



SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS THAT PREDISPOSE ADOLESCENTS TO PREMARITAL SEX IN GOKANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

Adolescence is characterised by a surge in hormonal flow resulting in dramatic physiological and psychosocial changes with several developmental consequences. This study evaluated the sociodemographic factors that predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive research design. A total of 421 adolescents participated in the study. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents from the study area. A structured and validated questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.76 was administered to elicit information from respondents. The data collected were subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, whereas the independent sample t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses at a .05 level of significance. The findings revealed the mean age of the respondents was 14.32 ± 2.86 years, and 62.2% of the respondent's parents had secondary education. Also, sociodemographic factors that predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA were age, parents' educational status, and parents' socioeconomic status. Gender was not a significant factor predisposing adolescents to premarital sex. It was recommended among others that parents should strengthen the parent-child relationship of their adolescents who due to their age and societal allusion are predisposed to premarital sex.

Keywords: Premarital sex, Adolescents, Sociodemographic factors, Sexuality

Introduction

Globally, there is considerable concern about the sexual and reproductive health of young people, especially the adolescents that constitute between 20-23% of the sub-Saharan African population (UNICEF, 2019; Coulibaly & Page, 2021). The teaming population of these young people can be considered assets for economic growth acceleration and poverty reduction in the sub-region, if their respective nations strategically invest in their capacity building to harness their potential locally, nationally, and internationally, through the promulgation of target-specific policies and programmes (Ibrahim, 2020). Incidentally, this category of individuals is prone to hasty judgements and behaviours that can be detrimental to unleashing their potential. Their peculiarities are often unaddressed in policies, thereby exacerbating their vulnerability and limiting their contribution to national and regional development (Ayoade et al., 2015). The neglect both by the government and society has made these young individuals succumb to pressure from negative influences, with consequent engagement in risky sexual behaviours like premarital sex (Morris & Rushwan, 2015; Shrestha, 2019).

Sexuality is an inherent part of human life. It is a dynamic factor behind attraction between species as well as the driving force for reproduction and survival. Adolescence marks the transition into the reproductive phase of life characterised by spouts in physical, mental, social, emotional, psychosexual, and general physiological development (UNICEF, 2016; Babatunde, 2019). This critical phase is characterized by confusion, exuberance, peer pressure, and experimentation, particularly with sexual relations (Elekeh et al., 2021) which exposes these individuals to the challenges of adulthood such as choices and decisions, and their consequences. The behavioural patterns acquired and learnt at this stage profoundly shape the adolescent's life course. Premarital sex is the penetrative vaginal sexual intercourse between a man and a woman who are not formally married (Behulu et al., 2019). Initiation into sexual activities usually takes place during adolescence and is strongly linked to the prevailing norms and values that permeate society such as increased alcohol consumption, cigarette smoking, and

access to internet-based pornographic materials as well as negative social influences with its pervasive sexual innuendoes (Babatunde, 2019; Behulu et al., 2019; Girmay et al., 2019). Societal sexual allusion often exploits adolescents' innocence and their inherent curiosity about the physiological changes they are undergoing, that is, sexual awareness, luring unsuspecting adolescents into inordinate sexual gratification (Envuladu et al., 2017; Sarmini & El Rizaq, 2018). Parenting style and parent-child interaction were foremost among the factors that predispose adolescents to premarital sexual intercourse. Strict parenting, as demonstrated by coercion, excessive prohibition, isolation, criticism, and verbal or physical abuse, often makes the home environment hostile and devoid of love (Noroozi et al., 2014). Adolescents have emotional gaps due to the 'hormonal rush' and uncertainties in the environment. Lack of emotional support from parents may push these adolescents into association with unfriendly friends to seek answers to the myriads of questions in their minds as well as fill their emotional gaps, a fundamental part of their existence ostensibly neglected by parents (Noroozi et al., 2014; Sarmini & El Rizaq, 2018). Poor interaction between parents, conflicts, separation or divorce may also place an additional emotional burden on adolescents especially the girl child, pushing them to seek emotional support from the opposite sex with acceptance of sexual relations on the ground of promised marriage as a means of escape (Shahid et al., 2017; Furlanetto et al., 2019).

