

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**



**THE MEDIA AND ADOLESCENT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: EXAMINING  
THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PROMOTING TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN  
GHANA**

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**A TERM PAPER SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND  
RESEARCH, GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A MASTER OF ART DEGREE IN  
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION**

**OCTOBER 2020**



**DECLARATION AND CERTIFICATION**

I, Francisca Bannerman-Afful (Mrs) hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and all materials used in this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

.....  
FRANCISCA BANNERMAN AFFUL (MRS)  
STUDENT

.....  
DATE

**SUPERVISORS DECLARATION**

I hereby certify that this project work was done under my supervision. I thereby approve that the work is adequate in scope and quality for the partial fulfilment of their requirements for the award of a Mater of Art in Development Communication.

.....  
DR. KOBBY MENSAH  
SUPERVISOR

.....  
DATE

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this academic work to God, first and foremost, without whom I would not have been able to accomplish this. My constant prayers for strength, resilience and fortitude to traverse this journey was answered and culminated in this dissertation.

I also dedicate this work to my mum (Ms Margaret Attiogbe), my dad (Mr Odartey Bruce; of blessed memory), my husband (Mr William Arthur Nii Darku Bannerman-Afful) and my three wonderful children of whom I was pregnant with one during this academic period (Miss Anaya Gabrielle Naa Densua Bannerman-Afful, Master Judah Arian Nii Otto Bannerman-Afful and Miss Margaret Wilma Naa Adoley Bannerman-Afful respectively).

I finally dedicate this work to myself to crown the many sleepless nights and the unending pressure to meet deadlines. It was a stressful but truly worthwhile experience.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I will first of all want to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Kobby Mensah whose sage advice, insightful criticisms and patient encouragement help me to shape this work to its current stage. Your contribution to this work has been outstanding and it will be an error on my part to forget your immense contribution to this work. I really appreciate you.

## ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the role media plays in teenage pregnancy. The study sought to assess the extent to which media is contributing to the problem of teenage pregnancy in Ghana by carefully reviewing what has been done in the past. We found that the media has become an important socialization, education information tool. The study found that in recent times, sexual education has become absent in schools and in homes, and there has been a major shift from traditional sources of sexual education and information to the media. Unfortunately, as teenagers in their formative years, modelling media images is a daily behaviour of teenagers. Media has been seen to be portraying a lot of sexual content using two important channels. Television and social media (Facebook). By continually been exposed to these images, teenagers are influenced to engage in sexual activity that tends to lead to early pregnancy. The paper proposes a way forward, as media can help reshape the behaviour of teenagers who are struggling to figure out the rapid changes taking place in their bodies. The paper concludes on the suggestion that media should take up a more formal sexual education and information role and avoid explicit images that encourage teenagers to engage in sexual activity.

*Keywords: teenage pregnancy, media, adolescent, sexual behaviour, Facebook.*

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Teenage pregnancy and the consequent teen motherhood are among the major societal problems confronting the contemporary global community. The problem has engendered as much analysis and policy discussions in Western industrialised societies like the United States as in the less developed nations of Africa. In Ghana, for example, one report estimates that nearly one-third of the childbirths recorded in public hospitals occurred to women under 19 years of age (Xinhua, 1996). The situation is even more dramatic in the rural areas and small-to medium-sized towns which are often under-represented in the hospital birth statistics. A survey conducted by the UN Regional Institute for Population Studies reported that one out of three girls aged 15 to 19 living in Ghana's Central Region has had a child. The area's fertility rate is 5.6 percent, compared to the national rate of 5.5 percent (Xinhua, 1996).

In other predominantly rural communities, family financial exigencies and social custom induce girls to stay out of school and enter early sexual relationships, most of which are exploitative. Similar situations have been described for other African countries (Mwansa, Mufune & Osei-Hwedie, 1994). One study in Swaziland found that about two decades ago females aged 15-19 years accounted for 32.8 per cent of the total fertility (Gule, 1985). Another study reported that females in the same age group contributed 103 births per 1000 women in the country (Gatara & Muriuki, 1985). It has been estimated that at least one out of twenty girls is likely to give birth during the school-going age. Data for Botswana also show that by 1984, about 25 percent of girls aged 15-19 years old were already mothers (Curtis, 1988). Two years later, in 1986, 56 percent of the girls had dropped out of secondary schools in the country due to pregnancy (Mashalaba, 1989).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Keller, Hilton & Twumasi-Ankrah (1999) in their studies found that in the Ghanaian society, early childbearing and motherhood is not a recent social development. Rather, it has only become a problem under present structural conditions and circumstances when the teenage years must be spent in school. By the present structural conditions, Keller, Hilton & Twumasi-Ankrah (1999) suggest that population increase, urban growth among other social factors have changed the way in which the social order is formed.

As a contemporary social problem, it was noted that "the epidemic" of teenage pregnancy saw its insurgence in the 1960s. Among the factors mentioned as contributors to the malaise were rapid population growth, dramatic increase of the size of the family, urban growth and anonymity, and increasing secularisation. The emerging family and social dynamics subverted the restrictions and controls that parents previously imposed on their daughters. It became difficult for most parents to monitor the activities of their daughters. With their increased involvement in numerous community and school-related activities, the girls were spending more and more time away from home.

In another study, Stephen & Augustt (2007) found that media exposure can have some effects on sexual and reproductive health of teenage girls. In addition, Gyan (2013) concluded in his studies of teenage girls in Chorkor that the same reasons for teenage pregnancy, as exposed by Keller, Hilton & Twumasi-Ankrah (1999) still persist.

