



Teen Pregnancy: Overview of The Causes and Its Effects on The Education of Girls' Child

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Abstract. The study's objective is to examine teenage pregnancies, including an overview of some of the causes and their effects on the education of girl children. The study uses a descriptive methodology. 200 teenage pregnant students from secondary schools were chosen at random for the study. To direct the study that led to the result, three research questions were stated. Data were gathered for the study using an interview and a questionnaire. Using a benchmark of 2.50, conclusions were drawn from the descriptive data. According to the research's conclusions, teen pregnancy is influenced by parental social economic position, students' exposure to sexual media content, and peers or friends. Additionally, certain recommendations were made.

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INTRODUCTION

An Overview of teenage pregnancy

In Nigeria, there are 400,000 unplanned births annually, according to Ekwueme (2000), and young women who are single and between the ages of 15 and 19 account for half of those births. She additionally observed that in the 31 nations where data was collected, there were high production rates among women between the ages of 15 and 19, with an average of 164 live births each year. According to Audu (1997), over a million young adult women in Nigeria become pregnant on a regular basis. Of these, around 400,000 are teenagers or younger. Pregnancies are, according to Ekwueme, a common problem among teenage girls in

Nigeria. This was something she was conscious of because of how quickly young people are engaging in sexual activity, especially in mixed-gender schools.

The main effects of these sexual behaviours, which are on the rise among teenagers, include teen or out-of-wedlock pregnancy, as well as abortion, premature delivery, and even death.

According to Bruce, Mugo, and Claire (2020), teens between the ages of 15 and 19 are estimated to give birth to 101 children for every 1,000 births, with teenage female reproduction accounting for the largest percentage at more than half of all birth rates in the entire region. Maembo (2018) found that teenage pregnancies had a negative impact on the ability of female children to continue their

education. 7% of females in Rwanda between the ages of 15 and 19 are already mothers owing to teen pregnancy, which is lower than that of the other Sub-Saharan African nations, according to NISR (2016), which was mentioned in Bruce, Mugo, and Claire (2020). Numerous academics concur that early pregnancy makes it impossible for many teenagers to finish their education, which leads to school dropout. When a girl child who is supposed to be in school becomes pregnant, her entire life may be completely turned upside down, shattering her aspirations and expectations (Alabi and Oni, 2017). Only 5% of girls who became pregnant while in school, according to Haguruka (2018), were able to finish their studies. When compared to their academic performance prior to pregnancy, the performance of teenagers who became pregnant while enrolled in school tends to decline.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Behaviourists Theory

The behaviourist theory is one of the theories that can be used to explain teenage sexual behaviour. Given the idea that all behaviour is learned through conditioning, which takes place as a result of interactions with the environment, behaviourism is a theory of learning. Behaviourists acknowledge that environmental cues influence our behaviour (Kendra, 2022). It focuses on how external and contextual influences affect young people's sexual behaviour. The behaviourist theory adamantly argued that learning from outside forces shapes behaviour. The theory predicted that people learn particular ways of acting as a result of environmental or external stimuli. The fundamental tenets of this theory are that behaviour is learned and that the encouragement of outside forces enhances the persistence of certain behaviour. John Watson, Edward Thorndike, Ivan Pavlov, Albert Bandura, and Skinner are some of the proponents of the behaviourist idea. According to Skinner, most of the behaviours we observe in people are kept up by external reinforcement. Reinforcers of a person's behaviour might come in the form of rewarding things like money, food, or praise. Similar to this, Skinner discovered that any behaviour that isn't reinforced by others will end. This suggests that a person's particular

defenses support their behaviour, and their removal may cause that behaviour to change.

It is crucial to note, when relating Skinner's behavioural theory to sexual behaviour, that people learn these behaviours through interaction with their environment. It is also crucial to note that these behaviours are the result of outside influences. For instance, if a young adult who smokes or drinks alcohol is applauded by others or regularly receives these substances from his friends, this will serve as support. By doing this, the abusers' continued usage of the drugs will be assured. These protests will end or be eliminated if alcohol consumption and cigarette use are condemned or not supported.

Similarly, sexual perversion will rise among teenagers if premarital sex or early sex is encouraged among them by the public (external causes), such as through the provision of condoms, illegal fetal removal, or other means. On the other hand, if all of the defenses that early sex has been given could be taken away, this might stop early sex, which would support its eradication. The importance of reward and punishment in determining a behaviour's coherence was acknowledged by Skinner. Theoretically, the behaviours would stop if all reinforcers that contribute to the teenagers' inescapable sexual style of acting were taken away.

