

Factors Influencing Premarital Sex among Students of Tertiary Institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling

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Abstract

Premarital sex among students of tertiary institution is increasing at an alarming rate in Nigeria, therefore this study sought to find out the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institution in Ilorin, Kwara state. Variables such as age, religion, gender and type of institutions were considered in relation to the study. The researchers developed a questionnaire tagged factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions (FPSSIIQ) which was used to collect data from the respondents. A two stage sampling technique was used to select 520 respondents that participate in the study. Hypothesis were formulated and tested at 0.05 level significance data collected were analysed using t-tested and analysis variance (ANOVA). The result showed that there was no significant difference on the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institution in Ilorin, Kwara state on the basis of age, gender, religion, institution, but there is a significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institution in Ilorin, Kwara state on the basis type of institutions. Based on these findings, recommendations were made to counsellors, lecturers, religious leaders and the government.

Keyword: Premarital Sex, Students of Tertiary Institution, Ilorin, Nigeria

Introduction

The proportion of sexually active youths and young people in Nigeria is increasingly high (Adeoye, Ola & Aliu, 2011). Adolescents today are going through an era of diverse changes affecting their social needs, perceptions and obligations that need to be recognized. Also, the period of adolescence is lengthening as biological maturity reached earlier and social and economic independence achieved later because of the economic increase in opportunity for further education. It is also a common knowledge that sexual activity among adolescents is increasing (Mehta, Groenen & Roque 1999).

The likelihood of beginning a sexual relationship prior to marriage is increasing globally, including the Asia and Pacific region (UNESCO & UNFPA, 1998; Mehta et al, 1999). During adolescence, the individual begins to preserve him/herself as a sexual being, while societal interest in him/her as a potential sexual partner increases (Marsiglio & Moit, 1986). It is generally agreed that both interest in and practice of sex among males are hormonally influenced in females, the social environment appear to play a more significant role (Udry, Talbert & Morris, 1986; Kiragu & Zabin, 1993). Similar views about prevalent sexual double standards were expressed by Mehta et al (1999). Thus in general, it is thought to be appropriate for adolescent men to engage in sex. It is no longer news that attitude towards sex have been changing rapidly throughout the world. The importance placed on virginity before marriage in the olden days is fast dying out and premarital sex has been accepted as "vogue" by many young people.

According to Adeoye and Aliu (2010), most young people have had sex before they reach 19 years of age. There are some other ones who engage in so called "sexual alternatives" such as fondling one's sexual organs (mutual and self masturbation). A report in the New York Times also revealed that "Oral Sex" has become a common place initiation sexual activity, widely perceived by young people as less intimate and less risky than intercourse (Scott, 2006).

The risks of engaging in premarital sex are elevated for young adults especially because their brains are not naturally mature; several brain regions in the frontal lobe of the cerebral cortex and in the hypothalamus important for self control, delayed gratification and risk analysis and appreciation are not fully mature until ages 25 – 30 (World Health Organization, 2001). Partially because of this, most adolescents are less equipped than adults to make sound sexual decisions and anticipated consequences of sexual behaviours (Taffa, Sundby, Holm-Hansen & Gunner, 2002). Teachman (2003)

observed that when adolescent engaged in heterosexual activities they are not generally concerned about the consequences. The main concerns are pleasure and satisfaction they derived from such behaviour. The consequences of premarital sex which could be devastating and confusing to the adolescent may lead her to seek advice from peers such pieces of advice include: abortion, dropping out of school, running away from home etc. Fikadua and Fidaku (2000) opined that premarital sex is one of the reproductive health problems witnessed among youths, studies such as the one carried out by HIV/AIDs prevention and control office (HAPCO, 2000) revealed that the prevalence of premarital sex among schools youths is 19% naturally. Due to the sensitivity of the issue of sex, young people receive inadequate education on reproductive health (Judith, 1999). With little knowledge about their bodies and sexuality, they find themselves vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases and infections, including HIV/AIDs, unplanned early child bearing and unsafe abortions, hence indicating that a real problem exists.

Premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions are increasing at an alarming rate, most of them are now capable of displaying sexual dexterity unmatched by adults. There are cases of students of tertiary institutions cohabitating with the opposite sex illegally; cases of students being caught having sexual intercourse in the evening classes. Also was a case of young man, an undergraduate who was caught caressing a girl's boobs in the library. The reports are little. In most tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis a large number of students live off campus i.e., reside outside the campus. It is quite difficult to differentiate at nights these tertiary institution students' residential areas from the popular Good evening streets' populated by commercial sex hawkers, who display different indecent outfits ranging from skimpy and backless dresses to micro miniskirts foreladies in which every dark spot is lore den.

Researchers such as Kiragu and Zabin, (1993); Isarabhakdi (1997); Lacson, Theacharis, Strack, Vincent and Osteria (1997); and Twa – Twa (1997) have found that many diverse factors influenced adolescents' level of sexual behaviour. Age at puberty, poverty, ethnicity, religiosity, peer relations, school performance, involvement in risk taking behaviours like mass media, drinking alcohol and taking drugs exposure and family composition and relationships have all been identified as determinants of adolescent sexual behaviour. Usually, an individual does not perform most sexual activity alone or in the absence of others sexual activity is only partly determined by factors originating within the individual, according to the intentions or inclination of adolescent are likely to be influenced by the various context in which

*Factors Influencing Premarital Sex among Students of Tertiary Institutions
in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling*

they function such as family, school, or community (Twa – Twa, 1997). In some societies, adolescents' behaviours may be influenced by family characteristics like parents' education and occupation, family income, living arrangements and conflicts between parents (Kiragu & Zabin, 1993; Oloko & Omoboye, 1993). In other societies, children are more responsible to institutions such as the school and peer (Isarabhakdi, 1997; Gorgen, Yansaine, Marx & Millimounou, 1998; Abraham & Kumar, 1999).

Problem

Pre-marital sexual activity in general is associated with various risks including Sexually Transmitted Diseases, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, child abandonment, child illegitimacy, students dropping out of school and the most severe is sexually transmitted diseases.

Previous researchers such as Okonkwo and Eze (2000) worked on attitude of Nigerian Adolescents to premarital sexual behaviour. Owuamanam (1982) researched on sexual activities of school going adolescents in Nigeria while Kiragu and Zabin (1993) researched on the correlates of premarital sexual activity among school – age adolescents in Kenya. These earlier researches focused on different variables, respondents and country. To the best knowledge of the researchers, no study has focused on factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State – implication for counsellors there by leaving a research gap to be filled.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State?
2. Is there any difference on the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State on basis of age?
3. Is there any difference on the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State on basis of gender?
4. Is there any difference on the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State on basis of religion?
5. Is there any difference on the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State on basis of type of institution?

Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference on the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State on the basis of age.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference on the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State on the basis of gender.
- H₀₃: There is no significant difference on the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State on the basis of religion.
- H₀₄: There is no significant difference on the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State on the basis of type of institution.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. Araoye (2004) stated that descriptive survey is concerned with person, place and time. It represents a probability to describe a given state of affairs that exist in a given population at a given time. The researchers considered descriptive survey method suitable for the study, because they are interested in finding out the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institution in Ilorin, Kwara State.

The population for the study consists of all students of tertiary institutions in Kwara State while the target population comprises students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state. The researcher adopted a two stage sampling procedure to select respondents for the study. Firstly, the researchers adopted purposive sampling procedure to select three (3) tertiary institutions: University of Ilorin, Al-Hikmah University and Kwara State Polytechnic. The choice of these tertiary institutions for the study was based on the assumption that these universities were large enough to represent the entire students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis. According to Daramola (1995), Purposive Sampling is a technique through which the researcher intentionally selects certain groups as samples because of their relevance to the investigation under consideration.

Secondly, simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 220 respondents from University of Ilorin, 150 from each Al-Hikmah University and Kwara State Polytechnic which made a total number of 520 respondents that participate in the study. Daramola (1995) defined simple random sampling as a sampling technique in which each element or characteristics of the population has an equal chance of being included or selected in a desire sample.

