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# Perceived effect of teenage pregnancy on agricultural productivity in Odeda local government area of Ogun state

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## ABSTRACT

This study looked at the perceived effect of teenage pregnancy on agricultural productivity in Odeda local government area of Ogun state, Nigeria. About 120 respondents including pregnant teenagers, mothers who once had pregnancy in their teen ages, and other community members were purposively sampled through the snowball sampling method. Four objectives were pursued while a hypothesis was tested. The result indicated that poverty and parental styles are the two major causes of teenage pregnancy. Absence of male household heads is, however, not seen as a serious cause of teenage pregnancy. The study further showed that teenage pregnancy has a negative effect on agricultural production. The result of the tested hypothesis deduced that age, sex and religion has a positive relationship with their assessment of teenage pregnancy. Accessible, free and compulsory qualitative basic education and awareness campaigns on sex education are essentially needed in reducing the incidence of teenage pregnancy in rural areas.

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## Introduction

Pregnancy is a physiological process, presenting with history of missed period, fatigue, breast enlargement and tenderness, abdominal distension, nausea and vomiting together with light-headedness. When these happen at age of 19 years or below they are called adolescent or teenage pregnancies (Nyakubega, 2009). According to Olunlade (2000) a teenager refers to a person in his or her teens between 13 and 19 years of age. Teenagers make up a significant proportion of the world's population. Globally 15 million women under the age of 20 give birth, representing up to one-fifth of all births (WHO, 1991) and 529,000 women die due to pregnancy and child birth related complication every year (WHO, 2005). This of course have implications for a broad based population structure for a world with high dependency ratio.

Nigeria like some other countries has suffered a decline in agricultural production in the recent years. Food production rose marginally in the 1950's and 1960's but fell in 1970's to the extent that production barely kept pace with population growth (Adeyoju, 2001). The discovery of the oil sector led to the neglect of the agricultural sector. Historically, the roots of crisis in the Nigerian economy lie in the neglect of agriculture and the increased dependence on a mono-cultural economy based on oil (Olagbaju and Falola, 1996 as cited in Ogen, 2007). This incidence led to rural-urban migration of young able bodied youths and left agricultural production to the hands of aged men and women, teenagers and younger children. In line with the report of ILO (2009), about 70% of working children are in agriculture working on farms and plantations, often from sunrise to sunset, doing various planting and post planting activities.

With the gradual industrialization of the Nigerian economy and the subsequent drift of a large number of populations from the rural to the urban centre, a lot of production has been left solely for the children and teenagers in the rural areas; this then led to a high concentration of teenagers in agricultural activities

(Adeyoju, 2001). Adeyoju further opined that the shortage of labour caused by the youth's non-involvement in agricultural activities has led to the wide involvement of teenagers in agricultural and non agricultural enterprises in the rural areas. He concluded that rural teenagers' contribution towards agricultural production has been substantial on a large proportion of agricultural products consumed all over this country.

Most rural families cannot afford paid labours and as such all teenagers in the families are drafted to work on the farm, it is not encouraging to realize the alarming rate of pregnancy among teenagers in rural areas. Most pregnant teenagers are further forced to bear the physical and emotional burden and heartache of unwanted pregnancy. It seems that there is hardly anything that is more depilating or depressing than becoming pregnant in an opportune time. The alarming dimension of this social observation has generated a deep concern for the high proportion of teenagers who unknowingly find themselves carrying pregnancy that are not planned for.

Teenagers according to Olunlade (2000) are naturally adventurous, majority of them know little or have no information about contraception and fertility and by this, they have the tendency of been faced with unintended pregnancy. Nyakubega (2009)'s study found that luxury and deprivation of education for girls as other reasons for adolescent pregnancy with 43.5% and 16.5% of students responding respectively, which goes hand in hand with John (1995), who reported that unwanted pregnancies were contributed by a wide range of factors, including financial problems – especially unemployment and poverty among girls, lack of information about sexual matters, exposure, too much leisure, illiteracy and low level of education among girls. The risk of death due to pregnancy-related causes is double among women aged 15-19 compared to women in their twenties (PRB, 2000). Young women are also at risk of unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections

(STIs) and unsatisfactory or coerced early sexual relationships (Singh and Darroch, 2000 and Wight, *et al*, 2000). In the developing world, one-third to one-half of women become mothers before the age of 20 and pregnancy related complications have become the leading causes of death among them (UN, 1997 and Viegas, *et al*, 1992 as cited in Raj, *et al*, 2010).

