Causes of Early Motherhood, Consequences and Prevention Strategies: the case of early Pregnant Teenagers

Alphonse Sebaganwa,
Department of Basic Education and TVET

Etienne Serupia Semuhoza
University of Rwanda

Abstract

This paper examined root causes of early pregnant teenagers under 19 years old. We selected 30 young girls from 3 districts of the southern Rwanda, who have been pregnant between 2018, 2019 and 2020. We decided to use "life story telling" methods whose analysis led us to the surprising major findings like the fact that more than 70% of our sample got pregnancy after the school abandon, 80% did not have any or false information on the sexual education and 90% of men pregnancy responsible are under 23 years old and are single. The findings showed also that more than 70% of the samples have no both parents.

The findings established that negative influences from peers and environment, care free attitude of parents among others were factors that pre-dispose the girl-child to early motherhood. Also the effects include disruption of academic process, school drop-outs and poor public image. It was therefore, recommended that schools and homes should be more protective and shields the girl-child from negative influences. Education of the girl-child should be free and compulsory to enable teenage mothers go back to school after nursing her baby as many would love to do but for financial constraints The findings showed also that more than 70% of the sample have no both parents.

Key words: teen pregnancy, sexual education, early motherhood**.**

1. Introduction

While visiting the people of one administrative Sector (code: S) in the southern province of Rwanda for other concerns, a mother approached us and said, "what will you do to help our young girls who become pregnant early enough?" Showing to us a young girl from her side carrying a child on the back, she adds: "This is my daughter, and she is only 15 years old!" So, we took this opportunity to extend our conversation, and in the end she told us that there are many girls in the area who are in this situation.

To check the veracity, we develop identification sheets to record adolescent girls (- 19 years) who have children or are pregnant. The Executive Secretary of this Sector made them completed in all cells of the sector. The results have seemed unbelievable and terrifying: 114 teenage mothers in the single sector between 2015 and 2020, not including those who may be pregnant at the time.
According to the annual report of UNICEF published in 2009, teenage girls who give birth to a child before the age of 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women of twenties. "70,000 young women aged 15 to 19 die in childbirth or from complications related to pregnancy," notes the report.

This social situation inspires us to decide starting a research with the main objective is to try to understand in depth the real causes that lead young teenage girls embark early in unprotected sexual relationships that cause unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV.
We also discuss the preventive measures of early motherhood such as the advocate concerned. Finally, an identification of the needs of teenage mothers will be made in accordance with their aspirations, so that they can be sustainably supported.

This study should answer to the research question: "what are the roots causes that lead young teenage girls under 19 to embark in sex acts" Before coming to the methodological approach, we first present elements of literature on this subject.

2. Elements of literature Review

Some current literature states that early pregnancy is a phenomenon that is growing day by day in our society. And it is youth, tender female youth who is the main victim. Indeed, in early pregnancy means a pregnancy that occurs in infancy, that is to say, before 19; when the girl barely out of childhood, or is a child herself. Naturally, the causes are many, and very serious consequences, hence the urgency to eradicate this social evil. Among the main causes of recent literature mentions premature discovery of sexuality, poverty, lack of supervision (advise) of parents and elders, voluntary refusal to use modern means of contraception in general and condom particular.

For Dumisani et all (2020) obstetrician-gynecologist, is ignorance and lack of information that are causing the problem. "Most of the girls are unaware of contraception and thus run the risk of STIs (sexually transmitted infections) and HIV AIDS. Parents do not think to tell the girls. Indeed, several authors reported that young girls from families with low economic status showed little motivation to avoid pregnancy and then have fewer abortions than those from wealthier families.

Another factor directly related to poverty refers to poor academic performance. In general, young sexually inactive tend to have educational goals and higher notes. In addition, adolescents from wealthy families value education and have more expectations for their future life. Pregnant teenagers, even when sexually inactive, have less realistic expectations and perceptions for their future. They are much more at risk of having low academic performance, to win, to get a job later in low-income and to continue the vicious cycle between poverty and early motherhood.

The logical consequences of this are disastrous for the girl is obliged to interrupt or abandon his academic studies (as the boy is spared). In the worst case, there are illegal abortions, with incalculable dangers (infections, infertility, and death).

He becomes a mother, therefore responsible before the age. The consequences of this increase in teenage pregnancy are very serious, affecting the quality of life of adolescents and that of their offspring. These consequences include STDs can be incurable or fatal diseases, abortion and adoption, as well as cognitive and behavioral problems of children teen parents (hofforth et ali, 2001, Kinby, 2010).

