



# **Associated Factors Of Premarital Sex Among Undergraduate Students Of The Ignatius Ajuru University Of Education**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the associated factors of premarital sex among undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The study adopted a descriptive research design. This research work was carried out at the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The population of the study consists of all students who were currently enrolled at the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The sample size for the study comprised of 380 students. A self structured questionnaire was used in collecting data from the sample population. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability with a reliability coefficient index of 0.82. The collected data was analysed using Statistical Package for Service Solution with frequency count, percentage, and Pearson Moment Correlation. The results showed that 93% of the respondents claimed to have friends that are already engaged in premarital while only 7% claimed to not have friends who are engaged in the act. The results also showed a significant majority of the respondents (83%) do not receive financial aid or scholarships to support their education and that nearly all respondents (97%) believe that some students engage in premarital sexual activities as a means to secure financial support. The results also showed that majority of respondents (64%) admitted to being curious about topics related to their bodies and sexual development. The results also showed a significant, positive and moderate relation between curiosity and premarital sexual practices among adolescents of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, ( $r = 0.362$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that factors such as peer group, curiosity, media and socioeconomic status contributes significantly to the prevalence of premarital sex. The study concluded that parents or guardians should know the kind of room-mates that their children associate with in the university in order to make appropriate adjustments on time.

**Keywords:** premarital sex, undergraduate students, media influence

## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the years and all through history it has been observed that opposite sex attracts, that is, man to woman, young boys to young girls, male child to female parent (Oedipus complex) and female child to male parent (Electra complex). This attraction could be for sexual gratification, sense of identity or a feeling of belonging. Literatures have shown that these two parties (male and female) have always had a strong connection that is beyond the ordinary. Something, someone or an idea has drawn them together. Premarital sex is generally used in reference to individuals who are presumed not yet of marriageable age, or between adults who will presumably marry eventually, but who are engaged in sexual activity prior to marriage (Public opinion polls have consistently shown that premarital sex is wrong and dangerous to health resulting in abortions, teenage mothers and sexually transmitted infections (Aaron, 2011; Finer,

2015).

Premarital Sex, is sex before marriage and it is generally found among the youth. It involves fornication, rape, defilement and incest. But the causes behind it have been established including curiosity among the youth, proof of manhood, lust, pornography and its adverse effects, insanity and sex promiscuity as well as moral decadence among the youths (Choe et al., 2014). Premarital sex is perceived and seen as a taboo in many cultures and considered a sin against man and God in most religion, it has become more commonly accepted by large portions of populaces in developed countries within the last few decades. The rise in premarital sex in Africa has resulted from a sexual revolution that came with western culture (Scott, 2015). A 2014 pew study on global morality found that premarital sex was considered particularly unacceptable in “predominantly Muslim nations” such as Indonesia, Jordan, Pakistan and Egypt, each having over 90% disapproval, whilst many people within western European nations were the most accepting with Spain, Germany and France having less than 10% disapproval.

According to a 2015 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, Th United Kingdom and The United States, approximately 25% of 15 year olds and 50% of 17 year olds have had sex. This goes a long way to prove that even before the students gain admission into the University a handful of them are already familiar with the experience of sexual intercourse and so the trends continue even at the University level (Scott, 2015).

Worldwide, rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among the youth are soaring; one-third of the 340 million new STDs each year occur in people under 25 years of age (Fernandez et al., 2019). There are notable behavioural problems among the adolescents that Nigerian society today has to contend with. Such problems include truancy, disobedience, drug offences, assault, insult, stealing, violent demonstrations, vandalism, examination malpractice, robbery and secret cult activities. Apart from these widely publicised behavioural problems, heterosexual activities are listed among types of behavioural problems prevalent in Nigerian secondary schools.

These are variously named in the literature as sex abuse, sex offences, sexual misconduct, sexual immorality, sexual promiscuity, and sexual maladjustment (Odoemelamelam, 2010). When these individuals graduate from their secondary school they do not only graduate with learned behaviour and new ideology which they bring into the University to explore their new gained freedom.

