

Menace of Early Pregnancy by Teenage Girls: Causes and Consequences

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ABSTRACT

The term teenage pregnancy, in everyday speech, usually refers to women who have not reached legal adulthood becoming pregnant. This can be attributed to factors such as illiteracy, societal practices, and poverty encouraging girls to enter into sexual relationships at an early age. In Nigeria, more than 23% of females aged between 15-19 years are bearing children. The case of underaged girls, usually between the ages of thirteen to nineteen years, becoming pregnant is a serious problem that has eaten deep to the fabric of our societies inhibiting the growth of the society in this contemporary period. This condemnable situation leads to numerous complications which include sexually transmitted diseases, school dropouts, pressure on the health sector, and increased child mortality to mention but a few.

This study focused on the menace of this act among the teenagers in our society, using a descriptive method to identify basic factors and their effects using primary data. Some of the root causes identified are poverty, peer pressure and media influence while the effects include school drop-out, inadequate care for the child born by teenage mother, health problems and a host of other vices. The study suggested adequate parental care, eradication of street hawking, and inculcation of moral values through religious bodies as ways of reducing teenage pregnancy in Nigeria.

(Keywords: teenage pregnancy, sexual relationships, poverty, sexually transmitted disease, school dropouts)

INTRODUCTION

One of the salient responsibilities of women is procreation. However, there are societal conditions to be met before a woman could start procreating. In the African context, the act of procreation is a responsibility of grown-up young adults who have been found to be physically, economically, emotionally, spiritually and at large psychologically matured; that is why the act of marriage is highly contracted and celebrated in our present societies. The observed situation prevalent in both developed and underdeveloped world is such that there are, however, girls as young as ten who are sexually active and occasionally become pregnant and give birth, such that girls of between thirteen and nineteen years are now getting pregnant at an alarming rate.

Surveys by investigators such as Briggs (2001), Onuzulike (2003) and others revealed that teenagers become sexually active at an early age with corresponding high fertility. This condition is widely referred to as teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy is defined as a teenage girl, usually between the ages of 13-19, becoming pregnant. The term in everyday speech usually refers to girls who have not reached legal adulthood, which varies across the world, who

become pregnant. Teen pregnancy is a health issue that has an effect on all of us. A child having a baby as a teenager is more likely to face critical social issues like poverty, poor education, risky behaviors that lead to poor health issues, and child welfare. The financial cost of teens having babies is financially devastating.

Educational attainment is difficult for the teen mother, and this leads to decreased economic opportunities and earnings throughout their lifetime. In 2008, public spending for births resulting from unplanned pregnancies totaled an estimated \$12.5 billion (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2014). Moreover, considerable disparities exist in the rates of teenage pregnancies amongst the racial and ethnic groups within any country. African American and Hispanic youth contribute to 57 percent of teen births even though they represent 35 percent of the total population of 15–19-year-old females in the United States (Centers for Disease Control, 2010). Teen birth rates amongst Latino and African American youth in the age group of 15 to 17 are 83 and 64 per 1000, which is more than two times that of Caucasian girls (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2007).

Children born to teen parents can have a greater tendency to emulate early sexual behaviors and motherhood, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty among future generations (Healthy Teen Network, 2008). The more people who are educated in a community, the less likely the number of poor people will exist without the knowledge and skills necessary to be productive in the workforce. Preventing teen pregnancy is just one way to positively impact critical social issues, but preventing or breaking the cycle of poverty makes a tremendous impact on our nation (Furstenberg, 2008). This raises questions about the relationship between factors like ethnicity and race, cultural and social variables, and teenage pregnancy.

Issues emerge between the culture of racial groups, their customs, economic background, and its influence on teenage pregnancies. This research study seeks to connect the personality and actions of teenagers, their perceptions and attitudes towards sex and early motherhood with their external cultural and social environment prevailing in their community. Does our environment cause our behavior? Does interaction between environment, behavior and a

person's psychological processes cause external actions?

One of the results of the teenage sexual culture is teenage pregnancy and childbirth. In the United States, approximately 100,000 pregnancies occur annually among teenagers, half of which will result in a live birth (Foster, Greene and Smith. 1990). The dilemma of teenage pregnancy and childbirth occurring in numbers considered alarming creates problems and major challenges on several fronts with serious social, health, economic, and educational implications. Some social consequences of teenage pregnancy cited by several authors include the risk of abuse and neglect, intergenerational teenage pregnancy, early divorce, and larger family size (Levering, 1983; Morrison and Jensen. 1982).

Society is held accountable for the problems of teenagers. It is charged with its contradictions and double standards that are not considered in the best interest of adolescents (Vinovskis. 1988; Watson, Rowe, and Jones, 1988, 1989). Teenage mothers and their children are at greater risk for health problems (Levering, 1983; Mitchell, 1984; Morrison and Jensen, 1982). In addition, the educational outlook for the teenage mother is bleak, because of the threat of truncated educational achievement (Elkind, 1984; Hayes, 1987; Mitchell, 1984; Morrison and Jensen, 1982).

A further consequence of teenage pregnancy and the resulting curtailment of the mother's education is that the young girl is at an economic disadvantage and her ability to compete for better jobs is significantly diminished. The problem of teenage pregnancy cuts across all ethnic, social, and economic classes. Minority youths, for example, are said to account for 40% of births although they comprise only 27% of the teen population (Ladner, 1987).

Freeman and Rickels (1993) indicated that there is enough evidence in studies to suggest that teenage pregnancy cuts across all socio economic and racial groups. Large differences are found in the birthrates among all cultural and socioeconomic groups. Four broad areas seem to impact the occurrence or non-occurrence of teenage pregnancy. Family, social/church, personality/self-esteem, and school variables seem to have some relevance to this study and are briefly introduced in this section.

