

Influence of Adolescent Pregnancy Behaviour on Students' Academic Attainment in Rivers State; Implication for Counseling

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Abstract: *This study aimed at investigating the influence of adolescents' pregnancy behavior on their academic attainment in Rivers state. To guide the study, three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated. The study adopted is a survey design. Eighteen Primary Health Centers were selected for the study. Six of these were in the two major Urban areas of the state, while twelve were skillfully selected from the three senatorial districts of the state. A total population of 1 three hundred and twenty-one (321) pregnant respondents was drawn for the study. Accidental sampling technique was used. The research instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire, designed by the researcher and validated by experts in psychometrics. The Reliability of the instrument was established using a test - re –test method. A reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. The data collected from the study instrument was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research question while the t – test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. The findings of the study revealed that; peer groups and self-esteem as variables of social behavior, had negative influence on the pregnant adolescent in academic attainment. Hence, the study recommended that counselors should identify these behavioral variables that have influence on the pregnant adolescents, so as to carry out a more informed and effective counseling.*

Keywords: *efficiency, management, primary education.*

INTRODUCTION

In the entire world, the issue of adolescent pregnancy has since become a concern among guidance, NGOs and various government agencies across the world given its effect in the educational growth and development in the child's life. It is well documented that industrialized and developing countries have distinctly different rate of adolescent pregnancy. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported on February 23rd 2018 that approximately 16 million girls aged 16-19 years and 2.5million girls less than 16 years give birth each in developing countries. The report states further that every year some 3.9million girls aged 15-19 years undergo unsafe abortions. The United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) stated that every day in developing countries, 20 thousand girls under age 18 give birth which amount to 7.3 million births a year and if all pregnancy are included and not just births, the figure of adolescent pregnancies tends to be much higher.

Women in Africa in general get married at much earlier age than women elsewhere, leading to earlier pregnancy. According to available data at World Bank as at 2015, the highest incident of birth among 15-19 years old girls was in Africa generally. A Save the Children Report identified 10 countries where motherhood carried the most risk for young mothers and their babies. Of these, nine were in Sub-Sahara Africa. In the 10 highest risk nations, more than one in six teenage girls between the ages of 15-19 gave birth annually and nearly one in seven babies born of these teenagers die before the age of one year.

In Nigeria, an estimated 23% of women age 15-19 years have begun child bearing, of which 17% have had their first child and 5% are pregnant with their first child (Demographic and Health Survey 2013). The report stated further that 32% of teenagers in rural area have begun child bearing, as opposed to 10% to urban area of Nigeria. The report shows disparities within the geopolitical zones as follows; North West 36%, North East 32%, North Central 19%, South South 12%, South East 8% and South West 8%. It was on this backdrop that the National Population Commission (NPC) in 2013 warned that the number of teenage mother in Nigeria may rise to 60 million by 2015 if aggressive step is not put in place.

In the rural area of Rivers state, in the South South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, the menace of adolescent pregnancy is prevalent as three in every ten girls who have dropped out of college is a mother already, and one in every girl who had just finished college in the rural area might have had an abortion. It is evident that one third of the female children born by their mothers at an adolescent age are most likely to give birth at same age in their life. The survey conducted by a leading International Organization called "Save the Children" stated that annually 13 million children are born by women under the age of 16 years and more than 90 per cent in the developing countries. It is also said that the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the world was found in the sub-Saharan Africa (Chang'ach, 2012).

Education plays an important role in the future of young people as it prepares them for work and life as an adult. However, available statistics indicated that one-third of pregnant schoolgirls do not complete their schooling (Dhlamini, 2009). Without proper education teenage mothers do not qualify for jobs to earn enough money to support themselves and their children. Grant and Hallman (2006) stated that there is a substantial body of evidence indicating that one of the most consistent risk factors of schoolgirl pregnancy is lower socioeconomic status. This cycle of poverty often repeats itself with pregnant schoolgirls beginning a lifelong trajectory of poverty for themselves and their children through truncated educational opportunities and poor job prospects.

