**The Effects of Pregnancy on Female Academic**

**Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Oyo State**

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**Abstract**

*The study examined the effects of pregnancy on female academic performance in Nigeria institutions of higher learning. The research design used in this study was descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consists of higher institutions of learning in Oyo State where three hundred and sixty (360) female respondents were selected. The research instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire title “Effects of Pregnancy on Female Academic Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Oyo State Questionnaire Rating Scale (EPFAPTIOSQRS)”. The data collected was analyzed using chi-square. The study revealed that the asymptotic significant value (71.240) is greater than alpha value 0.05 therefore; there is significant influence of pregnant on academic performance of female students in Oyo State. Also it was revealed that the asymptotic significant value (160.606) is greater than alpha value 0.05, which means there is significant influence of peer on female students’ pregnancy in Oyo State tertiary institutions. Finally, the Asymptotic Significant value (52.470) is greater than alpha value 0.05, which indicate that there is significant influence of family background on female students’ pregnancy in Oyo State tertiary institutions. It was concluded that pregnancy had effects on academic performance of female students in higher institutions in Oyo State. Based on the findings, the study recommends among others, that proper orientation programme should be organized for all the female students in higher institutions of learning on the negative effect of pregnancy on their academic performance.*

**Keywords:** Pregnancy, Academic Performance, Tertiary Institutions

**Introduction**

One of the challenging issues or contemporary social problem confronting higher institutions of learning in Oyo State and Nigeria in general is the issue of pregnancy among female students in Nigerian tertiary institutions of learning. From the first world countries to the third world countries, this problem has been a source of worry for Nigerian policy makers, social workers and other human service providers due to its negative repercussions on the female students’ education and academic performance. Therefore, the above-mentioned problem is one of the social elements that contribute to the poor academic performance of female student in our society at large (Aemiro, 2018). Academic performance is the outcome of education or the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goal. Furthermore, every person who is concerned about education should take academic performance very seriously (Osiki, 2001). In fact, academic performance can be seen as the hub around which many important elements of the educational system revolve. For this reason, the academic performance of any female student, particularly those attending Higher Education Institutions is important.

Pregnancy refers to a state of carrying a growing embryo or foetus within the female body. In other words, is a condition from conception to the expulsion of feotus (Barbara, 2014). Quist-Adade (2017) submitted that a female student’s chances of continuing her education are often low when she becomes pregnant. Therefore, Pregnancy at whatever level in life can be a life changing experience of female students that cuts across boundaries of race, educational attainment and socio-economic status. The increase in the incidence and prevalence rate around the world, as well as the adverse consequences these developments have on the world’s population, have put the issue of contraception on the global agenda. When a female student who is supposed to be attending school becomes pregnant, her hopes and aspirations can be dashed and her life forever changed. Pregnancy among female students is one of the greatest barriers to female educational attainment (Marteleto, Lam & Ranchod, 2008).

Ashcraft (2006) submitted that pregnancy of female students has a significant impact on young mothers and their children, limiting their educational attainment and economic security, leading to future single parenthood and marital instability. Klein (2005) observed that, the potential of peer groups to influence one another into sexual activities is central to many important policy issues in our society, sometimes they advise each other that the solution to keeping a beloved boyfriend is to have sex with him and have children, but it is often misunderstood and completely inaccurate which later affect their academic performance (Davies, 2000). Bhana, Morrell, Shefer & Ngabaza (2010) found that the presence of pregnant students in the lecture hall threatened not only their own academic performance, but also the overall academic performance and classroom harmony. In particular, most pregnant students are unable to meet the academic demands of school. Mangatu and Kisimbiyi (2019) submitted that female students from poor backgrounds are more likely to become pregnant while in school. Family instability influences pregnancy among female student in the sense that poor communication with parents, divorce, and domestic violence can lead to their pregnancy (Quinlivan, Tan, Steele, & Black, 2004).

In recent time it has been discovered that, most of the female students in higher institutions of learning get pregnant without planning or preparing for it, and term such unwanted Pregnancies. They engage in pre-marital sex and consequently end up with pregnancy while still studying. An unwanted pregnancy can cause many serious problems for the body, mind, and the social status of female students in higher institutions of learning who are not yet ready to be mothers. They are often nervous as they can’t solve the problem and their parents may not accept them and the pregnancy. Some may finally seek illegal abortion which can cause them their lives. Even when they do not terminate the pregnancy, some of them may be too young to give birth and have health complications. Some of the pregnant students in our higher institutions of

learning was directly or indirectly forced to quit their studies to stay at home until they give birth. These unprepared young mothers often inevitably encounter financial problems; stress and worries and eventually harm their mentality. Many of them lack knowledge to deal with the problem, because Pregnancy takes physical, social, physiological and emotional preparation to accomplish or give birth. The Adolescent female students may become pregnant as a result of many factors, conditions or situations, while some adolescent female students become pregnant while involved in dating relationships, poor family upbringing, and low educational level of parents, it could also be due to rape and parental influence. All pregnancies are the result of voluntary intercourse with a member of the opposite sex. There is no doubt that certain factors could account for the prevalence of pregnancy among female students in tertiary institution. Such factors are the following: place of residence, educational level of parents, and friends of the opposite sex. This research proposal seeks to assess the effects of pregnancy on female academic performance in tertiary institutions in Oyo Sate, Nigeria.

