



Attitudes of Undergraduate Hostel Students of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education toward Premarital Sex

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Abstract

Attitudes toward premarital sex among young adults have become a significant concern within university environments, particularly in hostel settings where students experience increased independence, peer interaction, and exposure to diverse social influences. Despite growing attention to sexual behaviour among undergraduates, limited empirical evidence exists on the relative contributions of knowledge, social influences, and self-regulatory factors in shaping students' attitudes toward premarital sex in Nigerian universities. This study investigated the predictors of attitudes toward premarital sex among undergraduate hostel students of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study examined the relationship between sexual knowledge and attitudes toward premarital sex, as well as the predictive influence of sexual knowledge, social/media exposure, and behaviour/self-control on students' attitudes. It also explored gender differences in attitudes. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring sexual knowledge, social/media influence, behaviour/self-control, and attitudes toward premarital sex. A sample of 100 undergraduate hostel students was selected through simple random sampling. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, Multiple Linear Regression, and Independent Samples t-test. Findings revealed a weak but statistically significant negative relationship between sexual knowledge and attitudes toward premarital sex, indicating that increased knowledge is associated with lower acceptance. The regression analysis showed that the combined predictors significantly explained variations in attitudes; however, only behaviour/self-control emerged as a significant predictor, suggesting that internal regulatory mechanisms play a more critical role than knowledge or social/media exposure. Additionally, no significant gender difference was found in students' attitudes toward premarital sex. The study concludes that attitudes toward premarital sex among undergraduate hostel students are shaped primarily by self-regulatory factors rather than demographic characteristics or exposure to information and media. It recommends the development of intervention programmes that emphasize behavioural regulation, personal responsibility, and value-based decision-making, alongside sustained sexual education initiatives within university settings.

Keywords: Premarital Sex; Attitude; Sexual Knowledge; Self-Control; Social Influence; Hostel Environment; Behavioural Regulation.

1. Introduction

Premarital sex is a significant social and psychological issue among young adults, particularly within university settings where students experience newfound independence. The transition from secondary school to university represents a developmental milestone characterized by increased autonomy, identity exploration, and social experimentation. For many students, particularly those living in university hostels, this period marks a distinct shift in their social environment, where peer interactions often supersede family influence and traditional norms concerning premarital sex may be challenged.

Previous research in tertiary institutions has shown that university students' attitudes toward premarital sex is shaped by multiple psychosocial factors such as peer pressure, self-esteem, and social influences (Yedemie, 2024). Studies conducted among undergraduate populations report that exposure to peer norms and lower self-esteem are associated with more permissive attitudes toward premarital sexual behaviour (Yedemie, 2024). In addition, knowledge about sexual health and its implications can influence how young people perceive the adoption of sexual behaviours (Alebiosu & Adeyemi, 2025), with evidence suggest that better-informed students may make less risky decisions regarding sexual engagement.

Religious and moral beliefs continue to play an important role in shaping attitudes and behaviours related to premarital sex. In the Nigerian context, religious teachings and cultural values often discourage

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premarital sexual involvement, promoting abstinence until marriage. Studies on factors influencing premarital sexual behaviour in Nigerian tertiary institutions indicate that religious commitment can act as a protective factor against early or risky sexual engagement, even as other influences such as peer pressure and social media promote liberal sexual attitudes (Amadu et al., 2025). This highlights the complex interplay between traditional values and contemporary influences that university students encounter.

Social and media influences also contribute significantly to students' attitudes and choices. Peer dynamics, romantic content online, and broader cultural representations of sexuality have been linked to more permissive sexual attitudes, which can translate into behaviours that increase the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancies, and emotional distress. Research shows that peer influence and exposure to sexual content are often cited as predictors of premarital sex among students (Amadu et al., 2025).

Understanding the attitudes of undergraduate hostel students toward premarital sex is essential because attitudes are strong predictors of behavioural intentions and eventual behaviour. This study focuses on the major variables measured by the research instrument which include acceptance or rejection of premarital sex based on sexual knowledge and awareness, religious and moral beliefs, behavioural intentions, and social and media influence to provide insight into how these factors determine the attitude of students in Tai Solarin Federal University of Education hostel towards premarital sex.

Empirical studies across different cultural contexts indicate that attitudes toward premarital sex among university students vary considerably. In a cross-sectional study of Ethiopian undergraduates, Yedemie (2024) found that positive peer norms and lower perceived social control significantly predicted favourable attitudes toward premarital sexual activity. The study also revealed that students with higher self-esteem were more likely to hold liberal attitudes toward sexual engagement. These findings highlight the importance of psychosocial factors in shaping sexual attitudes among young adults.