In all these studies, none has been able to link the role of the broadcast media in preventing teenage pregnancy. The only study that came near was that of Stephen & Augustt, who found in their study that newspapers provided some reproductive and sexual education. Their recommendation however was that future studies should look at the role of mass media in promoting sexual and reproductive health.

This study will focus on the role of television and radio in the prevention of teenage pregnancy since previous studies such as Keller, Hilton & Twumasi-Ankrah (1999), Gyan (2013) and Stephen & Augustt (2007) all agree that teenage pregnancy is a problem.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The researcher seeks to answer the following questions in this research.

- What is the role of the media in promoting teenage pregnancy in Ghana?
- How can the media help prevent teenage pregnancy in Ghana?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The researcher aims to realise the following objectives after this research.

- Examine the role of the media in preventing teenage pregnancy
- Find out how the media can help in preventing teenage pregnancy

### **1.5 Significance of Research**

This research is important because it will;

- Fill knowledge gap in literature as far as the concept of teenage pregnancy and the media is concerned
- Provide media with relevant information on which programs to create for teenagers
- Also assist relevant stakeholders in planning and drafting programs aimed at reducing the incidence of teenage pregnancy in Ghana

### **1.6 Scope of the Research**

The research will generally focus on the concept of teenage pregnancy and the role of the broadcast media in its prevention in *Ghana*.

The research will also consider the various literature on the media and its role in teenage pregnancy. In so doing, attention will be given to the various roles the media plays in promoting or preventing teenage pregnancy based on the images they project. A literature review of previous works on the subject will be done and the results of the analysis will be presented based on the analysis done.

### **1.7 Present Methodology**

The present analysis will make use of qualitative method, using literature review as design to conduct an investigation into the concepts presented in this study. According to Kondracki & Wellman (2002), research focusing on qualitative analysis pays attention to the meaning of texts, obtained from narrative responses such as books. For the purposes of this study, a latent analytical approach will be adopted, focusing on interpreting or, discovering underlying meanings of contents (in this context, previous literature), (Babbie 1992). This approach is adopted as a result of its relevance to the current study, as the study seeks to present a review of previous studies to gain new insights into the concept of teenage pregnancy and the role of the media. It is also considered because it will prove the researcher with the best results, as the paper is a long essay and will not involve the collection of primary data on the subject.

### **1.8 Outline of the Study**

The present study provides a discussion of the role of the media in promoting teenage pregnancy in Ghana. As a long paper on the topic, the paper is divided into four parts. The first part of the paper, which is chapter 1 presents an introduction to the topic, the background, research problem, questions, objectives and significance of the study. The second part of the discussion presents a review of related literature based on previous studies on the subject. It also presents a discussion of some major concepts relating to the topic as well as a brief discussion of related

theories underpinning the research. Chapter three of the discussion is a proposed methodology that can be used to conduct the research for future researchers interested in the topic. This part is presented to aid future researchers who may be interested in conducting the research on a large scale.

The last part of the discussion presents a discussion and presentation of major findings based on what has been discussed in the chapter two of the discussion. A conceptual framework is presented, as well as limitation and recommendation for future studies.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of previous literature related to the subject under consideration. It also presents some theories that are relevant to the current analysis, as well as notable works of scholars who have tackled the subject in similar studies. This section is relevant because it will serve as basis for the current studies to be conducted, with inspiration from the loopholes left by previous studies.

#### 2.1 Teenage Pregnancy

According to Akella & Jordan (2014) teenage pregnancy is defined as a teenage girl usually within the ages of 13-19 becoming pregnant. Thus, teenagers are people who have not reached adult stage. According to their analysis, teenage pregnancy is seen as a health issue that affects everyone.

Young people form the biggest part of the population of the world according to statistics available, with more than half of the world population being less than 25 years of age. At least, one person out of five adolescents is aged between 10 to 19 years old. The total estimated number of young people between the age of 10-19 is about 1.2 billion according to the UNFPA 2003 data. The adolescent period is a stage in the human transition in which the individual goes through various physical, emotional, psychological, cognitive, and social changes (Eccles, Templeton, Barber & Stone 2003, Berger 2001).

At this stage in the life of these young ones, they are going through a lot of transition and development, they are also expected to acquire and consolidate skills, attitudes and principles that are needed for them as they become adults (Berger 2001). This also means that a lot of

pressure is mounted on these young ones at this period in their life, as they battle with confusing information from friends, parents and society.

Thus, the choices they make at this stage of their lives is considered very important and critical. This is because, their decision at this stage will greatly impact on the outcomes of their future. That is why sexual and reproductive health decisions at this stage of their lives is very important, as iterated by UNAIDS (2008), Bearinger (2007) and WHO (2006). This also means that adolescents or young people at this stage must be able to make critical decisions that will most likely determine the course of their lives.

The world health organisation sees an adolescent as someone aged between the ages of 10 years to 19 years. In 2008, 11 % of all child births worldwide were by adolescents aged 15–19 years with about 95 % of them occurring in low-and middle-income countries (WHO 2012).

According to Ahorlu, Pfeiffer & Obrist (2015), adolescent pregnancy contributes about 9 percent to maternal mortality like other sub-Saharan countries. This means that the problem is not only popular in Ghana, as other African countries have been recording incidence of adolescent pregnancy, otherwise referred to as teenage pregnancy. The Ghana statistical service, Ghana Health Service and the Macro International in their 2007 report titled Maternal Health Survey reveal that the under-five mortality rate among children born to adolescent mothers in Ghana was 124 per 1000 births, ‘significantly higher than the national average’ according to them.

