

## CAUSES AND IMPLICATIONS ABORTION OF TEENAGE GIRL'S EDUCATION IN ONITSHA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE

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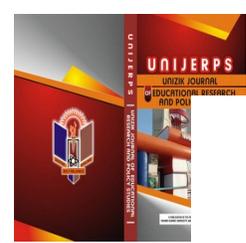
### Abstract

This paper sought to determine the causes and implications of abortion on teenage girl's education in Onitsha South local government area of Anambra State. Descriptive survey design was adopted for study and questionnaire was used for data collection. The population of the study was six thousand, nine hundred (6,900) pupils. Out of the above population, two hundred (200) subjects were randomly selected as sample population. Simple percentages were used in analyzing the data collected. From the study, the researcher found that, parents, friends, peer group and other relations showed displeasure at pregnant teenagers. Those pregnant teenagers were always asked to withdraw from school. That desire for wealthy husband, pornographic materials, peer group influence, unwanted pregnancy, high sex urge, lack of parental care, poverty, crave for material items etc are casual factors of abortion. That lack of sex education in schools is the major cause of abortion among secondary school girls. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended the following: Parents should give sex education to their children, from the early childhood. That provision should be made by government, for abortion to acquire vocational education.

**Keywords:** Abortion, Causes of Abortion and Implications of Abortion

### Introduction

Abortion is a global issue in our contemporary society. It's against the law to try to cause your own abortion. In developing countries, especially Nigeria, evidence of abortion is obvious in towns and villages as undeveloped neonates are discovered around bush paths, behind maternity premises and besides university hostels and public borrow-pits. Some pharmacy stores have been shut down and doctors apprehended for unlawful participation in practising abortion. Zastrow and Krist-Ashman (2017), defined abortion as the "termination of pregnancy by removing an embryo or fetus from the uterus before it can survive on its own outside the womb". This act is observed to be done by all classes of women, especially female undergraduates and secondary school students from all socio-economic and marital status; cultural and religious backgrounds



are no restrictions. Early initiation of coitus in the adolescent is often done without birth control and many result in pregnancy which most likely lead to abortion (National Statistical Service, Ministry of Health, and ICF, 2017).

A close observation of the incidence of abortion in Nigeria shows that abortion is very rampant. It is a common practice among female undergraduates and secondary school students. Personal experiences by the researchers of frequent occurrence of complications from abortion which often result in death across the states and in various hospitals throughout the country confirm the high rate of abortion in Nigeria. The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey affirmed the high rate of abortion when it revealed that 91.73 percent of government hospitals and 97.58 percent of private hospitals in Nigeria have attended to patients suffering from abortion complications on an annual basis (National Population Commission Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

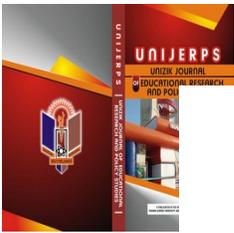
In Port Harcourt alone yesterday (October 28, 2017) a girl of 17-year old in one secondary school student died as a result of complications from abortion of a pregnancy of about three months old. Another case was an undergraduate student who aborted a pregnancy in a roadside chemist. Few hours, later she complained of pains in her lower abdomen and was rushed to University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital where she died of the complications. Cases of this nature are frequent occurrence in various parts of Nigeria.

Enquiries have shown that abortion is done for several reasons. The most common and obvious reason of all the considerations is that abortion as a last resort to unwanted pregnancy. For female abortion secondary school students, a pregnancy is principally unwanted because of the fear and shame of interruption in education, fear of parents' rejection, and the stigma associated with bringing up a child born out of wedlock, as well as the fact that a pregnant female may be ignorant of the person responsible for the pregnancy.

