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REASONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF PREMARITAL SEXUAL ESCAPADES AMONG FEMALE UNDERGRADUATES OF NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated reasons and implications of premarital sexual escapades among female undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 23,621 comprising 12639 males and 10982 females. The sample comprised of 800 undergraduate students. The sample was composed using simple random sampling method. Data collected were analyzed using mean. The findings of the study showed that cohabitation of students, poor socio-economic status of parents, peer group influence, indecent dressing among students, watching pornographic movies and pictures, quest for materialism, inability to control sexual urge, addiction to drugs and alcohol, poor parental upbringing of children and students lifestyle were the reasons behind premarital sex among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Also, it was discovered that unplanned pregnancy, unsafe abortion, infertility, untimely death, drug and alcoholic addiction, students joining bad company, loss of self control, transmission of sexually transmitted diseases and prostitution were the implications of premarital sex. Premarital sex with its attendant risk to unstrained fun and sexual activities may cause distraction for students. This may lead to academic underachievement. Based on the findings study, it was concluded that premarital sex persist among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka sequel to diverse socioeconomic reasons which could hamper their academic pursuit and goals in life. University authorities should also include issue of premarital sex in students' handbook; what constitutes premarital sex, its consequences on students and punitive measures to be meted out to students who indulge in it.

Keywords: Reasons; Implications; Premarital Sex; Female Undergraduates

Introduction

Education is a weapon for combating ignorance, poverty, and diseases. It is also a weapon for mass destruction of human affliction of ignorance and limitations that have hindered man from becoming useful to him-self and to the entire society. Education is therefore the potent force that brings about change in the attitude, skills, values and interest of individuals (Offor and Offiah 2021). In a man's life, the whole of the environment is the instrument of his education but in that environment, certain factors stand out more prominently than others in influencing behaviours, values and thoughts systems. Four such factors are the home, the school, the church, and the mass media. The school and the home are pervasive. In most societies, the school system has taken over the educative functions of the home. The schools assist in the shaping of the personalities of the crèche to the university level. In the university, the students are independent and are exposed to negative behaviours like stealing, drug addiction, rape and premarital sex.

Sex surely has a divine design with the intent of causing continuity of life and the sustenance of the human species (Offor, Adirika and Anadi, 2017). Without sex no human being could have been born into the world, except those who were fertilized invitro, but still involving the use of

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the gonads. It is through sex that a man and woman as husband and wife reaffirm their love for each other's innate yearnings for copulation for the sake of emotional balance. It is an expression of love, dedication, of appreciation, of commitment and communion. Sex is used interchangeably with lovemaking because it is supposed to involve a great deal of love between the participants. Any sexual activity with an opposite sex or with same sex partner before marriage is called premarital sex. Also, the term-premarital sexuality is usually used to refer to sexual intercourse before marriage. Significant numbers of females are involved in premarital sexual activities at an early age (Igbo, 2018). It is very common to find youths engaging in sex and boasting of it, worse still girls who used to be taught the virtues of keeping their virginity now lose it as if it were a huge burden on their ego and social status (Sauder, 2003). Social media depictions of sex have made it stoop low from its lofty marital height to a lowly pedestrian level where everyone can engage in it without fear of reprimand or obvious consequences. Premarital sex is now all comers affair.

The issues arising from undergraduate premarital sexual relationships have generated great concerns among individuals across the globe because young people all over the world are sexually active (Mohan, 2011). Premarital sexual activities among young female have been increasing worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (2019), it is based on female within the age range of 17-27 years old. It has been estimated that globally; about 60% female students are engaging in premarital sex, but the frequency varies widely between tertiary institutions in the countries. Of particular note is that more than 60% of Nigerian female students are engaging in the premarital sex (Elewor, 2021). There is prevalence of premarital sexual practices among female students in Nigerian universities and sometimes female students indulge in premarital sex through night clubbing. The night club is a place which causes the occurrence of social problems in society. A nightclub also known as a discothèque, dance clubs, or simply a club or disco is an entertainment venue which usually operates late into the night. A nightclub is generally distinguished from bars, pubs or taverns by the inclusion of a dance floor and a DJ who plays recorded music (Nwankwo, 2019). Night clubs are primarily made to be a safe venue for people to come in and enjoy themselves together with their loved ones. Many young people find themselves in much stress after a busy week and they decide to attend night clubs so as to relieve themselves from stress. Unfortunately, through night clubbing female students are exposed to deviant behaviours such as drug misuse and engaging in erotic dances. These deviant behaviours often lead them to engage in sexual intercourse within the club premises and more intense sex will continue with same sex partner in the long run. Some times when these girls are under the influence of alcohol and drugs, they tend not to know their sex mate during night clubbing. In the course of engaging in premarital sex, low academic engagement becomes inevitable. This means that premarital sex could have negative impact on students involved in the clubbing. The students will become lazy to do their task either group or individual assignments and as a result many students do not finish their academic task. Galloway (2018) posited that partying on Thursday night often means missing class on a Friday. It can cause students to engage in premarital sex and fall behind, especially if they are partying on a weekend and recuperating Sunday instead of studying. Galloway said misconceptions about the role of parties and their importance can hinder students who are trying to fit in with their peers. There are people coming to college with certain ideas of what a typical student's life is like. A number of factors were identified by Nwankwo (2019) as reasons for the existence of pre-marital sex among students in Nigerian universities. They include: parental influence, economic reasons, peer pressure or influence, search of pleasure, being heavy alcohol consumer and attending romantic video/film.

