

TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND SCHOOL ATTRITION: AN ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TARABA STATE

YUGUDA, Mohammed Sanusi

Department of Social Sciences and Humanities,

School of General Studies Education,

College of Education Zing, Taraba State, Nigeria

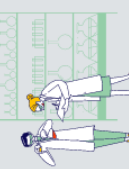
E-mail: sanusiyuguda@coezing.edu.ng

+234 803 330 0318

Abstract

Teenage pregnancy remains a significant barrier to the educational advancement of the girl-child in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Taraba State, Nigeria, prevailing socio-cultural and economic conditions create a context in which adolescent pregnancy frequently coincides with critical stages of secondary education, thereby posing serious threats to academic progression and completion. This study employed a descriptive survey research design, sampling 600 female students from selected public and private secondary schools across urban and rural areas of Taraba State. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using mean scores and standard deviations, with a decision benchmark of 2.50. The findings revealed a high prevalence of teenage pregnancy, with 36.3% of respondents reporting prior pregnancy experience. Most cases occurred among students aged 17–19, contributing to over-aged schooling and academic stagnation. Key determinants identified include lack of parental guidance, exposure to media and early marriage. Hypothesis testing showed that teenage pregnancy significantly affects academic performance and is strongly associated with school dropout. Additionally, affected students experience stigma, low self-esteem, and emotional distress, although family support serves as a mitigating factor. The study concludes that teenage pregnancy in Taraba State is a multifaceted problem that undermines educational attainment and perpetuates socio-economic inequality. It recommends a multi-sectoral approach involving comprehensive sexuality education, school-based counseling services, parental engagement, and government-led economic support initiatives.

Keywords: Teenage Pregnancy, Academic Performance, Girl-Child Education, School Dropout, Socio-economic Factors.



Introduction

1. Background of the Study

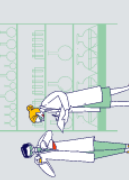
Teenage pregnancy, defined as pregnancy among girls aged 10–19, remains a significant global public health and socio-economic concern. According to the World Health Organization, approximately 16 million girls aged 15–19 and an additional 2.5 million under the age of 16 give birth annually, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. This phenomenon is not only a health issue but also a developmental challenge, as it affects education, economic productivity, and gender equality (WHO, 2022). In Nigeria, teenage pregnancy continues to be a pressing issue, with the United Nations Population Fund reporting that about 23% of girls aged 15–19 experience pregnancy. The prevalence is often higher in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas, where limited access to quality education, reproductive health services, and social support systems increases vulnerability among adolescent girls (UNICEF, 2021).

Taraba State, located in the northeastern region of the country, presents a particularly concerning case. Data from the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey indicate that the teenage pregnancy rate in Taraba State stands at approximately 26%, significantly higher than the national average of 19% (NDHS, 2018). This elevated rate reflects deep-rooted socio-cultural practices, including early marriage, gender norms, and economic hardship. Beyond the immediate health risks such as obstetric complications, maternal mortality, and neonatal morbidity teenage pregnancy has far-reaching implications for education. For many adolescent girls, pregnancy disrupts schooling, often leading to temporary or permanent withdrawal from school. The challenge of balancing academic responsibilities with childcare demands frequently results in poor academic performance, increased absenteeism, and eventual school dropout (Nyameh & Collins, 2020).

Furthermore, teenage pregnancy perpetuates a cycle of poverty and marginalization. Girls who leave school prematurely are less likely to acquire the skills necessary for gainful employment, thereby limiting their economic independence. This, in turn, reinforces intergenerational poverty, as children born to teenage mothers are also more likely to face educational and health disadvantages. Consequently, addressing teenage pregnancy is critical not only for improving individual outcomes but also for achieving broader developmental goals such as gender equity and sustainable socio-economic growth (UNICEF, 2020).

