

# LEARNING

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# LEARNING

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*Learning – A book in Honour of*  
**PROF. TOLULOPE WALE YOLOYE**

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**STAKEHOLDERS' CHARACTERISTICS AS  
CORRELATES OF THEIR PERCEPTION OF  
STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING EARLY PREGNANCY  
AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DELTA  
SOUTH AND CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICTS**

**Eugenia A. Okwilagwe  
And  
Lucky P. Oyeha**

**Preamble**

*This study examined stakeholders' characteristics as correlates of their perception of strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students in Delta South and Central Senatorial Districts. The study adopted a correlation approach. A total of one thousand five hundred (1,500) stakeholders were used for the study. A questionnaire, Strategies for Reducing Early Pregnancy among Secondary School Students (SREPASSS) was used for data collection. The data obtained were analysed using descriptive, Analysis of Variance and multiple regressions. The findings of the study indicated that there is significant difference in perception in terms of occupation was a significant factor in explaining difference in the perception of stakeholders on strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students ( $F_{(5, 1494)}=3.492, p \leq 0.05$ ). Religious leaders had better perception than the traders while other groups did not differ significantly in their perception. Stakeholders characteristics jointly influenced their perceptions ( $F_{(5, 1494)}=3.037, p \leq 0.05$ ) while marital status was the most influential factor. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that all stakeholders especially parents, school authorities and students should adopt and implement all identified strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students. Serious campaign should be mounted for traders and their wards to change their views on issues of sexuality.*

**Key words:** Stakeholders characteristics, Perception, Strategies, Early pregnancy, Secondary school students, Delta State, Nigeria

## Introduction

Early pregnancy is viewed as a serious problem worldwide. In the traditional Nigerian society where everyone was each other's keeper, the problem of early pregnancy was not very rampant; Mothers could not bear the shame that came with the social problem and so dialogued constantly with and monitored their young female children without keeping them out of sight. In some of these societies, it was a taboo for a young girl to be pregnant out of wedlock. However, many youths in some Nigerian communities of today are exposed to illicit sexual behaviour due to the freedom enjoyed from home, their social milieu and as a result of civilisation to engage in immoral behaviour without stringent restraint. According to Eruesegbefe (2005) and Ogunsanya (2005), youths now engage in regular pre-marital sexual relationships with the opposite sex in the popular boyfriend and girlfriend relationship, or sometimes with no serious intimacy but casual sex habit. This condition has led to unprecedented increase in cases of early pregnancies among secondary school students (Abraham & Kummar, 1999). This situation is not common to youths in Delta South and Central Senatorial Districts alone, but also in some Western and Eastern countries like the United States of America and Asia.

The incidence of early pregnancy is on the increase and is regarded as a major public health and social problem in the world (Boyd, 2000). The observed consequences of teenage pregnancy include the spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STIs) (Arowajolu, Ilesanmi, Roberts & Okunola, 2002), and the increase in the rate of school dropout among adolescents (Osakwe & Osagie, 2010). The young adolescent mother is at increased risk of pregnancy-induced diseases such as hypertension, anaemia and obstructed labour (Uwazuoke, Uzochukwu, Nwagbo & Onwujekwe, 2004). They are also three times more likely to die as a result of the complications of pregnancy and delivery than those aged 20 to 24 years (Aboyeji, Fawole & Ijaiye, 2001; UNFPA, 2000).

Furthermore, Action Health Incorporation (AHI, 2002) has affirmed that teenage pregnancy is a cause of school dropout among girls. In a study of 127 pregnant Nigeria school girls, 52 percent were found to have been expelled from school, 20 percent were too ashamed to return, 15 percent could not return because their parents refused to pay their tuition, and 8 percent were forced to marry. In the developed world like USA, the situation is not any better. White (2004) reported that more than one million teenage girls in the United States become pregnant each year, just over 400,000 teenagers get abortions, and nearly 470,000 give birth. These are girls aged between 14 to 17 years old. Increase in the rate of teenage pregnancy may be as a result of increased interest in sex and or inadequate knowledge on information regarding human sexuality. It is in this regard, that the sudden increase in the occurrence of unwanted pregnancy among youths in Nigeria is a major concern to stakeholders in the society today.

Studies have shown that certain characteristics tend to influence behaviour and human actions. For instance, Hodges in Okunsebor (2009) asserts that gender analysis recognises that males and females live together but have different experiences, needs, issues and priorities. Therefore, what women have in common with men may be

determine by their social positions or their ethnic groups, depending on age, ethnicity, disability, income levels, employment status, marital status, social orientation and whether they have dependants. Also, Bingham, Boden, Clapp, Hoppin, Krinsky, Michael, Ozonoff and Robbins (2006) in Okorodudu (2010) observed that generally, men have lower parental monitoring and greater parental permissiveness and are less parental-oriented than women.

