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The Consequences Of Teenage Pregnancy On The Education Of Secondary School Girls In Port Harcourt, Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the consequences of teenage pregnancy on the education of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised teenage girls in four (4) senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to select eighty (80) teenage girls for the study. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that teenage pregnancy negatively affects the academic performance of secondary school girls by reducing classroom concentration, increasing absenteeism, and making it difficult for students to complete assignments and prepare adequately for examinations. The study further revealed that teenage pregnancy contributes to school dropout as a result of childcare responsibilities, financial challenges, and fear of stigma and discrimination. The findings also showed that teenage pregnancy has adverse psychosocial effects on the educational experiences of secondary school girls through emotional stress, low self-esteem, social stigma, and anxiety, which negatively affect classroom participation and learning. Furthermore, the study identified that providing adequate reproductive health information, parental love and support, comprehensive sexuality education, and regular awareness campaigns are effective strategies for curbing teenage pregnancy among secondary school girls. The study recommended strengthening guidance and counselling services in secondary schools, promoting comprehensive sexuality education, increasing parental involvement and support, and organizing regular awareness programmes by government and non-governmental organizations to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and improve the educational outcomes of secondary school girls.

Keywords: Consequences, teenage pregnancy, education, academic performance, school dropout, psychosocial effect and secondary school girls.

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as one of the most important tools for personal development and national progress. It equips young people with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become productive members of society. For adolescent girls, access to quality secondary education provides opportunities for

academic achievement, economic independence, improved health outcomes, and informed decision-making. However, several social and economic challenges continue to hinder the educational progress of girls in Nigeria, with teenage pregnancy remaining one of the most persistent and concerning issues.

Teenage pregnancy refers to pregnancy occurring in girls between the ages of 13 and 19 years. Although adolescence is a period characterized by physical, emotional, and psychological development, many girls become sexually active without adequate knowledge, parental guidance, or access to reproductive health information and services. In developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, teenage pregnancy continues to pose serious public health, educational, and socio-economic challenges. Nigeria remains one of the countries with a relatively high burden of adolescent pregnancy, and the consequences extend beyond the individual to families, schools, and society as a whole (UNFPA, 2022). The educational consequences of teenage pregnancy are particularly severe. Pregnancy during the secondary school years often interrupts formal education, resulting in prolonged absenteeism, poor academic performance, school dropout, and, in many cases, the permanent end of a girl's educational journey. Teenage mothers frequently encounter stigma, discrimination, financial hardship, and the responsibilities associated with childbearing and childcare, making it difficult for them to return to school or complete their education. Even when opportunities exist for re-enrolment, many struggle to balance motherhood with academic demands, leading to reduced educational attainment and limited future career prospects (WHO, 2024).

In Nigeria, the challenge of teenage pregnancy is influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including poverty, inadequate sexuality education, peer pressure, early sexual debut, sexual violence, poor parental supervision, cultural expectations, and limited access to adolescent-friendly reproductive health services. These factors are particularly evident in many urban and semi-urban communities where rapid population growth, economic inequality, and changing social values increase adolescents' vulnerability. (Gabriel-Job & Okagua, 2019).

The consequences of teenage pregnancy extend beyond the immediate interruption of schooling. Girls who become pregnant during adolescence are more likely to experience social isolation, emotional distress, reduced self-esteem, and economic dependency. They may also face rejection from peers, teachers, and even family members, further reducing their motivation to continue their education. In the long term, educational disruption caused by teenage pregnancy contributes to lower employment opportunities, reduced lifetime earnings, intergenerational poverty, and diminished social mobility. (Ogbonna et al., 2024). These outcomes not only affect the individual girl but also hinder community development and national human capital formation. It is against this background that this study examines the consequences of teenage pregnancy on the education of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, teenage pregnancy has remained a major social and educational concern in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Although awareness campaigns, sexuality education programmes, and reproductive health initiatives have been introduced by government agencies and non-governmental organizations, cases of teenage pregnancy among secondary school girls continue to be reported. Many affected girls experience prolonged absence from school, poor academic performance, social stigma, psychological stress, and, in some cases, permanent withdrawal from school. These experiences not only affect the educational development of the girls involved but also have long-term consequences for their economic and social well-being.

