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## Research Paper

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# Consequences of Teenage Parenting Styles on The Attainment of Educational Goals in Mumias Sub County in Kakamega County -Kenya

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**ABSTRACT:** The greatest global investment whose productivity leads to rapid economic growth is education. Despite this fact, teenage parenting and the subsequent parenting styles had consequences on the attainment of educational goals as was revealed by a study that was carried out in Mumias Sub-county to find out the kind of consequences that teen motherhood and teen fatherhood had on a secondary school students' academic achievement. Two objectives were set to find out the prevalence rate of teenage parenting and to determine the kind of contributions the problem had on educational accessibility. The population consisted of 55 principals, 269 teachers and 4,143 students from three classes out of the four classes in the sampled out schools. One third of the population was taken for each of the three categories of respondents which gave 18 principals heading mixed gender secondary schools, 89 class teachers and 1,367 studentsboth male and female. The students were selected using the simple-random sampling alongside purposive sampling where the teen-agers were targeted, as the stratified random sampling technique targeted principals and teachers from public mixed gender secondary schools. The study area had four divisions namely, South Wanga, WangaMkulu, East Wanga and Mumias Central from which the eighteen schools were identified. To collect data, questionnaires were designed for students, teachers and principals. Descriptive statistics namely frequency counts and percentages was used to analyze the quantitative data which was then presented in tables. The study found that teenage parenting styles had consequences on the attainment of educational goals and the recommendations are that guidance and counseling should be intensified by not only the Ministry of Education at the school level, but also by the local administration to include parents to teenagers in public forums. Guidance and Counseling should help curb the problem of teenage parenting in order to remedy the consequences on the attainment of educational goals.

KEY WORDS: Educational goals, teen fatherhood, teen motherhood, teenage parenting.

#### I. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the objectives, consequences of teen parenting, research design, sampling procedure, results, conclusions and recommendations.

#### The Findings

Teenage parenting stylesbasically teenage motherhood and fatherhood have consequences on the attainment of educational goals. In a research study that was conducted in Mumias sub-county in a number of mixed secondary schools, it was evident that the problem of teenage parenting was prevalent and that it had consequences on the attainment of the goals of education for all stakeholders. The phenomena of teenage parenthood is a complex one and it touches on the lives of the adolescent father, mother, the child and children born to them, without forgetting their parents, schools, counseling and family planning services that have been created to help the very young parents cope with parenthood (Franklin, 1988; Caldas, 1993).

The consequences of teenage parenting styles revealed a high level of moral decay among the secondary school students and that the trends were adversely increasing despite the Ministry of Education Science and Technology giving teenage parents a second chance to education. The study was aimed at verifying that teenage parenting had consequences using two objectives which were to find out the prevalence rate of teenage parenting and the consequences on educational accessibility. The findings were that teenage parenting was prevalent and that the problem had consequences on accessibility to education.

Teenage fatherhood resulted from having certain expectations and values about early child bearing, having poor school achievement and engaging in delinquent behavior. Other risk factors included minority ethnic background and socio-economic disadvantages. Teenage fathers did not contribute much to the support of their children because most of them had low income and less education. This is a group that is seriously neglected yet facing a number of hardships. Policies and interventions directed at reducing teen fatherhood would take into consideration the many factors that influenced it and focused efforts throughout the life cycle (Thornberry *et.al*, 1997). Newman and Newman (1995), posited that determining the number of teenage fathers was difficult because young teen mothers would not reveal the names of their babies' fathers.

Fathering a child was bound to stimulate conflicting feelings of pride, guilt and anxiety in the adolescent boy. He must struggle with the fact that his sexual adventures had resulted in a pregnancy that could bring conflict and pain to someone for whom he cared. He therefore must confront the choices he and his girl-friend had in coping with an unplanned pregnancy. Feeling obligated to provide financial support to his girl friend and the child, he would drop out of school and enter the labor market although he would hope only to be minimally employed. (Hendricks and Fullilove, 1983). Limited evidence suggested that many fathers experienced stress related to the pregnancy and could benefit from some kind of counseling (Lamb &Elster, 1985). There is therefore no question that early entry into parenthood created problems for both boys and girls (Newman & Newman, 1995). It was upon this background that the researcher took to this study in order to establish that teenage parenting styles had consequences on the attainment of educational goals among students in Mumias sub-county.