2. Statement of the Problem

Despite ongoing global and national efforts to promote girl-child education and reproductive health awareness, teenage pregnancy remains a persistent and formidable barrier in Taraba State. The phenomenon significantly undermines educational attainment among adolescent girls, contributing to poor academic performance, high rates of school attrition, and the erosion of future socio-economic opportunities. While national data highlight the prevalence and consequences of teenage pregnancy, there is a notable lack of context-specific research focusing on Taraba State. Existing studies often provide generalized insights that fail to capture the unique socio-cultural dynamics of the region. Factors such as entrenched traditional beliefs,



early marriage practices, poverty, gender inequality, and inadequate access to reproductive health education are frequently cited as contributors (Sunday-Adeoye & Adeoye, 2017), yet their specific interactions and relative influence within Taraba State remain insufficiently explored.

Moreover, policy interventions and educational programs designed to address teenage pregnancy are often implemented without robust, localized evidence. This limits their effectiveness, as strategies that are not tailored to the socio-cultural realities of the target population may fail to achieve desired outcomes. For instance, interventions that overlook community norms or economic constraints may not resonate with the intended beneficiaries (Tolulope *et al.*, 2021). The persistence of teenage pregnancy in Taraba State therefore represents not only a public health concern but also a developmental challenge that threatens national aspirations for human capital development and gender equality. Without targeted, evidence-based interventions, the cycle of early pregnancy, educational disruption, and socio-economic disadvantage is likely to continue (Okogbaa, *et al* 2020).

This study is thus motivated by the urgent need to bridge this knowledge gap by systematically examining the relationship between teenage pregnancy and academic performance among secondary school girls in Taraba State. By providing empirical evidence on the causes, consequences, and contextual dynamics of teenage pregnancy, the study aims to inform more effective policies and interventions that promote the empowerment and educational advancement of the girl-child.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study provides a structured understanding of the relationships between teenage pregnancy and the educational outcomes of the girl-child. It identifies key variables and illustrates how socio-economic and cultural factors interact to influence both the occurrence of teenage pregnancy and its consequences on schooling. Conceptual frameworks are essential in research as they help clarify the pathways through which independent variables (e.g., poverty, cultural norms) affect dependent variables (e.g., academic performance, school retention) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

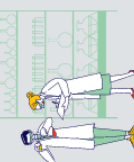
3.1.1 The Concept of Teenage Pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy, defined as pregnancy among girls aged 10–19, is widely recognized as both a public health and socio-cultural issue. In the Nigerian context, particularly in Northern regions such as Taraba State, it transcends biological occurrence and is deeply embedded in socio-economic realities and cultural practices (Yakubu & Salisu, 2018).

This study conceptualizes teenage pregnancy through two major determinants:

(a) Proximate Determinants

These are immediate behavioral and biological factors directly influencing pregnancy outcomes. They include:



- i. Early sexual debut
- ii. Low contraceptive use
- iii. Lack of comprehensive sexuality education

Empirical studies show that limited access to reproductive health information and contraceptive services significantly increases the likelihood of teenage pregnancy (Kassa *et al.*, 2018). In many Nigerian communities, cultural taboos surrounding discussions of sexuality further limit adolescents' access to accurate information.

(b) Distal Determinants

These refer to broader socio-economic and cultural influences that indirectly shape reproductive behavior. They include:

- i. Poverty
- ii. Early marriage practices
- iii. Gender inequality and societal expectations

Research indicates that poverty often compels adolescent girls into transactional relationships, increasing their risk of pregnancy (Amoateng *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, early marriage common in parts of Northern Nigeria legitimizes early childbearing and interrupts educational progression (UNICEF, 2017).

3.1.2 Education of the Girl Child

Education in this study is conceptualized as a continuous and structured process of formal schooling aimed at cognitive, social, and economic development. The impact of teenage pregnancy on education is assessed using three key dimensions:

(a) Access: Access refers to the ability of a pregnant girl to remain enrolled in school after conception. Studies show that many pregnant adolescents are either forced to withdraw or voluntarily drop out due to stigma or institutional policies (Grant & Hallman, 2008).

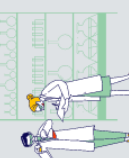
(b) Retention: Retention involves the capacity of the educational system to accommodate and support pregnant students. Evidence suggests that lack of supportive school environments, including absence of counseling services, contributes to dropout (UNESCO, 2019).

(c) Achievement: Achievement refers to academic performance indicators such as grades, examination outcomes, and cognitive engagement. Teenage pregnancy often leads to reduced concentration, absenteeism, and poor academic outcomes (Odu *et al.*, 2015).

