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Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Afolakemi Olasumbo Oredein

Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Arts & Education, Lead City University, Ibadan
E-mail: opefolake1@yahoo.com, a.oredein@lcu.edu.ng
Phone: (+234) 8055145060

Editorial Members

Prof. Opoola A. Oyedeji

Department of Curriculum Studies
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State
E-mail: opoolaoyedeeji@yahoo.com
Phone: (+234) 8034483431

Prof. Donald Abidemi Odeleye

Department of Guidance and Counselling
Faculty of Arts & Education, Lead City University, Ibadan
E-mail: bodeleye@gmail.com
Phone: (+234) 80601162719

Dr. Anjola Robbin

Department of Performing Arts and Culture
Faculty of Arts & Education, Lead City University, Ibadan
E-mail: anjolaelyon@yahoo.com
Phone: (+234) 8039272638

Dr. Abiola Ojo

Department of Physical and Health Education
Faculty of Arts & Education, Lead City University, Ibadan
E-mail: biolaojo@yahoo.com
Phone: (+234) 8033250280

Dr. (Mrs) E. Adeloye

Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti
E-mail: remiadeloye@yahoo.com

Dr Yi Lin

University of Florida,
Jacksonville, FL 32224-7699, USA
Email: Yi.lin@unf.edu
Phone: (904) 620-2797

Managing Editors

Anjola Robbin, Ph.D

Department of Performing Arts & Culture
Faculty of Arts & Education, Lead City University, Ibadan
E-mail: anjolaelyon@yahoo.com

Taiwo Ola, Ph.D

Department of Kinesiology, Sports Science & Health Education
Faculty of Arts & Education, Lead City University, Ibadan
E-mail: taiwosolake@gmail.com

Consulting Editors

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E-mail: Craig.mahoney@heacademy.ac.uk

Prof. Joel Babalola

Department of Educational Management
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
Email: joelbabalola2000@yahoo.co.uk Phone: +234 803518 8150,

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Department of Educational Leadership
East Tennessee State University
TN 37614-1707, USA
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Dr. Shireesh Singh

Associate Professor
Indira Gandhi National Open University, India
+919410320265, Email: shireeshsingh82@yahoo.com

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Assessment of Premarital Sex, Causes among Undergraduates of the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

¹Ibrahim, **OLOGELE**

ologele2010@gmail.com., ologele.i@unilorin.edu.ng
+2348063679928

²Nasirat Eniola, **BAKARE**

Department of Health Promotion and
Environmental Health Education,
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

³Ibrahim, **ABDULLAHI**

Department of Physical and Health Education
Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin

⁴Tawakalitu Kikelomo, **IJAODOLA**

Kwara State College of Health Technology, Offa
&

⁵Joseph Abiodun, **STEPHEN**

College of Science and Information Technology,
Department of HKHE, Tai Solarin University of Education,
Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode

Abstract

Undergraduates who engage in pre-marital sex inside and outside the school campuses are on the increase every day. This study investigates assessment of pre-marital sex, and causes among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin. The purpose of the study was to assess whether peer group influence, mass media or poverty causes premarital sex among undergraduates in the University of Ilorin. The descriptive research design of survey type was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of all undergraduates resident in school halls within the University of Ilorin. A multi-stage sampling

technique which comprises of simple, proportionate and convenience sampling procedures were used to select two hundred and thirty (230) respondents out of seven hundred and ten undergraduates resident in the hostels as participants in the study. Researchers structured questionnaire was used. The reliability of the instrument established through test-retest method. The coefficient obtained was $r = 0.83$. Inferential statistics of chi-square was used to test the hypotheses developed for the study at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study indicated that peer group influence, mass media and poverty are major causes for pre-marital sex ($92.83 > 21.03$, $90.57 > 21.03$ and $88.14 > 21.03$). The researchers concluded that peer group influence, mass media and poverty are major factors responsible for premarital sex among undergraduates in the University of Ilorin. The researchers recommend that the government should improve the economic condition of Nigerian citizens by provision of sufficient funds for education/facilities in all Nigerian secondary and tertiary institutions to reduce the financial problem faced by students in schools due to low financial support from their parents.

