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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAUSES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND FAMILY BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS IN SOUTH EASTERN STATES OF NIGERIA

OKUDO, ODINAKOLISA CHRISTOPHER (PhD)
Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University
Igbariam Campus
oc.okudo@coou.edu.ng +2347062401677

&
OBUMSE, NNEKA ANTHONIA (PhD)
Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University,
Igbariam Campus
naobumse@coou.edu.ng +2348035410658

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between causes of teenage pregnancy and family background characteristics of parents from south eastern states of Nigeria. Four research questions and a null hypothesis guided the study. Correlation survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was all the senior secondary (SSII) students in south eastern states of Nigeria during the 2020/2021 academic year. The sample size consisted of 3000 students selected through multi-stage sampling techniques. The research instrument was a questionnaire made of 40 items in four clusters and the data collected were analysed using mean scores for research question 1 and Pearson product moment of correlation for research questions 2, 3 and 4. The hypothesis was tested using -t-test for correlations. The findings revealed among others that there is high positive relationship between the family background characteristics of parents (socioeconomic status, family level of expenditure, parenting/socialization styles) and causes of teenage pregnancy in south eastern states of Nigeria. There was found to be a high positive relationship between causes of teenage pregnancy and socioeconomic factors of parents, levels of family expenditure and parenting styles and socialization. The following recommendations were made; a teenager is like a yam tendril that needs attention, care and concern, these should be provided for them, organization of sex education for both parent and girl child to be encouraged, legal/punitive measures should be severed for adult offenders of teenage pregnancy.

Keywords: Family, Parents, Background Characteristics, Relationship, Teenage Pregnancy.

Introduction

The concern raised by teenage pregnancy has been topical in many literatures in the recent time. Some of these literatures use the concept of teenage or teen-age interchangeably with adolescents. Authors such as Letanro (2013), Holmes (2013) and the world health organization opined that the teen years start from 13 and ends at 19 years. Onwuzulike (2014), Ukekwe

(2014) in their own view proffers 10 to 20 years as age range of teenagers. Despite the above variations, there is a consensus among authors that the teenage period is a phase of transition between childhood and adulthood (Melgosa; 2015).

Furthermore, Ezeilo (2014), the World Health Organization (2013), Onwuzulike (2014) and Negi (2016), described this phase of child development as a bridge between childhood and adulthood and a period of second decade in the life of a young person. It is a period characterized by significant psychological changes, effort towards identity construction, development of sexual feeling and progression from concrete to abstract thought. It is a stage during which youths begin to separate themselves from their parents and without clearly defined roles in the society.

Ukekwe (2014) noted that it is a period, if not properly guided and carefully handled could lead to disastrous consequence in later life especially among females. Such consequences include; school drop-out/interrupted schooling, victim of criminal activities, abortion, run-away behaviour, ostracism, child neglect (Mohase; 2015), school adjustment difficulties, adoption, lack of social security, poverty, repeated pregnancy (Bonell; 2015), negative effect to domestic life, poor academic performance, lack of educational attainment, low aspiration and expectation (Moveberaff & Kieman, 2014), trauma from parents and peers, rejection by parents, lack of role models, risk of intellectual, language and emotional delay, prone to disability, drug/alcohol abuse, domestic violence, aggression , withdrawal and mistrust. Again, authors such as Okudo (2013), Unachukwu and Ebenebe (2007) viewed this period as a phase during which female teenagers face aa wide range of issues relating to development in their social, cognitive, moral, physical, psychological and otherwise domain. Among these challenges the girl-child faces is pregnancy.

Archi (2019) stated that pregnancy is a state of carrying a developing embryo or foetus within the female body. Teenage pregnancy according to mayor (2013) is a pregnancy which starts and ends before the twentieth birthday. Mondal and Reb (2015) define teenage pregnancy as one occurring between thirteen and nineteenth year of age, though in a very rare and exceptional case, pregnancy may occur earlier especially in well nourished girls who may rarely get pregnant even before their first menarche.

