



Research Paper

## Causes and Effects of Teenage Pregnancy Among Female Secondary School Students in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State

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### Abstract

Teenage pregnancy, described as a case of an underage girl being pregnant between the ages of thirteen and nineteen has been of great concern to parents, school administrators and other stakeholders. The aim of this study was to ascertain the causes and effects of teenage pregnancy among female secondary school students in Abua/ Odual Local Government Area. The descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Three Research Questions guided the study. An instrument titled 'Causes and Effects of Teenage Pregnancy Among Female Students' was designed by the Researchers and used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts and reliability obtained through test re-test. Mean statistics was used to answer the Research Questions. Findings from the study show that lack of information, peer pressure, pressure from parents on teenage girls to get married, non-use of contraceptives and economic factors are some causes of teenage pregnancy. The study also revealed that drop out from school, health risks, isolation and rejection by parents and peers are some effects of teenage pregnancy, and that sufficient parental care, sex education in schools and prohibition of underage marriage are effective ways to reduce teenage pregnancy among secondary school students

**Keyword:** Teenage pregnancy, female, secondary school, students, Abua/Odual

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy is an unwelcomed occurrence among females who are both educationally and economically disadvantaged. Pregnancy among teenagers is one of the most pressing issues confronting most countries today. Teenage pregnancy is becoming a growing concern, and understanding the various causes of teenage pregnancy is critical. Pregnancies among girls appear to be one of the social issues confronting not only Nigeria, but also a number of other countries around the world. Sexual activities among teenagers in Nigeria are also on the rise (Nwosu, 2012). Out-of-wedlock pregnancies, which can result in abortion, childbirth, or even death, are a major consequence of these increased sexual activities among teenagers. Pregnancy, regardless of age, can be a life-changing experience that transcends race, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status. (Kost, Henshaw & Carlin, 2010). Motherhood imposes demands on one's life that were previously unimaginable before the woman's birth. When a girl who should be in school becomes pregnant, her entire life could be turned upside down as her hopes and dreams are dashed. Pregnancy is usually welcomed when it occurs at the appropriate age and in the context of marriage. On the contrary, it is particularly unwelcome when it occurs outside of marriage or during the adolescent years, when the individual is learning skills in a formal or informal setting. Poverty, pornography, mass media, and peer influence have all been identified as factors contributing to teenage pregnancy (Audu, 2011; WHO, 2011; Onuziuke, 2010). According to Gyan (2013), peer influence is also paramount during the period of adolescence. Furthermore, it was discovered that adolescents in a suburb of Accra, Ghana, mostly engaged in sex as a result of peer pressure, which could predispose them to early pregnancy, motherhood, and HIV/AIDS infection. Peer pressure has been identified as a factor that contributes

to teenage pregnancy. A study conducted in two Kenyan informal settlements to investigate patterns and determinants of entry into motherhood discovered that having negative peer models was linked to early childbearing among females aged 15–17 years (Donatien, 2013). Similar findings have been made in the United States, where, in some cases, when a friend has a child, it increases an individual's chances of becoming a parent (Nicoletta Balbo, 2014). Also, Kabiru (2014), opine that lack of peer pressure to not have a boyfriend predisposes teenagers to unintended pregnancy in the majority of cases. According to Kinby (2010), teenage pregnancy victims lacked knowledge or were likely not properly trained on safe sex by their parents, schools, or development agencies, which may have prepared them to deal with peers who lured them into sex prematurely. He went on to say that children with single parents are more likely to become pregnant as teenagers. Teenagers who are exposed to sexual material on television, sexuality in the media, pornographic and sex map rooms are more likely to engage in sexual behaviors (L' Eagles et al 2011, Park 2012). Acceptance of a gift for sex, as well as certain adults taking advantage of poor adolescents and encouraging them to have sex, have been identified as contributing factors to teenage pregnancy (United Nation, 2011). According to Kost et al. (2010), teen parents are those who have children between the ages of 13 and 19. Maynard (2011) believes that teenage parenting is a delinquent behavior that stems from a teenage girl's stress, dislike, malice, boredom, and unhappiness in her home environment. Alcoholism, opioid abuse, and sexual promiscuity are both predisposing factors.