Keywords: Assessment, Causes, Premarital, Sex, Undergraduates
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Introduction

Premarital sex is sexual activity practised by people before they are married or who are not married to each other. The activity was considered a moral issue which was a taboo in many cultures and considered a sin by some religious bodies, but since the 1960s, it has become more widely accepted especially in western countries. Ajiboye, Aina, Oyebanji and Awoniyi (2014) opined that the age of first sex has significantly reduced generally in modern society, particularly in Nigeria. Youths often dare the consequences of premarital sex to fulfill sexual desire which in most cases have dire effects on their health, education and social lives.

Williams (2018) explained that premarital sex is universally known as two people having sex before marriage. In the past, premarital sex is considered as forbidden and doing so will lead to a heavy retribution. Now as society evolves, values and mind-sets develop and our degenerating society is slowly embracing premarital sex as a common thing in relationships. This had led to ambivalent responses from society as well as religions. The significant question is has our society embraced premarital sex? Does the youth of our society know the effects of premarital sex? Waiting until you're married to engage in sexual activity isn't just some antiquated ideal. It can be advantageous to both partners and the relationship itself. Likewise, engaging in sexual activity before being married can also affect a relationship in myriad ways.

Premarital sex is the involvement in sexual intercourse by persons who have not engaged in a marital vow or culturally recognized as having been enrolled in the marriage institution. Although marriage rites take different forms depending on cultural permissiveness, nevertheless the major thrust is the acceptance by the society. In most cases, premarital sex is not always a problem for individuals who are sexually matured since they may view it as a natural response to a natural stimulus. However, premarital sex is morally unacceptable in almost every human society that regards marriage as the legitimate requirement for sexual permissiveness, and especially among youths who are considered vulnerable to health-related problems. Both Christianity and Islam which are the major religions in Nigeria vehemently oppose premarital sex and thus prescribed specific punishment for culprits. Sometimes, premarital sex is rebranded as fornication because of its implication. In Islam, the Holy Quran Chapter 24 verse 2 prescribed that a man or woman caught in the act of fornication (sex before marriage, that is, premarital sex) should be flogged with a hundred stripes in the public and that no one should have compassion for the victim. In Christianity, the Holy Bible states

that: "the marriage bed should be kept pure, for God will judge all the sexually immoral" (Heb.13:4). In this context, keeping the marriage bed holy suggests abstinence from sex before marriage while sexually immoral refers to any unacceptable sexual acts particularly premarital sex. Thus, it is also clear that Christian faith is prohibited from engaging in sex before marriage (premarital sex) (Ajiboye et al, 2014).

The traditional practices which made premarital sex abominable paved way with the advent of civilization across the globe. In particular, the emergence of the so-called "sex liberation" in the Western world in the 1960s and 1970s significantly legitimized the acceptance of sexual behaviours, including premarital sex before marriage (Abraham & Kumar, 1999). The modern society thus appears to be more permissive in many ways because premarital sex has become an 'ordinary' activity that permeates the adolescent group in particular and the entire human existence. According to Ajiboye et al (2014): Arumala (2005), the prevalence of premarital sex among adolescents is evidenced in the magnitude of unwanted (teenage) pregnancies, abortions, high rate of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and death resulting from sexual activities among the youths age group 13 to 21 years old. Wright, Williamson and Henderson (2006) corroborated this when he stated that, throughout the world; most young people have had sex before they reach 19 years of age (the adolescence and pre-marriage age) without engaging in the marital vow. He went further to identify some other ones who engage in so-called "sexually alternatives" such as fondling their sex organs (masturbation).

Peer pressure is always tough to deal with especially when it comes to sex. Some teenagers and youths decided to have sexual relationships because their friends think sex is cool. Others feel pressured by the person they are dating. Some find it easier to give in and have sex than try to explain why not. Some youths get

caught up in the romantic feelings and believe having sex is the best way they can prove their love. Jaccard, Blanton and Dodge (2005) found out that the odds of adolescents engaging in premarital sex increased 1.65 times when his or her best friend had engaged in such behaviour. This has also shown by Raffaelli and Crockett, (2003) who's opined that peer like roommates, classmates, Club associate and other members of one's social group members equally influence one to be a deviant or conformist. One of the reasons why teenagers and adult are involved in premarital sex is in influence from peers. An adolescent's decision to engage in sexual intercourse may be influenced by many different variables, one of which is their friends. Several studies have indicated that peer's sexual attitudes are closely associated with an adolescent's sexual behaviours.