The interruption of education resulting from teenage pregnancy contributes to increased school dropout rates and reduces the likelihood that affected girls will complete their secondary education. Those who eventually return to school often face challenges such as childcare responsibilities, financial constraints, discrimination, and emotional difficulties, which limit their ability to perform well academically. Consequently, many teenage mothers are unable to achieve their educational goals or compete favourably with their peers who complete their education without interruption. The persistence of teenage pregnancy among school-aged girls therefore raises important questions regarding its consequences for school attendance, academic performance, educational attainment, and school completion. Without adequate evidence on these educational consequences on secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, it

becomes difficult for policymakers, school administrators, teachers, parents, and counsellors to develop effective interventions that will support affected students and reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy. It is this gap in knowledge that necessitates the present study. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the consequences of teenage pregnancy on the education of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Objectives of the Study

i. Determine the effect of teenage pregnancy on the academic performance of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
ii. Assess the effect of teenage pregnancy on school dropout rates of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
iii. Examine the psychosocial effect of teenage pregnancy on the educational experiences of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
iv. Identify strategies to curb teenage pregnancy among secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Research Questions

i. What is the effect of teenage pregnancy on the academic performance of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
ii. What is the effect of teenage pregnancy on school dropout rates of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
iii. What is the psychosocial effect of teenage pregnancy on the educational experiences of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
iv. What are the strategies to curb teenage pregnancy among secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teenage pregnancy has become one of the most widely discussed issues in education, public health, and social development because of its far-reaching effects on young people, families, and society. It is regarded as a significant challenge, particularly in developing countries where many adolescents face limited access to quality education, reproductive health services, and adequate parental guidance. Although adolescence is a period characterized by rapid physical, emotional, cognitive, and social development, it is also a stage during which young people are vulnerable to risky behaviours that may result in unintended pregnancy. For many adolescent girls, pregnancy occurs before they are physically, emotionally, psychologically, and economically prepared for motherhood, thereby exposing them to numerous educational and social challenges.

The term teenage pregnancy generally refers to pregnancy occurring in a girl between the ages of 13 and 19 years. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2024) defines adolescent pregnancy as pregnancy in girls aged 10–19 years, irrespective of their marital status. This definition is widely accepted because it recognizes adolescence as the period between childhood and adulthood, during which individuals experience significant biological and psychological changes. Pregnancy during this stage is often associated with increased health risks for both the mother and the child, as well as disruptions in education and future socio-economic opportunities.

Researchers have explained teenage pregnancy from different perspectives. To Amoo, et al., (2021), teenage pregnancy is a complex social phenomenon resulting from the interaction of individual, family, community, cultural, and economic factors. It cannot be attributed to a single cause because several variables often interact to increase adolescents' vulnerability. These include poverty, inadequate parental supervision, peer influence, early sexual debut, poor access to reproductive health information, sexual abuse, low self-esteem, substance abuse, and inadequate sexuality education. The causes of teenage pregnancy are multidimensional and differ across communities. One commonly identified factor is inadequate knowledge of sexual and reproductive health. Many adolescents receive inaccurate information about sexuality from friends, social media, or other informal sources rather than from parents, teachers, or healthcare professionals. As a result, they may engage in unprotected sexual activities without

fully understanding the consequences. Studies have shown that comprehensive sexuality education enables adolescents to make informed decisions regarding their reproductive health and significantly reduces risky sexual behaviour (UNESCO, 2023).

FRN (2019) observes that teenage pregnancy has become a major educational concern because it affects the ability of adolescent girls to participate effectively in school activities and achieve their academic goals. During adolescence, students are expected to devote their time and energy to learning, developing study habits, and preparing for examinations. When pregnancy occurs during this critical stage, the educational focus of the affected student is often interrupted by the physical, emotional, social, and economic demands associated with pregnancy and motherhood. These challenges frequently reduce academic performance and limit educational achievement. One of the most noticeable effects of teenage pregnancy on academic performance is irregular school attendance. Pregnancy is commonly accompanied by health conditions such as nausea, vomiting, dizziness, fatigue, headaches, and body pains, especially during the first and third trimesters. These conditions often make it difficult for pregnant students to attend school consistently. In addition, regular antenatal clinic appointments may require students to miss classes. Frequent absenteeism results in missed lessons, incomplete assignments, reduced classroom interaction, and limited opportunities to participate in practical learning activities. (Stella, 2019). Consequently, students struggle to keep up with the academic curriculum, leading to declining academic performance. Teenage pregnancy also affects students' concentration and cognitive engagement during learning. Effective academic performance depends on a student's ability to pay attention, process information, retain knowledge, and actively participate in classroom activities. However, pregnant adolescents often experience emotional stress arising from concerns about their health, the well-being of the unborn child, parental reactions, financial challenges, and societal judgment. These worries reduce concentration during lessons and make it difficult to focus on academic tasks. As a result, students may perform poorly in tests and examinations despite having the intellectual ability to succeed.

