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DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES



**COPING WITH PREGNANCY IN AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT:
EXPERIENCES OF TERTIARY STUDENTS IN THE BONO REGION**

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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that this submission is our own work towards the Diploma in Registered Midwifery and that, to the best of our knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of diploma of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on how tertiary students cope with pregnancy in an academic environment in the Bono Region. A quantitative approach was used to collect in-depth information for the study. A convenience sampling technique method was employed to select the students from each class. A total of 50 respondents were sampled for the study. The data for the study was collected by administering the questionnaire to the participants.

The study found that respondents indicated that pregnancy has negative effect on academic life of students 96% (48), forced to defer courses were 94% (47), those who said studying becomes difficult when pregnant in school were 94% (47) and the respondents who said missing lectures due to ANC visits could result in poor academic outcomes were 84% (42). Pregnant students sometimes get mocked by students at school, 32% (16) of the respondents rated scale five, 28% (14) rated scale four, 18% (9) rated scale one, 12% (6) rated scale two and 10% (5) rated scale three. When probed about the sense of belonging when pregnant among peers, 24% (12) rated scale one, 22% (11) rated scale four, 20% (10) rated scale three, 18% (9) rated scale two and 16% (8) rated scale five.

The study recommended that the fertility awareness should be created or be intensive. Female students who become pregnant are to be supported in school (physically, psychologically, spiritually).

The study concluded that the school environment is a fertile area to promote pregnancy. Our induction concluded that their feelings are tempered with in school. The study concluded that their schooling and academic performance were affected negatively.

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ABBREVIATION

MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NUS	National Union of Students
SAMNC	South African Military Nursing College
UN	United Nations

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

In nursing colleges, pregnancies among student nurses remain a challenge. Apart from the social and psychological challenges, pregnancy can also affect the academic success of student nurses and that of the institutions (Coetzee & Ngunyulu, 2020); Failure to write examinations and the lack of maternity benefits and support from colleagues and staff during pregnancy are among the challenges that pregnant student nurses face (Van Den Berg & Mamhute, 2019).

Globally college/university pregnancies are among the major social and public health problem (Nigatu, 2019). Of an estimated 210 million pregnancies that occur in the world each year, 38% are unwanted, out of which 22% end up with abortion (Nigatu, 2019). In most cases, pregnancies that occur while in college are followed by abortion, which can have a serious health, social and economic consequences. A study done elsewhere pointed out that, from the total maternal mortality worldwide, abortion is the major cause of maternal death which accounts for 49% in which half of the deaths occur in Africa (Zhou, et al., 2019).

Tertiary institutions across the globe are known to be venues of significant sexual activity. University students who are at the cross-roads of adulthood, away from home, and for many, finally in a context of no behaviour supervision and in settings that provoke and promote intellectual inquisitiveness, generally feel inclined to experiment in arenas they may have hitherto been told were the preserve of adults (Adanu, Ntummy, & Tweneboah, 2021). Female students in tertiary institutions of higher learning are at an age and in a social context that

makes them extremely susceptible to unintended pregnancy (Adanu, Ntummy, & Tweneboah, 2021).

The number of pregnant and parenting students in higher education is increasing. Research suggests this population experiences added pressure and stress while pursuing their education. Few resources exist for these students and the universities who provide services do not adequately promulgate them to the campus community (Brown & Nicholas, 2021).

Karra and Lee (2019) point out that pregnant women may take longer to complete their studies because of the challenges they face, and this may impact the economy. In contrast, in the United Kingdom, pregnancy does not pose a challenge to student nurses as they receive support, are allowed to continue their studies and have 12 weeks of maternity leave as authorised absence (University of Salford, 2019). However, they have to make up for the time lost to comply with the professional registration regulation, and to be able to write their examinations on their return (University of Salford, 2019).