Teenage parenting was not peculiarly a Kenyan phenomenon. It was a phenomenon of international proportions for teenagers who attempted to exploit their sexuality. Globally, a survey was conducted to establish the percentage of teenage sex victims. A total of 5,353 youths in 25 countries of Asia, Pacific, Europe and the USA participated. Studies showed the rise of unprotected sex among the youth aged between 15 and 24. Births to teenagers were reported to have fallen to their lowest rate in the 60 years that statistics had been kept from an all-time rate of 96 births per 1,000 women of age 15-19 years in 1957 to an all-time low rate of 49 per 1,000 women in 2,000. The U.S.A. teen birth rate was one of the highest in the developed world. More than three-fourths of pregnancies of teenagers were unplanned half of which ended in births. Twelve percent of all births in the United States were to teenagers, most of who came from disadvantaged backgrounds. An elating new trend was the dramatic increase in the proportion of teen births that were non- marital. African – American teens were more sexually active than Whites and their birth rates were high just like the poor, Whites who displayed high teenage birth rates (Devault, Strong, Sayad&Yarber, 2005).

Teenage parenting has consequences on the attainment of educational goals. Consequences which impact negatively on the teenage parent for instance not accessing education by dropping out of school and thereby failing to achieve the academic goals. The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education has given a chance to teenage parents to resume learning in schools after their parenting obligations. The purpose of the study was to establish the consequences of teenage parenting styles on the attainment of educational goals among secondary school students in Mumias Sub county, Kenya. The objectives of the study were: To find out the prevalence rate of teenage parenting and to determine the consequences it has on educational accessibility. It is heartbreaking when teenagers still children themselves become parents. The trend is becoming wide spread, touching everyone in a way and that is why various organizations to include NGO's had stepped up to help tackle the problem of teen parenting after ten girls were reported by the media to have been found pregnant in a school in Ndiwa sub-county. Not left behind was The Kenya Red Cross Society which came up with interventions to sensitize the community on the dangers of teenage sex. Another concern for teenage parenting are the HIV/AIDS infection cases. Reports from an NGO called Programme for Rehabilitation of Women and Children in Socio-Economic Difficulty (Prowed, 2011) confirmed that teenage girls were getting infected through sex. The situation in Mumias calls for concern from education stakeholders. Reports from the Mumias sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Office (SQASO), confirmed secondary school drop out cases, some of which were attributed to teenage parenting. There was a drop in the enrolment of students between the years 2009 and 2011 – a drop that affected the academic performance of both boys and girls.

Table 1: Student Enrolment in Secondary Schools in Mumias Sub-county Between 2009 and 2011

N = 37 Secondary Schools				
	2009	2010	2011	
MALE	8,700	5,840	5,540	
FEMALE	7,358	5,613	5,517	
TOTAL	16,058	11,453	11,057	

**Source: Sub-county Education Office – Mumias (2011)** 

Adolescent pregnancy rate in the United States was much higher than in other industrialized countries. It was more than twice as high as the rates in the Netherlands and Japan (Santrock, 2001). Further to this was that despite a 21% decline in the rate of pregnancy among, older adolescents between ages 15 and 19, nearly 12,000 adolescent females under age 15 became pregnant each year (Rothenberg &Weisman, 2002; NCPTP, 2003). It was more than twice as high as Australia's and Canada's more than three times as high as France's, three and a half times as high as Germany's, six and a half times as high as the Netherlands and seven times as high as Japan's (United Nations, 2011; Hamitton*et al*).

Adolescence is a stage where many of the teenagers have difficulties in adjusting to life and dealing with their sexuality. Creates, (1993) explained that adolescents developed biological maturity earlier than in the past generations causing some to fall victims of adolescent pregnancy. Early pregnancy had harmful implications on the girls' physical, psychological economic and social status (Tsai and Wong, 2003). The greater the number of sex partners, the more likely teenagers were to be involved in a pregnancy. When the number of partners dropped to less than two, only 25 percent of teenage girls and 9 percent of teenage boys had experienced or had been involved in a pregnancy (Sullentrop&Flanigan, 2006).

Teenage pregnancy and child bearing presented a paradox in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, which has one of the highest levels of such cases in African Countries. (Were, 2007). Xinhua (1996), reported that in Ghana, nearly 33.4% of recorded childbirths occurred to teenagers between ages thirteen (13) and nineteen (19). This report was based on childbirths that were reported in public hospitals. The situation was worse in rural areas where traditional birth attendants were used and no statistical records had been kept. More disheartening was a report from Xinhua (1996) that one out of three girls aged 15 to 19 years residing in the central region of Ghana had a child. Africa as a continent was not an exception in this matter. Studies from South Africa found that 11.20% of pregnancies in teenagers were a direct result of rape while about 60% of teenage mothers had unwanted sexual experiences preceding their pregnancies. Reports said that Sub-Saharan Africa showed the highest rate of teenage pregnancy, in the world where women got married at an early age. A survey was carried out in Niger on 87% of married women, out of who 53% admitted to have had a child before they were 18 years old (Locoh, 1998 &Treffers, 2003).

