann, 2016). These statements embody the practice of conscious celibacy (E. S. Mann, 2016). They indicate that abstinence-based messages may include traditional and neoliberal messages that are founded in an agentic viewpoint (E. S. Mann, 2016). This explains that women may often hear and internalize abstinence-based messages from a traditional gender perspective and from neoliberal messages to bolster their decisions. Additionally, abstinence-based messages could have positive effects on young women such that women who receive these messages from their parents exhibit less sexual coercion and fewer rape myth endorsements (Levin et al., 2012). Assuredly, the data regarding the education of abstinence have yet to reach a consensus.

### Sexual and Reproductive Responsibility

As previously mentioned, sexual initiation is an indicator of the level of sexual assertiveness exhibited by an individual. Men, usually perceived as the initiators of sex, are granted a power position that would allow them to experience less regret after a sexual hookup whereas women might feel increased sexual pressuring, have a less pleasurable sexual experience, and might feel more sexual regret (Uecker & Martinez, 2017). Regret after a sexual encounter may stem from the perception that the male sexual partner has “lost respect” for the woman (Uecker & Martinez, 2017). Equally, gossip and rumours targeting perceived sexually permissive high school girls can be fabricated by other girls to affirm the notion that they do not consider themselves to be sexually promiscuous (Clayton & Trafimow, 2007; Miller, 2016). This alludes to women being increasingly deemed as “responsible” for sexual acts compared to their male counterparts.

The responsibility of women surrounding contraception can often be ambiguous. Women are commonly perceived as those who experience increased sexual health risks and as such, are responsible for contraception use and for averting ill-health effects (Martin, McDaid, & Hilton, 2014). Socially, they are seen as sexual gatekeepers in heterosexual relationships (Jovanovik & Williams, 2017; Trinh, 2015). Further, women might express that they must protect themselves by not engaging in early sexual encounters for fear of getting pregnant or contracting HIV (de Haas et al., 2017). Men may often negate contraceptive responsibilities based on the partners they deem safe from STDs, often white and middle-class women (Dalessandro, James-Hawkins, & Sennott, 2019). These women will thus have to bear the responsibility of contraception or abortion if fertilization occurs (Dalessandro et al., 2019). The term “strategic silence” was coined to explain the lack of communication regarding contraception and sexual health by men (Dalessandro et al., 2019). Research from Wigginton, Harris, Loxton, and Lucke (2018) found that 433 women out of 766 were solely responsible for contraception whereas only 64 out of 766 indicated that men were responsible. In addition, a few women claimed that they would have preferred to have some shared responsibilities when it came to contraception (Wigginton et al., 2018). In some cases, women would endure contraceptive methods they did not want, such as oral contraceptives, to appease their male partners who did not like to use condoms (Kelly et al., 2016). Correspondingly, these studies confirm the claim that women are increasingly burdened with responsibilities regarding contraception compared to their male counterparts.

### Cultural Implications

The cultural environment of an individual is an important contributor to the development and influence of sexual agency. The cultural environments that endorse feminine ideologies, such as traditional gender roles, are correlated with lower levels of sexual health knowledge and

the woman's confidence in asserting herself sexually (Curtin et al., 2011; Greene & Faulkner, 2005). Consequently, their ability to practice safe sex would be hindered which may be detrimental to their sexual health (Impett, Schooler, & Tolman, 2006). Although sexual intimacy was once viewed with a traditional gender-based lens, there is undoubtedly a shift in the Western world that now views "hookups" as commonplace (Garcia, Reiber, Massey & Merriwether, 2012). This shift in social environments may have a relationship with how the sexual agency of today's youth is affected.

Depending on the socio-cultural norms and expectations of a given location, the messages that youth receive are different. In Uganda, youth are taught by teachers, parents and counsellors that kissing in public is completely wrong, virginity is a must and that you must abstain from sexual intercourse until marriage. Failure to meet these expectations can result in bringing shame, embarrassment, and bad luck to your family (de Haas et al., 2017). Likewise, media representation of heterosexual intimacy in the United-States can negatively affect a young woman's perception of herself. This was exhibited by a young woman stating "why don't I have a boyfriend? It gives you the impression that I am supposed to have a boyfriend, I am supposed to be sleeping with him by now" (Brugman, Caron, & Rademakers, 2010, p.39). Further, depending on the cultural landscape, men are ordinarily seen as sexual beings that should pursue their sexual desires whereas women are supposed to want commitment and withhold their sexual desires (Jovanovik & Williams, 2017). This is especially seen with "friends with benefits" where men are celebrated when they engage in this activity and women are scorned and categorized as promiscuous (Jovanovik & Williams, 2017).

The sexual agency of young women may be difficult to attain due to the cultural barriers hindering the access to valuable sexual health information (Jovanovik & Williams, 2017). If

sexual literacy is recognized as taboo based on socio-cultural norms, parents may be reluctant to speak of such topics which ultimately causes gaps in sexual knowledge (Metusela et al., 2017; Rawson & Liamputtong, 2010). A refugee woman polled in an interview disclosed that discussions about sex were deemed as “disrespectful and culturally inappropriate” which consequently caused anxiety and trauma during sexual debut (Metusela et al., 2017). The topic of menstruation was considered quite shameful as women were not even able to speak with their parents due to it being considered gossip and a taboo subject (Ussher et al., 2017). Thus, cultural norms surrounding SRH topics can influence how women perceive their own sexual health and agency which consequently can affect the way they transmit that knowledge onto their children. It exposes the importance of analyzing how SGM women internalize these conversations.

### **Sources of Sexual and Reproductive Messages**

This upcoming section delves into the different sources of sexual and reproductive messages provided to youth women. The source, meaning the person or channel discussing and providing that information, may differ. Correspondingly, the knowledge that is transmitted can vary depending on the individual. It can influence how the adolescent organizes their sexual beliefs and consequently, how she will behave sexually (Bleakley, Hennessy, Fishbein, & Jordan, 2009). Further, as stated previously, the social environment may play a crucial role in the hindrance or the development of their sexual agency (Cense, 2018). External sources of sexual development include parents, peers, media (Bleakley, Khurana, Hennessy, & Ellithorpe, 2018), school (Clonan-Roy et al., 2020; Wood, Senn, Desmarais, Park, & Verberg, 2002) and siblings (Coleman-Minahan & Scandlyn, 2016), all of which is discussed in the following section.

## Parents

Parental sexual education is fundamental due to the parents' ability to provide physical and emotional support to the child, to hold the essential ideology of the family and to ultimately prepare and aid during the transition to adulthood (Turnbull, van Wersch, & van Schaik, 2008). In fact, it is believed that mothers are referred to as the “agents of sexual socialization” in a family and are thus generally able to communicate with their children about sexual topics (Diiorio, Kelley, & Hockenberry-Eaton, 1999). Research has consistently demonstrated the important role of parents in the reduction of risky sexual behaviours (Drioeane, 2014; Miller, Benson, & Galbraith, 2001; Widman, Choukas-Bradley, Noar, Nesi, & Garrett, 2016). While it is apparent that parental communication and education provide knowledge that can significantly reduce risky sexual behaviour in adolescents, the link between the sexual agency is less obvious.

Despite this knowledge gap, there is evidence indicating that parental support during adolescence, described as support in autonomy and emotions, has been shown to increase sexual agency in women assessed in the subsequent two years (Klein et al., 2018). Open communication in a family, particularly with the parents, are vital in ensuring that children understand the importance of sexual consent and the identification of detrimental sexual scripts (Rossetto & Tollison, 2017). This open line of communication can increase their sexual assertiveness and their overall sexual agency (Rossetto & Tollison, 2017). Research has shown that fathers who are supportive and emotionally responsive to their daughters have allowed them to gain the ability to reduce unwanted sexual activity thereby increasing their sexual assertiveness (Katz & van der Kloet, 2010).

Contrarily, parents may impose their views, ideologies and sexual discourses onto their children that may not align with desires of the child. As a result, the young girls may negate their

happiness by following and conforming to their parents' views to appease the potential conflicts that could arise from the disobedience (Cense, 2014). Similarly, a study conducted on fourteen young women revealed that most of them reported receiving information from their parents regarding sexual topics that they subsequently associated with fear (Averett et al., 2008; de Haas et al., 2017). That fear eventually translated to feeling insecurities, engaging in the passive feminine narrative, and accepting control and sexual aggression from men (Averett et al., 2008). Similarly, abstinence-based messages presented by parents to their young daughters have been negatively correlated with their sexual self-efficacy and ability to communicate about sexual topics (Levin et al., 2012). This demonstrates that there is a potential relationship between the message provided by parents and the level of sexual agency of the young woman.

### Siblings

In some cases, siblings may provide sensitization and advice to guide teens into being socially and sexually responsible young adults. Research conducted in the United-States on Mexican-origin immigrants found that older sisters shared protective sexual health messages to their younger sisters and as such, delayed the age of sexual intercourse and increased their use of contraception which also increased their condom self-efficacy (Coleman-Minahan & Scandlyn, 2016). Furthermore, in the African American community, sisters provided counsel to their sisters and brothers about their selection of sexual partners, sexual avoidance, STD prevention and sexual health care (Harper et al., 2019). Sibling bonding and closeness are factors that can reduce the likelihood of risky sexual attitudes in their younger sibling (McHale, Bissell & Kim, 2009). It is apparent that messages provided by siblings can influence the sexual behaviours of the adolescent; the relationship on their sexual agency is less apparent.

It was found that young girls receiving messages by their older brothers reported increased adherence to passive gender roles which included placing value on being a parent and asserting less sexual responsivity (Kornreich, Hearn, Rodriguez, & O’Sullivan, 2003). Sexual responsivity, the interest that one would have regarding intimate relationships, is directly correlated to sexual discourses promoting gender roles and the passive sexual script (Kornreich et al., 2003). Gender-based discourses present ideals on how men are supposed to discuss sexual topics in a vulgar and dominating manner in heterosexual relationships (Montemurro, Bartasavich, & Wintermute, 2014). Moreover, siblings, along with parents and peers, may impose gender attitudes to young, adolescent girls by overanalyzing and critiquing their outward appearances, their sexual expressions and exert control over their freedoms (Kågesten et al., 2016). Further research is needed to add to the knowledge gap concerning the relationship between the messages provided by siblings and the sexual agency of SGM women.

### Friends/Peers

Individuals may prefer to speak with their friends about sexual topics due to personal relevance (Porter, 2014). It was found that women spoke to their peers about sexual topics in greater numbers than men (Busse, Fishbein, Bleakley, & Hennessy, 2010), specifically for menstruation, pregnancy and contraception (Porter, 2014). Adolescents who gather information from their friends about sexual topics have a generally more positive outlook on the consequences of sexual behaviours in relation to the self and their relationship with their sexual partner (Bleakley et al., 2009). Positive sexual messages provided by friends to young girls have been linked to increased sexual efficacy and comfortability when engaging in sexual communication (Levin et al., 2012). Likewise, adolescents who had sexual health discussions

with both their parents and friends reported increased communication with their sexual partner (Widman, Choukas-Bradley, Helms, Golin, & Prinstein, 2013).

In opposition, teens who regularly spoke with friends about sexual topics displayed increased sexual risk-taking, permissive sexual attitudes (Holman & Kellas, 2015) and sexual initiation in the following 12 months (Busse et al., 2010). Further, adolescents who assume that their peers are sexually active are more likely to engage in sexual activities themselves (van de Bongardt, Reitz, Sandfort & Deković, 2015). In fact, a research study found that teens who participate in frequent sexual discussions with friends are more likely to believe that their friends are sexually active and may feel increased pressure to have sex (Nogueira Avelar E Silva et al., 2019).

To continue, a young college woman polled for a study disclosed that she received a sexual message from a peer stating “if you aren’t having sex within the first month, he is going to dump you. Guys like you based on how much you pleasure them” (Trinh, 2015, p.96). These types of messages based on norms and expectations can greatly alter the sexual decisions made by a young person. Sexual communication with peers may contain gender-based double standards like the expectation that women should not express sexual desire (Levin et al., 2012). Women who receive abundant double standard messages are shown to have less efficacy concerning sexual communication and are more likely to internalize rape myths (Levin et al., 2012). Granted, the sexual messages provided by peers can differ greatly as there are various sexual scripts that can be discussed and the individual interpretations of these messages can be internalized differently by the receiver (Trinh, 2015). As such, the relationship between the SRH messages provided by peers and the sexual agency of SGMs is interesting to assess.

## Teachers

Messages provided in academic environments can be beneficial or detrimental to the sexual agency of a young woman. Funds have been collected for sexual and HIV youth education, although the specific topics thought to assist teens are largely debated (de Haas et al., 2017). School can provide youth with the ability to negotiate and forge their self-sexual being (Allen, 2007). It has been suggested that certain discourses used in academic settings can directly affect their sexual agency. It can empower young women to affirm their sexual agency, however, it is measured by the sexual behaviour of the individual and consequently labelled as appropriate or inappropriate (Pincock, 2018). These discourses may associate positivity to non-sexual students (Allen, 2007). Negating a student's sexuality as well as engaging in negative sexual discourses are harmful to their sexual agency and can increase sexually risky behaviours such as less condom usage (Allen, 2007). An equally alarming sexual discourse labelled "good girls" was dispersed in educational settings to describe abstinence as the only viable option for a positive heterosexual relationship (Froyum, 2010). They taught the young girls to exercise sexual control and sustain the reputation of a "good girl" which the educators assumed would increase their sexual agency. Albeit this view propagates the sexual discourse surrounding gender roles and would thus negate the free choices of young girls (Froyum, 2010).