Irrespective of the cause of pregnancy, most teenagers are not mentally or physically prepared, this therefore affect their performance on the farm and therefore lead to low level of agricultural production (Abubakar, 2009). Therefore, teenagers' contribution towards agricultural production cannot be overlooked and underplayed most especially in the rural communities. Recent observation of the study area showed that there is a high concentration of teenagers within the villages in Odeda local government area of Ogun state. As contended by Abubakar (2009), pregnant teenagers are mentally, physically and emotionally disturbed and lead to low performance on the farm. Teenage or adolescent pregnancy has been an issue of concern to both local and international agencies and researchers (see Raj, *et al*, 2010; Nyakubega, 2009; Keller, *et al*, 1999; Hagen, *et al*, 2012; Slowinski, 2001; Khattri, *et al*, 1997, Banerjee, *et al*, 2009, etc), but less efforts have been concentrated on the effects of this phenomenon on national development through agricultural productivity. Many social and economic ills of Nigerian society have been linked to the prevalence of early marriages and pregnancies and low level of agricultural productivity (Olunlade, 2000).

It is in this view that the study looked at the perceived effect of teenage pregnancy on agricultural productivity in Odeda local government area of Ogun state. To actualize this, the following objectives were pursued:

1. to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study area.
2. to assess the causes of teenage pregnancy in the study area.
3. to investigate the agricultural and non-agricultural activities engaged in by female teenagers in the study area.
4. to determine the consequences of teenage pregnancy on agricultural productivity in the study area.

Findings extracted from this study are expected to add to the reservoir of knowledge on the perceived effects of teenage pregnancy on agricultural productivity and causes of teenage pregnancy in the rural areas. Also findings will help in the development of programmes that would stop the incidence of teenage pregnancy.

#### **Study hypothesis**

This study hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the community assessment of teenage pregnancy.

#### **Methodology**

The study was conducted in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun state, which has a characteristics feature of high but uniform temperature of 23°C - 30°C and relative humidity of 80-90%; it is located in the rain forest zone and has annual rainfall of 1455mm from an average of 139 rain days. It has an extensive landmass of mostly grassland with an area of 1263.45sqkm. It consist of a population of 109,449 inhabitant according to the 2006 population census figure with an annual growth rate of ten percent and upward increase of 10,334 to that of 1991 population census figure of 99,115 people. The local government is divided into two extensive blocks namely Ilugun and Opeji. Well structured interview guides were used to obtain

useful information from a total of 120 respondents that were sampled using the multi-stage sampling procedure as follows:

Stage 1: purposive selection of Odeda local Government Area of Ogun state due to prior observation of pregnant teenagers' involvement in farming;

Stage 2: random selection 20% (two) of the agricultural zones in the local government;

Stage3: random selection of four villages from selected zones to give a total of eight villages; and

Stage 4: purposive sampling technique used to select pregnant teenagers, mothers who once had pregnancy during their teen years and while random selection of community members was also made use of.

#### **Results and Discussion**

##### **Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

Table 1 show that 40.80% of the respondents were males while 59.20% were females. This indicates that about two-third of the respondents were females. This is largely due to the fact that females are the major respondents purposively selected being the pregnant teenagers and mothers who once had pregnancy during their teen ages. However the males were actively involved as they show their views and assessment of teenage pregnancy. More so, teenagers are generally used as labour source on farms by parents, men being the head of households are as well in the best position to give information about the effect of teenage pregnancy on agricultural productivity.

The age distribution shows that 24.20% of the respondents are within 10 and 19 years of age, 24.20% are within 20-30 years, 27.50% are 31 and 40 years and 19% are above 50. This indicates that most of the respondents are between the ages of 31 and 40 signifying they are in the working class and economically active. According to Table 1, Christianity is the prevalent religion in the study area as most (54.20%) of the respondents are Christians. None of the respondents indicated that they worship the traditional gods probably because they prefer to be known either as Muslims or Christians even though they claim that other religion cannot prevent them from their traditional practices, rituals and beliefs.

Most of the sampled respondents exist in a monogamous family structure with an average household size of 8 persons. They are mostly Yorubas (85.00%) combining various agricultural enterprise. The study further showed that 87.5% of the respondents were engaged in farming, 25.8% in trading, and 20% in hunting while 12.5% and 5.8% of the respondents were engaged in fishing and timber production respectively. The findings of this study then implies that farming is a major occupation in rural areas with close to half (45.50%) of the respondents having between 6 and 10 years of farming experience and majority of the respondents have their income based on farm activities. It also implies that rural people are engaged in more than one occupation as a way of managing risks that is attributed with farming enterprises.

