



Influence of Selected Demographic Variables on Parental Perceptions of Premarital Sex Among Adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of selected demographic variables on parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. Five research questions and four hypotheses were raised to guide the study. A descriptive research design was employed in this study. The study consists of an estimated population of 1,963 parents at Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. This study's sample consists of 185 parents at Delta State University, Abraka. The sample size was drawn from the entire estimated population using the Yamane statistical table. A purposive sampling procedure was used for the selection of the respondents for the study. Questionnaire on Parental Perception of Premarital Sex Among Adolescents was the instrument for data collection. The reliability of the Questionnaire on Parental Perception of Premarital Sex Among Adolescents was determined using the split-half reliability method, and a reliability coefficient value of 0.718 was obtained for the instrument. The questionnaires were administered to 185 respondents who are parents, but only 176, which represent approximately 95% of the total number of administered questionnaires, were retrieved and used for data analysis. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, the *t* test, and the analysis of variance at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study are: Parents' perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka, are negative; gender does not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents; marital status, education level, and Religion significantly influences parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations are made that parents should engage in open and non-judgmental discussions with their adolescents about sex, providing accurate information and guidance.

Keywords: Parental Perception, Premarital Sex, religious affiliation, gender, marital status, education level

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I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an important period between childhood and adulthood in terms of growth and development. An adolescent is identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as any individual between the ages of 10 and 19. Adolescence is a psychologically and physically transitional stage of growth that typically takes place during the period from adolescence to adulthood. Adolescence and young adulthood are typically considered times of transition and increased independence (WHO, 2018). During these years, young individuals begin to explore social interactions outside the family and construct meaningful relationships with peers. Adolescents are the portion of the population that is most exposed to different forms of behavior. One notable behaviour that appears to be very common with adolescents in the 21st century is premarital sex. This happens due to curiosity, imitation, and initiation, which are common characteristics of adolescents.

Premarital sex refers to sexual activity that occurs outside of marriage or before a person has legally entered into adulthood. It encompasses a wide range of behaviours that can include vaginal intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, and other types of sexual contact. Fajar et al. (2019) defined premarital sex as sexual activity that occurs between individuals who are not married to each other. It involves engaging in sexual intercourse or other sexual behaviours before entering into a formal marital union. Stated that premarital sex among adolescents is a complex issue influenced by various factors. One such factor that is of interest to the researcher is parental perceptions.

"Parental perception" refers to the beliefs opinions and understandings that parents hold regarding specific topics, situations, or phenomena. It encompasses how parents interpret and make sense of various aspects of their children's lives, their own roles as parents, and broader societal issues that impact family dynamics. In the context of premarital sex among adolescents, "parental perception" refers to how parents view and respond to the issue of their adolescent children engaging in sexual activity before marriage. This includes parents' beliefs regarding premarital sex, as well as their concerns, values, and expectations related to their children's sexual behavior. According to Sabejeje and Bello (2021), parents have a major influence on their child's development and well-being, making their perceptions a likely determinant of premarital sex among adolescents.

Wagner (2017) stated that some parents may be strict regarding the issue of premarital sex and may prohibit or discourage it, while others have more relaxed attitudes or even condone premarital sexual relations. So the parent's perception may be a significant factor in preventing premarital sexual behaviour among adolescents. Rouhparvar (2022) noted that whatever perception parents have, it may be due to some factors. Schwarz et al. (2015) suggested parents behaviour regarding their children may be influenced by religious beliefs, marital status, education level, gender, and cultural norms. However, in this study, the researcher will ascertain how religious beliefs, marital status, education level, gender, and occupation.

Parents' religious affiliation can significantly influence their perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents. Religious beliefs often shape individuals' values, moral frameworks, and attitudes towards sexuality, including premarital sexual behavior. Religious beliefs encompass a set of ideas, principles, and convictions that individuals or communities hold concerning the nature of existence. These beliefs can profoundly influence various aspects of life, including behaviour, values, and social interactions. Parents' religious beliefs can significantly influence their perception of premarital sex among adolescents.

