



## **Socio-Demographic Factors Contributing to Premarital Sex Among Students of The University of Ilorin**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The practice of premarital sex has been increasing drastically lately. With the rate at which students of the Universities are involved in the practice of premarital sex, this study examines the socio-demographic factors contributing to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin. Specifically, this study examined if family background and peer influence are contributing factors to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin. The population comprised Undergraduate students of the University of Ilorin. Stratified and Systematic random sampling techniques were used to select 180 respondents for the study. A validated questionnaire tested for reliability through the split-half method using Cronbach Alpha which generated 76 was used for the study. Inferential statistics of chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) were used to analyse the postulated null hypotheses. The finding revealed that family background and peer influence are contributing factors to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin. It is, therefore, recommended that parents should care for their wards/children, give them a listening ear and guide them in necessary steps to avoid them falling into being involved in premarital sex. Students should know the type of friends they keep.*

**Keywords:** *Premarital Sex; Students; Socio-demographic Factors; University of Ilorin.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sexual interests among adolescents, as among adults, can vary greatly. Sexual activity in general is associated with various risks including unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS (Ayoade, Blavo, Farotimi & Nwozichi, 2015). The risks are elevated for young adolescents because they are sexually active. Adolescents and young adults have been found to develop varying degrees of increased interest in the opposite sex, and they are usually interested in both physical and sexual attractiveness. These tendencies expose them to certain risks. In addition,

adolescents are more likely to make decisions without making a thorough consideration of the consequences (Zalelem, Melkamu & Muluken, 2013).

Sexuality is a psychosocial phenomenon in adolescence. The increased production of “androgen” the hormone that is mainly responsible for an increase in sexual drive makes the adolescents experience a new sexual and drive urge, making them increasingly aware of their sexuality, this new awareness greatly influences the adolescents’ emotional and self-concept (Ayoade, Blavo, Farotimi & Nwozichi, 2015). Many adolescents face pressures to use alcohol, cigarettes, or other drugs and to initiate sexual relationships at earlier ages, putting themselves at high risk for intentional and unintentional injuries, unintended pregnancies and infection from sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Many also experience a wide range of adjustments and mental health problems. Behaviour patterns that are established during this process, such as drug use or non-use and sexual risk-taking or protection, can have long-lasting positive and negative effects on future health and well-being. As a result, during this process, adults have unique opportunities to influence young people (Anene, Ojinaka & Ndie, 2017).

Premarital sex is a sexual activity practised by unmarried people. Historically, premarital sex was considered a moral issue which was taboo in many cultures and considered a sin by some religions, but since about the 1960s, it has become more widely accepted, especially in Western countries. The terms premarital sex have been suggested, including non-marital sex (which overlaps with adultery), youthful sex, adolescent sex and young-adult sex (Anene, Ojinaka & Ndie, 2017). In some cultures, for example in many modern-day Western cultures, many people do not hold value in sexual abstinence before marriage.

According to a 2001 UNICEF survey, in 10 out of 12 developed nations with available data, more than two-thirds of young people have had sexual intercourse while still in their teens. In Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States, the proportion is over 80%. In Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, approximately 25% of 15-year-olds and 50% of 17-year-olds have had sex (UNICEF, 2010). In a 2005 Kaiser Family Foundation study of US teenagers, 29% of teens reported feeling pressure to have sex, 33% of sexually active teens reported being in a relationship where they felt things were moving too fast sexually and 24% had done something sexual they didn’t want to do (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005).

The implications of premarital sex for both boys and girls were found to have serious effects. The boys are exposed to early fatherhood, which could imply the end of their academic career or vocational training, poverty and being encumbered with the burden of

providing for the mother and the unplanned child. Female adolescents can experience an unplanned and unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion that can lead to infertility or even death in extreme cases, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infections, dangers of dropping out of school, an early and unplanned marriage which can lead to lifelong unhappiness, increased risk of pregnancy-induced hypertension anaemia, obstructed labour and death. The foetus is prone to be delivered preterm, small for date and at risk of prenatal death among others (Ojengbede, Otolurin & Fabanwo, 1987; Aboyeji, 1997). Wong (2012) was of the view that the measure of peer sexual experience that was common among adolescents indicated a strong peer influence such that those whose peers were thought to have had sexual experience have themselves had premarital sex than those whose peers have not had such an experience.

