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**EFFECT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN JALINGO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF TARABA STATE, NIGERIA**

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***Abstract***

*The study investigates the socio-cultural determinants of adolescent pregnancy in Jalingo metropolis, Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria. The study adopted the simple percentage survey research design involving 40 young girls of ages 14 – 20, through a simple sampling technique. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The research questions were divided into two sections; section A contained questions on the personal data of the respondents and section B contain the subject of the study. Simple percentage rate was used to analysed the data collected. The result revealed that the age at which teenagers engaged in sexual intercourse is too early, socio-economic background, early manage and traditional gender role, peer group pressure, lack of sex education are the major determinants of why teenagers pregnancy is prevalence these days. And that incomplete education, isolation and rejection by both parents and friend, mothers health risk during birth and financial difficulties are some of effects of teenage pregnancy. Based on the findings, recommendation were made that both the Federal and State governments should contribute to reduce the teenage pregnancy by enforcing the custing child Right Acts of 2003, by providing funding for comprehensive education for the girl child. The girl child should be*

*given sex education on its consequences on their lives, parents should try to meet the needs of their teenage children.*

**Keywords:** Adolescent Pregnancy, Socio-cultural, Academic achievement

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## INTRODUCTION

An adolescent is a person who is in the transitional period of between the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood or maturity. A teenager on the other hand is a person who falls within the ages of brocket 13 and 19 years old (WAO, 2006). Teenagers can therefore been regarded as an adolescent, which is stage between childhood and adulthood. They are also regarded as older children or younger adults. According to Lawan (2006) a substantial proportion of the members of every society in the developmental stage are termed “adolescent”.

Persons within this age categories are sexually active and adventurous because this is when sexual maturity starts (Count, 2010). Hence, they tend to want relate with the opposite sex were (Carrea, 2011) children at this stage are said to be in a state of confusion because they are curious about sex (Laugham, 2015). This category of persons makes up the significant proportion of the world’s population.

Pregnancy is a physiological process where a woman missed her period, fatigue is experienced, breast enlargement and tenderness, abdominal distension, nausea and vomiting together with light headedness occurred. According to Ashimolowo, et al, (2013) pregnancy is expected to occur by default after marriage, which is a universal social institution between a male and female and through marriage. This adult acquires a new social status in the society as husband and wife (UN, 1990).

Pregnancy occurs in children especially those in teenages. Teenage or otherwise adolescent pregnancy is a situation whereby a female person is pregnant in her teen ages (Nyakubega, 2009). This is as a result of lack of knowledge about sexual behaviour activities. Adolescent pregnancy has become a global concern as it occurs in both developed and developing nations like Nigeria. Adolescent pregnancy is characterized as pregnancy that occurs between the maternal ages of 14 to 19 years (WAO, 2006).

According to Aquino et al (2003) and Duncan (2007) adolescent pregnancy tends to emerge in contexts marked by social vulnerability and lack of opportunities. In line with this stand, Daly and Wilson (2005) used the phrase “devaluing future” while giving a possible explanation for adolescent pregnancy. Globally, 15 million women under the ages of 20 give birth representing up to one-fifth of all births (WHO, 1991). Also WHO (2005) reported that an average of 529,000 women die due to pregnancy and childbirth related complications on a yearly basis.

In Nigeria, adolescent pregnancy takes place both in rural and urban centres across regions, but it is more common in the northern part of Nigeria. Adolescent pregnancy is more prevalent in the north than in the southern part of Nigeria, this is because of the early marriage in the north, whereas most of the pregnant teenagers are not married in the south.

The mean age at marriage has drastically reduced with variation between rural and urban population, just as in the north and southern Nigeria. In most parts of the rural communities researchers have shown that age at marriage is traditionally lower than what is obtained in the urban centres or cities. The impact of formal education, increased labour opportunities in the urban and social environment are among factors found to have influenced the age varying age of marriage (Bougaart& Cohen, 1998, Berker, 1993). This has made adolescent less dependent on parents and family and has prolonged the age at marriage. This led to increased independence from parents and family has influenced incidence of premarital sexual relations and increasing number of intended adolescent pregnancies.

According to the Nigeria Demography and Health Survey (2003) more than 25% of adolescent girls in Nigeria begin child bearing before attaining the ages of 17 years, with 17% living below poverty line, due to poor socio-economic conditions of parents. As pregnancy occurs, adolescents are left with the option to decide on whether to abort the pregnancy or keep the baby. In the case of abortion option, the adolescents are faced with the challenges of clandestine abortion due to the illegal status of the practices in Nigeria.

