



THE
AFRICAN
JOURNAL
OF BEHAVIOURAL
AND SCALE
DEVELOPMENT
RESEARCH

ISSN: 2714-2965 (Print)
ISSN: 2714-3449 (Online)

Volume 2 No 2, August, 2020

Editor-in-Chief
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Asst. Editor-in-Chief
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**THE AFRICAN JOURNAL OF BEHAVIOURAL AND SCALE
DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH (AJB-SDR)**

J. O. Adeleke Editor-in-Chief | **S. O. Ariyo** Asst. Editor-in-Chief
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Frequency: Biannually

ISSN: 2714-2965 (Print)
ISSN: 2714-3449 (Online)

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Volume 2 No 2, August, 2020

Contents

August, 2020

AJB-SDR Vol. 2, No 2, 2020

Assessing the differential item functioning of 2018 WASSCE mathematics achievement tests in Lagos State, Nigeria O. M. Alade, S. Aletan, B. S. Sokenu	8 - 20
Efficacy of ordinal alpha reliability method using teacher literacy and practice of school- based assessment data Idaka, Idaka Egbe, Okarefe, Oluremi Afolake, Joshua O. Adeleke	21 - 29
Implementing Assessment for Learning in Tertiary Institutions in the South-West Nigeria: A Qualitative Study Folajogun V. Falaye (Ph.D)	30 - 40
Psychological factors as predictors of proneness to teenage pregnancy among public secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State Bukola Olusola Elemide, Ezekiel Olusegun Babatunde	41 - 49
Effectiveness of logotherapy on somatic exhaustion experienced by the married persons in Ibadan Metropolis Adebiyi, Deborah Toyin, Makinde, Bola O.& Olusakin, Mopelola	50 - 58
Using rasch model to identify differential item functioning of teachers' job satisfaction scale with respect to gender Metu, Ifeoma Clementina (Ph.D)	59 - 65
Abuse of library materials in selected Nigerian special libraries Fagbola Bolanle Oluyemisi, Ogunjobi Taiwo Elizabeth	66-70
Items Coverage of the theories of demand and supply: A content analytical study of selected public examining bodies' past questions Mr Oladimeji David	71 - 81
Modeling teacher classroom practices, students' study habit and mathematical ability as determinants of achievement in chemistry Chima Jonas Egbujuo (Ph.D)	82 - 94
Learners' and social media engagement: An investigation into sandwich students' social media behaviour Babatunde, Ibrahim Saka, Ajayi, Oluwagbemiga Samson	95-104
Effect of student critical and analytical thinking skills on students academic achievement Ani, Mercy Ifunanya, Eze, Beatrice A. Ekeh, David Onyemaechi & Eze, Claris Nnenna	105-110
Predicting student's performance in SSCE mathematics from the performance in JSCE mathematics Allwell Sunny Njigwum, Oye, Noah Gem Peace	111-120
Assessment of teachers' awareness and proficiency in utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) packages in classroom instruction Owolabi Paul Adelana, Adebayo Monsur Ishola	121-130

Contents

AJB-SDR Vol. 2, No 2, 2020

August, 2020

- Parental support, students' attitude and personal factors as predictor to students' achievement in reading comprehension in English language among senior secondary students in Ogun State.
Titilayo I. Mamadelo and Joseph A. Adegbile 131-140
- Assessment of items effectiveness of senior secondary school mock chemistry examination conducted by Akwa Ibom State
Dr. Osokoya, Modupe M, ²Uko, Idorenyin A 141-150
- Mathematics as a prerequisite for admission into universities in Nigeria: A call for awareness creation and attitudinal change
Ariyo Simeon Oluniyi, Adeleke Joshua Oluwatoyin 151-158
- Availability and utilization of multimedia language laboratory in secondary schools in Ogun State
Oluwaseun Dorcas Atolagbe, Owolabi Paul Adelana 159-166

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Corresponding Author's Name, Email and Telephone Number