Indiscriminate and permissive use of alcoholic beverages has permeated the rank and file of our social system, and adolescents are not spared from the menace. Premarital sexual relations are highest among adolescents that indulge in drinking alcoholic beverages (Meleko et al., 2017; Arega et al., 2019). Peer pressure, the eagerness to be accepted and "feel belong", has been directly linked to the rise in premarital sexual intercourse among adolescents. Male adolescents attributed sexual activities to masculinity, maturity, and strength, while females attribute it to love and acceptance. In addition, the pervasive effects of poverty and social norms do perpetuate female subservience within sexual relationships (Envuladu et al., 2017). Similarly, curiosity and experimentation often take a better part of adolescents' reasoning. Illicit sexual activities do arise due to curiosity about sexual behaviours as reflected in social media which often leads to experimentation to satisfy the curiosity (Kar et al., 2015; Sarmini & El Rizaq, 2018). Other predisposing factors include access to internet-based pornographic materials, previous sexual abuse, poor living condition, school drop-out, inadequate/absence of sex education, severance from parents, cultural norms, family values, financial inducement due to poverty, deviance, smoking, and substance (drug) abuse (Babatunde, 2019; Furlanetto et al., 2019; Ghaffari et al., 2020; Srahbzu & Tirfeneh, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Risky sexual behaviours such as premarital sex and multiple sex partners appear to be more prevalent among adolescents, and these have heightened their vulnerability to diverse health complications associated with inordinate sex such as unwanted pregnancies, induced abortion, sexually transmitted infections (e.g. HIV/AIDS, HPV, syphilis, and gonorrhoea), and other maternal morbidity and mortality (Akokuwebe et al., 2015; Morris & Rushwan, 2015; UNICEF, 2015; Jayasinghe et al., 2017). Other unpleasant outcomes include but are not limited to regrets, school dropout, loss of self-respect, forced marriage, depression, alcohol abuse, and at times suicide (Shrestha, 2019; Adama & Ejih, 2021; Alawode et al., 2021). Despite relatively high knowledge of the negative impacts of premarital sex, early sexual debuts and risky sexual behaviours remain a challenge among adolescents in Nigeria (Adedini et al., 2021; Envuladu et al., 2021). Several studies have been conducted on risky sexual behaviours among adolescents however, there is a paucity of information on factors that predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State. It is on this premise that the researchers sought to examine the sociodemographic factors that predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study examined socio-demographic factors that predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State. The specific objectives of the study were to;

1. determine if age predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.
2. ascertain if gender predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.
3. determine if parental education predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.
4. ascertain if parents' socioeconomic status (purveyed by income level) predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were stated to guide the study

1. How does age predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State?
2. How does gender predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State?
3. How does parental education predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State?
4. How does parents' socioeconomic status (purveyed by income level) predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. Age does not significantly predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.
2. Gender does not significantly predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.
3. Parental education does not significantly predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.
4. Parents' socioeconomic status (purveyed by income level) does not significantly predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.

Materials and Methods

A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised all the adolescents in Gokana LGA of Rivers State. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents for the study. The first stage involved the use of the stratified sampling method to divide Gokana LGA into seventeen strata based on the number of wards. The second stage involved the use of stratified proportionate sampling to select nine wards which represent approximately 50% of the total wards in Gokana LGA. The third stage involved the use of simple random sampling to select the adolescents from each of the selected wards to make a total of 450 participants. A structured and validated questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.76 was administered to elicit information from respondents. The Cronbach formula was used for calculating the index. The data collected were subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions whereas the independent sample t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses at a .05 level of significance. Therefore, 450 copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents and only 421 copies retrieved were used for the study

Results

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Description	Frequency	Percent
Age (Years)	10-14	212	50.4
	15-19	209	49.6
	Mean/SD Age		14.32±2.86
Gender	Male	193	45.8
	Female	228	54.2
Parent's educational attainment	Primary	47	11.2
	Secondary	262	62.2
	Bachelor's Degree	82	19.5
	Postgraduate Degree	30	7.1
Socioeconomic status (income per month)	<N30,000.00	232	55.1
	N30,000.00-N50,000.00	119	28.3
	Above N50,000.00	70	16.6

The mean age as presented on Table 1 was 14.32±2.86 years and the modal age group was 10-14 years. There were more female (54.2%) than male (45.8%) respondents, and the majority of the respondent's parents (62.2%) had attained secondary education, while only a few had a first degree (19.5%) and postgraduate degree (7.1%) respectively. Also, the majority of the respondents' had parents who received less than N30,000.00 per month (55.1%), this was followed by those who had parents who received between N30,000.00 to N50,000.00 per month (28.3%) and the least had parents who received above N50,000.00 per month(16.6%).