Unfortunately, research and data has shown that young mothers are more likely to experience complications during pregnancy than adults (WHO 2001, GSS 2007). This means that the problem is more pervasive, in most populations as the World population data suggest is young. In addition, Ahorlu, Pfeiffer & Obrist (2015) suggests that adolescent pregnancy opens young girls to medical, social and economic risks. They also have a higher risk of dying during labour in addition to other social difficulties they are likely to face such as social shunning, rejection,

and condemnation. As a result, these young women stand a risk of becoming poor, or being exposed to poverty as they are left to fend for themselves (WHO 2006).

Research has also shown that urban centres are growing at a fast rate and majority of the youth will be living in the urban centres (UNICEF 2012). This means that in the next few years, many of our urban centres will have majority of its residents being made up of predominantly youth. This also means that the issue of teenage pregnancy will continue to be a topic of discussion for some time until such a time when practical solutions will be found in tackling it.

Theory underpinning the discussion

## **2.2. Social Learning Theory**

To understand how teenage pregnancy comes about, it is important to consider the processes that influence the teenage girls to engage in early sex without protection which leads to the situation of early pregnancy and its attendant problems. It is not far from investigation, as Bandura's Social learning theory comes in handy. The social learning theory emerged during the 1960s and 1970s and it explains the interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors that influence behaviour (Bandura 1977). According to Akers and Sellers (2004), people learn new behaviour by watching others in a social setting. Based on what they see people do, they also try to model or imitate the same things they see. This can be extended to media images that are portrayed on television and radio. Sexual scenes and commentaries depicting hot sexual images and actions tend to influence the growing adolescent who is now learning how to live in their new changing bodies. As inquisitive as they are, they tend to practice what they see on television, as Akers and Seller suggest.

The social learning theory is based on four premises namely differential association, definitions, reinforcement, and imitation (Akers and Seller, 2004). Differential association suggests that those who are in direct and indirect contact with expose acceptable and unacceptable behaviours

and a series of models to teenagers. The media in this regard is seen as a driving force in this process, as they are responsible for showing a series of images, behaviours, and models to teenagers.

Having been exposed to these models of behaviour, teenagers tend to interpret them in using their own analytical frames and how they can make meaning of the things they see. Akers and Seller argue that these meanings thus reflect what is seen as or defined as acceptable to the teenager.

At the reinforcement level, Akers and Seller argue that this is where individuals anticipate the consequences of their actions. By this, individuals differentiate between those behaviours that are either punished or rewarded and choose one that they feel more comfortable repeating or acting on. Thus, if the consequences of an action are pleasant, Akers and Seller argue they tend to be repeated in the near future whereas unpleasant consequences tend to be rejected.

The last part of the theory suggests that attitudes that have been exposed to individuals, interpreted, and reinforced tend to be imitated. Thus, behaviours previously witnessed by individuals from others tend to be modelled by those who have seen them. As Akers and Sellers put it, the people with whom one is in immediate contact will become a source of imitation (Akers and Sellers 2004).

The social learning theory is important to our discussion of teenage pregnancy because it helps us appreciate the learning process that influences the behaviour of teenagers as they enter adulthood. It also helps us to understand that images and behaviours prevalent in society tends to be imitated by teenagers as they grow up. Thus, when it has become acceptable behaviour in our society that teens can get pregnant, or it has become a normal phenomenon, then we can point to how society came to this or that point. Teenagers may be learning from the socially accepted norms prevalent in society. They have also learnt from the images and behaviours shown in the media continuously.

Although the social learning theory is relevant to our current discussion, it is important to note that it has some limitations. Akella & Jordan (2014) point to a major limitation of the concept, where they argue that Bandura ignored reinforcement and punishment, although they were central concepts in the social learning theory. What Bandura discussed was only limited to how individuals learn by watching others. The concept of punishment is important in shaping people's final imitated behaviour, and that is why Akella & Jordan (2014) consider this a major setback in the concept. Besides, reinforcement of behaviour is also part of the social learning process, as punished and rewarded behaviours are reinforced or rejected in the process of modelling. Individuals do not just copy what they see but stream those behaviours.

### **2.3 Social Learning Theory and Mass Communication**

Social learning theorists have shown that behaviour is influenced not only by personal or live models but also by those presented in the mass media. According to O'Rourke, television and film models seem to exert a powerful impact on people's behaviour. According to him, televised violence for example and the use of alcohol on television has enormous effects on children. Research has shown that children exposed to violence in the media tend to show violent attitudes whilst those exposed to alcohol tend to consume alcohol in their lifetime (as shown by the hypodermic needle theory).

Media has become a very powerful influence on our lives, and as children enter teenage or adolescence, print and electronic media help them to define who they are and who they want to become (O'Rourke, 2006). According to his study, he found that children spend a lot of time watching television, and by the time they reach middle school, they have spent 'tens of thousands' of hours watching television, movies and videos, listening to radio, CDs and surfing the internet.

In an exposure study of Anheuser-Busch's 1995 frog campaign on children 9 to 11 years of age, researchers found that 95% of the children recognized Tony the Tiger while 81% recognized the beer frogs. Overall, 73% of the sample remembered the slogan "Bud-weis-er" and 81% knew the frogs sold beer.

Boys were more likely than girls to remember the product. More children recalled the Budweiser slogan than the slogans for commercials and characters shown during children's programs (Alcohol Policy Network). These findings show the powerful effects of media, especially television in modelling behaviour for teenagers.