Mpumalanga Province has one college that admits student nurses for the Diploma in Nursing (General, Community, Psychiatry) and Midwifery. The college has one intake per year between February and April. According to the college admission register, the intake comprises 70% females and 30% males, with candidates being between the ages of 18 and 35. Study at Mpumalanga Province indicates that the admission of female pregnant students nurses faces educational challenges. According to the study, finishing one's training in the usual time has been impossible as these pregnant students misses some examination due to pregnancy related problems (Mamhute, 2020). Information from the college archives shows that, in 2015, three student nurses were admitted while pregnant; seven in 2014; nine in 2013; 10 in 2012 and four in 2011. A total number of 34 student nurses were admitted at the college while pregnant between 2011 and 2015, excluding those who reported their pregnancy during

the course of their studies. Without adequate support, these pregnant student nurses may struggle to complete their training (Sibeko, 2018).

Naidoo and Kasirum (2019) describe a similar situation and policies in Nigerian colleges and universities that allow for the expulsion of pregnant students. However, Mamhute (2020) states that in a South African Military Nursing College (SAMNC), pregnant student nurses are allowed to continue with their training. However, from the majority of the sources, it seems that pregnant student nurses, in general, need more fair consideration and better support and guidance from the academic community and other stakeholders to successfully balance their role as mothers and students (Mamhute, 2020).

Despite the success chalked with increasing female enrolment in tertiary institutions, there remain a challenge of females combining reproductive intentions and academic work at the country's institutions of higher studies with respect to coping with pregnancy in the academic environment (Asare & Esia-Donkoh, 2020).

Pregnancy is a unique experience and a major social expectation of women that most females encounter at various stages in their lives (Choi, Henshaw, Baker, & Tree, 2019). Traditionally in some Ghanaian cultures, women have been carefully trained to desire motherhood and sometimes pushed into having babies against their wish (Rothman, 2019). Those who choose not to follow this mantra are often questioned for their choice, or judged for it (Merril, 2019).

The Ghanaian culture expects women of reproductive age to reproduce. This makes pregnancy an acceptable occurrence in most tertiary institutions in Ghana (Etuah, Gbagbo, & Nkrumah, 2018). Ample evidence exists establishing the relationship between pregnancy and educational difficulties, yet little research has investigated the relationship between pregnancy during college and subsequent academic difficulties. The purpose of this study is

to find out the experiences of tertiary students with pregnancy in an academic environment in the Bono Region.

1.1 Problem Statement

The central theme that emerged from this study confirmed that pregnant student nurses experienced educational challenges negatively. Four main themes that emerged were academic challenges, failure to write examinations, support system and maternity leave. These findings had a negative impact on their education.

In Zimbabwe, pregnant student nurses may also take longer to complete their studies because of a policy that instructs school principals to exclude pregnant students who, because of pregnancy-related physical discomfort, are facing academic challenges (Van Den Berg & Mamhute, 2019).

South Africa actively promotes equity policies, and the admission of pregnant women in educational institutions and work environments forms part of these equity practices. Women are also supported by being granted maternity leave of not less than four consecutive months, according to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997 (BCEA). Sometimes, pregnant student nurses fail to write block tests that would qualify them for entrance into the examinations because they are not well, or they are already on maternity leave. Some of them hide their pregnancies for fear of being sent on maternity leave. Pregnant student nurses are conscious of the challenges of pregnancy to their academic performance (Kambanji, 2018).

With the increasing number of female student's population and intake of matured female students who are likely to combine child bearing with academic pursuits in various university this study becomes relevant to explore experiences of tertiary students with pregnancy in an academic environment in the Bono Region.

1.2 General Objectives

To find out how tertiary students cope with pregnancy in an academic environment in the Bono Region.

1.3 Specific Objective

1. To find out the possible contributing factors of pregnancy among tertiary students.
2. To compare tertiary students view regarding to pregnancy at home and in school.
3. To determine the effect of pregnancy on the academic performance of tertiary students.