Adewumi (1988) stated that instrumentation is the process of selecting or developing measuring devices and method appropriate to a given evaluation or research problems. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, a self structured questionnaire titled: Factors Influencing Premarital Sex among Students of Tertiary Institution Questionnaire (FPSSTIQ) was used to collect data. The questionnaire consists of two sections: A and B. Section A deals with personal data of the respondents while section B has 20 items which contains general factors influencing premarital sex. In section B, the respondents were asked to respond to the items using the following keys: "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree".

Validity: Validity is the ability of a research instrument to measure accurately what it purports to measure. In order to ensure validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to five experts in the Department of Counsellor Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. The corrections made by these experts were effected accordingly.

Reliability: Reliability is concerned with how consistent an instrument measure what it purports to measure. The test re-test method of reliability was adopted to determine the consistency. The instrument was administered twice on 30 students chosen from the University of Ilorin, Al-Hikmah University and Kwara State Polytechnic with an interval of four weeks. The two scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) at 0.05 alpha level. The co-efficient (r) for the administration was found to be 0.86 which means the instrument is reliable enough for the study.

The questionnaire was administered by the researchers with the help of two research assistants. The questionnaire was filled by the respondents and it was collected on the spot to limit or reduce missing of the questionnaire.

The data collected was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical method. These were percentages and frequency counts for the demographic data

while t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tools were employed to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Demographic Data

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents on the bases of Age, Gender, Religion and Type of Institution

Age	Frequency	Percentage%
15 – 25years	378	72.7
26 – above	142	27.3
Total	520	100
Gender		
Male	273	52.5
Female	247	47.5
Total	520	100
Religion		
African Traditional Religion	46	8.8
Christianity	270	51.9
Islam	204	39.2
Total	520	100
Type of Institution		
University of Ilorin	220	42.4
Kwara state polytechnic	150	28.8
Al-Hikmah University	150	28.8
Total	520	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents on the bases of age, gender, religion and type of institution. The age group 15–25years has the highest number of respondents 378 (72.7%), those within the range of 26years and above has 142 (27.3%) of the respondents. Thus, majority of the respondents are between 15 and 25years of age. The table indicates that 273 (52.5%) of the respondents were male, while 247 (47.5%) of the respondents were female. Thus, majority of the respondents were male. The table shows that 46 (8.8%) of the respondents are African Traditional Worshippers, 270 (51.9%) were Christians, while 204 (39.2%) were Muslims.

*Factors Influencing Premarital Sex among Students of Tertiary Institutions
in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling*

The table also shows that 220 (42.4%) of the respondents were sampled from University of Ilorin while, 150 respondents (28.8%) were sampled each from Kwara State Polytechnic and Al-Hikmah University. Thus, majority of the respondents were sampled from University of Ilorin.

Research Question: What are the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State?

Table 2: Means and Rank order on the factors influencing pre-marital sex among students of the tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis

S/N	Item	Factors influencing Premarital Sex are :	Mean	Rank
1	13	Earlier history of sexual abuse	3.32	1 st
2	12	Increased rate of poverty	3.31	2 nd
3	14	Keeping boy-girl friend relationship	3.28	3 rd
4	20	Indecent dressing (revealing part of the body in provoking manner)	3.21	4 th
5	1	Curiosity about sex	3.18	5 th
6	5	Intimidation by friends	3.16	6 th
7	10	Expressing love towards another	3.15	7 th
8	11	Too much attachment with opposite sex	3.08	8 th
9	9	Having feeling of adulthood	3.06	9 th
10	6	Social recognition attributed to it by friends	3.05	10 th
11	15	Lack of self control or discipline	3.03	11 th
12	16	Availability of contraceptives	3.02	12 th
13	2	Lack of reproductive health education	2.99	13 th
14	4	Watching of pornographic images	2.97	14 th
15	7	Having feelings of love towards one's partner	2.95	15 th
16	18	Freedom gotten in the campus	2.94	16 th
17	8	Poor or misconception of abstinence from sex	2.93	17 th
18	19	Cultural practice in one's society	2.92	18 th
19	3	Alcohol or drug abuse	2.85	19 th
20	17	Lack of proper upbringing	2.78	20 th