Bandura and other researchers have argued, through various findings that mass media does not only create personal attributes but can also alter existing attributes or behaviour based on exposure. In their argument, they see exposure as playing a very pivotal role in the process of social learning. For example, in a statistics generated by the Alcohol Policy Network, alcohol appears in 2/3s of all programs, 8.1 drinking references are made per hour in programs and music videos, over 1.5 alcohol advertisements appear each hour during sports programs (mostly beer), 1 in 4 music videos has the lead performer smoking and drinking.

By bombarding viewers with enticing scenes of alcohol use, music videos and other television programming may lure teens to take their first drink, three Stanford researchers have concluded. Their survey of more than 1,500 ninth graders at six San Jose high schools suggests that the more TV and music videos teens watch, the greater the odds they will start drinking during the next 18 months. Specifically, every extra hour of music videos per week brought a 31 percent increase in the average risk of starting to drink during the next 18 months.

In addition, the flow of information through social networks is important in the discussion of social learning in relation to the mass media. For example, exposure to experiences through television is considered a contributing factor in shaping behaviour according to O'Rourke. According to his argument, information flow from on social networks make it impossible for

people who do not even watch television or get exposed to the media to be influenced because they may at one point or the other get information or influence through personal or social interaction and communication.

The relevance of the discussion thus far is that it shows how the media is important in shaping behaviour based on the social learning theory. As we have seen, images and behaviour shown or seen in the mass media directly and indirectly influences those exposed to the behaviour, especially children and teenagers. Thus, if we want to interrogate the concept and problem of teenage pregnancy, this discussion is valuable in providing us with a framework with which we can look at the issue and its roots, at least from the media perspective in offering behaviour.

## **2.4 Related Literature**

A number of research have underscored the importance of the media as an important player in shaping the behaviour of teenagers in their decision to either get pregnant or not. For example, a survey of more than 2000 youth in the United States of America regarding their media use established that the media plays an important role in the type of information they receive. The survey found that the youth spent at least 10 hours and 45 minutes each day using various media including television, music, and movies (Collins, Steven and Rebecca, 2011).

According to Kimemia & Mugambi (2016), the media is considered a strong influence on adolescent attitudes. This is further supported by O'Rorke (2006) in his work when he also argued that the media play a central role in shaping the attitudes of teenagers. For example, evidence suggests that displays of sexual material on Facebook for example are associated with the reported intentions to become sexually active teenagers (Connel, 2009). In one study for example, researchers found that adolescents who viewed sexual references or models on their Facebook profiles were influenced by their sources (Moreno, Vanderstoep & Parks, 2009). In another study conducted in the USA, it was discovered that adolescents who viewed sex to be

normal based their assertions on what they were exposed to on Facebook and they were more likely to engage in sexual activity than those who were not exposed (Litt and Stock, 2011).

In addition, Dunton, Liao, Intille, Spruijt-metz & Pentz (2010) conducted a study on the sexual behaviours of adolescents on social media. They found that adolescents were more likely to display sexual references if their friends or peers did same on their profiles. This means that what these teenagers are exposed to influences them to take similar actions, as social learning theorists have argued.

In another study, Dowdel, Burgess and Flores (2011) interrogated the influence of electronic media on teenage pregnancy. They found that the sharing of sexual images (called sexting) among teenagers on the internet influenced their readiness to engage in sexual behaviour. Another study also found similar results. Sexting for example was associated with an increased likelihood of having sexual behaviour and been at risk of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and teenage pregnancy (Temple, Paul, berg & McElhany, Temple, 2012).

Strasburger (2015) argues that since there is absence of an effective sex education in homes and schools, television and other online electronic mediums become the leading sources of sexual education for adolescents. Thus, what teenagers are exposed to on television and other online social platforms become what they tend to practice in their real lives. Research has also found that teenagers intentions to have sex or engage in sexual activity is largely influenced by the amount of information they are exposed to on television and in the media in general (Pardun, L'Engle & Brown 2015).

Following the discussions from Bandura's argument of exposure, Bleakley, Hennessey, Fishbein & Jordan (2008) in their study demonstrated the relationship between exposure to sexual content and sexual activity. They argue that the more sexual activity adolescents engage in, the more likely they are to have been exposed to sexual content in the media. Put another way, the more sexual content teenagers are exposed to in the media, the more sexually active

and engaging they become. For example, Kim, Collins, Kanouse, Elliot, berry & Hunter (2006) found that when exposure to sexual content in the media is increased, friends approval of sex become heightened. In other words, there is a positive association between watching sexual behaviour in the media and the implication of engaging in sexual activity or encouraging others to engage in sexual activity.

A study by Chandra, Martino and Collins (2008) shows that teens who watch a lot of television with sexual content are more likely to have sexual intercourse and that there is evidence that youth exposure to sexual content on television shapes sexual attitudes and behaviour in a manner that may influence reproductive health outcomes. Teens who were exposed to high levels of television sexual content (90th percentile) were twice as likely to experience a pregnancy compared with those with lower levels of exposure (10th percentile).

Harris and Associate (1988) make the point that because television has now become easily available, as it can be viewed on the internet and other social networking sites, sexual references have been made more assessable. In their view, teenagers view at least 14,000 sexual references, innuendos, and behaviours via television. As Brown, Lengle, Guo, Kenneavy & Jackson (2006) have shown, exposure to sexual content on television is associated with expectations about sex, perceptions of peer approval and sexual initiation. However, the more teenagers watch television with sexual content, the more likely it was that an adolescent had engaged in sexual intercourse.

