



Perceived determinants of teenage pregnancy among female public secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Background: Adolescents are beyond childhood yet have not fully matured in all aspects of life. They tend to engage in unprotected sexual intercourse, which could result in female adolescent pregnancy, health complications and, consequently, delay or denial of their educational progress. **Objectives:** Therefore, this study investigated the perceived determinants of teenage pregnancy among female public secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria, with the view to examining the socioeconomic factors and evaluating family dynamics. **Methodology:** The study employed a survey design. The population comprised 49985 female public secondary school students in Kwara State. The Multistage sampling procedure, including cluster, proportionate, purposive, and random sampling techniques, was used to select 438 respondents. The research instrument used for the study was a questionnaire validated by and tested for reliability, which yielded 0.86. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequency and percentage. **Results:** The findings of the study revealed that female students receiving gifts or other favours from males in exchange for sexual intercourse could lead to teenage pregnancy, and single parenthood is not a determinant of teenage pregnancies. **Conclusion/ recommendations:** The study concluded that receiving gifts from men is a significant predisposing factor for teenage pregnancy, as it often creates a power imbalance and fosters unhealthy relationships that can lead to early sexual initiation. Single parenthood is a manifestation, rather than a cause, of deeper structural issues driving teenage pregnancy among female secondary school students in Kwara State. The study recommended that parents should provide their children with adequate financial support and that every family should give their children adequate sex education to prevent them from engaging in illicit sex, which can predispose them to teenage pregnancy.

Keywords: Adolescents, health complications, family dynamics, sex education, SDG 3

Introduction

Teenage pregnancy is a challenge that adolescent girls are facing worldwide. It affects not only women but their families and society. Teenage is often used interchangeably with adolescence. World Health Organisation (WHO, 2007) opined that adolescence is between 10 and 19 years when the secondary sex characteristics appear. In general, the term teenage pregnancy applies to all women who become pregnant before reaching the age of legal adulthood, which varies across the world. World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020) observed that 12

million girls aged 15-19 and nearly 780,000 girls under 15 give birth yearly in developing regions. Teenage mothers are more likely to suffer pre-birth and post-birth physical risks that could lead to miscarriages, infections, and difficulties in labour. Three million teenage girls undergo unsafe abortions every year, and thousands of them die from complications due to unplanned pregnancies (WHO, 2020). It is also stated that globally unsafe abortion is a significant contributor to maternal deaths, ranking as the fourth leading cause globally (Vogel *et al.*, 2019). Socioeconomic factors that influence

teenage pregnancy can be attributed to early marriage, societal norms tolerant of early casual relationships, unmet contraceptive needs, maternal deprivation, pre-existing family psychosocial issues, and dysfunctional family units (Andrew & Mary, 2015). In numerous developing countries, limited resources render contraception and reproductive guidance inaccessible. This challenge is often compounded by prevailing religious beliefs that prohibit the use of artificial birth control methods, leading to a heightened risk of unintended pregnancies among adolescents (Ibrahim & Owoye, 2012). Every adolescent has the right to basic needs, health care, and education. The lack of basic needs compels teenagers to pursue them from outside their families (Yasmin *et al.*, 2018). Consequently, they are exposed to exchanging economic benefits for sex, which results in teenage pregnancy. Rangiah (2021) affirmed that many of these teenagers are allegedly enticed into sex by men who give them money or other gifts in return for sexual favours, and some adolescent girls choose to have sex 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 adolescence. Many times, these teenagers allow mates to manipulate the decision to have sex, even though they are unaware of the repercussions. Family dynamics such as family financial exigencies and single parenting have also been noted to account for high teenage pregnancy in Africa (Chemuru & Srinivas, 2015). Family financial exigencies within families often force girls to drop out of school and engage in early sexual relationships, resulting in teenage pregnancies that perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Santelli & Song (2020) stated that teenagers from broken homes are more sexually permissive than those from stable homes. Daughters of divorced parents end up with unintended pregnancies. Ellis-Sloan (2018)