Table 2 shows that item 13 was ranked 1st (earlier history of several abuses) with mean score of 3.32. Ranked 2nd was item 12 (increased rate of poverty) with mean score of 3.31. Ranked 3rd was item 14 (keeping boy-girl friend relationship) with mean score of 3.28. Ranked 18th was item 19 (cultural practice in one's society) with mean score of 2.92. Ranked 19th was item 3 (Alcohol or drug abuse) with mean score of 2.85 while ranked 20th was item 17 (lack of proper upbringing). Since all items in

the questionnaire have mean score greater than 2.50, it can be concluded that factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis are:- earlier history of sexual abuse, increased rate of poverty, keeping boy-girl friend relationship, indecent dressing, intimidation by friends, availability of contraceptives, watching pornographic materials, lack of proper upbringing etc. This is in line with the findings of Kiragu and Zabin, (1993); Isarabhakdi (1997); Lacson, Theacharis, Strack, Vincent and Osteria (1997); and Twa – Twa (1997) that factors influencing adolescent sexual behaviour are age at puberty, poverty, ethnicity, religiosity, peer relations, school performance, mass media, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, family composition and relationships.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation, t-value and F-ratio on the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of Age, Gender, Religion and Type of Institution

Type of Institution				N	Mean	SD	DF	Cal. value	t-	Critical t-
									value	value
Age (years)										
15-25				378	70.12	5.844	518	0.16		1.96
26&above				142	70.04	5.715				
Gender										
Male				273	70.32	5.795	518	0.90		1.96
Female				247	69.86	5.816				
Religion										
Sources of variance				Sum of square	Df	Mean squares	Cal. ratio	F-	Critical F-	
Between groups				1063.874	2	354.625	2.70	3.00		
Within groups				1959.459	517	131.288				
Total				3023.333	519					
Type of Institution										
Between groups				1036.899	2	328.9332	2.87	3.00		
Within groups				72694.193	517	121.9701				
Total				7373.093	519					

*Factors Influencing Premarital Sex among Students of Tertiary Institutions
in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling*

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value for age is 0.16 while the critical t-value is 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level. On the basis of this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institution in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of age was retained.

The table also revealed that the cal t-value for gender is 0.90 while the critical t-value is 1.60 at 0.05 alpha level. On the basis of this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institution in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of gender was accepted.

The table further revealed that the cal. f-ratio for religion is 2.70 while the critical f-ratio is 3.00 at 0.05 alpha level. On the basis of this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institution in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of religion was accepted.

Finally, the table revealed that the cal. f-ratio for type of institution is 2.87 while critical f-ratio is 3.00 at 0.05 alpha level. On the basis of this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institution in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of type of institution was accepted.

Summary of major findings

1. There is no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State based on age.
2. There is no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State based on religion.
4. There is no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin, Kwara State based on type of institution.

Discussion

The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. The results were shown on table 3. Table 3 shows the mean, standard deviation, t-value and ANOVA on the factors

influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis. From the table, result shows that the calculated t-value for age is 0.16 while the critical t-value is 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value, there is no significant difference hence, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institution in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of age was accepted. This is therefore in line with the findings of Abraham and Kumar (1999); Kiragu and Zabin (1993) who documented that there exist a strong correlation between age and sexual experience as age increases, sexual activity increases. This means that age does not affect the expression of students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis as regards factors influencing premarital sex. This could be as a result that adolescents and young adults see premarital sex as a norm and a way to express their individualities. This is in line with the findings of Solongo (2000) which revealed that age is not a significant factor in the issue of premarital sex among adolescents while this is against the findings of Lawrence (2007) which stated that not only is premarital sex universal by age 30, but it is also very common at younger ages. The findings could be because human beings have active sexual instinct throughout his/her lifetime right from the day he/she discovers his/her sexuality in pre-adulthood.