Collins, Elliot, Berry, Kanouse, Kunkel & Huntler (2004) conducted a two-year longitudinal study. The survey studied teenagers between 12 and 17 years. They found that watching television (based on 23 television programs) predicted the possibility of 'hastened' sexual initiation. Similarly, Chandra, Martino & Collins (2008) found that teenagers who watched more sexual content on television were more likely to get pregnant than those who were not exposed to sexual television content.

Ward, Epstein & Merriwether (2011) emphasizes that sexual socialized television viewing is positively correlated with higher levels of sexual experience, having more sexual partners and more negative attitude towards abstinence. He further argues that greater exposure to music videos and talk shows, and stronger identification with popular media characters, each predict a greater level of dating and sexual experience among high school students which in most cases results to STIs infections and teenage pregnancy.

Kimemia & Mugambi (2016) in their study on social media and teenage pregnancy among students in secondary schools in Imenti North sub county in Kenya found that electronic media had a major influence on teenage pregnancy. They also found that majority of teenagers search for explicit music and movies on the internet. At least 27.3 percent said they look for adults rated movies or pornography whilst 26.1 were found to enjoy explicit music.

These findings and others cited show a positive relation between images seen on television and teenage pregnancy. They also add valid points to the discussion, as scholars have supported the idea that media, especially television and radio play a key role in influencing teenagers and their decisions to have sex, engage in sexual activity and getting unwanted pregnancies.

## **Conclusion**

This part of the discussion has focused on reviewing literature that is related to the study. In all, five previous works were examined and the relevant discussion in these works have been discussed in this present analysis. We found from the discussion that television viewing for example has been linked to teenage pregnancy. The media in general have been sited for playing a pivotal role in showing images that promote sexual behaviour of teenagers, leading to possible early pregnancies. The social learning theory, discussed in relation to this discussion has been helpful in pointing out the reason behind teenagers actions, based on what they see in the media. While the hypodermic needle theory has been helpful in showing us how media images are able to directly influence television viewers, the social learning theory has extended this relationship,

proving the psychological processes that teenagers go through as they are exposed to social images in the media.

In our next chapter, we present a proposed methodology that can be used for future studies. As we pointed out in the opening chapters of this discussion, the present analysis is based on an analysis of previous literature, using the qualitative literature review approach. As such, our findings will be based on a latent discovery\analysis of inspirations from the study. However, to assist future researchers who may be interested in conducting the research into more detail using primary data, a formal methodology that can arrive at the best conclusions, having collected relevant data is needed.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This part of the research presents the methodology that was used in discussing the issues in the present analysis. It documents the research design, sample as well as sampling technique engaged in the study. In addition, a proposed methodology for future studies is offered.

#### **3.1 Methodology**

Research methodology describes the various methods used in conducting research. For the purposes of this research, a qualitative research approach has been adopted. According to Bhandari 2020, Qualitative research involves the collection of data that is non numerical, in order to understand concepts, opinions or experiences. According to him, is used to gather data in order to get deeper understanding into the problem at hand in order to generate new ideas and insights into the various concepts or problems.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

For the purposes of the present study, a qualitative research approach is adopted. According to Smart (2003), a literature review can be described as a way of collecting data based on previous research. According to him, the data in the literature review design is previous studies on the topic under consideration. Webster & Watson makes the point that a review of literature provides a solid foundation for advancing arguments that promote the generation of knowledge (Webster & Watson, 2002) by integrating discoveries from findings of previous studies.

Sydney (2019) suggests that qualitative literature review can help provide an overview of areas in which research is not adequately covered as well as providing a base for exploring gaps in existing literature. The present studies will make use of this approach, as the researcher will

review what has already been done from the research conducted over the last five years. The review process was employed to integrate results from a number of studies on the subject matter.

### **3.3 Data Collection Criteria**

A purposive sampling technique was used to sample relevant literature for the purpose of the present discussion. According to Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, A. (2012), purposive sampling is a sampling technique in which the researcher relies on his or her personal judgement and selection criteria in choosing data in a research. It is a non-probability sampling strategy in which elements are chosen by judgement of the researcher in question. The non-probability sampling technique is used when researchers believe they can obtain the best representative sample based on their judgement, to save time and resources (Black, 2010). This approach was adopted because it allowed the researcher to sample only literature that were related to the study. This gave the researcher time to adequately cross check and reject literature that was not relevant to the present discussion.

### **3.4 Sampling**

The process for data collection (search for relevant literature on the subject) begun with an electronic search of literature on google using keywords such as branding and telecommunication in Ghana. Google scholar was used widely in the search for related literature. In some instances, the researcher put the topic in the search engine of google scholar and all related literature on the topic popped up. The researcher then carefully selected only literature that had similar topics to what is being addressed in this paper. Also, literature that is more recent in the Ghanaian context was chosen over those that were not conducted in the Ghanaian context. This is because the present analysis as much as possible seeks to examine

how media in Ghana influences teenagers in indulging in early sex that leads to early pregnancy. Thus, only Ghanaian studies and those that document the relationship between media and teenage pregnancy were considered.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PROPOSED METHODOLOGY FOR FUTURE STUDIES

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the methodology that can be used for the study for future researchers considering the topic. It explains the research design appropriate for the study, gives details on the population, sample and sampling procedures and the instruments that can be used in collecting data for the study. It also discusses the data collection procedure appropriate for collecting data in the process of future studies.

#### 4.1 Research Design

This research shall use quantitative research method. For a research of this nature it is important to survey the views of the public on the contribution of media in promoting teenage pregnancy. Quantitative research is defined as a systematic investigation of phenomena that quantifies data. In other words, quantitative research is the type of research that gathers quantifiable data by performing statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques (QuestionPro,2020).