1.4 Operational Definition of Terms

Pregnancy: Pregnancy is the period during which a woman carries a developing embryo and fetus (World Health Organization, 2015).

Academics: Anything related to education

Maternity: Refers to the period during pregnancy and shortly after birth

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter contains review of relevant literature related to the research topic. A well-structured literature review begins with broad or general information, then narrows the focus to those studies most closely related to the research problem.

2.1 Overview

A woman may enthusiastically embrace the simultaneous roles of mother and student; however, undertaking these two roles, even in ideal conditions, can pull one person in two directions (Springer, Parker, & Leviten-Reid, 2019). Combining motherhood and studying without compromising the activities of either one is a great dilemma for student mothers. When a woman must focus all her attention on her studies, her behaviour may contrast with her traditional motherhood role (Cohen, 2017). While discourse regarding the “good mother” in any society is based on the traditional motherhood, its definitions vary by society given the different experiences and challenges of motherhood in diverse cultures (Zhang, 2019). Role challenges cause women to abandon one role for the sake of the other (Springer et al., 2009). Myths, expectations, and ideals available in the campus culture can influence this behaviour. Academic activities are intertwined with challenging competitions. Therefore, motherhood responsibilities impose a large burden on students’ shoulders. The academic community focuses mainly on success, development, and never-ending competitions without providing any support. Therefore, taking on motherhood along with studies is not considered normal in universities. Student mothers experience unpleasant emotional pressures and receive negative feedback from the academic setting, implying that education is the first priority. Moreover, prejudice towards student mothers and the labelling of them as non-productive stimulate

avoidance behaviours and a discriminatory allocation of educational resources to other students (Springer et al., 2009).

Education is undoubtedly a source of empowerment and development. Achieving development goals in any society depends on women's participation in education (Esiah-Donkoh, 2017). Education is a starting point for life improvement and has a significant impact on family members (Adofo, 2019). It should be noted that the education of women is required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of gender equality and empowerment. Achieving the MDGs' goal is an unfinished agenda and requires comprehensive and transformative methods with a new development framework (UN Women, 2018). Education is recognized as a developmental tool and a female individual's right. Nevertheless, the characteristics of female reproduction have become a barrier to some female students' achievement of their full potential in the academic setting. A woman's reproduction rights, such as having the right to have children, are not considered equally as important as their education rights. It is essential that females' reproduction rights are recognized in academic settings and their rights for education are respected with consideration given their demographic characteristics (Esiah-Donkoh, 2017).

2.2 Causes of Pregnancy Among Students

Pregnancy has a detrimental effect on the education and future of tertiary students, this is because young mothers are obliged to attend to their education irregularly and sometimes drop out of school. Cultural practices is identified as one the factor to pregnancies among students as it prohibit young women to talk about sex at home with their mothers nor with anybody else (Brown & Nicholas, 2016). Absence of designed programs that teach students regarding sex education at the campus was reported as a major contributing factor to pregnancies among tertiary students (Sibeko, Effects of pregnancy on a school girl's

education', 2015). Additionally, female students who used alcohol and drug abuse were more likely to experience teenage pregnancy compared to those who did not use (Mathews & Mekuria, 2018).

Research by the National Union of Students (NUS) into the experience of students with children in further and higher education in the UK found that 59 per cent of respondents who had been pregnant while studying did not feel supported by their college or university (NUS, 2019). The number of students who become pregnant during their studies is likely to increase as data from Scotland and other European countries show a positive correlation between the increasing age profile of students and the likelihood of their having a child (Orr, Schnitzer, & Frackmann, 2018).