According to Louis (2020), taking out time to meditate on why in this 21st century, the issue of sex has become of grave concern to stakeholders; one would observe that the media has somehow succeeded in creating in peoples subconscious mindset, pictures of sex, sexual feeling and sexual arousal. Careful observation would reveal the fact that on almost all television station one turn to, there is either a beautiful damsel who is half naked intentionally showing off her cleavage, the size of her breast or her hip just to get your attention to a particular product or service. Access to the internet has heightened this issue of sexual feeling and arousal most especially among undergraduates who at the click of every link is beckoned to subscribe to a porn site or watch a pornographic video, or hookup. Newspaper, Magazines and other book materials are not left out in this jingle of sex and sexual activities all of which strengthens and empowers the individual to engage in premarital sex, where everything around an individual preaches the pleasure of sex and a desire to gratify ones identity.

The most important issue that can lead to high rate of premarital sex among tertiary institution female students is the student's lifestyle. This is basic because it is the lifestyle of those students will determine the kind of life the students live in the campus. Life in the institution of higher learning depicts independence for the students for the first time on their own and decides on what to do and what not to do. However some of the choices wrongly made have adverse effects on them. One of the dangerous lifestyle female students engage in, in the campus is premarital cohabitation (Eze, 2019). Premarital cohabitation refers to when a male and female who are of age choose to live together as husband and wife without the act of formalizing marriage (Offor, 2017). The said couple decides not to involve their parents and relations in the act of marriage. It is not a legal way of getting married. Premarital co-habitation is therefore when two people who are romantically involved choose to live together without making the formal commitment of marriage. The term is also called de facto marriage (Net Industries, 2020) and among Nigeria university undergraduates where the menace is spreading widely, it is simply referred to as "campus marriage", "couples' life", "campus coupling", and "marrying for marriage". The number of couples who choose to live together prior to marriage has been steadily increasing. This is up from 43% in 2012 and 64% in 2020 probably due to COVID 19 pandemic (Net industries, 2020). Among people who are currently married, approximately two-thirds say they lived together before making a marriage commitment (Obasi, 2020). Premarital co-habitation has become a norm amongst many youths while abstinence is no longer regarded as a virtue. Those who abstain or are chaste are regarded as unsophisticated.

Also, peer group influence has ranked as the highest social cause of premarital sex because most female students would not want to be labelled cowards, uncivilized and crude. Some female students have a high level of zeal to learn, to have fun and practice new things thus making them smoke, drink alcohol and practice sexual intercourse. Students from different background and ideology come together to either positively or negatively influence others. The caliber of the friends and group one associates within school influences the type of life that is expected of that individual. A female student who chooses to abstain from premarital sex is not only ridiculed by friends but is seen as a deviant, she is refused access to material things and are sometimes forced by her roommates/friends to indulge in the act (Gaba, 2010). According to Uzokwe (2008) one of the major causes of the high rate of premarital sex is the dereliction of parental responsibilities. The family is the primary or the basic unit of socialization, years ago families put a lot of premium on morality, honor and character. Parents took some time to bequeath some morals to their children during formation years. There were injunctions and periodic denial of basic necessities for doing things that impinge on the

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family name. No family would want to be blacklisted or blackmailed, so parents paid serious attention to the moral and social welfare of their children and take corrective actions when bad behaviors are detected. The reverse seems to be the case in this 21st century, some parents who are primarily responsible for the assignments are no longer keen on performing these all important assignments but are more interested in the pursuit of fame and wealth. Inculcation of the right values, morals, and norms becomes an up-hill-task as a result of the parents' busy schedule.