The table also revealed that the cal t-value for gender is 0.90 while the critical t-value is 1.60 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the cal. t-value is less than the critical t-value, therefore, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of gender was accepted.

This means that despite differences in physical and emotional maturation gender does not affect the expression of factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis. This is in line with the findings of Wilson, Stephen, Medora and Niluter (1999) that gender does not significantly influence premarital sex. It also corroborates the findings of Oliver and Hyde (1993) which stated that there is no significant difference in the expression of factors influencing premarital sex among adolescents on the basis of gender. This finding could be as result of the fact that the issue of sex is an instinct imprinted into the genes of each living creature, gender not significant.

The table also shows that the cal. f-ratio for religion is 2.70 while the critical f-ratio is 3.00 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the cal. f-ratio is less than the critical f-ratio, therefore, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the factors

*Factors Influencing Premarital Sex among Students of Tertiary Institutions
in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling*

influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of religion is accepted. This means that religion does not affect the expression of students of tertiary institution in Ilorin metropolis as regards factors influencing premarital sex. This could be as a result of the fact that all the major religions in Nigeria prohibit premarital sex. This finding is against the findings of Admlzyk and Brittany (2013) who stated that the religion that the adolescent belongs to still have a major effect on how likely he/she is likely to have taken a turn in bed before marriage.

Finally, the table revealed that the cal. f-ratio for type of institution is 2.87 while critical f-ratio is 3.00 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the cal. f-ratio is less than the critical f-ratio, therefore, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis on the basis of type of institution is accepted. This finding is in line with the findings of Eggleston, Jackson and Hardee (1999) that type of institution may be related to early sexual activity. Also findings of Abraham and Kumar (1999) that academic programs and type of institution and number of years in school significantly influenced the likelihood of having premarital sex.

Conclusion

It is evident from the findings of the study that premarital sex exist and the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis Kwara State are earlier history of sexual abuse, increase rate of poverty, keeping boy-girl friend relationship, indecent dressing, intimidation by friend relation, availability of contraceptives, watching pornographic materials, lack of proper upbringing etc. It was also revealed that there was no significant difference in the factors influencing premarital sex among students of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis on the bases of age, gender, religion and type of institution.

Implications for Counselling

From findings of this study, it is evident that factors influencing premarital are many therefore, the implication for this findings is that counsellors should understand these factors to organize talks and discussion for young people in order to serve as proactive and control measure for premarital sex. From the findings of this study, counsellors need to develop programs that will ensure safe sexual behaviours among youths; this kind of program will make the youth see reasons they need to abstain from premarital sex. Counsellors, through the findings of this study by implication

need to make improvements on the existing Family Life Education Program. The findings of this study implies that counsellors need to sensitize youths on assertive training skills, these kind of training can be done within and outside the school. This will help adolescent say capital NO to intimidation by friends. Counsellors should help develop new peer and parents education programs and modify the existing ones.

Recommendations

Law can only threaten people; it can never make them not to or do something. The most effective way of preventing premarital sex is that:

- Government should mount awareness programmes of healthy sexuality. The awareness should foster on healthy sexuality among adolescents. Counsellors should train children right from primary schools to mingle with opposite sex in a mature way. Counsellors should inspire adolescents to relate with mutual respect with the opposite sex. This is because; even from childhood a baby should learn to accept people as men and women; as equal partners on earth; not as subjects to fulfill lusty wishes and ambitions.
- Parents should from time to time communicate with their wards on consequences of premarital sex. This will make them understand risky sexual behaviour the more and would also facilitate positive parent – child relationship.
- Students should try as much as possible to say NO to friend's intimidation or sweet talks into premarital relationship and no to indecent dressing. They should be aware that there is more joy in abstaining from premarital sex than engaging in it.
- Mass media should desist from producing films and musical materials that will sensitize youths towards experimenting sex. Whatever that will be produced in mass media should be done moderately and decently.

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*Factors Influencing Premarital Sex among Students of Tertiary Institutions
in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling*

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