

ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN AGUATA EDUCATION ZONE OF ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated adolescents' perceptions of causes and effects of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State. The study was guided by two research questions. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 6,750 senior secondary schools in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw 400 students as the sample for the study. A researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Causes and Effects of Teenage Pregnancy Questionnaire (CETPQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts who were lecturers in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha which yielded an overall reliability of 0.79 for the instrument with coefficients for the clusters being 0.81 and 0.77 respectively. The researchers together with five research assistants collected data for the study and a 97 percent return rate of the instrument administered was recorded. Mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. The findings of this study revealed among others that the adolescents' perceptions of causes of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State included: poor knowledge of sex education, peer group influence, poor parental' moral guidance, social media influence, inadequate moral instruction in schools and poor guidance and counselling services in schools. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that school principals should organize orientation programme to enlighten adolescents on sexual education.

Keywords: Adolescents, Perceptions, Causes, Effects, Teenage Pregnancy

1. Introduction

Education plays essential roles for development, scientific and technological advancement of any nation. It is the means through which students acquire sound knowledge, requisite skills and desirable behaviour which help become self-reliant and also contribute to the growth of the study. Odikpo and Ejide (2021) noted that education develops a child's cognitive, affective and psychomotor potentials which help the individual to function maximally in the society. Onyal and Nnebedum (2021) noted that education plays a crucial role in the economic development of any nation by inculcating in individuals requisite skills, knowledge, and habits for adapting to the

changing world and contributing meaningfully to the growth of oneself and society at large. One of the means through which students receive formal education is secondary school. Most of the secondary school students are adolescents. Mathewos and Mekuria (2018) asserted that adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood characterized by significant physiological, psychological and social changes. Adolescents are financial dependent on others as well as mentally, physical and psychological immature to engage to sexual activities. Adolescents in Nigeria are usually below 18 years. Enyiche (2019) stressed that the persons within the age categories of adolescents are sexually active and adventurous because this is when sexual maturity starts. Some secondary school adolescents engage in early sexual activities which result to teenage pregnancy.

Teenage pregnancy is an unwanted pregnant among immature females. According to Nyangarika, Nombo and Mtani (2020) asserted that teenage pregnancy is a result of early unprotected sexual practices. Madume and Dibia (2021) noted that pregnancies among girls appear to be one of the social issues confronting not only Nigeria, but also a number of other countries around the world. Teenage pregnancy is becoming a growing concern, and understanding the various causes of teenage pregnancy is critical (Madume & Dibia, 2021). Nyangarika, Nombo and Mtani (2020) asserted that pregnancy can be caused by lack of parental guidance, poverty, peer pressure, attitudes and believes lack of reproductive health education. Continuing, Nyangarika et al (2020) asserted that poverty may induce teenage girls to indulge in sex in exchange for materials and food. Peer and social media could induce teenagers to engage in early sexual activities. Alabi and Oni (2017) maintained that the major consequence of these increase sexual activities among teenagers in Nigeria is out of wedlock pregnancies that may result in abortion, childbirth or even death.

Teenage pregnancy is a worldwide problem. According to WHO and UNFPA (2013), it has been estimated that Teenage pregnancy has some social, emotional and psychology consequences one the adolescents. Mathewos and Mekuria (2018) noted that it led adolescents to less educational attainment and high school dropout, poor health and poverty Teenage pregnancy could contribute to school drop-out, abortion, neglecting of the child and falling prey to criminal activities among others. The teenage pregnancies are prevalent among girls who are aged 13-17 years. Madume and Dibia (2021) asserted that teenage pregnancy is on the rise worldwide, especially among girls of below 18-year-old age bracket. World Health Organization (WHO) cited in Nyangaresi and Majanga (2021) observed that about 21 million cases of teenage pregnancy are recorded annually with majority of the cases being reported in Sub-Sahara Africa. Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria which is located in Sub-Sahara Africa has recorded the cases of teenage pregnancy. In the Nigeria, a report by the Demographic and Health Survey establishes that about 23% of females aged between 15-19 years are bearing children while 10 percent of adolescents residing in rural areas are already bearing children compared to the 32 percent of adolescents in urban locations (Demographic and Health Survey cited in

Amadi, 2013). The closures of schools due to COVID-19 seem to increase cases of teenage pregnancy. With the outbreak of the Corona Virus (COVID-19), the World Vision predicted that approximately one million girls across SSA region may fail to return to school due to teenage pregnancy as a result of COVID-19 school closure (cited in Nyangaresi & Majanga, 2021)

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine adolescents' perceptions of causes and effects of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

1. Adolescents' perceptions of causes of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State.
2. Adolescents' perceptions of effects of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the adolescents' perceptions of causes of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State?
2. What are the adolescents' perceptions of effects of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State?

2. Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State. Aguata Education Zone is made up of three Local Government Areas namely: Aguata, Orumba North and Orumba South. The population of the study comprised 6,750 students' senior secondary schools in Anambra State. Simple random sampling technique was utilized to draw a sample size of 400 students for the study.

A-researcher developed instrument titled "Causes and Effects of Teenage Pregnancy Questionnaire (CETPQ)" was used for data collection. CETPQ contains 19 items arranged in two clusters namely: I and II. Cluster 1 contains 8 items on causes of teenage pregnancy, while cluster II has 11 items on effects of teenage pregnancy. All the items are structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts who are lecturers, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one in Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha. This yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.81 and 0.77 for the two clusters respectively and the overall coefficient of the instrument was 0.79.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents by the researchers together with five research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Anambra State. A total of 400 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 389 were properly filled and successfully retrieved indicating 97 percent return rate. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions and t-test for testing the hypotheses. For

decision on the research questions, mean ratings that fall below 2.50 were taken as disagreement, while mean rating of 2.50 and above were taken to indicate agreement.