Thus, it seems that in Rwanda there is no study to date on the real causes of early motherhood, its consequences, and the logic of action taken to curb this phenomenon culturally devalued adolescents impoverishes them further and their respective families, and mortgage the future of their children.

It is for this reason that we want to study this phenomenon starting from the following questions

✓ What are the real causes of early motherhood, and what are the consequences

✓ Existing coaching on sexual education and reproductive health devices is it effective

✓ What are the specific strategies to prevent early motherhood?

✓ What are the opportunities to help these teenage mothers to support sustainably?

3. Material and Methods

The method we focus on is the "life story". Bertaux (1997) considers "that there's life story when a subject tells another person, researcher or not, any episode of his experience [.....]" The life story is the result of particular form maintenance, narrative interviews, during which a researcher (...) asks a person hereinafter referred to as "subject" to tell him all or part of his life experience" Wacheux (1996) defines, for his part as the biographical method "Analysis of a story by an actor on events he experienced. The speech is caused by the researcher. The actor is free to the formulation of facts and interpretations he gives".

This approach is objectivist in the sense that it does not intended to capture from within the value system and the schemes of representation of a person or social group. It aims to study a fragment of social reality (social object) and understand how it changes through social relations, mechanisms, processes and logics of action that characterize it. In other words it is to investigate a social reality fragment which our knowledge is limited to stereotypes, prejudice and collective representations of common sense.

By conducting a research project by the life stories of social and human sciences methods, we will come to know human facts on the basis three dimensions according Bertaux:

Through the situation itself, as a description of social relations or social statements at some point;

✓ By social, natural or caused such an assessment deviations between two points in time

✓ (3) By mobile action actors, as an explanation of a complex system of beliefs, identities, in a particular context. It is this model that we will use in our study, taking into account the purpose of the study and in our sample

3.1. Research Sampling

A **population** is the group of people that you want to make assumptions about. Our main population is all teenagers between 14 and 19years old who were pregnant or gave birth between January 2013 to December 2015.

A **sampling frame** is the group of people from which you will draw your sample. For example, I might decide that my sampling frame is every young girl between 14 to 19 years old(in 2015) who were pregnant between January 2013 to December 2015 from 3 districts whose codes are "H", "G" and "N". "H" District is the one we found impressed cases of the phenomenon that we are studying. The 3 Districts are neighbors and probably have similar social and economic realities, so that the coordination of activities was being facilitated. Notice that a sampling frame is not as large as the population, but it's still a pretty big group of people.

There are basically two ways to choose a sample from a sampling frame: randomly or non-randomly. There are benefits to both. Basically, if your sampling frame is approximately the same demographic makeup as your population, you probably want to randomly select your sample, perhaps by flipping a coin or drawing names out of a hat.

For this study, the only target group is those teenagers between 14 to 19 years old. Thirty subjects seem to be relatively a small group. But the methodological approach of this research" life story" is obviously used to get the subject to tell "the story of his or her life", in his or her own words. This is called the "narrative" method. It is common practice to begin the interview with the subject's early childhood and to proceed chronologically to the present. It's not an issue of extension based study, but a deep comprehension of taught, psychological and sociological representations.

3.2. Data collection methods

The nature of this research should be deep than extended. It means that the life story method that we used mainly requires a deep analysis for each cas with not less than 15 manuscript pages of the life story. So a maximum number of stories (of a search size) that we can manage to analyse is 30, so that the sample for each District is 10. Randomly, the cell's responsible gave us names of all teenagers between 14 and 19 years old who were pregnant or given birth between January 2018 to December 2020.

A recorded life stories has been done accordingly to the ethical issues for a search research. After this operation, we should transcript all records on computer so that we can manage to analyze data with "categorical analysis" which deals with categories or themes that make sens within the discours.

The complete transcription of the interviews is the basic corpus for the analysis of life stories. All the narratives are then sequenced according to three levels (Demazière and Dubar, 1997): the level of functions (episodes of the narrative, called sequences, which are numbered), the level of actions (elements of the narrative that depict (Actors that play a part in the trajectory) and the level of narration (arguments and propositions intended to convince Interlocutor, to defend a point of view, to inventory the universe of possibilities). Each element of the narrative is highlighted and annotated differently according to the level to which it refers. The same element can, however, refer to several levels.

Once the interviews are fully sequenced, the various main variables of the narrative are shown in tables. The latter make it easier to use the information to make graphic representations or to compare the stories with each other. Several tables have been constructed for each case individually or collectively (table summarizing the sequences of the trajectory with opposite actants and judgments carried on each sequence, table showing the motivations of the person to justify his installation project, etc. .).

