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Personal Factors and Premarital Sex among Undergraduate Students in the University of Calabar.

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Abstract

This study adopted survey design to examine the influence of personal factors on premarital sex among undergraduate students in the University of Calabar It was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses. A sample of three hundred and four (304) undergraduate were selected from 17 faculties in the University of Calabar using the stratified , proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. One instrument titled "Personal factors and premarital sex Questionnaire (PFPMSQ) was used for data collection. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha which gives .86. The hypothesis one was tested using One Way Analysis of Variance(ANOVA) while hypothesis two was tested using independent t-test at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that age, gender significantly influence premarital sex among undergraduate students in the University of Calabar it was concluded that premarital sex of undergraduate are mostly influence by their age and gender.

	Based on the conclusion of the study, it was recommended that educational programs should be tailored to address the specific concerns and behaviors of younger and older individuals, as well as different genders.

Introduction

It has become a common phenomenon for adolescents and young persons to engage in sex before marriage in the University of Calabar community. The act of engaging in premarital sex among university students has resulted in various consequences including complications resulting from abortion, child delivery outside wedlock, destruction of the wombs of several students and in some cases even death. The act of engaging in premarital sex has led to some students dropping out of school. In other cases, some students have become young mothers (Garcia, & Martinez, 2019).. The problems associated with premarital sex are preventable or at least the effect on a large majority of students can be reduced to the barest minimum. Accessing the causes can help us better understand ways to prevent and checkmate the occurrence of premarital sex among students of the University of Calabar. Premarital sex, pose a great threat to the future of the numerous naive students admitted yearly into the university and also to the name of the school, because if this act keeps increasing, various consequences will inevitably follow and it can grow into becoming a part of the culture among the students in the institution. Individuals from conservative backgrounds often hold negative views regarding premarital sexual activity, which can lead to feelings of guilt and anxiety. Conversely, those from more liberal environments tend to adopt more permissive attitudes. From this perspective, students personal factors was identified as one of the factors attributed to pre-marital sex among undergraduate in the University of Calabar.

Personal factors refer to individual characteristics and circumstances that influence behavior and decision-making. (Ibok, & Ntibi, 2021). This complex interplay of personal factors creates a challenging landscape for young adults navigating premarital sexual relationships, underscoring the need for targeted educational interventions that address these influences. Personal factors significantly influence attitudes and behaviors related to premarital sex, shaping how individuals navigate their sexual experiences and decisions. These factors include age, gender, cultural background, education, and personal beliefs (Ibok, Thomas, & Nyong, 2019) Understanding these influences is crucial for developing effective sexual health education and interventions (Johnson & Lee, 2020). Despite the increasing openness surrounding discussions of premarital sex, personal factors such as age, gender continue to significantly influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors regarding sexual activity before marriage.

The relationship between age and premarital sexual behavior among undergraduate students has been a subject of interest in various studies. Age plays a significant role in shaping attitudes

and behaviors related to premarital sex. A study conducted by Hensel, and Fortenberry (2016) found that fear of social stigma and lack of comprehensive sexual education contribute to a higher likelihood of abstinence among this age group. Bianchi and Gallo (2020) reported that young adults are more likely to engage in premarital sex, as they gain independence and access to new social environments that encourage exploration. Muthoni, Mburu, and Ngure, (2020) conducted a study to explored the relationship between age and the initiation of sexual activity among university students and found that younger students were more likely to initiate sexual activity earlier than older students, suggesting that age influences not only the timing of sexual experiences but also the context in which they occur. Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski,(2018) examined how age affects attitudes toward premarital sex and found that older undergraduate students generally held more permissive views towards premarital sexual activity, which they attributed to increased exposure to diverse viewpoints and life experiences. Lammers, Stoker, Jordan, and Pollmann, M. (2019) found that younger men often perceive premarital sex as a rite of passage, while younger women may face societal pressures that lead to more cautious behavior.