Table 2: Summary of descriptive statistics on how age predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State

SN	Premarital sex variables	10-14, n=212		15-19, n=209	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Family size influences my involvement in premarital sex	2.56	0.96	2.99	1.00
2	Inability to meet basic needs like food, shelter and clothing	2.48	1.14	2.87	0.87
3	Type of housing and environment	2.25	0.87	2.59	0.89
4	Nature of the job of parents working long hours	2.96	0.93	3.03	0.75
5	Financial pressure that weakens moral values	2.00	0.92	2.62	0.87
6	Lack of parental monitoring	2.39	1.07	2.80	1.03
7	Adolescents not living with both parents	2.54	1.17	2.96	0.85
8	Adolescents identifying with the views of their parents	2.16	0.77	2.62	0.88
9	Lack of parent-child communication	3.08	0.82	3.19	0.83
10	Parents not providing the best emotional support	2.15	0.96	2.67	0.83
11	Parents not providing necessary life lessons	2.49	1.16	2.93	1.04
12	Family instability, such as divorce, remarriage, death, etc	2.21	1.03	2.74	0.82
13	Parents reduced communication about sexual risks	2.29	0.71	2.75	0.85
14	Premarital sex is an immoral act	2.64	0.96	2.73	0.79
15	Engaging in premarital sex is discouraged in my culture.	2.74	0.89	2.82	0.71
16	Premarital sex is a sin	2.56	0.95	2.99	1.00
17	Premarital sex is considered unacceptable in my religion	2.48	1.14	2.87	0.87
18	I disapprove of premarital sex due to religion	2.25	0.87	2.59	0.89
19	Peers influence my engagement in premarital sex	2.97	0.93	3.03	0.75
20	Friends intensify the urge for indulging in premarital sex	2.00	0.92	2.62	0.87
21	Premarital sex is associated with problems	2.58	0.87	2.80	0.87
22	It is easier to discuss sex with friends than with parents	2.49	1.15	2.93	1.03
23	It is more convenient to discuss sexual matters with peers	2.21	1.03	2.74	0.82
24	Parents do not have the time to discuss sexual matters	2.29	0.71	2.75	0.85
25	Friends encourage me to engage in premarital sex	2.64	0.96	2.73	0.79
26	Parents discourage me from engaging in premarital sex	2.74	0.89	2.82	0.71
	Grand mean	2.47	0.27	2.81	0.27

The result from Table 2 shows the summary of descriptive statistics on how age predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State. It shows that the grand mean rating of the participants in the age bracket of 10-14 was 2.47, SD=0.27 whereas that of their counterparts in the age bracket of 15-19 years was 2.81, SD=0.27. This simply implies that age predisposes adolescents to premarital sex. It appears that the higher the age the higher their engagement in premarital sex.

Table 3: Summary of descriptive statistics on how gender predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State

SN	Premarital sex variables	Male n=193		Female n=228	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Family size influences my involvement in premarital sex	2.75	1.01	2.79	1.00
2	Inability to meet basic needs like food, shelter and clothing	2.68	1.04	2.66	1.03
3	Type of housing and environment	2.39	0.90	2.44	0.90
4	Nature of the job of parents working long hours	3.01	0.84	2.98	0.84
5	Financial pressure that weakens moral values	2.27	0.95	2.34	0.94
6	Lack of parental monitoring	2.57	1.07	2.61	1.07
7	Adolescents not living with both parents	2.75	1.06	2.74	1.03
8	Adolescents identifying with the views of their parents	2.35	0.84	2.42	0.86
9	Lack of parent-child communication	3.15	0.82	3.12	0.83
10	Parents not providing the best emotional support	2.38	0.93	2.43	0.93
11	Parents not providing necessary life lessons	2.68	1.13	2.73	1.12
12	Family instability, such as divorce, remarriage, death, etc	2.46	0.98	2.48	0.96
13	Parents reduced communication about sexual risks	2.50	0.81	2.54	0.81
14	Premarital sex is an immoral act	2.67	0.88	2.70	0.89
15	Engaging in premarital sex is discouraged in my culture.	2.79	0.82	2.78	0.80
16	Premarital sex is a sin	2.75	1.00	2.79	1.00
17	Premarital sex is considered unacceptable in my religion	2.68	1.04	2.66	1.03
18	I disapprove of premarital sex due to religion	2.39	0.90	2.44	0.90
19	Peers influence my engagement in premarital sex	3.02	0.84	2.99	0.85
20	Friends intensify the urge for indulging in premarital sex	2.27	0.95	2.34	0.94
21	Premarital sex is associated with problems	2.68	0.87	2.70	0.89
22	It is easier to discuss about sex with friends than parents	2.68	1.12	2.73	1.11
23	It is more convenient to discuss sexual matters with peers	2.46	0.98	2.48	0.96
24	Parents do not have the time to discuss sexual matters	2.50	0.82	2.54	0.82
25	Friends encourage me to engage in premarital sex	2.67	0.88	2.70	0.89
26	Parents discourage me from engaging in premarital sex	2.79	0.82	2.78	0.80
	Grand mean	2.63	0.32	2.65	0.32

The result from Table 3 shows the summary of descriptive statistics on how gender predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State. It shows that the grand mean rating of the male participants had a mean rating of 2.63, SD=0.32 whereas that of their female counterparts had a mean rating of 2.65, SD=0.32. This simply implies that gender does not predispose adolescents to premarital sex. It appears however that the female participants had a slightly higher disposition to engage in premarital sex than their male counterparts.