Teenage parenting caused economic dependency. Adolescent mothers became economically dependent due to their decreased educational attachment that resulted from their decision to keep and raise children (Brindis&Philliber 2003; Farber, 2003). Rothenberg and Weissman (2002) found that of out of 10 females who became adolescent mothers did not graduate from high school. Less than one third of adolescent females giving birth before age 18 ever completed high school. The younger the pregnant adolescents were, the less likely they were to complete high school (Koshar, 2001; Brindis&Philliber, 2003).

Pregnancy was both a cause and a result of poverty due to low academic achievement among teenagers. The problem was part of the "cycle of poverty" in which very young mothers often stayed poor and their children were at increased risk for teenage pregnancy, poverty and low academic outcomes (Basch, 2010). When teenagers do not receive the support and resources they need, a variety of detrimental consequences can result. Data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) listed within Melhado's research showed that teenage parenting had a total of 11.9 years of education compared to those who had no children and who averaged 13.9 years of education. However, having access to appropriate resources could reduce this 2 year education penalty" (Melhado, 2007). An earlier study found that fathers of children born to teen mothers earned an estimated average of 3,400 dollars less per year than the fathers of children born to mothers who were 20 or 21, over the course of 18 years following the birth of their first child (Annie, 1998).

Dropping out of school was a consequence of teenage parenting. Pillow (2004) argued that teenagers mostly affected by teenage pregnancy were young women who were already living in impoverished conditions prior to becoming pregnant. Most working class households were too poor to provide for their children's education and the indirect costs of sending them to school (Swainson et al, 1998). The costs of school uniforms and fees and babysitting, for instance had been argued by several studies to deter parents from sending girls to school. The need for girl's labour at home was considered one of the major constraints to girl's education whereby girls spent more time than boys on domestic chores, hence limiting the time available for school assignment (Sey, 1997).

Young people with below average achievement level at ages 7 and 16 had been found to be at significantly higher risk of becoming teenage parents (Kiernan, 1995). Evidence, suggested that young fathers (defined as those who become fathers before the age of 22), like young mothers were likely to come from lower socio-economic groups from families that had experienced financial difficulties and were more likely than average to have left school at the minimum age. The effects of early childbearing were also negative for teen fathers. They were more likely to engage in delinquent behaviours such as alcoholism and drug abuse or drug dealing and they completed fewer years of schooling than their childless peers (Tan and Quinliven, 2006).

The risk of getting HIV and AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and other severe health complications resulting from their bodies not being mature enough to handle childbirth safely, were other consequences of teenage parenting. In addition the parenting girl discovered that there was a big difference between motherhood and the teenage fantasies. Besides, many girls found out that fending for themselves and their new-born was far more difficult than they ever imagined (Mburu, 2010). Teenage mothers had special needs majorly health care and education where one-third of pregnant teens received contraceptive prenatal care and needed contraceptive counseling and services. Graduation from high school was a vital goal of educational programs for teenage mothers because it directly influenced their employability and ability to support themselves and their children. Such programs were under funded and periodically threatened with termination (Devault, Strong, Sayad&Yarber, 2005).

The worst consequence of teenage parenting was death. Girls who gave birth under the age of 16 years were more likely to die as a result of excessive hemorrhage, pre-eclampsia or to what many referred to as obstructed labor. With an estimated population of about 5.6 million in Sierra Leone, 48% of whom were below the age of eighteen years and this led to the country being ranked last in the Human Development Index 117th with 38% of the population not meeting their food needs. This was according to a 2007 statistical report on Sierra Leone Core Welfare Indicators Survey conducted. Primarily, teenage pregnancy had been identified as a booming problem in the very country – Sierra Leone- where as long as the teenage girl was married then it ceased to be a problem but was only a problem when she remained unmarried (Kamara, 2011).