However, the study was limited by its cross-sectional design, which restricts causal interpretation. Additionally, cultural differences between Ethiopia and Nigeria may limit generalizability, thereby justifying further investigation within Nigerian university settings. In a Nigerian study, Lawal and Idemudia (2018) examined attitudes toward premarital sex among unmarried undergraduates and found that peer connectedness, sexual orientation, and alcohol use were significantly related to more permissive attitudes. While the study acknowledged the role of social factors, it also suggested that students' understanding of sexual issues

influences their attitudinal disposition.

Somefun (2019) investigated the relationship between religiosity and sexual abstinence among Nigerian youths and found that higher levels of religious commitment were significantly associated with a greater likelihood of abstaining from sexual activity. Although the study focused primarily on behaviour rather than attitude, the findings imply that religious beliefs strongly shape sexual decision-making and moral evaluations.

However, few studies have simultaneously examined how religiosity interacts with peer and media influences among university hostel students. This gap underscores the need for a more integrative analysis of religious influence within a specific university residential context.

2. Statement of the Problem

Premarital sexual attitudes among undergraduates remain a pressing social and public health concern, particularly within university environments characterized by increased autonomy, peer immersion, and reduced parental monitoring. While Nigerian society traditionally upholds conservative sexual norms reinforced by strong religious and moral frameworks, contemporary university spaces increasingly reflect shifting sexual values influenced by globalization, digital media exposure, and evolving youth culture.

Empirical evidence indicates that peer norms, religiosity, and psychosocial factors significantly influence university students' attitudes toward premarital sex (Yedemie, 2024). Similarly, research within the Nigerian context demonstrates that religiosity is associated with delayed sexual initiation and abstinence (Somefun, 2019), while social context and peer environments significantly predict sexual risk behaviour among undergraduates (Odii et al., 2020). These studies collectively suggest that sexual attitudes are shaped by multidimensional factors including knowledge, social influence, and moral orientation.

However, several critical gaps remain evident. First, many Nigerian studies emphasize sexual behaviour rather than attitudes as a primary psychological construct, despite theoretical models such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) identifying attitude as a key determinant of behavioural intention. Second, limited empirical attention has been given to hostel-resident undergraduates, a subgroup uniquely positioned within dense peer networks and relatively reduced parental oversight. Third, few studies integrate sexual knowledge, religiosity, social/media influence, and self-control within a single analytical framework to determine their combined predictive effect on attitudes toward premarital sex.

In Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, hostel accommodation creates a socially concentrated environment where peer modelling and social reinforcement, as explained by Albert Bandura (1986),

Table 1: Level of awareness and knowledge of pre-marital sex among students

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
I have received adequate information about sex and reproductive health from school, family, or other sources.	53.0 (53%)	35.0 (35%)	11.0 (11%)	1.0 (1%)	3.40	0.72
I am knowledgeable about the physical and emotional consequences of pre-marital sex.	43.0 (43%)	48.0 (48%)	8.0 (8%)	1.0 (1%)	3.33	0.67
I know where young people can access sexual and reproductive health services when needed.	22.0 (22%)	45.0 (45%)	30.0 (30%)	3.0 (3%)	2.86	0.79
I believe consistent condom use can significantly reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections.	33.0 (33%)	41.0 (41%)	19.0 (19%)	7.0 (7%)	3.00	0.90
Lack of proper sex education increases risky sexual behaviour among young people.	54.0 (54%)	32.0 (32%)	9.0 (9%)	5.0 (5%)	3.35	0.85

may significantly influence sexual norm formation. Yet, there is no known systematic investigation examining how these factors interact to shape attitudinal disposition toward premarital sex among hostel-resident undergraduates in this institution.

The problem, therefore, lies in the absence of an empirically grounded, multidimensional assessment of attitudes toward premarital sex within this specific educational context. Without such investigation, institutional counselling services, policy decisions, and intervention programmes remain inadequately informed.

3. Research Questions

In this research, the following research questions was addressed:

1. What is the prevailing attitude of undergraduate hostel students of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education toward premarital sex?
2. What is the relationship between sexual knowledge, religion, social/media influence, self-control, and attitudes toward premarital sex?
3. Do attitudes toward premarital sex differ significantly based on gender?

4. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive correlational survey design. This survey design was appropriate because the study sought to systematically examine and describe the existing attitudes of undergraduate hostel students toward premarital sex without manipulating any variables. The study measured naturally occurring variables such as sexual knowledge, religious beliefs, social/media influence, and self-control as they exist within the population.

