

PREMARITAL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN ONDO STATE

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Abstract

The study examined the causes and consequences of premarital sexual behavioural practices among secondary school students in Ondo-State with concerns in the increase of high rate of social and health challenges. Variables such as the students' residence, students' attitudes and their locations were examined. A sample of 80 adolescent students were selected from each Local Government using stratified random sampling technique, making a total of 720 male and female. A self-constructed questionnaire titled "Premarital Sexual Practices (PSP) was used for the study. Data collected were analyzed with the use of descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency counts, percentage, and student t-test. The study revealed that majority of adolescents in Ondo State lived with both parents. It was found out that there is a significant relationship between students' attitude and their involvement in premarital sexual activities. It was also found that there is no significant difference in the sexual involvements of adolescents attending schools in rural and urban areas. Based on these findings, it was, therefore, recommended that adequate sex information should be given to adolescents by establishing youth advisory centers to provide necessary information on sexual matters. Parents should educate their children on reproductive health and refer aspects they cannot handle to school counsellors and health practitioners. Federal and State Governments should make provision for counselling services with adequate funding in all institutions of learning. Sex education should be given priority in education policy.

Key words- adolescent, premarital sex, secondary school, involvement, attitude.

Introduction

Premarital sexual behavior refers to any sexual activity involved in before someone gets married, that is, any form of sexual contact prior to entering into legal marriage. This could encompassed virginal intercourse, oral sex, and any other forms of sexual activities. Culturally, premarital sex was considered as a taboo with much emphasis on virginity, and it was accepted and considered as sin by numerous religious practitioners, most especially Christians. Biblically, premarital sex was frowned upon, it was recorded in the first book of Corinthians, chapter six, verse 13, that, "the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord and the Lord for the body". In verse 15, it was written that, "Do ye not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!". God who instituted marriage, designed sex to be enjoyed within a committed marriage.

Nowadays, it seems as if people have deviated from the cultural norms and the value system pertaining to sexuality. For example, in the modern western cultures, many people do not hold value in sexual abstinence before marriage which is now resulting to social and health related problems such as unplanned pregnancy, high rate of abortion, acquiring of sexually transmitted diseases, social stigma, rejection, premature death, poor academic performances and drop-outs to mention a few. Majority of the adolescents of nowadays seen sexual practices as a social conduct. Issues of sex are freely discussed, hugging, pecking, and romancing are

done openly without fear and shame (Owena & Fincham, 2011), it was stressed that there are overt display of nakedness common with adolescents culminating to immoral acts.

The rate of people's involvement in premarital sexual practices appear to be increasing tremendously. Ogendegbe (1996), reported that premarital sex is now very common over the past few decades, what was believed to be wrong in 1950's and 1960s has become a norm in today's society. He reiterated that majority believed that premarital sex as is unavoidable act for adolescents. Abiola, (2000) noticed that sexual permissiveness has been the characteristics of the social life of western regions with reference to Nigerian situation, expressed his concern over the premarital sexual practices that adolescents now see as a must for socialization. This was evident in a study by Bane (2014), who found out that the traditional ideas of chastity before marriage have faded out in today's societies. Values placed on sanctity of sex for procreation appears to have been overthrown in favour of sexual promiscuity. This sufficiently makes it indisputable that the traditional ideas of chastity before marriage for both male and female have faded out from virtually all human societies. It seems that majority of today's adolescent particularly those in Ondo State secondary schools, regards premarital coitus as reasonable and normal with the notion that the era of virginity before marriage has gone. As observed by the researcher, virginity means nothing to the new generation of adolescents. Issue of virginity is no longer

important to them. Adolescents strongly hold on to the notion that it is an abomination for young women, if their husbands should meet them as a virgin.

