



Causes and Consequences of Premarital Sex among Secondary School Students in Southern Ijaw LGA of Bayelsa State

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Abstract: This study was carried out to examine the causes and consequences of premarital sex among secondary school students in the Southern Ijaw local government area of Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study examined the factors responsible for secondary school student's involvement in pre-marital sex and also evaluated the effects of premarital sex. Lastly, the study recommends solutions. The study employed the descriptive survey design, from the responses obtained and analyzed, the findings revealed that pressure, economic reasons, and parental influence are some of the causes of pre-marital sex among secondary school students. Also, some of the effects of pre-marital sex among secondary school students are unplanned pregnancy, school dropout, and Poor academic performance. Lastly, some of the ways to curb pre-marital sex among secondary school students are that parents should provide the necessary materials for their children to discourage premarital sex, health educators should work in collaboration with the curriculum designers in the secondary school education and Sensitization on the effect of pre-marital sex. The study thereby recommends that parents should ensure that useful pieces of information on sexuality are provided for adolescents at home to guide them against being influenced by destructive information from friends and media.

Keywords: Premarital Sex, Students, Causes, Consequences, Secondary School.

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Research Paper

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INTRODUCTION

Premarital sex is voluntary sexual intercourse between unmarried persons and is increasing worldwide (Shahid, 2017). Adolescence is a crucial and transitional stage in life, from childhood to adulthood that is characterized by curiosity and adventures (Aleke, 2021). Ogbueghu (2017) stated that the rate of teenage pregnancy and the high level of indulgence in premarital sex among school children in this 21st century have become subjects of discourse. Ezeugwu and Ede (2016) revealed children have been observed engaging in sexual activities without proper education, and as such, they are exposed and induced to unfamiliar risks and Sexually Transmitted Diseases [STDs] such as gonorrhea, syphilis, candidiasis, chlamydia, and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome [AIDS] and so on.

Consequently, Eze (2014) stated that other motives that encourage premarital sex among adolescents include the desire by males for sexual gratification, the desire by females to develop romantic relationships that will lead to marriage, urbanism, negative peer influence, mass media, and poor

socioeconomic status. The aforementioned reason, coupled with poor sexuality training, exposes students to premarital sex and risks like early pregnancy, school dropout, self-guilt, poverty, inferiority complex, STDs, and death. Also, drug misuse or abuse could lead many youths to indulge in premarital sex due to peer influence (Charles *et al.*, 2024; Yenagoa *et al.*, 2024).

Anene (2017) opined that adolescent secondary school students, at this period of their life, are not yet knowledgeable about sex and its complications; as there is limited information from the school curriculum, school teachers, parents, or even church leaders, the only available information on sex for them is from their peers who are not well informed. Though the Nigerian government has in the past introduced sex education policy in secondary schools across the country, socio-cultural and religious factors have continued to affect its effects in schools. To make matters worse, there is no functional sex education subject in secondary school curriculum where the causes and consequences of premarital sex could be taught to the students.

However, premarital sex among adolescents or secondary school students doesn't just happen in a vacuum as there are external factors that play a vital role in its formation or execution. Students in secondary school tend to fall into a world of knowledge and information that influences their perception. The study analyses the causes and consequences of premarital sex among secondary school students in Southern Ijaw Local Government. The study aimed to analyze the causes and consequences of pre-marital sex among secondary school students in the Southern Ijaw local government area, examine the factors responsible for secondary school students' involvement in pre-marital sex, evaluate the effects of premarital sex among secondary school students, and ascertain students' perceived solutions to premarital sex among secondary school students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research adopted the descriptive survey design in determining the "causes and consequences of premarital sex among secondary school students in SILGA Bayelsa. The design was considered appropriate because it will avail the researcher the opportunity to meet the respondents one on one (close contract) the study involved collecting data from a sample of the population of students in four schools in the Southern Ijaw Local Government Area. Hence, the findings of this study will depend solely on the opinions of the respondents. The area of this study is the Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprises all students in secondary schools in Southern Ijaw local government area, Bayelsa, Nigeria. The total number of secondary schools in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area is forty-seven (47). The students in the schools are fourteen thousand and twenty-eight (14, 028) students (Bayelsa State Post Primary School Board, 2023). This is based on the presumption that they fall within the adolescent age range as specified in the research.