Most of the sampled respondents are married (50.80%) as seen in Table 1. The need to cater for their family members explains why they diversify into more than one type of agricultural enterprise. About 45% of the respondents earn between N10000 and N19999 per month, 30.8% earn between N20000 and N25000 while 24.2% earn between N1000 and N9999 per month.

Their level of education as seen in Table 1 below reveals that 36.7% of respondents had no formal education, 46.7% had primary education while 16.7% had secondary education. The

higher percentage (46.70%) of the respondents who had primary education could be due to the Universal Basic Education (UBE) of the Federal Government to ensure that rural people have at least primary education. The low level of education in the study area is then attributed to the high cost of secondary and tertiary education and teenage pregnancy which prevent rural children, especially girls, access to education.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents (n=120)**

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	49	40.8
Female	71	59.2
<b>Age</b>		
10-19	29	24.2
20-29	29	24.2
30-39	33	27.5
40-49	10	8.3
50 and above	19	15.8
<b>Religion</b>		
Islam	55	45.8
Christianity	65	54.2
<b>Ethnic group</b>		
Yoruba	102	85.0
Hausa	8	6.7
Igede	10	8.3
<b>Educational status</b>		
No formal education	44	36.7
Primary education	56	46.7
Secondary education	20	16.7
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	49	40.8
Married	61	50.8
Widowed	10	8.3
<b>Household size</b>		
1-5	46	38.3
6-10	51	42.5
above 10	23	19.2
<b>Family structure</b>		
Polygamy	46	38.3
Monogamy	74	61.7
<b>Occupation</b>		
Farming	105	87.5
Trading	31	25.8
Taxi driving	25	20.8
Fishing	15	12.5
Lumbering	7	5.8
Tailoring	6	5.0
Secondary school students	4	3.3
Hunting	1	0.8
<b>Farming experience (years)</b>		
1-5	28	23.3
6-10	54	45.0
above 10	38	31.7
<b>Source of family income</b>		
Farm income	74	61.7
Non-farm income	30	25.0
Remittances	70	58.3

Source: field survey, 2010

#### Causes of teenage pregnancy

Table 2 below shows the respondents' views about the various causes of teenage pregnancy. Most respondents see poverty (89.20%), love in the hope of marriage (62.50%), curiosity and experimentation (79.20%), excessive freedom (58.30%), lack of information on sex education (77.50%) lack of use of contraceptives (52.50%) and parental styles (80.00%) to be the causes of teenage pregnancy having. From the finding, it can be deduced that poverty and parental styles are principally

the major causes of teenage pregnancy and this is in support of the earlier work of Besharov and Gardner (1997) who found that poverty is associated with the increased rate of teenage pregnancy among rural dwellers.

This study also revealed that absence of male heads is not really a cause of teenage pregnancy as majority (77.50%) of the respondents is not in support of the view. This negates the findings of Barglow *et al.* (1968) that associated the absence of male heads of household with teenage pregnancy.

#### The Agricultural activities engaged by female teenagers.

Pregnant teenagers interviewed were engaged mostly in crop production (maize, cassava, yam, cocoa and orange) and fish production. Majority (93.20%) concentrated on crop production with the highest proportion (31.00%) attributed to Cassava production. About 27.50% and 20.70% are involved in maize and yam production respectively. Just 6.80% each are engaged in cocoa, orange and fish production. It was realized that majority of female teenager go into more of cassava production than maize, yam and other agricultural production and this shows that they are predominantly farmers growing cassava, maize and yam. It could also be concluded that pregnant teenagers are more involved in food crop production activities than any other agricultural activities because cassava, maize and yam seems to be staple foods in the study area like other southern parts of the nation.

**Table 3: Agricultural activities engaged in by pregnant teenagers**

Agricultural activities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Maize production	8	27.50
Cassava production	9	31.00
Yam production	6	20.70
Cocoa production	2	6.80
Orange production	2	6.80
Fish production	2	6.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: field survey, 2010

#### The non agricultural activities engaged by female teenagers

Aside from their engagement in agricultural activities, all the interviewed pregnant teenagers were also engaged in non-agricultural activities which include hair making, cloth weaving, petty trading and tailoring. Table 4 reflects that majority (34.40%) of the teenagers were involved in hair making, while 17.20% of the teenagers are petty traders, 24.10% each are cloth weavers and tailors. It was therefore realized that majority of the respondents go into hair making as a non agricultural enterprise than any other enterprise.