The correlational component was necessary because the study aimed to determine the relationships and predictive influence of independent variables (sexual knowledge, social/media influence, and Behaviour/self-control) on the dependent variable (attitude toward premarital sex). According to Icek Ajzen (1991), attitudes are predictive constructs influenced by cognitive and normative factors, making correlational

analysis appropriate for examining these associations.

The target population of this study comprised all undergraduate students residing in university hostels at Tai Solarin Federal University of Education. A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure equal probability of selection among all hostel-resident undergraduates. A comprehensive list of 550 hostel students was obtained from hostel administrative records. From this sampling frame, 100 students were randomly selected and invited to complete the online questionnaire. This procedure minimized selection bias and enhanced the representativeness of the sample within the defined population. representativeness of the sample within the defined study context.

With respect to gender, female respondents were 63%, while males constituted 37% of the sample indicating a higher proportion of female participants. age distribution. The majority of respondents were within the age range of 20–24 years (43%), followed by those aged 15–19 years (37%). Respondents aged 25–29 years constituted 11% of the sample, while 9% were between 30–34 years

The instrument used was a structured, self-developed questionnaire titled “Attitude of Young People Toward Premarital Sex Questionnaire.” (AYPTPSQ). It consisted of two sections: Section A elicited demographic information such as age, gender, religious affiliation, educational status, parental background, and employment status, while Section B contained 20 items designed to obtain quantitative data on respondents’ Sexual Knowledge and Awareness, Attitude Toward Premarital Sex, Social and Media Influence Self-Control, Intentions, and Responsibility.

The questionnaire was validated by experts to establish its face, content, and construct validity. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted using 20 hostel undergraduate students drawn from. The internal consistency of the instrument was computed using the Cronbach Alpha method, which yielded a reliability coefficient of **0.82**. This coefficient exceeds the acceptable benchmark of 0.70, indicating that the instrument was reliable and suitable for the main study.

Table 2: Social & media influence on Attitude of students towards pre-marital sex

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
Peer pressure plays a major role in young people's decision to engage in sex.	52.0 (52%)	37.0 (37%)	9.0 (9%)	2.0 (2%)	3.39	0.74
Social media and online content encourage early sexual experimentation.	37.0 (37%)	44.0 (44%)	15.0 (15%)	4.0 (4%)	3.14	0.82
I feel influenced by what my friends say or do regarding sexual relationships.	19.0 (19%)	22.0 (22%)	32.0 (32%)	27.0 (27%)	2.33	1.07
Exposure to romantic or sexual content online affects my views about sex.	28.0 (28%)	39.0 (39%)	20.0 (20%)	13.0 (13%)	2.82	0.98
Parental supervision reduces the likelihood of pre-marital sexual involvement	34.0 (34%)	41.0 (41%)	21.0 (21%)	4.0 (4%)	3.05	0.85

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Percentage analysis was used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics, while mean and standard deviation were employed to answer the research questions and describe the attitude of hostel undergraduate students in Tai Solarin Federal University of Education towards pre-marital sex.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Results

The data gathered from the research question is presented and described as follows:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between sexual knowledge and attitudes toward premarital sex among undergraduate hostel students in Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, Ogun State?

The table provides a detailed summary of respondents' perceptions of their level of sexual knowledge and awareness regarding reproductive health and premarital sex. Findings indicate that a large proportion of the respondents, 88 (88%), agreed that they have received adequate information about sex and reproductive health from school, family, or other sources, while only 12 respondents (12%) reported otherwise. This suggests a generally high level of exposure to sexual health information among the respondents.

In addition, 91 respondents (91%) indicated that they are knowledgeable about the physical and emotional consequences of premarital sex, whereas 9 respondents (9%) reported limited or no such knowledge. This further confirms that the majority of students possess substantial awareness of the implications of premarital sexual engagement.

However, awareness appears relatively lower in terms of access to sexual health services, as 67 respondents

(67%) reported knowing where young people can access such services, while a notable proportion of 33 respondents (33%) indicated a lack of awareness. This suggests a gap between general knowledge and practical access to reproductive health resources. Furthermore, 74 respondents (74%) agreed that consistent condom use can significantly reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections, whereas 26 respondents (26%) disagreed, indicating some level of uncertainty or misinformation regarding preventive practices among a segment of the population.