A sample of the study was made up of a hundred students from four schools out of the total population. The technique will be stratified by simple random sampling to represent the total population.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire which is designed by the researcher using the Likert-type scale rating, will be used as the instrument for data collection. The face and content validity of the instrument was determined by the supervisor of the study and two other experts in measurement and evaluation from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University. The instrument was given to the respondents and collected on the spot to avoid the loss cases. The data generated from the instrument was analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics.

Data Analysis

The data collected will be analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics. The Likert four (4) points rating scale will be used and weighed as follows: strongly agreed 4 points, agreed 3 points, disagreed 2 points, and strongly disagreed 1 point.

The formula used is as follows:

$$\text{Mean} = \bar{x} = \frac{\sum fx}{n}$$

Where: $\bar{x}$ = Mean; $\sum$ = Summation; F = Frequency; N = Number of Respondents

The cut-off Mean ($\bar{x}$) for each item in the instrument is 2.5. Therefore, all items with a Mean score of 2.5 and above would be identified as "agree", while any item with a mean score of 2.49 and below would be considered as "disagree".

RESULTS

Research question 1: What are the factors responsible for secondary school students' involvement in pre-marital sex?

Table 1: Factors responsible for secondary school students' involvement in pre-marital sex

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	SD (2)	D (1)	Total	Mean	Decision Rule
1.	Curiosity is one of the factors responsible for secondary school students' involvement in pre-marital sex	31 (124)	23 (69)	32 (64)	14 (14)	100 (271)	2.7	Agreed
2.	Peer pressure is one of the factors responsible for secondary school students' involvement in pre-marital sex.	20 (80)	43 (129)	20 (40)	17 (17)	100 (266)	2.6	Agreed
3.	Infatuation mistaken for love is one of the factors responsible for secondary school students' involvement in pre-marital sex	40 (160)	15 (45)	21 (42)	24 (24)	100 (271)	2.7	Agreed
4.	Lack of attention and control at home is one the factors responsible for secondary school students' involvement in pre-marital sex	29 (116)	23 (69)	25 (50)	23 (23)	100 (258)	2.5	Agreed
5	Naivety and lack of moral teaching are the factors responsible for secondary school students' involvement in pre-marital sex	30 (120)	32 (96)	25 (50)	13 (13)	100 (279)	2.7	Agreed
Grand Mean Response Score							2.6	Agreed

Source: Field, 2024; cut-off mean = 2.50. N=100

A mean score of 2.5 and above is considered agreed, while any item with a mean score of 2.49 and below is considered disagreed. From the data presented in the table above, it shows that the grand mean score of 2.6 is greater than the cut-off mean. This shows that the above are indeed factors that are responsible for

secondary school students' involvement in pre-marital sex.

Research Question 2: What are the effects of premarital sex among secondary school students?

Table 2: Effects of premarital sex among secondary school students?

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	SD (2)	D (1)	Total	Mean	Decision Rule
6.	Pregnancy is one of the effects of premarital sex among secondary school students	38 (158)	31 (93)	20 (40)	11 (11)	100 (302)	3.0	Agreed
7.	Sexually transmitted diseases are one of the effects of premarital sex among secondary school students	33 (132)	19 (57)	25 (50)	23 (23)	100 (262)	2.6	Agreed
8.	Shame and moral/religious degradation are some of the effects of premarital sex among secondary school students.	22 (88)	41 (123)	28 (56)	9 (9)	100 (276)	2.7	Agreed
9.	Lack of focus on one's education and future is one of the effects of premarital sex among secondary school students	40 (160)	16 (48)	21 (42)	23 (23)	100 (273)	2.7	Agreed
10.	Negative and failing mental health is one of the effects of premarital sex among secondary school students	41 (164)	20 (75)	20 (20)	19 (19)	100 (278)	2.7	Agreed
Grand Mean Response Score							2.7	Agreed

Source: Field, 2024; cut-off mean = 2.50. N=100

Mean score of 2.5 and above is considered agreed, while any item with a mean score of 2.4 and below is considered disagreed. From the data presented in the table above, it shows that the grand mean score of 2.7 is greater than the cut-off mean. This implies that the

above are some of the effects of premarital sex among secondary school students.