Family Factors

Parents influence their children's behaviors directly through verbal interactions and more indirectly through modeling. The type of modeling observed by children can have a strong impact on teenage pregnancy. The social learning perspective supports this idea and proposes that some familial factors related to teenage pregnancy include lack of parental love and protection, early and continuous maternal neglect, absent fathers, and historical teenage pregnancy (Hagenhoff, Lowe, Hovell, and Rugg, 1987).

If a child (in this case, a girl child) is raised in an environment where unwed teenage pregnancy is the norm, and where parents including the extended family do not direct her to avoid their pitfalls, it seems that this child will have no compelling reason to avoid an early pregnancy. When raised in a family environment in which she feels loved, protected, accepted, and appropriately challenged, chances are that this girl will be more open to incorporate her parents' values into her lifestyle despite peer pressure to the contrary.

Values may differ across families. For some, unmarried teenage pregnancy is an accepted way of life. Schooling, for example, may be important only to the extent that it is mandatory by the government, but plans for a future beyond this may be lacking. Children in some of these families observe their mother with multiple boyfriends and modeling from adults sends a certain message. Some of these children experience sexual and physical abuse at the hands of family members and family friends who have been entrusted with their care while parents pursue their various occupations. These abuses remain undetected or unchallenged in many cases.

When a girl child is raised in these kinds of abusive, unsupportive, and neglectful environments, she would, in all likelihood, have a negative view of her relationships within the family. This does not mean that all girl children raised under these conditions become teenage parents or experience academic failure. Many are the success stories of individuals who were mentored by a family friend, a distant relative, or a caring teacher. These people refused to continue the cycle of early pregnancy and low educational achievement. In other families, children are encouraged to seek an education, to "stay in school." Parents in these families may have

experienced intergenerational teenage pregnancy and may have reaped an undesirable economic harvest. For them, the idea of recurring poverty is abhorring enough to lead them to discourage early sexual activity and to encourage their children to aspire to some educational goal.

Social/Cultural Factors

A study of this nature requires an examination of society as it relates to the target population. An important point to consider, for example, is the power of peer culture. Is the peer culture one that has established culturally acceptable future goals and discourages risky behaviors that run the gamut from experimenting with drugs to early sexual activity, to full-blown violence? The peer group undeniably plays an important role in the development of teenagers.

Jorgenson and Sonstegard (1984) found that the prevalence of sexual intercourse among teenage girls was determined by role modeling from girlfriends, and by social pressure from boyfriends. Even when the peer culture embraces deviant behaviors, the young girl who has strong, supportive family ties is less likely to turn to her peers for validation. She feels less pressure to become sexually involved at an early age because she has goals for her future which do not accommodate pregnancy and parenting at this stage of her life. Church attendance is one of the traditional social activities in St. Kitts-Nevis.

Personality/Self-Esteem Factors

Individuals' behavior reflects their view of their lives and the extent to which they think they have power over or within their environment, young girl's view of herself in her environment is a factor influencing teenage pregnancy. Young girls raised with an external locus of control are more likely to experience an early pregnancy than those who have an internal locus of control. Individuals with an external locus of control look outward for answers to their situations and place responsibility for their problems on others and on circumstances. They seem not to think that they can actively influence their environment. They feel helpless in the face of family difficulties including discord, strife, and abuse, and an early pregnancy is just another of those things that happen to them, outside of their control. Having someone who belongs to them reduces their

sense of helplessness and gives them some semblance of power and control within their environment.

School Factors

The effects of teenage pregnancy are most swiftly and strongly felt in the area of schooling because once a pregnancy is discovered, the young girl must leave school. There continue to be debates on whether poor school performance predisposes a girl to early pregnancy or vice versa. Some suggest that girls with higher educational expectations are more likely to delay intercourse (Devaney, 1981). It seems then, that girls who have plans for education beyond high school, and who surround themselves with other girls with similar aspirations will be motivated to avoid teenage pregnancy. On the other hand, girls who have no such investment in their future may see little reason to avoid early pregnancy. Homes may be headed by both biological parents who may or may not be married to each other, or they may be headed by a single parent. Other homes may include adult members of the extended family.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teenage is often used interchangeably with adolescence. World Health Organization – WHO (1997) opined that, it is the period between 10 and 19 years when the secondary sex characteristics appear. Negi (1999) described this period as the second decade of life. He observed that it is the most important and sensitive period of one's life when a person is in the second genital stage of psychological development. According to Onuzulike (2003) female teenagers face a wide range of issues everyday relating to their psychological, physiological, emotional, and socio-cultural concerns. Turner and Helms (1993) reported that teen years fall between the ages of 13 and 19 years.

Onuzulike (2002) described the teen years as a bridge between life as a child, and life as an adult, which gives the individual the opportunity to drop childhood behaviors and learn the adult lifestyle. There are several views and opinions among authors and researchers on the specific age at which it begins or ends. In the view of Adesomowo (1988) teen years start at either 11 or 12 years and lasts to 19 years when the character of a person takes the permanent form. According

to Nwosu (2008), adolescents include all persons aged 13 to 19 years who constitute about 20 per cent of the world population.

Notwithstanding the varied opinions on the beginning and the end of the teen years, studies by numerous authors and researchers, as mentioned earlier indicated that the teen years span from the 13th to the 19th year of life. Ukekwe further noted that teenagers are expected to grow up morally and gradually observing the norms of society into adulthood. On the contrary, some of these teenagers engage in pre-marital sexual activities, which expose them to the risks of abortions, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancies.