CAUSES OF TEEN PREGNANCIES

Family history and socioeconomic status

One of the factors that may affect young women's pregnancy is parental income. Parents have a big impact on a teen's sexual behaviour. The views, support, and socioeconomic status of a youngster have a significant impact on their decision-making. Dittimiya (2005) asserts that parents with poor incomes find it difficult to provide for or handle their children's needs. According to Iheoma (2005), parents' financial circumstances have an impact on their kids' development. When parents are unable to support, care for, and pay for their kids' education, their kids miss school and engage in immoral activities. Due to the difficult financial circumstances of the nation, the majority of Nigerian parents find it difficult to handle the issue of their children's needs and thus neglect them. Teenagers from parents with poor socioeconomic positions and educational achievement are more likely to

engage in early sexual activity and generally forego using contraception, which increases their chances of getting pregnant (Billy and Brewster, 2004).

Parents have a duty to provide for their children's necessities and raise them to be useful or responsible members of society. Due to their low financial standing, many parents are forced to live in poverty and lack access to decent employment. Because of these, the majority of teenagers are left to take care of and support themselves, their parents, and even go so far as to support themselves in school due to the lack of financial support from their parents. This causes the teen to look for new sources of income or go further in order to support themselves and their parents, which occasionally results in illegal early sex that causes an unintended or teenage pregnancy. Teenagers who live with two parents are less likely to engage in sexual activity, are required to use contraception, and are less likely to become pregnant than those who live with a single parent or have no parents (Billy and Brewster, 2004; Kirby, 2001; Carver and Scheir, 2000). Children who have unprotected intercourse and become pregnant are inevitably the result of parents' permissive attitudes toward early or adolescent sex or their negative attitudes toward contraception (Kim, Ridger, Harper and Yang, 2007). Teenage pregnancy is frequently more common in children of single parents (Kirby, 2001).

Large-family-raised teenagers frequently begin having sex before their friends do. This could be a result of teenagers imitating their relatives' sexual behaviour or because the parental concern is stretched excessively when more kids are living in the house. The views and behaviour of the adolescent are influenced by the traits and behaviours that relatives display towards sexual risk-taking and early pregnancy. Children look to their parents as role models and frequently imitate their actions. In this way, it is reasonable to assume that teenagers will start having sex and getting pregnant if their parents are cohabiting, having extramarital affairs, have had children outside of marriage, or had children when they were teenagers. Numerous studies have demonstrated that children whose parents discuss these sensitive topics with them are compelled to postpone sexual engagement and, when they do, are more likely to use contraception (Okonofua, Abejide and

Makanjuola, 2002). According to a different study, the teenagers' orientation, the parent's gender, the closeness of their relationship, and the parent's personal characteristics may all have an impact on how strongly the relationship between parent-teenager communication and sexual risk-taking by the adolescent is connected (Carver and Scheir, 2000; Olukoya, 2001). For example, mothers seem more obligated to discuss their sexual preferences and ideas with their daughters than with their boys. There is some concern about whether young men are receiving enough information about sexual and conceptual welfare given the astounding numbers of children who are raised in families with just moms as the head of the household.

The role of the media in promoting teenage pregnancy

Newspapers, TV, radio, and other forms of mass media are examples of ways to communicate with a large audience. Through advertisements, music, and television movies, young people, teenagers, and adolescents are constantly exposed to information on sexuality. Many messages have been conveyed to young people by the mass media, including energizing movies, exposure to sexual media content through television, sex books or charts, and pornographic movies for teenagers, all of which have the potential to influence their sexual behaviour (L'Engle et al., 2006; Alabi and Oni, 2017). The mass media constantly portrays sex as romantic, thrilling, and stimulating while never depicting the actual negative effects of impulsive and reckless sexual behaviour. According to Mollor (2001), many children appear to be willfully unaware of the consequences of having illicit sex, so they continue radicalizing it, which may eventually lead to teen pregnancy. Parents shouldn't be reluctant to discuss the consequences of such commitment, such as pornographic views and especially late-night movies, as the media has negatively impacted a wide range of early pregnancies. By glamorizing teen pregnancies in news stories and films, the film industry and the media contribute to adolescent pregnancy.