Abortion is observed to be done at any stage of pregnancy. Most people carry it out at the first trimester, others at the second trimester and a few even at the last trimester notwithstanding the dangers that could result from such acts. A large number of female undergraduates and secondary school students who seek abortion, do so personally at home, taking self-prescribed drugs and herbs. Some get it done with drugs or herbs prescribed by unprofessional doctors, nurses, midwives pharmacist as well as traditional birth attendants/herbalists. However, a few get it done secretly in private hospitals and clinics by professional doctors and nurses. Abortion, though widely practised in the Nigerian society, has long-term attendant consequences that include physical health problem, psychological and social problems that are dangerous and destructive, sometimes culminating in death.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Abortion is a crucial and sensitive topic with controversial inclinations, especially among Nigerian female undergraduates and secondary school students. Abortion is also a subject on which many people feel strongly in both directions; some favour it while others object to it.



Emotions of people, particularly those of women run so high when issues on abortion are being raised or discussed.

Abortion is commonly practised by several women and girls in the various states in Nigeria. Those engaged in abortion do so even when they are aware that abortion is a dangerous procedure and against the law in the country. There are instances of severe pains and bleeding, infections, future miscarriages, complications in pregnancy and barrenness among other problems arising from abortion done unprofessionally that may result to death most times.

Psychological and emotional problems such as depression, guilt trauma, not forgiving oneself and transfer of aggression are also observed to be common experience of those who carryout abortion. Also, these emotional problems may result in some maladjusted behaviour and social problems that affect the home and society at large. Therefore, the problem of this study is determination of the effect of Abortion of Teenagers on the Academic performance of secondary school students in Onitsha South local government area of Anambra state.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the causes of abortion among secondary schools students in Onitsha South Anambra state?
2. What are the implications of abortion among secondary schools girls?

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Conceptual Framework**

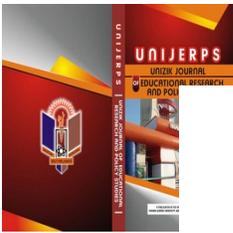
1. Causes of abortion
2. Problems of abortion
3. Suggestions on how to check abortion.

#### **Causes of abortion:**

These refer to the factors responsible for abortion. Here causes, factors and influences are used interchangeably for the purpose of this study. Experts in different fields have identified the following as the causes of abortion.

#### **Crave for money and materialism/poverty**

Teenage girls have become slaves to money and materials things of life. They sleep around to cam some money to meet up their materials needs particularly fashionable dress and jewelry. The prevalence of materialism took root after the Nigerian civil war with oil boom. It was the period that money flowed everywhere in the country thereby changing the life pattern of the people. Our teenage girls were not left out of the luxuries. They were given expensive cars and put in well furnished flats by men who are old enough to be their fathers and grandfathers. Most teenagers from poor families offer themselves to meet their needs and this leads to abortion.



Ayonuwe (2015) stated in a paper he delivered to a seminar on Juvenile delinquency that girls from poor homes who desire good things of life get trapped in sexual indulgence while parents do not demand from their daughters the source of money and gifts they bring home. Thousands of girls are constrained to feed for themselves early in life and they take jobs as waiters in restaurants and petrol attendants at petrol stations, occupation that exposes them to men constantly.

Ojoy (2017) attribute number of interesting school dropouts to poverty; which has a strong correlation with abortion. More than not, parents more than not parents of some teenage girls even encourage their association directly or indirectly with men for financial gains. .

### **Influx of pornographic materials, love novels and media:**

Children exposed to pornographic materials are likely to try out what they have seen or heard without knowing the consequences. Pornographic films and books are sold off the shelf in major towns and cities in Nigeria, such blatant exhibition only encourages the teenagers to try out their hands and the result are pregnancies and births for which the young an the society are ill-prepared.

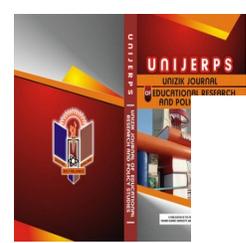
The obvious consequences of the influx of prone materials on teenagers were emphasized by Ayonuwe (2015) in a paper on juvenile delinquency. He stated that sex films on our television promote curiosity and acting to by adolescents. He discloses that this will make them to have the taste of the budding. Ayonuwe (2015) says that parents should probably tend to exert greater control in the type of books, magazines, posters and films to which their children are exposed to pornography are likely to tray out what they have seen or bear.