According to Atieno (2009) and cited by Ochieng (2009) many researchers view quantitative research design as the best approach to scientific research because it offers precise measurement and analysis. In quantitative research design the researcher will count and classify and build statistical models to then explain what is observed. Data collected using this research approach is in the form of numbers and statistics. In the article entitled, "An Analysis of the Strengths and Limitations of Qualitative and Quantitative Research Paradigms". Atieno (2009), suggests that quantitative research paradigm is empirical in nature. It also known as the scientific research paradigm. This research process includes a method of deductive reasoning by use of measurable tools to collect relevant data.

Quantitative research then results in precise measurements. In quantitative research, the aim is to determine the relationship between one thing (an independent variable) and another (a dependent or outcome variable) in a population. Quantitative research designs are either descriptive (subjects usually measured once) or experimental (subjects measured before and after a treatment). A descriptive study establishes only associations between variables. For an accurate estimate of the relationship between variables, a descriptive study usually needs a sample of hundreds or even thousands of subjects.

The researcher will use the descriptive study as this method seeks to gather information so that a description of what is going on can be made. The data collection for this study involved quantitative methods. The reason for the choice of the Accra is because the researcher is familiar with the working environment which enables easy access to respondents and the gathering of any additional information that might be needed for the study.

For the purpose of this study, the survey research method is proposed because this method is the most appropriate for a study of this nature. According to Baran (2009) cited by Nwodu (2000), survey allow mass communication researchers to measure characteristics, opinions or behaviours of population by studying a small sample from that group, then generalizing back to the population, which is of the group.

## **4.2 Population**

Oswala (2001) refers to population as the number of persons or objects covered by the study or with which the study is concerned. In other words, it is a set of people items under consideration in a study. A research study population is also known as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. In this research, the population considered for the study is the La community, a suburb of Accra. According to the 2010 population census, the population of Labadi is 183,528.

### **4.3 Instrument of Data Collecting**

The primary data collection tool that can be used to collect data for the research is the survey questionnaire. According to McLeod (2018), a questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a number of questions aimed at gathering information from respondents in a research. According to him, questionnaires can be seen as a written interview which seeks the views of respondents in a research exercise. This interview can be carried out face to face, on telephone or via email or post. However, for best results, it is proposed that the face to face administering of questionnaires should be done in order to increase the chances of getting more responses.

Using a questionnaire allows the researcher to collect data quickly because the researcher can administer a lot of questionnaires to many respondents at a time. This technique is useful for studies that involve large populations. It should be noted however that the questionnaire has a problem associated with it, in which respondents, according to McLeod can lie in order to present a positive image of themselves. Some may also exaggerate in their responses, especially in open ended questions.

Both open ended and closed ended questions should be used in the data collection process. Closed ended questions are questions that allow respondents to choose from pre-determined answers that fit the question posed. On the other hand, open ended questions are questions that give respondents the opportunity to express their views in their own words. This gives respondents the opportunity to answer in more detail.

### **4.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

According to McCombes (2019), research sample refers to the group or number of individuals who will actually participate in the research. A simple random sampling is proposed as the sampling technique for this study. In this technique, every member of the population will have an equal chance of being selected. The sample for the study as proposed is 500 residents of the

La community. This number is proposed based on the timely nature of responses anticipated. The number can be modified to suit the needs of the researcher in question, and to increase the chances of generalizing the findings on the population.

#### **4.5 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of refining and transforming data to discover useful information. The purpose of this is to extract useful information from collected data upon which a conclusion can be arrived at. In analysing data in this study, charts, graphs, tables and illustrations should be used to represent data. The use of these mathematical illustrations is based on the proposed method, and it will help the researcher to graphically represent data for easy interpretation.

#### **4.6 Possible Limitation of the Study**

One of the primary limitations of this research will be time constraints, especially if the research will be an academic one that will be time. Even in cases where the research, will not be an academic one, time will definitely be a challenge because the study will be time bound. Resources to conduct the study could also be a challenge considering the methodological proposal. Future researchers should therefore try as much as possible to work within time in the future by adequately planning for each stage of the research process with their own timelines. Also, researchers must make sure that they get enough resources that will allow them to conduct this study successfully.

#### **4.7 Ethical Considerations**

Future researchers should also consider all ethical issues that may be involved in this research. The present researcher identifies no ethical issues with the study, however, should the method change, to accommodate an interview of teenagers, researchers should strictly follow ethical

rules governing the interview of minors, seeking consent from relevant authorities and ethical clearance before the research is conducted.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This section of the study presented a methodological proposal for future researchers. Based on the topic, a quantitative research approach is suggested, using survey as a design that will adopt the questionnaire as a data collection tool. The research population is 183,528 and the proposed sample is 500, although future researchers can choose their own samples based on contextual and peculiar needs.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 Introduction

This section of the paper discusses some major findings based on the analysis of previous literature presented in chapter two. The discussion is based on fifteen selected literature that documents different arguments on the influence of the media on teenage pregnancy. The paper set out to explore two general objectives. In the first place, the paper tried to examine the role media plays in contributing to teenage pregnancy in Ghana as well as examine how the media can help to solve the problem.

### 5.1 Discussion

The review process begun with a search for literature online using scholarly websites and search engines. In all, fifteen scholarly articles were sampled and reviewed in the analytical process and the following were some of the observations made from the discussions thus far.