Teenager and puberty are sometimes used interchangeably. The secondary sex traits occur between the ages of ten and nineteen years, according to the World Health Organization WHO (2011). This time was characterized by Kinby (2013) as "the second decades of life." He found that when an individual is in the second genital stage of psychological development, it is the most critical sensitive time of their lives. Female teens, according to Onuziuke (2010), face a broad variety of issues pertaining to their social, mental, and socio-cultural problems on a daily basis. According to Turner and Helms (2012), adolescence is described as the period between the ages of thirteen and nineteen. The teen years, according to Onuziuke (2013), serve as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, allowing a person to shed childhood habits and develop adult behaviors. On the precise age at which it starts or finishes, writers and scholars have differing viewpoints. The teen years, according to Boongart and Cohen (2012), are a time of transformation from childhood to adulthood, marked by increased social maturity and rapid physical development. They said that this time cycle marks the beginning of puberty and biological maturity. It is a critical time in an individual's life because several social, economic and demographic events occur that set the stage for adulthood, according to Ukekwe (2013), who characterized it as the most important period in human life, which, if not properly treated, could lead to the most catastrophic outcomes later in life, particularly among females. According to Coley (2010), adolescence is the period that a person's sexual development begins. It's the time of year when they'll express interest in the opposite sex and be curious about a variety of sex-related issues. The media's irresponsible and reckless attitude has even led to the occurrence of sex among adolescents.

Certain factors have been identified to be associated with teenage Pregnancy. These factors according to Audu (2011) include; Lack of knowledge, dating violence, family factors, influence of mass media, religious belief, peer pressure, teenage drinking, sexual abuse or rape, childhood environment and general factors. Teenagers who as uneducated about sex are more likely to have unintended pregnancy. Some teens do not only understand the biological and emotional component involved with having sex, these teens may get inaccurate facts from peers, videos, sitcoms and more. Many times, teens do not have the knowledge needed to make informed and responsible decisions about whether to engage in sexual activity that can affect their life. Okafor (2010) identified ignorance of sexual intelligence as one of the factors responsible for pregnancies among teenagers. He went on to say that adolescents in high schools had a limited understanding of sex and sexuality. Adolescents face many risks, including unintended births, HIV/AIDS, other STIS, and sexual harassment, according to Nwosu (2011), but they are given little knowledge to assist them in navigating this daunting transition to adulthood. Briggs (2011), noted that the educational system would not provide youth with enough knowledge and education about sex and sexuality. As a consequence, many of them experience doubt and misunderstanding when it comes to sexual issues. Townsend and Worobey (2011) are of the opinion that teenagers from broken homes are more sexually permissive than those from stable homes. They opined that daughter of divorced mothers and teenagers from broken homes end up with teenage pregnancies. When two parents are present, Newcomer and Udry (2013) found that they have greater power than when only one parent is present. According to Audu (2012), teenage involuntary pregnancy is caused by a lack of fear of God and being non-religious. He claims that the more religious a teenager is, the more likely she is to attend church and the less likely she is to partake in premarital sex. Brown (2011) also observed that the more interested a girl is in church events, the less likely she is to dream of having a relationship with someone of the same gender. In the view of, Moilborn (2015) and Audu (2012), premarital sexual practices are common among adolescents, particularly those in secondary schools. Many of them are allegedly enticed into sex by men who give them money or other gifts in return for sexual favors, according to them. According to Moilborn, the girls choose to sell sex in order to satisfy their basic needs, which their parents are unable to do. Teenagers also feel pressured