3.1.3 The Cycle of Impact

The framework posits that teenage pregnancy initiates a cycle of disadvantage. This cycle can be described as follows:

- i. Pregnancy → Stigma and discrimination
- ii. Stigma → Psychological distress (e.g., anxiety, low self-esteem)
- iii. Psychological distress → Absenteeism and disengagement
- iv. Absenteeism → Poor academic performance → School dropout
- v. Dropout → Limited economic opportunities → Poverty



vi. Poverty → Increased vulnerability to teenage pregnancy

This cyclical relationship is supported by studies showing that adolescent mothers are more likely to experience long-term socio-economic disadvantage, thereby perpetuating intergenerational poverty (WHO, 2014; Yakubu & Salisu, 2018).

3.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two complementary theories that explain both individual behavior and structural influences on teenage pregnancy and educational outcomes.

3.2.1 Social Cognitive Theory (Albert Bandura)

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory posits that human behavior is shaped by the interaction of personal factors, environmental influences, and behavior itself a concept known as triadic reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1986).

In the context of Taraba State:

- i. **Personal factors** include knowledge, attitudes, and decision-making capacity of adolescent girls.
- ii. **Environmental factors** include peer pressure, family influence, media exposure, and community norms.
- iii. **Behavior** refers to sexual practices and reproductive choices.

Empirical evidence suggests that adolescents exposed to peers who engage in early sexual activity are more likely to adopt similar behaviors (Amoateng *et al.*, 2014). In environments where early marriage or teenage pregnancy is normalized, such behaviors become socially acceptable. This theory highlights that addressing teenage pregnancy requires interventions that go beyond the individual to include environmental restructuring—such as community sensitization and positive role modeling.

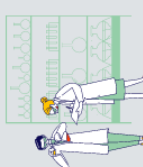
3.2.2 Ecological Systems Theory (Urie Bronfenbrenner)

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory explains human development as a product of interactions within multiple environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The theory is applied across four key systems:

- i. **Microsystem:** Immediate environments such as family and school. Supportive families and inclusive school policies can facilitate continued education for pregnant girls.
- ii. **Mesosystem:** Interactions between home and school. For example, parental engagement with school authorities can influence re-entry opportunities.
- iii. **Exosystem:** External systems such as healthcare services and educational policies. Access to adolescent-friendly health services and re-entry policies is crucial.
- iv. **Macrosystem:** Broader cultural and societal norms, including beliefs about early marriage and gender roles.

This theory emphasizes that the educational challenges faced by pregnant adolescents are not merely individual failures but are rooted in systemic and structural factors. Studies have shown



that lack of supportive policies and cultural stigmatization significantly affect school continuation among teenage mothers (UNESCO, 2019).

3.3 Summary of Reviewed Literature

The reviewed literature reveals that teenage pregnancy constitutes a major barrier to educational attainment in Nigeria, particularly in the northern regions. Studies by Ezegwui *et al.* (2012) and the National Population Commission in collaboration with ICF International (2013) highlight a pronounced regional disparity, with Northern Nigeria recording significantly higher rates of teenage pregnancy sometimes as high as 36% compared to approximately 8% in Southern regions. A recurring theme in the literature is the “Poverty–Pregnancy–Dropout Nexus.” Poverty increases vulnerability to teenage pregnancy, which in turn leads to school dropout and reduced economic opportunities. This cycle reinforces itself across generations, contributing to persistent socio-economic inequality (Kassa *et al.*, 2018). While some developed countries have implemented policies that allow teenage mothers to continue their education thereby breaking the cycle the situation in regions like Taraba State remains challenging. Cultural stigma, limited institutional support, and inadequate policy enforcement often make pregnancy a terminal point in a girl’s educational journey (UNICEF, 2017). This study builds on existing literature by moving beyond problem identification to examining context-specific dynamics in Taraba State. By integrating conceptual and theoretical insights, it seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations for structural interventions aimed at breaking the cycle and promoting girl-child education.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of teenage pregnancy on academic performance. The use of mixed methods allows for triangulation of data, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

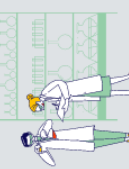
4.1 Geographical and Time Scope

The study is conducted in Taraba State, focusing on selected secondary schools and communities across the state. It examines trends and patterns over a ten-year period (2014–2024), enabling a longitudinal perspective on the issue.