The internet is a worldwide, publicly accessible network of interconnected computer networks that transmits information and services such as electronic mail, online chat, title transfer, interlinked web pages and other documents of the World Wide Web. Cayona (2012) argued that "easy access to the internet encourages youth to views free porn movies, sex video scandals, nude pictures and any other form of pornography". More so, when youths communicate through the various sources of mobile social network such as Facebook, 2go, Twitter and Whatsapp, they become more vulnerable to premarital sex. Through these, some female youth engage in romantic discussions with men who they have not seen physically and even go to the extent of visiting them in their houses or hotel rooms. Similarly, youths have unlimited access to books and magazines which contain distorted messages on sexuality, thereby promoting prohibited sexual behaviours.

Mahnaz, Fariba, Effat, Mahgol and Ali (2013) argued that failure of parents to provide the need of their children in school due to economic hardship experienced by parents may influence

female students to rely on opposite-sex friendship, especially, relationship with boys who spend money for them adequately. Sometimes, girls may have friendship with several boys simultaneously and accept the boy's sexual request to prolong the friendship. Barrett and Beckett (1996) explained that young girls were lured into premarital sex because of poor background in order to earn money for survival. Some students practice premarital sex due to the failure of their parents to give them enough financial support or when pre-marital sex is put as a determinant to pass a course in the school. This is also in line with the view of Adekunle (2011) who opined that Nigeria has a large number of adolescents living and making a living on the streets. This has been attributed to economic factors and exposure to all forms of risks. The result is the proliferation of prostitution among the adolescent with its attendant problem.

The study conducted by Musa and Abdullahi (2013) among three hundred and eighteen (318) youths of the University of Maiduguri. The result of the study indicated that pre-marital sex has several effects and consequences such as unwanted pregnancy, loss of respect, loss of family support, depression, abortion, sexually transmitted infections, poor academic performance and alienation from the larger society.

Some undergraduates in the study area engage in pre-marital activity strongly believing that they are in love and when they find out that there is no love, they become bored and unhappy with the relationship and they also grow dislike to their partners, they may undergo self-reproached and lowered self-esteem and shame. Apart from the psychological effect, they also experience loss of social reputation, pregnancy and problem of sexually transmitted diseases. The pain and consequences associated with unlawful sexual intercourse prompted researchers to carry out a research study with the purpose to correct or discourage the indulgence of

undergraduates in the study area from pre-marital sex which is against our religions and societal values.

Statement of the Problem

Some students especially at the university level need money and materials to meet up their academic programme and if such need cannot be provided for by their parents they use other means and the easiest alternative is to engage in unlawful sexual practice. Not all need of students based on the educational programme, in most cases, some of the students need was based on fashion. For instance, some students engage in premarital sex due to plan to change clothes, change cellular phone, seeking for more cosmetics, shoes or change accommodation from school hostel to 'Oke-Odo' which is the settlement loved to stay by some undergraduates without consideration for the health and academic consequences of their practices. Researchers observed the incident of premarital sex activity occurred between a male and female undergraduates resided at "Ile- apa" village which is closer to the school campus. The female student aborted the pregnant derived from her unlawful sexual practice with the opposite sex. Parents of the female student visited the place through information received from her roommate. Unfortunately, they met the girl inside her boyfriend's room and the two students were embarrassed. The student who engages in pre-marital sex is likely to stiffer negatively from long term physical, emotional, social and moral consequences than students who choose not to engage in it. Pre-marital sex is thus riddled with multiple emotional and mental consequences.

Premarital sex among Nigerian Youths has reached an alarming stage. Assessing the causes of premarital sex among undergraduates in the study area would help to understand causes of unlawful sexual practices among undergraduates to find ways to prevent the behaviour which posed a great threat to the future of

the numerous innocent students admitted yearly into the university. The outcome of the findings will provide measures need to put in place that will protect undergraduates against both immediate and long term consequences of premarital sex on students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. Will peer group influence cause premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin?
2. Will social media cause premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin?
3. Will poverty cause premarital sex among Undergraduates of the University of Ilorin?