S/N	Title	Correspondence Name and Email
1	Parental Support, Students' Attitude and Personal Factors as Predictor to Students' Achievement in Reading Comprehension in English Language among Senior Secondary Students in Ogun State Titilayo I. Mamadelo and Joseph A. Adegbile	Titilayo I. Mamadelo and Joseph A. Adegbile +23408104614815 titimamadelo@gmail.com
2	Assessment of teachers' awareness and proficiency in utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) packages in classroom instruction Owolabi Paul Adelana, Adebayo Monsur Ishola	Owolabi Paul Adelana pauletty@gmail.com +2348056405838
3	Availability and utilization of multimedia language laboratory in secondary schools in Ogun State Oluwaseun Dorcas Atolagbe, Owolabi Paul Adelana	Oluwaseun Dorcas Atolagbe atolagbedorcas4@gmail.com +2348034446009
4	Items Coverage of the Theories of Demand and Supply: A Content Analytical Study of Selected Public Examining Bodies' Past Questions Mr Oladimeji David	Mr Oladimeji David oladimejiseyi@gmail.com
5	Using rasch model to identify differential item functioning of teachers' job satisfaction scale with respect to gender Metu, Ifeoma Clementina	Metu, Ifeoma Clementina ifeomametu2015@gmail.com, or ic.metu@unizik.edu.ng
6	Efficacy of ordinal alpha reliability method using teacher literacy and practice of school based assessment data Idaka, Idaka Egbe, Okarefe, Oluremi Afolake, Joshua O. Adeleke	Idaka, Idaka Egbe Idaka.idakaegbe@gmail.com
7	Implementing Assessment for Learning in Tertiary Institutions in the South-West Nigeria: A Qualitative Study Folajogun V. Falaye (Ph.D)	Folajogun V. Falaye fvfalaye@gmail.com
8	Abuse of library materials in selected Nigerian special libraries Fagbola Bolanle Oluyemisi, Ogunjobi Taiwo Elizabeth	Fagbola Bolanle Oluyemisi bovicyem@yahoo.co.uk
9	Modeling Teacher Classroom Practices, Students' Study Habit and Mathematical Ability as Determinants of Achievement in Chemistry Chima Jonas Egbujuo (Ph.D)	Chima Jonas Egbujuo Chimajon20@yahoo.com
10	Psychological Factors as Predictors of Proneness to Teenage Pregnancy among Public Secondary School Students in Ibadan, Oyo State Bukola Olusola Elemide, Ezekiel Olusegun Babatunde	Bukola Olusola Elemide dadabukielemid@yahoo.com
11	Learners' and social media engagement: an investigation into sandwich students' social media behaviour Babatunde, Ibrahim Saka, Ajayi, Oluwagbemiga Samson	Ajayi, Oluwagbemiga Samson ajayiosamson@gmail.com
12	Effect of student critical and analytical thinking skills on students academic achievement Ani, Mercy Ifunanya, Eze, Beatrice A. Ekeh, David Onyemaechi & Eze, Claris Nnenna	Ani, Mercy Ifunanya merciful.ssit@yahoo.com
13	Assessing the differential item functioning of 2018 WASSCE mathematics achievement tests in Lagos State, Nigeria O. M. Alade, S. Aletan, B. S. Sokenu	B. S. Sokenu bsokenu@unilag.edu.ng
14	Predicting Student's Performance in SSCE Mathematics from their Performance in JSCE Mathematics Allwell Sunny Njigwum, Oye, Noah Gem Peace	Allwell Sunny Njigwum allwellsn@gmail.com +2347034948607
15	Mathematics as a prerequisite for admission into universities in Nigeria: A call for awareness creation and attitudinal change Ariyo Simeon Oluniyi, Adeleke Joshua Oluwatoyin	Ariyo Simeon O simeonariyo@yahoo.com 07066294394
16	Assessment of Items effectiveness of Senior Secondary School Mock Chemistry Examination Conducted by Akwa Ibom State Osokoya Modupe M and Uko, Idorenyin A	Uko, Idorenyin A kinduluv@gmail.com

Psychological Factors as predictors of proneness to teenage pregnancy among Public secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State

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Abstract

Teenage pregnancy is one of the socio-economic challenges confronting this millennium. Therefore, this study explored the proneness of girls to pregnancy and the proneness of boys to impregnating the girls. The study is a correlational research type. The sample comprised 1200 respondents from 12 public secondary schools in Ibadan (six from city and less city each), Oyo State. Two instruments namely Psychological Factors Questionnaire PFQ ($\alpha = 0.68$) and Proneness to Teenage Pregnancy Questionnaire of boys and girls to pregnancy PTPQ with ($\alpha = 0.67$) and ($\alpha = 0.60$) respectively used to collect data from the respondents and data collected were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. All the predictors accounted for 55% of the variance observed in proneness of boys to impregnating girls and 31% of variance observed in proneness of girls to pregnancy. Parental attitude contributed most significantly to the prediction of proneness of boys to impregnating the girls while students' attitude contributed most significantly to the prediction of girls' proneness to pregnancy. Based on the findings, it is recommended that sexuality education should be effectively taught at secondary school level so as to instill in the students' the necessary values that make them abstain from premarital sexual activities.