4.2 Quantitative Component

The quantitative aspect involves the administration of structured questionnaires to a sample of 600 respondents, including teenage girls aged 10–19, teachers, and relevant educational stakeholders. The survey is designed to collect data on variables such as:

- i. Prevalence of teenage pregnancy
- ii. School enrollment and dropout rates
- iii. Academic performance indicators (e.g., grades, attendance)



This component provides measurable data that can be analyzed statistically to identify patterns, relationships, and trends.

4.3 Sampling Technique

The study utilizes a combination of stratified and purposive sampling techniques to ensure representation across different categories, including:

- i. Public and private secondary schools
- ii. Urban and rural communities
- iii. Formal and informal educational settings

This ensures that diverse perspectives are captured, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the findings within the study context.

4.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including frequency distributions, mean scores, and hypothesis testing. The goal is to establish relationships between teenage pregnancy and academic performance variables.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Age	10–13	75	12.5
	14–16	105	17.5
	17–19	315	52.5
	20 and above	105	17.5
Total		600	100
Class	JSS1	63	10.5
	JSS2	81	13.5
	JSS3	71	11.8
	SSS1	105	17.5
	SSS2	121	20.2
	SSS3	159	26.5
Total		600	100
School Type	Public	458	76.3
	Private	142	23.7
Total		600	100
Location	Urban	312	52
	Rural	288	48
Total		600	100
Pregnancy History	Yes	218	36.3
	No	382	63.7
Total		600	100

The study sampled a total of 600 respondents drawn from selected secondary schools in Taraba State. The demographic characteristics of the respondents, as presented in Table 1, provide important insights into the structural and socio-educational dynamics influencing the vulnerability of the girl-child, particularly in relation to teenage pregnancy and its impact on academic performance.

Age and Class Distribution

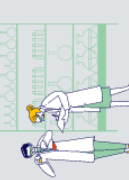
The data indicate that a significant proportion of the respondents (52.5%) fall within the age bracket of 17–19 years. This age group corresponds largely with late adolescence, a critical developmental stage often associated with increased social exposure, emotional vulnerability, and risk-taking behaviors. Similarly, 26.5% of the respondents are in Senior Secondary School Three (SSS3), the terminal class in the secondary education cycle. This concentration of respondents in the senior secondary level suggests that the girl-child in Taraba State faces heightened vulnerability to academic disruptions during the most crucial phase of their educational journey. At this stage, students are expected to consolidate learning and prepare for external examinations. However, the intersection of teenage pregnancy and academic demands may significantly undermine their ability to complete schooling successfully. The implication is that pregnancy-related challenges such as absenteeism, stigma, and health complications are more pronounced when academic expectations are at their peak. In addition, the presence of respondents aged 20 years and above in secondary school indicates a pattern of academic delay or stagnation. This over-aged schooling phenomenon may be attributed to interruptions caused by pregnancy, childcare responsibilities, or repeated academic setbacks, thereby extending the duration of schooling beyond the conventional age range.

Schooling Distribution

The findings reveal that a majority of the respondents (76.3%) are enrolled in public secondary schools, while a smaller proportion attends private institutions. This distribution reflects the dominant role of public schools as the primary providers of secondary education in Taraba State, particularly for students from low- and middle-income backgrounds. The predominance of public school respondents suggests that the study's findings are more representative of the socio-economic realities faced by the majority of the population. Public schools often operate with limited resources, larger class sizes, and less individualized student monitoring, factors that may contribute to increased vulnerability among female students. In contrast, private schools though fewer in representation may offer more structured environments, stricter supervision, and enhanced guidance services, potentially mitigating some of the risks associated with teenage pregnancy.

