



The Fundamentals And The Psychology Of The People Towards Teenage Pregnancy In Rivers State: The Case Of Emohua Local Government Area

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ABSTRACT

Teenage pregnancy is a term referred to a woman who has not reached legal adulthood becoming pregnant. This is a serious cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of the society. This urgently trend leads the teens into early entrance to poverty and informal labour. This study examined the fundamentals and the psychology of the people towards teenage pregnancy in Rivers State: The case of Emohua Local Government Area. The descriptive research design was adopted to guide the study. A sample size of 300 was used which comprised of parents and class teachers from all the ten clans in the Local Government Area. The respondents were drawn using stratified and simple random sampling technique. Questionnaires were self-administered to parents and class teachers, while with face to face interview was conducted for illiterate parents. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics making use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21.0, and the results were presented using frequency tables and percentages to make meaningful conclusion. The study discovered that poverty, poor parenting, effect of mass media, peer group, drug abuse and early pubertal development have positive relationship with teenage pregnancy, while lack of sex education reported otherwise. It was recommended that government should regularly organize an enlightenment programmes more at the rural areas, sensitizing them on the danger of early sex; the community and the religious groups should reawaken the consciousness of the teenagers on the moral implication(s) of teenage pregnancy in their societies and government and multinationals operating in the area should set up skills oriented programmes that will meaningfully engage the teens, so as to divert their attention from risky sexual practices that will endanger their lives.

Keywords: Fundamentals, Psychology, People, Teenage Pregnancy

INTRODUCTION

One of the major contemporary social problems confronting most countries in the world, is teenage pregnancy. From the first world countries like United States of America to the third world countries like Nigeria, this problem has been a source of worry for policy markers, social workers, religious groups and other human service providers due to its negative repercussions on the girl – child (Gyan in Amadi, 2019). Also, it is on record that one of the significant societal challenges generating debate amongst researchers and plaguing developing and developed societies, is teenage pregnancy as its impact on the societal advancement, mortality rate, educational enrolment/attainment, as well as child psychological development, has reached an alarming rates, globally (Alabi & Oni, 2017).

Teenage pregnancy is the pregnancy in a female under the age of 20 (Wikipedia, 2013). Also teenage pregnancy, according to (Alabi, *et al.*, 2017) is a period between 10 and 19 years when the secondary characteristics appear. They went further to explain that through one of the salient responsibilities of a woman is procreation as ordained by God. However, (Alabi *et al.*, 2017), stated that there are conditions to be met before a woman could start procreating.

In African context, the act of procreation is a responsibility of grown up young adults who have been found to be psychically, economically, emotionally, spiritually, and at large psychologically matured (Alabi, *et al.*, 2017) . That is why marriage act is highly contracted and celebrated in our present societies; they added Teenage pregnancy, according to Effiom & Jacks (2019), is viewed as a teenager

or underage girl usually within ages of thirteen to seventeen years becoming pregnant. It is sad to note that, in Emohua Local Government Area where this research study was carried out; hardly does a day pass without the news of adolescent below the age of seventeen years being delivered of babies.

The most worrisome aspect of this situation is that, in Emohua Local Government Area, the adolescent mothers usually end up in most cases losing their lives or that of their babies, or both of them in the process of giving birth, while some drop out of school. This is so because the teenage girl is not yet matured enough to handle pregnancy and the stress associated with it.

Literature has revealed that about 16 million girls between the ages of 15 – 19 years old, give birth each year, contributing nearly 11% of birth Worldwide. Also, different pieces of literature show that prevalence of teenage pregnancy varies across regions of the world.

In Asia pacific region, it was revealed that the teenage pregnancy ranges up-to 43% in Bangladesh and from 11.1% to 47.3% in Nepal. In Jordan, the prevalence is 25%. It was also revealed that teenage pregnancy varies in Africa. For instance, in Nigeria, it ranges 6.2% in Niger Delta States (comprising of Rivers, Cross-River, Akwa/Ibom, Delta, Edo and Bayelsa) to 49% in South Eastern states (comprising of Imo, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Anambra). In South Africa, East Africa (Kenya), Assosa (Ethiopia), and Sudan, it ranges from 2.3% to 19.2%, 31%, 20.4% and 31% respectively. The majority of countries with teenage pregnancy levels above 30% occur in Sub-Sahara Africa (Sibusiso and Clifford, 2015).