Pregnancy as defined by Gordon (1983) is a condition in which a female carries in her womb, the young before it is born. In the same vein, Skyes (2010) defined pregnancy as the condition of carrying a developing offering in the uterus. A look at the two definitions of pregnancy above could reveal that pregnancy is meant for procreation and continuity. Ekwueme equally remarked that among teenage girls in Nigeria, pregnancies are a common problem. This she maintained is because of the high rate of premarital sexual activities among teenagers especially in mixed schools.

Causes of Teenage Pregnancy

Some of the causes of teenage pregnancy are outlined below:

- **Age discrepancy in relationships**
According to the Family Research Council, a conservative lobbying organization, studies in the United States indicate that age discrepancy between the teenage girls and the men who impregnate them is an important contributing factor. Teenage girls in relationships with older boys, and in particular with adult men, are more likely to become pregnant than teenage girls in relationships with boys of their own age. They are also more likely to carry the baby to term rather than have an abortion. Men over age 25 fathered twice as many children of teenage mothers than boys under age 18, and men over age 20 fathered five times as many children of junior high school-aged girls as did junior high school-aged boys.

- **Media influence**

A study conducted in 2006 found that adolescents who were more exposed to sexuality in the media were also more likely to engage in sexual activity themselves. According to *Time*, "teens exposed to the most sexual content on TV are twice as likely as teens watching less of this material to become pregnant before they reach age 20".

- **Peer Pressure**

During adolescence, teenagers often feel pressure to make friends and fit in with their peers. Often these teens let their friends influence their decision to have sex even when they do not fully understand the consequences associated with the act. Teenagers have sex as a way to appear cool and sophisticated, but in some cases the end result is an unplanned teen pregnancy.

- **Absent Parents**

Teen girls are more likely to get pregnant if they have limited or no guidance from their parents. Many parents have busy lives that prevent them from providing the guidance and support that their young teenagers need to make good decisions on issues such as sex, according to the website *Parent Dish*. When a teen does not feel that she can talk to her parents about sex either because they forbid sex talk or because they are not around, she will more than likely turn to friends for direction on whether to have sex, resulting in misinformation and possible teen pregnancy.

- **Lack of Knowledge**

Teenagers who are uneducated about sex are more likely to have an unintended pregnancy. Some teens do not fully understand the biological and emotional aspects associated with having sex, these teens may get incorrect information from friends, videos, sitcoms and/or movies. Many times, teens do not have the knowledge needed to make informed and responsible decisions about whether to engage in sexual activity that can alter their life. Nwosu added that teens need access to specific information about how their bodies work and how to keep their bodies safe as well as information about sexual behavior and its consequences. She maintained that information about sexuality should be imparted to teenagers to help them avoid unwanted pregnancies.

- **Sexual Abuse or Rape**

Teens can become pregnant as a result of sexual abuse or rape. The Guttmacher Institute states that between 43 and 62 percent of teens acknowledge that they were impregnated by an

adult male, and two-thirds report that their babies' fathers are as old as 27. Approximately 5 percent of all teen births are the result of a rape. Studies have found that between eleven and twenty percent of pregnancies in teenagers were because of rape, while about sixty percent of teenage mothers had unwanted sexual experiences (abuse) preceding their pregnancy. One in five teenage fathers admitted to forcing girls to have sex with them. Multiple studies have indicated a strong link between early childhood sexual abuse and subsequent teenage pregnancy in industrialized countries.

- **Teenage Drinking**

Teen alcohol drinking can cause an unexpected pregnancy, according to the website *Love to Know*. Many teens experiment with drugs and alcohol. Drinking lowers a teen's ability to control her impulses, contributing to 75 percent of pregnancies that occur between the ages 14 and 21. Approximately 91 percent of pregnant teens reported that although they were drinking at the time, they did not originally plan to have sex when they conceived.

- **Dating Violence**

Studies have indicated that adolescent girls are often in abusive relationships. They have also reported that knowledge of their pregnancy often intensified violent and controlling behavior on the part of their boyfriends. Many teenage mothers had been beaten by their boyfriends. 51% had experienced attempts of birth control sabotage and 21% experienced schools or work sabotage. Studies have also found that girls whose fathers left the family early in their lives had the highest rate of early sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy.

- **Childhood Environments**

Research has shown that women exposed to abuse, domestic experienced family strife in childhood are more likely to become pregnant as teenagers and the risk of becoming pregnant as a teenager increases with the number of adverse childhood experience. Studies have also found that boys raised in homes with a battered mother or who experienced physical violence directly, are significantly more likely to impregnate a girl. According to Patrick (2010), the transition from childhood to teenage may cause unstable emotions to some teenagers, and this may cause complex teenage psychology break on teenagers.

- **Low Educational Expectations**

Low educational expectations have been identified as a risk factor of teenage pregnancy. A girl who is not so educated and has a mother that is illiterate is also more likely to become pregnant as a teenager if the mother also gave birth in her teens. Adolescent pregnancy can also be caused by a breakdown of communication between parents and child, and because of inadequate parental supervision.

- **Foster Care**

Foster care youths are more likely, than their peers, to become pregnant as teenagers. Studies found that the birth rate of girls in foster care was more than double the rate of their peers outside the foster care system.

- **Poverty**

Some teens are always ensnared with petty gifts and food items through which their leisure into pre-marital sex when the parent could not provide for the basic needs, they easily fall prey to forces outside. Some are usually confronted with rape through street trading or hawking: all these are because of poverty.