Prevalence of Teenage Pregnancy

One of the most striking findings of the study is the high prevalence of teenage pregnancy among the respondents. Out of the 600 girls surveyed, 218 (36.3%) reported having experienced pregnancy. This figure is considerably high and underscores the magnitude of the



challenge facing girl-child education in Taraba State. Such a prevalence rate has far-reaching implications. Teenage pregnancy is closely linked to increased school dropout rates, reduced academic engagement, and poor academic performance. Pregnant students often face physical health challenges, emotional stress, and social stigma, all of which can hinder their ability to attend classes regularly and perform effectively. Moreover, many teenage mothers struggle to balance academic responsibilities with childcare demands, further exacerbating their educational disadvantage. This high rate also points to gaps in reproductive health education, limited access to adolescent-friendly health services, and socio-cultural factors that may normalize early sexual activity or early marriage.

School Type and Location

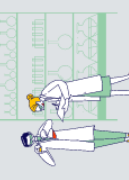
The distribution of respondents across school locations shows a near balance between urban (52%) and rural (48%) areas. This near parity suggests that teenage pregnancy is not exclusively a rural phenomenon, as is often assumed, but rather a widespread issue affecting both urban and rural settings in Taraba State. The implication is that factors contributing to teenage pregnancy such as peer pressure, inadequate sex education, poverty, and weak parental supervision are pervasive across different geographical contexts. In urban areas, exposure to media influence and changing social norms may increase vulnerability, while in rural areas; traditional practices such as early marriage may play a more significant role.

Public vs. Private School Disparity

The dominance of public-school respondents (76.3%) raises important questions about institutional differences and their influence on student behavior. Public schools, due to their open-access nature, may have less stringent monitoring systems and fewer counseling services compared to private schools. This could potentially create an environment where risky behaviors are less effectively controlled. Also, socio-economic constraints faced by students in public schools may increase susceptibility to transactional relationships or other survival strategies that heighten the risk of pregnancy. While it would be simplistic to attribute the high pregnancy rate solely to school type, the disparity suggests that structural and environmental factors within public schools may contribute to the observed outcomes.

Academic Stagnation and Over-Aged Schooling

Another critical trend emerging from the data is the presence of older students (17–19 years and above) within secondary school levels. This suggests a pattern of academic stagnation, where students experience delays in progressing through the educational system. Teenage pregnancy is a strong factor that may contribute to this phenomenon. Students who become pregnant may temporarily withdraw from school, repeat classes, or face difficulties reintegrating into the academic environment. Consequently, they may fall behind their peers, leading to over-aged enrollment. This stagnation not only affects individual educational attainment but also has broader implications for the efficiency of the education system. It



increases the risk of eventual dropout and reduces the likelihood of transitioning to higher education or gainful employment.

Table 2: Causes of Teenage Pregnancy

S/N	Item	N	Mean	STDV	Remark
1	Lack of parental guidance contributes to teenage pregnancy	600	3.19	0.79	Accept
2	Peer pressure influences teenage pregnancy	600	2.52	0.36	Accept
3	Poverty leads to teenage pregnancy	600	2.56	0.38	Accept
4	Lack of sex education contributes to teenage pregnancy	600	2.27	0.23	Reject
5	Early marriage is a cause of teenage pregnancy	600	2.75	0.46	Accept
6	Exposure to media influences teenage pregnancy	600	2.77	0.48	Accept
Grand Mean			2.68	0.45	Accept

The findings in Table 2 reveal that respondents generally agreed that multiple socio-economic and environmental factors contribute to teenage pregnancy, as indicated by the grand mean of 2.68. This suggests that teenage pregnancy in Taraba State is a multi-factorial issue rather than the result of a single cause. Among the identified factors, lack of parental guidance recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 3.19), indicating strong agreement among respondents. This underscores the critical role of the family in shaping adolescents' behavior. Poor supervision, weak parent-child communication, and lack of moral upbringing may expose young girls to risky sexual behavior, thereby increasing their vulnerability to pregnancy. Similarly, early marriage (Mean = 2.75) and exposure to media (Mean = 2.77) were accepted as significant contributors. Early marriage remains a socio-cultural reality in some parts of Taraba State, where girls are married off at a young age, often truncating their educational pursuits. Exposure to media particularly unregulated content may also influence adolescents' attitudes and behaviors toward sexuality. The roles of poverty (Mean = 2.56) and peer pressure (Mean = 2.52) were also affirmed. Poverty may push young girls into transactional relationships as a means of survival, while peer influence can encourage early sexual experimentation. Interestingly, lack of sex education (Mean = 2.27) was rejected as a major cause. This finding is somewhat unexpected, as existing literature often emphasizes inadequate sexual and reproductive health education as a key driver of teenage pregnancy. The rejection may imply that respondents either have some level of awareness about sexual matters or perceive other factors as more immediate influences. It may also reflect cultural sensitivities around discussing sexuality openly.