Teenage pregnancy often disrupts the educational journey of secondary school girls because it introduces responsibilities that are difficult to combine with schooling. Adolescence is a period during which students are expected to devote time to learning, preparing for examinations, and developing the knowledge and skills required for future careers. However, when pregnancy occurs during this stage, the affected student is compelled to divide her attention between academic responsibilities and the physical, emotional, and social demands of pregnancy. As these responsibilities increase, many girls find it difficult to continue their education, resulting in temporary or permanent withdrawal from school. One of the major reasons teenage pregnancy contributes to school dropout is the physical challenges associated with pregnancy. Pregnant students frequently experience morning sickness, fatigue, dizziness, body pains, and regular antenatal clinic visits. These health conditions often reduce regular school attendance and active participation in classroom activities.

As the pregnancy progresses, many girls become unable to cope with the physical demands of attending school daily. Prolonged absenteeism eventually causes them to miss important lessons, assignments, continuous assessments, and examinations, making it increasingly difficult to keep pace with their classmates. In many cases, the affected students eventually discontinue their education. Motherhood itself presents another major obstacle to educational continuity. (Unterhalter, 2019). After childbirth, teenage mothers are expected to provide constant care for their infants, including feeding, bathing, healthcare, and emotional nurturing. These responsibilities require considerable time and energy, leaving little opportunity for school attendance or academic study. Many young mothers struggle to balance childcare with educational demands, and without adequate support from family members or childcare services, continuing their education becomes extremely difficult. (Madume & Dibia, 2021). Consequently, many adolescent mothers permanently withdraw from school before completing their secondary education. Also, the educational experience of a student extends beyond classroom learning and academic achievement. It encompasses every aspect of school life, including regular attendance, classroom participation, interaction with teachers and peers, emotional well-being, motivation to learn, self-confidence, and involvement in extracurricular activities. A positive educational experience enables students to develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, and morally. However, when a secondary school

girl becomes pregnant during adolescence, her educational experience is often affected by numerous psychological and social challenges. These combined challenges are commonly referred to as psychosocial effects. Psychosocial effects are the emotional, psychological, and social consequences that result from a particular life event or condition. They involve the interaction between an individual's mental and emotional well-being and the social environment in which the individual lives. In the context of teenage pregnancy, psychosocial effects include emotional distress, anxiety, depression, fear, low self-esteem, social stigma, discrimination, social isolation, and reduced social support. These experiences often interfere with the student's ability to participate fully in school activities and achieve her educational goals. One of the most significant psychosocial effects of teenage pregnancy is emotional stress. Therefore, addressing these psychosocial challenges is essential for improving the educational experiences and future opportunities of adolescent mothers in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on the Problem Behavior Theory (PBT) developed by Richard Jessor in 1977 to explain why adolescents engage in behaviours that are considered socially undesirable or risky. According to Jessor, behaviours such as early sexual activity, substance abuse, truancy, delinquency, and teenage pregnancy do not occur in isolation but are influenced by a complex interaction of individual characteristics, family background, peer relationships, school environment, and the wider social context. The theory suggests that adolescents' behaviours are shaped by the balance between risk factors that encourage problem behaviours and protective factors that discourage them.