## Media

Certain media channels such as televisions, computers and smartphones have been long thought to influence adolescents' sexual activities and beliefs. Teenagers might have difficulty escaping the media world as more than 90% of them have daily access to internet (Romo et al., 2017). Ninety-two percent of youth disclosed that at least some media they consumed, such as television shows, movies, music, and games, depicted some form of sexual content (Ybarra,

Strasburger, & Mitchell, 2014). Television viewing may contribute to risky sexual behaviour as 64% of its content feature sexually explicit depictions (Collins, 2004). Adolescents who view television shows with sexual depictions have an increased likelihood of engaging in sexual intercourse and participating in sexual behaviour without intercourse in the subsequent year (Collins, 2004). This indicates that there is a cause-effect between viewing sexually explicit content from the media and risky sexual behaviours.

Coercive sexual victimization was examined to understand how the media influences violent behaviours. It was suggested that television shows and movies that depict “seduction”, like pushing the partner to engage in sexual intercourse, giving excessive complements and displaying that all couple have sex as commonplace, could normalize coercion (Ybarra et al., 2014). Furthermore, the way in which the adolescent internalizes the sexual content that they view can either deter or increase their sexual agency. Rousseau, Beyens, Eggermont, and Vandebosch (2016) conducted a study on adolescents to examine the “pathways” to sexual internalization ideals. Media can base sexual value on appearances, and this can trigger internalization of “self-objectification”, which means to view your body as an object based on appearances. Self-objectification was found to be linked to lower sexual agency (Rousseau et al., 2016).

Moreover, a study on undergraduate women assessing the relationship between media exposure and sexual agency found that women who consumed media channels such as magazines and television programs, may experience increased self-objectification (Ward et al., 2017). This led to reduced self-efficacy related to condom use, increase alcohol consumption prior to sexual activity and an increased negative sexual affect (Ward et al., 2017). Self-objectification is directly associated with sexual agency as women who view their sexual bodies

based primarily on appearances reported reduced sexual assertiveness, sexual satisfaction and increased body-consciousness when engaging in sexual intimacy (Grower & Ward, 2018).

Inversely, women who practice body appreciation reported greater sexual assertiveness, sexual satisfaction and increased condom use negotiation (Grower & Ward, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

There appears to be a gap of knowledge on the associations between the sources of SRH messages provided to adolescents, their cultural affiliations, and their level of sexual agency as young adults. More so, this lack of knowledge is apparent for SGMs who are often overlooked but represent a rather large portion of the Canadian population. This information is necessary to assess whether the sources and the content of the SRH messages conveyed to SGM girls are appropriate and useful for their sexual agency development. It is clear from the available literature that certain messages provided to young adolescents can influence their sexual behaviours and their self-perceptions. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that there is a possible relationship when analyzing the sexual agency instead. Cultural affiliations are also imperative to discern as the sexual agency cannot be examined without considering the socio-cultural environment of the individual.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### **Research Design and Data Collection**

This exploratory research study employed a quantitative retrospective cross-sectional survey as its research design. The recruitment posters were made available in both English and French. They were distributed to the social network of the researcher and the University of Ottawa professors who subsequently posted it in their virtual classrooms. The participants were also invited to share the posters with their own social circles. Thus, the distribution of the surveys was executed through convenience and snowball sampling. The surveys (see Appendix A and B) were accessible online through the *Survey Monkey* platform from March 2021 to August 2021. The online nature of this project was in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to allow complete privacy to the participants as they decided when and where to complete the survey using an internet-accessible electronic device. The “surveys with single responses” were enabled in the *Survey Monkey* platform to mitigate multiple responses from a single user. The entire survey took approximately 13 minutes to complete. The completion rate was 75%.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

Ethical approval was sought and granted by the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (see Appendix C). Due to the sensitive nature of this study, anonymity was guaranteed as the researcher did not require any identifying information from the participants. Informed consent was implied with the submission of the survey. Participants were asked to fully read either the English or French implied consent forms (see Appendix D and E) which indicated that the participation was voluntary, the survey was completely anonymous, and that they had the right to skip any question or stop the questionnaire should they desire. Once read, the participants were required to answer ‘yes’ to the prompt asking whether they have read and

understood the consent form, that they were over the age of 18 and that they agreed to participate in the study before they had access to the survey.

### Sample

Using Fisher's formula, a sample size of 334 participants was sought for the data analysis as seen in the calculations below. Due to the limitations imposed by the lockdowns created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the desired number of participants was difficult to reach. For this reason, the calculated sample size was omitted and rather, all eligible collected data were utilized for the data analysis.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

n= number of participants (if more than 10 000)

Z= standard normal deviate 95% confidence interval

p= proportion of Ottawa-Gatineau women aged 15-24 SGM

q= proportion of Ottawa-Gatineau women aged 15-24 who are not SGM

d= precision

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times (0.33 \times 0.67)}{0.05^2} = 339$$

Due to the n being less than 10 000, the Nf will be calculated:

$$Nf = \frac{n}{1 + n/N}$$

N= Estimated population

$$Nf = \frac{339}{1 + 339/28\ 105} = 334$$

The Ottawa-Gatineau region was chosen to complete this study as there are 28,105 SGM women between the ages of 15-24 (Statistics Canada, 2019). SGM women who could read either English and French and were between the age of 18-24 who resided in the Ottawa-Gatineau region were invited to participate. There were no exclusion criteria. Young women between the ages of 18-24 were chosen to participate to minimize recall bias. From March 2021 to August 2021, 139 participants responded to the *Survey Monkey* questionnaire. Amongst the 139 respondents, 34 did not fully complete the survey. The remaining 105 responses were used for the data analysis.

### **Instruments**

The questionnaire was created by the researcher based on the *Integrated Model of Four Components of Sexual Agency in Social Context* outlined in the conceptual framework by Marianne Cense (2018). It contained three main sections: the demographics, the SRH messages received by the sources/cultural affiliations and the level of sexual agency.

The demographic section contained nine questions including the participant's age, ethnicity, current location of residence, location of residence during adolescence, highest level of education and current marital/relationship status. They were measured as nominal data.

The second section of the questionnaire examined the sources of SRH messages: parent(s), sibling(s), peers, media, and school teachers. The actual sources of SRH messages received were determined using a scale of 1 to 10; 1-2 being rated as the source providing the least number of messages and 9-10 being the source providing the most. The 1 to 10 scale was also used for the preferred sources.

Shortly following, using the Sexual Socialization Discourses Measures by Trinh et al. (2013) and the Illustrative Questionnaire for Interview-Surveys with young people by Cleland

(2001) as a base, the researcher constructed 14 SRH statements. The statements included “Sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage” and “Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around” to determine how many times the participants heard each of the statements from all the sources. A Likert-scale from ‘Never’ (1) to ‘A lot’ (5) was used to determine the frequency of the statements. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability measured for each of the five sources was as followed: .969 for parents, .992 for siblings, .765 for friends/peers, .767 for teachers and .821 for media.

The cultural affiliation was designed by the researcher and was the last inquiry of this section. It consisted of three questions such as “My cultural traditions are very important to me” and “I feel pressure to respect the norms and expectations imposed by my culture”. They were measured using a Likert-scale from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (5). The Cronbach’s reliability was measured at .688.

The third section of the survey contained questions on the perceived level of sexual agency reported by the participant. Due to the many definitions of sexual agency, the two measurements used to assess the latter were sexual assertiveness and sexual affect as these components are closely related to the conceptual framework guiding this study. The two individual components were consolidated to create an “overall sexual agency” variable. Participants were asked whether they had ever engaged in sexual intercourse with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ prompt. If participants answered no, they were invited to read statements like “I am not ready to have sex” and “I fear contracting a sexually transmitted disease (STD)” and respond using the Likert-scale from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (5). This section was based off the conceptual framework of the study. If they did already engage in sexual intercourse, they were asked whether they used contraception during their ‘first time having sex’.

The participants who have already engaged in sexual intercourse were given the opportunity to answer the 18-item SAQ by Loshek and Terrell (2014). It contained statements such as “It is easy for me to discuss sex with my partner” and “It is easy for me to say no if I don’t want to have sex”. It was measured using a Likert-scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (5). Prior to the data analysis, six out of the 18 items were reverse-coded. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability was measured at .885.

The sexual affect was the final component of the survey. All participants regardless of whether they had previously engaged in sexual intercourse were asked to complete the 16-item Sexual Affect Scale by Fletcher et al. (2015). The question “How do you feel about your current level of sexual experience?” was asked and the participants responded with a Likert-scale of ‘Not at all’ (1) to ‘A lot’ (5) for each of the 16 emotions/feelings. The emotions/feelings included being “Happy” or “Embarrassed”. The feelings/emotions were separated into three distinct categories: positive, negative and shame affects. Ten out of the 16 emotions/feeling were reverse-coded in the overall sexual affect outcome. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability was measured at .648.

The questionnaire was translated from English to French by the researcher. Shortly thereafter, the French survey was imputed into the *DeepL* software to back-translate to English. The translated French copy was compared to the original copy to correct discrepancies. Both copies were revised by the supervisor and one member of the thesis advisory committee.

### **Data Analysis**

The completed data were transferred from the *Survey Monkey* website to *IBM-SPSS Version 28*. The data were cleaned using methods outlined by Salkind (2010). Missing data that appeared to be on purpose or simply omitted were coded as missing. Data that were intentionally

left blank due to the topic being non-applicable were coded as 9.00. Once the data cleaning was completed, the demographic section of the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics to assess the frequency and the percentages of participants belonging to a particular category. The central tendency of the five sources was examined using medians and frequencies. The standard deviation examined the variability. The actual and preferred sources reported by the participants were also assessed using frequencies and percentages. The Pearson's  $r$  correlation was employed to determine the relationships between each of the sources of the SRH messages and the cultural affiliations during adolescence and the level of sexual agency as a young adult. It was also used to assess the correlations between the three cultural affiliations statements, each of the 14 statements pertaining to the sources, and the sexual agency of the participants. The last section assessing the six reasons for abstinence used frequencies, percentages, and Pearson's  $r$  correlations to examine relationships between the statements and the sexual affect.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

### **Participants' Characteristics**

The participants were between the ages of 18-24 (N= 104; Mean = 20.32; SD = 2.07).

Most participants were of African descent (25%) as shown in Table 1. Most of the participants were in their postsecondary studies (67%) at the time of the study. Looking at relationship status, more than half of the women reported being single (55%). Most of the participants have not engaged in sexual intercourse at the time of the study (52%). Less than half of the respondents have engaged in sexual intercourse (46%).

Table 1. Participants' Characteristics (N = 105)

Characteristics	N	%
Age	M = 20.32; SD = 2.07; Range = 18-24	
18	30	29
19	16	15
20	12	11
21	13	12
22	14	13
23	8	8
24	11	11
Ethnicity		
African Origin	26	25
Middle Eastern	22	21
Asian	20	19
Caucasian	18	17
Mixed	12	11
Caribbean	4	4
Latina/Hispanic	3	3
Level of Education		
No high school diploma	1	1
High school diploma	17	16
Postsecondary studies	70	67
Postsecondary diploma	17	16
Relationship Status		
Single	58	55
Dating	40	38
Engaged	4	4
Unsure	2	2
Prefer not to answer	1	1
Has ever had sex		
Yes	48	46
No	55	52
Prefer not to answer	2	2

### Actual Sources of SRH Messages Reported by the Participants

Participants were asked to rate on a scale of 1-2 (1), 3-4 (2), 5-6 (3), 7-8 (4) or 9-10 (5) for the actual sources of SRH messages they have received from their mother, father, brother, sister, friends/peers, media (films/TV/movies), and school teachers.

As shown in Table 2, the highest rated source of actual SRH messages received was the media as 33.3% (N = 35) of the participants chose a rating of 9-10. Friends/peers, school teachers and mothers followed closely behind in that order. It is worth noting that fathers, brothers, and sisters did not rank at a 9-10 for any of the respondents. The lowest rating amongst the seven sources were fathers with 88.4% of the applicable participants (N = 84) choosing a rating of 1-2 for actual messages received. Brothers were also poorly rated as 87.3% of the eligible respondents (N = 62) chose the lowest rating score.

Table 2. Actual Sources of SRH messages Reported by the Participants

Source	N	Median	SD	1-2 (%)	3-4 (%)	5-6 (%)	7-8 (%)	9-10 (%)
Mother	104	2	1.19	31.7	29.8	25.0	5.8	7.7
Father	95	1	0.40	88.4	9.5	2.1	-	-
Sister	76	1	1.08	64.5	11.8	11.8	11.8	-
Brother	71	1	0.68	87.3	4.2	5.6	2.8	-
Friend/Peers	104	4	1.20	7.7	11.5	22.1	33.7	25.0
Media	105	4	0.97	-	8.6	27.6	30.5	33.3
School teachers	104	4	1.24	12.5	26.9	31.7	12.5	16.3

- No data imputed

### Preferred Sources of SRH Messages Reported by the Participants

The source reported by participants as the most preferred were friends/peers with 34.3% (N = 36) of the respondents choosing to allot a rating of 9-10. Although the media was the highest rated for actual sources received, it ranked second highest for the preferred source of SRH messages with a considerable number of respondents (17.6%; N = 18) choosing a rating of

9-10. Despite this fact, 20 respondents (19.6%) opted to elect the lowest rating for the media source.