A lot of factors have been noted as causal to teenage pregnancy. Achi (2019) noted that age discrepancy in relationship is one among them. According to him, teenage girls in relationship with older men are more likely to get pregnant because of the pressure to have sex given by such older men. It has also been noted that parental gap, peer pressure and lack of knowledge can lead to girl-child pregnancy. Ogbunude (2019) maintained that poor awareness and sex education is a factor in teenage pregnancy likewise peer pressure and parental gap. Other causes of teenage pregnancy include sexual abuse or rape, drug/alcohol, dating violence which could lead to abusive relationship, child environment, physiological changes (sexuality), unscrutinized immoral discuss, inspirational approaches from associates or friends, hormone driving urge, irresponsible and unguided way of interacting with opposite sex, poverty as result of low income, not making adequate provisions, lack of role model, chaotic life styles, emotional behaviours such as apathy, anger disappointments, hormones driving urge, parents attitudes/behaviour and awareness, socialization roles of parents etc. These have been noted to be among the many causes of girl-child pregnancies.

Parents according to Okudo (2013), Uzozie (2014) is defined as the father and mother of an animal. The socialization role is primarily and fundamentally played by parents. Emeka and Ezebube (2019) noted that the child's first place of contact with the world is the family. The child as a result, acquires initial education and socialization from parents and other significant persons in the family. This parental control and influence play a vital role in the lives of their teenage daughters and largely their sexuality. Corey (2014) stated that the family plays a very vital role in the sexual socialization of their offspring's. It is in the family that the context, content and evaluative tone of one's initial learning about sex is determined. Where this lacks, the teenage girl feels insecure and may look for a permanent image for affection. This could be found in role models that could abuse such opportunities Hence Melgosa (2012) noted that the more consistent the parent-teenage values, the less likely the girl becoming sexually active. Implying that where parents are involved as good role models of their children, there is a high tendency that the girl-child may not make such lasting mistakes such as teenage pregnancy. The contrary is observed from parents who exert poor influences on their girl-child development. The same is applicable to children from broken homes. In this regard Townsend and Workby (2013) remarked that studies have shown that teenagers from broken homes are more sexually permissive than those from stable homes. They proffered that girl-child of divorced mothers and teenagers from separated/broken homes mostly end up with teenage pregnancy. Similarly, Newcomer and Undry (2014) argued that separation in marriage creates circumstances characterized by emotional turmoil, parent's loss of the control of their children's behaviour and lack of parental control of their children's behaviour and lack of parental provisions. These are all factors leading to teenage pregnancy. Consequently, they stated that the autonomy of the teenage girl from parental control and care is related to sexual permissive behaviours and attitudes.

Apart from the above, the background factors of parents have been noted to be a strong predictor of sexual permissiveness of the girl-child. Family background characteristics according to Okudo (2013), Santrock (1998) Simpson and Earl (1995). Could be defined in terms of influences that had impact in parents variously which collectively shaped their present status. It could also be viewed as influencing experiences-physical cognitive, social, economic, cultural, psychological and religious impacts that parents received which combined towards shaping their present status. Uba (2002) related these influencing experiences to the different types of adjustments/impact an individual received and stated that they could be grouped into socioeconomic, ethnic and religious orientations. Okudo (2013) further noted that such influences could be grouped into the following namely, educational attainment of parents, family expenditure level, parenting styles/socialization pattern, social standing, location/residence of parents, income level and occupation of parents whereas the educational attainment, location, income and occupation of parents and social status constitute socio-economic status. Therefore, this study is interested in finding out the relationship between the socioeconomic status of parents, expenditure level of parents and styles of parenting with the causes of teenage pregnancy. With respect to the social economic status, it is viewed as an aspect of the family background characteristic which comprises the educational level of parents, social status, occupation, income and location/residence of the individual. These expresses those variables which determine the financial and social stand of the family. Both financial and social statuses of the parents have great influence/impact in the overall development of the girl-child especially her sexual permissiveness. Educated/well informed parents are seen to guide their girl-child through sex education, censor what they

read, monitor their activities, check peer influences, encourages them to bring friends home, discuss sex with them, check social influences, provides good social environment, role-model their girl child etc. According to young, (2011), Hanna (2012) and Bissel (2014) socioeconomic difficulties were reported among teenagers who became pregnant during teenage years because they were impoverished through the above mention factors. This view was collaborated by Muhammed, Ismael and Masona (2011) as well as Turner (2014) who noted that teenage pregnancy is among the implications of poor socioeconomic status for the girl child.

