

ASSESSING THE IMPLICATION OF PREMARITAL PREGNANCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT'S IN IJEBU NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OGUN STATE. NIGERIA

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Abstract

Premarital pregnancy among teenagers has posed various challenges which attracted a great deal of concern and attention from religious leaders, the general public and policymakers. Hence, this study focuses on assessing the implication of premarital pregnancy among secondary school students in Ijebu North East Local Government Area, Ogun State Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and fifty (150) teenage mothers to represent the entire population for the study. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Data was analyzed with descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation for research questions. Findings revealed that lack of proper sex education, peer pressure, being dropped out of school and others are the major causes of premarital pregnancy among teenagers ($\bar{x}=2.87$) while maintaining that inability to get married or go back to school after pregnancy, and stigma are the effects of teenager's premarital pregnancy ($\bar{x}=2.80$). It was therefore concluded and recommended that relevant government agencies should start sensitization campaigns to educate school girls about the dangers of unwanted pregnancy with good parental care. Also, Government/school authority should create a system of assisting teenage mother who are victims of early pregnancy to finish their education.

Keywords: Premarital, Teenagers, Pregnancy, Policymakers, Social Scientist, Psychological Assistance

Introduction

A serious social and public health concern that has a big impact on people, families, and societies is premarital pregnancy among secondary school students. Teenager's pregnancy is a serious issue for legislators, educators, and healthcare professionals because it is linked to social stigma, health issues, economic difficulty, and disruption of schooling (WHO, 2022). Peer pressure, poverty, cultural norms, lack of access to contraceptive services, and poor sexual and reproductive health education are some of the many factors contributing to premarital pregnancy among secondary school students (UNESCO, 2021). In many regions of the world, the prevalence of teenage pregnancies has

also increased due to the effect of social media, early exposure to sexual content, and parental neglect (UNFPA, 2020). Adolescent pregnancy has repercussions that go beyond the individual; it can impact financial security, mental health, and academic performance. Due to discrimination, lack of funds, or childcare responsibilities, many pregnant secondary school students are compelled to drop out, which restricts their future possibilities and feeds poverty cycles (UNICEF, 2020).

Teenage mothers are more likely to experience pregnancy and delivery difficulties, including low birth weight, preterm birth, and maternal mortality because of their biological immaturity and lack of access to appropriate

prenatal care, (WHO, 2022). Teenage pregnancy has an effect on families and communities as well since young women frequently need their parents' or guardians' emotional and financial assistance, which puts further strain on household finances. A comprehensive strategy is needed to address premarital pregnancy among secondary school students. This entails putting in place sex education programs that are age- and culturally appropriate, expanding access to reproductive health services, encouraging parental participation, and enforcing laws that permit pregnant students to finish their schooling (NICE, 2021). To assist young moms in reintegrating into society, schools, governments, and non-governmental organizations must work together to develop awareness campaigns, give counseling services, and provide vocational training.

Furthermore, encouraging healthy peer interactions and mentorship initiatives can enable teenagers to make knowledgeable decisions about their reproductive health. Stakeholders can collaborate to lower the occurrence of premarital pregnancy among secondary school students and assist those who are impacted by it by knowing the underlying causes, effects, and potential interventions. Ensuring the well-being and future success of young people requires giving them the information, tools, and encouragement they need to make responsible decisions.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to assess the implication of premarital pregnancy among secondary school students in Ijebu – North East

Local Government Area of Ogun State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. To examine the causes of premarital pregnancy among teenagers in and out of secondary schools.
2. To determine the effects of premarital pregnancy on teenagers in secondary schools in Ijebu-North East Local Government Area of Ogun State?
3. To identify the solutions to premarital pregnancy among teenagers in secondary schools in Ijebu-North East Local Government Area of Ogun State

Research Questions

1. What are the causes of premarital pregnancy among teenagers in secondary schools in Ijebu North East Local Government Area of Ogun State?
2. What are the effects and possible solution to premarital pregnancy on teenagers in secondary schools in Ijebu North East Local Government Area of Ogun State?
3. What are the solutions to premarital pregnancy among teenagers in secondary schools in Ijebu-North East Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Literature Review

Concept of Teenage Pregnancy

In daily speech, the term typically refers to girls who become pregnant who are between the ages of 13 and 19, depending on the country, and who have not attained legal adulthood. Critical socioeconomic challenges like poverty, inadequate education, dangerous behaviors that result in poor health, and child welfare are more likely to affect a child who has a baby while still a teenager. Often, teenage pregnancies

usually struggle to complete their education, which results in fewer prospects for employment and lower lifetime incomes. It was predicted that public funding for births brought on by unintended pregnancies cost \$12.5 million in 2008. (NCPTP, 2014).