Adolescent pregnancy has adverse effects both on the mother and the child. Some of the effects of adolescent mothers include low educational attainment, remaining unmarried and living in object poverty where the children who are

the products of teenage pregnancy are more likely to be born with low weight, grow up poor, live in single parent house hood, experience constant abuse and neglect (Maynard, 1997). Also girls that are born of teenage mothers are likely to become mothers themselves, while the boys are likely to be incarcerated (Maynard, 1997). And those adolescent mothers who are socially deprived are more likely to show anger towards their children or rely punishment.

The risks of medical complications are greater for girls who are under aged and younger as an underdeveloped pelvic can lead to difficulties in childbirth. Obstructed labour can lead to eclampsia, obstructed fistula, WF, infant mortality, and even maternal death, (Mayor, 2004).

According to Adeyanju and Afolayan (2011) adolescent pregnancy is a single factor adversely affecting female education in Nigeria. This is because most of these adolescent mothers drop out of school thereby limiting their chances of accessing higher education which would have earned them better job opportunities.

As a global social menace, that prevent many young Nigerians from attaining and achieving their goals in life, it has becomes imperative for any government that is concerned with the sustainable development of the nation to pay greater attention to investing in the sex education of teenagers and other category of youths. For a nation to develop there must be a solid foundation for the younger generation to build on it, therefore the need for this research.

This study become necessary because the researcher lives among these teenagers who more often than not become mothers, some are married due to the socio-cultural belief among the people. This people mostly who believe in their traditional practices, hence the study intend to determine the socio-cultural factors that influences pregnancy among adolescent in state secondary schools in Jalingo metropolis of Jalingo local government area of Taraba State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

To achieve this, the following were considered:

- To ascertain the socio-cultural determinants of adolescent pregnancy
- To assess the societal reaction about adolescent pregnancy
- To identify the strategies adolescent mothers adopted while pregnant

- Determine the effects of pregnancy on the academic performance of secondary school students.

### **Research Questions**

- i) What are the socio-cultural determinants of adolescent pregnancy?
- ii) How does the society react or see adolescent's pregnancy?
- iii) What strategies do the teen mothers adopt during their pregnancy?
- iv) What are the effects of early pregnancy on the academic performance on adolescent mothers?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this research work. This is a scientific method which involves the use of observing and describing the behaviour of a subject. Hence it is to determine the influence of socio-cultural factors on adolescent pregnancy. A well structured questionnaire were used for data collection.

### **Area of the Study**

The study was conducted in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State. The population study comprises adolescents girls of ages between 14 – 21 years. Forty (40) adolescents were selected from eight wards of Jalingo metropolis.

### **Sampling Techniques**

In this research study, the simple and random sampling technique was adopted because the study population comprised of both young mothers who are married and the single both within and out of school within the study area. The simple random sample means that every case of the population has an equal probability of inclusion in sample (Hamed, 2011). Forty (40) adolescents were from five (5) areas Jalingo metropolis, eight (8) questionnaires were randomly selected. The sample size was considered adequate as this reduced sampling error and enabled generalization of result.

### Method of Data Collection

Structured questionnaire were used to generate information on the basis of the research questions. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A deals with the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section B contained with items on the various socio-cultural determinants and its effects on the life of the pregnant adolescents. The respondents are expected to tick under an alternative of the best choice. The four points scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) agree (A) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was adopted.

### Data Collection

There are two main ways of via which questionnaire can be administered to the respondents to solicit for information. There is face-to-face and mail methods. The researcher adopted face-to-face, where the communities where the subjects were selected to carry out the study. The researcher explained vividly, the topic and it relevance to the respondents why the research is been carried out. After the distribution of the questionnaire, the filled were collected by the researcher with the assistance from one informant.

### Data Analysis

Demographic data was described via descriptive statistic which includes frequency percentage, means and standard deviation. These were used to analysed the specific objectives of the study.