- **General Causes**

In some societies, early marriage and traditional gender roles are important factors in the rate of teenage pregnancy. For example, in some sub-Saharan African countries, early pregnancy is often seen as a blessing because it is proof of the young woman's fertility. The average marriage age differs country by country where teenage marriages are common experience higher levels of teenage pregnancies. The lack of education on safe sex, whether it is from parents, schools, or otherwise, is a cause of teenage pregnancy. Many teenagers are not taught about methods of birth control and how to deal with peers who pressure them into having sex before they are ready.

Effect of Teenage Pregnancy

The medical, social, and economic cost of unplanned teenage pregnancies can be devastating to mothers and their children. Teen mothers are more likely to have medical complications during pregnancy and prolonged labor. Their babies are more likely to be born prematurely and to have low birth weights. These are caused by inadequate pre-natal care and poor nutrition often experienced by teenage mothers living in conditions of poverty (Dryfoos, 1999).

Teenage parenthood creates several economic and social disadvantages for young mothers. They are less likely to graduate from high school or attend college. The lack of educational achievement makes it more difficult for them to obtain adequate employment. They have a lower standard of living and are more likely to require public assistance. Their marriages are more likely to be unstable and they often have more children than they intended (Furstenberg, *et al.*, 2011).

Children born to teen mothers are also at a disadvantage. They show lower levels of cognitive functioning and more behavioral and emotional problems, while boys appear to be more affected than girls. The children of teenage mothers do poorly in school and are likely to become pregnant themselves. Teen mothers may also have less knowledge about child rearing than older mothers and may provide their babies with fewer opportunities for stimulation.

The effect of teenage pregnancy is not only on the teenage mother, the effect on her child could also be devastating. Hofforth. *et al.*, (2019) observed that most teenage mothers could not continue with their education. The observation confirms the fear expressed by Mollborn (2017) that if the teenage-mother eventually gets married, she becomes the primary caretaker and her chances of furthering her education decrease drastically.

Problems of Teenage Pregnancies

The problems associated with teenage pregnancy as highlighted by Guttmacher Institute (2019) are as listed below:

- There is a higher risk that babies born from teenage mothers are born too early, or that they have a low weight at birth.
- The mothers may also encounter complications or difficulties at birth; they have a higher risk of anemia than mothers aged 20-24.
- A pregnancy is best followed by trained medical staff during its course. Teenage mothers are less likely to receive prenatal care, often seeking it in the third trimester, if at all. The Guttmacher Institute reports that one-third of pregnant teens receive insufficient prenatal care and that their

children are more likely to suffer from health issues in childhood or be hospitalized than those born to older women.

- Like most other teenagers, teenage mothers may suffer from poor nutrition. This may lead to them having specific illnesses related to bad nutrition. Bad nutrition is a more marked problem of teenagers in developed countries.
- Problems other than the age of the mother, such as poverty and social support also affect the outcome. It is important that teenage mothers can rely on the family and the state to help them cope and educate their child. Teenage parents who can rely on family and community support, social services and child-care support are more likely to continue their education and get higher paying jobs as they progress with their education.
- Being a young mother often affects education. Teen mothers are more likely to drop out of high school. Recent studies, though, have found that many of these mothers had already dropped out of school prior to becoming pregnant.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that combines relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (Kothari, 2016). The study adopted a descriptive survey research design; the adoption of descriptive survey was useful for educational fact finding because it provided a great deal of information. This was carried out in the selected churches in Osun State which include Redeemed Christian Church of God [RCCG] and Christ Apostolic Church [CAC].

The Churches will be randomly selected because of the past record of population of youth especially teenagers, hence sufficiency of study population as required to make any research meaningful to the community and the state. The target population of the study consisted of two Christian churches with five selected from each denomination. They consist of a total of randomly selected 800 teenagers and 50 church leaders/parent, both males and females. Questionnaires

were distributed to this set of respondents [directly and indirectly filled].

Questionnaire

Adolescent girls' sociodemographic information questionnaire, which asks about their age, marital status, how many sisters or brothers they have, their economic situation, and whether they are divorced children. Other traits like parental marriage, siblings, or close family members under the age of 18, traditional parental marriage, the right age for girls to marry, who makes the final decision about whether to marry girls, and how to disagree with your parents if they choose to marry girls before the age of 18 were also evaluated.

Nine items with "right, wrong, and I do not know" responses were included in the Adolescent Girls Knowledge Questionnaire about early pregnancy.

The statement "I would like to have children before the age of 18" will be used to gauge the attitudes of adolescent girls using a 5-point Likert scale (completely agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, definitely disagree). Before sampling, the current questionnaires' reliability and validity will be evaluated. The content validity will be assessed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques; experts in this subject will assess the reliability and validity of the content.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

SPSS version 21 will be used to analyze the data. Kurtosis and Skewness will be used to determine the data's normality; they all had a normal distribution. The knowledge and attitudes of adolescent girls and their mothers regarding the causes and effects of early pregnancy will be reported using descriptive statistics, including frequency (%), mean, and standard deviation (SD). The association between knowledge score and attitude of adolescent girls and their moms towards early pregnancy and church growth will be examined using a one-way analysis of variance in the bivariate analysis. To evaluate the association between sociodemographic traits and attitude, a chi-square test will be performed ("I completely agree" and "I agree" were combined, and "I have no opinion," "I disagree," and "I completely disagree") were separated.

Table 1: Table of Sampled Population.

CHURCHES	SAMPLE SIZE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE [%]
RCCG	550	504	48.00
CAC	500	480	45.71
TOTAL	1050	984	93.71

From the above table 93.71% of the entire population responded in this research study

Table 2: Victims of Early Pregnancy.