The 2010 South African Demographic and Health Survey (SADHS), indicated that 27% of women had a child by the age of 19 years. A sociological difference between teenage fertility in South Africa and other Sub-Saharan countries, however, is that South African child birth to teen aged women tends to take place outside of marriage (SADHS, 2010).

A Uganda government survey on demography and health indicates that there is a higher morbidity and mortality rate among pregnant teenagers and their babies (Republic of Uganda, 2012). Furthermore, it was revealed that pregnant adolescent girls are more susceptible to pregnancy and child birth related complications. This is so because they have not yet developed the physical maturity required for a healthy pregnancy.

Also, teenage pregnancy can be seen as the process of pregnancy that is occasioned by the drug abuse and sexual exploitation of a child (Ekefre, Ekenem & Essien in Amadi, 2019). As a result, it can be deduced as the situation where an under aged girl undergoes physical and psychological functions, usually reserved for adults. Furthermore, the psychology of the people in Emohua Local Government Area towards teenage pregnancy is that, it is seen as an unwelcome phenomenon. Reasons been that psychologically, the mind of a teenage mother is not yet matured to handle the challenges of parenting and motherhood. That is the reason why majority of teenage mothers live with relatives who help to cater for their babies.

Also, teenage pregnancy is seen as an aberration in the area under study. It is viewed as a delinquent behaviour resulting from stress, dislike, malice, bore dorm and unhappiness experienced by a teenage girl within her home environment. A delinquent behaviour here means a behaviour that does not conform to the moral standards of society especially carried out by a juvenile. This is viewed so because when a girl child that should be in school (either formal or informal) becomes pregnant her entire life could be completely altered as her hope and aspirations may be shattered.

Experience has shown that victims of teenage pregnancy lacked information or probably were not adequately educated on safe sex, either by their parents, guidance, school that could have enabled them deal with friends who may have lured them into sex prematurely.

The researchers also, from life experiences observed that children of single parent are more vulnerable to teenage pregnancy; reasons being that they are in most cases, not given adequate information that will guide them against the deviant behaviour.

The fundamentals of teenage pregnancy as noted in this study are: poverty, poor parenting, mass media, peer group, alcohol/drug abuse, lack of school performance, and early pubertal development. From life experiences and as psychotherapists, the researchers have enunciated that risk factors for teenage girls who encounters early sexual behaviour, include, but not limited to having multiple sex partners, early use of alcohol or substance abuse, and lack of academic achievement.

The likely effect and consequences of teenage pregnancy as noted in the study were but not limited to poor academic performance of the girl child, as it could lead to lack of involvement at school, and/or dropout of school, the teen mothers are likely to be at greater risk of low intelligence and academic

achievement. Also, it hampers the further education of teenage mothers. It threatens the girl child's educational career, as well as the economic prospect.

Furthermore, the consequences of teenage pregnancy as revealed by the study include: self-esteem. Teenage mothers are always the object of community gossips. In some societies like Emohua Local Government, they are regarded as "second hand" where potential suitors are not ready to have them as wives, rather they prefer them as "sex partner". They are faced with difficulties of having husband, if they even see, it is always widowers or as third or fourth wife.

Many of the teens, having lost self-esteem, take solace in prayer houses, as to bring succour to their plight. Also, the teen mothers are faced with rejection as they become a social taboo, not being able to fit into any stratum in the society where they can be recognized. In most cases, especially at the rural areas, they lose the privilege of associating with their age grade, where there is still emphasis on morality. Also, malnutrition in most cases befalls the teen mothers. They manage to survive, especially that those from low economic background. They encounter the problem of how to feed themselves, as well as their babies.

The psychological and social problems associated or linked to teenage pregnancy include, but not limited to school interruption, persistent poverty, unmarried opportunity, separation from the child's father, divorce and repeat pregnancy (Achema, Emmanuel & Moses, 2017).

The prevention and reduction to the barest minimum, could be achieved through creation of awareness, and encourage abstinence through educational programme. This will in no small measure help to bring about behavioural change in teens and effective use of contraceptive.

Statement of the Problem

Teenage pregnancy is on the increase daily and teen sexuality and parenthood are seen to be major social issue bedevilling the society today. This menace has continued unabated inspite of all the enlightenment and civic education on teenage pregnancy by religious groups, governments, and non-governmental organizations.