Research Question 3: How can premarital sex among secondary school students be curbed?

Table 3: Methods of curbing premarital sex among secondary school students

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	SD (2)	D (1)	Total	Mean	Decision Rule
11.	Secondary students should abstain from premarital sex	40 (160)	11 (33)	26 (52)	23 (23)	100 (268)	2.6	Agreed
12.	Parents should look after their children very well	36 (144)	21 (63)	25 (50)	18 (18)	100 (275)	2.7	Agreed
13.	Schools should put measures in place and also carry out extra classes to teach against premarital sex	20 (80)	21 (63)	35 (70)	24 (24)	100 (237)	2.3	Disagreed
14.	The negative effects of premarital sex to all aspects of their lives should be taught to them	42 (168)	23 (69)	20 (40)	15 (15)	100 (292)	2.9	Agreed
15.	Religious bodies and NGOs should also play a role	37 (148)	35 (105)	15 (30)	13 (13)	100 (296)	2.9	Agreed
Grand Mean Response Score							2.6	Agreed

Source: Field, 2024; cut-off mean = 2.50. N=100

Mean score of 2.5 and above is considered agreed, while any item with a mean score of 2.4 and below is considered agreed. From the data presented in the table above, it shows that the grand mean score of 2.6 is greater than the cut-off mean. This shows that the majority of the above would constitute effective methods to curb premarital sex among secondary school students.

DISCUSSION

Table 1, sought to find out the causes of secondary school student's involvement in premarital sex.

The finding of the first research question agrees with the research finding of Mzeri and Wandele (2022) who also argue that pre-marital sex does not happen in a

vacuum but is directed by various factors all of which end with the decision of the teenager.

Table 2, considered the effects of premarital sex, and revealed that some of the effects of premarital sex are: pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, shame and moral/religious degradation, lack of focus on one's education and future, and negative and failing mental health. This is because of the rise of mental health cases in Gen Z, and premarital sex negatively affects it too.

The finding of the second research question tallies with the works of Offor and Offiah (2021) and Adama and Ejih (2021), as they all opined that the health, education, and societal aspects of teens are going to be drastically affected.

Table 3, the last item on the research question sought to find out the possible methods of curbing premarital sex among secondary school students, the result revealed that secondary students should abstain from premarital sex, parents should look after their children very well, the negative effects of premarital sex to all aspects of their lives should be taught to them, religious bodies and NGOs should also play a role among others can help reduce or stop student's involvement in premarital sex in the country at large.

The finding of the third research question tallies with the work of Onbumeha and Agbonifoh (2019) who recommend public enlightenment campaigns as a means to curb the rise and prevalence of premarital sex.

CONCLUSION

Premarital sex is a well-known concept across the country of Nigeria and unfortunately even at the secondary school level. The high rate of this demands a look into the causes as well as the consequences. Thus, this study concludes that: Secondary students in Southern Ijaw LGA have external and internal factors that push them to engage in premarital sex. Secondary students in Southern Ijaw LGA who engage in the act suffer negative consequences. There are indeed methods to curb the prevalence of premarital sex among secondary students in Southern Ijaw LGA. Based on the findings of this study, NGOs should focus more on secondary schools in local government areas the way they do in metropolitan areas. The consequences of premarital sex should be driven home in the minds of secondary school students. Students should form discussion groups supervised by teachers on the issue of premarital sex and its effects and how to overcome its causes.

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