Alan Guttmacher Institute (2006), as well as Biddlecom, Asare and Bankole (2009), reported that adolescent females who lived with both parents were less likely than females who had other living arrangements to have ever had sex, though, the same was not found for males. Two parents are more likely to provide the best emotional support and life lessons necessary for a child's development and psychosocial adjustment. Also, adolescents living in two-parent families take advantage of the presence of their parents in the home and can internalize from both father and mother about heterosexual love and commitment (Markham, Tortolero, Escoba, Parcel, Hamst & Addy, 2003).

Several risky sexual behaviours among students and adolescents have created a dilapidated environment that tends to eliminate a supposedly useful population. Painstaking studies have been conducted to evaluate the factors which are specifically responsible for this trend (Akinleye & Onifade, 1996; Ugoji, 2008) and it was observed that the current trend of sexual behaviours such as premarital sexual intercourse among young people could be linked to various customs, rapid urbanization, family background, peer pressure, economic situation, gender and educational background of parents (Akinleye & Onifade, 1996; Ugoji, 2008).

The impact of certain socio-demographic factors on premarital sex among adolescents has been investigated by various researchers and they found that the educational level of the household and the influence of urban and rural settlement have roles to play in premarital sexual intercourse among adolescents (Wellings, Collumbien, Slaymaker, Singh, Hodges & Patel, 2006; Stephenson, 2009). Studies by other researchers have found religion to have an impact on pre-marital sexual intercourse among adolescents in Africa (Omoteso, 2006; Sadgrove, 2007; Sambisa, Curtis & Stokes, 2010). Other socio-

demographic factors that may have a direct influence on premarital sexual intercourse are young age, female sex, and urban residence (Becker, Glass, Brathwaite & Zenilman, 1998; Bernstein, Curriero, Jennings, Olthoff, Erbeling & Zenilman, 2004). Other factors associated with premarital sex include the influence of media, peer pressure, insatiable lust for money, cultural influence, sexual harassment, curiosity, poor school discipline, location of school, religious teachings and literacy (Ajiboye, 2006; Adegoke, 2013).

In study conducted by Adeyemi (2013) on the proportion of young people who are sexually experienced by age 15 and 18 years old in Nigeria in 2008 showed significant variations between male and female. Where 5.7% of male of age 15 have had sex the female population was 15.7%. At age 18, the statistics showed that 25.6% of males have had sex but the females' proportion was 49.3%, which is remarkably higher than their male counterparts (Adeyemi, 2013). In Thailand and the Philippines, family structure was found to be associated with premarital sex; youths living with single parents have a higher rate of premarital sexual activities than those living with both parents (Stewart, Sebastiani & Lopez, 2001).

In Turkey, Mechet (2006) identified the mother's education, age, ethnicity and employment status as the most important predictors of attitudes of young women toward premarital sex. It can be deduced from these studies that home/family background is a common factor that predisposes youths to premarital sex. Premarital sex which involves having multiple sexual partners is now a growing common sexual behaviour among young people. The findings of a study conducted in Uganda (Agardh, Tumwine & Ostergren, 2011; Agardh, Odberg-Pettersson & Ostergren, 2011) and in Ibadan, Nigeria (Sunmola, 2005) proved that gender and religion were major predictors of multiple sexual partners among youths.

### **Statement of the Problem**

University life is characterized, for many students, by more independence and opportunities for social mixing than before. The situation is aggravated by the overall poor socioeconomic, environment, harmful traditional practices, low contraceptive use and voluntary counselling and test utilization. A study in Malaysia reported that young people's sexual intercourse was significantly associated with socio-demographic factors like environmental factors (living away from parents) and substance use (alcohol use, cigarette smoking and drug use) (Anwar, Sulaiman & Ahmad, 2008).