In the nuclear family, mothers were found to be the preferred source of SRH messages with many 7-8 (13.3%; N = 14) and 9-10 (18.1%; N = 19) ratings. The source “mother” did have a noticeable low preferred rating where 32.4% (N = 34) of the participants chose a 1-2 rating. Although 19.5% (N = 15) of the participants rated the source “sister” with higher 9-10 scores than “mother”, the overall rating of the former was lower. In fact, 45.5% (N = 35) did not choose “sister” as a preferred source and elected the lowest rating. Brothers and fathers were the lowest rated sources which parallels the findings for the actual sources received.

Table 3. Preferred Sources of SRH messages Reported by the Participants

Source	N	Median	SD	1-2 (%)	3-4 (%)	5-6 (%)	7-8 (%)	9-10 (%)
Mother	105	3	1.49	32.4	15.2	21.0	13.3	18.1
Father	96	1	0.76	84.4	9.4	3.1	1.0	2.1
Sister	77	2	1.60	45.5	14.3	10.4	10.4	19.5
Brother	73	1	0.70	84.9	6.8	6.8	1.4	-
Friend/Peers	105	4	1.18	6.7	5.7	26.7	26.7	34.3
Media	102	3	1.38	19.6	26.5	20.6	15.7	17.6
School teachers	102	3	1.34	17.6	14.7	28.4	20.6	18.6

- No data imputed

### **Relationship Between Cultural Affiliation and Sexual Agency**

As shown in Table 4, there was a weak, negative, and non-significant relationship between the sexual agency of the SGM women and the cultural affiliation ( $r = -.007$ ;  $p = .940$ ). The relationships between the two components defining sexual agency, sexual assertiveness, and sexual affect, were also weak negatively and non-significantly correlated with the cultural affiliations ( $r = -.009$ ;  $p = .950$  &  $r = -.053$ ;  $p = .590$  respectively).

Table 4. Relationship Between the Cultural Affiliation and Sexual Agency (N = 105)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N=105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
Cultural Affiliation	-.007 (.940)	-.009 (.950)	-.053 (.590)	-.040 (.686)	.002 (.981)	.141 (.151)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The three cultural affiliation statements were individually examined with the sexual agency. As seen in Table 5, there is only one significant correlation with the statement “I follow my cultural traditions closely” and the experience of a shame sexual affect ( $r=.249$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

Table 5. Relationship Between Cultural Affiliation Statements and Sexual Agency (N = 105)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N =105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
My cultural traditions are very important to me.	.088 (.371)	.209 (.145)	.010 (.919)	-.007 (.942)	-.065 (.512)	.072 (.466)
I follow my cultural traditions closely.	-.127 (.195)	-.148 (.306)	-.156 (.112)	-.068 (.488)	.138 (.162)	.249* (.010)
I feel pressure to respect the norms and expectations imposed by my culture.	.047 (.632)	-.037 (.800)	.038 (.704)	-.012 (.903)	-.089 (.366)	-.004 (.971)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

### Relationship between the sources of SRH messages and Sexual Agency

#### Parents

As shown in Table 6, there is a significant negative relationship between the parental source of SRH messages provided to adolescent SGMs and their subsequent level of sexual

agency ( $r = -.219$ ;  $p < .05$ ) as young adults. In fact, significant correlations were found with the parent source and the experience of a negative sexual affect ( $r = .272$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and a shame sexual affect ( $r = .310$ ;  $p < .01$ ). In addition, receiving negative SRH messages from parents were significantly correlated with feeling a shameful sexual affect ( $r = .217$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

Table 6. Relationship Between the Parent Source and the Sexual Agency (N = 101)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N=105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
Parent	-.219* (.027)	-.145 (.330)	-.185 (.063)	.033 (.741)	.272** (.006)	.310** (.002)
Parent Positive Messages	-.086 (.382)	.066 (.651)	-.040 (.683)	.015 (.879)	.044 (.659)	.115 (.244)
Parent Negative Messages	-.122 (.216)	-.061 (.672)	-.070 (.477)	.079 (.424)	.120 (.221)	.217* (.026)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Each of the 14 statements conveyed by parents was examined further to determine whether certain statements were significantly correlated with the sexual agency of the participants. In Table 7, the only statement that was significantly negatively correlated with the overall level of sexual agency was “women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around” ( $r = -.249$ ;  $p < .05$ ). The negative and shame sexual affects were also significantly correlated with certain statements. The statements “men only want sex” and “Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around” conveyed by parents were both significantly positively correlated with feeling a negative affect ( $r = .209$ ;  $p < .05$  &  $r = .255$ ;  $p < .05$  respectively). The shame sexual affect appears to have the greatest number of relationships with SRH messages provided by parents. The five statements that provided significant positive

correlations with the shame sexual affect were all categorized as negative SRH messages. These include “Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse” ( $r = .192$ ;  $p < .05$ ), “Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around” ( $r = .302$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and “Women should not initiate sexual contact with a man. Men should be the ones to initiate contact” ( $r = .213$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

Table 7. Relationship Between Parent Statements and Sexual Agency (N = 101)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N=105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
Sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage.	-.039 (.691)	-.100 (.490)	.003 (.978)	.114 (.248)	.038 (.700)	.143 (.148)
Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse.	-.077 (.437)	-.058 (.691)	-.031 (.750)	.135 (.170)	.107 (.276)	.192* (.050)
Having 'one-night stands' are good as long as it is consensual.	-.050 (.610)	.135 (.350)	-.024 (.811)	.009 (.928)	.014 (.887)	.089 (.366)
Men can't control their sexual urges.	-.107 (.278)	-.068 (.639)	-.061 (.537)	.052 (.600)	.095 (.336)	.174 (.075)
Sexual intercourse is sacred and should not be shared with many partners.	-.078 (.431)	-.105 (.473)	-.046 (.642)	.109 (.271)	.101 (.308)	.213* (.030)
Engaging in sexual intercourse is a fun activity - nothing more.	-.142 (.148)	-.014 (.926)	-.096 (.332)	-.033 (.741)	.087 (.378)	.167 (.089)
Men only want sex.	-.186 (.058)	-.074 (.612)	-.163 (.096)	-.010 (.916)	.209* (.033)	.256** (.008)
Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around.	-.249* (.011)	-.167 (.245)	-.184 (.060)	-.015 (.881)	.225* (.021)	.302** (.002)
Sexual experimentation/ exploration is good.	-.010 (.920)	.140 (.334)	.015 (.881)	.046 (.644)	-.007 (.942)	.045 (.650)
If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in.	-.053 (.593)	.064 (.656)	-.008 (.936)	.064 (.517)	.023 (.816)	.117 (.234)
A man will initiate sex because he likes you.	-.101 (.303)	-.011 (.940)	-.024 (.805)	.025 (.799)	.032 (.746)	.091 (.356)
Friends with benefits are fun.	-.102 (.301)	.057 (.693)	-.065 (.511)	.020 (.873)	.082 (.403)	.152 (.122)
Women should not initiate sexual contact with a man. Men should be the ones to initiate contact.	-.157 (.109)	-.043 (.768)	-.125 (.202)	-.007 (.943)	.153 (.120)	.213* (.029)
Women are responsible for contraception use.	.039 (.694)	.094 (.518)	.104 (.293)	.176 (.074)	-.065 (.511)	.043 (.663)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Siblings

There were no significant correlations between the “sibling” source and the level of sexual agency of SGMs. This dataset does show non-significant weak indications of a lower overall sexual agency in relation to the SRH messages provided by siblings. This is specifically shown for the negative sexual affect ( $r = .135$ ;  $p = .196$ ) and the shame sexual affect ( $r = .201$ ;  $p = .054$ ). When examined further, the positive and negative SRH messages from siblings did not show any significant correlations.

Table 8. Relationship Between the Sibling Source and Sexual Agency (N = 93)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N=105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
Sibling	-.092 (.379)	.039 (.803)	-.098 (.350)	.028 (.788)	.135 (.196)	.201 (.054)
Sibling Positive Messages	-.096 (.331)	-.042 (.772)	-.004 (.966)	.099 (.318)	.093 (.348)	.034 (.733)
Sibling Negative Messages	-.094 (.342)	-.049 (.738)	-.020 (.838)	.103 (.300)	.106 (.285)	.085 (.391)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The examination of the relationship between each of the 14 statements provided by siblings and the sexual agency has not indicated any significant correlations as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Relationship Between Sibling Statements and Sexual Agency (N = 93)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N=105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
Sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage.	-.086 (.388)	-.022 (.878)	-.050 (.617)	.083 (.401)	.129 (.192)	.125 (.206)
Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse.	.082 (.410)	-.027 (.854)	-.017 (.863)	.104 (.296)	.104 (.295)	.077 (.434)
Having ‘one-night stands’ are good as long as it is consensual.	-.110 (.266)	-.056 (.703)	-.016 (.870)	.085 (.388)	.104 (.294)	.036 (.719)
Men can’t control their sexual urges.	-.118 (.232)	-.037 (.802)	-.038 (.698)	.103 (.299)	.141 (.154)	.092 (.354)
Sexual intercourse is sacred and should not be shared with many partners.	-.023 (.818)	.040 (.783)	.023 (.819)	.151 (.126)	.068 (.493)	.076 (.440)
Engaging in sexual intercourse is a fun activity - nothing more.	-.109 (.270)	-.074 (.615)	-.012 (.901)	.077 (.438)	.087 (.382)	.037 (.712)
Men only want sex.	-.097 (.327)	-.016 (.916)	-.039 (.695)	.105 (.288)	.137 (.166)	.108 (.277)
Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around.	-.099 (.320)	-.131 (.376)	-.022 (.826)	.084 (.397)	.092 (.354)	.081 (.419)
Sexual experimentation/ exploration is good.	-.070 (.482)	-.009 (.952)	.017 (.864)	.141 (.152)	.099 (.317)	.016 (.871)
If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in.	-.126 (.204)	-.059 (.689)	-.035 (.724)	.071 (.474)	.114 (.248)	.066 (.507)
A man will initiate sex because he likes you.	-.075 (.448)	-.038 (.796)	.012 (.907)	.090 (.363)	.057 (.562)	.020 (.842)
Friends with benefits are fun.	-.106 (.284)	-.028 (.848)	-.021 (.831)	.088 (.372)	.107 (.280)	.057 (.565)
Women should not initiate sexual contact with a man. Men should be the ones to initiate contact.	-.109 (.275)	-.100 (.497)	-.023 (.816)	.071 (.474)	.089 (.371)	.066 (.510)
Women are responsible for contraception use.	-.063 (.526)	-.053 (.718)	.036 (.713)	.119 (.228)	.027 (.788)	.035 (.721)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

## Friends/Peers

As shown in Table 10, there is a significant relationship between the source friends/peers and the overall level of sexual agency of SGMs ( $r = -.197$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Both measures of sexual agency, the sexual assertiveness and the sexual affect, are non-significantly negatively correlated with the source “friend/peer”. There are also significant negative correlations between receiving negative SRH messages from friends/peers and the overall sexual agency ( $r = -.201$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and specifically the sexual assertiveness ( $r = -.321$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

Table 10. Relationship Between the Friend/Peer Source and Sexual Agency (N = 105)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N = 105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
Friend/Peers	-.197* (.044)	-.160 (.268)	-.111 (.260)	.047 (.637)	.191 (.051)	.181 (.065)
Friend/Peers Positive Messages	-.086 (.385)	.152 (.293)	-.069 (.485)	.060 (.544)	.143 (.144)	.123 (.212)
Friend/Peers Negative Messages	-.201* (.040)	-.321* (.023)	-.097 (.327)	.019 (.850)	.148 (.132)	.150 (.125)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Upon further examination, there are some significant correlations between a few of the 14 statements provided by friends/peers and the sexual agency. As shown in Table 11, there are three statements that are significantly negatively correlated with the overall level of sexual agency: “Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse” ( $r = -.210$ ;  $p < .05$ ), “If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in” ( $r = -.301$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and “A man will initiate sex because he like you” ( $r = -.241$ ;  $p < .05$ ). The correlation between the level of sexual assertiveness and the statement “Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse” is the highest negatively correlated measure calculated in this table ( $r = -$

.461;  $p < .001$ ). The statement with the greatest number of significant correlations is “If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in”. This statement is significantly correlated with the overall level of sexual agency ( $r = -.301$ ;  $p < .01$ ), the sexual affect ( $r = -.267$ ;  $p < .01$ ), the negative sexual affect ( $r = .299$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and the shame sexual affect ( $r = .260$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Interestingly, the statement “Friends with benefits are fun” from friends/peers is both significantly positively correlated with sexual assertiveness ( $r = .280$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and the shame sexual affect ( $r = .223$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

Table 11. Relationship Between Friend/Peer Statements and Sexual Agency (N = 105)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N=105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
Sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage.	-.077 (.433)	-.295* (.038)	-.039 (.691)	-.073 (.461)	.021 (.829)	-.022 (.823)
Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse.	-.201* (.040)	-.461**(<.001)	-.094 (.342)	.036 (.715)	.162 (.099)	.145 (.139)
Having 'one-night stands' are good as long as it is consensual.	.070 (.479)	.358* (.011)	.060 (.541)	.111 (.260)	-.013 (.896)	-.010 (.921)
Men can't control their sexual urges.	-.113 (.250)	-.126 (.385)	-.029 (.765)	.049 (.619)	.091 (.358)	.044 (.657)
Sexual intercourse is sacred and should not be shared with many partners.	-.006 (.949)	-.213 (.138)	.035 (.727)	.073 (.459)	.022 (.825)	-.047 (.637)
Engaging in sexual intercourse is a fun activity - nothing more.	.021 (.834)	.093 (.519)	.007 (.942)	.094 (.338)	.064 (.517)	.028 (.773)
Men only want sex.	-.171 (.082)	-.149 (.303)	-.109 (.269)	.008 (.938)	.151 (.125)	.176 (.074)
Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around.	-.058 (.560)	-.297* (.036)	.061 (.536)	.094 (.344)	-.022 (.827)	-.028 (.777)
Sexual experimentation/ exploration is good.	-.049 (.671)	.093 (.520)	-.066 (.503)	.068 (.492)	.151 (.125)	.112 (.255)
If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in.	-.301**(.002)	.042 (.770)	-.267**(.006)	-.136 (.168)	.299**(.002)	.260**(.007)
A man will initiate sex because he likes you.	-.241* (.013)	-.305* (.031)	-.117 (.235)	-.043 (.660)	.163 (.098)	.084 (.393)
Friends with benefits are fun.	-.105 (.285)	.280* (.049)	-.125 (.202)	.002 (.988)	.155 (.114)	.223* (.022)
Women should not initiate sexual contact with a man. Men should be the ones to initiate contact.	-.134 (.173)	-.023 (.875)	-.123 (.212)	-.054 (.582)	.109 (.270)	.195* (.047)
Women are responsible for contraception use.	-.083 (.400)	-.080 (.583)	-.039 (.690)	.028 (.778)	.037 (.709)	.149 (.130)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

## Teachers

There were no significant correlations between the teacher source and the sexual agency of SGMs as shown in Table 12. There were also no significant correlations between either receiving positive or negative SRH messages from teachers and the sexual agency. Overall, there is a non-significant weak negative correlation between receiving SRH messages from teachers and the overall level of sexual agency.