As observed by Baumeister and Mendosa (2011), adolescents are easily influenced by their peers with little persuasions especially those that are denied of parental guidance. In the African traditional set up, discussion about premarital sex is seen as a taboo by the elders, thus the children are denied sex information at home (Adegoke, 2003). Consequently it appears as if adolescents only received this kind of information in the school settings among their peers, social media and other external sources, like Facebook, WhatsApp and so on. This kind of information could be inadequate and incorrect. Alesha, (2013) asserts that, the danger in peers information is that members must be in conformity with others in the group, either they are right or wrong the interest of the group must be strictly adhered to. It was opined by Kazaura & Masatu, (2009) that, peers are so powerful to the extent that oftentimes, they overrule parent's enforced code of conduct upon the children. He further said that parents do not teach their children to start a relationship, but peers do.

A lot of concerns have been expressed about the delinquent behavior of adolescents in connection with their involvement in sexual practices. Traditional sex standards prohibit premarital sex among youths principally on grounds that unplanned coital sex may have overwhelming consequences as found out by Owuamanam, (1988). Physical and psychological consequences of premarital sexual indulgence was expressed respectively by Esen, (1994) & Bane, (2014) as guilt and anxiety. Under physical, venereal diseases was identified among boys and pregnancy in girls. According to Furman & Shaffer (2011), "about 72% of death among young females is attributed to abortion". It was also observed that there was an increase in expulsion and withdrawal in the secondary school as a result of unwanted pregnancies and death from abortion. A study by Spreacher (2014) revealed that about 85 out of every 1000 children died in the country as a result of Childhood "AIDS". Centre for Disease control and Prevention (1997) as quoted in Olusegun (2010), "more than one million teenage boys acquired sexually transmitted disease in Nigeria every year". All these was attributed to premarital involvement of young people in sexual activities.

Although the practice could be linked with the rapid urbanization that gives room to new social customs and the breakdown of ancient moral values (Astrat, (2009). Pornography is one of the factors responsible for the sexual permissiveness among teenagers. Rodriguez (2013), identified films and published pictures, the dissemination of sexual explicit materials go a long way to ensure that people forget what sexually accepted norms within

the Nigerian society is. Some people are of the opinion that media characters or personalities as role models "contribute to adolescent s" quest for premarital sex because teenagers tend to imitate whatever is presented.

A study on adolescents by Aluko (2014), revealed that the sexual awareness of adolescents attending schools in rural and urban areas could be a contributing factor to their involvement in premarital sexual activities. It was opined by Asrat, (2013) that adolescents' attitudes to sexual practices as mentioned earlier in this study could be a major factor for their involvement in premarital sex. More so, it seems as if some parents do not have time to attend to the welfare of their children. It appears that the nature of some parents' job is hindering their efficiency at home, not realizing that most of their efforts is majorly for the wellbeing of the children. It is high time for parents to adopt the idea of Gebre, (2010) who opined that whatever is deposited in the lives of our children today, will definitely manifest tomorrow.

Since 1920s till the Second World War, premarital sex was rampant and prevalent in the developed countries. According to the national survey by UNICEF (2001), it was recorded that in 10 out of 12 developed nations, more than two- third of the adolescents have engaged in premarital sexual activities while still in their teens. Despite the fact that premarital sex was frowned at, it appears that there is no significant change in the sexual behavior manifested in 1950s and the current era beginning from the Second World War. The only noticeable difference according to Spreacher, (2014), is that adolescents of nowadays appear to be sexually active than those in the past and they are likely to report engaging in sexual activities with casual partners than with a spouse or regular partner. Probably, this is the reason why the advocate against premarital sex was mostly centered on prevention rather than abstinence.

The indulgence of adolescent in premarital sexual activities has become a great concern because of the social and health consequences that accompany such behavior. On the basis of the background above, the research has to investigate the causes of premarital sexual behavior among adolescents in Ondo State secondary schools its implications stressing the need to expand awareness.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is adolescents' students' involvement in premarital sex. This often time results to unplanned pregnancy, acquiring of sexually transmitted diseases, high rate of abortion, premature death and poor academic performance. In any of these situations, wastage is bound to be recorded economically, socially, educationally, physically and psychologically. Therefore, there is need to investigate into the tide of the unwholesome social development.