found that when two parents are present, they have greater power than when only one parent is present. But looking Olatan *et al.* (2015) claim teenage pregnancy happens due to an adolescent nature of being inquisitive and conscious of the changes in their body, with the desire to experiment with new things, they can run the risk of getting pregnant. The problem of teenage pregnancy could be due to poverty, ignorance of both teenagers and their parents on the knowledge of sex education, also adolescents having sexual intercourse without adequate contraception while abstinence is the only sure way to prevent pregnancy. In an ideal situation, teenagers are expected to focus on education and skills development, free from unplanned pregnancies (Abiodun & Balogun, 2020). In Nigeria, pregnancy was celebrated at the right time, within a committed relationship, and when the individual was prepared. Unfortunately, many adolescent girls face an increasing risk of teenage pregnancy, with severe consequences on their education, health, and future. Globally, 87 million teenage pregnancies occur annually, leading to 46 million abortions and 18 million unsafe abortions, resulting in 68,000 maternal deaths (United Nations 2020). The research observed from a mini survey conducted across the three senatorial districts of Kwara state found that many students were forced to drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy (provide the reference). According to records, between 2020 and 2023, a total of 163 cases of teenage pregnancy were reported, accounting for 0.18% of the student population.

Furthermore, some of the affected girls resorted to unsafe abortion practices, which can have severe health consequences. The researchers' observations and interactions with students during school visits revealed a pervasive reluctance among students to engage in discussions about sex, resulting in a lack of necessary information and guidance on sex

education. This reticence can be attributed to the dearth of parental involvement in teaching sex education at home, leaving the responsibility solely to teachers, who often gloss over the topic during biology classes. The prevailing economic conditions, where parents are preoccupied with providing necessities like shelter and food, exacerbate this issue, leading to neglect of children's emotional needs and growth (provide the reference). The involvement of the children in family financial issues could assist them in becoming livelihood-conscious, thereby regulating their emotional needs and growth. The researcher noted a disturbing trend in Kwara State, where a significant number of adolescent girls between 13 and 19 years old are grappling with teenage pregnancy. A majority of these girls are students, and the consequences of this trend

are far-reaching, leading to a high dropout rate from school with devastating effects on the girls' families and the community at large. Observably, these young girls are being stigmatised and marginalised, becoming a burden on society. With this in mind, the current study investigated the perceived socioeconomic conditions and family conditions as the determinants of teenage pregnancy among female secondary school students in Kwara State. The research questions are the following. *Research question one:* Will socioeconomic conditions be the determinants of teenage pregnancy as perceived by the female secondary school students in Kwara State? *Research question two:* Will family dynamics be the determinant of teenage pregnancy as perceived by the female secondary school students in Kwara State?

Material and methods

A descriptive research design of survey type was used to carry out this study. This research design is suitable because it enables the researcher to generalize the findings to a larger population. The population of this study consisted of all female public secondary school students in Kwara State, with a total of 49985. The sample size for this study was drawn from the population of all the public secondary school students in Kwara State using

Yamane's formula (1967): $n = N / (1 + N (e^2))$

In line with the above calculation, a sample of 398 is appropriate for this study. However, in order to account for invalids and loss of the instrument and increase the generalizability of the findings from this study, 10% of the calculated sample was added (which is 10% of 398). So, $398 + 40 = 438$. A multistage sampling procedure consisting of cluster sampling, purposive, simple random sampling, and proportionate sampling techniques of five (5) stages was used to select 438 respondents from the three constitutionally recognized senatorial districts of Kwara State for this study. *At stage one*, the Cluster sampling technique was used to group the state into the existing three constitutionally recognized senatorial districts viz Kwara South, Kwara North and

Kwara Central senatorial districts. *Stage two:* A proportionate sampling technique was used to select 45% of all Local Governments in each of the Senatorial districts in Kwara state. The local government selected from Kwara South were Oyun, Offa, Irepodun, and Ifelodun. Kwara North were Edu, Patigi and Baruten, while Kwara Central were Ilorin West and Ilorin South. *Stage three;* Purposive sampling technique was used to select four (4) public secondary schools from each Local Government Area with the highest number of female students. *Stage four:* Thirty-six (36) public secondary schools were selected for this study.