The Human Sciences Research Council of the World Bank estimated that 18 percent of all students in South Africa either got pregnant or made someone pregnant each year. Maternity at a young age led to serious health complications, even death. Maternal deaths recorded in the country comprised teenage mothers, while accounting for only about 8 percent of all births (Ghosh, 2013). Worldwide teenage pregnancy rates ranged from 143 per 100 in some Sub-Saharan African countries to 2.9 per 1,000 in South Korea (UNICEF, 2001 &Treffers, 2003). Save the Children found that annually, 1 million children were born to women aged under 20 years worldwide, more than 90% in developing countries. Complication of pregnancy and childbirth were the leading cause of mortality among women aged 15-19 in such areas (Mayor, 2004).

The prevalence rate was ascertained by the number of absentee students, the drop out cases and reasons leading to their dropping out of school in addition to start of year enrollment population in relation to the end of year total student population. The secondary school enrollment of boys and girls between the year 2009 and 2011 revealed a subsequent drop, thus hinting at the problem of teenage parenting. Reports from the Sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Office confirmed a gross enrollment of boys from 51.3% in 2008/2009 to 49% in 2010/2011. The transition to adulthood was bedeviled with many dangers for young people. Reports by an NGO called SAIPEH concerning the situation in Mumias Sub-county were that 5 out of 10 adolescents began child bearing before the age of 20 years. It meant that the next step for them was to settle and raise children instead of pursuing higher education which could improve their future social and economic prospects. Worse still, the children they bore were disadvantaged because low educational levels of parents compromised the offspring's quality of life. Four out of every 10 women who died of unsafe abortion complications were below the age of 20 years meaning that they were in their teenage years. (SAIPEH, 2010).

#### II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design which enabled the researcher to collect information in its current state. The study covered a total of 18 mixed public secondary schools located in the four divisions that make Mumias sub-county as shown in Table 1.

From a target of 55 public schools 18 mixed public schools were selected, meaning that there were 18 principals, 89 teachers and 1, 367 students each making one third of the population, an equivalent of 33 percent of the study population. This is shown in Table 1.

Respondents Sampled Population (n) Population (N) Percentage % **Principals** 55 18 33 269 89 33 Teachers **Students** 4143 1,367 33 4,467 1,474 100 Total

Table 1: Sample Size Distribution for the Study

Source: Field Data

The simple random sampling was used to select both male and female teenagers in public mixed schools, the stratified – random sampling enabled the researcher to ensure, that from each stream, class and school, the respondents included male and female students. To select class teachers and those heading the guidance and counseling departments, the researcher employed the stratified – random technique for principals as well as the choice of the nature of schools which basically were mixed gender type. The data collected from questionnaires was edited, coded and analyzed using SPSS. The findings were drawn and then generalized to the population (Ingule&Gatumu, 1996). The data was presented in form of tablesand discussed.

#### **Results and Discussion**

The first objective sought to determine the prevalence rate of teenage parenting and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Teen Parenting Affects Boys or Girls.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Boys	50	3.7
Girls	302	22.4
Boys & Girls	997	73.9
Total	349	100.0

Source: Field Data

The data in table 2 showed that 3.7 percent of the respondents had a view that only boys fell victims of teenage parenting, 22.4 percentage had a view that only girls fell victims as 73.9 percent were of the opinion that both boys and girls faced the problem of teenage parenting hence implying that there existed both parenting styles which confirmed that the cases were prevalent. The percentage of boys who became parents was lower than that of their female counterparts. Girls seemed to be more vulnerable than their male counterparts because they tended to have more personal and cultural problems that motivated them to fall prey to early motherhood. These problems were linked to socio-economic background of families from which they came. As highlighted in the questionnaires, poverty posed a challenge to adolescent girls who at that stage in life required extra care and attention. A number of them lacked very essential personal effects which the parent or guardian would not provide and so, resorted to seeking support from any well-wisher, some of who took advantage of them and impregnanted them.

Table 3: Prevalence of Teenage Parenting

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Common	857	63.2
Rare	500	36.8
Total	1,357	100.0

Source: Field Data

The prevalence of teenage parenting was further confirmed in Table 3. The data showed that there was high prevalence rate of teenage parenting because 63.2 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that the cases were common as the remaining lower percentage of 36.8 had a view that the cases were rare. Therefore, the higher the percentage, then the higher the prevalence rate-hence the attainment of the first objective. The prevalence rate of teenage parenting was linked to what one would label as a visciouscycle of the problem. That like father like son and or like mother like daughter. Some teenage parents were born to teen parents, hence the continued cycle. This problem resulted in absent fathers and absent mothers which was crucial for the psychological development of the child. As a result of parents being absent, what we would term as irresponsible parenthood, some parenting teens fell into the trap while seeking the attention of a missing parent from some relatives who then took advantage of them. This was revealed by the teacher counselors who through the counseling sessions had some teen parents blaming it on some foster mother or father or even distant kinspeople.