Jordan, Combs & Smith (2014) submitted that involvement in sexual activities can lead to a students’ lack of interest in their studies and poor academic performance will now set in, which eventually cause them to leave the university. It causes female students to experience trauma, feel despondent, and lose their confidence (Shumba & Matina, 2002). Therefore, any female student that is a victim of sexual harassment to the extent of becoming pregnant, such individual lacked information or probably she was not adequately educated on safe-sex either by their parents, schools or development agencies that could have enabled her deal with friends who lure her into sex prematurely. It has been estimated that around 16 million girls globally become pregnant each year, about 5.5 million of them live in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the world health organization (WHO, 2011). Therefore, the effects of pregnancy on female academic performance and social psychological well-being of female students in higher institutions of learning most especially in Oyo State is what the study is poised to determine. Access to education has been recognized as a human right and is not only seemed as a human right, but it is also viewed as an instrument to guide against unwanted pregnancy among female students in higher institution of learning in Nigeria. It also seen as instrument to harmonize physical, mental, moral (spiritual), and social faculties of individuals, for a life of dedicated service as the grade level of education increases, so also the number of female students starts to increase compare to their male counterparts. Consequently, higher education remains the level of learning where female students are less represented due to cases of sexual activity that had resulted into increased cases of unplanned pregnancies, poor academic performance, and eventually school dropouts.

Female students’ pregnancy is a concern worldwide and has risen at an alarming rate in every society. Therefore, it is noted that, unplanned or premarital pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV, poor academic performance are distinctive problems that students engaging in sexual activity are likely to encounter. However, Good academic performance is a core achievement desired by any educational institution that aims at achieving quality education. It should also be noted that, students attend schools to attain their academic achievement. It is during this time that young people pass through a critical time of their life development including academic and eventually career choices.

**Statement of the Problem**

The growing problem of female students’ pregnancy in Nigerian Higher Institutions of learning is no doubt a cause for concern. The alarming rate at which female students in Nigerian higher institutions get pregnant is on the increase, and this has led to social problem that needs to be addressed and this issue of students’ pregnancy in higher Institution of learning is no longer a new thing in any society be it developed, developing or less developed nations. Various reasons have been adduced for its existence but the basic problem is the persistency and the geometric progression of its expansion despite all the efforts that has been made by government, schools, religious bodies and non governmental agencies at resolving some identified factors leading to this in our societies. This research therefore focuses on the effects of pregnancy on female academic performance in our tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria, precisely tertiary institutions in Oyo Sate, Nigeria.

**Purpose of the Study**

**The main purpose of this study is to determine the effects o**f pregnancy on academic performance of female Students in Oyo State higher institution of learning. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To critically assess the influence of pregnant on academic performance of female Students in Oyo State.
2. To identify influence of peer on female students’ pregnancy in Oyo State tertiary institutions.
3. To examine the influence of family background on female students’ pregnancy in Oyo State tertiary institutions.

**Research Hypotheses**

To achieve the objectives of this study the following hypotheses were formulated for testing at 0.05 significant level.

**H01**. There is no significant influence of pregnant on academic performance of female students

 in Oyo State.

**H02**. There is no significant influence of peer on female students’ pregnancy in Oyo State

 tertiary institutions.