On the expenditure level, Okudo (2022) defined the family expenditure level as the capital input invested in the socialization of the young adolescents. It entails the ability of the parents to provide the socialization needs of their girl-child. Such socialization needs include provision of basic needs (clothing, feeding, shelter), social provisions (sponsoring excursion, vacation trips, visit to zoos and museums) cognitive provisions (buying of text-books, payment of school fees, provision of school uniform, sandals, prompt payment of other levies) etc. These were also found to have very high influence in the overall development of the girl-child especially their sexual maturity. The contrary encourages sexual permissiveness.

In view of the above, Arkutu (2013) &Audu (2014) and others believed that adolescents (girl-child) particularly those in secondary schools are involved in premarital sexual activities because of the material things used to lure them into such acts. He argued that some of these girls prefer to sell sex to meet up their existential demands which could have been provided by their parents. Similarly, Onwuzulike (2014) noted that teenagers whose parents could not provide their basic/material needs will most likely substitute such provisions through sexual acts and in most cases such acts lead to pregnancy.

Concerning parenting/socialization styles, Okudo and Obumse (2022), Kagau (1995) view parenting as implementing a series of decisions about socialization of the child. It includes what parents do to support proper and positive adjustment/adaptations of their adolescents. Several classifications were made of styles parents could adopt to aid proper development of their adolescents. Such classification includes the following namely: permissive, authoritative, authoritarian and democratic styles of parenting (Melgosa, 2015). Permissive parents are non-punitive, acceptable and affirmative towards the child's impulses, desires and actions. Permissive parents also do not consult with children on policies and do not give explanation for rules. The authoritative parents attempt to direct the child's activities but in a rational, issue orientated manner, they affirm child's present qualities but also set standards for future conduct. The authoritarian parents attempt to shape, control and evaluate the behaviour and attitude of the child in accordance with set standard of conduct, usually an absolute standard motivated and formulated by higher authority.

Giving the above context, Townsend and Worby (2013) stated that children raised by permissive parents especially broken homes are more likely to become sexually permissive. In a similar manner NewComer and Undry (2014) posits that separation in marriage creates a permissive parenting style characterized by emotional turmoil, which could be substituted by sexual permissiveness.

Apart from the above, Location also has been noted to have very vital and significant impact on number of teenage pregnancies. Girl-child from rural areas seem more prone to juvenile pregnancies than their counter parts in the cities. This is because girls in cities have other factor influences such as the social media, peer supports and other environmental factors.

Statement of the Problem

In the today's society characterized by many behavioural changes institutionalized as the new normal, there has been a surge in teenage pregnancy globally, Nigeria inclusive. According to Nwosu (2005) and Ukekwe (2009), more than 14 million adolescents (teenagers) get pregnant annually. Majority of these child-births are unwanted by their mothers. Consequently, leading to rejection, starvation, lack of care, abandonment, health challenges and other social problems. These not only affect the well being of the girl-child alone but also constitute menace to both the family, the institution and society at large. Melissa (2012) stated that teenage pregnancy could interfere with the life of the girl-child in the following ways namely: emotional trauma and stigma, incomplete education, lack of employment, abortion etc. it is also a source of worry to most parents because of the economic hardship and frustration (Achi, 2019), pains and troubles the family girl-child, and offspring suffers.

Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the causes of teenage pregnancy and the family background characteristics (socioeconomic factors, levels of expenditure and parenting styles/socialization patterns) in southern eastern part of Nigeria. The study sought to examine specifically the causes of pregnancy among the teenagers of South eastern part of Nigeria to examine what impact the socioeconomic status of parents have in teenage pregnancy, to establish the relationship between teenage pregnancy and family level of expenditure and to examine how parenting style/socializations pattern predicates to teenage pregnancy.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are causes of teenage pregnancy among the girl child of south eastern part of Nigeria?
2. What relationship exists between socioeconomic background factors of parents and teenage pregnancies?
3. What relationship exists between the family level of expenditure and teenage pregnancies?
4. What relationship exists between the parenting socialization styles and teenage pregnancy?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the mean scores of urban and rural adolescents based on the causes of teenage pregnancy.