The second objective sought to determine if teenage parenting styles had consequences on the learners access to education. The results were as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Nature of School Attendance for Teen Parents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
.00	2	0.1
Regular	262	19.6
Irregular	1074	80.3
Total	1338	100.0

Source: Field Data

Accessibility to Education had to do with being present at school as in regularly attending classes. To determine the consequence of teenage parenting on accessing education by teenage parents, the aspects of regularity and irregularity were used. The consequence was very clear that their access to education was hampered, characterized by absenteeism and therefore labeled irregular with the higher percentage of 80.3. The lower percentage of only 19.6 represented respondents whose opinion was that the teen parents attended school regularly. The irregular school attendance was in agreement with the research findings which showed that the parental obligations overwhelmed teen parents such that they occasionally were forced to stay away from school nursing their new-borns and even taking them to health facilities for medical check-up.

The overall lack of access to educational opportunities, sex education and information regarding contraceptives as well as widespread poverty predisposed girls to teenage pregnancies. This problem should be viewed within the socio-economic and socio-cultural environment in which the adolescents operated. For instance, lack of parental guidance on issues of sexuality and sex education was reinforced by cultural taboos that inhibited such discussions (Were, 2007). In 2013, October, a member of parliament in Kenya publicly commented on the rising cases of romantic relationships between teachers and school girls – a behavior he labeled "irresponsible" – that was a problem to worry about because it was shocking that female teens fell victims of parenting where they went to access education. The matter called for a lot of concern from educational stake holders hence the need for researchers to carry out research in order to help alleviate the problem (Githinji, 2013).

The research findings showed a relationship in Tables 3, 4 and 5, that the prevalence rate was as high as 63.2%, the inconsistency in attending school, termed as irregular school attendance was high at 80.3 percent and the below average academic performance that was a characteristics of parenting students was equally high at 57.9 percent. Teenage parenting makes a student to be absent from school, when one is absent, one fails to do assignments regularly, misses lesson and so cannot score well in examinations, thus the relationship. Previous researchers support this finding that there was a connection between teenage pregnancy, poor education and poverty. That schools and homes had policies where some rules were laid down to govern teen parents. For instance there was a time when they had to be out of school for the purpose of maintaining school order or rules. Equally at home, parents laid down conditions on how the new born had to be cared for, causing the adolescent parent not to access school and thereby failed to achieve academically (Zachry, 2005; Zachry, 2007).

#### III. CONCLUSIONS

From the summary of the results of the study on the consequences of teenage parenting styles on the attainment of educational goals, the following conclusions were drawn. It was established that the prevalence rate of teenage parents was still high despite the implementation of relevant school programmes such as the guidance and counseling sessions and the life-skills lessons. The study established that teenage parenting posed a great challenge not only to the teenage parents but also to the guardian or parent, in terms of one failing to access education, hence not achieving the academic goals because of the parenting demands which kept them away from school. Finally, It also emerged that the goals of education were not realized because of the relationship that was evident between teenage parenting, accessing education and achieving academically. That the financial input by the Ministry of Education at form one would not be realized at the end of form four since some dropped out due to parenting.

In conclusion parents were asked to teach their children about sex because sex education was an important aspect of human life. That was in a forum on Parental Participation on Sexuality Education held in Nairobi where the Education Deputy Principal Secretary, encouraged parents that they had a role to play in their children's lives in letting them know the mysteries of life (Okello, 2011).

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made.

- (i) The Ministry of Education policy planners and decision makers should minimize the number of mixed gender schools to help lower the prevalence rate of teenage parenting. A decision could be made to swop the learners so that the female students move to one of the schools as the male students equally move to another in order to create more one-gender secondary schools. This recommendation was arrived at after discovering that boy-girl relationships were so high in the mixed schools. Teachers should go beyond just covering the course content and also intensify the life –skills sessions in creating awareness in the students about the dangers of early pregnancies and parenting which include health challenges like contracting STIs and HIV/AIDS.
- (ii) There was need to intensify the guidance and counseling programmesin schools as a way of helping the adolescents manage the challenges surrounding their development. The more the guidance and counseling the less the number of students becoming teenage parents and the greater there will be chances of accessing education, hence achieving academically. The educational goals should be spelled out clearly to the students in order to understand the importance of being students, remaining students until the end of the course at which the goals are realized. That for a secondary school student, education is a four-year-journey after which one advances to a higher level and so parenting need not hamper this advancement.

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