

## Attitudes of Female Students towards Premarital Sex and it's Perceived Consequences in Arba Minch University

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### ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** The purpose of this study was to explain attitudes of female students towards premarital sex and its perceived consequences on the young generation. **Methods:** The Cochran's formula was used to draw the participants from the 307(132) total populations. Meanwhile, 132 participants were identified to involve in both quantities and qualitative portions of the study. Stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the firm participants in the quantitative and qualitative portion of the study respectively. After the end of data collection, SPSSA 20 new version was used to analyze data. **Findings:** Majority of young students were well concerned that premarital sex might lead one to get unplanned pregnancy and abortion, school dropout and withdrawal from the school. That directly indicate that majority of young students have negative attitudes towards premarital sex. Students perceived that the need to be civilize and modernize; peer pressure, liberal attitude towards religious thought and dogmas and; mass media and social Medias leading grounds to engage in premarital sex. In addition, there is no statistically significance difference observed among batches in their attitude towards premarital sex ( $F = 1.099$  and  $p=0.00$ ). **Conclusions:** having clear knowledge and awareness on the consequences of premarital sex helped students to develop negative attitude towards premarital sex. Liberal perception and thought were background to have liberal attitude towards premarital sex. Collaborative work at micro-ecological to Meso ecological level will be a good ground to empower students' to have good knowledge on premarital sex.

**Keywords:** Premarital Sex, Attitude, Consequences and Students

During 1960, the majority of adult Americans believed that premarital sex was wrong. But there has been dramatic change in public opinion. Since then, the percentage of middle age people who say sex before marriage is "not wrong at all" has increased considerably and over 60% of American say premarital sex is okay. More than half say that living together before marriage is morally acceptable (Thornton and Demarco, 2001, Harding and Jencks, 2003, cited in Feldman, 2011).

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Attitudes toward premarital intercourse during adolescence become more liberal beginning in the mid-1960 and especially during the early the 1970s. Not surprisingly, accompanying this shift in attitude was unequally not worthy shift in sexual behavior (Allan Guttmacher Institute (1994), cited in Hindin, 2009).

Different people in different nation defined premarital sex in various situations, accusation according to their religious, experience moral norms and value (WHO, 2001). Premarital sex refers to sexual activities, especially sexual intercourse that takes place to marriage. However, using “premarital sex” to describe sexual behavior among all married adults is becoming increasingly questioned (Devault and Colleagues, 2010).

Changes in attitude toward premarital sex were matched by change in actual rates of premarital sexual activity for instance, the most recent figures show that just more than one half of women between the age of 15 and 19 have had premarital sexual intercourse. Reports over decades has been showed that more women engaged in premarital sexual activity (Jones, Darroch and Singh, 2005, as cited in Feldman, 2011)

Throughout history, people sexual behavior has been guided by religious teaching and cultural beliefs, many religious like Christianity have attempted to regulate sex out said marriage by condemning it as a sinful other religious like Islam are also condemning sex outside marriage but allow mean to take more than one wife (Alson and Defrain, 1999)

Premarital sex has caused severe problems in society today. People everywhere are not waiting until they get married to have sex. People having today are not aware of consequences like sexually transmitted disease (STDs), unplanned pregnancy and HIV/AIDS that come with having sex. They just think it is fun and there is nothing over than fun comes with having sex (Bane, 2006)

Until recently, premarital sexual intercourse, at least for women, was considered one of the major taboos in our society. Traditionally, women have been warned by society that “ nice girls don’t do it”. Men have been told that premarital sex is okay for them, but they should marry virgins. This view that premarital sex is permissible for males, but not for female is called double standard. (Liang, 2007, cited in Feldman, 2011).

A recent research review found that frequent watching of soap operas and music videos were linked with greater acceptable of causal attitudes about sex and higher expectations of engaging in sexual activity (Ward, 2003, cited in Santrock, 2000)

A growing body of research suggest that what is most important are attitudes and values communicated by parents during discussion of sex and of course, the way in which these attitudes and values are interpreted by the adolescents (Grube, 2005 cited in Hindin, 2009).

According to study conducted in Shiraz university of Iran on difference on attitudes towards premarital sex is girls had more negative attitudes toward premarital sex than boys. Another study on premarital romantic partnerships: attitudes and sexual experience of youth in Delhi India indicated that, males were more likely to seek information about the person they were interested in (76% vs. 61%) and to engage in heterosexual premarital sex (32% vs. 6%). While females were less likely than males to report that, it is okay to engage in premarital sex if the male and female love another (14% vs 33%) (as cited in Daba, 2006).