Lastly, a majority of 86 respondents (86%) agreed that lack of proper sex education increases risky sexual behaviour among young people, while 14 respondents (14%) did not share this view. This reflects a strong recognition among respondents of the importance of sexual education in shaping safe behavioural outcomes. Overall, the findings suggest that while respondents demonstrate a relatively high level of sexual knowledge and awareness, certain gaps remain, particularly in relation to access to sexual health services and comprehensive understanding of preventive measures.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of social & media on the attitude towards premarital sex among undergraduate hostel students in Tai Solarin Federal University of Education?

The table provides a detailed summary of respondents' perceptions of social and media influences on attitudes toward premarital sex. Findings indicate that a large proportion of the respondents, 89 (89%), agreed that peer pressure plays a major role in young people's decision to engage in sexual activities, while only 11 respondents (11%) disagreed. This suggests that peer influence is a significant factor shaping students' sexual decisions.

Table 3: Relationship between behaviour/self-control and attitude of students towards pre-marital sex

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
I feel confident in my ability to refuse sexual advances if I am not ready.	47.0 (47%)	45.0 (45%)	7.0 (7%)	1.0 (1%)	3.38	0.66
I intend to delay sexual intercourse until marriage or until I feel emotionally prepared.	49.0 (49%)	42.0 (42%)	8.0 (8%)	1.0 (1%)	3.39	0.68
I believe I am personally responsible for the consequences of my sexual decisions.	51.0 (51%)	41.0 (41%)	5.0 (5%)	3.0 (3%)	3.40	0.73
I have experienced curiosity or desire related to sexual activity.	26.0 (26%)	43.0 (43%)	21.0 (21%)	10.0 (10%)	2.85	0.93
I believe young people need stronger guidance and counselling on sexual behaviour.	68.0 (68%)	28.0 (28%)	3.0 (3%)	1.0 (1%)	3.63	0.60

Similarly, 81 respondents (81%) agreed that social media and online content encourage early sexual experimentation, whereas 19 respondents (19%) did not share this view. This indicates that digital exposure is widely perceived as a contributing factor to early sexual engagement among young people.

However, responses regarding direct personal influence from friends were more varied. Only 41 respondents (41%) reported feeling influenced by what their friends say or do regarding sexual relationships, while a higher proportion of 59 respondents (59%) indicated that they are not influenced. This suggests that although peer pressure is acknowledged generally, its direct personal impact may differ across individuals. Furthermore, 67 respondents (67%) agreed that exposure to romantic or sexual content online affects their views about sex, while 33 respondents (33%) disagreed. This highlights the role of media content in shaping perceptions and attitudes toward sexual behaviour.

Lastly, 75 respondents (75%) agreed that parental supervision reduces the likelihood of premarital sexual involvement, whereas 25 respondents (25%) disagreed. This reflects the continued importance of family oversight in moderating young people's sexual behaviour despite increased independence in hostel settings. Overall, the findings suggest that social and media factors play a considerable role in influencing students' attitudes toward premarital sex, although the degree of personal susceptibility to these influences varies among individuals.

Research Question 3: What relationship exists between behaviour/self-control and attitude towards pre-marital sex among undergraduate hostel students in Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, Ogun State?

The table presents a detailed summary of respondents' perceptions of behaviour and self-control in relation to

attitudes toward premarital sex. Findings indicate that a large proportion of the respondents, 92 (92%), agreed that they feel confident in their ability to refuse sexual advances if they are not ready, while only 8 respondents (8%) expressed otherwise. This suggests a high level of perceived self-efficacy among students in managing sexual situations. Also, 91 respondents (91%) indicated that they intend to delay sexual intercourse until marriage or until they feel emotionally prepared, whereas 9 respondents (9%) did not share this intention. This reflects a strong inclination toward delayed sexual engagement among the majority of respondents.

Furthermore, 92 respondents (92%) agreed that they are personally responsible for the consequences of their sexual decisions, while 8 respondents (8%) disagreed. This highlights a high level of personal accountability and awareness of the implications of sexual behaviour. However, responses regarding sexual curiosity were more varied. A total of 69 respondents (69%) acknowledged experiencing curiosity or desire related to sexual activity, while 31 respondents (31%) did not report such experiences. This indicates that while self-control is relatively high, natural curiosity remains present among a significant proportion of students.