In many religious traditions, premarital sex is considered taboo or morally wrong, and adherence to religious teachings often shapes parents' attitudes towards this issue. Religious teachings often provide moral guidelines regarding sexual behaviour, including the expectation of abstinence before marriage. Parents who adhere to moral beliefs may view premarital sex as morally unacceptable and may instill these values in their children. According to Urban (2010), some religious traditions consider premarital sex a sin or a violation of divine laws. Parents who hold these beliefs may fear the spiritual consequences of engaging in premarital sex and may emphasise the importance of chastity for their children. Parents who hold religious beliefs may view premarital sex as potentially harmful to their children's emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being (Osafo et al., 2013). They may perceive abstinence as a way to protect their children from negative consequences such as unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and emotional distress. However, it is not clear to what extent the perception of parents at Delta State University, Abraka, regarding premarital sex among adolescents is influenced by parents' religious affiliation. Understanding the extent to which parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka, are influenced by marital status requires empirical research.

Parental perception of premarital sex may also be influenced by gender. Parents, especially fathers, may feel a heightened sense of responsibility to protect their daughters' sexual purity. They may hold more conservative attitudes towards premarital sex for daughters, fearing the potential social and emotional consequences. According to Manning et al. (2018) fathers often hold more traditional views regarding sexuality compared to mothers, advocating for abstinence and emphasizing the importance of moral values. In contrast, mothers tend to adopt a more open-minded approach, acknowledging the realities of adolescent sexual exploration and prioritizing comprehensive sex education. However, it is not clear to what extent the perception of parents at Delta State University, Abraka, regarding premarital sex among adolescents is influenced by gender. Understanding the extent to which parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka, are influenced by parents' gender requires further research.

Parental perceptions of premarital sex may also be influenced by parents' marital status. Married parents may adhere more strongly to traditional values regarding sexuality and marriage. Research has shown that married individuals often express more conservative attitudes towards premarital sex compared to unmarried individuals (Regnerus & Uecker, 2011). This could influence their perception of premarital sex among adolescents, leading them to view it more negatively or as a deviation from societal norms. Parents' own experiences with relationships and marriage can shape their attitudes towards premarital sex. Married parents may prioritise the values of commitment and monogamy, viewing premarital sex as incompatible with these ideals. In contrast, unmarried or divorced parents may have more varied perspectives influenced by their personal experiences with relationships and family dynamics (Brown & Booth, 2016). Married parents may perceive premarital sex as a potential threat to the stability of romantic relationships and family structures. They may prioritise promoting the values of chastity and abstinence to ensure the longevity and success of their children's future marriages (Grau et al., 2016). In contrast, unmarried parents may have different priorities or concerns regarding their children's sexual behavior. However, it is not clear to what extent the perception of parents at Delta State University, Abraka, regarding premarital sex among adolescents is influenced by marital status. Understanding the extent to which parental

perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka, are influenced by marital status requires empirical research.

Parental perceptions of premarital sex may also be influenced by parents' education level. Parents' education level can significantly influence their perception of premarital sex, shaping their attitudes, beliefs, and communication patterns regarding sexuality. Research suggests that parents with higher levels of education tend to hold more liberal attitudes towards sexuality compared to those with lower levels of education (Lam et al., 2022). Higher-educated parents may be more likely to embrace progressive or non-traditional views on premarital sex, viewing it as a natural and acceptable aspect of human relationships (Thornton & Camburn, 2017). Parents with higher education levels often have greater access to information and resources related to sexuality and reproductive health. They may be more knowledgeable about contraceptive methods, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and relationship dynamics, enabling them to engage in more informed discussions with their children about premarital sex (Manlove et al., 2016). This can lead to more open and supportive communication patterns within the family. However, it is not clear to what extent the perception of parents at Delta State University, Abraka, regarding premarital sex among adolescents is influenced by education level. Understanding the extent to which parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka, are influenced by education level requires empirical research.

The rationale for the study lies in the increasing rate of premarital sex among adolescents and the need to better understand how parental perception affects premarital sex among adolescents, particularly within the context of Delta State University, Abraka. The study will also determine how demographic factors such as religious affiliation, marital status, education level, gender and influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka.

