



Pre-marital sexual relationships, teenage pregnancy, and parents involvement effects on academic performance: An educational concern among adolescent-students in Yaba Nigeria

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Abstract

Teenage pregnancy, which is often the direct result of premarital sexual relationships, is a significant concern, especially in Nigeria, where the consequences of early childbearing are felt in the academic performance. Thus, this study examined how adolescent students in Lagos State's Yaba Local Council Development Area performed academically in relation to premarital sexual encounters and teenage pregnancy. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study with a sample of 97 secondary school students. Pearson-Product Moment Correlation and Chi-Square statistical methods were used to assess three research hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that premarital sexual relationships and academic achievement are significantly correlated, teenage pregnancy has no significant influence on school attendance, and there is a significant influence of parental involvement on the prevention of premarital sexual relationships among adolescent-students in Yaba. Based on these findings, the study recommended that schools should integrate well-structured and age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education into their curricula, parents should be actively involved in their children's lives by fostering open and non-judgmental communication about relationships, sexuality, and academic aspirations, schools should establish counselling and mentorship programs to support students, particularly teenage mothers, in managing both academic and personal responsibilities, and that schools and community organizations should create peer mentorship programs where older students or trained peer educators can guide younger ones on making informed life choices.

Keywords: academic performance, adolescent-student, peer-mentorship, pre-marital sexual relationships, teenage pregnancy

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INTRODUCTION

Premarital sexual relationships and teenage pregnancy have emerged as pressing societal issues in many parts of the world, including Nigeria. These issues have garnered increasing attention in recent years due to their profound impact on adolescents' education, health, and well-being. In Nigeria, where traditional values often emphasize sexual abstinence before marriage, premarital sexual activity among teenagers stands in contrast to these cultural norms. Despite the strong societal expectations surrounding sexuality and gender roles, research on adolescence period has shown a rise in premarital sexual activity among adolescents, especially in urban areas like Yaba Local Council Development Area in Lagos State, Nigeria. The problem of

premarital sexual relationships and teenage pregnancy has raised significant concerns among parents, educators, policymakers and health professionals due to the lasting consequences it has on the academic performance and future prospects of teenagers.

One of the most common factors contributing to the rise in premarital sexual activity among teenagers in Nigeria is peer pressure. A research by Adeyemi (2026) indicate that adolescents, particularly those in their teenage years, often feel compelled to engage in sexual activity to fit in with their peers. This peer pressure could lead to risky sexual behaviours, with lasting emotional, physical and psychological consequences which may have direct impacts on adolescents' academic performance. Most of these teenagers who engage in premarital sexual activities tend to experience a range of negative emotions, including guilt, shame, and stress, which could interfere with their academic performance and overall well-being. According to Akuiyibo et al. (2019), the desire to conform to peer expectations plays a significant role in shaping the sexual behaviour among adolescents, which may lead to early sexual initiation and its associated risks.

Additionally, the lack of proper sex education exacerbates the problem of premarital sexual relationships among teenagers. As Osadolor et al. (2022) points out, young people are ill-prepared to make decisions regarding their sexual health due to insufficient sex education programs in schools. Many teenagers are exposed to sexual content in the media and online platforms, without proper education about the physical, emotional, and social consequences of sexual activity, they are more prone to act in a dangerous sexual manner. Inadequate knowledge about contraception and the potential for unintended pregnancies also increases the likelihood of teenage pregnancies, which is often a direct result of premarital sexual relationships. These pregnancies present numerous challenges for the young mothers, particularly in terms of their academic performance and overall life trajectory.

Teenage pregnancy, which is often the direct result of premarital sexual relationships, is a significant concern, especially in Nigeria, where the consequences of early childbearing are felt educationally. According to a report by the United Nations Population Fund (2020), Nigeria has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in sub-Saharan Africa. Teenage pregnancy poses a serious public health challenge, as it is associated with increased maternal and infant mortality rates. Moreover, teenage mothers face numerous barriers to continuing their education, including physical and emotional burdens associated with pregnancy and the responsibility of caring for a child. Research conducted by Egwuaba and Kosiso (2018) highlights how pregnant students often experience fatigue, lack of concentration, and difficulty meeting academic deadlines. These challenges, combined with healthcare appointments and the physical discomfort of pregnancy, significantly hinder their academic performance.

