



The Impact of Teenage Motherhood on the Cognitive Development and Academic Achievements of Children: Liberia's Context



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Introduction

- About 16 million girls around the world between 15-19 years old give birth every year (WHO, 2008).
- In Liberia, about 31 percent of girls give birth.
- Girls with low SES are vulnerable to teenage pregnancy (Gyesaw & Ankomah, 2013).
- Teenage mothers face numerous challenges that impede their development and their ability to adapt to the obligations of parenthood.
- In many African societies, motherhood is central to the social and cultural system (Ngum, 2012).
- Some studies suggest that teenage motherhood is a risk factor for poorer child outcomes, while other studies suggest that other aspects of the family ecology may be more influential (Chase-Lansdale, et al, 1999).
- This may be particularly so in the context of Liberia in which family support is important.
- Hence, it is important to further investigate factors that may allow these young mothers and their children to achieve positive outcomes.



Aim

To re-examine the association between teenage motherhood and children cognitive and academic abilities at ages 6 and 7 years in Liberia.

Hypotheses

- Teenage mothers' children will do poorly on cognitive and academic tasks due to poor quality of parenting, low SES and lack of family support compare to adult mothers' children.
- Yet, teenage mothers' children will do well on cognitive and academic tasks if the mothers receive family support and show good enough parenting in spite of their low SES status.

Participants

Complete family	Single-parent family	Children
• 10 teenage & 10 adult families	• 10 teenage & 10 adult mothers	• Age 6-7 • All in school

Measures

- HOME-SF :A modification of the HOME inventory (Caldwell & Bradley 1984, 1992), that measures the quality of the cognitive stimulation and emotional support provided by a child's family.
- EGRA PLUS: Individual test that surveys cognitive & academic knowledge & skills of 5-11yr olds validated in Liberia (LBR_EGRA,2010)

Implications

- Shed light on the inadequate understanding of the specific reasons why teenage motherhood is associated with poorer developmental outcomes and the extent to which these outcomes are a product of teenage childbearing per se versus disadvantaged background.
- This study serve as a framework to mothers and policy makers that optimizing teenage mothers' parenting behaviors may foster positive developmental outcomes for their children and help identify those at risk.



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