Method

The design was corelation survey, the area of study was the south eastern states of Nigeria comprising Enugu, Ebonyi, Abia, Anambra and Imo States. The population of study was all the Senior Secondary School (SSII) in south eastern State of Nigeria during the 2020/2021 academic year totalling 28,690. The sample size consisted of 3000 students selected through multi-stage sampling techniques. The reliability of the instrument was established using split

half method and the result analysed using Cronbach ($\propto$) which yielded a reliability co-efficient of 0.76. A total of 3000 copies of questionnaires was produced and were distributed through fifteen briefed assistants and all the questionnaires were collected. The data collected was analyzed using mean scores for research question 1, while Pearson's product moment of correlation were used for research questions 2, 3 and 4. The hypothesis was tested using -t-test for correlations at .05level of significance.

Results

The data collected from the study were analyzed and the summaries presented in tables 1-5 to highlight the findings. The presentation was systematically arranged with the answers to the research questions and finally the hypothesis.

Research question one: what are the causes of teenage pregnancy among the girl-child (teenagers) in south eastern part of Nigeria.

Table 1: mean and standard deviation rating on the causes of teenage pregnancy

S/N	Items on Causes of Teenage Pregnancy	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Relationship with older men	2.98	0.90	Agree
2	Poor awareness and sex education	3.58	0.80	Agree
3	Parental gap	2.76	0.77	Agree
4	Peer pressure	3.43	0.69	Agree
5	Rape or sexual abuse	2.64	0.84	Agree
6	Dating violence	2.70	0.81	Agree
7	Alcohol/drugs	2.69	0.79	Agree
8	Child environment	2.89	0.82	Agree
9	Unscrutinised immoral discussions	2.75	0.69	Agree
10	Hormone driving urge	2.90	0.90	Agree
11	Irresponsible and unguided ways of interacting with opposite sex.	3.49	0.74	Agree
12	Lack of role models	2.72	0.69	Agree
13	Chaotic life styles	3.30	0.72	Agree
14	Poverty	3.40	0.82	Agree
15	Emotional behaviours such as anger (apathy and disappointment.	2.67	0.76	Agree

Table 1 indicates that all items recorded as factors causing teenage pregnancy had mean scores above 2.50. Therefore, the items were accepted as issues causing teenage pregnancies among adolescents in south eastern part of Nigeria.

Research question two: what relationship exists between the socioeconomic background factors of parents and teenage pregnancy.

Table 2: Pearson on teenagers rating of the socioeconomic background factors of parents and causes of teenage pregnancy

Source of Variation	**N**	**Socioeconomic Factors (r)**	**Causes of teenage pregnancy (x)**	**Remarks**
Socioeconomic background factor	3000	1.00	0.76	High positive relationship
Causes of teenage pregnancy	3000	0.76	1.00	

Table 2 above revealed that there is high positive relationship of 0.76 existing between the adolescents rating of the socioeconomic background factor of their parents and causes of teenage pregnancy.

Research question three: what relationship exists between the family expenditure level and causes of teenage pregnancy.

Table 3: Pearson on teenagers rating of family level of expenditure and causes of teenage pregnancy

Source of Variation	**N**	**Family Level of Expenditure (r)**	**Causes of Teenage Pregnancy (r)**	**Remarks**
Family level of expenditure	3000	1.00	0.78	High positive relationship
Causes of teenage pregnancy	3000	0.78	1.00	

The table 3 above reveals that there is a high positive relationship (0.78) between the family level of expenditure and causes of teenage pregnancy.

Research Question Four: what relationship exists between the parenting/socialization styles and causes of teenage pregnancy.