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Early sexual activity is linked with risky behavior such as drug use, delinquency and psychological related problem (Jaya Kody and others, 2011 cited in Santrock, 2000). A longitudinal study from 10 to 12 years of age to 25 years of age, early sexual intercourse and affiliation with deviant peers were linked to substance use disorders in emerging adulthood (Cornelius and others, 2007, cited in Santrock, 2000).

### METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** in this research a cross sectional descriptive design is used. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of research also used to triangulate the findings. Additionally, it allows to making a possible description on the attitudes of females' students toward premarital sex and its perceived consequences.

**Participants of the study:** the total number of students in Arba Minich University in the Collages of Social Science and Humanities are around 903. Among them 596 are males and 307 are females. Randomly 132 participants were selected to involve in the study.

**Sampling Technique and Sample Size:** The stratified random sampling method was used to select the participants. This is to ensure how much samples represent the total populations.

**Method of Data Collection and Procedures:** The relevant information or data was collected by using non standardized tools such as open-ended and closed-ended questionnaire. Additionally, semi-structured type of interview style was used to triangulate the results.

**Data Collection Instruments:** The five point scale type Likert scale was used to measure the attitude of the participants.

**Method of Data Analysis:** The data that will be collected through open-ended questions and interview were analyzed through qualitatively data analyzing mechanisms (i.e content and narrative analysis). And the data that is gathered through open and closed-ended question were analyzed by using percentage, using descriptive and inferential statistics (by using central tendency concepts and ANOVA).

**Ethical Consideration:** Individual verbal consent was a prior action to engage in the study. Agreement made between investigators and participants as the participants have rights to continue or terminate their participation in the study as if they felt discomfort. The researcher also ensures that their responses will not be given or exposed for the third parts.

### RESULTS

**Table 3. Student Attitude towards Premarital Sex**

	1 <sup>st</sup> - Year		2-nd Year		3 <sup>rd</sup> Year		Total
	Frequency	Percentage (100%)	Frequency	Percentage (100%)	Frequency	Percentage (100%)	
Positive Attitude	6	6.66	7	7.77	3	3.33	30
Negative Attitude	19	21.11	14	15.55	13	14.44	67.77
Neutral	0	0		0	2	2.22	2.22

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According to participants response 67.77% of the participants (16.66% male) have a negative attitudes towards premarital sex and 30% of the participants (12.22% male) have a positive attitudes towards premarital sex and 2.22% of participants in 3<sup>rd</sup> year female students are neutral.

**Table- 1. The Perceived Factors to Engage in Premarital Sex**

	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	total
liberal Attitude towards Religious Thought and Dogmas	Agree	64	71.11	
	Disagree	11	12.22	
	Neutral	15	16.6	
				100%
Peer Pressure	Agree	46	51.11	
	Disagree	30	33.33	
	Neutral	14	15.55	
				100%
Civilization and Modernization Thought	Agree	84	93.33	
	Disagree	2	2.22	
	Neutral	4	44.44	
				100%
Mass-Media and Social Media Influence	Agree	30	33.33	
	Disagree	40	44.44	
	Neutral	20	22.22	
				100%

Students perceived that civilization and modernization (93.33%), the liberality towards religious thought and dogmas (71.11%), and peer pressure (51%) leading factors to involve in premarital sex. majority of students presented that Medias (44.44%) have little contribution to expose young to premarital sex.

**Table-2. Students Perception towards the Consequences of Premarital Sex**

	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	total
Academic Failure and School Dropout	Agree	61	67.77	
	Disagree	17	18.89	
	Neutral	12	13.3	
				100%
Getting Pregnancy and Abortion	Agree	81	90	
	Disagree	3	3.33	
	Neutral	6	6.67	
				100%
Getting Conflict with Family and Isolation	Agree	44	48.88	
	Disagree	29	32.22	
	Neutral	17	18.88	
				100%

Respondents perceived that premarital sex causes pregnancy and abortion (90%), Academic failure and school dropout (67.77%), getting conflict with family and isolation (48.88 %).

**Table - 4. ANOVA to Determine Attitude Variation among Three Batch Student towards Premarital Sex**

<b>Source of variation</b>	<b>Degree of freedom(df)</b>	<b>Means square(ms)</b>	<b>F</b>
Between groups(ssb)	2	25.495	1.099
With in groups(ssw)	61	23.19	
Total (sst)	63		

\*\* p=0.00 and F= 1.099

The ANOVA F value ( F = 1.099 and sign =0.05). The result indicates that p value is greater than 0.05. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference observed among the three batches in their attitude towards premarital sex.