Keywords: Proneness, Teenage pregnancy, Psychological Factor, Sexuality Education, Parental Attitude and Students' attitude

Introduction

Teenage period is the time between the beginning of sexual maturation, puberty and adulthood. It is considered to be the period between ages 13 and 19 and is largely characterised as the beginning of sexuality. During this period, teenagers experience not only physical growth and change but also emotional, psychological, social and mental change. At this stage, the secondary sexual characteristics in the body are becoming pronounced and visible. The awareness of these body changes makes teenagers to pay more attention to them and tend to feel they are adults. This sexual behavior of teens is rampant among secondary school students who incidentally form the bulk of teenagers. Studies suggested that 20 to 35 percent of the sampled population of 10-19 year-old in-school group for both boys and girls have high level of sexual activities (Oke, 2014; Ajayi, Shittu and Yunusa, 2013).

Most teenagers engage in casual sexual behaviours forgetting that they are at risk of getting pregnant, they are carried away with social activities and fun of adolescence. Hence, the boys are prone to impregnating the girls

while the girls are prone to teenage pregnancy. Great attention has been given to the prevention of teenage pregnancy in recent times, leading to several campaigns against the act. Despite research work and awareness to save the young girls from this menace, young boys who are exposed and aroused with the technological revolution will not allow girls to yield to strict information on abstinence from casual and regular sex life style.

In 2014, World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that 11% of all births were among teenagers aged 13 to 19 years (World Health Organization, 2014). Nigeria has the highest teenage birth in Africa and the Niger Delta region seems to be the highest in the country (Isa, Ibukun and Owoeye, 2012). Isiugo-Abanihe and Udoh-Emokhare (2012), in Oyo State found that more than 1 in 5 adolescents had had sex before age 16. The hospital prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Ibadan was 21.7% (Okuyelu, Ajayi and Okedare, 2017). Gandhi, Sharm and Rahul (2014) discovered that teenage pregnancy is generally considered to be a high-risk event, because teenage girls are physically and psychologically immature for

reproduction. Various reasons have been adduced for the incidence of teenage pregnancy, some of which could be psychological.

Psychological factors are the factors that affect the feelings and emotions of people. In other words, they are the mental or internal factors such as parental attitude to premarital sex, students' attitude to premarital sex, depression and child abuse. Many parents do not realize that their verbal and non-verbal behaviors (which form attitude) could produce major effect on their children's life style. Findings of Macleod and Tracy (2010) have shown that teenagers are more likely to engage in sexual activities when they perceive that their parents do not have firm opinions, rules and guidelines regarding sexuality. The perception then transcends into attitude upon which teenagers build their behaviors, which is to become sexually active. Apart from transmission of verbal attitudes, the non-verbal behaviors of parents also point to their approval or disapproval of premarital sex. Findings of Cumper (2006) revealed that children have a better understanding of proper sexual practices when their parents exhibit definite, meaningful sexual behaviours. Children are more likely to see themselves as learners and to see their parents as teachers.

The attitude of teenagers to premarital sex is one of the reasons for the prevalence of teenage pregnancy. Peer influence wields a great influence on the attitude of teenagers. This is because many teenagers do not have detailed and correct information about sexuality so they rely on their peers for information and their attitudes are based on the wrong information received from their peers (Huong, Chengshi and Naomi, 2016). The perception of the norms and behavior of the peer group that teenagers belong to has huge effect on their decision for sexual urge as a result of societal peer influence. Furthermore, there is a disintegration of sexual values, beliefs, practices and behaviors that promote abstinence in the society. What it shows is that the present day society has become permissive or liberal about sexual issues. Kyokwijuka (2009), remarked that promotion of sexuality in form of nudity and pornography through various modern day social media devices has affected the attitude of teenagers.

Depression was initially associated with

older people but nowadays, teenagers are no longer exempted from the disorder. Bettge (2008) stated that depressive symptoms are widely prevalent in teenagers. Depression can be as a result of passing through difficult life situations like loneliness, disappointment, parents being too strict and some unexpected situations. Teenagers, given their own developmental level, have significant emotional and social needs. Teenagers who do not stay with their biological parents could engage in promiscuous acts if they have not been loved by their guardians. Kearney (2008) remarked that family bond and connectedness affects the overall behavior of a child, else the child becomes lonely despite the presence of family members.