Hypotheses

The research hypotheses formulated for the study were as follows:

- H_{01} : Peer group influence will not significantly cause premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.
- H_{02} : Social media will not significantly cause premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.
- H_{03} : Poverty will not significantly cause premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.

Methodology

The descriptive research design of survey type was used for the study. The population for the study comprised of all undergraduates in the study area. The target populations were the students who resided on campus halls of residence. The multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select respondents who participated in the study. At stage one, simple random sampling technique was used to select three hostels out of four hostels

owned by the school. The three hostels selected were Lagos, Abuja and Trunil. The second stage, proportionate sampling technique was used to select twenty per cent of the undergraduates from each of the selected hostel based on their population. The third stage, convenience sampling technique was used to select number of respondents participated in the study based on twenty percent selected from each of the selected hostel. The numbers of respondents selected were as follows; Lagos hostel, one hundred and twenty selected (120) out of six hundred (600), Abuja hostel, eighty (80) respondents selected out of four hundred (400) and thirty respondents were selected from Trunil hostel out of One hundred and fifty (150). Two hundred and thirty (230) respondents participated in the study.

The instrument used for the study was a researcher-developed questionnaire which was validated by three experts from the related field. The reliability of the instrument established using a test-retest method. Twenty copies of the questionnaire were administered on twenty respondents from Zamfara hostel which was not part of the study. Two weeks after, the instrument was re-administered and Pearson product Moment Correlation was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. The result of correlation coefficient obtained was $r = 0.83$. The result was high enough which made the research instrument reliable for the study. The researchers administered the instrument with the help of the three trained research assistants. Non- parametric statistics of chi-square was used to analyse the result of stated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Hypotheses 1: Peer group influence will not significantly cause premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.

Table 1: Chi-square analysis showing peer group as a cause of premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.

	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	df	Cal. V	Tab. V	Deci sion
1	I have been severally invited to parties by my friends which makes me practice sexual activities before marriage	24 (10%)	31 (13%)	68 (30%)	107 (47%)				
2	I didn't mind being like my friends in whatever they do	20 (8.6%)	25 (10.8%)	80 (34.7%)	105 (45.6%)				
3	I have been told by my friend about his/her sexual experience.	20 (8.6%)	50 (21.7%)	60 (26.%)	100 (43.4%)	12	92.8 3	21.0 3	H ₀ , rejec ted
4	I desire to be like my friends in possessing material things which prompt sexual activities before marriage	22 (9.5%)	26 (11.3%)	73 (31.7%)	109 (47.3%)				
5	Having sexual activities to make up peer standard is not bad	15 (6.5%)	29 (12.6%)	62 (26.9%)	124 (53.9%)				

@ 0.05 alpha level of significance

The finding from table one reveals that the calculated chi-square value of 92.83 is greater than the table value of 21.03 with 12 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated chi-square value is greater than the critical value, therefore, the null hypothesis one is rejected. This means that Peer group influence cause premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.

Hypotheses 2: Social Media will not significantly cause premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis showing social media as a cause of premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.

	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Df	Cal. V	Tab V	Decis ion
6	I have come across many nude pictures on social media which make me involve in premarital sex.	16 (6.9%)	40 (17.3%)	70 (30.4%)	104 (45.5%)				
7	I enjoy posting my picture on social media.	20 (8.6%)	24 (10.4%)	70 (30.4%)	116 (50.4%)				
8	I have been influenced to visit pornographic sites on the internet.	21 (9.1%)	39 (16.9%)	60 (26%)	110 (47.8%)	12	90.57 21.03		H ₀ reject ed
9	Many people like products being sexually advertised on social media.	38 (16.5%)	38 (16.5%)	50 (21.7%)	104 (45.2%)				
10	I become sexually aroused when watching pornographic films	16 (6.9%)	30 (13%)	75 (32.6%)	109 (47.3%)				

@0.05 alpha level of significance

The finding from table two shows that the calculated chi-square value of 90.57 is greater than the table value of 21.03 with 12 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated chi-square value is greater than the table value, therefore, the null hypothesis two is rejected. This means that

social media cause premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.