### **Broken homes and single parenthood**

Broken or one parent home is more likely to produce a teenage mother. This is so because when there is lack of join contact and control, you cannot but find juvenile delinquency. Single parents most of who are women do make attempts to cope with the stress of rising their children alone, but they are invariably confronted by problems they cannot solve on their own.

According to Bassey (2016), a female divorce told Newswalch magazine in an interview on the effect of single parenting on abortion that sometimes you get so fed up with a child's naughtiness, you just fold your arms. She further added that the emotional stress is too much for one parent to bear. A major problem of single parenting is that the parents may not be able to provide adequate parental care, which is capable of checking wayward attitude of the girls.

According to Nyc (2011) school aged adolescents, 14-16 years old have been the most rapidly increasing age of the single parents. This is truth; according to (Ogo, 2011) that the member of one-parent families has been increasing seven times as rapidly as that if traditionally two-parents



families, with a growing proportion being represented by never married teenagers. Nwosu (2012) is of the view that broken family and quest for money by parents are the causes of abortion.

### **Lack of sex education in schools and in homes**

It is a well known fact that there is lack of sex education in schools and at homes. Parents as well as teachers regard it as a very difficult subject to discuss. Adolescence is a period of growth spurt and they are usually overwhelmed by sexual urges. Most adolescents are constrained to seek answers to their questions on sex from their peers since teachers and parents apparently refuse to answer them. A Nigerian secondary school boy once said, it is easier discussing (sex) with young people because older people want to know where you first hear about it and from whom, they shut us up and say that we want to start doing them (bad things) before growing up.

Also a Nigerian youth disclosed in an interview on sex education in passage magazine, in our country, young people primarily get information on sexuality from their friends. According to Kaluger and Kaluger (2011) most information about sex come from the peer group and often bring with it misconceptions. Similarly, in an investigation carried out in West Nigeria, Easen (1974) revealed that high school adolescents aged 12 and 16 years are already more involved in sex exploration than adults realize, and that their main source of information is the peer group.

In Nigeria like most other countries of the world, people believe that sex education is a forum for promoting promiscuity and premature genital involvement. Parents do not care to check the sex information posed by their children and this information are often misleading and are likely to cause abortion. Most people still cherish the notion that discussing sex in the homes is taboo. Many teenagers thus depend largely on unrealistic information received from peers to guide their sexual conduct. There is a great need for sex education at schools and at homes to guide the sex life of adolescents who are often ignorant.

Laoye (2014) suggested that expert on sex education could be invited to give talks to the pupils, for example doctors, welfare workers, officials of marriage guidance clinic and senior nursing sisters or matrons of hospitals. Also a World Health Organization (WHO) review found that offering sex education in schools often delay or decreased adolescent sexual activity and led to more contraceptive use.

### **Ignorance**

Possibly, ignorance is one of the most important cause of abortion. Most of these teenage girls who indulge in sexual affairs do not know of and never used any contraceptive. Besides, they engage in sexual affairs for the fun of it without knowing the implications. Some girls are forced into having sex and of either stupidity or sympathy for these involved they do not tell and adult of their affairs. Igiebor (2017) discovered that: Majority of adolescent girls who become pregnant in Nigeria often display their ignorance and innocence on the circumstances that forced them to it.

### **Lack of parental care and Affection**

Parental care and affection are very important factors in the rearing up of children. The way parents interact with their children affect them either positively or negatively, some parents are so harsh and authoritative towards their children that they are scared of them. Similarly some parents portray bad life styles, which if emulated by their children could lead to abortion.

Levey (2001) stressed the need for parents to show good example. He said that behaviour modification of a child is based life styles before inculcating ideas into their little one. Parents should live a life worthy of emulation for deviate from acceptable norms. Parents should also show love and affection to their children so that they may not seek affection from other sources.

### **Problems of Abortion**

#### **Socio-economic problems**

Socio-economic circumstances are the background to much of the anxiety that is expressed about teenage parenthood. Lower birth weights and premature deliveries are not just an outcome of a mother who is too young; they are outcomes of poor nutrition. Unsatisfactory housing and inadequate health care, which come from poor socio-economic circumstances.