Lack of information

Teenagers who don't understand sex are destined to become pregnant unexpectedly. Some teenagers don't comprehend the common and everyday perspectives associated with having sex; these kids may receive false

information from friends, recordings, and movies. The young people confront many risks, including unwanted pregnancies, HIV and AIDS, other STIs, and sexual abuse, but they lack the knowledge to assist them in planning this difficult transition into adulthood. Young people frequently lack the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about engaging in sexual development that has the potential to alter their lives. According to Kirby (2001), teenagers who engage in teenage pregnancy often lack knowledge about safe sex or sex education, or they have not received the proper instruction in these areas from their parents, schools, or development organizations. This lack of knowledge could have made them more vulnerable to peer pressure to engage in early sex.

Okafor (1997) identified the lack of sexual information as one of the causes of teen pregnancies. He also mentioned how poorly versed secondary school students are on sex and sexuality. The young people require permission to express information about how their bodies function, how to protect their bodies and the ramifications of a sexual behaving style. Briggs (2001) found that the school system doesn't give teens enough information and instruction about sex and sexuality. Audu (1997) believes that the fewer information children have, the more likely they are to engage in unsafe sex and engage in hasty sexual experimentation. As a result, many of them experience sensitivity and incorrect interpretations of sexual concerns. She continued to believe that young people should be given information about sexuality in order to aid them in preventing unintended pregnancies.

Influence of peers and friends

Teenagers' initial sexual encounters are largely shaped by their classmates or the other sex. According to Alabi and Oni (2017) findings, 20–30% of adolescent pregnancies are the result of an assault, and 60% of young mothers had unwanted intercourse before becoming pregnant before the age of 15 due to pressure from men who were roughly six years older than them (Williams, 2010, Alabi and Oni, 2017). Peers are crucial socialization experts who establish leadership norms and act as real role models. This helps shape the development of sexual attitudes and rules (Okonofua, Abejide, and Mokajuola, 2002).

Teenagers usually experience pressure to find friends and fit in throughout their pre-adult years. When they don't understand the implications of the demonstration's outcomes, these youngsters frequently let their friends influence their decision to engage in sexual activity in any case. The aim of sexual activity among young people is to appear sophisticated and cool, but occasionally the result is an unplanned pregnancy.

It's interesting to notice that peer influence on young adult sexual activity extends beyond mere peer behaviour to specific peer beliefs. The young child's attitudes and behaviour are directly tied to the idea of normalizing sexual perceptions and actions. Young people are compelled to have sexual relations once they accept—accurately or incorrectly—that their friends are having relations. Teenagers are obligated to use contraception once they acknowledge that their friends support it (Kirby, 2001). Peer influence may have a different effect depending on the adolescent's other sources of information on sexual and conceptual health. According to Williams (2001), the majority of young people succumb to high school pregnancy because they rely too much on their friends for knowledge.

Societal influence

The study on the causes of teen sex began by concentrating on the individual level, specifically the influence of the teens' own physical and psychological traits. More recently, there has been growing attention in context-oriented factors and facets of the contexts that youth are a part of, such as the community and school. These studies have consistently shown that young people's sexual behaviour is influenced by the neighbourhood where they live. Young individuals are likely to engage in sex at a young age and get pregnant if they reside in communities with more friendly disorders and less financial means. Unquestionably, there is a relationship between teenagers' sexual behaviour and the education level, unemployment rate, and income of the community's adults (Okonofua, 2005 Kirby, 2001). Pregnancy in teenagers typically relates to a desire to feel wonderful and sensible as a woman, since some teenagers deliberately choose to become pregnant. Sometimes young women turn to sex and pregnancy when they are uneasy about the changes they are going through or when they

need a strong sense of security about their future. This is a strategy for convincing people, including oneself, that they are just as human as anyone else (Oleen in Eruesegbefe, 2005, Oboawharhe, 2022).

A few immature young women exploit pregnancy as a means of retaining a lover and pressuring him into marriage (Oboawharhe, 2022). Early marriage and common leadership positions are important determinants in the rate of young pregnancies in particular social hierarchies. For instance, early pregnancy is frequently viewed as a gift in a few sub-Saharan African nations since it is evidence of the young woman's productivity. The average marriage age varies from country to country depending on how frequently young couples become pregnant while still in high school. Additionally, sexual corruption will rise among this subgroup if early sex is encouraged among minors through the provision of condoms, illegal fetal removal, or other motivators by the general public (external influences). On the other hand, if all of the reinforcements associated with early sex are eliminated, this might cause it to stop, therefore supporting its eradication. Skinner agreed that external factors like reward and discipline are essential in determining the sustainability of any behaviour. This theory recognizes that the behaviours will stop if all the reinforcers that keep up with the inevitable sexual manner of acting among youths are removed.