Smith and Jones (2019) conducted a study to highlighted the significant role of peer influence on sexual behaviors among college students and found that younger students were more likely to conform to peer norms regarding premarital sex, while older students exhibited greater independence in their sexual decision-making. Thompson, McCauley, and Heller (2021) investigated the impact of age on the effectiveness of sexual health education and found that older students often benefited more from comprehensive sexual health education, which positively influenced their attitudes and behaviors regarding premarital sex. Alavi, Mohammadi, and Asadi, (2022) conducted a explored how cultural expectations regarding premarital sex change with age and found that younger students often face societal pressure to abstain from sex, while older students experience a more permissive environment, reflecting broader cultural shifts. The age of premarital sex among undergraduates is influenced by a variety of factors, including social, cultural, educational, and psychological elements. The age at which individuals engage in premarital sex is a significant aspect of sexual behavior studies, particularly within the undergraduate population. Understanding the factors influencing this age can provide insights into broader social and health implications

The influence of gender on premarital sex among undergraduates has been a significant area of research in sociology, psychology, and public health. The following review synthesizes empirical studies highlighting the differences in attitudes, behaviors, and societal pressures related to premarital sex based on gender (Ibok, Meremikwu, Orim Anditung & Inah, 2023. A study conducted by Smith, Johnson, and Williams, (2018) reported that female undergraduates feeling more pressure to conform to traditional sexual norms compared to their male counterparts. A study by Lammers et al. (2019) showed that men often perceive premarital sex as a means of asserting dominance, while women may experience societal pressures that influence their sexual choices. Such dynamics underscore the importance of considering gender as a personal factor in understanding premarital sexual behavior. Research

conducted by Jones & Taylor (2019) showed that male students tend to underestimate the risks associated with premarital sexual activity, leading to higher reported rates of sexual encounters than female students, who exhibited more cautious behavior. A study conducted by Nguyen, Smith, and Brown, (2020) found that while both genders engage in premarital sex, males reported higher frequencies of sexual partners. The study highlighted that societal acceptance of male sexual promiscuity contributes to this disparity. Research conducted by Adams (2021) identified distinct motivations for premarital sex among genders and stated that males often cited physical pleasure and peer acceptance, while females were more likely to report emotional connection and relationship stability as primary motivators.

According to Lee and Kim (2022), peer influence plays a crucial role in shaping sexual behaviors. Male students reported feeling pressured to engage in sexual activities to maintain social status, whereas female students often felt pressured to resist such advances to uphold personal and societal values. A study conducted by Garcia (2023) on the perpetuate gender stereotypes regarding sexuality and found female undergraduates reported feeling objectified, which influenced their decisions surrounding premarital sex. The literature indicates that gender significantly influences attitudes and behaviors related to premarital sex among undergraduates. While males generally exhibit more permissive attitudes and behaviors, females often navigate a complex interplay of societal expectations and personal beliefs. In conclusion, the review provides a comprehensive overview of the influence of personal factors in terms of age and gender on premarital sex among undergraduates, emphasizing the need for continued exploration and understanding of this complex issue.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of personal factors on premarital sex among undergraduate students of the University of Calabar. In specific terms, the study sought to;

1. Determine the influence of age on premarital sex among undergraduate students
2. Investigate the influence of gender on premarital sex among undergraduate students

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study;

1. Age does not significantly influence premarital sex among undergraduate students
2. There is no significant influence of gender on premarital sex among undergraduate students