Stage five: A simple random sampling technique was used to select 438 respondents from their various schools. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was face and content validity tested by three experts with extensive health education and research knowledge. A split-half method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. Twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire were administered to twenty (20) students outside the study area, and their responses were analysed using the Spearman-Brown Prophecy Statistic. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained, which showed that the instrument is reliable for the study. Data collected from the field were sorted, collated, coded, and subjected to descriptive statistical

analysis, utilizing frequency and percentage calculations to provide insights and address the research question.

Results

Table 1 presents the demographic breakdown of the respondents who participated in the study. The findings indicated that Ansaruddeen College, Offa, had 34 (7.8%) participants, Senior Secondary School Ita-alamu had 26 (5.9%), and Oro Grammar School, Oro, had 31 (7.1%) participants. Hence, the majority of respondents were from Ansaruddeen College, Offa, Oro Grammar

School, Oro, and Senior Secondary School Ita-alamu. In terms of the class category, JSS 3 had the highest number of participants, with 159 (35.8%), followed by 101 (23.2%) from JSS 2. Regarding the age bracket section, 253 (57.8%) respondents were between 14 and 17 years old, followed by 164 (37.7%) between 18 – and 21 years old. The following presents the answers to the research questions:

Research question one: Will socioeconomic conditions be the determinants of teenage pregnancy as perceived by the female secondary school students in Kwara State?

Table 2 shows that 1,570 (71.7%) positively responded that socioeconomic influence is a determinant of teenage pregnancy as perceived by female secondary school students in Kwara State, while 620 (28.3%) negatively responded; this implies that socioeconomic factors largely influence teenage pregnancy.

Research question two: Will family dynamics be the determinant of teenage pregnancy as perceived by the female secondary school students in Kwara State?

Table 3 shows that 1,316 (60.1%) positively responded that family conditions are a determinant of teenage pregnancy as perceived by the female secondary School students in Kwara State, while 874 (39.9%) negatively responded to it; this implies that the female secondary school students in Kwara State perceived family conditions as the primary determinant of teenage pregnancy.

Discussion

The result revealed that female students receiving gifts or other favours from males are prone to teenage pregnancy. This finding correlated with the finding of Rangiah (2021), which found that many of these teenagers are allegedly enticed into sex by men who give them money or other gifts in return for sexual favours. Some adolescent girls choose to have sex to satisfy their basic needs, which their parents are unable to provide. The finding in this study also aligned with a finding of the Guttmacher Institute (2022) for a strong correlation between parental income and teenage pregnancy. Teenagers from low-income families are more likely to engage in unprotected sexual activity compared to those from more affluent backgrounds, often due to a lack of supervision and poor communication with their parents. Teenage pregnancy is found to be twice as likely among teenagers from low socioeconomic backgrounds, with factors such as poverty, social exclusion, low educational level, and gender inequality contributing to this trend.

Additionally, another study by Abiodun and Balogun (2020) revealed that teenagers in intergenerational relationships may struggle to practice safe sex due to concerns about compromising their economic aspirations. Many young women engage in risky sexual behaviour to fulfil their basic needs and wants, which can increase the likelihood of pregnancy, particularly when combined with a lack of adult supervision and poor economic conditions. The finding indicated that single parenthood is not a determinant of teenage pregnancy as perceived by the females assessed across the selected public secondary schools in Kwara State. This finding contradicts the research of Basch (2019), which found that teenagers from divorced parents were nearly two times more exposed to teenage pregnancy compared to adolescents from married parents; this is due to the absence of practical parental guidance and open communication about sexual and reproductive health issues compared to married ones. These lead to increased early sexual debut and risky sexual behaviours among adolescents from divorced parents. Fathers who leave their families, sisters of childbearing teenagers, and mothers who experienced teenage pregnancies are all associated with adolescent pregnancies.