In the first place, we confirmed the existence of teenage pregnancy as a national problem that does not only exists in Ghana but globally. Teenage pregnancy has been found to open young girls to many problems including social, medical, and economic risks. Medical risks include cases of complications from pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases as well as possible loss of live in labour. This is because since these young ones' body are not prepared to receive pregnancy, the body is forced to make the pregnancy possible, thereby opening the child to pregnancy associated complications. Also, because most of these children lack proper sexual education, they easily contract diseases in the process of the sexual act.

That is not all, social shunning, rejection, and condemnation have been found to be associated with early pregnancy in most communities. Teenage mothers do not only have their education truncated, they also face various degrees of condemnation from their families, friends and

community who see their condition as abominable. This situation leads these poor girls into poverty, as they usually lose those who take care of them, become poor and destitute.

In our analysis of media contribution to this situation, we found that the youth spend at least 10 hours and 45 minutes each day using various media (Collins, Steven & Rebecca 2011). What this suggests is that the media is playing a key role in the lives of these teenagers and hence the kind of material available to them on these platforms is equally very important. We discover that the media has a very strong influence on teenagers' attitudes too (Kimenia & Mugambi 2016), suggesting that if positive images are presented in the media, these teenagers are likely to model positive attitudes.

Consequently, we found that sexual material available in the media has been associated with teenagers' intentions to get into sexual activity. Connel 2009 made this clear in his analysis, when he found that sexual materials available on Facebook has strong influence on adolescents' intention to engage in the act. Consistent with this argument, Pardun, L'Engle & Brown (2015) show that the amount of sexual material made available on the media has strong connection to the intentions of adolescents and teenagers to engage in sexual activity that can lead to teenage pregnancy. What these observations suggest is that the media presentation of sexual images can lead to negative consequences on the behaviour of teenagers who are exposed to these images. In addition, we also found that teenagers who considered sex as a normal activity might have been exposed to sexual content in the media. Based on the research of Litt & Stick (2011), we discover that teenagers who have been exposed to sexual images on Facebook for example, viewed sex as a normal activity to engage in and were more likely to engage in it freely without any recourse to the consequences that may arise from such behaviour.

Sexting has also been found to be considered normal among teenagers exposed to sexual activity in the media based on the report from Dowdel, Burges & Flores (2011). Sexting is a situation in which sexual images and conversations are sent via communication devices. This

phenomenon or activity has been found to be very common among teenagers who were exposed to media content that contained explicit scenes. Thus, as the social learning theory has emphasized, exposure to behaviour leads to modelling, since adolescents are in their formative years of learning about their bodies and things around them. Thus, having been exposed to these models of behaviour, teenagers tend to interpret them in using their own analytical frames and how they can make meaning of the things they see.

In a similar vein, we discover that teenagers who viewed sexual content from popular figures in the media, especially social media are likely to consider sex as a normal activity is acceptable. They have been seen to be more likely to engage in sexual activity than those who have not been exposed to images in the media. Kim et al (2006) have suggested that when teenagers are exposed to sexual content in the media, they are more likely to engage in sexual activity than those who have not been exposed.

Furthermore, we find from our discussion that television and online mediums have become major sources of sexual education to teenagers. This is because sexual education has become absent in the homes and schools (Strasburger, 2015), thus, teenagers have been redirected to accessing relevant sexual education and information from the media. Unfortunately, most of this information end up pushing teenagers into sexual acts, which lead to sex.

Chandra, Martino & Collins also lay emphasis on the fact that more television content containing sexual content is more likely to influence teenagers to have sexual intercourse, while Collins (2004) extends this argument by suggesting that television content with explicit images hasten sexual initiation of teenagers. This means that the more teenagers are exposed to sexual content, the more likely they are to engage in sexual activity that tends to lead them into early pregnancy and its negative consequences.

In the light of this foregoing discussion, one question that needs to be addressed is why sexual images are presented in the media showing negative influences on teenagers. The answer to this could be the following.

Negative sexual images presented in the media result in negative influence. We get this idea from the discussions and arguments advanced thus far. It is likely from the discussion that the kind of images shown in the media are not positive. Sexual images are not negative in themselves, but their functions determine whether they are negative or positive. Sexual images that seek to educate teenagers on the implications of sexual activity, highlighting the negative consequences is more likely to have a positive effect on adolescent sexual behaviour than explicit images that are meant to arouse sexual feelings. This also means that the media is not showing the right images that will attract positive results and behaviour among teenagers who are in their learning and socialisation periods.

When the media presents positive images, there is likely going to be positive modelling and influence that will result in positively modelling the behaviour of teenagers to disengage in early sexual activity. When teenagers are well educated and informed about the negative consequences of engaging in early sex, they are more likely to desist from it and this will lead to a reduction of the number of teenage mothers that are recorded yearly in Ghana and around the globe.

From the discussions, we present a graphical representation of the various roles the media has been playing, which have been attributed to teenage pregnancy based on the review under consideration.



**Figure 5.1.1 A conceptual presentation of the roles of the media in teenage pregnancy, Researcher (2020)**

From the discussions we have advanced so far, we present a conceptual image of the various roles the media plays in the discussion of teenage pregnancy in Ghana. From the concept, we find that the media plays the role of a sexual educator. As Strasburger (2015) has argued, since sexual education is no more found in homes and schools, the media has become an important source of sexual information for teenagers. Teenagers use the media, especially social media (as has been found from the analysis), to access sexual information. Facebook has been cited as the leading source of sexual information for teenagers. Television comes second based on our findings.