It has been observed that most students are viewed as youths engaged in premarital sexual intercourse. Most of these adolescents are prone to many series of serious health problems which are naturally diverse. These series of problems range from sexually

transmitted infections (STIs), unsafe abortion, teenage pregnancies, teenage mothers, unintended pregnancies, stillbirth, depression, anxiety, dropping out of school, early and unplanned marriage which can lead to lifelong unhappiness, increased risk of pregnancy-induced hypertension anaemia, obstructed labour and death. These problems are not limited to affecting just the two individuals involved but tend to affect their families, society and the nation at large. The family is affected in such a way that they become the talk of society, the society is affected as it leads to breeding of truant and the nation is affected as it reduces the productivity of the nation.

Forced premarital sex does lead to mental depression and dilemma. Another danger is the transfer of sexually transmitted diseases; as premarital partners are likely not aware of diseases that spread through intercourses. Getting pregnant through premarital sex is another disastrous consequence of premarital sex. More than 700,000 teenagers become pregnant each year. One in three (34%) females became pregnant at least once before age 20. Even though, the reproductive health problem of young people is critical among both sexes: young girls are more affected because of their biological, economic and social vulnerability (Anwar, Suluiman & Ahmad, 2008).

The causes of premarital sexual intercourse include poverty, broken homes, peer group influence, and modernization. The root cause of premarital sexual intercourse includes mass media among others. Umar (2011) is of the view that poor home life and peer group are the root causes of premarital sexual intercourse. So, this study is designed to assess socio-demographical factors contributing to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin.

## **METHOD**

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey. The descriptive survey approach was considered appropriate since the researcher is interested in collecting information from a representative sample of undergraduate students of the University of Ilorin based on socio-demographic factors contributing to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin. The population of this study comprise all students at various faculties in the University of Ilorin. The population was stratified based on its faculties, whereby a faculty was sampled conveniently. Faculty of Education as the sampled faculty consist of ten thousand two hundred and ninety-two students (10292). Using systematic



random sampling techniques, 180 respondents were sampled from all departments under the faculty. This involves selecting 20 respondents from all nine departments in the faculty.

A researcher self-designed questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on Socio-Demographic Factors contributing to Premarital Sex (QSDFCPS)” was based on four Likert type rating scale formats of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. The content and construct validity of the instrument were adopted. To determine the reliability of the instrument, 20 copies of questionnaires were administered to some set of students outside the sampled faculty. A split-half method of reliability was employed. The result obtained was analysed through Cronbach Alpha at a 0.05 level of significance. A correlation coefficient ‘r’ of .76 was obtained therein that ascertain if the instrument is reliable. Copies of the questionnaire for this study were administered by the researcher, with the help of two research assistants who were trained on how to administer and retrieve the instruments. The data collected for this study was collated, sorted, coded and subjected to appropriate statistical analysis. Percentile analysis was used to answer the research questions while inferential statistics of Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) was used to test the null hypotheses set for the study at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Research Question 1:** Will family background be a contributing factor to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin?

**Table 1.**  
 Percentile Analysis of Family Background and Premarital Sex

S/N	Statement	SA	A	Positive Response	D	SD	Negative Response
1	Students living with a single parent are more likely to participate in premarital sex	98 (54.4%)	51 (28.3%)	149 (82.7%)	21 (11.7%)	10 (5.6%)	31 (17.3%)
2	Family poverty or economic depravity has been linked with premarital sex practice among students.	79 (43.9%)	60 (33.3%)	139 (77.2%)	33 (18.3%)	8 (4.4%)	41 (22.7%)
3	Lack of parental monitoring and parents working long hours push the adolescent into premarital sex.	88 (48.9%)	41 (22.8%)	129 (71.7%)	30 (16.7%)	21 (11.7%)	51 (28.4%)
4	Low educational levels of parents were associated with increased risky sexual behaviour.	69 (38.3%)	47 (26.1%)	116 (64.4%)	34 (18.9%)	30 (16.7%)	64 (35.6%)
<b>Column Total</b>		<b>334</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>533 (74.0%)</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>187 (25.9%)</b>

In Table 1, the majority strongly agreed and agreed that family background is a contributing factor to premarital sex. Hence, family background is a contributing factor to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin.

**Research Question 2:** Will peer influence be a contributing factor to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin?