Sexual intercourse from observation and from the reports and witnesses of people who engage in them attest to the fact that it is highly pleasurable, both during and after the act, and as such an average person would be attracted to activities that induce pleasure. People engage in premarital sex, in this case University undergraduates, for several reasons whether out of curiosity, for pleasure sake or a feeling of achievement etc. The case of premarital sex among undergraduate student of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education one can say has been on the increase and is gradually becoming a part of the norm in our society and the University communities.

According to Abdullahi and Umar (2018), “Sexual behaviour among the students in our University is speculatively very rampant and worrisome. In this contest it is important to understand why youth engage in risky sexual behaviour and to understand the influencing factors for the behaviour. When the Dean, students’ affairs of the University of Maiduguri whose responsibility is to regulate the conduct of students issued a circular to checkmate sex activities amongst students, the students felt that neither the deanery nor the university authority had jurisdiction over their sex life. The students, who live in congested rooms and study in a difficult academic environment, were angry, not for the lack of facilities in the halls of residence or in the teaching areas, but with the interference of the university management with their personal life (Their Activities). On the Monday night of January 28th 2002, the students carried out a demonstration. From the above, one can see that matters pertaining to sex and sex activities are held dearly by students, even when other aspects of their health and even their future is threatened. They would rather fight for “their personal life”. Taking out time to meditate on why in this present time the issue of sex has become an issue of grave concern, one would observe that the media has somehow succeeded in creating in our subconscious, pictures of sex, sexual feeling and

sexual arousal. Careful observation would reveal the fact that on almost all television stations you 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. This is also the case for the opposite sex who would flaunt his muscles and “six pack” just to sell underwear. Access to the internet (which is actually a great thing) have heightened this issue of sexual feeling and arousal most especially among undergraduates who at the click of every link are 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 (Adeniji & Okewole, 2014). 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 one's identity.

A look at all the facts and speculation that has been built around premarital sex among individuals in the society at large and among undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in particular, one can conclude that it is a matter that needs to be addressed and causes carefully assessed to get better understanding or insight into these causes and possibly provide alternative activities or suggestions that can help address this issue for the benefit of the individual, the university community and the nation at large.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This research work is designed to investigate the prevalence of premarital sexual practices among undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. From my own personal observation, a walk and a careful survey of the environs of the university community one would find packs of already used condoms littering the ground, even though it is not rampant. It's possible that these packs were used as instructional materials or for the primary purpose for which it was made.

Students live within a community where they meet people from different backgrounds and as such they are exposed to peer influence and a desire to meet up with certain standards. This can contribute to the likelihood of students to engage in premarital sexual activities which as a result culminates into various problems such as unwanted pregnancy, exposure to sexually transmitted infections, poor academic performance, school dropout and a host of other negative consequences and misfortunes.

All of these 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 undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. 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 increase various consequences will inevitably follow and it can grow into becoming a part of the culture among the students. From this, one can see that it is essential to carefully understand this menace and seek ways to curb it.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research work is to investigate the associated factors of premarital sex among undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

1. How does peer group influence contribute to the occurrence of premarital sex among undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?
2. How does the socio-economic status of undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education influence their likelihood to engage in premarital sexual activities?
3. To what extent does curiosity or the desire to experiment influence students' decisions to engage in premarital intercourse?
4. How does the media influence the occurrence of premarital sex among undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?

**METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive research design. This research work was carried out at the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The population of the study consists of all students who were currently enrolled at the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The sample size for the study comprised of 380 students. A self structured questionnaire was used in collecting data from the sample population. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability with a reliability coefficient index of 0.82.