Table 4: Pearson on teenagers rating of parenting/socialization styles and causes of teenage pregnancy

Source of Variation	**N**	**Family Level of Expenditure (r)**	**Causes of Teenage Pregnancy (v)**	**Remarks**
Parenting/Socialization styles	3000	1.00	0.70	High positive relationship
Causes of teenage pregnancy	3000	0.70	1.00	

Table four reveals high positive relationship of 0.70 between the parenting/socialization styles and causes of teenage pregnancy.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between the mean scores of urban and rural teenagers on the causes of teenage pregnancy.

Table 5: -t-test of correlation between the urban and rural teenagers rating on the mean scores of the causes of teenage pregnancy

N	R	Df	Cal-t-	Crit-t-	P >.05
3000	0.71	2998	1.96	26.32	S

Table 5 above indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 2998df, the calculated t-1.96 is less than the critical-t-26.32, hence there is no significant relationship existing between urban and rural adolescents rating of the causes of teenage pregnancy.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study were discussed under the themes in line with the main purpose of study, which sought to determine the relationship between causes of teenage pregnancy and family background factors of girl-child (teenagers) in south eastern Nigeria as was judged by them. The discussion was presented under the following major headings:

1. The causes of teenage pregnancy among girl-child in south eastern states of Nigeria.
2. The relationship that exists between teenage pregnancy and socioeconomic background factors of parents in south eastern states of Nigeria.
3. The relationship that exists between teenage pregnancy and family level of expenditure of parents from south eastern states of Nigeria.
4. The relationship that exists between parenting/socialization pattern of parents and causes of teenage pregnancy.

On the causes of teenage pregnancy, a questionnaire was developed to determine the causes of teenage pregnancy among the girl-child in the Five state which made up the south eastern part of Nigeria. The questionnaire looked at the extent of acceptance to non-acceptance of the following items which were used to determine the causes of teenage pregnancy. Such items include relationship with older men (2.98), poor awareness, and sex education (3.58) parental gap (2.76), peer pressure (3.43), rape or sexual abuse (2.64), dating violence (2.70), alcohol/drug dependence (2.69), child environment (2.89), unscrutinised immoral discuss (2.75) hormone driving urge (2.90) irresponsible and unguided way of interacting with opposite sex (3.49), lack of role model (2.72) chaotic life style, (3.30), poverty (3.40), emotional behaviours such as anger, apathy and disappointment (2.67). These were items used to determine the causes of juvenile (teenage) pregnancy and interestingly all the items measured presented scores greater than the mean score of 2.50 consequently were all seen as factors causal to teenage pregnancy.

The result also revealed some items with very high scores greater than 3.0, such include; poor awareness and lack of sex education (3.58), peer pressure (3.43), irresponsible and unguided ways of interacting with opposite sex (3.49), chaotic life styles (3.30), poverty (3.40). these factors could be termed hypo/macro causal and by implication has high tendency of

causing/leading to girl-child pregnancy when indulged in by the adolescents. It goes to support the views of Achi (2019) and Ogbunude (2019) who stated that age discrepancy, poor awareness and lack of sex education is a factor causal to teenage pregnancy. Dawan (2014) and Mohase (2015) in their views also stated that poverty and other social related problems such as unguided was of interacting with opposite sex and chaotic life styles are among the factors leading to juvenile or teenage pregnancy.

Furthermore, the hypothesis which tested for significance of relationship between urban and rural girl-child prone to pregnancy revealed that .05 level of significance and degree of freedom 2998, the calculate – t – 1.98 and the crit-t-26.32 implying that the critical-t- is greater than the calculate-t-. There is no significant relationship between both. This could be accounted for based on the factor that location is a strong factor in this study. Girls from the rural communities have high risk of teenage pregnancy because of poverty, poor awareness and lack of sex education, strongly manifested and prevalent in our rural communities contrary to the urban areas favoured by other social interventions/ advantages.

On the relationship existing between causes of teenage pregnancy and social expenditure level of parents, a researcher based proforma was developed which sought to establish the impact family expenditure level on teenage pregnancy. The proforma contained items that measured the following provisions namely (basic provision) clothing (2.36), feeding (2.46), shelter (2.90), (social provisions) such as sponsoring vacation trips (2.21), visit to zoo and museum (2.17). (Cognitive provisions) such as buying of text books (2.18) payment of school fees (2.23), provision of uniforms and sandals (2.39), prompt payment of other levies (2.40), provision of pocket money (2.12).