CHURCHES	TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENT	VICTIM OF EARLY TEENAGE PREGNANCY	PERCENTAGE [%]
RCCG	505	16	3.16
CAC	500	13	2.60
TOTAL	1050	29	5.76

The table above shows the number of teenagers affected by early pregnancies in churches.

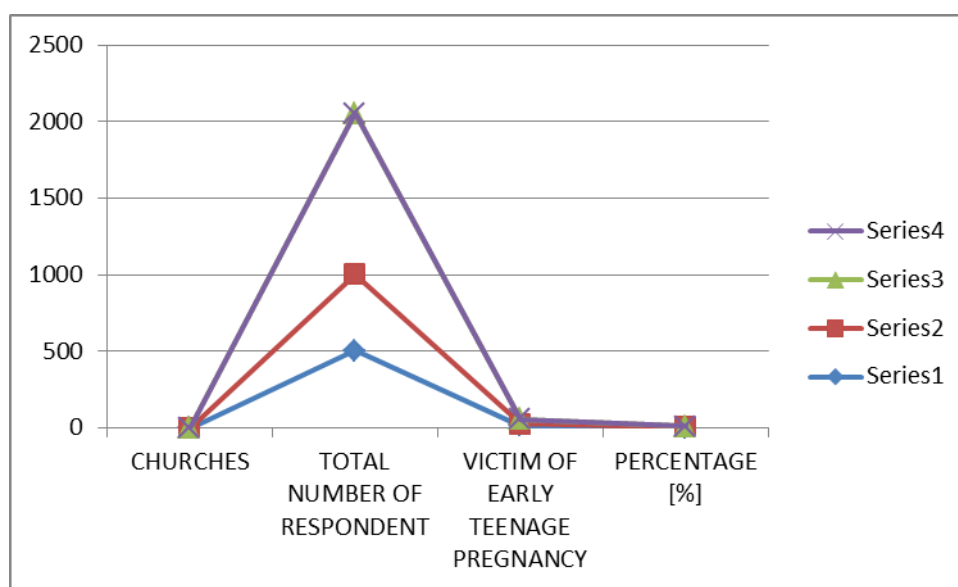


Figure 1: Number of Teenagers Affected by Early Pregnancies in Churches.

Findings in Table 2 and Figure 1 indicate that number of students whose performance was impacted by the challenge of early pregnancy in the two selected schools. Research showed that 16 of the total population of 505 representing 3.16% of RCCG were affected by early

pregnancy and out of 500 students from CAC with 13 students representing 2.60% were affected by domestic violence totaling to 5.76% of students in the two selected schools in our churches experiencing challenges of early pregnancies.

Table 3: Causes of Early Pregnancy.

CAUSES	DISTRIBUTION OF BLAME	PERCENTAGE [%]
Rapid Transition	3	10.30
Moral Decadency	8	27.50
Lack of Sex Education	4	13.70
Cultural and Religious Believes and Practices	3	10.30
Mishandling adolescence Age	11	37.90
TOTAL	29	99.70

Table 3 shows the causes of early pregnancies tendencies in Churches.

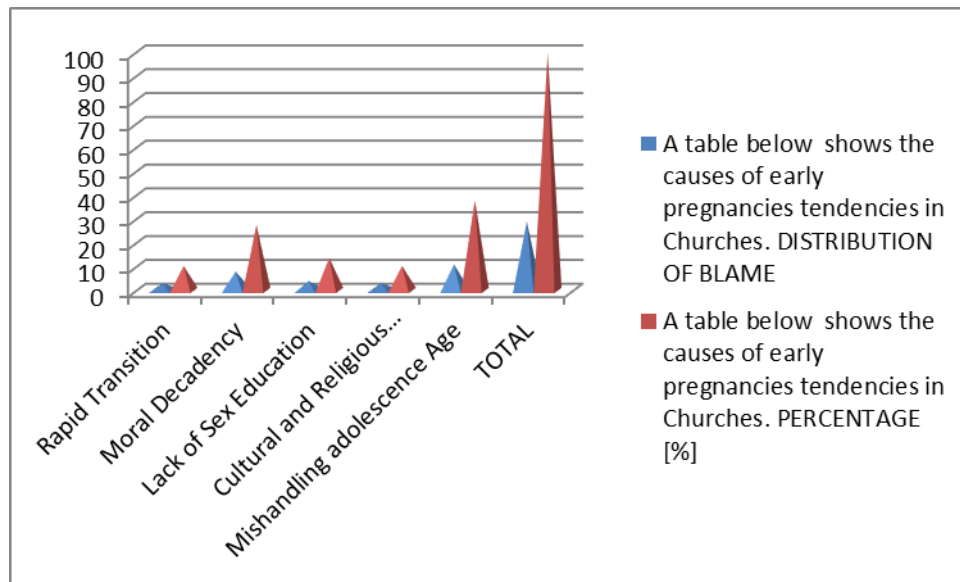


Figure 2: Graph of Distribution of Blame and Percentage Composition.

Results showed that many factors led to early pregnancy in the church, however, the degree or the rate of increase vary for different factors as shown in the graph above. Findings have shown that mishandling the adolescent stage (37.9%) in churches and at home has resulted in increasing early pregnancy.

Here an adolescent fails to cope with the ongoing pressures in his body and the presence of a pervasive community gives them the upper hand leading to early pregnancy. Moral decadency (27.5%) among the youth is also on a rapid increase in our churches. This has been attributed to mass media and the so-called modernization country wide.