**Table 4: Non agricultural activities engaged in by pregnant teenagers.**

Non-agricultural activities	Frequency	Percentage
Hair making	10	34.40
Cloth weaving	7	24.10
Petty trading	5	17.20
Tailoring	7	24.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: field survey, 2010

#### Perceived effects of teenage pregnancy on agricultural productivity

Table 5 indicated a reduction in the average quantity of agricultural crops (in baskets) produced by crop farmers due to teenage pregnancy. The reduced yield observed in crop production is as a result of reduction in the performance of the available labour hands and this supports Olunlade (2000) that irrespective of the cause of pregnancy, most teenagers are not mentally, physically and emotionally prepared.

**Table 2 : Community members' view on the causes of teenage pregnancy (n=120)**

Causes of teenage pregnancy	Yes		No		Rank
	Frequency	Percentages (%)	Frequency	Percentages (%)	
Poverty	107	89.2	13	10.8	1
Love in the hope of marriage	75	62.5	45	37.5	5
Curiosity and experimentation	95	79.2	25	20.8	3
Broken homes	55	45.8	65	54.2	8
Excessive freedom	70	58.3	50	41.7	6
Lack of information on sex education	93	77.5	27	22.5	4
Lack of use of contraceptives	63	52.5	57	47.5	7
Absence of male heads	27	22.5	93	77.5	9
Parental styles	96	80.0	24	20.0	2

Source: field survey 2010

However, the same Table showed an increase in the average quantity of livestock (Goats, fowls and fishes) been raised by animal farmers as a result of teenage pregnancy. The increase in the yield of animal farming is due to the fact that the productivity of animal farming is directly dependent on the feeding, medication, housing etc. Also, animal rearing in the study area is mostly through the extensive management system. Hence, animal rearing in the study area do not require labour and therefore teenage pregnancy does not directly affect the productivity. It is therefore concluded that teenage pregnancy reduces agricultural productivity since majority of the farmers in the study area concentrate on crop production and just rear animals on few occasions.

**Table 5: Effect of teenage pregnancy on agricultural productivity**

Agricultural activities	Average quantity (Before)	Average quantity (After)
Maize (basket)	40	35
Cassava (basket)	45	42
Yam (tubers)	70	67
Plantain (basket)	9	10
Cocoa (basket)	16	15
Kola nut (basket)	17	17
Cashew (basket)	15	17
Orange (basket)	14	12
Goat	7	12
Fowl	6	12
fish	250	241

Source: field survey, 2010.

**Hypothesis testing**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the demographic characteristics of respondents and the community assessment of teenage pregnancy.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are significantly related to the community assessment of teenage pregnancy. The demographic characteristics were tested against the community assessment of teenage pregnancy at 0.01 level of significance with the use of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

The result revealed that sex ( $r = -0.359$ ,  $p=0.001$ ), age ( $r=0.492$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and religion ( $r=0.201$ ,  $p=0.005$ ) were significantly related to community assessment of teenage pregnancy.

From Table 6 there is a strong relationship between the demographic relationship of the respondents and the community assessment of teenage pregnancy. Sex shows a negative correlation with the community assessment of teenage pregnancy indicating that the male community members have negative attitude towards teenage pregnancy while the females showed favourable perception of teenage pregnancy. Age and religion shows a positive and correlation with the assessment of

teenage pregnancy. This implies that the older members of the community assessed teenage pregnancy more positively than the younger members of the community.

**Table 6: Test of relationship between the demographic characteristics of respondents and their assessment of teenage pregnancy**

Variables	R value	p value	Decision
Sex	-0.359	0.001	significant
Age	0.492	0.000	significant
Religion	0.201	0.005	significant

**Conclusion and recommendation**

The study revealed that poverty and parental styles are two major causes of teenage pregnancy while absence of male household heads was not viewed as a major cause of teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy was also perceived to have negative effects on agricultural production, especially, in the crop production sector as the number of household labour will be reduced due to tiredness. This is mainly because rural farmers highly depend on family members as good and reliable source of farm labour. Pregnant teenagers, also engage in non-agricultural activities like hair dressing, tailoring, etc.

It is therefore recommended that parents, guardians, and all tiers of government should encourage pregnant teenagers to continue their education after delivery as entrenched in section 15 (5) of the Child's Rights Act, 2003. Education of the child should be made free, compulsory and accessible to all rural children of school age. Awareness campaign on sex education should be made a necessity by all stakeholders in the rural development sector.

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