Table 1: Demographic data of the respondents (n = 438)

S/N	VARIABLES	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	SCHOOL		
	Government Day sec sch, More	9	2.1
	Comprehensive high sch Lasseipo Arandun	10	2.3
	grammar sch,Arandun Oro Grammar sch,	9	2.1
	Oro	31	7.1
	Moremi High Sch, Offa	12	2.7
	Offa Community Sec sch, Offa Iyeru	19	4.3
	Grannar sch Offa Ansarudeen College, Offa	25	5.7
	Erin-ile sec sch, Erin-ile	34	7.8
	Baptist Model Senior sec School, Ijagbo	18	4.1
	Ojoku Grammar school,Ojoku	5	1.1
	Ipee Baptist Grammar School	9	2.1
	Senior Sec Sch, Ojuolapekokoararomi	11	2.5
	Senior sec sch,Masudo	3	0.7
	Muslim Sec Sch, Omupo Community Sen	4	0.9
	Sec Sch, Ganmo Government Day Sec Sch,	6	1.4
	Zambufu	15	3.4
	Kinti community (SSS) Sch Ganagagi	18	4.1
	NYSC Model Sec Sch (SSS) Kpandaragi	9	2.1
	Etsusaadu Sen Sec Sch Ndeji	5	1.1
	Govt. Day Sec Sch, Gadaworo Government	5	1.1
	Sec Sch, Rogun Senior Sec Sch, Lata	3	0.7
	Community Sec Sch Kusogi	6	1.4
	Government Senior Sec Sch, Gbedebereru	4	0.9
	Senior sec sch Gbabe	3	0.7
	Ansarul Islam Sec Sch (SSS)Taberu Senior	8	1.8
	Sec Sch Bwen	3	0.7
	Taoheed Sec Sch, Ilorin	10	2.3
	Muyideen Arabic Sec Sch, Kulende	9	2.1
	Government Sec Sch, Omode Senior Sec	18	4.1
	Sch, Fate, Basin	15	3.4
	Imam Senior Sec Sch, Ilorin Senior Sec Sch,	13	2.9
	Ita-alamu Baptist Senior Sec Sch Surulere	15	3.4
	Ansar-u-deen Sen Sec Sch, Ilorin	13	2.9
		26	5.9
		17	3.9
		18	4.1
2.	CLASS		
	JSS 1	30	6.8
	JSS 2	101	23.1
	JSS 3	159	36.3
	SSS 1	47	10.7
	SSS 2	42	9.6
	SSS 3	59	13.5
3.	AGE BRACKET		
	10-13 years old	21	4.8
	14-17 years old	253	57.8
	18-21 years old	164	37.4

Table 2: Perceived socioeconomic influences as determinants of teenage pregnancies by female secondary school students in Kwara State. (n = 438)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	PR	D	SD	NR
1.	Poverty influences female students' decisions to engage in transactional sex to meet their needs, leading to teenage pregnancy.	96 (21.9%)	257 (58.7%)	353	42 (9.6%)	43 (9.8%)	85
2.	Female students from lower-income families could lead to teenage pregnancy.	41 (9.4%)	256 (58.4%)	297	62 (14.2%)	79 (18.0%)	141
3.	Limited economic opportunities & education lead female students to engage in sex, resulting in teenage pregnancy.	84 (19.2%)	303 (69.2%)	387	28 (6.4%)	23 (5.3%)	51
4.	Female students from financially challenged families in my school are prone to teenage pregnancy due to financial assistance.	51 (11.6%)	248 (56.6%)	299	109 (24.9%)	30 (6.8%)	139
5.	Engaging in sexual intercourse to meet their need as a result of the lack of employment of the breadwinner of the family could lead to teenage pregnancy	69 (15.8%)	165 (37.7%)	234	169 (38.6%)	35 (8.0%)	204
	MEAN			1, 570 (71.7%)			620 (28.3%)

SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PR = Positive Response, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, and NR = Negative Response

Table 3: Perceived family dynamics as a determinant of teenage pregnancy by the female secondary school students in Kwara State (n = 438)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	PR	D	SD	NR
1.	Lack of support for the female students from the family could lead to teenage pregnancy	44 (10.0%)	198 (45.2%)	242	151 (34.5%)	45 (10.3%)	196
2.	Female students that single parents raised are prone to teenage pregnancy	55 (12.6%)	27 (6.2%)	82	101 (23.1%)	255 (58.2%)	356
3.	Low-income family interaction relationship with parents could lead to teenage pregnancy	71 (16.2%)	183 (41.8%)	254	155 (35.4%)	29 (6.6%)	184
4.	Female students that come from uneducated family could lead to teenage pregnancy	49 (11.2%)	158 (36.1%)	207	192 (43.8%)	39 (8.9%)	231
5.	Maltreatment of a girl by the parent could lead to teenage pregnancy	53 (12.1%)	204 (46.6%)	257	164 (37.4%)	17 (3.9%)	181
	MEAN			1,316 (60.1%)			874 (39.9%)

SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PR = Positive Response, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, and NR = Negative Response

Additionally, the economic status of the family can also influence adolescent pregnancies. The study revealed that female adolescents from low-income families are 2.7 times more likely to engage in premarital sex, which often leads to teenage pregnancies, compared to those from wealthier families. Interestingly, family support is a significant predictor of teenage pregnancy, a result consistent with Macleod (2020), who found that parental support and guidance play a crucial role in children's development. It was found that many adolescents who engage in early sexual activity leading to unplanned and unwanted pregnancy receive little support from their parents and family members. Another study (provide the reference) indicated that the absence

of a father has a more significant impact on their daughter's sexual activity and teenage pregnancy compared to other factors such as mental health problems or academic achievement. Furthermore, it was discovered that a mother's education and living with only one parent or guardian, as opposed to living with both parents, increases the risk of pregnancy among girls (provide the reference).

Similarly, the finding of this study discovered that child abuse was also a significant determinant of teenage pregnancy, a result consistent with the Guttmacher Institute (2022), which revealed a positive association between child abuse, child neglect and teenage pregnancy. Specifically, adolescents who experienced sexual abuse

exhibited a significantly increased likelihood of becoming pregnant during adolescence relative to their non-abuse peers. Moreover, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect were also found to be positively correlated with an elevated risk of teenage pregnancy.

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the study's objectives and associated findings, the following were made: receiving gifts from men is a significant predisposing factor for teenage pregnancy, as it often creates a power imbalance and fosters unhealthy relationships that can lead to early sexual intuition. Single parenting is a manifestation of deeper structural issues driving teenage pregnancy than a cause. Based on the conclusion of the study, the following were made: Financial support for parents, such as a student loan scheme or business grant for parents, will go a long way to financially support students and parents so that sex hawkers would not take advantage of them for selling sex for financial gain, which usually predisposes them to teenage pregnancy or unwanted pregnancy. Every family should give their children adequate sex education to prevent them from having illicit sex, which can predispose them to teenage pregnancy.

Implications of the Study: The findings of the students can be used to design school-based health education programs that address the specific needs and concerns of female secondary school students; this study can help reduce the stigma surrounding teenage pregnancy by emphasizing the complexities of the issue and the necessity for support and education.; the study's findings can inform policy development aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy rates and improving reproductive health outcomes; the study can contribute to improving adolescent health outcomes by highlighting the factors that contribute to teenage pregnancy.

Limitation of the study: The study focuses only on female secondary school students, excluding

other populations, such as out-of-school adolescents or those in vocational training

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