to make friends and blend in with their peers during their adolescence years. Many times, these teenagers allow their mates to manipulate their decision to have sex, even though they are unaware of the repercussions. Teenagers use sex to look hip and sophisticated, but it can lead to an unplanned teen pregnancy in some cases. According to the Kekeis (2010), more than 29% of pregnant teens indicated feeling forced to have sex, and 33% of pregnant teens said they were not ready for a sexual relationship but went on anyway because they were afraid of criticism or rejection. Lawin (2013) reported that psychological changes that arise during adolescence seem to lead to increased sexual appetite, and that this rise in sexual desire is a reaction to hormonal, psychological, and social changes that teenagers go through. All of these factors may be related to the high rate of underage pregnancy in today's culture. Gordon (2010) theorized that a strong need for love and approval drives the desire for early sexual activity initiation. They also compared that to a display of the sophistication that adolescents believe they have achieved. They pointed out that this assumption leaves teens vulnerable to underage unwanted pregnancies and the problems that come with them. All these characteristics tend to expose teenagers to premarital sexual activities. Teens can become pregnant as a result of sexual abuse or rape. The Allian Guttmacher institute (2011) states that between 43% and 62% of teens acknowledged that they were impregnated by an adult male, and 2/3 reported that their babies' father was as old as 27. Unplanned teenage births have a high medical, social, and economic cost for mothers and their children. Adolescent mothers are more likely to have medical problems during pregnancy and labor that lasts longer. Their babies are more likely to be born prematurely and to have a low birth weight. These are exacerbated by a lack of maternal care and insufficient diet, which are common among teenage mothers who live in poverty.

Young moms face a variety of financial and social disadvantages as a result of being parents while still in high school. They have a lower likelihood of graduating from middle school and enrolling in a postsecondary college. They would have a harder time finding suitable jobs because of their lack of educational accomplishment. They live on a smaller income and are more likely to depend on government assistance. Their relationships are more likely to be dysfunctional, and they often have more children than they first planned (Furstenberg & Brooks, 2012). Similarly, children born to teen mothers face challenges. They have lower cognitive functioning, as well as a greater number of behavioral and mental issues. Children, on the other hand, tend to be more afflicted than females. Teenage mothers' daughters do worse in school and are more likely to get pregnant themselves. Teen mothers may also have less experience in child rearing than older mothers, resulting in less chances for excitement for their children.

The impact of teenage pregnancy is not just on the teen mother; it can also be traumatic for her child. According to Hoffort et al. (2012), the majority of young mothers are unable to continue their schooling. The finding supports Mailborn's (2015) concern that if teenage mothers ultimately marry, she will become the primary caretaker and her chances of furthering her education will be drastically reduced. According to Kosha (2012) teenage pregnancy could lead to incomplete education, unemployment and other numerous traumas. Early motherhood had been linked to affects the psychological development of the child adversely. Beside psychological physical risk could be ignored. Teenage girl's body is not as developed as adult women in term of childbearing. Thus, they are often to face certain complications during pregnancy. Lack of sexual education causes teen's abortion since they realize that they are not ready to take responsibility to be a parent at such a young age and they still have many things to chase in life. The chance of maternal death cannot be ruled out in effecting teenage pregnancy by child. According to Marnach *et al.*, (2013) medically, teenage pregnancy maternal and prenatal health is of particular concern among teens that are pregnant or parenting. The worldwide incidence of premature birth and low birth weight is higher among teenage mothers. Teenage mothers between 15-19 years old. Day (2015) stated that the effects apply to the infants; teenage mothers, according to them, face difficulties that extend past birth and are at a greater risk of developing academic, linguistic, and socio-emotional delays, resulting in their schooling failing to meet the needs of their children in terms of growth and school readiness. In comparison to children with older mothers, Terry-Hoffman (2013) found that children of adolescent mothers had difficulties with comprehension, language expression, and inter-personal skills. Studies by Hoffman (2013) show that less than 2% of young teen mothers are less than 18 years attain college degree before attaining 30 years of age and about 50% if them repeat a grade with lower performance on standardized tests.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teenage pregnancy is no longer a novel problem in any culture, whether existing, emerging, or less developed. Teenage pregnancy is on the rise worldwide, especially among girls in the 13–19-year-old age bracket. Adolescent pregnancy has become a significant policy issue as a result of these problems. Various reasons have been given for its presence, but the main issue is that it continues to grow and expand despite all of the efforts made by the government, schools, religious bodies, and non-governmental organizations to address some of the established factors that lead to this cancerous or decadent state in our societies. The rate of adolescent pregnancy in the Rivers State is increasing at an alarming rate. It is believed that a lack of adequate