4. Results

Identification of main categories that make sense in line with the elements of literature on causes of early motherhood (as presented before): one district with 10 subjects

Table 1.Main categories identified from subject's stories and their significations

Code of District : N Major findings 1	
Major findings	Significations
1. 80% got pregnancy after more than 2 years leaving school	Early school abandon
2. 90% have a study level of primary school	Lack of basic education (12 years)
3. 60% left school for family poverty reasons and 30% due to parent's irresponsibility	Full family and community responsibility of school drop out
4. 100% of those young girls (mothers) have no occupation	Lack of family and community support
4. 100% of those young girls (mothers) have no occupation	Lack of family and community support
5. 50% have both parents, while 40% have mothers only	Lack of efficient sexual education from parents
6. 100% of parents are farmers	No signification
7. 70% of men responsible for pregnancy where between 20 and 23 years old, while 30% where between 28 and 30 years old	Early embark in sex adventure
8. 90% of men responsible for pregnancy are single	Lack of basic sexual education
9. 40% of them do small business (boutique), and 30% unknown occupation	Lack of basic education

Description for the above table.

From this table, it's clear that the law level of education (primary school), school abandon and lack of occupation are the root causes of early embark in sexual adventure. It shows also that men responsible for pregnancy are single and young (under 23). Some of them run small businesses that allow them to attract teenagers and embark them in sexual acts. These results show that in this area of research adults or men already married are not the ones who embark teenagers doing sex!

Table 2.Main categories identified from subject's stories and their significations

Code of District: N' Major findings 2	Significations
1.60% did not got information on sexual matters, 30% got some	Lack of basic and efficient sexual education
2. 90% did once sexual act	Lack of basic and sexual education
3. 100% did not used contraceptive methods	Lack of sexual education
4. 80% did sexual act with consent	Lack of maturity and strong standing capacity
5. 70% where good treated by their parents before pregnancy and 30% bad	Ignorant parents
6. 70% where bad treated by there parents during and after giving birth and 30% good	Ignorant parents
7. 50% stay in the family after giving birth and 40 % forced temporally to leave searching for better life	Lack of family and community support
8. 0% no repetition of early pregnancy in the family	No consequence
9. 40% supported can go back to school, 40% supported can do small business	Lack of family and community support

Description for the above table.

From the information in this table, we find that these young girls did not got minimum elements of information on sexual education because for example they did not use condom during their first intercourse from which they got pregnancy. Most of them affirm to have sex with "consent". But due to the ignorance of the function of their body in general and their genital organ in particular, they have unprotected sex and one of the consequences is "pregnancy". Another consequence that is stated here, is the fact that pregnant girls are bad treated by their parents (some of them are forced to leave the parent's home).

Table 3.Main categories identified from subject's stories and their significations

Code of District H	
Major findings	Significations
1. 70% got pregnancy after more than 2 years leaving school	Early school abandon
2. 30% got pregnancy during studies	Lack of sexual education
3. 50% have a study level of primary school	Lack of basic education studies (12 years)
4. 50% have a study level of lower secondary school	Lack of basic education studies (12 years)
5. 70% left school for family poverty reasons and 30% due to the pregnancy	Full family and community responsibility of school drop out
5. 70% left school for family poverty reasons and 30% due to the pregnancy	Full family and community responsibility of school drop out
6. 90% of those young girls (mothers) have no occupation	Lack of family and community support
7. 40% have mothers only, 30% fathers only and 30% no one (grand mother, sister)	Lack of efficient sexual education from parents
8. 60% of parents are farmers, 40% small business	No signification
9. 70% of men responsible for pregnancy where between 21 and 23 years old, while 30% where between 29 and 30 years old	Early embark in sex adventure, lack of sexual education
10. 90% of men responsible for pregnancy are single	Lack of basic sexual education
11. 30% of them do small business (boutique), and 40% house keepers, 30% (students, soldiers, farmers)	Lack of basic education, problem of family and community responsibility

Description for the above table.

In this District, the only difference between table 1 (District N) and table 3 (District H) is that a half of young girls have lower secondary school level. It should mean that the training that they have at school is not sufficient and efficient! All other findings are similar

Table 4.Main categories identified from subject's stories and their significations

Code of District: H' Major findings	Significations
1. 40% did not got information on sexual matters, 30% got some and 30% got false	Lack of basic and efficient sexual education
2. 90% did once sexual act	Lack of basic and sexual education
3. 100% did not use contraceptive methods	Lack of sexual education
4. 80% did sexual act with consent, 20% forced	Lack of maturity and strong standing up capacity / Parent's and community support problem
5. 90% where good treated by their parents before pregnancy and 10% bad	Responsible parents
6. 80% where good treated by there parents during and after giving birth and 20% bad	Responsible parents
7. 90% stay in their family after giving birth	Responsible parents
8. 90% no repetition of early pregnancy in the family	No link
9. 40% already went back to school, 60% supported can do small business	Lack of family and community support (60%)

Description for the above table.