Reasons for Adolescent Pregnancy

The increase in adolescent pregnancies is influenced by several variables. Below is a list of some of the factors that contribute to teenage pregnancy:

1. **Education and Religion:** Islam and Christianity are the two main religions in Nigerian society, and education has long been recognized as a crucial factor in the fight against poverty and illiteracy. Nigerian religious value systems, which influence sexual attitudes and behaviors, are primarily derived from them. Also, the increase in adolescent pregnancies in Nigeria can be ascribed to the parents' and teens' ignorance and illiteracy; the likelihood of adolescent pregnancy is influenced by the parents' and teens' educational level (Undiyaundeye, et al, 2015).
2. **Rebellion/Poverty:** Scholars have long recognized youthful exuberance as a component of adolescence, as it involves teens rebelling or agitating against their parents' authority or reliance and attempting to engage in behaviors that may bring them pain and embarrassment. Unprotected sexual practices are one of these behaviors, which almost always result in pregnancy. Teenage girls from low-income families are more likely to become pregnant, (Mangatu and Kisimbii (2019).

3. **Family instability and age differences:** Teenage pregnancy is influenced by family stability in that it can result from spousal violence, divorce, and poor communication with parents. Furthermore, teens who are not given the right guidance by their parents are more likely to become pregnant because studies have shown that teens who grow up in dysfunctional households are more likely to become teenage moms (Saikia, 2017).
4. **Lack of Guidance:** One of the main causes of adolescent pregnancy is a lack of guidance from parents and guardians who are unwilling or do not see the importance of teaching teenagers about sexual reproduction and vices. This results in the teenagers not receiving the proper guidance during their adolescent stage of development, which is crucial for the development of their social, emotional, psychological, and cognitive abilities.

Premarital Pregnancy's Effect on Adolescents Enrolled in Secondary Schools

Secondary school students being pregnant before marriage is a serious problem that affects young women, their families, and society as a whole. Beyond the immediate emotional and physical repercussions, adolescent pregnancy has an impact on mental health, education, social standing, health, and financial security. Adolescent mothers frequently encounter particular hurdles that can restrict their options and cause problems down the road. Adolescent moms experience the following range of consequences:

1. **Educational Consequences:** One of the areas of teenage pregnancy that

is most negatively impacted is education. Because of the shame, lack of assistance, and childcare load, many pregnant students are compelled to leave school (UNESCO, 2021). Pregnant students are excluded from formal education in many nations because schools lack regulations to accommodate them.

2. **Health Consequences:** There are serious health concerns associated with adolescent pregnancy for both the mother and the unborn child. Teenage females are particularly vulnerable to pregnancy-related issues because of their biological immaturity, such as: high-risk pregnancies, nutritional deficiencies, limited access to prenatal and postnatal care, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
3. **Psychological and Emotional Repercussions:** Adolescent pregnancy frequently has a profound emotional toll, resulting in a number of mental health problems, such as: depression and anxiety, postpartum depression, remorse and hopelessness. Many adolescent moms find it difficult to adjust to their new situation without sufficient psychological help, which can have a detrimental effect on their ability to parent and general mental health. Other consequences include social isolation, forced and

early marriage, Loss of confidence and self-esteem.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for this study. The study was carried out in Ijebu - North East Local Government area of Ogun state. The population of this study comprised of all teenage mothers in Ijebu ode, Ogun State. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) teenage mothers were randomly sampled for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: "Questionnaire on Premarital Pregnancy among Teenagers (QPPAT)" rated on four-point scale. The instrument was validated by experts who specializes in social works to ensure the instrument is suitable for the intended purpose. The researcher administered and collected the data for the study with the support of two research assistants. The filled questionnaire items were collected on the spot by the researchers and research assistant. The data collected were analyzed with descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation for research questions.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Question 1

What are the causes of premarital pregnancy among teenagers in and out of secondary schools in Ijebu-North East Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Table 1: Causes of premarital pregnancy among teenagers

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
I got pregnant as a teen because I lack proper sex education	3.81	0.31	Agreed