II. Statement of the Problem

Parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's behaviours regarding sexuality, including premarital sexual activity. As primary carers and role models, parents have a significant influence on their children's attitudes, beliefs, and values related to sexuality. From an early age, children observe and internalise messages about sexuality from their parents through direct communication, observed behaviours, and family dynamics.

Parents serve as important sources of information and guidance regarding sexual health, relationships, and values. They often provide their children with education about anatomy, reproduction, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections. Additionally, parents may instill values such as respect, responsibility, and consent in their children, which can influence their perception towards premarital sex.

However, there is a limited understanding of how parents at Delta State University, Abraka, perceive premarital sex among adolescents. Demographic variables such as parent gender, educational level, marital status, and religious affiliation may influence parental perceptions of premarital sex. Yet, the extent to which these factors influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka, remains unclear. Hence, the study examine parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. What perception do parents hold towards premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka?
2. To what extent does gender influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka?
3. To what extent does marital status influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka?
4. To what extent do education levels influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka?
5. To what extent does religion influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided this study:

1. Gender does not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.
2. Marital status does not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.
3. Education level does not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.

4. occupation do not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.
5. Religion do not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

A descriptive research design was employed in this study. A descriptive research design is a type of research methodology used to systematically collect, analyze, and interpret data to describe phenomena within a particular population. This approach aims to provide an accurate portrayal of the subject under study without influencing the variables of interest. Thus, this design was considered appropriate since the study collected data from respondents in order to investigate the parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. The study consists of an estimated population of 1,963 parents in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. The target population is all the parents who have adolescents attending Delta State University, Abraka. The sample of this study consists of 185 parents in Delta State University, Abraka. The sample size was drawn from the entire estimated population using Yamane statistical Table. Purposive sampling procedure was used for the selection of the respondents for the study. Purposive sampling procedure used because the researcher need parents who have children between 10 to 19 years who are in attending Delta state University, Abraka. The instrument for data collection in this study was questionnaire. The questionnaires which titled “Questionnaire On Parental Perception of Premarital Sex Among Adolescents” were structured by the researcher. The instrument was subdivided into two sections- A and B; Section A of the instrument was designed to collect respondents’ personal data such as Gender: (Father and Mother), Marital Status (Married, Single parent, Divorced, Separated and Widowed), Education Level (No school, Primary School Leaving Certificate, SSCE, OND, NCE, HND and BSC and above), Occupational status (Civil Servant, Business and Artisan) and Religion affiliation (Christianity, Islam and Others). Section B of the instrument consist of 20 items measuring Parental Perception of Premarital Sex Among Adolescents. In the instrument respondents (parents) were asked to indicate their opinion on four points options with close-ended items as Strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and Strongly disagree (1) points. The face and content validity of the research instrument were determined by giving the initial draft to two experts in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation at Delta State University, Abraka, for correction. The experts reviewed the items on the instrument in terms of their appropriateness to the purpose of the study. The questionnaire was corrected based on the recommendations of the experts.

The reliability of the Questionnaire on Parental Perception of Premarital Sex Among Adolescents was determined using the split-half reliability method. Using the split-half method for the determination of the reliability of the Questionnaire on Parental Perception of Premarital Sex Among Adolescents, copies of the questionnaire were produced and administered to 25 parents randomly selected from Delta State University of Science and Technology, Ozoro. The items in the questionnaire were split into odd and even question items and then correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics. This gave a reliability coefficient value of 0.718 (see Appendix B). This type of reliability was chosen to determine the internal consistency of the instrument.