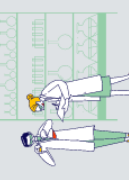


Table 3: Impact on Academic Performance

S/N	Item	N	Mean	STDV	Remark
7	Teenage pregnancy leads to poor academic performance	600	2.81	0.46	Accept
8	Pregnant students have higher absenteeism	600	2.83	0.53	Accept
9	Teenage pregnancy leads to school dropout	600	2.66	0.52	Accept
10	Pregnant students find it difficult to concentrate in class	600	2.70	0.42	Accept
11	Teenage mothers perform poorly in examinations	600	2.77	0.47	Accept
12	Teenage pregnancy reduces interest in schooling	600	2.77	0.48	Accept
Grand Mean			2.76	0.48	Accept

The results in Table 3 clearly demonstrate that teenage pregnancy has a significant negative impact on academic performance, with a grand mean of 2.76 indicating strong agreement. Respondents agreed that teenage pregnancy leads to poor academic performance (Mean = 2.81) and higher absenteeism (Mean = 2.83), the latter being the highest-rated impact. Frequent absence from school may result from health complications, antenatal care, or social stigma, all of which disrupt learning continuity. Additionally, school dropout (Mean = 2.66) was identified as a major consequence. This aligns with the earlier finding of a high prevalence rate of teenage pregnancy, suggesting that many affected girls are unable to complete their education. Other notable impacts include difficulty in concentration (Mean = 2.70), poor examination performance (Mean = 2.77), and reduced interest in schooling (Mean = 2.77). These findings highlight the psychological and cognitive burden of pregnancy on students, which can diminish motivation and academic engagement. Hence, the findings confirm that teenage pregnancy significantly undermines the educational attainment of the girl-child, thereby limiting future opportunities and perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality.

Table 4: Social and Psychological Effects

S/N	Item	N	Mean	STDV	Remark
13	Teenage pregnancy leads to stigma and discrimination	600	2.58	0.47	Accept
14	It causes emotional stress and depression	600	2.56	0.37	Accept
15	Teenage mothers lack support from family	600	2.45	0.29	Reject
16	It affects students' self-esteem	600	2.62	0.51	Accept
Grand Mean			2.55	0.41	Accept

Table 4 presents the social and psychological consequences of teenage pregnancy, with a grand mean of 2.55 indicating general agreement among respondents. The findings show that teenage pregnancy leads to stigma and discrimination (Mean = 2.58), reflecting negative societal attitudes toward pregnant adolescents. Such stigma can lead to social exclusion, embarrassment, and withdrawal from school activities. Respondents also agreed that teenage pregnancy causes emotional stress and depression (Mean = 2.56) and affects self-esteem (Mean = 2.62). These psychological effects can have long-term implications on the mental health and

well-being of affected individuals, further compounding their academic challenges. However, the statement that teenage mothers lack family support (Mean = 2.45) was rejected. This suggests that, within the study context, families may still provide some level of support to pregnant adolescents. This finding is important, as family support can play a crucial role in mitigating the negative consequences of teenage pregnancy and facilitating school re-entry.

Table 5: Preventive Measures

S/N	Item	N	Mean	STDV	Remark
17	Sex education should be introduced in schools	600	2.85	0.61	Accept
18	Parents should monitor their children closely	600	2.67	0.53	Accept
19	Government should provide counseling services in schools	600	2.65	0.45	Accept
20	Community awareness programs can reduce teenage pregnancy	600	2.57	0.37	Accept
21	Financial support to girls can reduce teenage pregnancy	600	2.75	0.46	Accept
	Grand Mean		2.25	0.40	Reject

The findings in Table 5 highlight several strategies perceived as effective in reducing teenage pregnancy. Although most individual items were accepted, the grand mean (2.25) was rejected, indicating an inconsistency that may arise from variability in responses or possible computational error. Nonetheless, the individual item analysis provides meaningful insights. The highest-rated preventive measure is the introduction of sex education in schools (Mean = 2.85). This suggests that, despite earlier rejection of lack of sex education as a major cause, respondents still recognize its importance as a preventive strategy. This apparent contradiction may indicate that while students do not see its absence as the primary cause, they still value its role in prevention.