#### **Psychological/Emotional problems:**

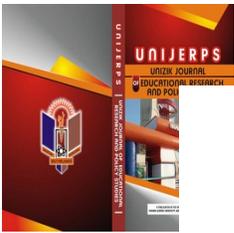
The psychological/emotional problems for the pregnant teenagers are enormous. Famuyiwe (2012) states that she is usually isolated and over-whelmed by feelings of guilt and shame, majority of abortion feel less adequate as individuals. They exhibit low self esteem. They evaluate their moral with a view to ascertaining the devil that led them into that condition.

Pattern (2015) asserts that pregnant adolescent has low self-esteem, which results from poor environment and a life with little gratification. The pregnant teenager feels dejected and deserted by her friends; she would not know where to run to look up to for encouragement. These would subsequently lead to emotional problems.

Pattern (2015) asserts that the expectations of adolescents especially adolescence, and mothers are influenced by the hopes of self esteem and opportunities offered by the society. During adolescence, the peer may help provide self assurance, but if this role is rejected, the adolescent mother may be neglected.

### **Implications of abortion**

Abortion is associated with lots of complications although having a baby always carries potential health risks for all women especially at first births. However, the risk of child bearing are heightened, and new hazards emerge, when a young adolescent a girl not yet 17 gives birth. Adolescent at this age often have not reached completed physical maturity, and their pelvis may not



be wide enough to accommodate a baby's head. In such as circumstances, obstructed delivery and prolonged labour are likely and these difficult deliveries can result in hemorrhage and even death of both mother and child if a young woman does not have access to media care that provides the option of surgical intervention.

McCauley and Salter (2016) demonstrated that, young adolescents, especially tragic pregnancy outcomes more often than do older adolescents or adult women. They likely further to state that young adolescents are more likely to experience premature labour spontaneous abortion and still births than al-c older women, and they are up to four times as likely as women older than 20 to die from pregnancy related causes. Bovine and Kuex (2004) pregnancy related illnesses such as hypertension and anemia are also more common among adolescents than among adult women.

A study at the University of Calabar Teaching hospital found that 72 percent of the patients hospitalized for abortion complications were under twenty. Fifty eight lercen1 were students and 11 percent and undergone a previous safe abortion. Only five percent of the patients has used contraceptives Archibong (2014). Some estimates indicate that illegal abortion may contribute to 50% of material deaths and may results in many other serious health consequences.

### **Illegal children**

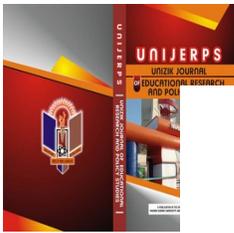
Due to alarming increase of illegitimate pregnancies, there is also alarming increase in illegitimate births in society today. More often than not, abortion do not know the father of their children. This gives rise to illegitimate children.

Armstrong (2002) expressed that, since 1943, illegitimate births have risen sharply. Now, over three thousand known illegitimate babies are born in United States each year. That means that one out of every twelve children is illegitimate babies born to girls under twenty.

### **School Dropouts**

Majority of the abortion usually dropout of school on realizing they are pregnant because of shame. While most of these young girls have no hope to continuing their studies few others are 'able to continue their education from where they left off. Tofua (2017) the number of female students who become pregnant has reached an alarming level and most of them dropout of school without any hope of" returning to complete their studies.

Gyepi (2006) stated that in a Nigerian study of 127 pregnant school girls, 52 percent were expelled from schools, 20 percent were too ashamed to return 15 percent could not return because their parents refuse to pay tuition, and eight percent were forced to marry. About 10 percent of the girls enrolled in Anambra secondary schools dropout each year as a result of pregnancy. Erikson (2003) believes that abortion leads to high rate to school dropout. In schools, students who are found to be pregnant are usually thrown out; such students may end up becoming roughs or prostitutes with the resultant effect that they may never go back to school.