Lastly, an overwhelming majority of 96 respondents (96%) agreed that young people need stronger guidance and counselling on sexual behaviour, whereas only 4 respondents (4%) disagreed. This suggests a strong perceived need for structured support systems to guide responsible sexual decision-making. This finding indicates that respondents demonstrate high levels of self-control, personal responsibility, and intention to regulate their sexual behaviour, although underlying curiosity and desire remain evident, reinforcing the importance of continuous guidance and counselling

5.2 Discussion

This study examined the predictors of attitudes toward premarital sex among undergraduate hostel students of Tai Solarin University of Education. The first hypothesis examined the relationship between sexual knowledge and attitudes toward premarital sex. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis revealed a weak but statistically significant negative relationship ($r = -.216, p < .05$). This indicates that as sexual knowledge increases, acceptance of premarital sex decreases among hostel students.

This finding suggests that informed students may be more aware of the physical, emotional, and social consequences of premarital sexual engagement, thereby developing more cautious or conservative attitudes. The result aligns partially with previous findings (Alebiosu & Adeyemi, 2025) that sexual awareness influences sexual decision-making patterns among young adults. However, the weak magnitude of the relationship indicates that knowledge alone is not a strong determinant of attitudinal disposition.

Theoretically, this finding reflects elements of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), which proposes that attitudes are shaped by beliefs about consequences. Students who are more informed may hold less favourable beliefs about potential risks, leading to reduced acceptance. However, the weak strength of association suggests that cognitive awareness may not be sufficient to significantly shape deeply held moral or behavioural attitudes.

The second hypothesis tested whether sexual knowledge, social/media influence, and behaviour/self-control jointly predict attitudes toward premarital sex. The regression model was statistically significant ($F(3, 96) = 5.058, p < .05$), explaining 13.6% of the variance in attitudes. This indicates that the predictors collectively contribute to explaining students' attitudes, although a substantial proportion of variance remains unexplained, suggesting the influence of additional socio-cultural or psychological factors not captured in the present study.

However, when examining individual contributions, only behaviour/self-control significantly predicted attitudes ($\beta = -.325, p < .05$). Sexual knowledge and social/media influence did not make significant unique contributions when entered simultaneously into the model. This is a conceptually important finding that says, while sexual knowledge was correlated with attitudes at the bivariate level, it lost significance in the multivariate model. This suggests that its influence may be mediated or overshadowed by internal resources, regulatory mechanisms such as self-control. Similarly, although social/media exposure is often presumed to shape youth sexual attitudes, it did not independently predict acceptance of premarital sex in this study.

The result strongly supports Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which emphasizes self-regulation as central to behaviour and attitude formation. Students with stronger self-control and greater perceived

responsibility demonstrated lower acceptance of premarital sex, regardless of social media exposure or knowledge levels. This indicates that internal cognitive control mechanisms may be more influential than external environmental factors within this population. This implies that attitude formation among hostel students may be more intrapersonal than environmental.

The third hypothesis examined gender differences in attitudes toward premarital sex. The independent samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female students ($t(98) = -0.360, p > .05$). This finding suggests that attitudes toward premarital sex among hostel residents may not be strongly gender-differentiated within this university context. Although traditional societal norms often portray males as more permissive and females as more conservative regarding sexual matters, the present data did not support this dichotomy.

This may reflect changing social dynamics among university populations where exposure to similar academic, social, and media environments reduces attitudinal gaps between genders. It also suggests that moral orientation and personal regulation may transcend gender categorization in shaping sexual attitudes.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that attitudes toward premarital sex among undergraduate hostel students are influenced primarily by internal self-regulatory beliefs rather than gender, social exposure, or knowledge alone. Although sexual knowledge is associated with attitudes at the correlational level, it does not independently predict acceptance when behavioural control is considered.

The findings imply that moral reasoning and personal responsibility may be central in shaping students' sexual attitudes within the university hostel environment. Therefore, interventions aimed at influencing sexual attitudes may need to move beyond information dissemination and focus more on strengthening self-control, responsibility, and value-based decision-making.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's empirical findings and derived conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed for policy, practice, and future research, in line with the expectations of a reputable scholarly journal:

University administrators are strongly encouraged to integrate structured value-based and behavioural education programs within hostel orientation activities. Policies promoting accessible counselling services and peer mentorship programs may help reinforce responsible attitudes toward sexual behaviour.

In educational settings, particularly classrooms, comprehensive sexual education should be adopted to ensure informed decision-making on sexual related matters. However, curriculum emphasis should shift toward behavioural competence and consequence awareness rather than factual knowledge alone

Future studies should investigate mediating variables between knowledge and attitude, examine longitudinal patterns to determine causal relationships, expand sample size and include multiple institutions for broader generalization, explore additional psychological constructs such as moral identity, religiosity intensity, and family attachment.

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