It is on record that women constitute two – third of the world population, and if adequate measure is not taken to streamline this deviant behaviour (teenage pregnancy) as perceived by the researchers, which in-most cases lead to obstetric complication(s), resulting in high mortality and morbidity rate, one wonders, what the population of the nation, especially in Emohua Local Government Area might be in the future.

It is against this background that the study sought to investigate the fundamentals, and the psychology of the people towards teenage pregnancy in Emohua Local Government area.

This study was hinged by or anchored on social learning theory.

This study was hinged or anchored on social learning theory, which its proponent is Albert Bandura. This theory was developed and published in 1941. According to the theory, the important aspects of development are: behaviour, environment and cognition, that is behaviour can be acquired by observation and imitating others.

Furthermore, social learning theory explains why people acquire and maintain certain behavioural patterns. For instance, if teenagers avoid certain behaviour like risky sexual practices, and teenage pregnancy, then she needs an exposure to positive and healthy environment. This is so because; positive and healthy environment will definitely produce more positive and healthy behaviours.

Bandura opined that human conducts and behaviours are acquired observationally. This implies that as they are watching others, they gain and understanding of how new practices are performed. These acquired thought serve as a guide, which will be translated into action. It is also worthy of note that the teenagers within the environment observe the behaviours of others, especially those they see as their role models, such as their peers, aunties or people they belief in their own thinking, are significant.

This observable behaviour will lead them into engaging in the sexual practices. On the other hand, the positive influences from these role models can indirectly influence the teenagers, thereby reducing risk behaviours that may lead to teenage pregnancy and child birth. For instance, in building the behavioural capability, teachers, guidance, aunties and significant figures to the teenagers, can teach positive behavioural skills, such as good communication skills, and positive sexual practices.

It is imperative that adequate information be provided to the teenagers at this stage of their development. Also, they (teenagers) should be given opportunity to practice the skills, and receive feedback.

This approach is more effective on the recipient, when their role models are influential and respected in the society. Reasons being that it makes them (teenagers) believe that the behaviour they are modelling will be welcomed and accepted by the society they belong.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive survey research design to investigate the fundamentals and the psychology of the people towards teenage pregnancy in Rivers State: The case of Emohua Local Government Area. The population of 300 comprised twenty parents each from all the ten clans to the Local Government Area. They include Ogbakiri, Emohua, Odegu, Uvuahu (Ibaa/Obelle), Runderle, Rumuekpe, Elele-Alimini, Omudioga/Akpabu/Itu, Egbeda and Ubimini. Also ten teachers were selected from a school in each clan. The sample sizes of 300 respondents were used for the study involving parents and class teachers. The respondents were drawn using stratified and simple random sampling technique. Questionnaires were self-administered to parents and class teachers, while face to face interview was conducted for those illiterate parents. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics making use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 and the results were presented using frequency tables and percentages to make meaningful conclusion.

The purpose of the study is to determine the fundamentals and the psychology of the people towards teenage pregnancy in Rivers State: The case of Emohua Local Government Area.

RESULT

The researchers sought to establish the behaviour of the people, and the fundamentals of teenage pregnancy in Rivers State: The case of Emohua Local Government Area. Data were analysed, and the result are presented below:

Table 1: Poverty

Parents' Frequency		Percentage	Teachers' frequency		Percentage
Yes	185	92.5	80		80%
No	15	7.5	20		20%
Total	200	100	100		100

From the findings at shown in table 1, 92% of the parents indicated that poverty is one of the fundamentals of teenage pregnancy. That is it causes them to having sex at the early stage in order to take care of themselves. Also while 7.5% said it does not. From the teachers' findings, 80% percent that poverty has to do with teenage pregnancy, while 20% percent of the teachers indicated that poverty does not influence. From these findings, it was deduced that poverty one of the strange fundamentals of teenage pregnancy.

Table 2: Poor Parenting

Parents' Frequency		Percentage	Teachers' Frequency		Percentage
Yes	175	87.5	65		65
No	25	13.5	35		35
Total	200	100	100		100

From the findings as indicated in table 2, 87.5% of the parents indicated that poor parenting contributes, majorly to teenage pregnancy, while 13.5% indicated that it does not. From the teachers' findings 65% of them indicated poor parenting as a cause for teenage pregnancy while 35% of the students indicated that it does not. From these findings, it was deduced that poor parenting is a strong predictor to teenage pregnancy.