In addition to the physical and emotional toll of teenage pregnancy, the societal stigma attached to pregnant teenagers further exacerbates the difficulties they face. In many Nigerian communities, teenage pregnancy is viewed as a social taboo, and young mothers often face exclusion and discrimination. This stigma not only affects the teenagers' social relationships but also contributes to a decline in their self-esteem, making it even harder for them to focus on their education. The psychological distress experienced by these students can have a direct impact on their academic motivation, as feelings of shame and fear of judgment take a toll on their academic aspirations. Furthermore, the lack of support from both family and school systems often forces many teenage mothers to drop out of school, thereby limiting their educational attainment and future career opportunities. As Machoka et al. (2024) notes, many young girls who become pregnant are forced to leave school due to the lack of support systems at home and within the educational environment.

The socio-economic context of Yaba LCDA, which is part of the larger Lagos metropolis, also plays a major influence on how teenagers experience in relation to premarital sexual activity and teenage pregnancy. In urban areas like Yaba, where there is greater exposure to media,

social pressures, and economic disparity, teenage pregnancy rates are higher. Agu et al. (2022) observed that cultural norms and the societal expectation to maintain virginity until marriage have become increasingly difficult to uphold in the face of peer pressure, media influence, and changing gender roles. This trend is further compounded by the socio-economic challenges faced by many families in urban areas.

Addressing the issue of premarital sexual relationships and teenage pregnancy demands a multifaceted strategy that incorporates social support, healthcare, and education. Many experts, including Sekhra et al. (2024), advocate for the implementation of comprehensive sex education programs that address the physical, emotional, and social consequences of sexual activity. These programs should also include information about contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and the importance of making informed choices regarding sexual behaviour. Moreover, there is a need for stronger support systems for pregnant teenagers to help them continue their education, reduce stigma, and provide access to healthcare services. In the long term, such interventions can help reduce the rates of premarital sexual activity and teenage pregnancy, ultimately improving the educational outcomes for adolescents in Nigeria. In light of this, the study aims to investigate the impacts of pre-marital sexual relationships and teenage pregnancy on academic performance among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA of Lagos-Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested at a 0.05 level of significance were as follows: (1) there is no significant relationship between premarital sexual relationships and the academic performance among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA, (2) teenage pregnancy has no significant relationship on the school attendance among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA, and (3) parental involvement has no significant relationship impacts on the prevention of premarital sexual relationships among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA.

RESEARCH METHOD

The descriptive survey design was employed for this study. The design was used for assessing the opinions of the selected respondents. This method is appropriate for this study because it allows respondents to express their life experiences and opinions on this nature of study. The population of this study comprised all the under-aged parents in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State, which will total approximately 1,325 under-aged parents at the time of carrying out this research.

A multi-stage sampling process was employed in this study. In the first stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select three (3) schools in Yaba LCDA through hat and draw method. The second stage involved using convenient sampling method used to collect data from 97 respondents.

A researcher self-designed questionnaire was used to gather relevant information which was constructed in two main sections, 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' contained the bio-data of the selected respondents, while Section 'B' contained 20 items that focused on pre-marital sexual relationships and teenage pregnancy and their effect on academic performance among adolescent-students. The questionnaire structured on a four-point Likert scale with response options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), with corresponding points of 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. Additionally, 30 standardized questions in English Language were also used to assess the academic performance.