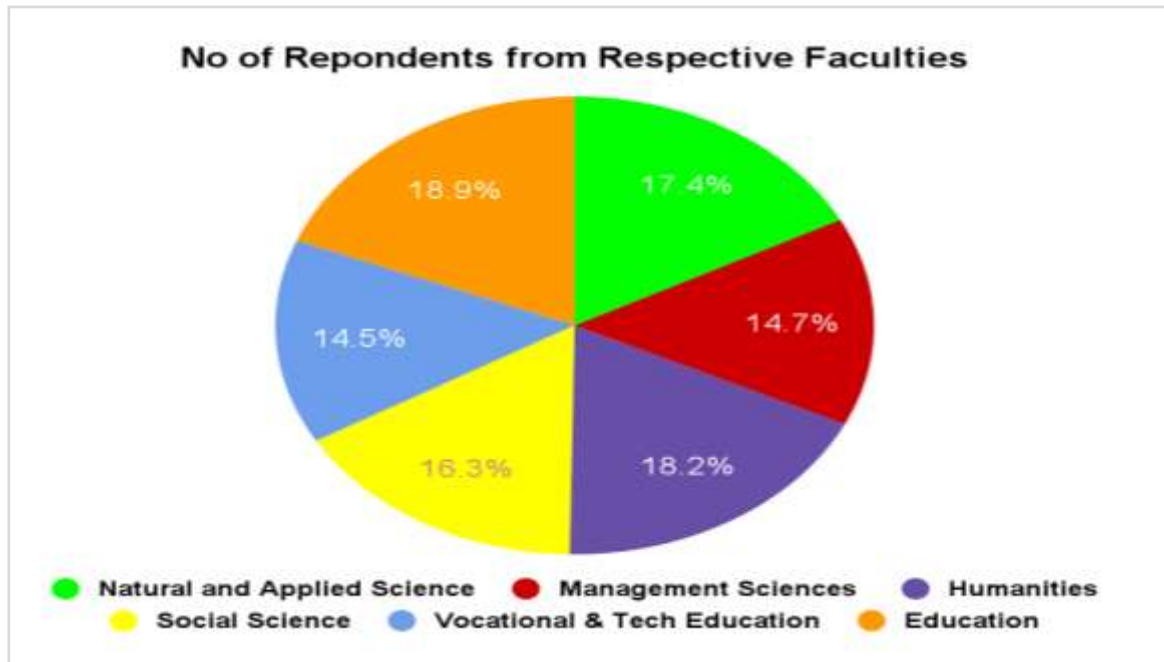
The researcher administered the questionnaire to the students across various faculties of Ajuru University of Education. The collected data was analysed using Statistical Package for Service Solution with frequency count, percentage, and Pearson Moment Correlation

**RESULTS**

**Table 1: Demographic variables of the respondents**

Valid	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	180	47%
	Female	200	53%
	Total	380	100%
Age	15-18	68	18%
	19-22	205	54%
	23-26	84	22%
	27-30	23	6%
	Total	100	100%
Marital status	Single	96	96%
	Married	4	4%
	Total	100	100%

From table 1, it could be observed that 47% of the total respondents were male, while the other 53% of the respondents were female. The table shows that 18% of the respondents were between the ages of 15-18, 54% of the respondents were ages 19-22, 22% of the total respondents were between the ages of 23-26 and 6% were between the ages of 27-30. Furthermore, it could be observed that 96% of the respondents were single while 4% of the respondents were married.