Methodology

The study area was University of Calabar of Cross River State, Nigeria. The research design used for this study was the survey design. Population of this study consists of all undergraduate students of the University of Calabar. Records from the office of the Registrar revealed that there are thirty four thousand nine hundred and twenty nine (34,929) students in the university of Calabar of both males and females in the various programmes of the university for the 2023/2024 academic session. Multi stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study which

consisted of stratified sampling technique, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. Stratification was used on the basis of faculties so as to give adequate representation of the subjects in each faculties. This technique was considered appropriate because every undergraduate of the seventeen faculties had an equal chance of being selected for the study. To select the schools for the study, the researcher using the hat and draw techniques in selecting 5 faculties out of 17 faculties where all the seventeen (17) faculties in the study areas were written on a piece of paper, squeezed and shuffled in a hat. The researcher closed his eyes and picked any one faculties from the hat without replacement until he picked 5 faculties representing 29.4% of the entire 17 faculties in the study area. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the faculties used for the study. In each of the selected faculties, the researcher selected randomly selected two departments to represent the faculties. In selecting the respondents used for the study, the researcher adopted the systematic sampling technique. Five percent of students were selected for the study. A sample of 304 undergraduate students were selected from Faculties in the University of Calabar. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire titled "students' personal factors and premarital sex Questionnaire (SPFPMSQ)". The questionnaire contained two sections. Section A was designed to elicit information from respondents' demographic variables such as the age, and gender while section B is a 12 item four points Likert type scale designed to measure the premarital sex. Each item required the respondent to indicate the frequency of his or her various opinions under strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The two kinds of validation established for the instrument of the study were face and content validity. The face and content validity were established by using three (3) experts in Test, Measurement and Evaluation; two (2) human kinetics educators in the faculty of Education, University of Calabar. The expert certified that the instrument was face and content valid and could be used for the study. Reliability was established through Cronbach alpha reliability of the instrument (questionnaire), a trial testing was done using forty (40) undergraduate from the department who where not used for the study to examine the internal consistency which give reliability index of .86 showed that the research instrument was reliable. The hypotheses formulated to guide the study were appropriately tested using independent t-test for the two hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

Results

The result of the analysis is presented in the table one and two. The hypotheses were tested at .05 significant level.

$H0_1$: Age does not significantly influence premarital sex among undergraduate students. The independent variable in this hypothesis is age while the dependent variable is undergraduate premarital sex. In order to test the hypothesis, age were classified into three (20year & below, 21 years-23years, 24 years and above). Based on the classification,. Their means and standard deviation were computed and compared using One Way Analysis of Variance and the result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: One-Way Analysis of Variance of the influence of Age on premarital sex among undergraduate

Age	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	
20 years & below	150	30.7333	3.52111	.28750	
21-23years	93	29.0000	2.46277	.25538	
24years & above	61	30.0328	2.01633	.25816	
Total	304	30.0625	3.05171	.17503	
Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F-value	P-value
Between group	172.545	2	86.272		
				9.802	.000
Within group	2649.268	301			
Total	2821.813	303	8.802		

* Significant at 0.05 level (Critical $F_{2,\ 217} = 3.00$)

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 1 revealed that, the calculated F-values of (9.802) associated with the p-value of .000 is significant at .05 levels of alpha with 2 and 303 degree of freedom. This result indicated that age does significantly influence premarital sex among undergraduate students. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis was accepted**.** The result also shows that those undergraduate with age 20years & below with mean score of 30.7333 are more prone to premarital sex, followed by undergraduate with age 21 years to 23 years with mean score of 30.0328, then followed by those with age bracket 21years to 23years with mean score of 29.000. A post hoc test multiple comparison was used to examine the differences in premarital sex based on difference groups of age.(See Table 2.)

Table 2: LSD post hoc of the influence of age on undergraduate premarital sex

Students age	20yrs &below (n=150)	21-23 yrs(n=93)	24yrs & above (n=61)
20yrs & below	30.7333	1.7333[b]	.45052
21yrs – 23year	..000[c]	29.0000	1.0328
24yrs & above	.121	.0.035	30.0328

a=Group mean along the principal diagonal
b = Mean difference above the principal diagonal
c= P-value below the principal diagonal

The information in Table 2 show the post hoc test multiple comparison result of Fisher's which shows a significant difference Biology achievement between students' with age bracket 20yrs &below and 21years -23years(MD =1.7333; P=.000) and also significant between1 students with age bracket of 21years to 23 years and 24years &

above(MD=1.0228;p=0.035). There was no significant difference between age bracket of 20years &below and age bracket of 24years and above(MD=.4552;p=.121),