Problem Behavior Theory is built around three interrelated systems: the personality system, the perceived environment system, and the behaviour system. The personality system includes factors such as personal values, beliefs, self-esteem, expectations, and future aspirations. Adolescents with low educational aspirations, poor self-control, or limited knowledge of reproductive health may be more likely to engage in behaviours that expose them to unintended pregnancy. The perceived environment system focuses on the influence of parents, peers, schools, and society. Adolescents who experience weak parental supervision, poor communication within the family, negative peer influence, or limited school support are more vulnerable to engaging in risky sexual behaviours. Peer pressure and exposure to inappropriate social influences may encourage adolescents to become sexually active at an early age without fully understanding the consequences.

The behaviour system consists of the actual actions performed by adolescents. These behaviours may either be protective, such as concentrating on education and avoiding risky relationships, or risky, such as engaging in unprotected sexual activity. According to the theory, when protective influences are weaker than risk factors, adolescents are more likely to participate in behaviours that may result in teenage pregnancy. The theory further explains that teenage pregnancy often produces consequences that extend beyond health outcomes to include educational, psychological, and social challenges. Once pregnancy occurs, affected students may experience prolonged absenteeism, poor academic performance, school dropout, emotional stress, and reduced opportunities for higher education. Thus, Problem Behavior Theory provides an important framework for understanding both the occurrence of teenage pregnancy and its consequences on the education of secondary school girls. The theory is relevant to this study because it explains how individual behaviour and environmental influences contribute to teenage pregnancy and how these behaviours eventually affect school attendance, academic achievement, educational aspirations, and school completion among secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Empirical Review

Stella (2019) examined the effect of teenage pregnancy on secondary school education in Nigeria, with particular attention to Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study employed a semi-structured questionnaire to collect data, which were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20. A total of 802 respondents participated in the study, representing a response rate of 96.2%. Most of the participants were teenagers, while 151 respondents (18.1%) were parents. The findings showed that teenage pregnancy has a significant negative effect on secondary school education, particularly in relation to school enrolment and retention. The study further revealed that many girls

become pregnant before reaching the age of 15. It also established that low educational attainment among both parents and teenagers contributes to a higher incidence of teenage pregnancy. In addition, socioeconomic challenges such as poverty and drug abuse were identified as important factors that increase the likelihood of teenage pregnancy. The study further found that approximately 61.2% of teenage mothers were likely to discontinue their education because of the financial responsibilities associated with motherhood. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended that government agencies and other relevant stakeholders should implement public awareness campaigns to educate communities about the consequences of teenage pregnancy. The study also suggested improving access to quality adolescent healthcare services, making contraceptive methods readily available and affordable, establishing school-based daycare centres for teenage parents, and providing psychological counselling services within secondary schools to assist students in coping with peer influence, emotional challenges, and social stigma.

Albert (2016) investigated the effects of teenage pregnancy on the educational attainment and socio-psychological well-being of young women in rural communities within the Etche ethnic nationality of Rivers State. The study specifically sought to identify the factors that contribute to early motherhood among the girl-child and to assess how teenage pregnancy affects both their educational progress and psychological and social well-being. The research involved a sample of 120 respondents. Data were gathered through the use of structured questionnaires and scheduled interviews, while frequency counts and mean statistics were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that several factors, including peer pressure, adverse environmental influences, and inadequate parental supervision, were major contributors to teenage pregnancy. The study further established that teenage pregnancy negatively affects the academic lives of young mothers by interrupting their education, increasing school dropout rates, and exposing them to social stigma that damages their public image and self-esteem. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended that parents, schools, and the wider community should work together to provide greater protection and guidance for the girl-child against harmful social influences. The study also advocated for free and compulsory education for girls, alongside policies that encourage and support teenage mothers to return to school after childbirth, particularly by addressing the financial barriers that often prevent them from continuing their education.