**Figure 1**

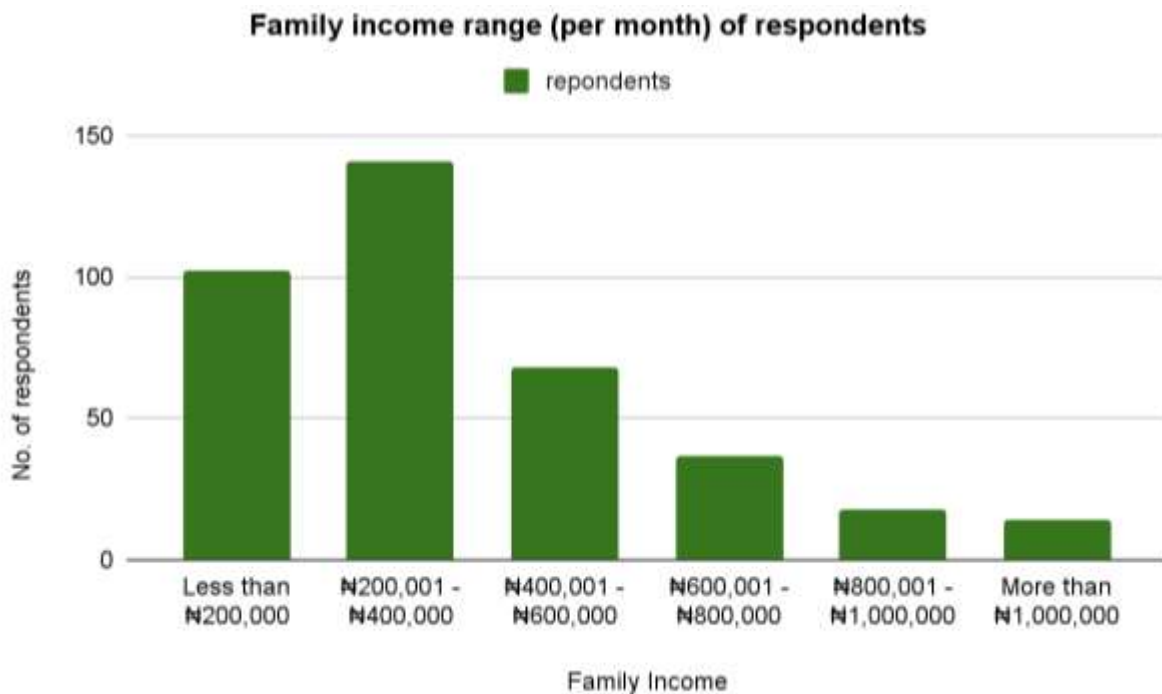
From figure 1, it could be observed that 18.2% of the respondents were students from the faculty of Humanities, 17.4% from the faculty of Natural and Applied Science, 14.7% from the faculty of Management Sciences, 16.3% from the faculty of Social Science, 14.5% from the faculty of Vocational & Technical Education and 18.9% from the faculty of Education.

**Table 2: peer group influence on the occurrence of premarital sex**

S/no	Item	Response Options				
		VF	FF	OC	RR	NV
1	How often do you discuss topics related to sex with your friends or peer group?	16%	31%	42%	9%	2%
2	How comfortable do you feel discussing sex related topics with your friends or peers?	VC	CC	SC	UC	VU
		17%	53%	12%	14%	4%
3	Do you agree that having friends who always talk about sexual pleasures can increase one's desire to engage in premarital sexual activities?	Yes		No		
		96%		4%		
4	Do you have friends who are engaging in premarital sex?	Yes		No		
		93%		7%		
5	Have your friends or peers ever encouraged or pressured you to engage in premarital sex?	Yes		No		
		68%		32%		
6	Have you ever felt the need to engage in premarital sex because your peers were doing it?	Yes		No		
		83%		17%		

Keys: VF: Very frequently, FF: Frequently, OC: Occasionally, RR: Rarely, NV: Never VC: Very comfortable, CC: Comfortable SC: Somewhat comfortable, UC: Uncomfortable, VU: Very uncomfortable

From the result obtained in the table 2 above, 93% of the respondents claimed to have friends that are already engaged in premarital while only 7% claimed to not have friends who are engaged in the act. From the study, 16% of the respondents claim to discuss sex related topics very frequently with their friends or peers, 31% claim to discuss frequently, while 42% discuss occasionally, 9% rarely and 2% claim to have never discussed. In regards to the level of comfort in discussing sex related topics with their friends or peer group, 17% were very comfortable , 53% were comfortable, 12% were somewhat comfortable, 14% were uncomfortable while only 4% were very uncomfortable. Furthermore, 68% of the respondents agreed that having friends who are already engaging in premarital sex influences one to have sex, while 32% disagreed. It was also noted that 83% of the respondents agreed that friends who always talk about sexual pleasures encourage one to have sex, while 17% disagreed.