H_{O2}: There is no significant influence of gender on premarital sex among undergraduate students The independent variable in this hypothesis is gender while the dependent variable is undergraduate premarital sex. To test this hypothesis, gender were classified into two groups (Male and Female). Based on their classification, their means were compared using the independent t-test analysis. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis on influence of gender on premarital sex among undergraduate

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Male	118	30.6610	3.79883		
				2.753	.006
Female	186	29.6828	2.39852		

*Significant at 0.05, df = 302

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 3 revealed that, the calculated t-values of (2.753) associated with p-value of .006 is significance at .05 levels of alpha with 302 degree of freedom. This result indicated that there is a significant influence of gender on premarital sex among undergraduate. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis was accepted**.** The result also shows that female students with mean score of 30.6610 are more prone to premarital sex than their female counterpart with the mean of 29.6828.

Discussion of findings

This section presents the discussion of findings that were obtained from analysis of data and testing of each hypothesis.

The result of hypothesis one shows that age significantly influence premarital sex among undergraduate in University of Calabar. The finding agreed with. a study conducted by Hensel, and Fortenberry (2016) who found that fear of social stigma and lack of comprehensive sexual education contribute to a higher likelihood of abstinence among this age group. The finding is in line with Bianchi and Gallo (2020) who reported that young adults are more likely to engage in premarital sex, as they gain independence and access to new social environments that encourage exploration. The finding is in line with the finding of Muthoni, Mburu, and Ngure, (2020) who found that younger students were more likely to initiate sexual activity earlier than older students. N line with finding Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski, (2018) found that older undergraduate students generally held more permissive views towards premarital sexual activity, which they attributed to increased exposure to diverse viewpoints and life experiences.

The finding is in support of the finding of Smith and Jones (2019) who found that younger students more likely to conform to peer norms regarding premarital sex, while older students exhibited greater independence in their sexual decision-making. The finding also agreed with Alavi, Mohammadi, and Asadi, (2022) who found that younger students often face societal pressure to abstain from sex, while older students experience a more permissive environment, reflecting broader cultural shifts.

The result of the second hypothesis shows that gender significantly influence premarital sex among undergraduate in University of Calabar, the finding agreed with Smith, Johnson, and Williams, (2018) who reported that female undergraduates feeling more pressure to conform to traditional sexual norms compared to their male counterparts. The finding agreed with a study conducted by Lammers et al. (2019) who found gender significantly influence sexual behaviour. The finding agreed with the finding of Jones and Taylor (2019); Lee and Kim (2022), and Nguyen, Smith, and Brown, (2020) Research conducted by Adams (2021) identified distinct motivations for premarital sex among genders and stated that males often cited physical pleasure and peer acceptance, while females were more likely to report emotional connection and relationship stability as primary motivators. The finding agreed with a study conducted by Garcia (2023) on the perpetuate gender stereotypes regarding sexuality and found female undergraduates reported feeling objectified, which influenced their decisions surrounding premarital sex.

Conclusion

The influence of age and gender on premarital sex is significant and complex. Research indicates that younger individuals are generally more accepting and engaged in premarital sexual activities, driven by changing societal norms and increased access to sexual education and technology. Gender differences further complicate this landscape, with males often reporting higher levels of premarital sexual activity than females, although this gap tends to narrow with age. The finding of the study revealed that there was a significant influence of age and gender on premarital sex among undergraduate students of the University of Calabar.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommended were made:

1. Students across various age groups especially older students should be adequately educated on the emphasize of healthy relationships, consent, and the implications of premarital sex.
2. There should be regular gender-based sensitization especially for females within the university in order to reduce the incidence of premarital sex among students
3. Programs should be tailored to address the specific concerns and behaviors of younger and older individuals, as well as different genders.

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