According to the data we have in this table, some young girls got right information, others wrong, on sexual education from school and or from their girl friends or boyfriends. It means that, either, there is a misinterpretation of right information or acceptation of wrong information, because they had unprotected sex. Comparative information is that parents are more responsible in "H" District than in "N" District because those from the first assisted their ladies before and after pregnancy. The last observation is that some girls went back to school in this city after giving birth. Is the effect of city living behavior of parents? Are the local leaders sensitized both parents and teens?

Table 5.Main categories identified from subject's stories and their significations

Code of District : G	
Major findings	**Significations**
1. 80% got pregnancy after more than 2 years leaving school 2. 20% got pregnancy during studies	Early school abandon Lack of sexual education
3. 60% have a study level of primary school 4. 30% have a study level of lower secondary school	Lack of basic education studies (12 years) Lack of basic education studies (12 years)
5. 60% left school for family poverty reasons and 20% due to the pregnancy, 20% for parent's responsibility	Full family and community responsibility of school drop out
6. 70% of those young girls (mothers) have no occupation, 20% went back to school	Lack of family and community support
7. 80% have no parents, 20% have mothers only	Lack of efficient sexual education from parents
8. 90% of parents are farmers	No signification
9. 80% of men responsible for pregnancy where between 21 and 23 years old, while 20% where between 25 and 28 years old	Early embark in sex adventure, lack of sexual education
10. 100% of men responsible for pregnancy are single	Lack of basic sexual education
11. 20% of them do small business (boutique), and 40% unknown occupation , 30% (students in secondary school)	Lack of basic education, problem of family and community responsibility

This table shows that 80% of young girls don't have both parents, meaning that they are orphans. Is this fact justifying the phenomenon? Another similar result is that 80% of them got pregnancy after leaving school for different reasons, among them poverty, meanwhile they did not benefited basic education in general and sexual education in particular at school or at home.

Table 6.Main categories identified from subject's stories and their significations

Code of District: G' Major findings	Significations
1. 40% did not got information on sexual matters, 50% got some and 10% got false	Lack of basic and efficient sexual education
2. 100% did once sexual act	Lack of basic and sexual education
3. 100% did not use contraceptive methods	Lack of sexual education
4. 90% did sexual act with consent, 10% forced	Lack of maturity and strong standing up capacity / Parent's and community support problem
5. 70% where good treated by their parents before pregnancy and 30% bad	Responsible parents
6. 60% where bad treated by there parents during and after giving birth and 20% good	Responsible parents
7. 60% stay in their family after giving birth, 40% forced temporally to leave the family home	Non Responsible parents
8. 100% no repetition of early pregnancy in the family	No link
9. 30% would like to go back to school, 70% supported can do small business	Lack of family and community support (60%)

Description for the above table.

The last table of results is not really different from the previous ones, but we can highlight the fact that 100% got pregnancy during the first intercourse, meaning lack of maturity and strong standing up! The consequences of early pregnancy are also similar to the previous ones because many of them have been bad treated by their parents during pregnancy and after giving birth.

Description for the above table.

The last table of results is not really different from the previous ones, but we can highlight the fact that 100% got pregnancy during the first intercourse, meaning lack of maturity and strong standing up! The consequences of early pregnancy are also similar to the previous ones because many of them have been bad treated by their parents during pregnancy and after giving birth.

6. **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Some decision makers conceive and implement political strategies in different areas of the social or economical life of the country without a deep knowledge of the field situation. This leads to

failing because of the lack of information's based research. The study presents a conceptual and empirical understanding of the root causes of early pregnancy and its consequences that allow us to design a community based prevention strategies of the phenomenon.

The methodology used "life story" allowed us to widely obtain discourses from subjects containing interesting life stories, where young girls freely express the itinerary of their lives before, during and after pregnancy. This material has been collected in mother tongue (Kinyarwanda) and translated in English not systematically, but by categories that make sense in line with theoretical elements (main causes) of the study, but also with new categories that emerge from stories.