According to Newman (2008) the choice of what to do when the pregnancy is confirmed is too serious a matter for the level of maturity of most school girls. A pregnant schoolgirl often faces confusing advice from people regarding pregnancy, child-rearing and education, and this can undermine confidence in herself and her ability to cope (Changach, 2012). More disheartening is a report from Xinhua (1996) that one out of three girls aged 15 to 19 residing in the central region of Ghana has had a child. Pregnancy takes physical, social, physiological and emotional preparation to accomplish or give birth.

Teenage pregnancies that are unplanned may lead to impulsive decision-making, and pressure from parents, peers, society and school may have an impact on the decisions teens make (Wirkus & Maxwell, 2012). Their inability to see future consequences for their behaviour as

well as psychological immaturity puts them at risk (Mokwena, 2003). According to Seabela (1990), teenage pregnancy presents itself to an affected teenager as an experience associated with a variety of psycho-socio-economic implications for the child, the mother and the society as a whole.

The negative impact of teenage pregnancy on the teenage mother is clearly revealed when she tends to face psychological, emotional, and social problems which may lead to the interruption of the developmental stage of self-identity formation, depressive symptoms, overdependence on parents, high levels of frustration, and problems with forming and maintaining personal relationships (Thompson, 2006). Loignon (1996) cited in the Québec (2011) maintains that teenage mothers often face consequences such as social isolation, poor life habits, low education level, maltreatment, stress, and depression.

The shock of an unwanted pregnancy can be emotionally, psychologically and socially traumatic for the young teenage mother-to-be and in situations where there is no emotional support, some teenagers may experience increased anxiety and frustration, while others may develop depression, emotionally reject the existence of an unborn baby, become alienated from life, break communication with family and friends, and may eventually commit suicide (Bezuidenhout, 2009). Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED) has been defined as the display of behavioural difficulties in pregnant adolescents, sometimes as a result of internal distress (feelings of sorrow, anger, anxiety, frustration, disappointment), that are persistent over time and disrupt learning (Yampolskaya, Brown & Greenbaum, 2002).

On the contrary, Lemos (2009) contends that being pregnant may attract welcome care and attention from parents, professionals, friends and, of course, the boyfriend and young fathers – some or all of whom may want to be, young mothers and fathers such that having a baby stirs powerful emotions of love and tenderness in almost everyone, with these feelings being overwhelmingly positive, regardless of the long-term negative consequences.

Falling pregnant while still at school or at an educational institution generates a set of problems for which the teenager has to find a solution (Bezuidenhout, 2004). She has to decide if she carries the unborn baby to full term or to have an abortion. Should she decide to carry the unborn baby to full term, her studies are obviously going to be interrupted and she would immediately be placed in a disadvantaged position, especially when having to rear her own baby (Bezuidenhout, 2004), and poor academic performance leads to poor employment and financial prospects, which in turn may have detrimental effects on all the other aspects of the life of the mother and her baby (Enderbe, 2000).

In the Daily News (23 July 2011) Allen quotes a statement by Thompson (2009) that “Teenage pregnancy is associated with poor high school attainment and decreased earnings later on in life”. Mpaza (2006) maintains that once the baby is born, the teenage mother needs more time parenting the baby and much of the responsibility is carried out during the night, which leaves the teenager with less time to study and do homework – the ultimate consequence of this being a teenage mother failing to concentrate in the classroom because she would be feeling drowsy and exhausted, leading to poor performance in school subjects and failure.

Statement of the Problem

Teenage pregnancy can have a profound impact on young mothers and their children by placing limits on their educational achievements and economic stability, and predisposing them to single parenthood and marital instability in the future. Teenage mothers are unlikely to complete secondary school education or will perform poorly as a result of emotional, psychological and social distractions they face due to the pregnancy. The non-completion or unsound completion of secondary school education limits the life earning potentials among the teenage population, which could perpetuate the cycle of impoverishment in the community.

Most literature focuses on social factors, which predispose adolescents to falling pregnant. Pregnancy may cause psychological distress, as it is often associated with dropping out of school, either before or shortly after childbirth. Adolescent mothers are more likely to present with symptoms of depression when compared with their non-parenting peers and older mothers.