Many students especially in senior three and four reported that they want to cope with the changing society; this has been increased by lack of sex education (13.7%) from both parents and teachers and clergy men and women hence leading to early pregnancies.

Rapid transition representing (10.3%) and cultural and religious teaching and beliefs representing (10.3%) have also contributed to occurrence of early pregnancy in the studied churches.

Table 4: Summary of Causes of Early Pregnancies and their Effects in Church Growth.

Causes	Effects
Rapid Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School dropout Early marriages poverty
Moral Decadency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor grades Lack of moral values
Lack of Sex Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child suffrage
Cultural and Religious Believes and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of moral ethics
Mishandling adolescence Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of future plans Poor grades

What are the Causes of Teenage Pregnancy among Teenagers in our Churches?

Table 5: Causes of Teenage Pregnancy among Girls in the Church.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SDA	MEAN	DECISION
1	Lack of Information	600	365	0	0	0	4.62	Accepted
2	Peer Pressure	515	425	0	10	5	4.50	Accepted
3	Pressure from Parent/ family on the young girl child to get married and nonuse of contraceptive	700	260	0	3	2	4.71	Accepted
4	Financial/Economic factors	800	155	2	6	2	4.80	Accepted
Grand Mean							4.66	Accepted

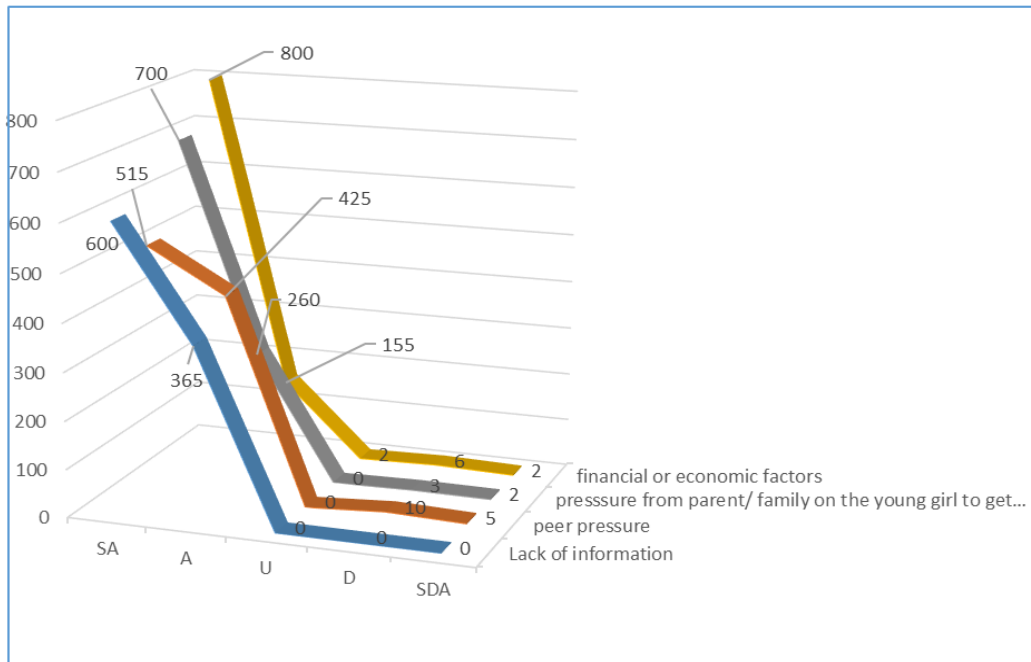


Figure 3: Causes of Teenage Pregnancy.

From Table 5, it was revealed that all the listed items are causes of teenage pregnancy among our girls in churches with financial/economic factors having the highest mean score of 4.80 while peer pressure is having least mean score of 4.5. The average mean of 4.66 was obtained this implies that all the listed items are causes of teenage pregnancies among our girls in churches.

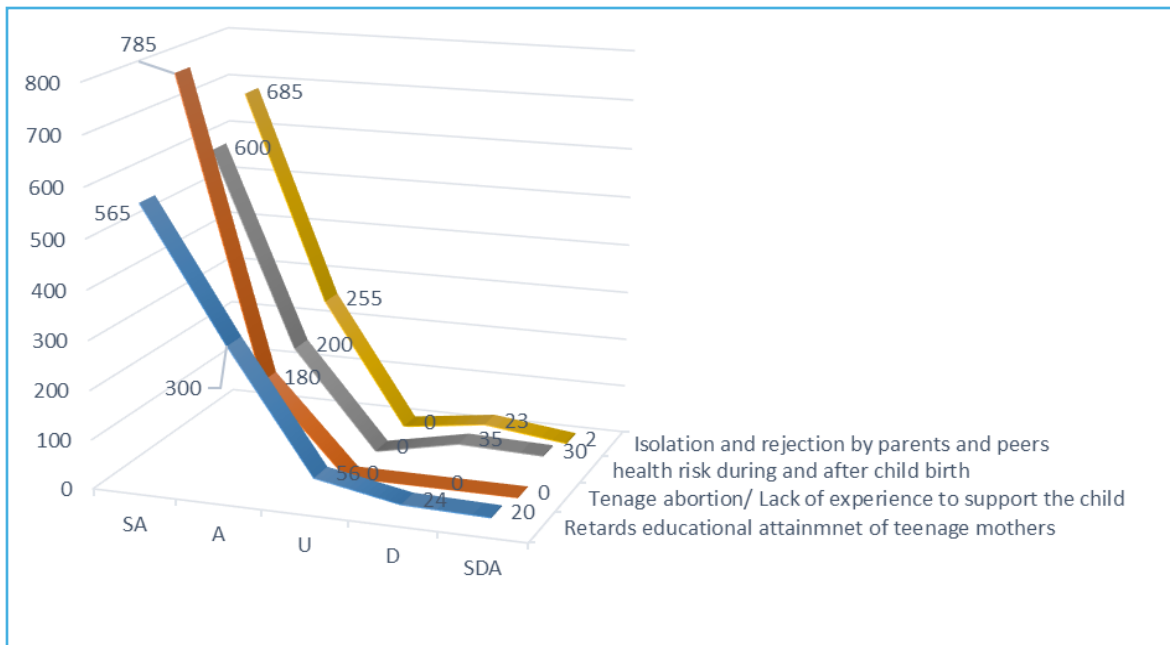
From the Figure 3, we can deduce that 600 correspondent strongly agree and 365