information about sex education among teenage girls contributes to them becoming sexually active, which leads to pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy has been shown to have a negative and socially long-term impact on a teenager's life. It is in the light of this that the study is carried out to examine the causes and effect of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine the causes and effect of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odual Local Government Area.

### **Objective of the study**

1. Identify the causes of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odual Local Government Area.
2. To identify the effects of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odual Local Government Area.
3. To identify strategies to curb causes and effect of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odual Local Government Area.

### **Research Questions**

The following was the research question of the study:

1. What are the causes of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odual Local Government Area?
2. What are the effects of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odual Local Government Area?
3. What are the strategies to curb causes and effects of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odual Local Government Area?

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive survey research was used with an aim to determine the causes and effects of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odual Local Government Area. The population of the studies consist of all the female students in all the public secondary schools in Abua/Odual Local Government Area of Rivers State. In total, there were 5174 of female students for the 2019/2020 academic session. The sample for the study consists of 20 percent of the population making a total of 1035 student drawn from the secondary schools under study. However only 965 correctly completed and returned their questionnaires for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample size. An instrument titled 'Causes and Effects of Teenage Pregnancy Among Female Students' was designed by the Researchers and used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts and reliability obtained through test re-test. Mean statistics was used to answer the Research Questions.

## **III. RESULTS**

### **Research Question 1**

What are the causes of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odual Local Government Area?

**Table I**  
*The causes of teenage pregnancy among females' secondary school*

<b>S/N</b>	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SDA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1.	Lack of information	600	365	0	0	0	4.62	Accepted
2.	Peer pressure	515	425	0	10	5	4.50	Accepted
3.	Pressure from parent/family on the young girl child to get married and nonuse of contraceptive	700	260	0	3	2	4.71	Accepted
4.	Financial/economic factors	800	155	2	6	2	4.80	Accepted
	<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>4.66</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

From Table 1 above it was revealed that all the listed items are causes of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odua with financial/economic factors having the highest mean score of 4.80 while peer pressure is having least mean score of 4.5. The average mean of 4.66 was obtained this implies that all the listed items are causes of teenage pregnancies among secondary school students in Abua/Odua Local Government Area.

**Research Question 2**

What are the effects of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odua Local Government Area?

**Table 2**  
*The effect of teenage pregnancy among female secondary school students*

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SDA	Mean	Decision
5.	Retards educational attainment of teenage mothers	565	300	56	24	20	4.42	Accepted
6.	Teenage abortion/lack of experience to support the child	785	180	0	0	0	4.81	Accepted
7.	Health risk during and after child birth	600	200	0	35	30	4.0	Accepted
8.	Isolation and rejection by parents and peers	685	255	0	23	2	4.65	Accepted
	<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>4.47</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Results in Table 2 above show that all the listed items are effects of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odua with Teenage abortion/lack of experience to support the child having the highest mean score of 4.81 while Health risk during and after child birth is having least mean score of 4.0. The average mean of 4.47 was obtained this implies that all the listed items has a strong effect on teenage pregnancies among secondary school students in Abua/Odua Local Government Area.

**Research Question 3**

What are the strategies to curb causes and effect of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odua Local Government Area.