A pilot study was carried out to ascertain the reliability coefficient of the instrument. In doing this, 30 copies of the questionnaire were administered to some selected respondents (15 males and 15 females) outside the main study area. The identical instruments were given to the same responders again after a two-week break. under the same condition. Then, the Pearson-product Moment Correlation was used to analyze two findings, 0.74 result was obtained. This showed

the reliability coefficient of the instrument was relatively high. The collected data was analyzed using Pearson-product Moment Correlation and Chi-square statistical tools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Relationship between premarital sexual relationships and the academic performance among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA

The relationship between premarital sexual relationships and the academic performance among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Relationship between premarital sexual relationships and the academic performance among adolescent-students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r-calculated	r-criteria	Remarks
Premarital sexual relationships	97	15.91	2.292	95	0.435	0.200	Significant ^a
Academic performance	97	14.02	2.217				

^a $p(0.000) < 0.05$

Table 1 shows that the r-calculated value of 0.435 is more than the critical value of 0.200 given 95 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. The result revealed that, there is a significant relationship between premarital sexual relationships and the academic performance among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA. This implies that sexually active students often experience lower grades, higher dropout rates, and increased emotional distress.

Relationship between teenage pregnancy on school attendance among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA

The relationship between teenage pregnancy and school attendance among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Chi-square analysis showing influence of teenage pregnancy on school attendance of senior secondary school students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	X ² -calculated	X ² -criteria	Remarks
Teenage pregnancy on school attendance	97	3.72	0.746	4	11.897	9.488	Significant ^a

^a $p(0.003) < 0.05$

Table 2 shows that, with four degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.05, the X²-calculated value of 11.897 is greater than the critical value of 9.488. Consequently, the null hypothesis was disproved. The result revealed that, teenage pregnancy has significant influence on school attendance among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA.

Relationship between parental involvement on the prevention of pre-marital sexual relationship among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA

The relationship between parental involvement on the prevention of pre-marital sexual relationship among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Chi-square analysis showing influence of parental involvement and school attendance of senior secondary school students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	X ² -calculated	X ² -criteria	Remarks
Influence of parental involvement on premarital sexual relationship	97	4.16	0.874	4	29.938	9.488	Significant ^a

^a p(0.003) < 0.05

Table 3 reveals that the X2-calculated value of 29.938 is more than the critical value of 9.488 given 4 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant influence of parental involvement on the prevention of premarital sexual relationships among senior secondary school students in Yaba LCDA.

Discussion

Hypothesis one established that there is a significant relationship between premarital sexual relationships and the academic performance among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA. This finding aligns with the study by Khan et al. (2025), who demonstrated that students engaged in premarital sexual relationships tend to exhibit lower academic performance due to distractions, emotional stress, and reduced concentration on schoolwork. In corroboration, Pedrini et al (2022) found that adolescents involved in early sexual activities often experience poor study habits, irregular school attendance, and a decline in motivation for academic excellence.

Furthermore, Khan et al. (2025) argued that premarital sexual involvement among students can lead to psychological distress, which negatively affects cognitive functions such as memory retention and critical thinking, thus reducing overall academic performance. This is further corroborated by Honghao et al. (2021), who posited that romantic relationships among adolescents often lead to time mismanagement, where students prioritize personal relationships over academic responsibilities, leading to poor grades. However, the findings diverge from the study by Noroozi et al. (2014), who suggested that while premarital sexual relationships may influence academic performance, the impact is not always negative, as some students develop stronger emotional support systems through relationships, which may enhance their academic engagement. Similarly, Khan et al. (2025) emphasized that the relationship between premarital sexual activity and academic performance is moderated by other factors, such as parental guidance, peer influence, and socio-economic background, suggesting that students with strong support systems may not experience a decline in academic performance. Additionally, the impact of premarital sexual relationships on academic performance varies across different cultural and religious settings, where societal norms influence students' attitudes towards relationships and academic engagement. While premarital sexual relationships may contribute to academic underachievement, external factors such as substance abuse, family instability, and financial stress may play a more significant role in shaping students' academic outcomes.