correspondent agreed that lack of information contribute to the cause of teenage pregnancy, 515 correspondent strongly agree and 425 correspondent agreed that peer pressure contribute to the cause of teenage pregnancy, while 700 correspondent strongly agree and 260 correspondent agreed that pressure from parent or family contribute to teenage pregnancy and 800 correspondent strongly agree and 155 agreed that financial or economic factors.

What are the Effects of Teenage Pregnancy among Girls in the Church?

Table 6: The Effect of Teenage Pregnancy among Female Secondary School Students.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SDA	MEAN	DECISION
5	Retards educational attainment of teenage mothers	565	300	56	24	20	4.42	Accepted
6	Teenage abortion/lack of experience to support the child	785	180	0	0	0	4.81	Accepted
7	Health risk during and after childbirth	600	200	0	35	30	4.00	Accepted
8	Isolation and rejection by parents and peers	685	255	0	23	2	4.65	Accepted
Grand Mean							4.47	Accepted



- Retards educational attainment of teenage mothers
- Teenage abortion/ Lack of experience to support the child
- health risk during and after child birth
- Isolation and rejection by parents and peers

Figure 4: Effect of Teenage Pregnancy.

From the chart above, we can deduce that 565 correspondents strongly agree that retards educational attainment of teenage mother has effect on teenage pregnancy among female while

300 agreed that it has effect. 785 of the correspondents strongly agree that teenage abortion or lack of experience to support child has effect on teenage pregnancy.

What are the Strategies to Curb Causes and Effects of Teenage Pregnancy among Teenage Girls in the Selected Churches?

Table 7: Strategies to Curb Causes and Effects of Teenage Pregnancy among Teenage Girls.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SDA	MEAN	DECISION
9	Retards educational attainment of teenage mothers	563	302	59	23	18	4.71	Accepted
10	Teenage abortion/lack of experience to support the child	700	260	0	3	2	4.41	Accepted
11	Health risk during and after childbirth	665	260	20	14	6	4.62	Accepted
12	Isolation and rejection by parents and peers	533	400	19	10	3	4.50	Accepted
Grand Mean							4.56	Accepted