Table 12. Relationship Between the Teacher Source and Sexual Agency (N = 105)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N=105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
Teacher	-.158 (.107)	-.208 (.148)	-.128 (.192)	-.076 (.440)	.118 (.232)	.156 (.111)
Teacher Positive Messages	.011 (.909)	-.099 (.493)	-.006 (.954)	.029 (.766)	.042 (.672)	-.001 (.993)
Teacher Negative Messages	-.181 (.065)	-.187 (.194)	-.140 (.154)	-.098 (.321)	.112 (.253)	.174 (.076)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

When looking at the correlation between the specific statements provided by teachers and the level of sexual agency, significant correlations were found. As indicated in Table 13, the statement “Men only want sex” was significantly correlated with the overall level of sexual agency ( $r = -.342$ ;  $p < .001$ ), the sexual assertiveness ( $r = -.480$ ;  $p < .001$ ), the sexual affect ( $r = -.286$ ;  $p < .01$ ), the positive sexual affect ( $r = -.234$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and the negative sexual affect ( $r = .280$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Additionally, the statement “If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in” was significantly correlated with the overall level of sexual agency ( $r = -.304$ ;  $p < .01$ ), the sexual affect ( $r = -.277$ ;  $p < .01$ ), the negative sexual affect ( $r = .287$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and the shame sexual affect ( $r = .274$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

Table 13. Relationship Between Teacher Statements and Sexual Agency (N = 105)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N=105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
Sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage.	-.045 (.651)	-.058 (.689)	-.018 (.857)	-.049 (.620)	-.042 (.668)	.065 (.509)
Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse.	-.110 (.267)	-.093 (.520)	-.109 (.270)	-.097 (.327)	.049 (.619)	.170 (.084)
Having 'one-night stands' are good as long as it is consensual.	.082 (.404)	-.009 (.949)	.077 (.434)	-.006 (.948)	-.106 (.280)	-.130 (.188)
Men can't control their sexual urges.	-.144 (.142)	-.131 (.366)	-.129 (.188)	-.026 (.796)	.179 (.068)	.141 (.153)
Sexual intercourse is sacred and should not be shared with many partners.	-.071 (.475)	-.232 (.104)	.013 (.893)	.008 (.939)	-.045 (.647)	.052 (.597)
Engaging in sexual intercourse is a fun activity - nothing more.	-.023 (.819)	-.070 (.629)	-.060 (.544)	.001 (.988)	.112 (.254)	.032 (.745)
Men only want sex.	-.342**(<.001)	-.480**(<.001)	-.286**(.003)	-.234* (.016)	.280**(.004)	.181 (.065)
Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around.	-.215* (.027)	-.171 (.234)	-.189 (.053)	-.171 (.081)	.149 (.130)	.162 (.099)
Sexual experimentation/ exploration is good.	.045 (.647)	-.094 (.518)	.034 (.729)	.122 (.214)	.043 (.661)	.014 (.891)
If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in.	-.304**(.002)	-.044 (.763)	-.277**(.004)	-.164 (.095)	.287**(.003)	.274**(.005)
A man will initiate sex because he likes you.	-.043 (.662)	-.088 (.545)	-.039 (.691)	-.020 (.839)	.031 (.750)	.064 (.517)
Friends with benefits are fun.	-.129 (.190)	.053 (.715)	-.147 (.134)	-.098 (.320)	.167 (.088)	.093 (.346)
Women should not initiate sexual contact with a man. Men should be the ones to initiate contact.	-.184 (.060)	-.186 (.196)	.139 (.157)	-.170 (.084)	.093 (.345)	.064 (.517)
Women are responsible for contraception use.	-.043 (.661)	.015 (.915)	-.055 (.578)	.039 (.693)	.076 (.438)	.158 (.108)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

## Media

As shown in Table 14, a significant relationship between receiving positive SRH messages from the media and feeling a positive sexual affect ( $r = .257$ ;  $p < .01$ ) was found. Otherwise, when analyzing the media source solely, there is a non-significant weak correlation indicating that SRH messages from the media may be associated with feeling less sexually agentic.

Table 14. Relationship Between the Media Source and Sexual Agency (N = 105)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N=105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
Media	-.106 (.281)	-.213 (.138)	-.012 (.901)	.134 (.173)	.111 (.262)	.101 (.306)
Media Positive Messages	.017 (.865)	-.115 (.425)	.108 (.273)	.257** (.008)	.026 (.789)	.008 (.937)
Media Negative Messages	-.154 (.117)	-.207 (.149)	-.080 (.419)	.032 (.750)	.134 (.171)	.133 (.177)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

There is a significant positive relationship between experiencing a positive sexual affect and the statement “Having ‘one-night stands’ are good as long as it is consensual” ( $r = .321$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Viewing sexual intercourse as solely fun is also positively correlated with experiencing a positive sexual affect ( $r = .311$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Media content that depicts the concept that “Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around” is significantly negatively correlated with the sexual assertiveness ( $r = -.290$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Giving into sexual advances, without desiring to, is also correlated with experiencing a negative sexual affect ( $r = .228$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Lastly, seeing messages that display women being responsible for contraception is correlated with experiencing a shame sexual affect ( $r = .221$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

Table 15. Relationship Between Media Statements and Sexual Agency (N = 105)

Predictors	Sexual Agency (N =105)	Sexual Assertiveness (N= 50)	Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Positive Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Negative Sexual Affect (N= 105)	Shame Sexual Affect (N= 105)
Sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage.	.114 (.246)	.020 (.893)	.168 (.087)	.191 (.051)	-.119 (.227)	-.091 (.355)
Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse.	-.121 (.218)	-.276 (.053)	-.104 (.290)	-.035 (.727)	.138 (.162)	.097 (.326)
Having 'one-night stands' are good as long as it is consensual.	.106 (.284)	-.133 (.357)	.185 (.058)	.321**(<.001)	-.036 (.717)	-.071 (.474)
Men can't control their sexual urges.	-.072 (.467)	-.093 (.519)	-.053 (.590)	-.017 (.866)	.092 (.349)	.005 (.963)
Sexual intercourse is sacred and should not be shared with many partners.	.078 (.428)	-.167 (.247)	.109 (.267)	.084 (.392)	-.124 (.209)	-.044 (.652)
Engaging in sexual intercourse is a fun activity - nothing more.	.126 (.205)	-.072 (.622)	.169 (.087)	.311**(.001)	-.034 (.732)	-.024 (.812)
Men only want sex.	-.039 (.695)	-.169 (.241)	.025 (.803)	.108 (.271)	.032 (.745)	.052 (.601)
Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around.	-.182 (.064)	-.290* (.041)	-.132 (.180)	-.034 (.732)	.165 (.093)	.160 (.102)
Sexual experimentation/ exploration is good.	-.043 (.667)	-.073 (.613)	.017 (.863)	.155 (.114)	.095 (.335)	.049 (.616)
If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in.	-.219* (.025)	-.121 (.404)	-.139 (.158)	-.003 (.979)	.228* (.020)	.128 (.193)
A man will initiate sex because he likes you.	-.061 (.539)	-.242 (.090)	.044 (.657)	.068 (.490)	-.005 (.963)	-.036 (.713)
Friends with benefits are fun.	-.057 (.563)	.120 (.412)	-.031 (.756)	.059 (.553)	.068 (.491)	.110 (.267)
Women should not initiate sexual contact with a man. Men should be the ones to initiate contact.	-.193* (.048)	-.090 (.533)	-.153 (.120)	-.127 (.195)	.133 (.175)	.125 (.203)
Women are responsible for contraception use.	-.143 (.145)	-.054 (.707)	-.102 (.301)	.026 (.789)	.133 (.177)	.221* (.024)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

### Non-Sexually Active Participants

Participants who have not engaged in sexual intercourse at the time of the survey (N = 55) were asked to rate possible reasons for their abstinence. The data presented in Table 16 show that most of the participants (40%) chose “strongly agree” for “not ready to engage in sexual intercourse”. The number of participants who chose “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree” for the statement “I fear getting judged by others” were almost equivalent (N = 12 and N = 13 respectively). The reasons for abstinence that were the less frequently reported as “strongly agree” are “I fear getting judged by others” and “I fear getting pregnant”.

Table 16. Reasons for Sexual Abstinence (N = 55)

Reason	Median	SD	Strongly Disagree N (%)	Disagree N (%)	Neutral/ Undecided N (%)	Agree N (%)	Strongly Agree N (%)
I am not ready to have sex.	4	1.27	3 (6)	9 (16)	4 (7)	17 (31)	22 (40)
The opportunity to have sex has not presented itself.	3	1.52	12 (22)	8 (15)	9 (16)	11 (20)	15 (27)
Sex before marriage is a sin.	4	1.71	16 (29)	5 (9)	5 (9)	8 (15)	21 (38)
I fear getting pregnant.	3	1.34	9 (16)	12 (22)	8 (15)	18 (33)	8 (15)
I fear contracting a sexually transmitted disease (STD).	4	1.34	6 (11)	6 (11)	9 (16)	16 (29)	18 (33)
I fear getting judged by others.	3	1.49	12 (22)	10 (18)	9 (16)	11 (20)	13 (24)

For further examination, the reasons for abstinence were correlated with the level of sexual agency reported by the participants. Table 17 displays the correlations between each of the reasons for abstinence and the overall level of sexual affect (the only sexual agency measurement recorded for participants who have not yet engaged in sexual intercourse at the time of the survey), which includes the positive, negative and shame sexual affects. Significant correlations were found between the overall sexual affect and the following reasons: “I am not ready to have sex” ( $r = .398$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and “The opportunity to have sex has not presented itself” ( $r = .320$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Both reasons were also significantly positively correlated with experiencing a

positive sexual affect ( $r = .387$ ;  $p < .01$  &  $r = .330$ ;  $p < .05$ , respectively). Additionally, there was significant negative correlation between the reason “I am not ready for sex” and experiencing a negative sexual affect ( $r = -.282$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Interestingly, “I fear of contracting a STD” is also significantly positively correlated with a positive sexual affect ( $r = .304$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and a negative sexual affect ( $r = .287$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Lastly, “I fear getting judged by others” is significantly correlated with experiencing a negative sexual affect ( $r = .333$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Whilst not a significant correlation, the overall sexual affect for that reason is negatively correlated with the sexual agency ( $r = .131$ ;  $p = .341$ ).

Table 17. Correlation Between the Reasons for Abstinence and Sexual Agency (N = 55)

Predictors	Sexual Affect	Positive Sexual Affect	Negative Sexual Affect	Shame Sexual Affect
Not ready for sex.	.398**(.003)	.387** (.003)	-.282* (.037)	-.253 (.063)
No opportunity for sex.	.320* (.017)	.330* (.014)	-.184 (.179)	-.259 (.056)
Premarital sex is sin.	.149 (.278)	.105 (.443)	-.136 (.321)	-.120 (.382)
Fear pregnancy.	-.066 (.632)	.177 (.196)	.258 (.057)	.141 (.304)
Fear STD.	-.020 (.884)	.304* (.024)	.287* (.033)	.173 (.206)
Fear of judgement from others.	-.131 (.341)	.170 (.216)	.333* (.013)	.257 (.059)

Significance in parentheses

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Adolescent sexual risks have been researched abundantly; sexual agency is a topic that has been less explored (Seabrook et al., 2017). The knowledge gap is especially noticeable for research concerning the sexual agency of SGM women in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. Sexual agency development is vital and can bring forth negative health consequences such as being unable to refuse unwanted sexual activities (Darden et al., 2018), increase sexual impulsivity (Jardin et al., 2016), decrease self-esteem and increase negative emotions (O'Sullivan et al., 2006). SGMs comprise of a large portion of the Canadian population, and as such, there is a need to conduct evidence-based research to fill this gap in literature. These individuals may have to balance separate cultural spheres that may be difficult to navigate (Cense, 2019). As a result, this exploratory study is of great importance and provides a general overview of the different relationships between external sources of SRH messages and their level of sexual agency. The originality of this project can prove valuable by potentially guiding further research with increased specificity based on the findings. This study utilized the framework outlined by Marianne Cense, in which she conceptualized sexual agency in the socio-cultural world surrounding the individual (Cense, 2019). In line with her framework, the cultural environment, and the sources of SRH information available to SGM women were analyzed.