### **The Parents**

The new generation parents have no time for their, children are left at the mercy of the maids who cannot educate the adolescents on sexual issues. Moreover, some parents are so harsh and authoritative that their children especially young girls cannot open up to them rather they tend to find confidence in their peers. Schooled (2014) strongly believes that ‘Lack of knowledge of sex and abortion would be avoided if teenagers hear about it from their parents.

Nwosu (2012) arguing in Lagos weekend strongly believed that increasing abortion is a caused by the quest for money by parents who leave the education of children at the mercy of the maid. To him the maid cannot provide the much needed sexual advice or provide the needed sexual constraints which the preserve of the parent will do.

### **The teenagers**

It is not surprising to find that the teenagers are not receiving directives from their teachers these days, most teachers’ exhibit non-challant attitude towards the teenage either for fear of the teen’s parents or the teens themselves. According to CPO Teen council Member (2013): I was very upset about a hurtful situation. I was crying down the hallway and went to talk to a teacher. When I confided in her, she simply said, you can handle it. You can handle it, you can handle anything. After that comment, she go up and left me alone in the room. I felt abandoned and even more upset.

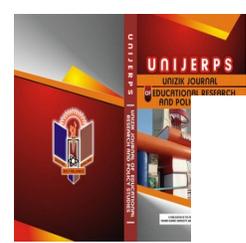
Cases of sexual harassment and abuse are prevalent in our secondary schools. Female students are lured to be bad by male teacher through promises to pass them in examination or tests. In some cases students who fail to co-operate are threatened with failure. Teachers suppose to inculcate knowledge and instill discipline in the teens and when it turns the other way round there will be problem. They should be looked upon as model.

### **The School Guidance Counselors:**

The school counselors are very important in cases of abortion in schools and also in assisting teens in making good choices. There is no doubt that in a school where guidance and counseling programmes thrives, the first person, the pregnant adolescent girls is likely to confide in the counselor, even in schools where guidance programme is not to pronounced, the counselor has to reach out for his or her client. Duncan and Mofeat (2014) explained that counselors should establish a setting for clients to examine feelings and evaluate alternatives.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was analyzed using the human capital theory which views human beings as critical elements of economic production alongside land, capital and entrepreneurship. Human Capital



Theory was developed by Shultz (2004) and Becker (2001) to take account for the increase in productivity that could not be explained by improvements in technology or fiscal capital. Education is seen as crucial to human capital development on the basis that it improves the quality of labor force and therefore the value of labor input in the production process (Welch, 1975 as cited by DeSousa and Gebremedhin 2010).

Consequent to this education and training not only plays a central role in human capital formation but is a crucial engine in the growth of the economy.

### **Empirical Studies**

Grant and Hallman (2016) and Marteleto (2016) used longitudinal data sets from South Africa, there exists an association between academic achievement and sexual initiation and therefore pregnancy: showing that those who perform better in school are less likely to initiate sex or use contraceptives if active, and for girls less likely to become pregnant or drop out if pregnant. Repetition due to poor performance leads to biological maturation of the girls while still in school and the attendant peer pressure to become sexually active can easily result in unwanted pregnancy (Kirby, 2012).

Coles (2015) opines that girls who become teen mothers were already experiencing academic difficulties in school, had low educational expectations, and were not confident they will graduate. Pursuing higher education or a career was not reasonably within reach and adolescent girls had no motivation to avoid pregnancy as it served as an alternative path to economic independence and adult status (Turner, 2004).

### **Research Method**

The research design was descriptive survey method which utilizes the opinions of a sample of the population to determine the views of a large population. The area of the study is Onitsha South local government area of Anambra State. The population of the study was six thousand, nine hundred (6,900) students from twenty (20) secondary schools in the local government area. Out of the above population, two hundred (200) pupils (respondents) were randomly selected as sample population. Five (5) pupils from each school, sixty (60) pregnant teenagers, forty (40) parents, eight (8) teachers and two (2) welfare officers. Out of the population, two hundred (200) pupils (respondents) were randomly selected as sample population. Five (5) pupils from each school, sixty (60) pregnant teenagers, forty (40) parents, eight (8) teachers and two (2) welfare officers. Questionnaire was administered by the researcher.

## Results

### Research Question 1

What are the causes of abortion among secondary schools students in Onitsha South Anambra state?