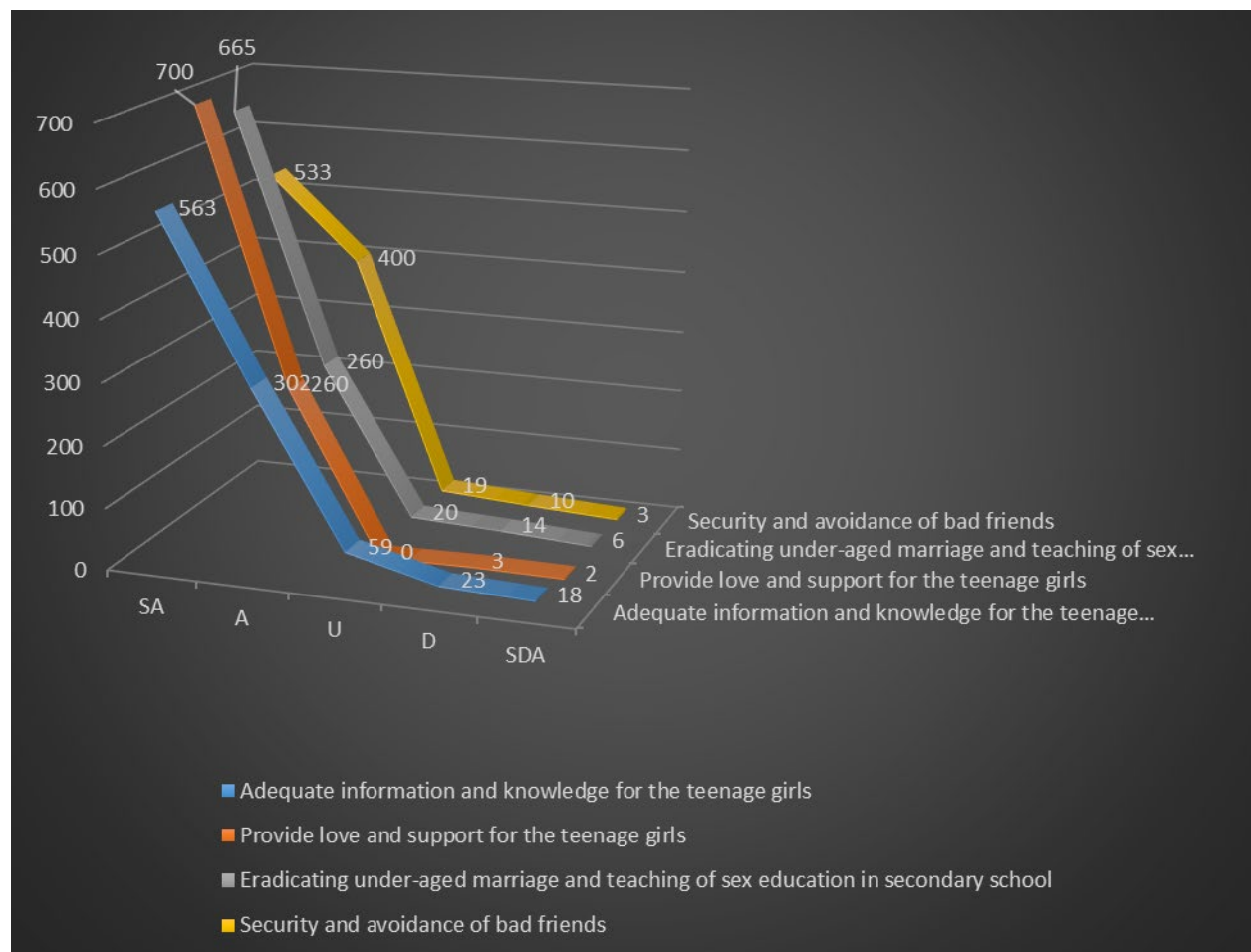


Figure 5: Strategies to Curb Causes and Effects of Teenage Pregnancy among Teenage Girls.

Results in Table 7, show that all the listed items are strategies to curb causes and effect of teenage pregnancy among teenage girls in the selected churches with Adequate information and knowledge for the teenage girls having the highest mean score of 4.71 while Provide love and support for the teenage girls is having least mean score of 4.41. An average mean of 4.56 was obtained. This implies that all the listed items are strategies to curb or reduce the causes and effect of teenage pregnancy among teenage girls in the selected churches.

From Figure 5, we can deduce that 563 correspondents strongly agree that adequate information and knowledge will curb causes and effect of teenage pregnancy while 302 correspondents agreed. 700 correspondents strongly agreed that providing love and support for the teenage girls will also curb teenage pregnancy among females.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Discussion of Findings

Out of a total of 984 respondents, or 86.2%, responded in the affirmative when asked about the causes and effects of early pregnancies in secondary schools. In response to a follow-up question about the causes of this issue, 3 respondents (10.3%) said it is because of rapid transition among schoolgirls, 8 respondents (27.9%) said it is because of moral decadence, 13 respondents (13%) said it is because of a lack of sex education, and 3 respondents (10.3%) said it is because of culture and religion.

According to our research, the majority of respondents (3.79%) said that they in Kole district are failing to address the effects of the adolescent stage that lead to early pregnancy. It is inferred from the result based on research questions one accepted all the listed variables which are lack of information, peer pressure, family pressure and economics. These factors are all causes of teenage pregnancy. This is in line with the study of Audu (2011) who listed the causes of teenage pregnancy to be; lack of knowledge, dating violence, family factors, influence of mass media, religious belief, peer pressure, teenage drinking, sexual abuse or rape, childhood environment and general factors. Also, according to Kinby (2010), in teenage pregnancy, victims lacked knowledge

or were likely not properly trained on safe sex by their parents, schools, or development agencies, which may have prepared them to deal with peers who lured them into sex prematurely.

The results of study question two's second table indicate that all respondents agreed that teenage pregnancy among secondary school students has the effects indicated, including retarded education, adolescent abortion, loneliness, and rejection, among others. This result is consistent with Kosh's (2012) assertion that teenage pregnancies can result in unfinished education, unemployment, and a host of other traumatic experiences.

Teens who lack sexual education end up having abortions because they realize they are not mature enough to parent at such a young age and still have a lot of goals to pursue in life. Additionally, teenage pregnancy's effects on maternal and perinatal health are particularly concerning among teenagers who are. The result from the research question three discussed about the strategies to curb teenage pregnancy among female student in secondary school supports that of Nwosu (2011) which states that adequate information and knowledge for the teenage girls, providing love and support security and avoidance of bad friends, eradicating of under aged marriage are some strategies to curb teenage pregnancy among female secondary school.

Implications of our Findings on Society Growth

The awareness of self-actualization and self-discipline among youth in our church can be greatly improved by Pastors and church workers. Adolescent girls have learned about the causes and effects of adolescent pregnancy from them with the use of adequate information. Church should also employ a distinctive method for identifying student misbehavior. A deeper comprehension of these principles will help and give the necessary information to this group of adolescents to help them deal with the problems associated with adolescence. Therefore, imparting sound knowledge to teenage girls is crucial to guaranteeing their scholastic success, future prospects, and the growth of our church.

Conclusion

In the two chosen secondary schools in our churches, the study was carried out to determine the cause and effects of early pregnancy on teenage girls. According to the survey, 6.2% of teenage girls struggle with early pregnancies, which has a negative impact on their involvement in church activities as well as other aspects of their lives. The study also showed that early pregnancy had a detrimental impact on respondents' academic and spiritual performance and further supported the idea that there was a substantial negative correlation between early pregnancy and church growth.

Recommendations

Upon analysis of the data and the resulting evidence obtained from the research coupled with the data available, the following recommendations were provided:

- Sensitization programs should be initiated by relevant bodies to educate the populace on the impact of teenage pregnancies.
- Psychological help should be provided for teenage girls to help them deal with pressures of peers and societal stigmatization.
- Contraceptive education should be introduced in one of our family Sunday programs.
- Policies that facilitate better health care services for teenagers should be deployed by government and non-government organizations to religious houses and schools.
- Government and non-governmental organizations should make contraceptive services easily accessible and affordable.

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