Hypothesis two showed that teenage pregnancy significantly influences school attendance among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA. This finding aligns with the study by Gselamu et al. (2019), who demonstrated that teenage pregnancy often leads to increased absenteeism and higher dropout rates due to the physical, emotional, and financial challenges associated with early motherhood. In the same vein, Senaratne et al. (2025) found that pregnant teenagers are more likely to experience irregular school attendance as they navigate the demands of pregnancy and childcare, which often conflict with academic responsibilities. Teenage mothers face stigma and discrimination within the school environment, leading to social withdrawal and

decreased engagement in academic activities. The lack of support systems for teenage mothers contributes to their diminished school attendance, as they struggle to balance educational pursuits with parenting duties. However, with adequate support and flexible school policies, teenage mothers can maintain regular school attendance and successfully continue their education. The impact of teenage pregnancy on school attendance is mediated by factors such as family support, access to childcare services, and the presence of school-based programs designed to assist young mothers. The influence of teenage pregnancy on school attendance varies across different socio-economic contexts, noting that students from more affluent backgrounds may have access to resources that enable them to continue their education despite early motherhood. While teenage pregnancy poses challenges to school attendance, other factors such as peer influence, quality of school infrastructure, and personal motivation play significant roles in determining a student's commitment to schooling.

Hypothesis three revealed that parental involvement significantly influences the prevention of premarital sexual relationships among adolescent-students in Yaba LCDA. Oluyemi et al. (2017) argue that increased parental communication and monitoring are associated with a reduction in adolescents' engagement in premarital sexual activities. The study found a significant relationship between parental communication and participants' sexual behaviour, indicating that parental involvement positively affects adolescents' sexual decisions. Similarly, Odimegwu et al. (2002) explored parental characteristics and adolescent sexual behaviour in Bida Local Government Area, Nigeria. Their research highlighted that parents' involvement in their adolescents' sexual and reproductive health, particularly concerning terminating unintended pregnancies, plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' sexual behaviours. Furthermore, adolescents with poor perceptions of their family support and functioning were more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours. The study emphasized that a supportive family environment is essential in deterring adolescents from engaging in premarital sexual activities. However, despite parental involvement, various barriers hinder effective communication about sexual risks, suggesting that parental involvement alone may not be sufficient to prevent premarital sexual relationships among adolescents. Additionally, adolescents who had been sexually abused, especially by close relatives, were more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours. This finding suggests that while parental involvement is crucial, the quality of the family environment and the nature of familial relationships significantly impact adolescents' sexual behaviours.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant impact of premarital sexual relationships, teenage pregnancy, and parental involvement on the academic performance, school attendance, and educational attainment of senior secondary school students in Yaba Local Government Area. Premarital sexual relationships were found to negatively affect academic performance due to distractions, emotional stress, and reduced concentration, though some studies suggest emotional support systems may mitigate these effects. Teenage pregnancy significantly influences school attendance and educational attainment, as pregnant students often face absenteeism, stigma, and financial struggles, although flexible school policies and strong support systems can help them continue their education. Additionally, parental involvement plays a crucial role in preventing premarital sexual relationships, as effective communication and guidance reduce risky behaviors among adolescents. However, challenges such as poor communication and past experiences of abuse may limit parental influence. Therefore, a multi-dimensional approach that includes comprehensive sex education, school-based support programs, peer mentorship, and community-driven interventions is essential for addressing these challenges and promoting students' academic success.

Recommendations

The study's findings led to the following recommendations: (1) the schools should integrate well-structured and age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education into their curricula, (2) the parents should be actively involved in their children's lives by fostering open and non-judgmental communication about relationships, sexuality, and academic aspirations, (3) the schools should establish counselling and mentorship programs to support students, particularly teenage mothers, in managing both academic and personal responsibilities.

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Author contribution

All authors contribute in the research and/or writing the paper, and approved the final manuscript.

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Conflict of interest

All authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Ethics declaration

We as authors acknowledge that this work has been written based on ethical research that conforms with the regulations of our institutions and that we have obtained the permission from the relevant institutes when collecting data. We support the International Journal on Education Insight (IJEI) in maintaining the high standards of personal conduct, practicing honesty in all our professional practices and endeavors.

The use of artificial intelligence

We do not use any generative AI tools to write any part of this paper.

Additional information

Not available.

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