**Table 1**

S/N	Items	Responses			
		Yes	%	NO	%
1.	Craze for money and material wealth	150	75	50	25
2.	Reading of pornographic materials	80	40	120	50
3.	Ignorance	175	87.5	25	12.5
4.	Broken homes	110	55	90	45
5.	Lack of sex education both at home and school	160	80	40	20
6.	Lack of parental care and affection	140	70	60	30
7.	Peer group influence	120	60	80	40
8.	Moral laxity	160	80	40	20
9.	Single parenthood	105	52.5	95	47.5

### Research Question 2

What are the implications of abortion among secondary school girls?

**Table 2**

S/N	Items	Responses			
		Yes	%	NO	%
1.	Occasional deaths	120	60	80	40
2.	Illegitimate children	192	96	8	4
3.	School drop outs	160	80	40	20
4.	Write natal complications	110	55	90	45
5.	Single parenthood	160	80	40	20
6.	Forced marriages	180	90	20	10
7.	Constraints in maintaining the pregnancy	140	70	60	30
8.	Poor nutrition	160	80	40	20
9.	Premature delivery	118	59	92	46
10.	Ill health	178	89	22	11
11.	Underweight baby inclined	120	60	80	40
12.	Inclined to procure abortion	190	95	10	5
13.	Poverty	120	60	80	40
14.	Rejection by parents, peers, friends and relations.	160	80	40	20
15.	Lack of moral support from any source.	178	89	22	11
16.	Feeling of shame and guilt	190	95	10	5
17.	Withdrawal from public view	180	90	20	10

18.	Complete one's education	150
	75    50    25	

### Discussion of the Results

The results obtained are hereby discussed as follows: The results of table 1 indicated the responses from the respondents on the problems of pregnant teenagers. Six questionnaire items dealt on this subject. As shown eighteen items were generally accepted as possible problems of pregnant teenagers and an average of 78% of the 200 respondents accepted that the problems indicated on questionnaire items 1-18 were the obvious problems of pregnant teenagers, 22% of the respondents did not believe that those problems existed regarding pregnant teenagers.

Table one showed responses obtained from respondents as to the major causes of abortion. An average of 67% of the 200 respondents agreed on causes of abortion as shown in questionnaire items 1- 9. The respondents indicated that need for money, materialism, Ignorance, lack of sex education and peer group influence are the major causes of abortion. 33% of respondents disagreed however.

Similarly, table two shows the responses obtained from the respondents as the implications of the abortion among secondary school girls. An average of 77.9% of the 200 respondents agreed on the implication of the abortion to secondary school girls as shown in questionnaire items 1-18. While 22.1% disagreed to the implications. In the implication of abortion, the result was discovered that lack of sex education in schools is the major causes of abortion. Based on the finding, parent

should give set education to their children from early childhood. Abortion can be prevented by teaching teens about the risks of teen sex and how to make choices that will create lives for them self and their future family.

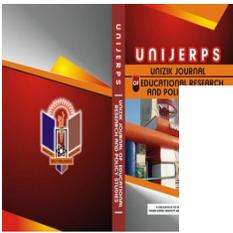
### Conclusion

From results of the study, it has been established that the incidence of teenage pregnancies exists in secondary schools in Onitsha South Anambra State. There are a number of factors, which lead to this incidence among which are lack of sex education in homes and in schools, group influence as well as poverty.

A lot of problems are encountered by the pregnant teenagers during and after pregnancy ranging from financial difficulty to abandonment. Guidance counselors are found to be immense help to these pregnant teens in providing relief to them and solution to their problems.

### Recommendation

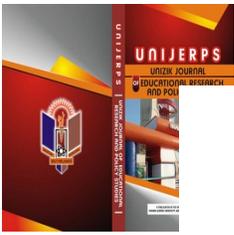
- a. Following this research, the researcher recommended the following for further research.
  1. The effect of abortion on the life of the teenage mother.
  2. The problem of abortion among secondary school students



3. Abortion and abandoned babies: An in-depth study.
4. The problems of fatherless children

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