**H03**. There is no significant influence of family background on female students’ pregnancy in

 Oyo State tertiary institutions

**Methodology**

The study examined the effects of pregnancy on female academic performance in Nigeria institution of higher learning precisely Oyo State. The research design used in this study was descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consists of higher institutions of learning in Oyo State. Twelve (12) higher institutions were selected, the selected higher institutions of learning were University of Ibadan, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Oyo State Technical University, The polytechnic Ibadan, Oke-Ogun Polytechnic Saki, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Federal College of Animal Health and Production, Ibadan, Federal College of Agriculture, Ibadan, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo, Oyo State of Agriculture and Technology, Igbo-Ora, Oyo State College of Nursing and Midwifery, Oyo State College of Health Science and Technology. Thirty (30) female respondents were identified and selected from each institution with the help of co-researchers and some teaching and non-teaching staffs in those institutions also a number of female students were of help in identifying female respondents who were pregnant as at the time of this research work and those that have given birth during the course of their studies therefore a total of three hundred and sixty (360) respondents were used. The research instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire title “Effects of Pregnancy on Academic Performance of female Students in Tertiary Questionnaire Rating Scale (EPAPFSTQRS)”. The instrument was validated by two experts. One expert from Measurement and Evaluation in the department of Education Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, and the other expert from department of Biology in the same institution. The instrument was subjected to test-retest method to ascertain it reliability and it yielded reliability coefficient of r=0.83, this shows that the instrument is reliable. The researcher and two research assistants administered the questionnaires to the respondents and the questionnaires were retrieved back immediately after completion. The data collected were analyzed using chi-square at 0.05 significant level.

**Analysis of Results**

H01. There is no significant influence of pregnant on academic performance of female students

 in Oyo State.

**Table 1: *Shown chi-square on the influence of pregnant on academic performance of female students in Oyo State***.

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|  Value Df Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square 71.240a 3 .000Likelihood Ratio 102.066 3 .000Linear-by-Linear Association .019 1 .891N of Valid Cases 360 |

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0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 0.5 The minimum expected count is 8.06 Since the Asymptotic Significant value (71.240) is greater than alpha value 0.05, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected and it was concluded that there is significant influence of pregnant on academic performance of female students in Oyo State.

H02. There is no significant influence of peer on female students’ pregnancy in Oyo State

 tertiary institutions.

**Table 2: *Shown chi-square on influence of peer on female students’ pregnancy in Oyo State tertiary institutions****.*

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|  Value Df Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square 160.606a 3 .000Likelihood Ratio 187.817 3 .000Linear-by-Linear Association 95.916 1 .000N of Valid Cases 360 |

0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 0.5 the Asymptotic Significant value (160.606) is greater than alpha value of 0.05, then the null hypothesis (H02) wasrejected while the alternative was accepted. Therefore, the result of the findings revealed that peer groups has great effects on female students’ academic performance

 H03. There is no significant influence of family background on female students’ pregnancy in

 Oyo State tertiary institutions.

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| **Table 3: *Shown chi-square on influence of family background on female students’ pregnancy in Oyo State tertiary institutions*** |
|  Value Df Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square 52.470a 3 .000Likelihood Ratio 79.408 3 .000Linear-by-Linear 47.018 1 .891N of Valid Cases 360 |
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0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 0.5 the minimum expected count is 2.16. Since the Asymptotic Significant value (52.470) is greater than alpha value 0.05, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected and it was concluded that there is significant influence of family background on female students’ pregnancy in Oyo State tertiary institutions

**Discussion of findings**

From table 1, at the significant level of 0.05, the Asymptotic Significant value (71.240) is greater than alpha value of 0.05, H01 wasrejected. Therefore, pregnancy has significant effect on academic performance of female students as argued by Ashcraft (2006) that pregnancy of female students has a significant impact on young mothers and their children, limiting their educational attainment and economic security, leading to future single parenthood and marital instability.

Also in table 2, at the significant level of 0.05, the Asymptotic Significant value (160.606) is greater than alpha value of 0.05, then the null hypothesis (H02) wasrejected while the alternative was accepted. Therefore, the result of the findings revealed that peer groups has great effects on female students academic performance as opined by Klein (2005) that the potential of peer groups to influence one another into sexual activities is central to many important policy issues in our society, Sometimes they advise each other that the solution to keeping a beloved boyfriend is to have sex with him and have children, but it is often misunderstood and completely inaccurate which later affect their academic performance. Moreover, table 3, revealed that family background has effect and heavily contributed to female students’ pregnancy and poor academic performance since the Asymptotic Significant value (52.470) is greater than the alpha value of 0.05 as corroborated by Mangatu & Kisimbiyi (2019) that female students from poor backgrounds are more likely to become pregnant while in school. Quinlivan, Tan, Steele & Black (2004) also submitted that family instability influences pregnancy among female student in the sense that poor communication with parents, divorce, and domestic violence can lead to their pregnancy and poor academic performance.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher claims that pregnancy has an impact on how well female students perform academically at higher education institutions in Oyo State. Peers and family background or status have also been linked to poor academic performance among female students who become pregnant.

**Recommendations**

In line with the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

* Orientation grogramme should be organized for all the female students in higher institutions of learning on the negative effect of pregnancy on their academic performance
* Management of higher institutions of learning should put in place rule and regulations that will enhance discipline in the area of sexual involvement among female and male students.
* Parent students should try as much as possible to meet the needs of their female students in higher institution of learning in order to guide against sexual involvement which can lead to unplanned pregnancy.

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