The Demographic and Health Survey of 2013, puts the number of adolescent girls that have giving birth in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria to be 12%. The National Population Commission (NPC) in 2013 warned that the number of teenage mothers in Nigeria may rise to 60million by 2015 if aggressive steps are not put in place. Adolescent pregnancy has been a prevailing issue in this region as most of the female children between the ages of 14-17 are already exposed to sexual life which if not well exposed will lead to pregnancy and the rate at which the number of young female school drop-outs and younger mothers on the street calls for a serious concern. It is against this backdrop, that this study is determined to investigate the influence of adolescent pregnancy behavior on the academic attainment of female students and also proffer solution to the problem.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of adolescents' pregnancy behavior on students' academic attainment in Rivers State. The specific objectives are;

1. To determine the extent to which emotional behavior of pregnant adolescents influence the academic attainment of students in Rivers state.
2. To investigate the extent to which social behavior of pregnant adolescents influence the academic attainment of students in Rivers state.
3. To assess the extent to which psychological behavior of pregnant adolescents influence the academic attainment of students in Rivers state.

Research Questions

Based on the research purpose, the following research questions were raised

1. To what extent does emotional behaviour of pregnant adolescents influence the academic attainment of students in Rivers State?

2. To what extent does social behaviour of pregnant adolescents influence the academic attainment of students in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does psychological behaviour of pregnant adolescents influence the academic attainment of students in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study;

- Ho₁** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of urban and rural adolescent girl on the extent to which emotional behaviour of pregnant adolescent students influence their academic attainment in Rivers state
- Ho₂** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of urban and rural adolescent girl on the extent to which social behaviour of pregnant adolescent students influence their academic attainment in Rivers state
- Ho₃** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of urban and rural adolescent girl on the extent to which psychological behaviour of pregnant adolescent students influence their academic attainment in Rivers state

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research method used for this study is the descriptive survey. survey research because it covers a large sample population. The T test statistic was utilized at 0.05 level of significance to test three null hypotheses; while mean was used to answer the three questions.

Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of two hundred and seventy (270) pregnant adolescent gotten from eighteen health centers across Rivers State, and fifty one (51) pregnant adolescents met accidentally across six local government area in Rivers State. This summed up to give a total population of three hundred and twenty one (321) respondents for the study.

Sample procedures/Sample Size Determination

The entire accidental respondents obtained from the population was added to 161 respondents obtained from the eighteen health centers, bringing a total of two hundred and twelve (212) pregnant adolescents as sample respondents for this study.

In determining the sample size, the YaroYamen's sampling formula as offered by Baridam (2001:93) was adopted.

Development of Research Instrument

The researchers developed an instrument title 'Influence of Adolescent Pregnancy behavior and their academic attainment of students (IAPBAA). A set of questionnaire was used to get objective responses from Pregnant/Parenting adolescent girls in Urban and Rural areas of the state. The instrument was tested for Validity and Reliability.

Validity of the Instrument

The researchers had made frantic efforts to ensure that the necessary data for the study are provided by the Pregnant Adolescent. After developing the questionnaires, it was given to experts in the Department of Educational Foundation to ascertain psychometric property. These experts examined the suitability of the language in relation to the level of the students.

Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the Instrument, a test-retest method was administered on a set of ten pregnant/parenting adolescent girls from Urban and Rural Health centers respectively, which are outside the sample population. After, the first administration of the instrument, an interval of three weeks was reached before re-administering the same instrument to same respondents. The pair of results was correlated using Pearson Product Moment statistics. A high positive correlation coefficient (r) up to 0.8 was achieved which showed that, the instrument is ‘reliable’.

RESULTS OF FINDINGS

Research Question 1: To what extent does social behavior of pregnant adolescents Influence the academic attainment of students in Rivers State?

Table 4.1: Analysis of perceptions of Urban and Rural Pregnant Adolescent Girls on how their Social Behavior Influence Academic Attainment.