**Table 2.**  
 Percentile Analysis of Peer Influence and Premarital Sex

S/N	Statement	SA	A	Positive Response	D	SD	Negative Response
1	Associating with friends who are already exposed to sex can contribute to participation in premarital sex among teenagers	119 (66.1%)	29 (16.1%)	148 (82.2%)	22 (12.2%)	10 (5.6%)	32 (17.8%)
2	Peer pressure is considered to contribute to student sexual behaviours	87 (48.3%)	53 (29.4%)	140 (77.7%)	28 (15.6%)	12 (6.7%)	40 (22.3%)
3	Students who sought information from their peers were sexually experienced compared to those who sought information from parents, teachers etc.	81 (45.0%)	48 (26.7%)	129 (71.7%)	38 (21.1%)	13 (7.2%)	51 (28.3%)
4	People's orientation about sex can contribute to engagement in premarital sex among teenagers.	73 (40.6%)	62 (34.4%)	135 (75.0%)	31 (17.2%)	14 (7.8%)	45 (25.0%)
<b>Column Total</b>		<b>360</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>552</b> <b>(76.7%)</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>168</b> <b>(23.3%)</b>

In Table 2, the majority strongly agreed and agreed that peer influence is a contributing factor to premarital sex. Hence, peer influence is a contributing factor to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin.

### Hypotheses Testing

**Hypothesis one:** Family background will not be a significant contributing factor to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin.

**Table 3.**  
 Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) Analysis on the Result of Family Background and Premarital Sex.

Variable	N	Df	Cal. Value	Table Value	Remarks
Family Background and Premarital Sex	180	9	155.91	16.92	Ho rejected

In Table 3, it was revealed that the critical value of 155.912 is greater than the table value of 16.92 @ 0.05 alpha level at the degree of freedom of 9. Thereby the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. Hence, family background is a significant contributing factor to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin.

**Hypothesis Two:** Peer influence will not be a significant contributing factor to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin.

**Table 4.**  
Chi-Square ( $X^2$ ) Analysis on the Result of Peer Influence and Premarital Sex

Variable	N	Df	Cal. Value	Table Value	Remarks
Peer Influence and Premarital Sex	180	9	159.52	16.92	Ho rejected

In Table 4, it was presented that the critical value of 159.519 is greater than the table value of 16.92 @ 0.05 alpha level at the degree of freedom of 9. Thereby the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. Hence, peer influence is a significant contributing factor to premarital sex among students of the University of Ilorin.

## Discussion

Hypothesis one: stated that majorities agreed that family background is a contributing factor to premarital sex among students in the University of Ilorin because the critical value of 155.91 is greater than the table value of 16.92 @ 0.05 alpha level at the degree of freedom of 9. Thereby the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. This implies that family background is a contributing factor to premarital sex among students at the University of Ilorin. This finding corroborates with the report of Alan Guttmacher Institute (2006), as well as Biddlecom, Asare and Bankole (2009), reported that adolescent females who lived with both parents were less likely than females who had other living arrangements to have ever had sex, though, the same was not found for males. Two parents are more likely to provide a best emotional support and life lessons necessary for a child's development and psychosocial adjustment. Also, adolescents living in two-parent families take advantage of the presence of their parents in the home and can internalize from both father and mother about heterosexual love and commitment (Markham, Tortolero, Escoba, Parcel, Hamst & Addy, 2003).

Hypothesis two: stated that majorities agreed that peer influence is a contributing factor to premarital sex among students in the University of Ilorin because the critical value of 159.52 is greater than the table value of 16.92 @ 0.05 alpha level at the degree of freedom of 9. Thereby the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. This implies that peer influence is a contributing factor to premarital sex among students at the University of Ilorin. The report of this finding is ascertained by Wong (2012) who was of the view that the measure of peer



sexual experience that was common among the adolescents indicated a strong peer influence such that those whose peers were thought to have had sexual experience have themselves had premarital sex than those whose peers have not had such an experience.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that family background is a significant contributing factor to premarital sex among students at the University of Ilorin. Also, peer influence is noted to greatly contribute to premarital sex among students at the University of Ilorin.

### Recommendations

The study therefore suggested that family members especially parents should care for their wards/children, give them a listening ear and guide them in necessary steps to avoid them falling involved in premarital sex. Also, as friends have a lot to do in one's life, students should know the type of friends they keep, exposed & corrupt friends will offer nothing than their bad ways and make one fall into a similar act, and the victim can be an agent of premarital sex.

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