To answer the research questions, the sexual assertiveness (the ability to assert yourself sexually) and the sexual affect (the feelings pertaining to your sexual experiences) were the components used to define the sexual agency. The sexual assertiveness was measured using the SAQ by Loshek and Tyrrell (2014). The sexual affect was measured with the Sexual Affect Scale by Fletcher et al. (2015). This upcoming chapter discusses the findings after analysis, the strengths, the limitations, the areas for future research and a short conclusion.

## **Major Findings of Study**

### Actual and Preferred Sources of SRH Messages Reported by the Participants

The findings revealed little variation between the actual and preferred sources of SRH messages. The participants indicated that they received the most SRH messages from the media. This finding is consistent with the available literature as television shows, most notably, were reported by youths to display many important sexual concepts that they deemed useful (Bleakley et al., 2009; Hetsroni, 2007; Ward, Day & Epstein, 2006). Only 18% of Canadian girls between grade 6-10 respect the recommended 2-hour limit for screening time a day (Mark, Boyce & Janssen, 2006) thus explaining the ease at which youth can access SRH topic depicted in the media. Friends/peers followed closely behind as the second highest rated source. This also does not contradict the available literature where friends were quoted as a relevant and important source of SRH information (Baheiraei, Khoori, Foroushani, Ahmadi & Ybarra, 2014; Secor-Turner, Sieving, Eisenberg, & Skay, 2011). SRH education provided by teachers in school settings has been reported by adolescents as prominent and essential (Bleakley et al., 2009; Tanton et al., 2015). Hence, the findings in this study do not differ greatly from the available literature for these three high ranking sources.

The actual sources of SRH messages provided by the nuclear family, such as the mother, sister, brother, and father, were ranked in that order. In contrast, the literature suggests that parents are an essential source that provide the most actual SRH messages to adolescents (Boone, 2015; Eversole, Berglas, Deardorff, & Constantine, 2016; Flores & Barroso, 2017), particularly mothers (Baheiraei et al., 2014). Comparable to the available literature, adolescents reported speaking with their mothers more than their fathers for sexual topics (Bleakley et al., 2009; Sneed, Jones & Alfaro, 2013) which is consistent with the findings of this study. Fathers

were ranked lowest for actual SRH messages. This is regrettable as communication based on sexual topics between fathers and daughters provide a guide that may positively shape the sexual behaviours of teens (Wilson, Dalberth & Koo, 2010; Wright, Randall & Arroyo, 2012). Siblings are an informal source of SRH messages that have been reported by adolescent as important, along with peers (Secor-Turner et al., 2011). The findings of this study do not suggest siblings as a prevalent source of SRH information. In essence, the data suggest that adolescents report the media, friends/peers and teachers as the sources most available to them; further research or health interventions should priorities these sources.

The findings on the preferred sources did not differ greatly from the actual sources. This can allude to participants favouring the sources that are most available to them. Media was ranked third for the preferred source of SRH messages. The participants were divided on whether they deemed the media as a preferred source or not as 17.6% chose a rating of 9-10 and 19.6% chose a rating of 1-2. Possible explanations for this might be due to level of maturity or timing of menarche. A study has shown that young girls who reach puberty earlier are more likely to seek SRH information from the media rather than their peers as they may deem them to not be helpful (Brown, Halpern & L'Engle, 2005). Moreover, the media usually depict sexual health topics as embarrassing or funny, that men are preoccupied with sex and that women are responsible for contraception, teenage pregnancy or avoiding STDs (Hust, Brown & L'Engle, 2008). These messages might not be alluring to some viewers and accordingly, may explain the split number of positive and negative rankings. Comparable to the actual reported sources, further research or health interventions should focus more on the top three ranking preferred sources of SRH messages.

### Relationship between Cultural Affiliation and Sexual Agency

There were no significant correlations between the cultural affiliations reported by the participants and their level of sexual agency. The non-significant negative correlation does indicate that participants who are more culturally affiliated might feel less sexually agentic. As stated in the conceptual framework of the study, youth, at times, may have to negotiate and forge their way through socio-cultural expectations described in the *bonded agency* (Cense, 2019). They could potentially express discomfort or pressure to respect the norms imposed by external factors (Cense, 2019). This might be unavoidable due to sexual empowerment being influenced by the cultural discourses available (Peterson, 2009). Consequently, the ambiguous socio-cultural nature for sexual expression in women can perpetuate feelings of shame (Williams, 2021), as specifically seen with qualitative individual interviews and focus group discussions conducted on migrant and refugee women over the age of 18 from Australia and Canada (Ussher et al., 2017). This concept of shame is exemplified in this research study as the shame sexual affect did have a significant positive correlation with the statement “I follow my cultural traditions closely”. The non-significant findings could possibly be attributed to the reduced sample size. To portray accurate findings, further research with an appropriate sample size is recommended.

### Relationship between Parent Source and Sexual Agency

The findings indicate that SRH messages provided by parents are significantly negatively correlated with the sexual agency. This may explain why the participants chose mothers as their fourth preferred source of SRH messages and fathers as their last choice. In fact, an online survey employing Likert-scale questions on the frequency of communication for specific sexual topics between parents and their 13-17 year old adolescent from the United-States found that the

discussions were mostly about sexual health risks instead of sex-positive messages like sexual satisfaction and sexual desires (Evans, Widman, Kamke & Stewart, 2019). Further, adolescents may avoid speaking with their parents about sexual topics due to the experience of shame and anxiety stemming from feeling judged (Fallon, 2012), it is seen as a taboo subject that requires secrecy (Rawson & Liamputtong, 2010) or because they report feeling “uncomfortable”, “awkward” or “weird” during these conversations (Rosengard et al., 2012). This concept is paralleled with the findings of this study where significant correlations were found with negative SRH statements voiced by parents and experiencing a shame sexual affect. Conversations between parents and daughters that discourage sexual activities are associated with having fewer positive attitudes about sex as self-reported by American adolescents from varied cultural backgrounds participating in a Likert-scale survey (Sneed, Tan & Meyer, 2015), which has also been found in this study, albeit not significantly. This demonstrates that young girls are somewhat vulnerable to what their parents think of their sexual behaviours (Maguen & Armistead, 2006; Sneed et al., 2015). It might possibly explain why five out of 14 statements conveyed by parents were significantly correlated with shame.

Cense (2019) explained in the *narrative agency* that youth may have to alter their feelings or decisions to not bring shame or pain to others around them. The concept of *bonded agency* also provided explanations on how youth may engage in an internal battle to forge and negotiate through external expectations imposed by parents (Cense, 2019). Whilst communication between a parent and their child has proven beneficial in the reduction of risky sexual behaviours (Secor-Turner et al., 2011; Whitaker & Miller, 2000), they appear in this study, to have a negative association with the level of sexual agency of the SGM participants. The sexual affect is the component most affected by parents and as such, focus should be centered on ways to reduce the

experience of negative emotions and feelings of shame felt by adolescents stemming from parental input.

#### Relationship Between Sibling Source and Sexual Agency

The non-significant correlations between the messages provided by siblings and the sexual agency of the participants do show non-significant weak negative associations. This may allude to SRH communication between siblings not being beneficial to the development of sexual agency, despite evidence suggesting that messages provided by siblings may reduce risky sexual behaviours (Secor-Turner et al., 2011). Furthermore, older siblings may subject sexual and reproductive norms and expectations to their younger siblings which may in turn, influence their attitudes towards sex (Almy et al., 2015; Elton, Palmer, & Macdowall, 2018; Whiteman, Zeiders, Killoren, Rodriguez, & Updegraff, 2014). The findings of this research study do not support the former view as both positive and negative messages were mostly non-significantly negatively correlated with the sexual agency. Correspondingly, the findings in this study are inconsequential and cannot be considered substantiative. Further analysis is warranted with a sufficient sample size to accurately portray findings.

#### Relationship Between Friend/Peer Source and Sexual Agency

Significant negative correlations between the SRH source “friends/peers” and the sexual agency of the participating SGMs were found. This is especially true for the negative messages and the sexual assertiveness. Gender-based sexual standards imposed on women, like women must be sexual gatekeepers, withhold their sexual desires and not engage in casual sexual encounters as they might be labelled “slutty”, (Jovanovic & Williams, 2017), could explain why the sexual assertiveness is significantly negatively correlated ( $r = -.461$ ;  $p < .001$ ). In addition,

adolescent boys and girls who perceive that their peers have negative attitudes about sex are more likely to hold these negative attitudes themselves (Sneed et al., 2015).

On the contrary, expectations and norms related to positive sexual messages such as “Having ‘one-night stands’ are good as long as it is consensual” are associated with a significant positive sexual assertiveness. It is the only significant positive association for sexual assertiveness found amongst all the sources. The positive norms and expectations deriving from SRH messages and behaviours by friends might thus be associated with an increased ability to assert yourself sexually. It is important to note that the overall positive statements voiced by friends/peers are non-significant and have weak negative correlations with the sexual agency. Given that friends/peers were reported as the most preferred source of SRH messages and was significantly negatively associated with the sexual agency of the participating SGMs, it is essential that greater focus be placed on this source for further research or potential health interventions.

#### Relationship Between Teacher and Sexual Agency

The findings suggest that youths’ sexual agency might be negatively associated with negative statements voiced by teachers as compared to positive statements. It is known that negative statements about sex or refusing to accept a youth’s sexuality can render the achievement of a positive sexual agency difficult, which in turn, may reduce safe-sex practices (Allen, 2007). Teachers who promote the concept of engaging in sexual activities even if you desire not to, are going against the principles of sexual agency. Naturally, that statement was significantly correlated with feeling less sexually agentic and experiencing a negative and shame sexual affect. These findings, in conjunction with the high reported preferred ranking for

teachers, indicate that messages provided by teachers appear to be quite relevantly associated with the level of sexual agency exhibited by SGM women.

### Relationship Between Media and Sexual Agency

Positive messages presented in the media are significantly correlated with an increased positive sexual affect. This is especially true when analyzing sexual consent and viewing sexual activities as “fun”. In contrast, negative statements that discuss feminine sexual promiscuity or allowing sexual activities to occur even if it is not desired, are respectively associated with a negative sexual assertiveness and a negative overall sexual agency. Depending on what is depicted, the SRH message portrayed in the media may have different consequences on the sexual agency and thus, it has been suggested that the role of the media on the level of sexual agency of adolescents not be negated (Seabrook et al., 2017). Parallel with the findings of this study, young girls who saw women being viewed as sexual objects, not asserting themselves sexually and following the sexual demands of men, were negatively associated with the sexual agency (Tolman, Kim, Schooler, & Sorsoli, 2007). The latter research assessed the frequency of sexual depictions and heterosexual scripts on television, and the sexual agency of adolescents using five-point Likert-scale questions in the United-States. In addition, women who upheld gender-based narratives depicted in the media were more likely to experience shame and negative sexual affects (Seabrook et al., 2017). The findings of this study determine that adolescents’ sexual agency is associated with the positive or negative content they see depicted in the media. Based on that assessment, causality and effect analysis could be conducted to further illuminate the dynamic between the variables. In sum, adolescents should be cautioned on the link between what they see on screen and how they could potentially feel as an agentic being.

## Reasons for Abstinence

Most non-sexually active participants listed that they were not ready to engage in sexual activities. Not being ready for sex is significantly positively correlated with the sexual affect, specifically, it is positively correlated with a positive affect and negatively correlated with a negative affect. These findings presume that participants who decide for themselves not to engage in sexual intercourse due to not being ready are more likely to exhibit a higher level of sexual affect. Certainly, that closely follows the definition of sexual agency in which control of your sexual life is paramount. Heywood, Patrick, Pitts and Mitchell (2016) recorded similar findings in which the participating adolescents were exhibiting more positive feelings, such as happiness and pride, from their decision not to engage in sexual intercourse and that most did not feel pressured to have sex. The online survey comprised of five-point Likert-scale questions interrogating the “feelings”, “reasons” and “pressures”, among many others, associated with their decision to not yet engage in sexual intercourse at the time of the survey. Further, they found that the participants rated reasons like “not ready to have sex” and “not finding the right partner” as more meaningful than fears associated with STDs, pregnancies, religious beliefs, or disapproval from parents (Heywood et al., 2016). It parallels the findings of this research as the overall sexual affect was not significantly correlated with any of the “fear” reasons. Feeling judged was significantly associated with feeling a negative sexual affect. Parallel to the findings of this study, Goblet and Glowacz (2021) found that young girls who are judged (slut-shamed) are more likely to experience a depressed affect and suicidal ideation. In brief, correlations in this section demonstrate that most of the non-sexually active participants are presumably following their own choices and thus possess a sexually agentic stance.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

This research project utilized two outcomes for sexual agency: sexual assertiveness and sexual affect. By employing two different aspects for measuring sexual agency, this study allowed for both sexually active and non-sexually active respondents to participate in the survey. The sexual agency development is equally as crucial for both participants who are not yet sexually active and those who are. As such, they were not excluded from this study. As stated previously, there is a lack of knowledge pertaining to female SGMs in Canada, specifically in Ottawa. Considering this lack of knowledge, this study adopted an exploratory design to examine multiple sources of SRH messages to determine whether there are associations between certain sources compared to others. Based on these findings, emphasis can be placed on relevant predictors for further research or interventions which illuminates the value and importance of this exploratory study.