Any female student that engages in premarital sex can develop mental depression. Another danger is possible exchange of Sexually Transmitted Diseases as those involved cannot be able to identify male or female partners who contracted sexually transmitted and are with them. This will promote rapid growth of Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Female students who are impregnated as a result of involvement in premarital sex experience out of wedlock birth which poses many challenges to the young female students. This may hamper female students' academic progress and employment opportunities in the long run; it may damage their marital prospects. Female students who engage in premarital sex are more likely to suffer negatively from long-term physical, emotional, social and moral effects, than students who choose to wait until they get married before engaging in sexual intercourse. Premarital sex has contributed to the ongoing moral decadence in the society and in the tertiary institution. Students who engage in premarital sexual activities perform poorly in academics (Gasa, 2010). This is because they are easily distracted by pleasures that surround sex, hardly concentrate and focus on their studies. Again, the level of commitment to the relationship must also be taken into consideration because, it is a determinant to the student's academic performance.

The extent of relationship affects the female students' grades. A female student who is involved in an exclusive relationship differs from one who is involved in casual dating. Also some female students who are pregnant tend to quit from their studies. This could bring about shame, depression, child abuse, attempting suicide and abandonment. Returning to school after giving birth becomes dicey because of financial problems and psychological trauma. The student will end up not completing her programme. When a married woman gives birth, it brings joy to the world unlike a single girl who is not married. Presently, some female students become pregnant without planning or preparing for it because of involvement in premarital sex while in school. An unwanted pregnancy can cause psychological, academic and emotional problem to the student. It is either the student aborts the child or runs to an orphanage where she will be taken care of for the remaining period of the pregnancy till she delivers the baby. This is because the baby is unwanted to her, she leaves the baby with the management of the orphanage who will gives her a stipend as a reward. The management of the orphanage determines the fate of the child by adopting the child to couples who are having fertility problems.

Despite these implications associated with premarital sexuality, female undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, appears to be actively involved in premarital sexuality. In the lodges within school campus many female students are living with their boyfriends mainly for sexual purpose. This can hamper their academic engagements which could lead to low grade in school. At times, the females are often abused and molested by their male partners when they quarrel leading to grave psychological trauma that could affect their health and education. It is also common to find female undergraduates battling with one sexually transmitted disease or the other due to premarital sex. Majority often withdraw from school while some spend longer time than necessary as a result of carryover. This problem

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could continue unabated in the tertiary institutions if suitable measures are not put in place to address them. Thus, understanding the complexity of the problem and moving forward to addressing them necessitated the work on reasons and implications of premarital sexual escapades among female undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been formulated to guide this study:

1. What are the reasons for premarital sexuality among female undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?
2. What are the implications of premarital sexuality among female undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Research Method

Descriptive survey design was adopted in the study. The population of the study consisted of all the undergraduates of 2020/2021 academic session in the fourteen faculties in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. There total is 29,794 comprising 14232 males and 15,562 females. The sample of the study was 800 undergraduates. In composing the sample, simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 out of 14 faculties. In the 10 selected faculties simple random sampling was used to select 2 departments from each of the 10 faculties. From each of the department, 40 undergraduates were selected; making a total of 80 undergraduates from each faculty. The instrument used in collecting data for the study was the structured questionnaire titled Reasons and Implications of Premarital Sex (RIPS). The questionnaire was validated by three experts, two in the area of sociology of education and the other in measurement and evaluation, all in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. To establish the reliability of the instrument, trial testing method was used on 50 undergraduates of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University, Igbariam outside the study area. The reliability was calculated using Cronbach Alpha for each of the subsections. At the end of the analysis, the scores obtained were 0.81 for reason of premarital sex and 0.86 for implications of premarital sex. The results showed high reliability of the instrument. The instrument has two parts, A and B. Part A sought information on the respondents. Part B sought information required to answer the research questions. It has 1 & 2 and these were concerned with information regarding, reasons and implications of Premarital Sex. Part A contains 10 items while part B also contains 1"0items, making a total of 20 items. The four point response mode of strongly Agreed (SA = 4 points), Agree (A = 3 points), Disagree (D = 2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1 point) was adopted in the study. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researchers with the help of 20 research assistants, who were paired for each of the 10 faculties. Administration of the questionnaire was done during the first semester of 2020/2021 academic session. All copies of the questionnaire distributed were collected back because of on the spot delivery method and collection technique applied. Mean was use to analyze the data. The four point response mode used, informed the use of mean 2.50 as the cut-off point for decision. The decision rule was that mean scores of items of 2.50 and above were regarded as positives while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as negative.