Table 4: Summary of descriptive statistics on how parental educational background predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State

SN	Premarital sex variables	Primary n=47		Secondary, n=262		Bachelor's Degree, n=82		Postgraduate, n=262	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Family size influences my involvement in premarital sex	2.91	1.00	2.77	1.01	2.72	1.02	2.63	0.89
2	Inability to meet basic needs like food, shelter and clothing	2.87	0.95	2.70	1.01	2.71	0.97	2.00	1.23
3	Type of housing and environment	2.38	0.85	2.45	0.92	2.40	0.89	2.23	0.77
4	Nature of the job of parents working long hours	3.09	0.72	3.06	0.78	3.00	0.82	2.30	1.24
5	Financial pressure that weakens moral values	2.49	1.00	2.29	0.94	2.35	0.97	2.03	0.72
6	Lack of parental monitoring	2.74	1.05	2.58	1.08	2.56	1.10	2.57	0.94
7	Adolescents not living with both parents	2.91	0.95	2.79	1.03	2.74	0.98	2.10	1.27
8	Adolescents identifying with the views of their parents	2.47	0.91	2.41	0.87	2.38	0.84	2.07	0.58
9	Lack of parent-child communication	3.19	0.82	3.16	0.81	3.15	0.82	2.77	0.90
10	Parents not providing the best emotional support	2.64	0.87	2.44	0.92	2.43	0.92	1.73	0.91
11	Parents not providing necessary life lessons	2.98	1.03	2.75	1.09	2.68	1.13	1.93	1.20
12	Family instability, such as divorce, remarriage, death, etc	2.55	1.02	2.44	0.99	2.51	0.93	2.50	0.86
13	Parents reduced communication about sexual risks	2.60	0.77	2.53	0.82	2.52	0.82	2.27	0.74
14	Premarital sex is an immoral act	2.77	0.73	2.73	0.84	2.76	0.91	2.03	1.13
15	Engaging in premarital sex is discouraged in my culture.	2.81	0.74	2.79	0.82	2.72	0.84	2.87	0.68
16	Premarital sex is a sin	2.94	0.96	2.78	1.01	2.72	1.02	2.63	0.89
17	Premarital sex is considered unacceptable in my religion	2.87	0.95	2.70	1.01	2.71	0.97	2.00	1.23
18	I disapprove of premarital sex due to religion	2.38	0.85	2.45	0.92	2.40	0.89	2.23	0.77
19	Peers influence my engagement in premarital sex	3.11	0.73	3.06	0.79	3.00	0.82	2.30	1.24
20	Friends intensify the urge for indulging in premarital sex	2.49	1.00	2.29	0.94	2.35	0.97	2.03	0.72
21	Premarital sex is associated with problems	2.49	0.83	2.66	0.88	2.72	0.85	3.20	0.89
22	It is easier to discuss sex with friends than with parents	2.96	1.02	2.76	1.08	2.68	1.13	1.93	1.20
23	It is more convenient to discuss sexual matters with peers	2.55	1.02	2.44	0.99	2.51	0.93	2.50	0.86
24	Parents do not have the time to discuss sexual matters	2.57	0.80	2.54	0.83	2.52	0.82	2.27	0.74
25	Friends encourage me to engage in premarital sex	2.77	0.73	2.73	0.84	2.76	0.91	2.03	1.13
26	Parents discourage me from engaging in premarital sex	2.81	0.74	2.79	0.82	2.72	0.84	2.87	0.68
	Grand mean	2.74	0.28	2.66	0.31	2.64	0.31	2.31	0.33

The result from Table 4 shows the summary of descriptive statistics on how parental educational background predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State. It shows that adolescents whose parents had primary education had a grand mean rating of 2.74, SD=0.28, whereas those whose parents had secondary education had a mean rating of 2.66, SD=0.31. The adolescents whose parents had a bachelor's degree had a mean rating of 2.64, SD=0.31 and the participants whose parents had postgraduate education had a mean rating of 2.31,