The researcher personally went around the three campuses of Delta State University in Abraka and distribute the questionnaire among the respondents with the help of two research assistants to ensure hitch-free administration. In all, questionnaires were administered to 185 respondents who are parents but only 176 which represent approximately 95% of the total number of administered questionnaires was retrieved and used for data analysis. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation. All the hypotheses were tested using the t test and the analysis of variance. All the hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One

What perception do parents hold towards premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation(SD) Analysis of Perception that Parents Hold towards Premarital Sex Among Adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	D
1.	I believe premarital sex is morally wrong for adolescents.	2.85	1.07	+
2.	I feel comfortable discussing sexual topics with my adolescent child.	2.91	1.04	+
3.	I feel uncomfortable when considering the possibility of my adolescent child engaging in premarital sex.	2.95	1.18	+
4.	I believe that adolescents should abstain from sexual activity until marriage.	3.28	0.89	+
5.	I believe that premarital sex can have negative consequences for adolescents.	2.78	1.11	+
6.	I believe that premarital sex is a normal part of adolescent development.	2.17	1.17	-

7.	I believe that restricting access to information about premarital sex will prevent adolescents from engaging in it.	2.05	1.01	-
8.	As a parent, I closely monitor my adolescent child's behaviour to know if they are into romantic relationships.	3.18	0.94	+
9.	I am concerned about the potential consequences of my adolescent child engaging in premarital sex.	3.10	0.91	+
10.	I am confident in my adolescent child's ability to make informed decisions about premarital sex.	3.16	0.84	+
11.	I believe that providing adolescents with access to contraceptives encourages responsible behaviour.	2.40	1.09	-
12.	I feel that discussions about premarital sex should be tailored to the maturity level of the adolescent.	3.02	0.95	+
13.	I am open to learning new approaches to discussing premarital sex with my adolescent child.	2.36	1.02	+
14.	I think that establishing open communication with my adolescent child is key to discussing premarital sex.	2.41	1.04	+
15.	I believe that societal double standards regarding sex affect adolescents' understanding of premarital sex.	2.93	1.18	+
16.	I think that teaching adolescents about consent is essential in discussions about premarital sex.	3.28	0.89	+
17.	I believe that providing adolescents with accurate information about premarital sex empowers them to make informed choices.	2.78	1.11	+
18.	I feel that discussions about premarital sex should include information about healthy relationships.	2.77	1.17	+
19.	I am open to discussing alternative approaches to teaching adolescents about premarital sex beyond abstinence-only education.	3.05	1.01	+
20.	I believe that open dialogue about premarital sex reduces the likelihood of risky behaviours among adolescents.	3.18	0.94	+
Grand mean		2.83		

Bench mark mean:2.50

Table 1 indicates that parents at Delta State University, Abraka generally hold negative and conservative perceptions toward premarital sex among adolescents. Parents view premarital sex as morally wrong, believe adolescents should abstain until marriage, and express discomfort and concern about their children engaging in premarital sex. They also perceive premarital sex as having negative consequences and actively monitor their adolescents' behaviour, reflecting strong parental involvement and concern. Conversely, parents do not regard premarital sex as a normal part of adolescent development, are skeptical about restricting access to sexual information as a preventive measure, and show limited support for providing contraceptives as a way to encourage responsible behaviour. Despite these views, parents acknowledge the importance of age-appropriate discussions, teaching consent, and maintaining open dialogue, believing that informed communication can reduce risky behaviours. Overall, the grand mean score of 2.83, which is above the benchmark mean of 2.50, confirms that parents at Delta State University, Abraka largely hold a negative perception toward premarital sex among adolescents, while still recognising the value of guidance and communication.

Research Question Two

To what extent does gender influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka?

Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of extent to which gender influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka

S/N	Items	Males (N=121)			Females(55)		
		Mean	SD	D	Mean	SD	D
1.	I believe premarital sex is morally wrong for adolescents.	2.89	1.02	+	2.76	1.19	+
2.	I feel comfortable discussing sexual topics with my adolescent child.	2.92	1.02	+	2.89	1.10	+
3.	I feel uncomfortable when considering the possibility of my adolescent child engaging in premarital sex.	3.11	1.09	+	2.60	1.29	+
4.	I believe that adolescents should abstain from sexual activity until marriage.	3.17	0.95	+	3.51	0.72	+
5.	I believe that premarital sex can have negative consequences for adolescents.	2.78	1.12	+	2.78	1.08	+
6.	I believe that premarital sex is a normal part of adolescent development.	2.91	1.18	+	2.47	1.12	-
7.	I believe that restricting access to information about premarital sex will prevent adolescents from engaging in it.	3.01	0.97	+	3.13	1.11	+
8.	As a parent, I closely monitor my adolescent child's behaviour to know if they are into romantic relationships.	3.20	0.91	+	3.13	1.00	+