Child abuse has also been associated with teenage pregnancy. Child abuse comprises all forms of behaviors, actions and treatments that can cause pain, injury or suffering to a child. It could be sexual and non-sexual. Nkwanyana (2011) found out that rape accounted for 11 % of reasons for teenage pregnancy. Non-sexual abuse includes physical violence often in the form of beatings and slapping; emotional abuse like ignoring and isolating and verbal abuse, etc. Teenage girls who are maltreated by parent or guardian at home do not feel safe and needs a hide-out. As a result of this victimization, many of them become prey in the hands of men who lure them into sexual activities in the pretence of safe habitation.

Non-sexual child abuse can lead to perceived parent rejection which in turn can make teenagers have low self-esteem. Non-sexual child abuses may foster attempts by teenagers to justify unfulfilled intimacy through early sexual relationships and consequently teen pregnancy. In Malawi, about 25% of teenagers have experienced physical violence (Wood and Jewkes, 2006). Likewise, Maxwell, (2005) found out that physical violence was a risk factor for unwanted teenage pregnancy in South Africa. A Study by Varga, (2003) also indicated that physical and sexual abuse exposes teenagers to unplanned pregnancy.

Statement of the Problem

Development of sexual characteristics in teenagers makes them feel that they are adults.

During this period, teenagers are expected to acquire education and skills needed for the future. On the contrary, many of the teenagers at this level engage in premarital sex, which expose them to the risks of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and other health related problems among which is teenage pregnancy. Several reasons have been found to predict teenage pregnancy worldwide. Despite effort to curtail this menace of teenage pregnancy, it keeps increasing probably because attention is centered more on girls whereas the boys need to be observed to see their involvement in teenage pregnancy. Therefore, this research investigated the prediction of teenage pregnancy based on psychological factors (parental attitude to premarital sex, students' attitude to premarital sex, child abuse and depression) among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria and the proneness of boys to impregnating their female counterparts.

Research Questions

1. What is the pattern of relationship among psychological factors (parental attitude to premarital sex, students' attitude to premarital sex, depression and child abuse) and proneness to teenage pregnancy of:
 - a. Male teenagers?
 - b. Female teenagers?
2. What is the relative effects of psychological factors on proneness to teenage pregnancy of:
 - a. Male teenagers?
 - b. Female teenagers?

Methodology

(i) Research Design

This study employed correlational research type of non-experimental design. No variable was manipulated in the study. Only their correlations were assessed.

(ii) Sampling techniques and Sample

Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted and purposive sampling technique was engaged

to select Ibadan land with 11 Local Government Areas from the 33 local government areas in Oyo State. Ibadan was stratified into city and less city. Random sampling technique was adopted in selecting three Local Government Areas each from Ibadan City (Urban) and Ibadan Less City (Rural). Thereafter, four schools were randomly selected in each of the Local Government Areas in the rural and urban areas of Ibadan to make 24 secondary schools in all. Purposive sampling technique was used to select Senior Secondary School Two boys and girls that fall within the age bracket of 13 to 19 years and random sampling techniques was used to select 25 boys and 25 girls within the age bracket in each school. The total sample for the study comprised 1200 students from the 24 public schools.

(iii) Instrumentation

Two instruments namely: Psychological Factors Questionnaire and Proneness to Teenage Pregnancy Questionnaire were used to collect data from the respondents. Psychological Factors Questionnaire is an adapted instrument with 20 items in a modified Likert scale of 'Very True', 'True', 'Almost true', 'Not true'. It was revalidated using Cronbach alpha reliability which has a value of 0.68. Proneness to Teenage Pregnancy Questionnaire consists of 30 items that measured the proneness of boys and girls to pregnancy with ($\alpha = 0.67$) and ($\alpha = 0.60$) respectively.

(iv) Data Collection Procedure

The researchers and four research assistants collected the data from the sampled schools. Data collection exercise lasted for six weeks.

(v) Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using correlation and multiple regression.

Results

Research Question 1a: What is the pattern of relationship among psychological factors (parental attitude to premarital sex, students' attitude to premarital sex, depression and child abuse) and proneness to teenage pregnancy of male teenagers?