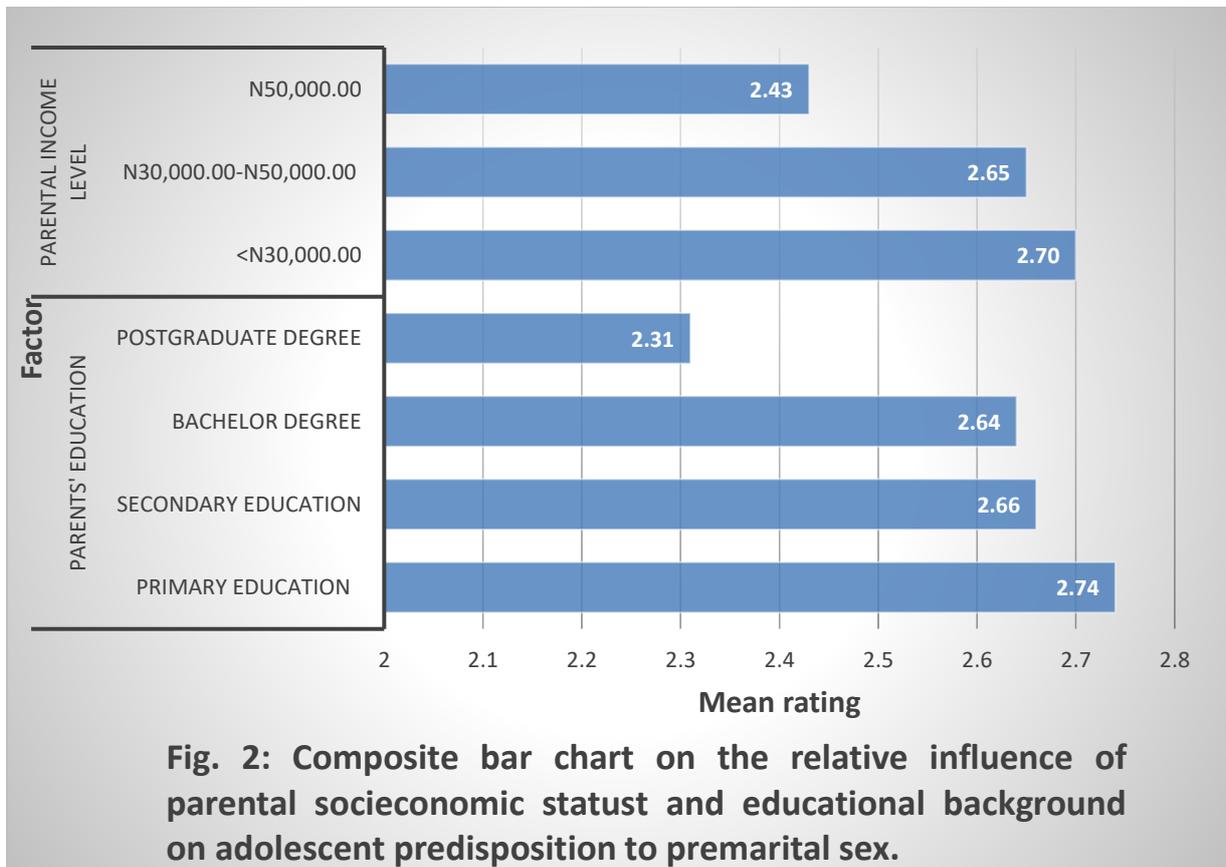
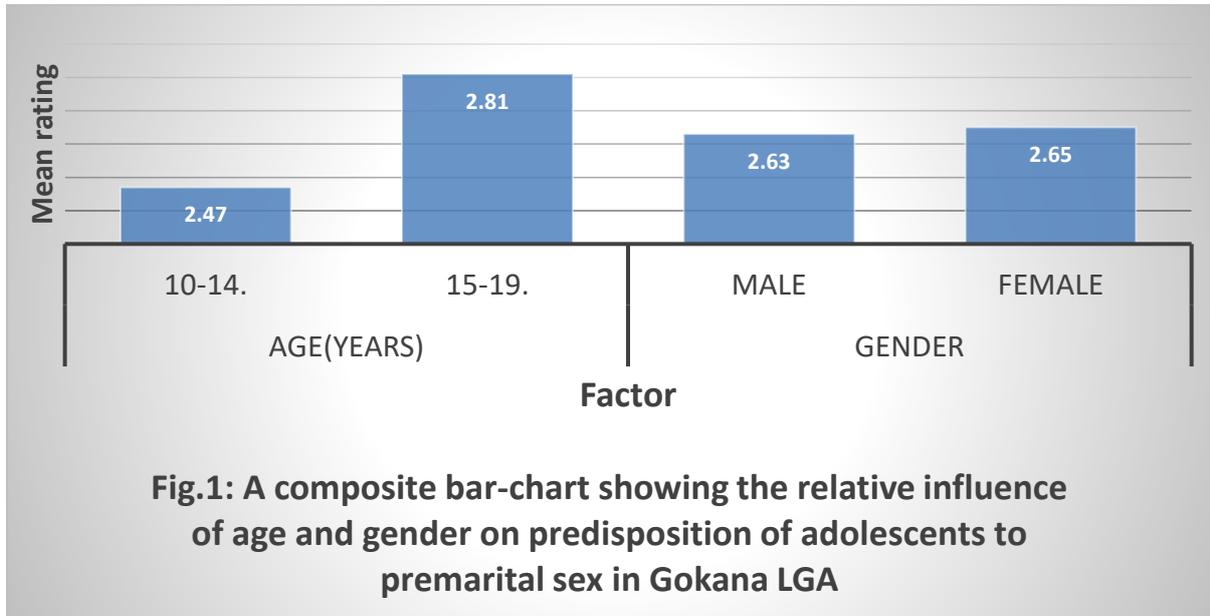
SD=0.33. This simply implies that the education of parents predisposes adolescents to premarital sex. It appears that the lower the educational background of parents the higher the tendency to engage in premarital sex by the children.