**Figure 2:**

The results obtained from figure 2, illustrates the distribution of family incomes per month among the survey respondents. The data reveals that respondents come from a wide range of income backgrounds. The largest group of respondents falls within the income range of ₦200,000 to ₦400,000 per month, with 141 respondents (approximately 37% of the total). This suggests that a significant portion of the surveyed population falls within the middle-income bracket. Furthermore, 102 respondents reported a monthly family income of less than ₦200,000. This group represents individual Respondents with family incomes ranging from ₦400,001 to ₦1,000,000 per month make up a substantial portion of the sample. This indicates the presence of moderate to upper-middle-income households among the survey participants' from lower-income households, comprising approximately 27% of the total respondents. A smaller but still noteworthy number of respondents (32) reported family incomes exceeding ₦800,000 per month, with 18 of them earning between ₦800,001 and ₦1,000,000, and 14 earning more than ₦1,000,000. This suggests the existence of higher-income households within the surveyed population.

**Table 3: socio-economic status influence premarital sex**

S/no	Item	Yes	No
8	Do you receive financial aid or scholarships to support your education?	17%	83%
9	Have you been employed during your time as an undergraduate student?	14%	86%
10	Have you ever faced financial difficulties that made it hard to cover school fees and basic living expenses such as food, housing, or transportation?	77%	23%
11	Do you think that some students engage in premarital sex as a way to secure financial support from their partner?	97%	3%
12	Do you believe that your financial situation could influence your decision to engage in premarital sexual activities?	68%	32%

From the result obtained from table 3 above, a significant majority of the respondents (83%) do not receive financial aid or scholarships to support their education. This suggests that a large proportion of the respondents are either financially self-reliant or depend solely on family and partner(s) when it comes to their education. The above tabulated results also revealed that the majority of the participants (86%) have not been employed during their time as undergraduate students, indicating that a significant portion of them may rely on sources like family or partner other than employment for financial support. Additionally, a substantial majority of respondents (77%) have experienced financial difficulties that hindered them from covering essential expenses. This highlights the prevalence of financial challenges among the participants that may well influence their decision to engage in premarital sex. In fact, nearly all respondents (97%) believe that some students engage in premarital sexual activities as a means to secure financial support. This perception suggests a strong association between financial considerations and premarital sexual behaviours. A significant portion of participants (68%) believe that their financial situation can influence their decision to engage in premarital sexual activities. This underscores the perceived impact of financial status on their choices regarding premarital sex.

**Table 4: extent of curiosity effect on premarital sex**

S/no	Item	Yes	No
13	Have you ever been curious about topics related to sexual development of your body?	64%	36%
14	Have you ever sought information or answers to questions about various sexual practices due to curiosity?	98%	2%
15	Have you ever watched or read explicit sexual content out of curiosity?	79%	11%
16	Have you ever engaged in sexual activities because you were curious about how it feels?	42%	58%
17	Would you feel comfortable revealing your curiosity about a sexual topic of interest?	63%	37%
18	Do you agree that curiosity or desire to experiment could lead some students to engage in premarital sex?	83%	17%

The results obtained from table 4 shows that the majority of respondents (64%) admitted to being curious about topics related to their bodies and sexual development. This indicates that a significant portion of students harbour innate curiosity on matters relating to sex. An overwhelming 98% of respondents stated that they had actively sought information or answers to questions about sexual topics out of curiosity.

This suggests a strong inclination among students to satisfy their curiosity by seeking knowledge in this area. A substantial 79% of the participants revealed that they had watched or read explicit sexual content out of curiosity. Such high percentage highlights the prevalence of curiosity-driven exposure to explicit material among students. Regarding engaging in sexual activities because of curiosity about how it feels, 42% of respondents admitted to doing so, while 58% reported not having done so. This indicates that curiosity plays a role for a significant portion of students in their decision to engage in sexual activities. A majority of 63% of respondents stated that they would feel comfortable revealing their curiosity about a sexual topic of interest. This suggests that students are generally open to discussing their curiosity about sexual matters. A significant 83% of the participants agreed that curiosity or the desire to experiment could lead some students to engage in premarital sex. This finding suggests a strong belief among students that curiosity can influence the decision to participate in premarital sexual activities.