Urban Girls		Rural girls						
S/N	Factors	Variable Questions	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	Remarks	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	Remarks
1	Social behaviour (peer groups) (self-esteem)	Pregnant girls relate well with peers at school	2.08	0.88	Low Extent	2.71	0.91	High Extent
		Friends and classmates made pregnant students isolate themselves at school	2.92	0.82	High Extent	2.52	1.10	High Extent
		Parents unable to provide adequately for pregnant students contributed to them dropping out of school	2.92	1.09	High Extent	2.13	0.89	Low Extent

(Self-concept)	Pregnant students feel embarrassed when classmates speaks about their body changes due to pregnancy.	3.25	0.89	High Extent	2.89	0.82	High Extent
	Friends influence decision most pregnant students make	2.25	0.67	Low extent	1.83	0.90	Low Extent
	Shyness of body structural changes made pregnant students drop out of school.	2.38	1.00	Low Extent	2.19	0.93	Low Extent
Grand	\bar{X}/SD	2.63	0.89		2.27		0.92

Source: Field Survey, 2020

From the above Table 4.1, it can be seen that taking a mean of 2.50 as an index of a group, majority of Urban pregnant girls are in agreement with a grand mean of 2.63 that, social behavior during pregnancy influence academic attainment, but reverse is the case for the rural pregnant girls with a grand mean of 2.27. Also, it can be observed that both respondent groups have similar view about item variable statements 2 and 4 also to item 5 and 6 on self-concept. While for the other two sub-factors, they both show slight opposite views.

Research Question 2: To what extent does emotional behavior of pregnant Adolescents Influence the academic attainment of Students in Rivers State?

Table 4.2: Analysis of Perceptions of Urban and Rural Pregnant Adolescent Girls on how their Emotional Behavior Influence Academic Attainment.

Urban Girls			Rural Girls					
S/N	Factors	Variable Questions	\bar{X}_1	S_1D_1	Remarks	\bar{X}_2	S_2D_2	Remarks
1	Emotional behavior (lack of interest)	Guilt that parents/guardians of pregnant adolescent are disappointed by their pregnancy makes them lose interest in studies.	3.04	0.90	High Extent	2.83	1.17	High Extent

		Fear on how parents and teachers react on every provocation makes pregnant adolescents lose interest in studies.	2.5 4	0.97 Extent	High	2.31	0.80	Low Extent
2	(Lack of attention)	Pregnant adolescents are often distracted in class work because they often try to understand the different body changes occurring within them.	2.9 2	0.82 Extent	High	3.06	1.11	High Extent
		Pregnant adolescents loose attention in class work because they are frustrated with the thought that classmates do have negative perception about them being pregnant.	2.8 3	1.00 Accepted		2.69	1.03	Accept ed
Grand \bar{X}/SD			2.8 3	0.92		2.65	1.03	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

From the above Table 4.2, it can be seen that taking a mean of 2.50 as an index of a group, majority of the respondents from both groups are largely in agreement that, emotional.

Behavior during pregnancy affects their academic attainment with a grand mean of 2.83 and 2.65 for urban and rural respondents respectively. Also, it can be observed that both respondent groups have similar view about item variable statements 1, 3 and 4. While they both show slight opposite views on variable 2 alone.

Research Question 3: To what extent does psychological behavior of pregnant adolescents influence the academic attainment of Students in Rivers State?

Table 4.3: Analysis of Perceptions of Urban and Rural Pregnant Adolescent Girls on how Psychological Behavior Influence their Academic Attainment.

S/ N	Urban Girls			Rural Girls				
	Factors	Variable Questions	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	Remarks	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	Remarks
1	Psychological behaviour (Aggression)	Pregnant adolescent get easily unfriendliness during discussion.	2.2 1	0.8 7	Low Extent	3.00	0.92	High Extent

2	(interaction)	Pregnant adolescent are quick to make assumptions that classmate are speaking about them in a negative light.	3.08	1.01	High Extent	3.08	0.94	High Extent
		Pregnant adolescent suggestions during classroom discussion are often rejected.	2.17	1.04	Low Extent	1.98	1.03	Low Extent
		Pregnant adolescents are often more interested in social interactions than attending to studies.	2.96	0.89	High Extent	2.67	1.03	High Extent
3	(Cognitive retention)	Pregnant adolescents ask their seat mate too much questions during test/exams writing.	2.71	1.07	High Extent	2.60	1.14	High Extent
		Pregnant adolescents hardly answer correctly, questions asked in lesson period.	1.79	0.96	Low Extent	2.67		High Extent
Grand \bar{X}/SD			2.49	0.97		2.67	1.02	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