Interestingly, apart from provision of shelter (basic need provision) which was rated 2.90 by the girl-child, all other items measuring the family expenditure level substance of the girl-child were found to be rated below the acceptable mean score of 2.50. implying that they are factors causal to teenage pregnancy. This view is in line with the findings of Arkutu (2013) and Audu (2014) who stated that most secondary school students engage in Juvenile sexual activities because of these material provisions which their parent could not avail them.

Supporting this view, Onwuzulike (2014) stated that teenagers whose parents could not provide such material-needs substitute them for sex which often result in pregnancy.

Given the above context, the table three which sought to establish the relationship between family expenditure levels of parents and teenage pregnancy reveals that a high positive relationship of 0.78 exist between causes of teenage pregnancy and family expenditure level. Furthermore, with respect to the relationship existing between the socioeconomic factors of parents and causes of teenage pregnancy the following items were raised and they include guiding the girl child through sex education (2.30), censor what they read (2.10) monitor their activities (2.15), check peer influence (2.32), encourages them to bring friends home (2.40), discuses sex with them (2.29), checks social influence (2.15), provides good social environment (2.20) constitute good role models (2.40).

The result above revealed that all the items found in the family socio-economic variable were scored below the acceptable mean score of 2.50, this perhaps accounts for the high positive

relationship (0.76) indicated by table 2 seeking to establish the relationship between teenage pregnancy and family socioeconomic background factor. Implying that poor socioeconomic factors could lead to teenage pregnancy. Young (2011), Hanna (2012) and Bissel 2014 affirmed that socioeconomic difficulties were reported among pregnant teenagers who were impoverished.

Finally on the relationship existing between parenting/socialization styles and causes of teenage pregnancy (research question four and table A). which indicated that a high positive relationship of 0.70 exists between causes of teenage pregnancy and parenting/socialization styles. A research based proforma was raised containing the following items namely, my parents are non-punitive (2.30), acceptable and affirmative towards my impulses (2.32), allows me do things my own way (2.42), never bothered about my actions, (2.39), do not discuss policies and rules neither do they make any (2.15), set standards for future conduct (3.20), attempts to shape, evaluate and control my behaviours (2.10).

The figures found above reveals that only set standard for future conduct (3.20) has a value above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 which the rest were scored below the acceptable mean score. This could also perhaps explain why a high correlational value (pearson) 0.70 was obtained in table four which seeks to determine the relationship existing between the causes of teenage pregnancy and parenting/socialization styles.

Parents from the above result were seen to be permissive in their parenting styles. Consequently, allowing their girl-child to do whatever pleases them and the consequences of such permissive behaviour is teenage pregnancy. This view was supported by Worby and Toownsend (2013) who noted that children from permissive homes are more proned to teenage pregnancy. Newcomer and Undry (2014) affirmed the above views positing that children raised in broken (permissive) home are proned to such risks.

Conclusion

Based on the findings above, there is a high positive relationship between causes of teenage pregnancy and family background factors. About 15 factors were underscored with a maximum rating of 3.58 (poor awareness and lack of sex education). To a minimum rating of 2.67 (emotional behaviours such as anger, apathy and disappointment. Furthermore, the study revealed that among the parent's background characteristic studied (socioeconomic factor, family level of expenditure and parenting styles/socialization). A high positive relationship exists between them and causes of pregnancy implying that Juvenile pregnancy could be reduced when all the background factors are properly handled.

Recommendations

1. The adolescents (teenagers) are like a yam tendril that needs care, attention and concerns: These should be provided for them.
2. The society/especially leaders should try to improve on basic amenities and socioeconomic needs of the citizens to facilitate the provision of basic needs.
3. Organized sex education should be encouraged and taught in schools, seminars, local/village meetings and other similar fora.
4. Legal systems showed push for a more severe punishment for adults responsible for juvenile or girl-child pregnancy.

5. A reduction of the Urban/rural gap is encouraged to be facilitated by both stakeholders, social workers and government.

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