Table 5: Summary of descriptive statistics on how parents' socioeconomic status (purveyed by income level) predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State

SN	Premarital sex variables	<N30,000 n=232		N30,000- N50,000, n=119		N50,000 & above, n=70	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Family size influences my involvement in premarital sex	2.83	1.03	2.77	1.00	2.56	0.90
2	Inability to meet basic needs like food, shelter and clothing	2.73	0.98	2.69	1.02	2.44	1.18
3	Type of housing and environment	2.47	0.90	2.43	0.92	2.24	0.82
4	Nature of the job of parents working long hours	3.07	0.77	3.00	0.83	2.73	1.02
5	Financial pressure that weakens moral values	2.39	0.93	2.31	0.95	2.04	0.94
6	Lack of parental monitoring	2.66	1.09	2.59	1.06	2.37	1.00
7	Adolescents not living with both parents	2.81	0.98	2.77	1.05	2.49	1.21
8	Adolescents identifying with the views of their parents	2.46	0.89	2.38	0.85	2.16	0.67
9	Lack of parent-child communication	3.15	0.83	3.16	0.82	3.01	0.83
10	Parents not providing the best emotional support	2.53	0.89	2.40	0.92	2.01	0.97
11	Parents not providing necessary life lessons	2.86	1.09	2.70	1.12	2.21	1.12
12	Family instability, such as divorce, remarriage, death, etc	2.49	0.96	2.47	0.97	2.43	1.00
13	Parents reduced communication about sexual risks	2.59	0.82	2.54	0.82	2.27	0.74
14	Premarital sex is an immoral act	2.74	0.83	2.69	0.88	2.50	1.03
15	Engaging in premarital sex is discouraged in my culture.	2.78	0.79	2.79	0.80	2.77	0.87
16	Premarital sex is a sin	2.84	1.02	2.77	1.00	2.57	0.88
17	Premarital sex is considered unacceptable in my religion	2.73	0.98	2.69	1.02	2.44	1.18
18	I disapprove of premarital sex due to religion	2.47	0.90	2.43	0.92	2.24	0.82
19	Peers influence my engagement in premarital sex	3.08	0.78	3.00	0.83	2.73	1.02
20	Friends intensify the urge for indulging in premarital sex	2.39	0.93	2.31	0.95	2.04	0.94
21	Premarital sex is associated with problems	2.65	0.87	2.71	0.88	2.80	0.89
22	It is easier to discuss sex with friends than with parents	2.86	1.07	2.70	1.12	2.21	1.12
23	It is more convenient to discuss sexual matters with peers	2.49	0.96	2.47	0.97	2.43	1.00
24	Parents do not have the time to discuss sexual matters	2.59	0.83	2.54	0.82	2.27	0.74
25	Friends encourage me to engage in premarital sex	2.74	0.83	2.69	0.88	2.50	1.03
26	Parents discourage me from engaging in premarital sex	2.78	0.79	2.79	0.80	2.77	0.87
	Grand mean	2.70	0.30	2.65	0.32	2.43	0.31

The result from Table 5 shows the summary of descriptive statistics on how parents' socioeconomic status (purveyed by income level) predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State. It shows that adolescents whose parents earn less than N30,000.00 per month had grand a mean rating of 2.70, SD=0.30, whereas those whose parents had earned between N30,000.00-N50,000.00 had a mean rating of 2.65, SD=0.32 and the adolescents whose parents earn above N50,000.00 had a mean rating of 2.43, SD=0.31. This simply

implies that the socioeconomic status of parents (eg income level) predisposes adolescents to premarital sex. It appears that the lower the income level of parents the higher the tendency to engage in premarital sex by the children.



Hypotheses Testing

H₀1: Age does not significantly predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.