**Table 3**  
*The strategies to curb causes and effect of teenage pregnancy among female secondary school student*

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SDA	Mean	Decision
9.	Adequate information and knowledge for the teenage girls	563	302	59	23	18	4.71	Accepted
10.	Provide love and support for the teenage girls	700	260	0	3	2	4.41	Accepted
11.	Eradicating under-aged marriage and teaching of sex education in secondary school	665	260	20	14	6	4.62	Accepted
12.	Security and avoidance of bad friends	533	400	19	10	3	4.50	Accepted
	<b>Average Mean</b>						<b>4.56</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Results in Table 3 above show that all the listed items are strategies to curb causes and effect of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in Abua/Odua with Adequate information and knowledge for the teenage girls having the highest mean score of 4.71 while Provide love and support for the teenage girls is having least mean score of 4.41. The average mean of 4.56 was obtained this implies that all the listed items are strategies to curb causes and effect of teenage pregnancy on secondary school students in Abua/Odua Local Government Area.

**IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The result of Table one which is for research questions one accepted all the listed variables which are; lack of information, peer pressure, family pressure and economic. These factors are all causes of teenage pregnancy. This is in line with the study of Audu (2011) who listed the causes of teenage pregnancy to be; Lack of knowledge, dating violence, family factors, influence of mass media, religious belief, peer pressure, teenage drinking, sexual abuse or rape, childhood environment and general factors. Also, according to Kinby (2010), In teenage pregnancy, victims lacked knowledge or were likely not properly trained on safe sex by their parents, schools, or development agencies, which may have prepared them to deal with peers who lured them into sex prematurely. The findings of the study also agree with that of Carrisra et al (2012) which state that lack of information financial/economic factors, peer pressure etc are some cases of teenage pregnancy among female secondary school students.

The result in table two show that the respondents all accepted the listed items which include retarded education, teenage abortion, isolation and rejection etc to be the effect of teenage pregnancy among secondary school student. This finding is in consonance with that of Kosha (2012) who stated that teenage pregnancy could

lead to incomplete education, unemployment and other numerous traumas. Lack of sexual education causes teen's abortion since they realize that they are not ready to take responsibility to be a parent at such a young age and they still have many things to chase in life. Also, according to Mamach et al. (2013) medically, teenage pregnancy maternal and prenatal health is of particular concern among teens that are pregnant or parenting. The worldwide incidence of premature birth and low birth weight is higher among teenage mothers. Fadeyi et al (2012) which opined that teenage pregnancy has some effect on the teenage girl, which is retrieved educational efficient, teenage abortion/lack of experience to support the child, health risk during and after child birth and isolation and rejection by family and friends.

The result from the research question three discussed about the strategies to curb teenage pregnancy among female student in secondary school supports that of Nwosu (2011) which states that adequate information and knowledge for the teenage girls, providing love and support security and avoidance of bad friends, eradicating of under aged marriage are some strategies to curb teenage pregnancy among female secondary school.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Teenage pregnancy has a detrimental effect on the education and future plans of teenagers, this is because the teen age mother's attend school irregularly and sometimes drop out of school thereby becoming a social as well as economic issue as it portends low education and unemployment, high rate of poverty and the psychosocial stigma it carries especially when it is out of wedlock. The correlation between earlier childbearing and failure to complete secondary school reduces career opportunities for many young mothers.

## **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS**

Teachers have a vital role in increasing their student's knowledge in understanding self-actualization and self-discipline. Adequate information from the teacher to the students has been a source of knowledge to students in understanding the causes and consequences of teenage pregnancy. Furthermore, teachers have a unique approach in detecting student's behaviour. Teachers have a better understanding of the students more than the students themselves. As a result, providing quality information to students is very important to ensuring student's educational attainment and prospect.

## **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Upon analysis of the data and the resulting evidence obtained from the research, the following recommendations were provided;

1. Sensitization initiatives to train the population on the effects of adolescent pregnancies should be launched by appropriate institutions
2. Secondary students should be given psychological assistance in dealing with peer pressure and social stigma.
3. Contraceptive training in high schools should be adopted.
4. The government and non-governmental organizations should implement policies to promote quality health care services for adolescents.
5. Government and NGOs should make contraceptive services affordable and readily available.
6. Policies to allow teenage mothers to stay in high-school education should be developed.

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