Table 3: Effect of Mass Media

Parents' Frequency		Percentage	Teachers' Frequency		Percentage
Yes	180	90	62		62
No	10	10	38		38
Total	200	100	100		100

From the findings in table 3, 90% of the parents indicated that effect of mass media influences teenagers to have sex at their early age which leads to pregnancy, while 10% indicated that it does not.

From the teachers findings 80% indicated that effect of mass media influences teenagers to have sex early which leads to pregnancy, while 20% of the teachers indicated that it does not influence.

Table 4: Peer Group

Parents' Frequency	Percentage	Teachers' Frequency	Percentage
Yes	163	77	77
No	37	23	23
Total	200	100	100

From the findings as shown in table 4, parents indicated peer group influence is a predictor of teenage pregnancy, while 18.5% indicated that it does not. From the teachers' findings, 77% indicated that peer group influences early sex which leads to teenage pregnancy.

From these findings, it was deduced that peer group in most cases, influences early sex which leads to teenage pregnancy.

Table 5: Lack of Sexual Education

Parents' Frequency	Percentage	Teachers' Frequency	Percentage
Yes	105	43	43
No	95	57	57
Total	200	100	100

From the result of the findings as shown in table 5, 52.5% of parents indicated that lack of sexual education is the cause of teenage pregnancy, while 47.5% indicated that it does not.

From the teachers' findings, 43% indicated that lack of sexual education was the cause of teenage pregnancy, while 57% of the teachers indicated that it does not.

From these findings, it was deduced that lack of sexual education may or may not be the cause of teenage pregnancy.

Table 6: Alcohol/Drug Abuse

Parents' Frequency	Percentage	Teachers' Frequency	Percentage
Yes	198	48	52
No	102	52	48
Total	200	100	100

From the result of the findings as shown in table 6, 51% of parents indicated that Alcohol/Drug Abuse taken by the teens led them to early sex which has caused teenage pregnancy. While 49% of parents indicated Alcohol/Drug Abuse does not cause teenage pregnancy.

From the teachers' findings, 48% indicated that alcohol/drug abuse contributes to teenage pregnancy, while 52% indicated that it does not. From these findings, there were mixed reactions, which imply that the yes of the parents are higher in percentage, while the no of the teacher are higher. It was deduced that the variable(s) may or may not be the cause or one of the fundamentals of teenage pregnancy.

Table 7: Lacks of School Performance

Parents' Frequency	Percentage	Teachers' Frequency	Percentage
Yes	103	65	65
No	97	35	35
Total	200	100	100

From the result of the findings as shown in table 7, 51.5 indicated that lacks of school performance, may cause teens to early sex, which will lead to teenage pregnancy, while 48.5% of the adults indicated that it does not.

From the teachers' finding, 52% indicated that lack of school performance may cause them to engage in early sex, which may land them into teenage pregnancy.

From these findings, it was deduced that lack of school performance will lead to teenage pregnancy.

Table 8: Early Pubertal Development

Parents' Frequency		Percentage	Teachers' Frequency		Percentage
Yes	155	77.5	85	85	85
No	45	22.5	15	15	15
Total	200	100	100	100	100

From the finding, 77.5% of the parents indicated that early pubertal development of a teen girl leads her to early sex, which the resultant effect is teenage pregnancy, while 22.5% indicated that it does not. From teachers finding, 85% indicated that early pubertal development causes the teen girls to involve in early sex, which results in teenage pregnancy in most cases, while 15% indicated that it does not.

From these findings, it was deduced that early pubertal development will lead to teenage pregnancy.

CONCLUSION

The study identified a number of variables as fundamentals that may influence the rate of teenage pregnancy. Also, the study has enumerated the likely effects it will have on the victims. Therefore, strategies to reduce this menace should focus more on sex related information like making contraceptive more accessible and offering programmes that empowers girls in the area of sexuality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government should regularly organize enlightenment more at the rural areas, sensitizing them on the danger of early sex.
2. The communities and the religions groups should reawaken the consciousness of the teenagers on the moral implication of teenage pregnancy in the society.
3. Government and multinationals operating in the area should set up programmes that will meaningfully engage the teens so as to divert their attention from risky sexual practices that will endanger their lives.

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