Hypothesis 3: Poverty will not significantly cause premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis showing poverty as a cause of premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Df	Cal. V	Tab V	Decisi on
11. My parents' income cannot meet our family needs as this make me practice premarital sex for more money	20 (8.6%)	24 (10.4%)	78 (33.9%)	108 (46.9%)				
12. I can earn a living on the street through premarital sex	26 (11.3%)	35 (15.2%)	64 (27.8%)	105 (45.6%)				
13. I did not mind engaging in sexual activities to sponsor myself in school HO3 rejected	25 (10.8%)	40 (17.3%)	74 (32.1%)	91 (39.5%)	12	88.14	21.03	
14. Collecting money from sugar daddies/mummies is not bad	30 (13%)	48 (20.8%)	52 (22.6%)	100 (43.5%)				
15. Nothing is wrong with having premarital sex in order to get money to buy books	30 (13%)	40 (17.3%)	65 (28.2%)	95 (41.3%)				

@0.05 alpha level of significance

The finding from table 3 shows that the calculated chi-square value of 88.14 is greater than the table value of 21.03 with 12 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated chi-square value greater than the table value, therefore, the null hypothesis three is rejected. This means that poverty cause pre-marital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the first hypothesis tested for the study showed that peer group influence causes premarital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin. The result of the finding agreed with the view of Jaccard, Blanton and Dodge (2005) who found out that the odds of adolescents engaging in premarital sex increased 1.65 times when his or her best friend had engaged in such behaviour. This has also shown by Raffaelli and Crockett, (2003) who's opined that peers like roommates, classmates, club associate and other members of one's social group members equally influence one to be a deviant or conformist. One of the reasons why teenagers and adults involved in premarital sex is the influence of peers. An adolescent's decision to engage in sexual intercourse may be influenced by many different variables, one of which is their friends. Several studies have indicated that peer's sexual attitudes are closely associated with an adolescent's sexual behaviours.

The result of the second hypothesis indicated that social media cause pre-marital sex among undergraduates in the study area. The result of the finding supports the submission of Cayona (2012) who argued that "easy access to the internet encourages youth to views free porn movies, sex video scandals, nude pictures and any other form of pornography". More so, when youths communicate through the various sources of mobile social network such as Facebook, 2go, Twitter and Whatsapp, they become more vulnerable to premarital sex. Through these, some female youth engage in romantic discussions with men who they have not seen physically and even go to the extent of visiting them in their houses or hotel rooms. Similarly, youths have unlimited access to books and magazines which contain distorted messages on sexuality, thereby promoting prohibited sexual behaviours.

The result of the third hypothesis showed that poverty cause pre-marital sex among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin. The result of the finding corroborates with the view of Barrett and

Beckett (1996) who explained that young girls were lured into premarital sex because of poor background in order to earn money for survival. Some students practice pre-marital sex due to the failure of their parents to give them enough financial support or when pre-marital sex put as a determinant to pass a course in the school. The finding is also in line with the view of Adekunle (2011) who opined that Nigeria has a large number of adolescents living and making a living on the streets. This has been attributed to economic factors and exposure to all forms of risks. The result is the proliferation of prostitution among the adolescent with its attendant problem.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Peer group influence cause premarital sex among undergraduates in the University of Ilorin.
2. Social media cause premarital sex among undergraduates in the University of Ilorin
3. Poverty cause premarital sex among undergraduates in the University of Ilorin.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. The parents should educate their children on the danger involved on engaging in premarital sex and the need for them to keep away from a friend that motivate them to practice unlawful sexual activity which is dangerous to their health and educational achievements.
2. The ministry of health and University authority should carry out enlightenment campaign through mass media on the

danger associated with pre-marital sex as well as in the University campuses.

3. The government should improve the economic conditions of Nigerian citizens by their provision of sufficient funds for education/facilities in all Nigerian secondary and tertiary institutions to reduce the financial problem faced by Students in school due to low financial support from their parents.

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