### Findings and Discussion

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents according to Socio-economic characteristics (n=40)

Socio-economic characteristics		Frequency	Percentage	Mean
<b>Ages at first pregnancy</b>				
1	3	–	1 6 1 0	1 9 4 7 . 7 17.0 yrs
1	7	–	1 9	2 1 5 2 . 5
<b>Present ages (years)</b>				
1	5	–	2 0	1 7 4 2 . 5 21.3 yrs
2	1	–	2 5	1 8 4 5 . 0

2 6 – 3 0	5	1 2 . 5	
<b>R e l i g i o n</b>			
M u s l i m	3	5 5	
C h r i s t i a n i t y	5	1 2 . 5	
<b>Highest Education</b>			
P r i m a r y	2	6 6 5 . 0	
S e c o n d a r y	1	4 3 5 . 0	
<b>Household size</b>			
- 5	1	5 3 7 . 5	7 persons
- 6 – 1	1	8 4 5 . 0	
- 1 1 – 1 5	7	1 7 . 5	
<b>Parents occupation</b>			
F a r m i n g	2	7 6 7 . 5	
T r a d i n g	8	2 0 . 0	
A r t i s a n	5	1 2 . 5	
<b>Marital Status</b>			
M a r r i e d	3	5 8 7 . 5	
D i v o r c e d	5	1 2 . 5	
S i n g l e	0	0 . 0	

**Source:** Field Survey April, 2021

Table 1 reveals that the respondents mean age at first pregnancy was found to be 17 years with higher percentage of (52.5%) being between 17 – 19 years, while the remaining (47.5%) were 15-16 years. This implies that the teenage pregnancy could occur at either the early or later teen ages as there was almost equal distribution of the respondents at their first pregnancy and support the findings of Nyakubega (2009) which reported that teenage pregnancy occurs at the age of 19 years or below the mean age of the respondents at present was 21 years old with about 42.5% and 45% of the respondents being between 15 – 20 years and 21 years old. This implies that the respondents were youthful in age and can still recollect their experience as teenagers. In fact some of the respondents were teenagers as they were between 15 – 20 years old. The result from the table rather revealed that about 87.5% of the girls are mostly Muslim with remaining percentage belonging to Christianity.

Also as shown in table 1, about 65% of the respondents attended primary school, while the remaining attempted secondary education. This shows that all the respondents have formal education, but because of pregnancy, they dropped out of school. This supports the findings of Brosh et al (2007) that birth rate among women with low education are higher than those with higher education.

Considering household size, table 1 shows that 37.5% of the respondents had less than 5 persons, while 45% of the respondents had between 6 – 10 persons and 17.5%. The respondents had 11 – 15 persons. This means that the household size has an average of 7 persons. This implies that young girls are likely to have pregnancy at early age.

Furthermore, table 1 shows that over 67.5% of the respondents parent were farmers. 20% and 12.5% were traders and artisans respectively. This implies that the dominant occupation of the people is farming. Since some of these girls who are dropped out of schools, and had nothing too much more to depend on, they are engage in trading petty things, which according to Rhodes (2011), teenage pregnancy has been associated with socio-economic conditions of parents.

In table 1 also, about 80%, 87.5% of the respondents were married, while the remaining (12.5%) were divorced. Most of these girls really confessed that some of them had their first sexual intercourse with their married partners, which resulted to pregnancy.

**Table 2:** Socio-cultural determinants of Adolescent Pregnancy (n=40)

F a c t o r s	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Illiteracy (Lack of sex education, non use of contraceptive)	3	17.5
Peer group pressure	3	07.5
Parental care	2	6.65
Childhood environment	2	6.65
Having a single parent	3	17.5
Sexual abuse	2	6.65
Parents occupational	7	42.5
Parents education background	2	15.2