This research study has some limitations. It utilized a retrospective approach which might contribute to recall bias. Young adults between the ages of 18-24 were chosen to mitigate this, although the bias cannot be fully eliminated. This survey relied on the self-report of participants on a sensitive health topic. Participants were given the opportunity to choose when and where to complete the survey to establish privacy and were provided an informed consent form specifying the complete anonymous nature of the study to reduce socially desirable responses. Even with these protective measures, social desirability bias was still possible.

There was no pre-test conducted prior to the distribution of the questionnaire. This may affect the internal validity of the study. Particularly, the cultural affiliation section of the survey was composed of only three statements. Without a pre-test, it is uncertain whether three statements suffice to collect appropriate data on the cultural affiliations of the participants and the subsequent relationship with their sexual agency.

The data were collected from SGM women; accordingly, the results are not generalizable to the general population other than Ottawa-Gatineau SGM women. Moreover, most of the participants who responded to the survey were in their postsecondary studies. This might be due to the convenience/snowball sampling technique and because most of the study flyer were circulated by University of Ottawa professors. This may, in turn, affect the external validity of the study.

The survey itself was quite long; a few respondents have not completed the entire survey. The length of the survey could have also made participants less focused near the end and thus produced inaccurate responses.

Sexual agency was separated into two specific components, sexual assertiveness and sexual affect, and were measured using Likert-scale statements. Condom-use efficacy, which can also be used as a measurement of sexual assertiveness, was not measured using a Likert-scale approach. As a result, it was not included in the overall sexual agency outcome. Condom-use efficacy is a concrete sexual behaviour that directly ties with the sexual agency and could have provided greater specificity when analyzing the overall level of sexual agency.

### **Areas for Future Research and Conclusion**

As this is an exploratory study, one of the main goals was to assess which sources were preferred by SGM women. The findings confirm that friends/peers, media, and teachers were reported as the most actual and preferred sources of SRH information for adolescents. There were also indications of significant correlations between the SRH statements from these sources and the level of sexual agency of the participants. Further research focusing instead on the cause and effect of these three sources is warranted as the findings show that external sources are in fact, directly associated with the level of sexual agency.

For the media source, tv shows, films and movies were assessed. This negates the implications of a social media presence such as Instagram, Twitter, or internet websites, including pornography. This may generate increased specificity or clarity on how adolescent sexual agency is associated with external factors. In addition, the cultural affiliations of the participants were briefly explored. The specific cultural backgrounds and their implications with the sexual agency were not interrogated. Cense (2019) mentioned the importance of exploring the socio-cultural environment of the person to assess their sexual agency. Further research on the ecological environment including the cultural spheres, the implications of races/ethnicities and religious beliefs, should be explored.

The findings of this research are strictly limited to SGM women between the ages of 18 to 24. Future research might instead be conducted on male SGM adolescents to examine the relationship between external sources of SRH information and their level of sexual agency. FGMs or TGMs' sexual agency associations might also differ from SGMs and could be analyzed for determining variations. Unquestionably, a larger sample size would be required to reach statistical power and improve accuracy of the findings.

Academics should continue with the examination and analysis of sexual agency since it is an important factor that can have great repercussions on the sexual health of today's youths. Although the findings in this study present each of the five sources and the cultural affiliations as negatively associated with the sexual agency of the participants, there is still knowledge to be gained and further questions to be asked. Optimistically, SGM youth could have access to the SRH messages they need that would help them prosper into their sexually agentic selves.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: The English Survey

#### Section A: Demographics

1. How old are you?
2. Do you currently live in the Ottawa/Gatineau region?
  - (1) Yes
  - (2) No
3. Did you live in the Ottawa/Gatineau region during your adolescence (10-17 years old)?
  - (1) Yes
  - (2) No
4. Were you born in Canada?
  - (1) Yes
  - (2) No
5. Were at least one of your parents born outside of Canada?
  - (1) Yes
  - (2) No
6. Do you identify as a woman?
  - (1) Yes
  - (2) No
  - (3) Prefer not to say
7. What is your ethnicity?
  - (1) Caucasian
  - (2) Caribbean
  - (3) West African
  - (4) East African
  - (5) North African
  - (6) South African
  - (7) Latina or Hispanic
  - (8) Asian
  - (9) Middle Eastern
  - (10) Mixed
  - (11) Other: Please specify
  - (12) Prefer not to say
8. What is your level of education?
  - (1) No high school diploma
  - (2) High school diploma
  - (3) Postsecondary studies

(4) Postsecondary studies degree

9. What is your current relationship status?

- (1) Single
- (2) Dating
- (3) Engaged
- (4) Married
- (5) Separated
- (6) Divorced
- (7) Unsure
- (8) Widowed
- (9) Other: Please specify
- (10) Prefer not to say

#### Section B : Sources

In this section, I would like to assess the sources of sexual and reproductive health messages you received when you were an adolescent. **Please note that there is no wrong answer.**

10. **Please rank each of the following sources** of sexual and reproductive health messages (sexual intercourse, puberty, sexual education, reproductive education) that you've received the most and least of during adolescence (10-17 years old) **on a scale of 1 to 10**; 1 being the source of sexual and reproductive health messages you've received the least and 10 being the most. If the source does not apply to you, please leave it blank.

- (1) Mother
- (2) Father
- (3) Brother
- (4) Sister
- (5) Friends
- (6) Films/TV/Videos
- (7) High school teachers

11. **Please rank by order of importance your preferred source** of sexual and reproductive health messages (sexual intercourse, puberty, sexual education, reproductive education) when you were an adolescent (10-17 years old) **on a scale of 1 to 10**; 1 being the source of sexual and reproductive health messages you preferred the least and 10 being the source you preferred the most. If the source does not apply to you, please leave it blank.

- (1) Mother
- (2) Father
- (3) Brother
- (4) Sister
- (5) Friends
- (6) Films/TV/Videos
- (7) High school teachers

12. Did you live with at least one parent?

(1) Yes

(2) No

13. You may have heard many sexual and reproductive health messages from your **parent(s)** when you were an adolescent (10-17 years old).

Please read the following statements to assess if you have heard sexual and reproductive health messages from your parents. If so, **how many times did you hear each of these messages from them when you were an adolescent.** The range is from ‘never’ (e.g. my parents never said this), ‘once’, ‘a few times’, ‘quite a bit’ to ‘a lot’.

	Never	Once	A few times	Quite a bit	A lot
Sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage.					
Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse.					
Having ‘one-night stands’ are good as long as it is consensual.					
Men can’t control their sexual urges.					
Sexual intercourse is sacred and should not be shared with many partners.					
Engaging in sexual intercourse is a fun activity - nothing more.					
Men only want sex.					
Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around.					
Sexual experimentation/exploration is good.					
If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in.					
A man will initiate sex because he likes you.					
Friends with benefits are fun.					
Women should not initiate sexual contact with a man. Men should be the ones to initiate contact.					
Women are responsible for contraception use.					

14. Did you live with one or more siblings?

(1) Yes

(2) No

15. We'll do the same with the next source: siblings.

Please read the following statements to assess if you have heard sexual and reproductive health messages from your **sibling(s)**. If so, **how many times did you hear each of these messages from them when you were an adolescent**. The range is from 'never' (e.g. My sister never said this), 'once', 'a few times', 'quite a bit' to 'a lot'.

	Never	Once	A few times	Quite a bit	A lot
Sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage.					
Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse.					
Having 'one-night stands' are good as long as it is consensual.					
Men can't control their sexual urges.					
Sexual intercourse is sacred and should not be shared with many partners.					
Engaging in sexual intercourse is a fun activity - nothing more.					
Men only want sex.					
Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around.					
Sexual experimentation/exploration is good.					
If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in.					
A man will initiate sex because he likes you.					
Friends with benefits are fun.					
Women should not initiate sexual contact with a man. Men should be the ones to initiate contact.					
Women are responsible for contraception use.					

16. Please read the following statements to assess if you have heard sexual and reproductive health messages from your **friends/peers**. If so, **how many times did you hear each of these messages from them when you were an adolescent**. The range is from ‘never’ (My friend never said this), ‘once’, ‘a few times’, ‘quite a bit’ to ‘a lot’.

	Never	Once	A few times	Quite a bit	A lot
Sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage.					
Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse.					
Having ‘one-night stands’ are good as long as it is consensual.					
Men can’t control their sexual urges.					
Sexual intercourse is sacred and should not be shared with many partners.					
Engaging in sexual intercourse is a fun activity - nothing more.					
Men only want sex.					
Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around.					
Sexual experimentation/exploration is good.					
If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in.					
A man will initiate sex because he likes you.					
Friends with benefits are fun.					
Women should not initiate sexual contact with a man. Men should be the ones to initiate contact.					
Women are responsible for contraception use.					

17. Please read the following statements to assess if you have heard sexual and reproductive health messages from your teachers. If so, **how many times did you hear each of these messages from your high school teachers when you were an adolescent**. The range is from ‘never’ (My teacher never said this), ‘once’, ‘a few times’, ‘quite a bit’ to ‘a lot’.

	Never	Once	A few times	Quite a bit	A lot
Sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage.					
Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse.					
Having 'one-night stands' are good as long as it is consensual.					
Men can't control their sexual urges.					
Sexual intercourse is sacred and should not be shared with many partners.					
Engaging in sexual intercourse is a fun activity - nothing more.					
Men only want sex.					
Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around.					
Sexual experimentation/exploration is good.					
If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in.					
A man will initiate sex because he likes you.					
Friends with benefits are fun.					
Women should not initiate sexual contact with a man. Men should be the ones to initiate contact.					
Women are responsible for contraception use.					

18. Last source: media! The media includes movies/TV series/videos that you have seen when you were a teenager (10-17 years old).

Please read the following statements to assess if you have heard or seen sexual and reproductive messages from movies/TV series/videos. If so, **how many times did you hear each of these messages from them when you were an adolescent.** The range is from 'never' (e.g I never heard this on tv), 'once', 'a few times', 'quite a bit' to 'a lot'.

	Never	Once	A few times	Quite a bit	A lot

Sexual intercourse is only permissible after marriage.					
Men lose respect for women if they have sexual intercourse.					
Having 'one-night stands' are good as long as it is consensual.					
Men can't control their sexual urges.					
Sexual intercourse is sacred and should not be shared with many partners.					
Engaging in sexual intercourse is a fun activity - nothing more.					
Men only want sex.					
Women who sleep around are worse than men who sleep around.					
Sexual experimentation/exploration is good.					
If a guy wants to have sexual contact/intercourse with you, you should give in.					
A man will initiate sex because he likes you.					
Friends with benefits are fun.					
Women should not initiate sexual contact with a man. Men should be the ones to initiate contact.					
Women are responsible for contraception use.					

19. I would now like to assess your level of cultural affiliation.

Please read the following statements and respond with the answer that best suits you. This range goes from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral / Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
My cultural traditions are very important to me.					
I follow my cultural traditions closely.					

I feel pressure to respect the norms and expectations imposed by my culture.					
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Section C: Sexual Agency

The next set of questions pertain to your level of sexual experience. Please read the following questions and answer to your best ability. **Please note that there is no wrong answer.**

20. Have you ever had sexual intercourse?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Prefer not to answer

21. If you answered yes, did you use contraception for your ‘first time having sex’? (If you have not had sexual intercourse, please click N/A).

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Prefer not to answer
- (4) N/A

22. If you have not had sexual intercourse, what are the reasons?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral / Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am not ready to have sex.					
The opportunity to have sex has not presented itself.					
Sex before marriage is a sin.					
I fear getting pregnant.					
I fear contracting a sexually transmitted disease (STD).					
I fear getting judged by others.					

23. This section will assess your sexual assertiveness. Sexual assertiveness relates to your ability to communicate with your sexual partner(s) about sexual initiation and satisfaction, your ability to refuse unwanted sexual contact/intercourse and to communicate with your sexual partner(s) about their sexual history.

**Please read the following statements and click on whether you strongly disagree to strongly agree.**

The Sexual Assertiveness Questionnaire by Eevett Loshek & Heather K. Terrell

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral / Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel uncomfortable telling my partner what feels good.					
I feel uncomfortable talking during sex.					
I am open with my partner about my sexual needs.					
I let my partner know if I want to have sex.					
I feel shy when it comes to sex.					
I approach my partner for sex when I desire it.					
I begin sex with my partner if I want to					
It is easy for me to discuss sex with my partner.					
I refuse to have sex if I don't want to.					
I find myself having sex when I do not really want it.					
I give in and kiss if my partner pressures me, even if I already said no.					
I have sex if my partner wants me to, even if I don't want to.					
It is easy for me to say no if I don't want to have sex.					
I would ask my partner about his or her risk of HIV.					
I would ask my partner if he or she has had sex with someone who shoots drugs with needles.					
I ask my partner if he or she has practiced safe sex with other partners.					
I ask my partners about their sexual history.					
I ask my partners whether they have ever had a sexually transmitted disease (STD).					

24. This last section will assess your sexual affect. This is related to your emotions/feelings from your current level of sexual experience. **Please use the scale from ‘not at all’ to ‘a lot’ to report the number of times you’ve felt each of the following emotions.**

The Sexual Affect Scale by Fletcher, Ward, Thomas, Foust, Levin & Trinh

“How do you feel about your current level of sexual experience?”