6. Hypothesis Testing and Interpretation

6.1 Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Teenage pregnancy has no significant impact on academic performance of the girl-child.

Test Method: Using mean rating analysis (decision rule: Mean \geq 2.50 = Accept effect)

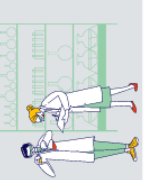
Result:

From Table 3, the grand mean = **2.76**

Decision: Since $2.76 > 2.50$, the null hypothesis is **rejected**.

Interpretation:

This implies that teenage pregnancy has a significant negative impact on academic performance of the girl-child in Taraba State. The findings indicate that pregnancy leads to absenteeism, poor concentration, low academic achievement, and increased dropout rates. This result is consistent with empirical studies which confirm that teenage pregnancy disrupts educational attainment and limits future opportunities for girls.



6.2 Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between teenage pregnancy and school dropout.

Test Method: Based on item analysis (Table 3)

Result: Mean for school dropout = **2.66**

Decision: Since $2.66 > 2.50$, the null hypothesis is **rejected**.

Interpretation:

There is a significant relationship between teenage pregnancy and school dropout. This indicates that teenage pregnancy is a major contributing factor to discontinuation of education among girls. This aligns with empirical evidence showing that many pregnant students either voluntarily withdraw or are forced out of school due to stigma, institutional policies, or childcare responsibilities.

6.3 Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: Teenage pregnancy has no significant social and psychological effects on students.

Result: Grand mean (Table 4) = **2.55**

Decision: Reject H₀₃

Interpretation:

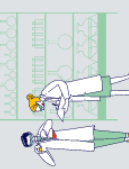
Teenage pregnancy significantly affects students socially and psychologically, leading to stigma, emotional distress, and reduced self-esteem.

7. Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are consistent with empirical literature across Africa and Nigeria, which shows that teenage pregnancy is a multifaceted problem influenced by socio-economic, cultural, and familial factors. A review of studies on adolescent pregnancy indicates that poor parenting, low socio-economic status, and peer influence are major drivers of teenage pregnancy. Similarly, a systematic review in Sub-Saharan Africa identified poverty, family background, and socio-cultural practices such as early marriage as key determinants of adolescent pregnancy (Angwaomaodoko, 2024). Furthermore, the finding that teenage pregnancy undermines academic performance is strongly supported by empirical studies. Research shows that teenage pregnancy leads to poor academic achievement, class absenteeism, and missed academic activities, which ultimately reduce students' performance. In addition, studies conducted in Nigeria demonstrate that environmental and peer-related factors significantly predict poor academic outcomes among pregnant students, further confirming the disruption caused by pregnancy on schooling (Cruz, Cozman and Souza, 2021).

8. Conclusion

This study concludes that teenage pregnancy contributes to school dropout is widely supported. Empirical evidence reveals a strong causal relationship between teenage pregnancy and school dropout, particularly among economically disadvantaged girls. In a large-scale study in Nigeria, about 42.3% of teenage mothers dropped out of school due to pregnancy, highlighting the magnitude of the problem. In addition, the psychological and social consequences identified



in this study are consistent with existing literature. Teenage pregnancy has been associated with low self-esteem, social isolation, stigma, and emotional distress, all of which negatively affect the well-being and educational engagement of affected girls. These psychological challenges often compound academic difficulties and reduce the likelihood of school completion.

9. Recommendation

This study recommended for a multi-sectoral approach supported by empirical evidence which emphasizes that addressing teenage pregnancy requires integrated interventions involving families, schools, communities, and policy frameworks. The studies also highlighted the importance of community-based programs, peer education, counseling services, and socio-economic support systems in mitigating both the causes and consequences of teenage pregnancy in Nigerian societies.