Table 1: Pattern of Relationship among Psychological Factors and Proneness to Teenage Pregnancy

	Proneness	Parental Attitude	Students' Attitude	Depression	Child Abuse
Proneness	1.000				
Parental Attitude	0.65*	1.000			
Students' Attitude	0.61*	0.66*	1.000		
Depression	0.64*	0.68*	0.69*	1.000	
Child Abuse	0.62*	0.64*	0.65*	0.78*	1.000
M	43.86	7.96	8.77	8.64	7.84
SD	15.25	3.73	4.29	4.32	4.14

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 1 shows that all the psychological factors, parental attitude ($r = 0.65$), depression ($r = 0.64$), child abuse ($r = 0.62$) and students' attitude ($r = 0.61$) were positive, significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) and strongly related to proneness to pregnancy among male teenagers.

Research Question 1b: What is the pattern of relationship among psychological factors (parental attitude to premarital sex, students' attitude to premarital sex, depression and child abuse) and proneness to teenage pregnancy of female teenagers?

Table 2: Pattern of Relationship among Psychological Factors and Proneness to Teenage Pregnancy

	Proneness	Parental Attitude	Students' Attitude	Depression	Child Abuse
Proneness	1.000				
Parental Attitude	0.41*	1.000			
Students' Attitude	0.49*	0.57*	1.000		
Depression	0.48*	0.56*	0.62*	1.000	
Child Abuse	0.45*	0.53*	0.60*	0.80*	1.000
M	40.02	7.11	7.73	7.40	6.83
SD	12.30	3.34	3.68	3.34	3.19

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The pattern of relationship shows that all the psychological factors are related to teenage pregnancy as shown in Table 2. Students' attitude to pre-marital sex ($r = 0.49$), depression ($r = 0.48$), child abuse ($r = 0.45$) and parental attitude to pre-marital sex ($r = 0.41$) were related and positive to proneness to pregnancy among female teenagers.

Research Question 2a: What is the relative effects of psychological factors on proneness to teenage pregnancy of male teenagers?

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	B	Std Error	Beta	T	p-value
(Constant)	9.096	1.869		4.865	0.00*
Parental Attitude	1.10	0.17	0.27	6.38	0.00*
Students' Attitude	0.51	0.15	0.14	3.37	0.00*
Depression	0.48	0.18	0.14	2.67	0.01*
Child Abuse	0.60	0.17	0.16	3.50	0.00*

* Significant at $p < 0.05$; NS= Not significant

Table 3 shows that all the psychological factors, parental attitude ($\beta = 0.27$, $t = 6.38$), students' attitude ($\beta = 0.14$, $t = 3.37$), depression ($\beta = 0.14$, $t = 2.67$), child abuse ($\beta = 0.16$, $t = 3.50$) contributed significantly to the prediction of male proneness to pregnancy. Their respective contributions may be attributed to their

significant positive relationship with male proneness to teenage pregnancy.

Research Question 2b: What is the relative effects of psychological factors on proneness to teenage pregnancy of female teenagers?

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	p-value
(Constant)	19.517	2.142		9.111	0.00*
Parental Attitude	0.37	0.17	0.10	2.17	0.03*
Students' Attitude	0.72	0.16	0.21	4.48	0.00*
Depression	0.58	0.22	0.16	2.60	0.01*
Child Abuse	0.33	0.23	0.09	1.48	0.14 ^{NS}

NS= Not significant at $p > 0.05$, *= significant at $p < 0.05$

Three of the psychological factors, parental attitude ($\beta = 0.10$, $t = 2.17$), students' attitude ($\beta = 0.21$, $t = 4.48$), depression ($\beta = 0.16$, $t = 2.60$) contributed significantly to the prediction of female proneness to pregnancy.

The respective values of the significant levels of parental attitude to premarital sex, students' attitude to premarital sex and depression are lower than the critical value hence, their significant contribution to the prediction of female proneness to teenage pregnancy. This result may be due to fact that the variables had

significant positive relationship with female proneness to teenage pregnancy. On the other way round, among social factors, only media usage contributed significantly to the prediction of female proneness to teenage pregnancy. This result may be as a result of the fact that attitudes are quite important when predicting human behaviour, which might have accounted for the significant prediction of media usage to female proneness to pregnancy.

Discussion

In this study, it was found out that parental attitude is directly related to male proneness to teenage pregnancy. The result agrees well with that of Levy (2008) who found out that psychological factor like parental attitudes play a large role in the sexual behavior of teenagers. This study does not support the claims of Marion (2008) that parental attitude does not contribute significantly to involvement of teenagers in pre-marital sexual activities.