Madume and Dibia (2021) investigated the causes and consequences of teenage pregnancy among female students in secondary schools located in Abua/Odual Local Government Area. The researchers adopted a descriptive research design, and the study was guided by three research questions. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Causes and Effects of Teenage Pregnancy Among Female Students. The questionnaire underwent expert validation, while its reliability was established through the test–retest method. Mean statistics were employed to analyze the data and answer the research questions. The findings indicated that inadequate knowledge about reproductive health, peer influence, parental pressure to marry at an early age, failure to use contraceptives, and economic hardship were among the major factors responsible for teenage pregnancy. The study further revealed that teenage pregnancy results in several adverse outcomes, including school dropout, increased health complications, social isolation, and rejection by both family members and peers. To address the problem, the researchers recommended strengthening parental care and supervision, incorporating comprehensive sex education into the school curriculum, and enforcing laws that discourage child and early marriage as effective measures for reducing teenage pregnancy among female secondary school students.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the comprised of teenage girls in four (4) senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The simple random sampling technique was adopted to select eighty (80) teenage girls. The data collected from the respondents was properly organized in tables, coded and analyzed using Mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the effect of teenage pregnancy on the academic performance of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Teenage pregnancy reduces students' academic performance	42	28	6	4	3.35	Accepted
2	Pregnant students find it difficult to concentrate during classroom lessons	45	25	7	3	3.40	Accepted
3.	Pregnancy makes it difficult for students to complete assignments and prepare for examinations.	41	30	5	4	3.34	Accepted
4.	Teenage pregnancy leads to high rate of absenteeism in school	47	24	6	3	3.34	Accepted
	Grand Mean					**3.38**	**Accepted**

Table 4.1 shows the respondents' views on the effect of teenage pregnancy on the academic performance of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. All the items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were therefore accepted. The item stating that teenage pregnancy leads to a high rate of absenteeism in school recorded the highest mean score of 3.44, while the statement that pregnancy makes it difficult for students to complete assignments and prepare for examinations recorded the lowest mean score of 3.34. The grand mean of 3.38 indicates that respondents agreed that teenage pregnancy has a negative effect on the academic performance of secondary school girls.

Research Question 2: What is the effect of teenage pregnancy on school dropout rates of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Childcare responsibilities make it difficult for teenage mothers to continue schooling	44	26	6	4	3.38	Accepted
2.	Financial challenges resulting from pregnancy contribute to school dropout.	46	24	7	3	3.41	Accepted
3.	Fear of stigma and discrimination discourages pregnant students from remaining in school.	43	28	5	4	3.38	Accepted
4.	Teenage pregnancy increases the likelihood of school dropout	48	23	5	4	3.44	Accepted
	Grand Mean					**3.40**	**Accepted**

Table 4.2 reveals that all the listed items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were accepted. The item teenage pregnancy increases the likelihood of school dropout obtained the highest mean score of 3.44, while childcare responsibilities make it difficult for teenage mothers to continue schooling and fear of stigma and discrimination discourages pregnant students from remaining in school each recorded a mean score of 3.38. The grand mean of 3.40 implies that respondents agreed that teenage pregnancy contributes significantly to school dropout among secondary school girls.

Research Questions 3: What is the psychosocial effect of teenage pregnancy on the educational experiences of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Teenage pregnancy causes emotional stress that affects learning.	46	26	5	3	3.44	Accepted
2.	Pregnant students experience low self-esteem that reduces classroom participation.	43	27	7	3	3.38	Accepted
3.	Social stigma negatively affects the educational experiences of pregnant students.	45	25	7	3	3.40	Accepted
4.	Anxiety and fear reduce students' interest in school activities.	42	29	6	3	3.38	Accepted
	Grand Mean					**3.49**	**Accepted**

Table 4.3 indicates that all the listed items were accepted since their mean scores exceeded the criterion mean of 2.50. The statement that teenage pregnancy causes emotional stress that affects learning recorded the highest mean score of 3.44, while pregnant students experience low self-esteem that reduces classroom participation and anxiety and fear reduce students' interest in school activities each recorded the lowest mean score of 3.38. The grand mean of 3.49 indicates that teenage pregnancy has considerable psychosocial effects on the educational experiences of secondary school girls.

Research Question 4: What are the strategies to curb teenage pregnancy among secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Adequate information and knowledge should be provided to teenage girls.	49	23	5	3	3.48	Accepted
2.	Teenage girls should receive love and support from parents and guardians.	47	25	3	5	3.45	Accepted
3.	Sex education should be taught in secondary schools.	50	22	5	3	3.49	Accepted
4.	Government and non-governmental organizations should organize regular awareness campaigns on teenage pregnancy in secondary schools	48	24	5	3	3.46	Accepted
	Grand Mean					**3.47**	**Accepted**