Those categories have been analyzed and exposed in tables where we highlighted major findings which seem to be particularly interesting because they show for the first time that people (men) responsible for pregnancies of teenagers are not adult persons, but young people under 23 and single. Another surprising result is that more than 70% of teenagers are orphans, justifying the early school abandon and bad consequences among others, getting pregnancy. Again, the fact that 100% of young girls affirmed to have unprotected first intercourses from which they got pregnancies, shows a lack of maturity and sexual education that they should get from school and from parents and the community in general (Maynard, 1997, L'engle, 2006, Kost et ali, 2010) .

These results should not be considered as extensible beyond the area of research but should provide a deep understanding of causes of unwanted pregnancies for young girls under 19. This is preliminary studies that provide major concept and methodological tools to extend it in the country, including young men responsible for pregnancies.

But findings should anyway highlight ways to prevent teen pregnancy because we believe that having accurate, research-based information can only help decision makers to design efficient programs to prevent teen pregnancy. It is also crucial for such leaders to understand that research-based information leads to drow solutions to the teen pregnancy challenge.
Findings of this research shows that no single effort can be expected to solve this problem by itself because teen pregnancy is, after all, a very complex problem, influenced by many factors,

including individual biology, parents and family, peers, schools and other social institutions, religion and faith communities, the media, and the list goes on.

Teenage pregnancy effect the educational attainment and socio- psychological well-being of the affect teenage girl. To reduce its effect it was therefore recommended: (1) That the home and school environments should be protective enough to shield the children from exposure to negative influences, by parents and teachers been concerned about the well-being of the girl child through education about sex and sexuality and the danger inherent.(2) The education of the girl child should be made compulsory at the basic education level. Free basic education for the girls will increase school enrolment of teenagers who hither to were out of school as a result of exorbitant fees.(3) Social welfare agencies (public and private) should redouble efforts in educating, counseling and rehabilitation of victims.

By these efforts many of them could be encouraged to continue their education of engage in other meaningful activities to avoid early destitution and other life threatening experiences resulting from early motherhood.

References

Bertaux, D. (1997). Le récit de vie : perspectives ethnosociologiques, Nathan, Armand Colin.

Dumisani, E. NK. (2020). Girls' Empowerment and Adolescent Pregnancy: A systematic Review, International Journal of Environment and Public Health,17, 1664 doi : 10.3390/ijerph 17051664

Elvire, J. (2015) http://health.usnews.com/doctors/elvire-jacques-476029[online] Available: (may 25, 2015).

Harris, G. (2007). Teenage Birth Rate Rises First Time Since '91.[online] Available:Http *www.nytimes.com*. (may 24, 2015).

Santelli, J; and Melnikas, A (1910). Teen Fertility in Transition: Recent and Historic Trends in the United States," Annual Review of Public Health, vol. 31, pp. 371-383.

Solomon-Fears, C. (2015). Teenage pregnancy prevention: statistics and programs, in Congress Research Service.

UNICEF, annual report 2009, [online] Available:http://www.scribd.com/doc/34011866/UNICEF-Annual-Report-2009#scribd(may 25, 2015)

Wacheux, F. (1996). Méthodes qualitatives et recherche en gestion [online] Available : https://www.researchgate.net/publication/41786879 (may 30, 2015)

Day, N.L., 2009. Body size and intelligence in 60 − years olds: Are offspring of teenage mother at risk? Materials and Child Health Journal, 13(6): 162-173.

Dilworth, K., 2002. Literature review (Teenage Pregnancy) Canadian institute of child health.

Available from http//www.phaaspc.ge.ca/dca-dea/publications/reduceteenpregnancysection Accessed 20th December, 2013].

Gaby, R., (2012). The pregrancy project. USA: CBS College Publishers. pp: 14-18.

Haveman, R.H., B. Wolfe and E. Peterson, 1997. Children of early child bearers as young adults in kids having kids: Economic costs and social costs of teen pregnancy. In R. Maynard (Eds). Urban Washing DC: Urban Institute Press.

Hofforth, S.L., L.M. Reid and L. Frank, (2001). The effects of early childbearing on schooling over time. Family Planning Perspectives, 33(6): 65-72.

Kinby, D., (2001). The impact of schools and school programmes upon adolescent sexual behavior. Journal of Sex Research, 29(1): 27-33.

Kost, K., S. Henshaw and L. Carlin, (2010). US teenage pregnancies, births and abortions: Washington DC: Island Press. pp: 16-22.

L'Engle, K.L., J.D. Brown and K. Kenneavy, (2006). The mass media are an important context for adolescent sexual behaviour. Journal of Adolescent Health, 38(3): 186-192.

Maynard, R.A., (1997). The study, the context and the finding in brief. In R. A. Maynard (Eds). Kids having kids: Economics costs and social consequences of teen pregnancy. Washington DC: Urban Institute Press.