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	A lot
Happy					
Satisfied					
Pleased					
Proud					
Content					
Comfortable					
Anxious					
Frustrated					
Insecure/inadequate					
Sad					
Confused					
Uneasy					
Self-conscious					
Ashamed					
Regretful					
Embarrassed					

## Appendix B: The French Survey

### Section A : Caractéristiques démographiques

1. Quel âge avez-vous ?
2. Habitez-vous actuellement dans la région Ottawa/Gatineau
  - (1) Oui
  - (2) Non
3. Avez-vous vécu dans la région d'Ottawa/Gatineau pendant votre adolescence (10-17 ans) ?
  - (1) Oui
  - (2) Non
4. Êtes-vous née au Canada ?
  - (1) Oui
  - (2) Non
5. Est-ce qu'au moins un de vos parents est né à l'étranger ?
  - (1) Oui
  - (2) Non
6. Est-ce que vous vous identifiez comme une femme ?
  - (1) Oui
  - (2) Non
  - (3) Je préfère ne pas répondre
7. Quelle est votre origine ethnique ?
  - (1) Caucasienne (blanche)
  - (2) Originaire des Caraïbes
  - (3) Africaine de l'Ouest
  - (4) Africaine de l'Est
  - (5) Nord-Africaine
  - (6) Sud-Africaine
  - (7) Latine ou Hispanique
  - (8) Asiatique
  - (9) Moyen Orientale
  - (10) Mixte
  - (11) Autre: veuillez préciser
  - (12) Je préfère ne pas répondre

8. Quel est votre niveau de scolarité ?

- (1) Pas de diplôme d'études secondaires
- (2) Diplôme d'études secondaires
- (3) Études postsecondaires
- (4) Diplôme d'études postsecondaires
- 

9. Quel est votre statut civil ou le statut de votre relation amoureuse ?

- (1) Célibataire
- (2) Fréquentation (Date)
- (3) Conjoint de fait
- (4) Mariée
- (5) Séparée
- (6) Divorcée
- (7) Incertaine
- (8) Veuve
- (9) Autre: veuillez préciser
- (10) Je préfère ne pas répondre

#### Section B : Sources

J'aimerais maintenant évaluer les sources des messages liés à la santé sexuelle et reproductive que vous avez reçus lorsque vous étiez une adolescente. **Rappelez-vous qu'il n'y a pas bonne ni de mauvaise réponse.**

10. **Veillez classer chacune des sources** de messages sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive (relations sexuelles, puberté, éducation sexuelle, éducation reproductive) que vous avez reçue pendant l'adolescence (10-17 ans), **sur une échelle de 1 à 10** ; 1 étant la source la moins fréquente des messages reçus sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive et 10 étant la source la plus fréquente. Si une ou des sources parmi les choix suivants ne s'applique pas à vous, veuillez laisser la case vide.

- (1) Mère
- (2) Père
- (3) Frère
- (4) Sœur
- (5) Ami(e)s
- (6) Films/Séries télévisées/Vidéos
- (7) Enseignant(e)s du secondaire

11. **Veillez classer par ordre d'importance votre source préférée** de messages sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive suivants (relations sexuelles, puberté, éducation sexuelle, éducation reproductive) lorsque vous étiez une adolescente (10-17 ans), **sur une échelle de 1 à 10** ; 1 étant la source des messages de santé sexuelle et reproductive que vous préférez le moins et 10 étant la source que vous préférez le plus. Si une ou des sources parmi les choix suivants ne s'applique pas à vous, veuillez laisser la case vide

- (1) Mère
- (2) Père
- (3) Frère
- (4) Sœur
- (5) Ami(e)s
- (6) Films/Séries télévisées/Vidéos
- (7) Enseignant(e)s au secondaire

12. Avez-vous vécu avec au moins un parent ?

- (1) Oui
- (2) Non

13. Vous avez peut-être entendu de nombreux messages sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive par l'entremise de vos **parents** lorsque vous étiez une adolescente (10-17 ans).

Veillez lire les déclarations suivantes afin de déterminer si vous avez entendu ces messages de la part de vos parents. **Si oui, combien de fois avez-vous entendu chacun de ces messages de leur part durant votre une adolescence.** Les réponses vont de 'jamais' (par exemple, mes parents n'ont jamais dit cela), 'une seule fois', 'à quelques reprises', 'à plusieurs reprises', 'très fréquemment'.

	Jamais	Une seule fois	À Quelques reprises	À Plusieurs reprises	Très fréquemment
Les relations sexuelles ne sont permises qu'après le mariage.					
Les hommes ne respectent plus les femmes lorsqu'elles s'engagent dans des relations sexuelles.					
Les aventures d'un soir sont acceptables tant qu'elles sont consensuelles.					
Les hommes ne peuvent pas contrôler leurs pulsions sexuelles.					
Les relations sexuelles sont sacrées et ne doivent pas être partagées avec de nombreux partenaires.					

Avoir une relation sexuelle avec quelqu'un est une activité amusante, rien de plus.					
Les hommes veulent seulement avoir des relations sexuelles.					
Les femmes qui ont des relations sexuelles avec de multiples partenaires sont pires que les hommes qui font la même chose.					
Il est bon d'explorer ou d'avoir des relations sexuelles.					
Si un homme veut une relation sexuelle avec vous, vous devez accepter.					
Un homme initiera une relation sexuelle avec vous parce qu'il vous aime bien.					
Les amants (sex-friends) sont amusants.					
Les femmes ne devraient pas initier le contact sexuel avec un homme. Il appartient aux hommes de le faire.					
Les femmes sont responsables de l'utilisation de méthodes contraceptives.					

14. Avez-vous vécu avec un ou plusieurs frères ou sœurs ?

- (1) Oui
- (2) Non

15. Nous ferons de même avec la prochaine source : les frères et sœurs.

Veillez lire les déclarations suivantes afin de déterminer si vous avez entendu ces messages sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive de votre/vos frère(s) ou sœur(s). **Si oui, combien de fois avez-vous entendu chacun de ces messages de leur part durant votre adolescence.** Les réponses vont de 'jamais' (par exemple, ma sœur n'a jamais dit cela), 'une seule fois', 'à quelques reprises', 'à plusieurs reprises', 'très fréquemment'.

	Jamais	Une seule fois	À Quelques reprises	À Plusieurs reprises	Très fréquemment
Les relations sexuelles ne sont permises qu'après le mariage.					
Les hommes ne respectent plus les femmes lorsqu'elles s'engagent dans des relations sexuelles.					

Les aventures d'un soir sont acceptables tant qu'elles sont consensuelles.					
Les hommes ne peuvent pas contrôler leurs pulsions sexuelles.					
Les relations sexuelles sont sacrées et ne doivent pas être partagées avec de nombreux partenaires.					
Avoir une relation sexuelle avec quelqu'un est une activité amusante, rien de plus.					
Les hommes veulent seulement avoir des relations sexuelles.					
Les femmes qui ont des relations sexuelles avec de multiples partenaires sont pires que les hommes qui font la même chose.					
Il est bon d'explorer ou d'avoir des relations sexuelles.					
Si un homme veut une relation sexuelle avec vous, vous devez accepter.					
Un homme initiera une relation sexuelle avec vous parce qu'il vous aime bien.					
Les amants (sex-friends) sont amusants.					
Les femmes ne devraient pas initier le contact sexuel avec un homme. Il appartient aux hommes de le faire.					
Les femmes sont responsables de l'utilisation de méthodes contraceptives.					

16. Veuillez lire les déclarations suivantes afin de déterminer si vous avez entendu ces messages sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive de vos **amis/pairs**. **Si oui, combien de fois avez-vous entendu chacun de ces messages de leur part durant votre adolescence.** Les réponses vont de 'jamais' (par exemple, mon amie n'a jamais dit cela), 'une seule fois', 'à quelques reprises', 'à plusieurs reprises', 'très fréquemment'.

	Jamais	Une seule fois	À Quelques reprises	À Plusieurs reprises	Très fréquemment
Les relations sexuelles ne sont permises qu'après le mariage.					

Les hommes ne respectent plus les femmes lorsqu'elles s'engagent dans des relations sexuelles.					
Les aventures d'un soir sont acceptables tant qu'elles sont consensuelles.					
Les hommes ne peuvent pas contrôler leurs pulsions sexuelles.					
Les relations sexuelles sont sacrées et ne doivent pas être partagées avec de nombreux partenaires.					
Avoir une relation sexuelle avec quelqu'un est une activité amusante, rien de plus.					
Les hommes veulent seulement avoir des relations sexuelles.					
Les femmes qui ont des relations sexuelles avec de multiples partenaires sont pires que les hommes qui font la même chose.					
Il est bon d'explorer ou d'avoir des relations sexuelles.					
Si un homme veut une relation sexuelle avec vous, vous devez accepter.					
Un homme initiera une relation sexuelle avec vous parce qu'il vous aime bien.					
Les amants (sex-friends) sont amusants.					
Les femmes ne devraient pas initier le contact sexuel avec un homme. Il appartient aux hommes de le faire.					
Les femmes sont responsables de l'utilisation de méthodes contraceptives.					

17. Veuillez lire les déclarations suivantes afin de déterminer si vous avez entendu ces messages sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive de vos **enseignant(e)s au secondaire**. **Si oui, combien de fois avez-vous entendu chacun de ces messages de leur part durant votre adolescence.** Les réponses vont de 'jamais' (par exemple, mon enseignant n'a jamais dit cela), 'une seule fois', 'à quelques reprises', 'à plusieurs reprises', 'très fréquemment'.

	Jamais	Une seule fois	À Quelques reprises	À Plusieurs reprises	Très fréquemment
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Les relations sexuelles ne sont permises qu'après le mariage.					
Les hommes ne respectent plus les femmes lorsqu'elles s'engagent dans des relations sexuelles.					
Les aventures d'un soir sont acceptables tant qu'elles sont consensuelles.					
Les hommes ne peuvent pas contrôler leurs pulsions sexuelles.					
Les relations sexuelles sont sacrées et ne doivent pas être partagées avec de nombreux partenaires.					
Avoir une relation sexuelle avec quelqu'un est une activité amusante, rien de plus.					
Les hommes veulent seulement avoir des relations sexuelles.					
Les femmes qui ont des relations sexuelles avec de multiples partenaires sont pires que les hommes qui font la même chose.					
Il est bon d'explorer ou d'avoir des relations sexuelles.					
Si un homme veut une relation sexuelle avec vous, vous devez accepter.					
Un homme initiera une relation sexuelle avec vous parce qu'il vous aime bien.					
Les amants (sex-friends) sont amusants.					
Les femmes ne devraient pas initier le contact sexuel avec un homme. Il appartient aux hommes de le faire.					
Les femmes sont responsables de l'utilisation de méthodes contraceptives.					

18. Dernière source : les médias ! Les médias comprennent les films/séries télévisées/vidéos que vous avez vus lorsque vous étiez une adolescente.

Veillez lire les déclarations suivantes afin de déterminer si vous avez entendu ou vu ces messages sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive dans des films/séries télévisées/vidéos. Si oui, **combien de fois avez-vous entendu chacun de ces messages de leur part durant votre**

**adolescence.** Les réponses vont de 'jamais' (par exemple, je n'ai jamais entendu cela à la télévision), 'une seule fois', 'à quelques reprises', 'à plusieurs reprises', 'très fréquemment'.

	Jamais	Une seule fois	À Quelques reprises	À Plusieurs reprises	Très fréquemment
Les relations sexuelles ne sont permises qu'après le mariage.					
Les hommes ne respectent plus les femmes lorsqu'elles s'engagent dans des relations sexuelles.					
Les aventures d'un soir sont acceptables tant qu'elles sont consensuelles.					
Les hommes ne peuvent pas contrôler leurs pulsions sexuelles.					
Les relations sexuelles sont sacrées et ne doivent pas être partagées avec de nombreux partenaires.					
Avoir une relation sexuelle avec quelqu'un est une activité amusante, rien de plus.					
Les hommes veulent seulement avoir des relations sexuelles.					
Les femmes qui ont des relations sexuelles avec de multiples partenaires sont pires que les hommes qui font la même chose.					
Il est bon d'explorer ou d'avoir des relations sexuelles.					
Si un homme veut une relation sexuelle avec vous, vous devez accepter.					
Un homme initiera une relation sexuelle avec vous parce qu'il vous aime bien.					
Les amants (sex-friends) sont amusants.					
Les femmes ne devraient pas initier le contact sexuel avec un homme. Il appartient aux hommes de le faire.					
Les femmes sont responsables de l'utilisation de méthodes contraceptives.					

19. Je voudrais maintenant évaluer votre niveau d'appartenance culturelle.

Veillez lire les déclarations suivantes et choisir la réponse qui vous convient le mieux. Les réponses vont de ‘pas du tout d’accord’ à ‘tout à fait d’accord’.

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Indifférente / indécise	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
Mes traditions culturelles sont très importantes pour moi.					
Je respecte scrupuleusement mes traditions culturelles.					
Je ressens de la pression à respecter les normes et attentes imposées par ma culture.					

### Section C: Agence Sexuelle

Les prochaines questions portent sur votre niveau d'expériences sexuelles. Veillez lire les questions suivantes et y répondre au mieux de vos capacités. **Veillez noter qu'il n'y a pas de bonne ni de mauvaise réponse.**

20. Avez-vous déjà eu des relations sexuelles ?

- (1) Oui
- (2) Non
- (3) Je préfère ne pas répondre

21. Si vous avez répondu oui, avez-vous utilisé un moyen de contraception pour votre "première relation sexuelle" ? (Si vous n'avez pas eu de relations sexuelles, veuillez cliquer sur N/A).

- (1) Oui
- (2) Non
- (3) Je préfère ne pas répondre
- (4) N/A

22. Si vous n'avez pas eu de relations sexuelles, quelles en sont les raisons ?

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Indifférente / indécise	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
Je ne suis pas prête à avoir des relations sexuelles.					
L'occasion d'avoir des relations sexuelles ne s'est pas présentée.					
Les relations sexuelles avant le mariage constituent un péché.					