Presentation of Results

Research question one: What are the reasons for premarital sexuality among female undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Table 1: Reasons for Premarital Sex among Undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

S/N	ITEMS	DEC $\bar{X}$

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1.	Cohabitation of Students	3.21	Agreed
2.	Poor socio-economic status of parents	3.64	Agreed
3.	Peer group influence	3.27	Agreed
4.	Indecent dressing among students	3.31	Agreed
5.	Watching pornographic movies and pictures	3.19	Agreed
6.	Quest for materialism	3.13	Agreed
7.	Inability to control sexual urge	3.14	Agreed
8.	Addiction to drugs and alcohol	3.45	Agreed
9.	Poor parental upbringing of children	3.44	Agreed
10.	Students lifestyle	3.27	Agreed
	Total	29.92	Agreed

		10	
	Cluster	2.99	Agreed

Data in Table 1 showed that the respondents gave positive responses to the rest of the items with mean scores well above 2.50. The cluster mean of 2.99 indicated that the respondents agreed to the stated reasons for premarital sex among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Research Question two: What are the implications consequences of premarital sexuality among female undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Table 2: Implications Of Premarital Sexuality Among Female Undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

S/N	ITEMS	$\overline{X}$	DEC
11.	It leads to unplanned pregnancy	2.55	Agreed
12.	It results to unsafe abortion	2.62	Agreed
13.	It brings about Infertility	2.62	Agreed
14.	It leads to untimely death	2.72	Agreed
15.	It result in drugs and alcoholic addiction	2.88	Agreed
16.	It encourages students to join bad company	2.59	Agreed
17.	It leads to loss self control	2.66	Agreed
18.	It results to contacting sexually transmitted diseases	2.53	Agreed
19.	It leads to impulse spending by students	2.61	Agreed
20.	It can result to prostitution	2.62	Agreed
	Total	26.4	
		10	
	Cluster x	2.64	Agreed

Data in table 2 showed that all the items attracted positive responses with scores well above 2.50. With the cluster mean of 2.64 indicated agreement with the listed implications of premarital sex amongst undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

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Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study showed that cohabitation of students, poor socio-economic-status of parents, peer group influence and indecent dressing among students were some the reasons for premarital sex among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. This result is in the line with the findings by Igbo (2018) who agreed that heterosexual cohabitation, socioeconomic status of parents and peers influence often cause premarital sex among undergraduates. Similarly, Offor and Anadi (2017) supported that cohabitation of students and peer group influence lead to premarital sex among university students. Also, the findings showed that watching pornographic movies and pictures, quest for materialism, inability to control sexual urge, addiction of drugs and alcohol and poor parental upbringing of children were some of the reasons for premarital sex among undergraduates. To support these findings, Ade (2016) agreed that choice, uncontrollable high sex drive, drug abuse, watching of pornographies and cohabitation were the major reasons for premarital sex among university students. Also, Nwankwo (2019) agreed that drug misuse and cohabitation were the reasons for premarital sex among university students in Nigeria.

The findings of the study also revealed that poor academic performance, unsafe abortion, unwanted pregnancy and infertility were some of the implications of premarital sex among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. To support these findings, Offor and Anadi (2017) agreed that unplanned pregnancy, infertility and abortion were some of the problems associated with premarital sex. Similarly, Elewor (2021) stated that poor academic engagement which often leads to poor academic performance, drug abuse and addiction and infertility are the key implications of premarital sex among students in Universities in Anambra State. The findings by Elewor (2021) and the present study tally probably because the two studies were carried out in the Anambra State. More so, the findings revealed that sexually transmitted diseases, high rate of school dropout, drug addiction, loss of self-control among others are also agreed by the respondents to be the implications of premarital sex among undergraduates. Similarly, Offor and Anadi (2017) also supported that students who engage in premarital sex could be exposed to drug abuse and addiction, sexually transmitted diseases and could dropout from school.

Conclusion

Premarital sex is almost inevitable among undergraduates because of diverse reasons with its negative implications on academic goals of the students. There is high rate of abortion among female undergraduates in tertiary institutions. Premarital sex with its attendant risk to unstrained fun and sexual activities are reasons for distraction for students academically. This may lead to academic underachievement. Based on the findings study, it was concluded that premarital sex persist among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka sequel to diverse socioeconomic reasons which could hamper their academic pursuit and goals in life.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should always checkmate their children in school. This could be done by paying regular unscheduled visit to the students in the campus.
2. The university authorities should build more hostels and charge moderate accommodation fees so that many students can afford it. Also t he rules and regulations in the hostels should not be so harsh so that students will be encouraged to pack into the school hostels.
3. University authorities should also include issue of premarital sex in students' handbook; what constitutes premarital sex, its implications on students and punitive measures to be meted out to students who indulge in it.

4. The government and stakeholders should give scholarship to indigent students so that they can meet up with their financial obligations in the university. This will go a long way to avert students cohabiting in school which creates room for premarital sex.
5. Government and nongovernmental organizations should extend the fight against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases to higher institutions so as facilitate wider coverage of students. This will go a long way in influencing students positively regarding the issues of premarital sex.

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