**Source:** Field survey, April, 2021



Table 2 shows that illiteracy which include lack of knowledge of sex education, non-use of contraceptive, application of family planning measure and hawking to complement family economic daily needs were the most common factors identified by 77.5% of the respondents. These are the results of poverty, as parents has no alternative than to order their children to hawk petty gods in order to contribute to household income. In the process of hawking teenagers are exposed to sexual abuse or raped in some cases, thereby leading to unwanted pregnancies. Following closely illiteracy and hawking as factors influencing teenage pregnancy is the influence of peer group pressure, which has been identified to by (75.0%) which implies that the fact that other teenager are engage in sexual activities may make a teenager to want to try same or want to feel among her peers, by so doing they engage in such activities. This is an indication that teenage pregnancy may be as a result of bad friends following the popular say that “birds of the same feather flock together”. Educational background of some parents does not necessary matter in the sexual activities of girls to some extent. Whether educated or uneducated parents and some teenagers could still go about their sexual life thereby having being impregnated by rascals. However, among most parents of these teenager in question, the parent low level of education contribute to the prevalent of teenage pregnancy. An uneducated person with low level of education will in most cases feel inferior and thereby tend to do what others want her to do. This is in conformity with the findings of Langham (2011) which stated that low self-esteem is among the causes of teenage pregnancy. He also associated ignorance of sex education to unwanted or unintended pregnancy among adolescents as most of these pregnancies among adolescent as most of these teenagers are unaware of the danger of biological and psychological effects of having sex at early age in life. Table 2 also shows that 65% of the respondents identified childhood environment, sexual abuse (65%), lack of parental care 65% as major factor responsible for teenage or otherwise adolescent pregnancy in the study area. Locoh (2000) was also of the view that children exposed to abuse, domestic violence and family violence are likely to get pregnant early in life as a teenager. 52.5% of the respondents were of the view that the educational attainment of parents can influence teenage pregnancy.

**Table 3:** Reaction of community members towards adolescent pregnancy (n-40)

Reaction community member	S	A	A	U	D	S	D	
People treated me badly	3	5	0	%	3	7	5	%
I was criticized	4	5	0	%	2	0	0	12.5
The person responsible for pregnancy denied me	3	7	5	%	5	0	0	0
I got helped by some community members	5	0	0	0	2	2	5	2
I disappointed my parents	3	7	5	1	2	5	10	0
I got support from outside groups	3	5	0	%	1	5	0	30

**Source:** Field survey, April, 2021

Table 3 show that (72.5%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were badly treated by people around them. About 65.0% also responded that they were criticized for getting pregnant in their teenagers. Pregnancy was only accepted from about 57% of the respondents by the people who are responsible for the pregnancy. Parents of about half 50.0% of the respondents were disappointed in their daughters getting pregnant teenagers were linked up with support groups. This shows that the society frowns at social menace like teenage pregnancy and implies that teenage pregnancy is not an acceptable development in the study area. However, it is believed that amongst the majority of the people in the study area, it beyond that early manages are acceptable among the people despite the fact that the global early child manages are being discourage worldwide. According to Ettah (2001) teenage pregnancy is encouraged in the northern part of Nigeria however, it is not encouraged outside marriage.

**Table 4:** Coping with strategies adopted during pregnancy (n-40)

C o p i n g S t r a t e g i e s	Frequency	Percentage (%)
P e r s o n a l r e s o l u t i o n	2	9 7 . 5 %
E x t e r n a l s u p p o r t	2	8 7 0 . 0
The baby taking care of by another person	1	1 2 7 . 5
C h a n g e e n v i r o n m e n t	1	5 3 7 . 5
W a n t e d t o a b o r t t h e p r e g n a n c y	1	4 3 5 . 0

**Source:** Field survey, April, 2021

The findings as shown in table 4 shows that the coping strategies adopted by the teenage (mothers) pregnant revealed that 72.5% of the respondents took personal decision and 70.0% had external encouragement. This implies that pregnant teenagers only accepted it as their fate in life and decided to move on in life with addition to external encouragements receives from some community members. This support the findings of Agunbiade et al (2009) that the entire adolescents were supported, no one way or the other through informal means which largely rest on few sympathizers. This is an indication that although teenage pregnancy was considered by the security, the security still cares for the well being of the pregnant teenagers.

**Table 5:** Effect of Adolescents Pregnancy on the Mother and the Child (n=400)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
P o v e r t y   c o n d i t i o n	2	8 7 0 . 0
Remained unmarried for a long time	2	1 5 2 . 5
Dewied by Friends and colleagues	2	8 7 0 . 0
Dropped out of school (low level of education)	3	5 8 7 . 5
H i g h   b l o o d   p r e s s u r e	2	6 6 5 . 0
Became addicted to drugs and alcohol	9	2 2 . 0
I was unhappy when I got pregnant	2	4 6 0 . 0
I find it difficult to be a moher at that age	2	4 6 0 . 0
P o o r   c h i l d   g r o w t h	3	3 8 2 . 5
P r e m a t u r e   b i r t h	2	8 7 0 . 0
S i n g l e   p a r e n t i n g	2	7 6 7 . 5
M a l n u t r i t i o n	2	7 6 7 . 5
C h i l d   a b u s e	2	9 7 2 . 6