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9.	I am concerned about the potential consequences of my adolescent child engaging in premarital sex.	3.08	0.94	+	3.15	0.87	+
10.	I am confident in my adolescent child's ability to make informed decisions about premarital sex.	3.09	0.89	+	3.31	0.72	+
11.	I believe that providing adolescents with access to contraceptives encourages responsible behaviour.	2.36	1.03	-	3.15	1.01	+
12.	I feel that discussions about premarital sex should be tailored to the maturity level of the adolescent.	3.02	1.01	+	3.00	0.79	+
13.	I am open to learning new approaches to discussing premarital sex with my adolescent child.	2.43	0.94	-	2.22	1.18	-
14.	I think that establishing open communication with my adolescent child is key to discussing premarital sex.	2.32	1.03	-	2.62	1.03	+
15.	I believe that societal double standards regarding sex affect adolescents' understanding of premarital sex.	3.08	1.11	+	2.60	1.29	+
16.	I think that teaching adolescents about consent is essential in discussions about premarital sex.	3.17	0.95	+	3.51	0.72	+
17.	I believe that providing adolescents with accurate information about premarital sex empowers them to make informed choices.	2.78	1.12	+	2.78	1.08	+
18.	I feel that discussions about premarital sex should include information about healthy relationships.	2.91	1.18	+	2.47	1.12	-
19.	I am open to discussing alternative approaches to teaching adolescents about premarital sex beyond abstinence-only education.	3.01	0.97	+	3.13	1.11	+
20.	I believe that open dialogue about premarital sex reduces the likelihood of risky behaviours among adolescents.	3.20	0.91	+	3.13	1.00	+
Grand mean		2.92	1.02	+	2.91	1.03	+

Bench Mark Mean:2.50. 2.50 and above = High extent (+) below 2.50=low (-)

Table 4.2 shows that both male and female parents generally share similar perceptions regarding premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. Overall, both groups agree that premarital sex is morally wrong, believe in abstinence until marriage, acknowledge its potential negative consequences, and emphasize monitoring adolescents' behaviour and maintaining open dialogue. They also agree on the importance of providing accurate information, teaching consent, tailoring discussions to adolescents' maturity levels, and that open communication can reduce risky behaviours. Notable gender differences emerged on some issues. Male parents expressed greater discomfort with the possibility of their adolescents engaging in premarital sex and were more likely to view it as a normal part of adolescent development, while female parents were less accepting of this view. Female parents showed greater confidence in their adolescents' ability to make informed decisions, placed more emphasis on open communication, and were more supportive of providing contraceptives and including information on healthy relationships. Both groups, however, were generally cautious about adopting new approaches. The grand mean scores for males (Mean = 2.92, SD = 1.02) and females (Mean = 2.91, SD = 1.03), both above the benchmark mean of 2.50, indicate an overall agreement among parents, regardless of gender, on perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents.

Research Question Three

To what extent does marital status influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka?

Table 4.3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of extent to which marital status influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka

Marital status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Single parent	8	2.71	.32
Married	146	2.99	.59
Separated	14	2.46	.44
Divorced	6	2.32	.42
Widowed	2	3.90	.071
Total	176	2.92	.61

Table 4.3 revealed the Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the extent to which marital status influences parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. Single parents have a mean score of 2.71 with a standard deviation of 0.32. Married parents have a mean score of 2.99 with a standard deviation of 0.59. Separated parents have a mean score of 2.46 with a standard deviation of 0.44.

Divorced parents have a mean score of 2.32 with a standard deviation of 0.42. Widowed parents have the highest mean score of 3.90 with a standard deviation of 0.071. The overall mean score is 2.92 with a standard deviation of 0.61. This indicates that marital status has a varying influence on parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. Widowed parents show the highest level of agreement, followed by married parents, single parents, separated parents, and divorced parents.

Research Question Four

To what extent does education levels influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka?