Methodology

The study employed the descriptive survey method. Data were generated from 720 selected students who were selected on stratified random sampling technique from different Local Governments in Ondo State. These students responded to a self-constructed questionnaire on adolescent's student's involvement in premarital sexual practices. Test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. The items sought information on the adolescent's involvement in premarital sex. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics of student t- test to give the concise premarital sexual practices of adolescents that is resulting to health consequences and poor academic performances. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

Question 1: Does whom an adolescent lived with influence premarital sexual practices

In analyzing this general question, response of subjects on whom they lived with were used. The data were collected and the analyses were made on the basis of percentages. The findings are shown in table1.

Table 1: Response of subject with regards to whom they lived with

S/N	Adolescents Residence	Number of Subject	Percentage%
1	Living with both parents.	505	70.20
2	Living with father only.	61	8.46
3	Living with mother only.	72	10.04
4	Living with guardian.	82	11.30
	Total	720	100

Table 1 above shows that 505 subjects (70.20%) claim to be living with both parents 61 subject (8.46%) live with their father only, 72 adolescents (10.04) live with their mother only while 82(11.3%) of the adolescents were living guardians.

The findings above revealed that majority of the adolescents lived with both parents. Only few lived with either of the parents and guardian.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between students' attitude and their involvement in premarital sex. To test this hypothesis, the mean score obtained by adolescents on attitude of students and their involvement in premarital sex was subjected to t-test statistics analysis. Results of this test were present in table 2.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of Adolescent's Involvement in Premarital sex

Variable	N	X	SD	t-cal	t-tab
Sexual attitudes	720	13.35	9.06	0.85	1.96
Sexual involvement	720	4.36	3.04		

Significant at $p < 0.05$

The result in table 2 reveals that t-cal (0.85) is lesser than t-table (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore there is a significant relationship between student attitude and their involvement in premarital sex. The findings of this study revealed that adolescents' attitude has to do with their involvement in premarital sex.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between adolescent's in rural and those in urban in their involvement in premarital sex.

To test the hypothesis, the mean score obtained by adolescents on premarital sexual involvement of students in rural and urban areas was subjected to t-test statistical analysis. Result of the test was presented in Table 3.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Premarital Sexual Involvement of Students in Rural and Urban Areas.

Location	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-cal
Rural	284	4.95	3.02	715	4.23	1.96
Urban	433	3.98	3.00			

Significant at $p < 0.05$

The result in table 3 reveals that t-cal (4.23) is greater than t-table 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore there is no significant difference between adolescents in rural and urban areas in their involvement in premarital sex.

The finding of this study revealed that there is no deference between adolescents attending schools in urban and rural areas in their involvement in premarital sexual practices.

Discussion

The result on table 1 revealed that majority of the adolescents lived with both parents. Probably there is no committed supervision by their parents. Another possible reason for their involvement in premarital sex could be peer influence as opine by Kazaru & Masatu (2009), that adolescents are easily influenced by peers, simple persuasion from the practitioner. They are so powerful to the extent that oftentimes, they overrule parents enforced code of conduct upon their children.

The findings revealed that adolescent's attitude has to do with their involvement in premarital sex. This result was in line with the perception of Owena & Fincham,(2012),that adolescents have seen sexual practices as a social conduct, and that issues of sex

are freely discussed, hugging, pecking, and romancing are done openly with overt display of nakedness. The findings also revealed that adolescents in rural and urban schools have no significant difference in their premarital sexual involvements. This research finding corroborates Aluko (2014) who found that adolescent's premarital behavior depends on their sexual awareness. This shows that there is no difference in the sexual awareness of student attending schools in rural areas compared with those in urban.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that majority of adolescents in Ondo-State living with both parents still involve in premarital sex based on their attitude towards sexual practices and their parents commitment to their wellbeing. It could also be concluded that there is no difference in the premarital sexual involvement of adolescents attending schools in rural and urban areas.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Adequate sex information should be given to adolescents both in rural and urban areas. This could be achieved by establishing youth advisory centers to provide necessary information.
2. Parent should educate their children on reproductive health and refer any aspects which they cannot handle to counsellors and health practitioners.
3. The federal and state governments should make provisions for counseling services with adequate funding.
4. Sex education should be included in education policy.

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