### **The Problem of the Study**

Adolescents are faced with series of problems including academic and social problems during adolescence period. Their inability to cope with these problems causes a lot of them to drop out of school before completion of basic education in Nigeria. Educators and other relevant stakeholders are concerned about how to mitigate the problem of youths dropping out of secondary school in Nigeria and elsewhere. Besides developing a multidimensional strategies scale for redressing the problem, many researchers have only conducted opinion polls, examined the determinants of sexuality and uses of contraceptives among others. These are inadequate. A more and decisive steps needs to be taken. In view of this, the study examined stakeholders' characteristics as correlates of their perceptions of strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students in South and Central Senatorial Districts of Delta State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

On the basis of the above problem statement, the study provided answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there any difference among the perceptions of stakeholders on strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students in Delta South and Central Senatorial Districts?
2. To what extent do sex, age, marital status, educational qualification, family type and occupation of stakeholders jointly influence the perception of strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students in Delta South and Central Senatorial Districts?
3. Which of the stakeholders' characteristics - sex, marital status, educational qualification, family type and occupation of stakeholders will mostly influence the perception of strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students in Delta South and Central Senatorial Districts?

### **Methodology**

The study is a descriptive research that adopted a correlation approach. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. At the first stage, simple random sample was used to select two senatorial districts from the three existing senatorial districts in Delta State. At the second stage, five local governments were selected from each of the two selected senatorial districts. At the third stage, purposive sampling was used to select respondents on the basis of those who can read and write in each of the local government. A total of 1,500 stakeholders (teachers 300, traders 300, civil servants 250, health workers 250, religious leaders 200 and students 200) formed the sample.



A questionnaire on Strategies for Reducing Early pregnancy among Secondary School Students (SREPASSS) was used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument examined stakeholders' perceptions on strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students. SREPASSS was divided into two sections. Section (A) elicited demographic information from the respondents while section (B) consisted of 55 items on strategies for reducing early pregnancy among students. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of each sub-scale in the instrument. The reliability of the sub-scales of the instrument ranged from 0.50 to 0.88.

The data collected from the respondents were statistically analysed using descriptive, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and multiple regression statistics.

### Results and Discussion

Results of significant difference in stakeholders' perception of strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students are presented in Tables 1a, b and c. Table 1(a) shows the mean response of the respondents on the identified strategies. Table 1(b) shows that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of stakeholders on strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students  $F_{(5, 1494)} = 3.492, p \leq 0.05$ .

A post hoc test was carried out to determine where the difference between the stakeholders lies. Result shows that the difference lies between traders and religious leaders perceptions with Mean= 158.3567, S.D= 12.766 and Mean= 162.3150, S.D= 12.378 respectively. Table 2 shows that stakeholders' characteristics: gender, marital status, highest educational qualification, family type and occupation jointly predicted stakeholders' perceptions of strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students  $F_{(5, 1494)} = 3.037, p \leq 0.05$ . The magnitude of the relationship between stakeholders' perceptions of strategies for reducing early pregnancy and the predictors is indicated by the values of coefficient of multiple regression (R) of 0.100, multiple regression square ( $R^2$ ) of 0.10 and adjusted R square of .007. It shows that 0.7% of the total variance in stakeholders' perceptions of strategies for reducing early pregnancy was explained by the combined contributions of stakeholders' characteristics that were built into the regression model. Other factors not measured were responsible for 99.3% of the variance in stakeholders' perceptions of strategies for reducing early pregnancy..

Table 3 shows that the value of t-ratio associated with respective variables, three stakeholders' characteristics: marital status  $\beta = -.056, t = -2.045, p < 0.05$ ; family type  $\beta = -.059, t = -2.250, p < 0.05$ ; highest educational qualification  $\beta = -.061, t = -2.078, p < 0.05$  contributed significantly to stakeholders' perceptions of strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students. Two other variables 'occupation' and 'gender' did not contribute significantly to the stakeholders' perceptions.

**Table 1(a): Summary of Stakeholders Perception of Strategies for Reducing Early Pregnancy among Secondary School Students**

S/N	Strategies	Mean Response	Std. Dev.
1.	Adequate monitoring of students by parents.	3.37	0.675
2.	Restrictions on some of the programmes of media houses/internet.	2.792	0.855
3.	Teachings on absolute abstinence.	1.89	0.935
4.	Continuous teachings from religious leaders.	3.38	0.662
5.	Regulation of working hours for mothers.	3.30	0.723
6.	Incorporation of sex education into the school curriculum.	3.29	0.754
7.	Provision of counseling units in schools.	3.097	0.890
8.	Enactment of legal laws to protect the female gender.	3.86	0.863
9.	Enactment of legal laws against sexual abuse.	2.76	0.855
10.	Assertiveness training by experts.	3.07	0.774
11.	Public awareness of teenage pregnancy.	2.67	0.888
12.	Provision of counseling units in schools.	3.097	0.890

**Table 1(b): One-Way ANOVA of the Perceptions of Stakeholders on Strategies for Reducing Early Pregnancy among Secondary School Students**

Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P. value
Between Groups	3006.790	5	601.358	3.492	.004*
Within Groups	257263.943	1494	172.198		
<b>Total</b>	<b>260270.733</b>	<b>1499</b>			

\* = Significant at  $p \leq 0.05$

### Discussion

Findings in this study indicated that there is a significant difference between the perceptions of stakeholders on strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students. On the basis of occupation, the views of religious leaders were better than those of traders, while those of others like: health workers, students, and civil servants were similar. The differences observed may be due to the fact that from experience traders (young and old) tend to show more permissive attitudes and are prone to sexual abuse than children of religious leaders who are nurtured daily with the word of God by their parents. Besides, some traders do not have the time to monitor the

Occupation	Mean	Students	Religious Leaders	Health Workers	Civil Servants	Traders	Teachers
Students	162.0850						
Religious Leaders	162.3150						
Health Workers	159.124						
Civil Servants	159.9480						
Traders	158.3567		*				
Teachers	160.7167						

\* = Significant at  $p \leq 0.05$

activities of their children or wards as they spend most of their time in the market struggling to make ends meet. In addition, many of these traders while hawking their wares find themselves in all nooks and crannies of the community and are vulnerable to be abused by carefree and uncultured individuals. Religious leaders on the other hand, have ample opportunities to discuss with their families and monitor the activities of their children. These views and the findings in this study seem to corroborate Onyewadume and Otuadah views cited by Okorodudu (2010) who observed that parents spend little or no time at home to assist in the upbringing of the children. Never the less, the findings of the study is at variance with that of Ito et al (2006) who discovered in their study that health workers are in support of sexuality education more than any other groups they used.

It has also been established in this study that when stakeholders' characteristics: gender, marital status, highest educational qualification, family type and occupation were combined, they contributed significantly to their perceptions on strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students but when they were independently examined, only three of the five characteristics contributed significantly. These are: marital status  $\beta = -0.056$ , family type  $\beta = -0.059$  and highest educational qualification  $\beta = -0.061$ . The beta weights of these stakeholders' characteristics were inversely related to their perceptions. The values of the standardised regression weights associated with the three significant variables show that "marital status" was the most influential characteristics that stakeholders perceived as important strategies of reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students followed by family type and highest educational qualification respectively.

It, therefore, implies that as marital status of stakeholders' changed from single to married and divorced, their perceptions on strategies for reducing early pregnancy among secondary school students became positive. Also, as stakeholders move from polygamous family type to monogamous family type their views increased positively on strategies for reducing early pregnancy. So also was their educational qualification. The reverse was the case when their perceptions were negative. Characteristics such as gender of stakeholders did not contribute, even though Ito, Kristin, Owen-O'David, Leone & Miller (2006) observed that gender especially the female gender supported the inclusion of sexuality education in school more than their male counterparts.

**Table 2: Multiple Regression Summary and ANOVA of Stakeholders' Characteristics on Perceptions of Strategies for Reducing Early Pregnancy among Secondary School Students**

<b>R</b>	=	.100
<b>R Square</b>	=	.010
<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	=	.007
<b>Standard Error of the Estimate</b>	=	16.065

<b>ANOVA Source Table</b>					
<b>Model</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P. value</b>
Regression	3919.039	5	783.808	3.037	.010*
Residual	385577.510	1494	258.084		
<b>Total</b>	<b>389496.549</b>	<b>1499</b>			

\* = Significant at  $p \leq 0.05$

**Table 3: Most Influential Stakeholders' Characteristics on Strategies for Reducing Early Pregnancy among Secondary School Students**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		P. value
	(β)	Std. Error	Beta (β)	T	
Constant	181.183	2.332		77.680	.000
Gender	-.528	.854	-.016	-.619	.536
Marital status	-1.750	.856	-.056	-2.045	0.41*
Highest educational qualification	-.757	.364	-.061	-2.078	.038*
Family type	-2.171	.965	-.059	-2.250	.025*
Occupation	.520	.275	.054	1.888	.059

\* = Significant at p≤ 0.05

### Summary and Conclusion

Early pregnancy among secondary school students is a serious problem that needs urgent attention on how to reduce its incidence in the society. Stakeholders are concerned on how to reduce the ugly incidence. The study examined the influence of stakeholders' characteristics on strategies for reducing early pregnancy among school students. The identified strategies are very significant in ensuring that early pregnancy is reduced among school students. Among the stakeholders' characteristics that were examined: marital status, family type and highest educational qualification significantly explained stakeholders' perception on factors for reducing early pregnancy among school students. The observed stakeholders' characteristics have implications for parents, students, policy makers and other categories of stakeholders.

### Recommendations

The following recommendation are made: all identified strategies should be implemented by respective organs of government, parents, schools and students, serious campaigns and education should be organised for traders and their wards to change their views, because knowledge is power and married couples and polygamous families should take their responsibilities as parents in proper training of their children and wards to make them better citizens.

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