**Table 5:** Relationship between Curiosity and Premarital Sexual Activity among undergraduates

Variables		Sexual Curiosity	Sexual Activities
Sexual Curiosity (SC)	Pearson Correlation	1	0.362
	Significance (2-t)		0.0001
	Sample size: n	380	380
Sexual Activity (SA)	Pearson Correlation	0.362	1
	Significance (2-t)	0.0001	
	Sample size: n	380	380

Source: Raw data taken from instruments used to conduct the study.

Table 5 shows that there is a significant, positive and moderate relation between curiosity and premarital sexual practices among adolescents of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, ( $r = 0.362$ ,  $p << 0.05$ ). The data was reliable with a  $P$  value of 0.0001 which is much less than 0.05.

**Table 5: How the media influence the occurrence of premarital sex**

S/no	Item	Yes	No
19	Do you believe that media exposure has a greater influence on the perceptions of premarital sex among young people today compared to previous generations?	380 (100%)	0 (0%)
20	Do you think that pornographic content from the internet encourages premarital sex among students?	372 (98%)	8 (2%)
21	Does frequent exposure to sexually stimulating pictures/objects from print media like magazines increase one's desire to engage in premarital sex?	376 (99%)	4 (1%)
22	Does the media encourage students to engage in premarital sex through music videos, reality TV shows etc.	308 (81%)	72 (19%)
23	Have you ever discussed or shared sex related media content with your friends or peers?	87 (23%)	293 (77%)
24	Do you believe that media exposure has a greater influence on the perceptions of premarital sex among young people today compared to previous generations?	380 (100%)	0 (0%)

The results obtained from the table above shows that 98% of the respondents agreed that pornographic



content from the internet encourages premarital sex among students, while 2% of the respondents disagreed. 99% agreed that frequent exposure to sexual-stimulating pictures/objects from print media/magazines reinforce some students' desire to engage in premarital sex, while 1% of the respondents disagreed. 81% agreed that the media encourages premarital sex through music videos, reality TV shows etc while 19% disagreed. Furthermore a small amount of 23% admitted to sharing sex related media content with their peers or friends. Interestingly, there was 100% agreement among respondents that media exposure has a greater influence on the perceptions of premarital sex among young people today compared to previous generations.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

From research question 1, "How does peer group influence contribute to the occurrence of premarital sex among undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?", the findings showed convincingly there was a positive and significant correlation between peer group influence and the occurrences of premarital sex among undergraduates. In fact the study revealed that 93% of the respondents have friends who partake in premarital sex. Furthermore, 96% of respondents agreed that having friends who always talk about sexual pleasures can increase one's desire to engage in the act. In fact, 68% of the respondents revealed to have been either encouraged or pressured by friends or peers to engage in premarital sex and that having such friends strongly influences one's decision to have sex. Furthermore, results of the study revealed that a significant 43% of the respondents have felt the need to engage in premarital sex because their peers were doing it. Peer groups play a pivotal role in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of university students. Peer pressure, discussions, and the desire to fit in can significantly impact students' decisions regarding premarital sex (Seme et al., 2016).

From research question 2, "How does the socio-economic status of undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education influence their likelihood to engage in premarital sexual activities?", the study revealed that socio-economic status has an important influence on the likelihood of undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education to engage in premarital sex. Only 17% of the respondents claimed to receive financial aid or scholarships to support education and only 14% revealed to have ever been employed during their time as an undergraduate student. In fact 77% claim to have faced financial difficulties that made it hard to cover school fees and basic living expenses such as food, housing, or transportation highlights the prevalence of financial challenges among the participants that may well influence their decision to engage in premarital sex. In fact, nearly all respondents (97%) believe that some students engage in premarital sexual activities as a means to secure financial support. This perception suggests a strong association between the financial background of students and their premarital sexual behaviours. Ikpe (2013) concludes that in University of Lagos students negotiate sex for money. According to Amusat (2018), for example many undergraduates have resorted to full time prostitution in their campuses under the guise that they are hustling. Moreover, due to the fact that the majority of higher education students and high school students are economically insecure, they are susceptible to economic incentives that can lead to higher risk sexual practices (Tekletsadik et al., 2014). Furthermore, a significant portion of participants (68%) believe that their financial situation can influence their decision to engage in premarital sexual activities. This underscores the perceived impact of financial status on their choices regarding premarital sex.