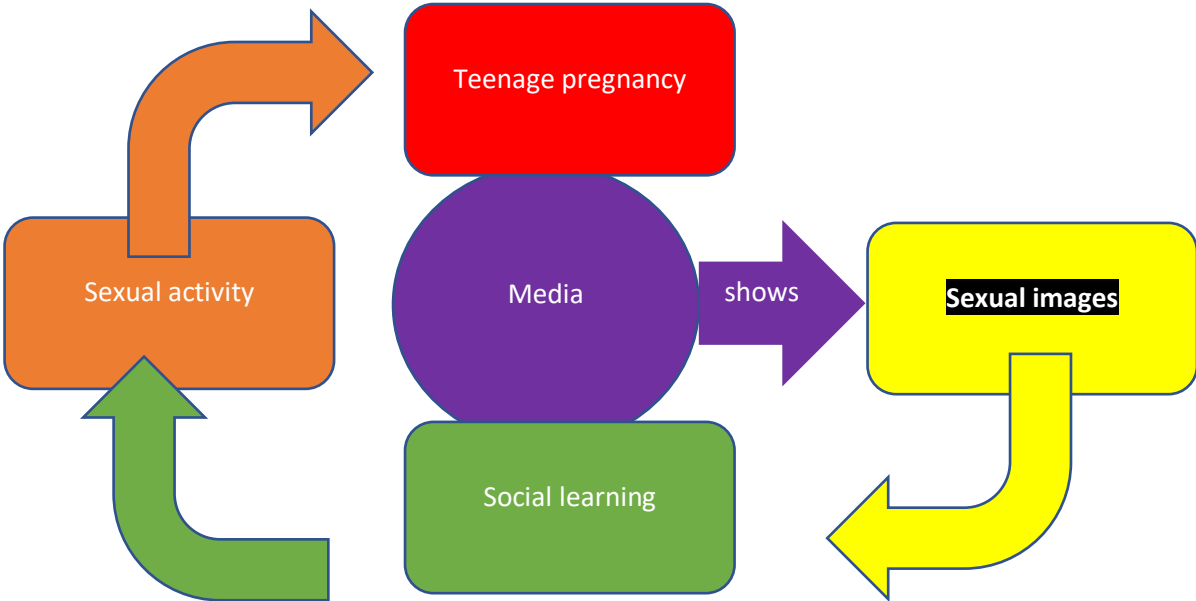
We also see from the image that the media plays the role of sexual information, that is, informing teenagers on sexual issues. Connel (2015) points to this and suggests that the media's role in showing sexual images influence intentions of teenagers to engage in sexual activity.

The media thus is responsible for providing relevant sexual information that will promote abstinence instead of encouraging teenagers to engage in sexual activity.

The last role the media plays is the role of entertainer. Sexual entertainment is not meant for teenagers but has been found to be pervasive and popular in the media. Sexting for example has been linked with images seen in the media that encourages teenagers to discuss them using electronic devices. It has been reported that they engage in this sexting for fun, but this leads to other negative and undesirable behaviours that end up in teenage pregnancy.

Having established these roles, it is important for the media to consider designing materials that promote positive behaviour among teenagers that will reduce sexual intentions and sexual activity instead of promoting negative behaviour.

*A conceptual model of the role of media and teenage pregnancy*



**Figure 5.1.2 A conceptual framework of the role of the media and teenage pregnancy, researcher (2020)**

Based on what has been discussed so far, we present a conceptual framework that ties the various concepts discussed in this paper. We argue that media images presented to teenagers influence them through social learning (as a theory). This is explained in the fact that, the social

learning theory provides useful explanation on how teenagers learn as they grow. We argue then that, when the media shows sexual images, teenagers in their formative years pick up these images and try to model or replicate them. In the process, they engage in sexual activity, which eventually leads to teenage pregnancy along with its numerous consequences.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The researcher would like to make the following recommendations based on the discussions so far. This research has found that media images negatively influence teenagers to engage in early sex leading to early pregnancy.

- Future researchers should consider examining what media platforms influence teenagers the most
- Future researchers should consider interrogating other factors that can lead to teenage pregnancy apart from the media
- Research in the future can also consider establishing the relationship that exist between early pregnancy, media content and their consequences.

## **5.3 Conclusion**

The present analysis has been centred on interrogating the impact of the media on teenage pregnancy. From the discussions, we discovered that teenage pregnancy as a global problem is also a national problem that impacts on the development of the nation considering the fact that the young ones involved in this are the future leaders of the nation. We discovered that the media plays a central role in influencing teenager decisions and intentions to engage in early sexual activity. This is due to the numerous sexual images and content that are present on the screens and social media platforms easily assessable to these teenagers. When teenagers get hold of these sexual images or are exposed to them, they try to model them, and in the process

get pregnant. The consequences of teenage pregnancy cannot be overstated. It truncates the future of these children, negatively impacts on their growth, health, economy, and overall wellbeing. The ultimate danger perhaps is the threat that complications from this kind of pregnancy can have on their lives.

As a central player in the socialisation, education and information for teenagers, the media needs to be more cautious in their public display of sexual images to mitigate or reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy. It is not easy, but together, the media can partner parents, schools, and other stakeholders to draw up strategies that can promote positive sexual education.

Government should also consider including sexual education in the curriculum of teenagers in schools so that they will not, out of inquisitiveness, search other sources of sexual education, nor seek information from their peers who may not be in the position to give such information.

Parents should also try their best to be responsible role models to their children at home. They should try to educate their teenage children on sexual topics as they struggle through one of the most difficult points in their lives. This can go a long way to helping these teenagers better understand the changes taking place in their bodies and how to guard themselves against unwanted consequences of sexual activity.

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