Table 4.4 shows that all the proposed strategies recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were accepted by the respondents. The item sex education should be taught in secondary schools recorded the highest mean score of 3.49, while teenage girls should receive love and support from parents and guardians recorded the lowest mean score of 3.45. The grand mean of 3.47 indicates that respondents agreed that providing sexuality education, adequate information, parental support, and regular awareness campaigns are effective strategies for curbing teenage pregnancy among secondary school girls.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that teenage pregnancy has a significant negative effect on the academic performance of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The respondents agreed that pregnancy reduces academic performance by making it difficult for students to concentrate during

lessons, complete assignments, prepare for examinations, and attend school regularly. These findings are consistent with Albert (2016), who reported that teenage pregnancy disrupts the academic process and contributes to poor educational outcomes among adolescent girls in Rivers State. Similarly, Stella (2019) found that teenage pregnancy significantly affects school enrolment and educational attainment, with many teenage mothers withdrawing from school because of the responsibilities associated with motherhood.

The study further revealed that teenage pregnancy contributes significantly to school dropout among secondary school girls. Respondents agreed that childcare responsibilities, financial difficulties, fear of stigma, and the burden of pregnancy increase the likelihood of leaving school before completion. This finding supports the study by Madume and Dibia (2021), which found that school dropout is one of the major consequences of teenage pregnancy among female secondary school students. Likewise, Stella (2019) reported that many teenage mothers withdraw from school because of the financial obligations of raising a child.

The findings also showed that teenage pregnancy has considerable psychosocial effects on the educational experiences of secondary school girls. Respondents agreed that emotional stress, low self-esteem, social stigma, and anxiety negatively influence learning and participation in school activities. These findings are in agreement with Albert (2016), who reported that teenage pregnancy affects not only academic performance but also the socio-psychological well-being of adolescent girls. The findings also corroborate Madume and Dibia (2021), who observed that teenage mothers often experience isolation and rejection from parents and peers, thereby affecting their educational experiences.

Finally, the study found that respondents supported several strategies for reducing teenage pregnancy among secondary school girls. These strategies include providing adequate information on reproductive health, strengthening parental love and support, introducing comprehensive sex education in schools, and organizing regular awareness campaigns by government and non-governmental organizations. These findings are consistent with the recommendations of Madume and Dibia (2021), who advocated sex education, parental care, and the prohibition of underage marriage as effective preventive measures. They also support Stella (2019), who recommended public sensitization programmes, improved reproductive health services, and counselling interventions for adolescents.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the consequences of teenage pregnancy on the education of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that teenage pregnancy has significant negative consequences on the education of secondary school girls. The study revealed that teenage pregnancy adversely affects students' academic performance by reducing concentration during classroom lessons, increasing absenteeism, and making it difficult for students to complete assignments and prepare for examinations. The findings further showed that teenage pregnancy contributes to school dropout due to childcare responsibilities, financial challenges, and the fear of stigma and discrimination. In addition, the study established that teenage pregnancy has considerable psychosocial effects on the educational experiences of secondary school girls through emotional stress, low self-esteem, social stigma, and anxiety, which negatively affect learning and participation in school activities. The study also identified that providing adequate reproductive health information, strengthening parental love and support, introducing comprehensive sexuality education in schools, and organizing regular awareness campaigns are effective strategies for curbing teenage pregnancy among secondary school girls. Therefore, collaborative efforts by parents, schools, government agencies, healthcare providers, and community stakeholders are essential to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and promote the educational success and overall well-being of secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School administrators and teachers should strengthen guidance and counselling services in secondary schools to educate students on reproductive health, responsible decision-making, and

the educational consequences of teenage pregnancy in order to improve their academic performance.

2. Parents and guardians should provide adequate supervision, emotional support, and financial assistance to teenage girls to reduce the likelihood of school dropout resulting from pregnancy and to encourage affected students to continue their education.
3. Government, school authorities, and counsellors should establish psychosocial support programmes, including counselling and mentoring services, to help pregnant students and teenage mothers cope with emotional stress, low self-esteem, stigma, and other psychological challenges that affect their educational experiences.
4. The Ministry of Education, healthcare agencies, and non-governmental organizations should intensify comprehensive sexuality education and regular awareness campaigns in secondary schools to equip adolescents with accurate reproductive health information and practical knowledge needed to prevent teenage pregnancy.

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