From research question 3 "To what extent does curiosity or the desire to experiment affect students' decision to engage in premarital intercourse?", the finding indicated that curiosity does have a notable influence on the decision of undergraduate students to engage in premarital intercourse. Furthermore, the study revealed a significant, positive and moderate relation between curiosity and premarital sexual practices. A significant 83% of the participants agreed that curiosity or the desire to experiment could lead some students to engage in premarital sex. This finding suggests a strong belief among students that curiosity can influence the decision to participate in premarital sexual activities. The natural curiosity of young adults drives them to explore and experiment with their sexuality. Curiosity about sexual experiences and relationships can significantly influence their decisions (Ogunwale & Owojuyigbe,

2016).

From research question 4, “How does the media influence the occurrence of premarital sex among undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education”, this study revealed that media influence was one of the leading factors contributing to their eagerness to engage in premarital sex. The findings revealed that the media influence as perceived by the participants, is a major contributing factor for the high occurrence of premarital sex among undergraduates at the university in question. From the respondents, 98% agreed that pornographic videos from the internet encourage premarital sex among students, 99% agreed that frequent exposure to sexual stimulating pictures/objects from print media/magazines reinforce some students desire to engage in premarital sex, and 81% agreed that the media does encourage premarital sex through music videos, reality TV shows etc. Mass media, such as television, the internet, and popular culture, contributes to the normalization and acceptance of premarital sex. Exposure to sexual content and provocative imagery can influence students' perceptions and desires (Abdullahi & Umar, 2020). Brown, et al., (2016) admonish the academic community and policy makers “not to wait decades” to conclude that the mass media are an important factor in youth sexual behavior.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the findings of the research, it was concluded that peer group influence contributes significantly to the prevalence of premarital sex and to an extent can conclude that the kinds of peers with which one associates has ways of influencing one's decisions and attitude towards engagement in premarital sexual activities. The study found a significant correlation between socio-economic background of students and their likelihood to engage in premarital sex, and this could either be because the individual has no other reliable means of sustaining their livelihood which includes the funding of their education as well as other basic living expenses. A strong desire to know or learn something (curiosity) together with the influence of mass media through pictures and videos of sexual erotic objects are all direct or indirect causes of premarital sex among undergraduate students of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations were made:

1. Parents or guardians should know the kind of room-mates that their children associate with in the university in order to make appropriate adjustments on time.
2. During orientation programs for undergraduates, students should be taught on how to choose the right friends that will reduce the chances of them engaging in premarital sex.
3. The cost of living should be reduced considerably in the university environment, and special aids, grants or scholarships should be given to students who are facing financial difficulties with ease and on time.
4. During orientation programs, in the classrooms, or in teaching sex education, the students should be taught on how to manage their curiosity and the effect of this curiosity if not well managed.
5. The university should implement well-designed sexual education programs to address adolescents' curiosity with accurate information that provides useful knowledge and proper guidance while promoting responsible and safe sexual behaviours.
6. Prevention programs should focus on educating students about the risks associated with premarital sex, such as sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy.
7. Intervention programs should focus on helping students develop the skills and resources they need to make healthy sexual decisions.
8. Supportive environments should be created for students who choose to wait until marriage to engage in sexual activity. This can be done by promoting positive attitudes towards virginity and by providing students with access to resources and support groups.
9. The films, music videos, reality TV shows produced within and outside the country should be well scrutinised.

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