J'ai peur de tomber enceinte.					
J'ai peur de contracter une maladie sexuellement transmissible (MST).					
J'ai peur d'être jugée par les autres.					

23. Cette section évaluera votre affirmation sexuelle. L'affirmation sexuelle fait référence à votre capacité de communiquer avec votre/vos partenaire(s) sexuel(s) à propos de l'initiation et de la satisfaction sexuelle, à votre capacité de refuser des rapports ou des contacts sexuels non désirés et à communiquer avec votre/vos partenaire(s) sexuel(s) à propos de leur(s) antécédent(s) sexuel(s). **Veillez lire les déclarations suivantes et choisir la réponse qui vous convient le mieux. Les réponses vont de 'fortement en désaccord' à 'fortement en accord'.**

Le Questionnaire sur l'Affirmation Sexuelle by Eevett Loshek & Heather K. Terrell

	Fortement en désaccord	En désaccord	Indifférente / indécise	En accord	Fortement en accord
Je me sens mal à l'aise de dire à mon partenaire ce qui me fait du plaisir.					
Je me sens mal à l'aise à l'idée de parler durant l'acte sexuel.					
Je suis ouvert à discuter de mes besoins sexuels avec mon partenaire.					
J'en parle à mon partenaire si je veux avoir des relations sexuelles.					
Je me sens timide quand il s'agit de sexualité.					
Je vais vers mon partenaire pour avoir des relations sexuelles quand je le désire.					
J'initie les relations sexuelles avec mon partenaire si j'en ai envie.					
Il est facile pour moi de discuter de sexualité avec mon partenaire.					
Je refuse d'avoir des relations sexuelles si je n'en ai pas envie.					

Je me retrouve à avoir des relations sexuelles alors que je n'en ai pas vraiment envie.					
Si mon partenaire me met de la pression, je cède et je l'embrasse, même si je lui ai déjà dit non.					
J'ai des relations sexuelles avec mon partenaire s'il le veut, même si je n'en ai pas envie.					
Il est facile pour moi de dire non si je ne veux pas avoir de relations sexuelles.					
Je demanderais à mon partenaire quel est son risque d'avoir le VIH.					
Je demanderais à mon partenaire s'il a eu des relations sexuelles avec quelqu'un qui s'injecte de la drogue avec des aiguilles.					
Je demande à mon ou ma partenaire s'il a eu des relations sexuelles protégées avec d'autres partenaires.					
J'interroge mes partenaires sur leur vie sexuelle.					
Je demande à mes partenaires s'ils ont déjà eu une maladie sexuellement transmissible (MST).					

24. Cette dernière section évaluera votre affect sexuel. Elle est liée à vos émotions/sentiments découlant de votre niveau d'expériences sexuelles actuelle. **Veillez lire les déclarations suivantes et choisir la réponse qui vous convient le mieux. Les réponses vont de 'pas du tout' à 'tout à fait'.**

L'Échelle des Affects Sexuels par Fletcher, Ward, Thomas, Foust, Levin & Trinh

"Comment vous sentez-vous par rapport à votre niveau d'expérience sexuelle actuelle ?"

	Pas du tout	Un peu	Plutôt	Très	Tout à fait
Heureuse					

Satisfaite					
Ravie					
Fière					
Contente					
Apaisée					
Anxieuse					
Frustrée					
Insécure/inadéquate					
Triste					
Confuse					
Mal à l'aise					
Gênée					
Honteuse					
Pleine des regrets					
Embarrassée					

## Appendix C: The Certificate of Ethics Approval

04/03/2021

**Université d'Ottawa**

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

**University of Ottawa**

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

### CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

<b>Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number</b>	H-01-21-6377
<b>Titre du projet / Project Title</b>	Relationship Between the Sources of Sexual Reproductive Health Messages and the Sexual Agency of Second-Generation Migrant Ottawa Women: A Retrospective Cross-Sectional Study
<b>Type de projet / Project Type</b>	Thèse de maîtrise / Master's thesis
<b>Statut du projet / Project Status</b>	Approuvé / Approved
<b>Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	04/03/2021
<b>Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	03/03/2022

### Équipe de recherche / Research Team

<b>Chercheur / Researcher</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Role</b>
Amina ALI	École interdisciplinaire des sciences de la santé / Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences	Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator
Sanni YAYA	École de développement international et mondialisation / School of International Development and Global Studies	Superviseur / Supervisor
Bright AHINKORAH	University of Technology Sydney	Assistant de recherche / Research Assistant

### Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154    550 Cumberland Street, Room 154  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada    Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada

613-562-5387 • 613-562-5338 • [ethique@uOttawa.ca](mailto:ethique@uOttawa.ca) / [ethics@uOttawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uOttawa.ca)  
[www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie](http://www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie) | [www.recherche.uottawa.ca/ethics](http://www.recherche.uottawa.ca/ethics)

## Appendix D: The English Implied Consent Form

**Title of the study:** Relationship Between the Sources of Sexual Reproductive Health Messages and the Sexual Agency of Second-Generation Migrant Ottawa Women: A Retrospective Cross-Sectional Study

**Supervisor:** Dr. Sanni Yaya  
Full Professor  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
University of Ottawa  
Ottawa, ON  
(613) 562-5800 ext. 1940

**Student:** Amina Ali  
M.Sc Student Interdisciplinary Health Sciences

**Invitation to Participate:** You are invited to participate in the above-mentioned research study conducted by Amina Ali who is being supervised by Dr. Sanni Yaya, in fulfillment of a master's thesis project. I have been invited to participate in this project because I am a second-generation migrant woman between the age of 18-24. I am able to read in either English or French. I understand that this is an independent research project and am not obligated to participate in this study.

**Participation:** If you wish to participate in this study, please complete the attached survey. Your decision to complete and submit this survey will be interpreted as an indication of your consent to participate. The survey should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. Once you have completed the survey, please click 'submit' on the Survey Monkey website.

**Purpose of the Study:** From this research, we wish to learn the associations of the sources of sexual and reproductive health messages you received as an adolescent (10-17 years old) on your sexual agency as a young adult (18-24 years old). We receive various pieces of information about sexual and reproductive health topics through many different sources. We would like to assess which source has the largest impact on how you perceive your sexual agency when you are a young adult and the content of those messages.

**Benefits:** Your involvement in this study will have minimal direct benefits on you. It may allow you the chance to look back on the various sources and bits of information you have received when you were a teenager and choose whether you deemed them as beneficial to your sexual and reproductive health. The results of this study may generate insight on how second-generation migrants internalize the messages they receive from their social network and the media.

**Risks:** The risks in participating in the survey are minimal. Re-visiting sexual and reproductive health messages during adolescence may possibly create emotional or psychological discomfort and regret in some participants. The Sexual Assertiveness Questionnaire might contain sensitive

questions for the participant that might induce some emotional or psychological discomfort. As a result, the survey is completely anonymous. You also have the right to refuse any question that may cause such discomfort. Please contact the following resources should you require assistance: Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region at 613-238-3311 and/or The Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa at 613- 234-2266.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity:** The information that you share will remain strictly confidential and will be used solely for the purposes of this research. The only people who will have access to the research data are the principal researcher, her supervisor and Bright Opoku Ahinkorah (research assistant). In order to minimize the risk of security breaches and to help ensure your confidentiality, we recommend that you use standard safety measures such as signing out of your account, closing your browser and locking your screen or device when you are no longer using them / when you have completed the study. Results will be published in pooled (aggregate) format. Anonymity is guaranteed since you are not being asked to provide your name or any personal information.

**Conservation of data:** The surveys will be kept in a password protected flash drive at the home of the researcher and will be kept for a period of 10 years at which time they will be destroyed.

**Voluntary Participation:** You are under no obligation to participate and if you choose to participate, you may refuse to answer questions that you do not want to answer. Completion and return of the questionnaire by you implies consent. Please note that due to the anonymous nature of this study, once the survey is submitted, it cannot be withdrawn.

**Information about the Study Results:** The research findings will not be made available to the participants.

If you have any questions or require more information about the study itself, you may contact the researcher's supervisor at (613) 562-5800 ext. 1940.

If you have any questions with regards to the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5, tel.: (613) 562-5387 or [ethics@uottawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uottawa.ca).

Please keep this form for your records.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

## Appendix E: The French Implied Consent Form

**Titre de l'étude :** Relation Entre les Sources des Messages de Santé Sexuelle et Reproductive et L'agence Sexuelle des Femmes Migrantes d'Ottawa de Deuxième Génération : Une Étude Transversale Rétrospective

**Superviseur :** Dr. Sanni Yaya  
Professeur Titulaire  
Faculté des Science Sociales  
Université d'Ottawa  
(613) 562-5800 poste 1940

**Étudiante :** Amina Ali  
Étudiante à la maîtrise  
Sciences Interdisciplinaires de la Santé

**Invitation :** Vous êtes invité à participer à l'étude de recherche mentionnée ci-dessus, menée par Amina Ali et supervisée par le Dr Sanni Yaya, dans le cadre d'un projet de thèse de maîtrise. J'ai été invitée à participer à ce projet parce que je suis une femme migrante de deuxième génération, âgée entre 18 et 24 ans. Je suis capable de lire en anglais ou en français. Je comprends qu'il s'agit d'un projet de recherche indépendant et que je ne suis pas obligée de participer à cette étude.

**Participation volontaire :** Si vous acceptez de participer à ce projet, je vous demanderai de remplir le questionnaire ci-joint. Ceci devrait vous prendre 15 minutes. Le fait de remplir ce questionnaire indique votre acceptation de participer à ce projet. SVP nous retourner le questionnaire avant la fin du mois de mars. Vous pouvez vous retirer du projet en tout temps, et/ou refuser de répondre à certaines questions, sans subir de conséquences négatives.

**Objectif :** Ce projet de recherche vise à examiner l'association des messages de santé sexuelle et reproductive que vous avez reçue en tant qu'adolescente (10-17 ans) sur votre agence sexuelle présentement (18-24 ans). Nous recevons des messages sexuels et reproductifs par de nombreuses sources durant la jeunesse. Nous aimerions évaluer quelle source a eu le plus grand impact sur la façon dont vous percevez votre agence sexuelle lorsque vous êtes une adulte ainsi que le contenu de ces messages.

**Avantages :** Votre participation aura des avantages directs minimes. Ça pourrait vous donner la chance de revenir sur les différentes sources d'information sexuelle et reproductive que vous avez reçue lorsque vous étiez jeunes. Ainsi, vous pouvez évaluer si vous considérez ces sources comme étant avantageux. Les résultats de cette étude peuvent permettre de mieux comprendre comment les migrants de deuxième génération assimilent les messages qu'elles reçoivent de leur réseau social ainsi que les médias.

**Désavantages :** Les risques liés à la participation sont minimes. L'analyse des messages sexuelle et reproductive que vous avez reçue pendant l'adolescence peut créer un inconfort émotionnel ou psychologique et du regret chez certains participants. Le Questionnaire sur l'Affirmation Sexuelle contient des questions délicates qui peuvent provoquer un malaise émotionnel ou psychologique chez le participant. Nous ferons tout possible pour minimiser ces risques en

assurant que l'étude est confidentielle. Vous avez également le droit de refuser toute questions pouvant causer un tel inconfort. Si vous avez besoin de soutien, veuillez contacter les ressources suivantes : Centre de Détresse d'Ottawa et la Région au 613-238-3311 et/ou le Centre d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel au 613-789-8096.

**Confidentialité et anonymat :** L'information que vous partagerez restera strictement confidentielle. Le contenu sera utilisé uniquement pour cette étude. Seules les personnes suivantes y auront accès, Amina Ali, Dr. Sanni Yaya et Bright Opoku Ahinkorah (assistant de recherche). Afin de minimiser les risques d'atteinte à votre sécurité et pour assurer votre confidentialité, nous vous recommandons d'utiliser des mesures de sécurité standard, telles que mettre fin à la session, fermer votre navigateur Internet et verrouiller votre écran ou appareil lorsque vous ne les utilisez plus/lorsque vous avez terminé l'étude. Votre identité sera protégée car les résultats seront publiés dans un format groupé (agrégé). Votre anonymat est garanti car nous ne vous demandons pas pour votre nom ou autre information permettant de vous identifier.

**Conservation des données :** Les données recueillies seront conservées de façon sécuritaire dans des clés USB protégés par mot de passe au domicile du chercheur et seront conservées pendant une période de 10 ans. Après la période de conservation, elles seront détruites.

**Participation volontaire :** Vous n'êtes pas obligé de participer à cette étude. Si vous choisissez de participer, vous pouvez refuser de répondre aux questions auxquelles vous ne souhaitez pas répondre. Le fait de remplir et de soumettre le questionnaire implique votre consentement. Veuillez noter qu'en raison de la nature anonyme de cette étude, une fois que le questionnaire est soumis, il ne peut être retiré.

**Informations sur les résultats de l'étude :** Les résultats de la recherche ne seront pas mis à la disposition des participants.

Pour tout renseignement additionnel concernant cette étude, vous pouvez communiquer avec mon superviseur au (613) 562-5800 ext. 1940.

Pour tout renseignement sur les aspects éthiques de cette recherche, vous pouvez vous adresser au Responsable de l'éthique en recherche à l'Université d'Ottawa, 550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154, (613) 562-5387 ou [ethique@uottawa.ca](mailto:ethique@uottawa.ca).

Veuillez conserver cette feuille d'information pour vos dossiers.

Merci pour votre participation.