3. Results

Research Question One: What are the adolescents' perceptions of causes of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation scores of Adolescents on Causes of Teenage Pregnancy

S/N	Item statements	(N =389)		
		Mean	SD	Decision
1	Poor Knowledge of sex education	2.76	1.08	Agree
2	Peer group influence	2.57	1.01	Agree
3	Negligence of parents on needs of their girl-child	2.43	1.00	Disagree
4	Poor parental' moral guidance	2.78	1.15	Agree
5	Social media influence	2.62	0.98	Agree
6	Drugs abuse which create urge for sexual activities	2.45	1.11	Disagree
7	Inadequate moral instruction in schools	2.60	1.07	Agree
8	Poor guidance and counselling services in schools	2.55	1.00	Agree
Cluster Mean		2.60	1.05	Agree

Results on Table 1 revealed that the mean ratings of students which are above 2.50 for all items except item 2 indicated agreement on these items as the causes of teenage pregnancy among secondary school adolescents. The overall standard deviation score of 1.05 indicated that there is homogeneity amongst their responses. The cluster mean of 2.60 is above the mean score of 2.50 and this indicated agreement that the items are the adolescents' perceptions of causes of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State.

Research Question Two: What are the adolescents' perceptions of causes of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation scores of Adolescents on Causes of Teenage Pregnancy

S/N	Item statements	(N =389)		
		Mean	SD	Decision
9	Drop-out of school	2.87	1.01	Agree
10	Low academic performance	2.70	1.08	Agree
11	Stigmatization by peers	2.76	1.10	Agree
12	Increase in mortality rates	2.67	1.00	Agree
13	Irregular school attendance	2.57	1.03	Agree
14	Suicidal attempt	2.81	1.05	Agree
15	Depression	2.71	0.97	Agree
16	Negligent of rendering support to the girl-child	2.43	1.04	Disagree
17	Early marriage	2.44	1.11	Disagree

18	Exposure to sexually transmitted diseases	2.60	1.09	Agree
19	High rate of prostitution	2.45	1.13	Disagree
Cluster Mean		2.64	1.06	Agree

As shown on Table 2, the mean ratings of students are above 2.50 for items 9-15 and 18 and this indicated agreement on these items as the effects of teenage pregnancy among secondary school adolescents. On the other hand, the mean ratings of students are below 2.50 for items 16, 17 and 19 and this indicated disagreement on these items as the effects of teenage pregnancy among secondary school adolescents. The overall standard deviation score of 1.06 indicated that there is homogeneity amongst their responses. The cluster mean of 2.64 is above the mean score of 2.50 and this indicated agreement that the items are the adolescents' perceptions of effects of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State.

4. Discussion of the Findings

The finding of this study shows that there are causes of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State. The adolescents' perceptions of causes of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State included: poor knowledge of sex education, peer group influence, poor parental' moral guidance, social media influence, inadequate moral instruction in schools and poor guidance and counselling services in schools. This is in line with the finding of Nyangaresi and Majanga (2021) which revealed that peer pressure, poverty levels, parental negligence, drug abuse, ignorance among the adolescents are among the causes of teenage pregnancies. This also supported that the finding of Waraga and (2018) who reported that media influence, peer influence, low self- esteem, negligence of parents, dating early and broken relationships are causes of teenage pregnancies in secondary school in the area of study. This is also in agreement with the finding of Nyangarika, Nombo and Mtani (2020) who revealed that the underlying causes of teenage pregnancy in day government schools include poverty, economic status; peer pressure; lack of parental guidance, and lack of reproductive health education. The types of films/pornographic adolescents watch on the social media may encourage lots of negative sexual behaviours among the teenagers. The girl-child are influenced by their bad peers and television programmes to engage in sexual activities. Secondary school adolescent engage in sexual acts due to poor family support system.

The result of the study shows that there are many effects of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State. The adolescents' perceptions of effects of teenage pregnancy in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State were drop-out of school, low academic performance, stigmatization by peers, increase in mortality rates, irregular school attendance, suicidal attempt and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases. This is line with the finding of Madume and Dibia (2021) who reported that retarded education, teenage abortion; isolation and rejection are the effect of teenage pregnancy among secondary school student. This also supported the finding of Igba, Igba, Nwafor, Elom and Mgboro (2018) who reported that the effects of adolescent pregnancy such as poor nutritional complications, abortion, school drop-out, stigmatism and depression among others. This is also in line with the earlier report of Moyagabo and Regis (2013) which revealed that the effects of teenage pregnancy include: irregular school attendance, school dropout, emotional imbalance and grade repetition. Teenager

pregnancy disrupts the girl-child processes of learning, which then creates more antisocial problems. This prevents girl-child from becoming useful adult in the society. Teenager pregnancy violates social norms and values threaten the collective wellbeing of society.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that peer, parental, school and societal factors contribute to teenage pregnancy. Some parents seldom educate and enlighten their child on sex education. Some adolescents watch romantic and blue films which induce them to engage in sexual activities. The poor moral education, guidance and counselling of students on sex education in school has contributed to teenage pregnancy. The adult members of the society engage in sexual in which teenagers emulate. Teenage pregnancy has a detrimental effect on the girl-child education. Teenage early contribute to irregular school, drop out of school and low academic performance of girl-child.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended among others:

1. School principals should organize orientation programme to enlighten adolescents on sexual education.
2. Parents should always engage on discussing the dangers of early sexual activities among children.
3. The State Government should spelt out punishment on adults who lure the young girls into sexual activities and resulting to early teenage pregnancies in order to serve as deterrent to others who intends to engage in such acts.

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