***Gender difference in attitude towards premarital sex***

Regarding to differences of gender on factors that affect attitudes, females have more positive believes and attitude towards their religion than males. On the other hand, males have more positive believes and attitude towards their friends yet peer pressure is relativity high in females than males.

***Causes towards sexual liberality***

Key informants stated that age (fire age or adolescence), strong sexual desire, getting children from the loved one, migration from rural to urban, peer pressure, social media (pornography), western movies, desire to get money from sugar - daddies and so on were leading factors to engage in premarital sex.

The Key informants additionally noted that campus environment itself contributed it own share on students to engage in premarital sex because there is high tension and peer pressure in the university compound than school environments.

***As the informants stated there are huge reasons behind campus life as a leading cause to engage in premarital sex:*** for instance the hot and dry weather and climatic condition of the campus, unnecessary competition among young students, weak knowledge on sexual behavior and romantic relationship, repeated presence of night clubs, completely wrong perception towards civilization and modernization, social loafing (relating academic grade with the sexual practice with teacher to obtain good grade) some of the mentioned reasons to engage in premarital sex.

Moreover, contemporary dressing styles, sexual urge provoking ceremonies and welcome programs in campus laid a fertile ground for the expansion of premarital sexual practice in the university compounds.

Keb said that ‘‘University is a good place to practice sexual intercourse that is why student are using street ladies for their first sexual contact’’

***Perceived consequence of premarital sex***

Students stressed that premarital sex in campus leads female students to get unwanted Pregnancy, & abortion. A key informant during interview session want to show her friends experience as ‘‘ while she was a second year she had sex with her boyfriend, unfortunately she gets pregnant. She is now caring about her child. She already drooped out from the campus.’’

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Loss of life, sexual transmitted diseases, academic failure, school dropout, family conflict, isolation loss of body energy, lack of self confidence, social conflict , economic problem, sexual dysfunction, disturbance or lack of satisfaction in their later life are a few of the consequences.

Additionally, young faces a chronic psychological distress like; psychological crisis, depression, and chronic stresses.

Key informant noted that may be premarital sex leads one to sexual transmitted infections, fear of pregnancy, to perform a weak academic performance, fear of academic failure and school dropout.

It exposes adolescents to the negative interaction in between child and parent, bad romantic relationship in their future life literally it to mean decreasing trust among couples, leading to heavy psychological burden.

### **DISCUSSION**

Regarding to the difference between male and female, male have positive attitude towards premarital sex than females as a study reported by Matlin (2002). This study contradicts with the current findings.

Among many factors media has big sharer for changing the attitudes towards premarital sex as (Lawrence, 2011) and young's are liberal towards premarital sex than adults (Feldman, 2012). Similarly the present result confirmed the previous research findings.

As mentioned in Ashari, (2006) study premarital sex has greater probability to link with unplanned pregnancy, STDs and HIV/AIDS. However, majority of people have less awareness on the consequences of premarital sex (Ashari, 2006). The statement above is the opposite of the current finding which clearly state that people have good stand to the consequences of premarital sex. Even that good awareness helped youngest to have conservative attitude towards premarital sex. University staying has no as such scientifically proved effect on youngest attitude towards premarital sex which is completely different from the previous study by (Cobb, 2010).

### **CONCLUSION**

However, students have negative attitudes towards premarital sex yet they practicing premarital sex due their internal and externally provoked reasons. Males are more liberal than females in their attitude towards premarital sex. Cultural factors and parenting styles has a lion's share in males' liberality towards premarital sex. Regarding to the exploration of identifying factors that affect females attitudes towards premarital sex, there are several factors identified such as religion, smooth parent and child communication, age, culture, social norms, campus life, media, peer pressure.....etc. Premarital sex is leading young to unplanned pregnancy and abortion, academic failure and school dropout, social conflict, STD, loss of confidence, disturbance in later marriage life. Campus staying has a little role to involve in premarital sex.

### ***Recommendations***

All responsible bodies including academic institutions have to engage in awareness creation companies to alleviate the problem that young students seriously facing today. The campus

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student service has to made modification in preparing freshman students' welcoming ceremony/program because currently various sexually provoking practices are observing and interests are reflecting. Scratching supporting system to encourage girls club and organizing a new club which tend work on working in human sexuality. Nationally systems have to be designed to ban the contemporary dressing styles that are provoking youngsters for sexual practice.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests.

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