Statement of the Problem

The rate of pregnancy among Nigerian adolescents is thought to be on the increase. It is asserted by a researcher that more than a quarter of Nigerian students aged 15-19 are pregnant or have had children, and that forty-three per cent (43%) of pregnancies are unintended. The social implications of early pregnancy in an adolescent female are serious. Most schools in Nigeria do not allow pregnant girls to continue schooling and the resulting premature dropout from school reduces their opportunity for upward socioeconomic mobility (Atteh, 2011). Babies born by teen mothers are at higher risk of medical problems such as low birth weight due to improper fetus growth and/or early delivery. The children have a higher likelihood of being impoverished and having children while still teenagers. Teen pregnancy costs society money in addition to what it costs the teenagers and their offspring,

particularly in terms of population increase. On this note, a study on the reasons for teen pregnancy and its impact on girl child education is being conducted by the researcher.

Methodology

A survey research method is employed in the study. All secondary school students in the twenty-four (24) government secondary schools serving a total of 12,547 students in the Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria, make up the study population. Twenty students from each of ten (10) secondary schools, totalling 200, were randomly chosen as the sample. To determine the reasons for teen pregnancy and its effects, the researcher created a questionnaire and interview guide that served as the study's instrument. The survey uses a scale with four options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). With a sealing point of 2.50 as a benchmark, descriptive statistics were employed to examine the data. This indicates that a statement or item is considered to be rejected if the mean for that statement is lower than the sealing point of 2.50, but approved if it is higher than the sealing point of 2.50.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire's items 1-3 depict the connection between parental income and teen pregnancies. Since the mean is higher than the cutoff of 2.50, Table 1 above demonstrates that there is a significant correlation between teenage pregnancy and low-income parents. Teenage pregnancy could result from a parent's inability to meet their kids' basic requirements. When parents struggle to cover their children's tuition and other educational costs, their kids may turn to other options to meet their demands, which could result in teenage pregnancy. The findings were reinforced by Iheoma's (2005) assertion that parental financial circumstances have an impact on their children's development and that failing to properly care for and pay for their children's education causes them to miss class and engage in immoral behaviour.

The findings are supported by Billy and Brewster's (2004) theory that adolescents with parents who have low socioeconomic positions and educational attainment are more likely to be inclined to engage in premarital sex, which results in teenage pregnancy. If the parents are

unable to supply school materials, the children may miss class and become involved in unethical behaviour that could result in an unintended pregnancy. Low-income parents find it challenging to care for or handle their children's educational concerns. Teenagers with unemployed parents would be more likely to trade sex for food, mobile phones, and

clothing which can lead to teenage pregnancy. The lack of parents to offer books on sex education could also result in adolescent pregnancy. However, it is generally acknowledged by the mean grade above that victim of underage pregnancy typically have low-earning parents and will remain impoverished themselves.

Table 1. Analysis of data on parent's income and its contribution to teenage pregnancy

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\sum fx$	F	X	Remark
1	My parent could not provide my basic needs led me to early pregnancy	12 6	4 2	30	2	692	20 0	3.46	Agreed
2	My parents could not pay for my school fees and I look for other alternatives to pay which result pregnancy.	11 4	4 8	24	14	662	20 0	3.31	Agreed
3	My parents could not provide me with school materials and so am away from school which push me into pre-marital sex that resulted to unwanted pregnancy	92	6 2	26	20	626	20 0	3.13	Agreed

Teenage pregnancy is caused by parents' income among secondary school students because parents who are unable to meet their children's basic needs may push female students to date men they believe will support them, which will ultimately lead to having sex, which will cause teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy occurs when parents don't pay for their children's education and turn to other sources of support. Additionally, a shortage of school supplies may cause students to skip class and engage in immoral behaviour, both of which increase the risk of an unwanted pregnancy.

The above findings are supportive of Okon (1998) who listed some combined factors known to be responsible for the rise in teenage pregnancy as the problem of survival, absence of sex education both at home and in school, craving for money and materialism, the influx of pornographic materials, neglects by parents, teenager's ignorance and innocence about their bodily changes, broken homes, moral laxity in the society, bad company and examples from parents, lack of job and educational opportunities in the society.