Table 4.4: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of extent to which education levels influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka

Education Levels	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Primary School Leaving Certificate	56	2.87	.58
SSCE	33	2.64	.76
NCE	16	3.17	.41
HND	26	3.11	.61
BSC and above	45	2.99	.49
Total	176	2.92	.61

Table 4 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the extent to which education levels influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. Parents with a Primary School Leaving Certificate have a mean score of 2.87 with a standard deviation of 0.58. Parents with SSCE have a mean score of 2.64 with a standard deviation of 0.76. Parents with NCE have a mean score of 3.17 with a standard deviation of 0.41. Parents with HND have a mean score of 3.11 with a standard deviation of 0.61. Parents with a BSC and above have a mean score of 2.99 with a standard deviation of 0.49. The overall mean score is 2.92 with a standard deviation of 0.61. This indicates that education levels have a varying influence on parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. Parents with NCE show the highest level of agreement, followed by parents with HND, parents with a BSC and above, parents with a Primary School Leaving Certificate, and parents with SSCE.

Research Question Five

To what extent does religion influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of extent to which education levels influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka

Religion	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Christianity	159	2.96	.59
Islam	9	2.62	.57
Others	8	2.48	.69
Total	176	2.92	.61

Table 5 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the extent to which religion influences parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. Parents who identify with Christianity have a mean score of 2.96 with a standard deviation of 0.59. Parents who identify with Islam have a mean score of 2.62 with a standard deviation of 0.57. Parents who identify with other religions have a mean score of 2.48 with a standard deviation of 0.69. The overall mean score is 2.92 with a standard deviation of 0.61. This indicates that religion has a varying influence on parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. Christian parents show the highest level of agreement, followed by Muslim parents and then parents of other religions. It was therefore concluded that religion influences parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents to a moderate extent.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

Gender does not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.

Table 6: Independent t-test Analysis of the influence of gender on parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Males	121	2.92	.60391	174	0.058	0.95	Null hypothesis accepted
Females	55	2.91	.61817				

$\alpha=0.05$

Table 6 shows the independent t-test statistics used to determine the influence of gender on parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. The p-value of 0.95 is greater than the 0.05 alpha level. Based on this, the null hypothesis was retained. This means that Gender does not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.

Hypothesis Two

Marital status does not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.

Table 7: Analysis of variance of the influence of Marital status on parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.085	4	2.021	6.138	.000
Within Groups	56.315	171	.329		
Total	64.401	175			

Table 7 shows the ANOVA statistics used to determine the level of significance of the influence of marital status on parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. The p-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 alpha level. Based on this, the null hypothesis was not accepted. This means that marital status significantly influences parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka

Hypothesis Three

Education level does not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.

Table 8: Analysis of variance of the Influence of Education Level On Parental Perceptions of Premarital Sex Among Adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.939	4	1.235	3.551	.008
Within Groups	59.462	171	.348		
Total	64.401	175			

Table 8 shows the ANOVA statistics used to determine the level of significance of the influence of education level on parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. The p-value of 0.008 is less than the 0.05 alpha level. Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that education level significantly influences parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka.

Hypothesis Four

Religion does not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.

Table 9: Analysis of Variance of the Influence of Religion On Parental Perceptions of Premarital Sex Among Adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.581	2	1.291	3.612	.029
Within Groups	61.820	173	.357		
Total	64.401	175			

Table 9 shows the ANOVA statistics used to determine the level of significance of the influence of religion on parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. The p-value of 0.029 is less than the 0.05 alpha level. Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that religion significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka.

IV. Discussion of findings

The findings of this study were discussed as follows:

The perception that parents hold towards premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka

The first finding of this study revealed that the perception that parents hold towards premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka is negative. The possible reason for this finding could be that parents at Delta State University, Abraka emphasize moral and health concerns, prefer abstinence, and express discomfort and proactive monitoring, while being less supportive of certain preventive measures like access to contraceptives and information restriction. This finding is consistent with that of Somers and Anagurthi, (2014) who revealed that adolescents' sexual attitudes, frequency of oral sex, frequency of sexual intercourse, and number of sexual partners all varied by parents' values status. This finding also aligned with Gbaa et al., (2022) who found that the general perception of youth on premarital sex is negative.