From the above Table 4.3, it can be seen that taking a mean of 2.50 as an index of a group, majority of Urban pregnant girls are not in agreement with a grand mean of 2.49 that, psychological behavior during pregnancy influence academic attainment, but reverse is the case for the Rural pregnant girls with a grand mean of 2.67. Also, it can be observed that both respondent groups have similar views about item variable statements 2, 4, and 5. While they exhibited varying views for variable statements 1, 3, and 6.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of Urban and Rural Adolescent on the extent to which Emotional Behaviour of Pregnant Adolescent Students influence Academic Attainment of student in Rivers State

Table 4.4: t- test on the significance of emotional behaviour of pregnant adolescents on academic attainment.

Teenage Pregnant Respondents	Mean	St.Dev.	N	Df.	St. Error	P	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Urban girls	2.63	0.89	130						

190 0.92 0.05 2.47 1.96 **H₀₁**
 Rejected

Rural girls	2.27	0.93	200
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The data in Table 4.4 revealed that the calculated t-test value of Urban and Rural Pregnant adolescent girls is 2.47, while the critical t-value was 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 190 at 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Meaning that, there is significant relationship in the perceptions of the Urban and Rural Pregnant adolescent girls on the influence of emotional behavior on academic attainment.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of Urban and Rural Adolescent on the extent to which Social Behaviour of Pregnant Adolescent Students influence Academic Attainment of student in Rivers State

Table 4.5: t- test on the significance of Social Behavior of Pregnant Adolescents on their Academic Attainment..

Teenage Pregnant Respondents	Mean	St.Dev.	N	Df	St. Error	P	t _{cal}	t _{crit}	Remark
Urban Girls	2.83	0.92	130	190	1.01	0.05	1.04	1.96	H₀₂ Accepted
Rural Girls	2.65	1.03	200						

The data in table 4.5 revealed that the calculated t-test value of Urban and Rural Pregnant adolescent girls is 0.04, while the critical t-value was 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 190 at 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀₂), is accepted. Meaning that, there is no significant relationship in the perceptions of the Urban and Rural Pregnant adolescent girls on the influence of Emotional behavior on academic attainment

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of Urban and Rural Adolescent on the extent to which psychological Behaviour of Pregnant Adolescent Students influence Academic Attainment of student in Rivers State.

Table 4.6:t- test on the significance of psychological behavior of pregnant Adolescents on their academic attainment.

Teenage Pregnant Respondents	Mean	St.Dev.	N	Df	St. Error	P	t _{cal}	t _{crit}	Remark
Urban Girls	2.49	0.97	48	190	1.01	0.05	1.04	1.96	H₀₃

Rural Girls	2.67	1.02	144
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The data in Table 4.6 revealed that the calculated t-test value of Urban and Rural Pregnant adolescent girls is 1.04, while the critical t-value was 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 190 at 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{03}), is accepted. Meaning that, there is no significant relationship in the perceptions of the Urban and Rural Pregnant adolescent girls on the influence of psychological behavior on academic attainment.

Discussion of Findings

In this section, the results and findings of the study are interpreted with respect to the behaviors that determine academic attainment in pregnant adolescents in Rivers State. The study explores some of the key factors in order to effectively understand and control academic attainment within the study group.

CONCLUSION

Teenage pregnancy behavior as it influences academic performance has been investigated at both urban areas and rural areas of Rivers state. The findings noted three dependent variables which are a risk factors to adolescents' behavioral attitude during and after Pregnancy as it influence academic performance. These behaviors include; Social behavior (such as self-concept and self-esteem, peer relationship and risk), Emotional behavior (such as, Lack of interest to study, lack of attention to class work), Psychological health behavior (such as absent minded, poor constructive contribution in discussion and low cognitive retention).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Pregnant adolescents should be counseled quickly, so that their orientation about their present condition would not adversely affect their behavioral pattern which in turn influence their academic attainment of student's.
2. Sex education should be taken seriously by school authorities as it is observed that most adolescents fall prey to pregnancy due to ignorance of its negative implications on their academic attainment of students.

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