Table 6: Summary of independent sample t-test on the influence of age on premarital sex among adolescents in Gokana LGA

Age	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p	decision
10-14	212	2.47	0.27	-13.124	419	.000	Significant
15-19	209	2.81	0.27				

The result in Table 6 above showed that age significantly influenced premarital sex among adolescents in Gokana Local Government Area. This indicated that age could predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana Local Government Area ($t=13.12$, $p=.00$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected at .05 level of significance.

H₀2: Gender does not significantly predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.

Table 7: Summary of independent sample t-test on the influence of gender on premarital sex among adolescents in Gokana LGA

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p	Decision
Male	193	2.63	0.32	-.733	419	.464	Not Significant
Female	228	2.65	0.32				

Table 7 presented the result of the independent sample t-test on the influence of gender on premarital sex among adolescents in Gokana LGA. The result showed that gender does not significantly predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA ($t= .733$, $p= 0.464$), although, the mean difference revealed that being a female could marginally predispose the adolescent to premarital sex. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained at .05 level of significance.

H₀3: Parental education does not significantly predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.

Table 8: Summary of ANOVA on the influence of parent educational attainment on premarital sex among adolescents

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	3.873	3	1.291	13.683	.000	Significant
Within Groups	39.344	417	.094			
Total	43.217	420				

The result on the influence of parent educational attainment on premarital sex among adolescents is presented in Table 8 above. The result showed that participants whose parents had only primary education had a mean rating of 2.74, $SD=0.28$, whereas those parents had only secondary education had a mean rating of 2.66, $SD=0.31$ while those with parents who had Bachelor's degrees was 2.64, $SD=0.31$ and the mean rating of participants whose parents had postgraduate education was 2.31, $SD=0.32$. The involvement of the participants in premarital sex appears to increase with decreasing parental educational attainment. The result revealed that parents' educational attainment significantly predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana Local Government Area ($F=13.68$, $p= 0.00$). Thus, the hypothesis three was rejected at a .05 level of significance.

H₀4: Parents' socioeconomic status does not significantly predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana LGA of Rivers State.

Table 9: Summary of ANOVA on the influence of parents' socioeconomic status (purveyed by income level) on adolescents' involvement in premarital sex

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	3.801	2	1.900	20.152	.000	Significant
Within Groups	39.416	418	.094			
Total	43.217	420				

Table 9 presented the result on the influence of parents' socioeconomic status (purveyed by income level) on adolescents' involvement in premarital sex. The participants whose parents received less than N30,000.00 per month had a mean rating of 2.70, SD=0.30 whereas those whose parents received N30,000.00-N50,000.00 per month had a mean rating of 2.65, SD=0.32 and those whose parents received above N50,000.00 was 2.43, SD=0.31. The involvement of the participants in premarital sex appears to increase with decreasing parental socioeconomic status as purveyed by income level. The result revealed that parents' socioeconomic status significantly predisposes adolescents to premarital sex in premarital sex in Gokana Local Government Area (F=20.152, p=0.00). Therefore, hypothesis four was rejected at a .05 level of significance.

Discussion of Findings

The adolescents in this study were in their prime, as demonstrated by the mean age of 14.32±2.86 years and the modal age group of 10-14 years. The majority of parents/guardians of the adolescents had minimal education as demonstrated by the great number that only attained secondary education, while only a small fraction attained tertiary education. The mean age was similar to that of Oluoha et al., (2017) who pegged the mean age of adolescents at 14.59±1.76 years while researching the prevalence and pattern of nutritional status of adolescents attending public secondary schools in Gokana. Education is propounded as the stake through which positive attitudes and perceptions of sexuality are established (Baku et al., 2017; Sharma, 2020). Thus, the fact that the majority of adolescents' parents had secondary education and above could enable the parents to inculcate positive attitudes and perceptions toward premarital sex to their adolescents. Research has shown that parents/guardians often shy away from discussing issues of sex and sexuality with their children due to certain cultural values and traditional norms, while some parents feel too embarrassed to discuss any sex-related topic with their wards (Shahid et al., 2017; Furlanetto et al., 2019; Othman et al., 2020). Certain religious beliefs also prohibit adults from discussing issues related to sexuality with their young with the assumption that sex education leads to early sexual debuts (Kamangu et al., 2017; Oluyemi et al., 2017; Baku et al., 2018). The gap created by poor parents-children communication increases the exposure and vulnerability of these adolescents to peer pressure and risky sexual behaviours (Behulu et al., 2019; Shrestha, 2019).