The findings of this study which indicated that there was a significant relationship between depression and male proneness to teenage pregnancy is in line with that of Nelson and Lapore, (2013) that depressed adolescents become lonely, isolated and consequently get involved in premarital sexual activities. The result also corroborates that of Roberts, Connor, Golding and Team (2004) that there exists a strong relationship between depression and teenage pregnancy. However, the result contradicts that of Hamilton and Meston (2013) which revealed that teenagers with depressive symptoms have little sexual desire and do not associate easily with peers, thereby they are not prone to impregnating their female counterparts.

On child abuse, this study agrees with Joubert (2008) who established that teenagers who were earlier maltreated during childhood have the tendency to be involved in premarital sexual activities. Contrary to this study, Oke (2010) concluded that child abuse as a single factor did not predict male teenagers' proneness to teenage pregnancy. The result which shows a relationship between the attitude of male teenagers to premarital sex and their proneness to impregnating their female counterparts is a mirror of that of Odejimi and Bellingham-

Young (2014), Tsebe (2012) that established an earlier link between teenagers' attitude and pregnancy. The result of this study supports Thobejane (2015) and Eze (2014) that the attitude of female teenagers to premarital sex is a determining factor for their proneness to getting pregnant.

This finding on depression agrees with the submission of Keyes, Cheslack-Postava, Westhoff, Heim, Haloosim, Walsh and Koenen (2013) that female teenagers who experienced more depressive symptoms are prone to unplanned pregnancy. However, the result contradicts that of American Psychiatric Association (2013) that depression and teenage pregnancy are not closely related. To corroborate findings of this work on child abuse and teenage pregnancy, United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) (2013) suggested that female teenagers who were victims of sexual or physical abuse might not be able to control their bodies, a situation which makes them vulnerable to unplanned pregnancy. In contrary, Nkwanyana (2011) reported that sexual abuse as a single variable could not predict teenage pregnancy. The finding of this study on parental attitude to pre-marital sex supports that of Owuamanam (2013) that parental attitude to pre-marital sex has a strong influence on teenage pregnancy.

The findings of this study on relative contribution of parental attitude to pre-marital sex aligns with that of Macleod and Tracy (2010) that proper communication of parental attitude about sexual issues guide teenagers in refraining from pre-marital sexual behaviours. Kirby (2001) noted that permissive attitudes of teenagers about sexuality have led to an increase in the practice of pre-marital sex aligns with the result of this finding. Result on relative contribution of depression to teenage pregnancy revealed similar findings as that of Quilivan (2019) that depressed teenagers are more likely to be involved in risky sexual behaviours than their non-depressed counterparts. Treffers (2003) established a strong link between childhood sexual abuse and display of risky sexual behaviours in adolescents which is in support of this result.

The finding in this study on relative contribution of parental attitude on proneness to teenage pregnancy corroborates that of Nava (2012) who found that pregnant teenagers were as a result of the bad attitudes of their parents. The finding on contribution of students' attitude on proneness to teenage pregnancy is in line with that of Osisoma (2008) who found out that bad attitude of some teenagers which are manifested in form of indecent dressing and acceptance of premarital sex led to a high incidence of teenage pregnancy. The result on relative contribution of depression on teenage pregnancy corroborates that of Roberts, Connor, Golding and Team (2004) that there is a strong relationship between depression and teenage pregnancy.

Conclusion

The inference drawn from the findings of this study generally are that psychological factors have an effect on the proneness of teenage girls to pregnancy, with the boys playing a significant role in impregnating their female counterparts. It was revealed that among psychological factors, parental attitude to pre-marital sex contributed most significantly to the prediction of male proneness to pregnancy while students' attitude to pre-marital sex contributed most significantly to the prediction of female proneness to pregnancy. In conclusion, the findings established significant relationship between psychological factors and proneness to teenage pregnancy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- The government through the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) should ensure that movies and songs with sexual themes are not shown on the television so that teenagers do not build their attitudes on the wrong information from the media
- Parents should exhibit distinct behaviours that will guide their teenage children in forming their attitude about issues of sexuality.
- Parents should relate well with their children so as not to give room to depression

- School counsellors should talk to the boys and girls about the dangers of premarital sex
- Effort should be geared towards proper monitoring of the boys as well.

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