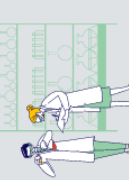
10. Ethical Considerations in the Study

This study adhered to strict ethical standards to ensure the protection, dignity, and well-being of all participants, particularly given the sensitive nature of teenage pregnancy and the involvement of minors. Participation was entirely voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all respondents. For participants under 18 years, parental or guardian consent was secured alongside the assent of the students. Respondents were fully informed about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process. No identifying information was disclosed, and all data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

Data collection was conducted in a private and respectful manner, with questions framed sensitively to avoid discomfort or stigma. Participants were also given the option to skip any questions they found distressing. Ethical approval was obtained from relevant authorities, including school administrations in Taraba State.

References

1. Amoateng, A. Y., Kalule-Sabiti, I., & Arkaah, Y. J. (2014). The effect of socio-demographic factors on risky sexual behaviours of adolescents. *African Population Studies*, 28(1), 487–498.
2. Angwaomaodoko, E. A. (2024). A Review on the Impact of Teenage Pregnancy on Students' Academic Performance. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 13(4). DOI:10.24940/ijird/2024/v13/i4/APR24004
3. Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*.
4. Prentice-Hall.
5. Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Harvard University Press.



6. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.
7. Cruz, E., Cozman, F.G., Souza, W. (2021). The impact of teenage pregnancy on school dropout in Brazil: a Bayesian network approach. *BMC Public Health* **21**, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11878-3>
8. Ezegwui, H. U., et al. (2012). Teenage pregnancy in Nigeria: A public health concern. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 16(3), 105–112.
9. Grant, M. J., & Hallman, K. K. (2008). Pregnancy-related school dropout. *Studies in Family Planning*, 39(4), 369–382.
10. Kassa, G. M. (2018). Adolescent pregnancy in Africa: A systematic review. *Reproductive Health*, 15(1), 195.
12. National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS). (2018). *Nigeria demographic and health survey report*. Abuja, Nigeria: National Population Commission.
13. Nyameh, C.N. & Collins, F.S. (2020) Teenage Pregnancy in Zing Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria: Factors, Consequences and Possible Remedies. *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGJAHDS)*. 3(3) pp239-249.
14. UNESCO. (2019). *Education and teenage pregnancy policy review*. UNESCO.
15. UNFPA. (2020A). *Motherhood in Childhood: Facing the Challenge of Adolescent Pregnancy*. Retrieved from <https://www.unfpa.org/adolescent-pregnancy>
16. UNFPA.(2020B). *Adolescent pregnancy: A review of the evidence*. Retrieved from <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/adolescent-pregnancy-review-evidence>
17. UNICEF. (2017). *Early childbearing in Nigeria*. UNICEF.
18. UNICEF (2020). *State of the World's Children 2020: Children, food and nutrition*. New York: UNICEF.
19. UNICEF. (2021). *Adolescent Pregnancy*. Retrieved from <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-health/adolescent-health/adolescent-pregnancy>
- Odu, B. K., et al. (2015). Teenage pregnancy and academic performance in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(28), 1–7.
20. Okogbaa, O. G., Smith-Okai, H. R., & Ezenekwe, R. M. (2020). Reproductive behaviour of adolescents in Nigeria: policy implications. *South African Journal of Child Health*, 14(1),4-7.
21. Sunday-Adeoye, I., & Adeoye, O. A. (2017). Factors associated with teenage pregnancy and its effects on educational attainment of the girl-child in South Western Nigeria. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development*, 5(2), 8-19
22. Tolulope, F O & Ijabadeniyu, O,A (2021) Teenage Pregnancy and its Influence on Female Education in Nigeria; *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation (IJRSI)* Vol.iii (1), 2021 ISBN 2321-2705
23. World Health Organization. (2014). *Adolescent pregnancy report*. WHO.
24. World Health Organization (2022). *Safe Abortion: Technical and Policy Guidance for Health Systems*. Geneva: WHO
25. Yakubu, I., & Salisu, W. J. (2018). Determinants of adolescent pregnancy in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Reproductive Health*, 15(1), 15.