**Source:** Field survey, 2021

In the table 5, it reveals that majority 87.5% of the respondents had low level of education as a result of having got pregnancy at early age. This is because they drop out of school and their parents are not willing to support their educational pursuit, even though some are willing to go back to school. Nwalodo et al (20066) also noted that pregnant young girls are expelled from schools thereby becoming dropouts. This greatly affects the girl child education

in most rural and urban parts of Nigeria. It is further revealed in the table that 70% of the respondents claimed that teenage pregnancy resulted in their present condition. Poverty is a serious affects of the teenage pregnancy in developing nations or countries like Nigeria. According to Ikwuake (2001) teenage pregnancy leads to growth in unnecessary population with the resultant effect on the crime waves in the society and other social vices. About 60% of the respondents found it very uncomfortable with the pregnancy they had at the very early age, they were also not happy been mothers at that age, couple with the inexperience of motherhood at an early age. This implies that emotional and psychological trauma associated with teenage pregnancy as Meltssah (2010) submitted that teenage pregnancy can lead to a lot of psychological traumas in young mothers.

According to Nwalado et al (2006) in one of his findings, discovered that most teenager especially the unmarried ones expressed self-doubt, loneliness, uncertainty and helplessness than their peers. High blood pressure 65.0% and remaining unmarried for sometime was put at 52.5%.

The result from the finding also shows that 82.5% of the respondents confessed that their children had poor growth. This could be as a result of poor economic condition of the parents, who could not have enough to provide foods of nutritional value to their children. Children born of teen mothers are at the higher risk of poor parenting because the parents are young of age to master the demanding jobs of being a parent.

From the table, it is also revealed that about 72.5% of the respondents posited that teenage pregnancy resulted in child abuse. This is a true situation whereby such children are called names by the people they live amongst them in the community. This shows that such children are victims of activities that are not good enough for them such as begging on the shacks, child trafficking and hawking. Families where young parents are head, usually experience incidences of child abuse and neglect.

The study also shows that about 70% of the respondents reported to have premature birth during their teen ages. Studies have shown that a proportion of babies born to teen mothers are 28% higher than those of mother 20 years and above. Teen mothers especially those who are not married are unable to meet their basic daily needs of their children since they too are still growing and

developing during this time period. Malnutrition in children could weaken their immune system and thereby making them prone to diseases and other health challenges.

### **Conclusion**

The researcher has identified the purpose of the study as the socio-cultural determinants of adolescent pregnancy. Pregnancy in female teenagers is a reality in the Jalingo metropolis, as the area is characterized as having a mean age of 17 years of age, low level of education, the parents are largely farmers with a few engaged in petty trading. The study concluded that certain factors are responsible to the teenage pregnancy; also it is ascertained that the psychological effects of the teenage pregnancy, a high risk of experiencing depression, birth complication and even death. There is also sociological effects on teen mothers as they are shy away from others especially their mates and even the general public, some are rejected by their own friends, also there is physiological effects as mothers are not fully matured to meet the emotional needs of their children.

Furthermore, the research has shown that most teenage mothers have uncontrollable challenges pertaining education and health wise in child bearing more than adult mothers, the research also shows that many teenagers who are involved in early age pregnancy experienced financial difficulties which was as a result of incomplete education. From the opinion of the respondents, it shows that, there were many factors that influenced teenagers into sexual intercourse either as a married or unmarried teenage. Therefore, strategies have been employed by this research on how to alleviate the adolescent or teenage pregnancy most especially in Jalingo metropolis of Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State.

### **Recommendations**

1. Federal and state governments can contribute in reducing sexual activities of the teenagers by providing stable funding for comprehensive educational and support services to pregnant and preventing teenagers.
2. There is need for an urgent social and cultural re-orientation especially as pertaining early marriages among the teenagers.

3. There should be an aggressive campaign to sensitized communities to allow young girls finish their education before venturing into marriage, in order to better their opportunities in life.
4. Parent should enlighten their teenagers on the consequences of engaging into sex at the early ages.
5. Government should in addition, enforce the provision of the Child Right Act on defaulter who intentionally violate the right of Nigerian children through labour, sexual abuse or rape and child neglect.
6. Government should as a matter of urgency establish more schools in all the local government areas, where these teenage mothers be encouraged to continue with their education even as some are nursing mothers, so that they will be out of the ignorance and illiteracy.

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