I was lure into early sex by my peer group (friends)	2.74	0.76	Agreed
I got pregnant because I dropped out of school	2.66	0.65	Agreed
I got pregnant as a teen because I was sexually abuse/raped	2.65	0.64	Agreed
I do not have a choice than to engage in early sex in other to support myself financially	2.51	0.72	Agreed
Average Mean	2.87		Agreed

Note. The standard reference mean score was 2.50

Table 1 indicated the causes of premarital pregnancy among teenagers in secondary schools in Ijebu – North East Local Government Area of Ogun State. It was discovered that the majority of the respondents got pregnant as a teen because they lack proper sex education (mean= 3.81), the majority of the respondents were lured into early sex by peers/friends (mean= 2.74), the majority of the respondents got pregnant because they dropped out of school (mean= 2.66), the majority of the respondents got pregnant as a teen because they were sexually abused/raped (mean= 2.65), the

majority of the respondents got pregnant because they do not have a choice than to engage in early sex in other to support myself financially (mean= 2.51). However, with an average mean of 2.87 the study revealed that lack proper sex education, abuse/rape, peer group pressure and others are causes of premarital pregnancy among teenagers in secondary schools

Research Question 2

What are the effects of premarital pregnancy on teenagers in secondary schools in Ijebu – North East Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Table 2: Effects of premarital pregnancy on teenagers

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
Inability to get married as a single mother	3.41	0.411	Agreed
The pregnancy destroyed my relationship with my parents	2.97	0.550	Agreed
I could not go back to school after pregnancy	2.85	0.683	Agreed
Premarital pregnancy leads to malnutrition of the child	2.40	0.819	Disagreed
Premarital pregnancy leads to poor growth of the child	2.38	0.799	Disagreed
Average Mean	2.80		Agreed

Note. The standard reference mean score was 2.50

Table 2 indicated the effects of premarital pregnancy on teenagers in secondary schools in Ijebu – North East Local Government Area of Ogun State. It was discovered that the majority of the respondents were unable to get married as a single mother (mean= 3.41), the majority of the respondents' relationships with their parents were affected (mean= 2.97), the majority of the respondents could not go back to school after pregnancy (mean= 2.85).

However, with an average mean of 2.80 the study revealed that inability to get married or go back to school after pregnancy, malnutrition and poor growth are the effects of premarital pregnancy on teenagers

Research Question 3

What are the solutions to premarital pregnancy among teenagers in secondary schools in Ijebu – North East Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Table 3: Solutions to premarital pregnancy among teenagers

Items	Mean Score	Standard deviation	Remark
Adequate sex education	3.85	0.52	Agreed
Good parental care	3.70	0.31	Agreed
Avoidance of pre-marital sex	2.77	0.51	Agreed
Decent dressing	2.38	0.93	Disagreed
Enough financial provision from parents	2.24	0.88	Disagreed
Average Mean	2.99		

Note. The standard reference mean score was 2.50

Table 3 indicated the suggested solutions to premarital pregnancy among teenagers in secondary schools in Ijebu – North East Local Government Area of Ogun State. It was discovered that the majority of the respondents accepted that adequate sex education is a solution to premarital pregnancy (mean= 3.85), the majority of the respondents accepted that good parental care is a solution to premarital pregnancy (mean= 3.70), the majority of the respondents accepted that avoidance of pre-marital sex is a solution to premarital pregnancy (mean= 2.77).with an average mean of 2.99 the study revealed that adequate sex education, good parental care, avoidance of pre-marital sex and others are the solutions to premarital pregnancy among teenagers

Conclusion

According to findings of the study, the main consequences of premarital pregnancy among youths enrolled in secondary schools includes social isolation, early marriage, Loss of confidence and self-esteem, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and others. Therefore, adequate sex education, appropriate parental care, avoiding premarital sex, self-discipline, avoiding negative peer groups, among others were also recommended as ways to reduce premarital pregnancy among teenagers in secondary schools. It is implied that in order to reduce the

prevalence of premarital pregnancy among teenagers enrolled in secondary schools, a comprehensive strategy involving the home, school, community, healthcare setting, and structural change is required.

Recommendations

The results of this findings led to the following recommendations.

1. Relevant government agencies should start sensitization campaigns to educate school girls about the dangers of unwed pregnancy.
2. Pregnant secondary students should be given psychological support to cope with social stigma and peer pressure
3. Government/school authority should create a system of assisting teenage mother who are victims of early pregnancy to finish their education
4. Defaulters who willfully or inadvertently breach the rights of Nigerian children through sexual abuse should be subject to the government's enforcement of the Child's Rights Act.

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