Table 2. Analysis of students' exposure to sexual content on media and its contribution to teenage pregnancy

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\sum fx$	F	X	Remark
4	My exposure to sexual content on media, television, sex chart or book resulted to premarital sex	106	92	2	0	704	200	3.52	Agreed
5	My exposure to pornographic made me to indulge in premarital sex that made me pregnant	160	20	20	0	740	200	3.70	Agreed

The correlation between student exposure to sexual content in media and teen pregnancies is shown in item 4-5 of the

questionnaire. Table 2 shows that the mean is higher than the benchmark, which indicates that it is acceptable. Teen pregnancy and

student exposure to sexual media have a connection. According to research by L'Engle et al. (2006) and Alabi and Oni (2017), youngsters who are exposed to sexual mass

media, such as enticing movies (pornographic movies), sex charts, or books, are more likely to engage in sexual conduct that results in pregnancy.

Table 3. examines how students' ignorance of sex education and its connection to teenage pregnancy

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\sum fx$	F	X	Remark
6	Lack of information on sex education by my parents cause my premarital pregnancy	154	40	6	0	748	200	3.74	Agreed
7	Lack of information on sex education by my school cause my premarital pregnancy	132	40	20	8	696	200	3.48	Agreed
8	Lack of awareness about the implications of early sex made me pregnant	98	74	14	14	656	200	3.28	Agreed

The association between students' lack of knowledge about sex education and its contribution to teenage pregnancy is shown in items 6–8 of the questionnaire. Table 3 revealed that the mean is higher than the benchmark meaning that is generally recognized. Teen pregnancy and students' lack of sex education knowledge are related. According to Kirby (2001), teenagers who engage in these acts of teenage pregnancy lack knowledge about safe sex or sex education or were not properly educated about it by their parents, schools, or development

organizations, which could have given them advice on how to deal with their peer groups that will tempt or persuade them into early sex and supported the findings.

One of the factors contributing to teenage pregnancies among young people is a lack of sexual education. Briggs (2001) said that teenagers are not given enough information and education about sex and sexuality by the school system, which supports the findings. As a result, a lot of people experience sexual misinterpretations and vulnerability.

Table 4. analyzes how peer pressure affects students' chances of becoming pregnant as adolescents & Analysis of students' peer influence and its contribution to teenage pregnancy

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\sum fx$	F	X	Remark
9	I was influenced by friends to have early sex which led to my pregnancy	104	76	20	0	684	200	3.42	Agreed
10	I wanted to be like my mate that led to my pregnancy	74	78	38	10	616	200	3.08	Agreed
11	I deliberately got pregnant to hold fast to my boy friend not to leave me	122	44	18	16	672	200	3.36	Agreed
12	I wanted to satisfy my urge or emotion because of ignorant cause my pregnancy	108	72	18	2	686	200	3.43	Agreed

The association between student peer influence and its role in teen pregnancies is demonstrated in items 9–12 of the survey. Table 4 shows that the mean is higher than the generally recognized standard. Teen

pregnancy and student peer pressure are related. The findings were supported by Charles (2013) discussion of peer pressure, inadequate parenting, love-seeking, poverty, and other variables that contribute to teenage

pregnancy. According to Okonofua, Abejide, and Mokajuola (2002), peer groups are important socialization agents because they provide moral norms and serve as role models, which in turn influence the development of sexual sentiments and standards. Additionally supporting the findings, Kirby (2001) found that teenagers who acknowledge that their peers encourage contraceptive use are more likely to use contraception themselves. The findings were corroborated by Williams (2001) assertion that the majority of adolescents trust the advice of their friends, which leads them to consent to teenage pregnancy.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

If teen pregnancy is not properly managed, it undermines the girl child's future and educational opportunities. Teenage pregnancies are both an economic and a social concern because they predict low educational attainment, a high likelihood of poverty, and the psycho-social embarrassment they cause for the young lady, particularly if she is not legally wed. The literature study revealed that there are numerous factors that can lead to teen pregnancy. According to the research, peer groups, parental incomes, and exposure to sexual media all play a role in teen pregnancy.

The findings lead to the following recommendations: Teenagers should not be treated harshly by their parents; instead, they should feel comfortable approaching them and sharing information regarding premarital sex when peer pressure is present. Parents should make every effort to address their children's needs while also educating teenagers about the consequences of premarital sex. To help teens understand their physiological makeup, the government should mandate that sex education be taught in all schools. Moral instruction in churches and mosques by religious leaders should address the problem of teenage pregnancies. The significance of discussing sexuality and the dangers of premarital sex with children, especially female children, should be made clear to parents in seminars.

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