Gender and parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.

The second finding revealed that Gender does not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka. Both male and female parents in Delta State might share similar cultural and societal norms regarding premarital sex, leading to consistent perceptions across genders. In contemporary settings, parenting roles and responsibilities are becoming more equally shared between mothers and fathers. As a result, both parents may develop similar attitudes and beliefs about premarital sex, reflecting a unified approach to parenting and moral guidance. This finding contradicts that of Eze, and Adu, (2015) who revealed that Gender has a significant influence on the adult parents' views on the adolescents' attitude towards premarital sex.

Marital status and parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.

The third finding Marital status significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka. One of the primary reasons for the observed influence of marital status on parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka, is the values and beliefs held by parents. These values are often shaped by their own experiences, cultural upbringing, and personal beliefs. Parents who are married themselves may have more conservative views regarding premarital sex, as they tend to be more traditional and advocate for upholding marital norms. They may perceive premarital sex as a negative behavior that goes against their own values and expectations, leading them to disapprove of it and have stricter attitudes towards it. This finding is inconsistent with that of Cornelius et al. (2016) found that parental marital status plays a role in shaping individual attitudes towards premarital sex.

Education level and parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.

The fourth finding of this study indicates that education level significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka. Education level influences parental perceptions to a significant extent, with higher educational attainment generally associated with greater agreement on perceptions regarding premarital sex among adolescents. Parents with NCE and HND show the highest level of agreement on perceptions regarding premarital sex. This may be due to their educational background, which could provide them with a broader understanding and more structured perspectives on the topic. Parents with primary school education and higher degrees (BSC and above) also show relatively high agreement but with moderate variation. This indicates a shared concern and perception regarding premarital sex, influenced by their

educational experiences. Parents with SSCE show the least agreement and the highest variation in their responses. This suggests that this group might have more diverse views and less consensus on the issue. This finding aligns with Feldman and Rosenthal, (2018) who revealed that parents with higher levels of education tend to have more progressive views towards sexuality and are more likely to communicate openly with their children about these topics.

Religion and parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka.

The sixth finding revealed that Religion significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents in Delta State University, Abraka. The possible reason for this finding could be Cultural Integration with Religion. In many societies, religion is intertwined with cultural practices and norms. This integration can reinforce religious attitudes towards premarital sex, making them a strong influence on parental perceptions. This finding is consistent with that of Crosby and Rager, (2014) who revealed that religion plays a prominent role in shaping an individual's values, morals, and behaviors, especially during their formative adolescent years. The finding is also in line with Kassim (2013) who revealed that parental religious involvement has been found to have a strong correlation with adolescent behavior regarding sexual activity.

V. Conclusion

The study examined parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka. The findings indicate that parents generally hold negative perceptions towards premarital sex among adolescents. Specifically, the study found that gender does not significantly influence parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents. Marital status significantly influences parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents; education level significantly influences parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents; and religion significantly influences parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents. The conclusion, therefore, is that parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka, are negative., and parent perceptions of premarital sex are shaped by these demographic variables such as marital status, education level, occupation, and religion. Thus, marital status, education level, occupation, and religion are significant factors influencing parental perceptions of premarital sex among adolescents at Delta State University, Abraka.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study the following recommendations are made:

1. Universities and community organizations should organize regular parent-focused seminars and workshops. Parents should be encouraged to engage in open, honest, and age-appropriate discussions with their adolescents about premarital sex. This approach will help adolescents make informed decisions while respecting parental values, especially given parents' expressed discomfort but willingness to monitor and guide their children.
2. Non-governmental organizations should conduct family-based interventions that target both mothers and fathers equally. Programmes should emphasize shared parental responsibility in guiding adolescents on sexual matters and promote a unified parenting approach.
3. Counseling and educational interventions should be designed to accommodate differences among married, single, divorced, and widowed parents.
4. University authorities should ensure that educational materials are simplified or expanded based on parents' educational attainment.
5. Faith-based organizations should be encouraged to integrate accurate sexual health information with moral teachings, promoting responsible behavior without stigmatization.

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