Age was observed to significantly predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana Local Government Area. The finding is consistent with Ayoade et al. (2015) who established that a significant effect exists between the age and sexual behaviour of adolescents in secondary school. Mid to later adolescents were observed to be more involved in premarital sexual intercourse than the early adolescent with an increase of 87% among adolescents who experienced parental neglect (Srahbzu & Tirfeneh, 2020). Similar results obtained by Anene et al. (2017) revealed a prevalence of 66.6% especially among older adolescents confirming that age plays a significant role in adolescents' risky sexual behaviours and disease vulnerability. The reason could be hormonal, cravings to experiment and prove sexuality, or desire to feed curiosity, among others (Envuladu et al., 2017). The result further revealed that gender had no significant influence on adolescents' involvement in premarital sex in Gokana LGA, although, the mean difference slightly indicated higher involvement among female adolescents. The marginal higher involvement observed among female adolescents could be due to financial inducement and peer pressure as demonstrated by the widespread transactional sex among female adolescents (Folayan et al., 2015; Ranganathan et al., 2017; Ghaffari et al., 2020). A similar result was reported by Aleke et al. (2021) in Ebonyi State. However, the finding was at variance with the work of Anene et al. (2017) who reported male adolescents were three times more likely to involve in premarital sexual intercourse than female adolescents in Anambra State. Additionally, those male adolescents were more likely to initiate sexual intercourse and have more permissive perceptions about

sex than females. The slight variance observed in the results may be attributed to the settings and population from which samples were drawn for the research.

Parental educational attainment was observed to significantly influence adolescents' involvement in premarital sex in Gokana Local Government Area. The finding is in tandem with earlier research by Udigwe et al., (2014), who posited that parents are the primary socializers of their children. It also associated low educational attainment of parents with increased risky sexual behaviours among children; asserting that parents have the unique responsibility to help their adolescents cultivate positive attitudes towards sex, and build healthy sexual habits in life. According to Svodziwa et al. (2016), parents' educational attainment could be a deterrent or accelerant to parent-adolescent communication about reproductive issues most especially on sex and sexuality education. They observed that parents with higher educational attainment usually explore the print media (brochures, magazines, journals, etc.) on matters of sex education and cautiously furnished their adolescents with relevant information about sex and sexuality through these materials.

Socioeconomic status (purveyed by income level of parents) of adolescents' parents was observed to significantly predispose adolescents to premarital sex in Gokana Local Government Area. The observed significance could be attributed to the financial structure of adolescents' families. Incidences of sexual impiety are commonly reported among adolescents whose parents are found at the bottom of the socioeconomic status, and this is often linked to financial inducement by wealthy adults who often take advantage of their unmet financial needs (Tende, 2020; Ali et al., 2021). This is evidenced in the high transactional sex observed among adolescents (Udigwe et al., 2014; Olorunsola et al., 2021). Although socioeconomic status is one of the major motivational factors of premarital sex among adolescents, Shrestha (2019) argued that the cause of premarital sex is multi-dimensional. According to Anene et al. (2017) and Shrestha, (2019), a larger family size has a significant influence on adolescents' involvement in premarital sexual relations. This, they attributed to the poor emotional support that resulted in poor social development due to less interaction between siblings, poor parental supervision, and inadequate and insufficient resource allocation. Anene et al. (2017) also posited that certain cultural norms and religious beliefs are more permissive to the male gender than the female; thus, the female is closely monitored with stricter rules while the male is somewhat at liberty to mingle with the opposite sex. Other factors such as being resident in a nucleated household with two parents, permissive use of alcoholic beverages, cigarette smoking, sexual awareness, and residential areas, have been reported to exert an influence on adolescents' involvement in premarital sex and other risky sexual behaviours (Girmay et al., 2019; Ghaffari et al., 2020).

Conclusion

Adolescence is a critical stage in human development that is fraught with confusion, exuberance, pressure, and desire for self-expression part of which is demonstrated by risky sexual behaviours such as premarital sex. Apart from hormonal influxes, certain socio-cultural, as well as economic variables, have been established to exert tremendous influence on adolescents' sexual behaviours. Age, parental education attainment and socioeconomic status of parents are found to influence adolescents' predisposition to premarital sex. Parent-child relationships and bonds must be enhanced as this would ensure that adolescents acquire adequate and correct information about sex and sexuality and greatly stem the vices that adolescents are exposed to when getting information from unreliable sources.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are recommended;

1. Parents are encouraged to improve and strengthen the parent-child relationship as children are more vulnerable at the adolescent age, thereby protecting them from societal sexual allusion that can predispose adolescents to premarital sex.
2. Parents should endeavour to educate their adolescents on sex, sexuality, and reproductive health by furnishing them with appropriate information on sex education, as adequate sex education can mitigate adolescents' predisposition to premarital sex.
3. Parents should endeavour to improve the quality of life of their adolescents by meeting their financial needs to enervate their self-esteem. This will mitigate their predisposition to premarital and transactional sex.
4. Educational programmes that are target-specific should be organised by relevant government and non-governmental organizations to educate the adolescents on dangers of premarital sex thus mitigating their predisposition.

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