A cross-section descriptive study was conducted on premarital sexual intercourse and unintended pregnancy among graduate students in 49 colleges/universities in 7 cities of China. A multistage, stratified, cluster sampling was recruited. 13,544 voluntary participants were recruited from 327 classes of 49 universities/colleges of 7 cities. Among them, 88.1% (11,936) responded validly and completely. The study identified risk factors for unintended pregnancy among both genders that were active in premarital sex were: having no steady lover, younger age at the first sexual intercourse, lack of condom use at the first sex, unaware of the conditions of conception, and unaware that abortion endangers women's future pregnancy. The study concluded that the avoidable risk of being unintended pregnancy among graduate students in China indicates that an urgent need to take action on how to delay the age of first sex, promote condom use at first sex, and acquire accurate contraceptive information, as well as improve skills to use reliable contraception among graduate students (Xhou, et al., 2017).

An institutional based cross sectional study design was employed to assess the prevalence of unwanted pregnancy and predictors among 862 female college students in Debre Tabor in 2017/18 academic year. The sample size was determined using a single population proportion formula with the assumption of 95% confidence interval, margin of error 5%, design effect 2 and 10% nonresponse rate. Data were entered, edited and cleaned using Epi-info version 7 and exported to SPSS version 20 for further statistical analysis. The study found that unwanted pregnancy were; forget to take contraceptives (44.8%), infrequent sexual act (13.4%), contraceptive failure (11.9%), rupture of condom (9.0%), unavailability of contraceptives (9.0%), forced to have sex (rape) (9.0%), and moral reasons (2.9%). The study concluded that the proportion of unwanted pregnancy among female college students was high (Nigatu, 2019).

2.3 Pregnancy at Home and in School

According to Chauke Chauke (2018), pregnant students in her study were discriminated against during school functions, and they were found on their own during lunch breaks and other school gatherings. In a study by Gyesaw & Ankoma (2019), pregnant students were provoked by the other students and teachers until some of them decided to stay away from school. When pregnant student nurses lack a sense of belonging, they feel isolated and discriminated against (Nkosi, Makhene, & Matlala, 2018).

A Ghanaian study by Etuah et al. (2018) reported that pregnant students felt lonely during pregnancy because their families lived far away from them. It was noted that partner's frequency of visit depends on the place of residence during pregnancy. About 87% of the participants lived outside the university halls. With those staying outside the halls, majority live alone while a small portion of the participants live with their parents. With those living with their parents, their partners visits them only when necessary. Among those living with

their friends, about 9.52% of their partner's visits them once a month, 14.29% of the partners visits them when necessary and 4.7% of the pregnant students rather visits their partners.

Etuah et al. (2018) added that few (10.0%) of the participants indicated that they were not able to attend any Antenatal Clinic due to time constraints. A respondents indicated that: "I have not attend any Antenatal Clinic since I became pregnant for the past four months. I simply don't have the time to attend the clinic because of my tight lecture schedules which coincides with clinic days".

2.4 Effect of Pregnancy on Academic and Health Levels in School

Across both undergraduate and graduate populations, structural limitations issues were found within schools that restricted students' ability to meet their needs. One issue reported was the mismatch between pedagogical strategies used within classrooms, such as group work or attendance to outside programs, and the schedules and time demands inherent in the lives of parenting students (Duquaine-Watson, 2017). Other issues included: overall lack of program flexibility (Yakaboski, 2020), lack of available housing for pregnant and parenting students (Cohen, 2017), lack of lactation facilities on campus (Springer, Parker & Levitan-Reid, 2009) and the difficulty in obtaining childcare for young children (Brown & Amankwaa, 2018).

Research by the National Union of Students (NUS) into the experience of students with children in further and higher education in the UK found that 59 per cent of respondents who had been pregnant while studying did not feel supported by their college or university (NUS, 2009). Pregnant students have faced issues including being forced to withdraw from their course, taking longer out of their course after giving birth than they would like, and being prevented from sitting examinations (Pugh, 2018). Pregnancy should not be equated with poor health. However, there are health and safety considerations that arise during pregnancy

and breastfeeding, and the risks to which students could be exposed need to be assessed. The highest risk of damage to the baby is during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy (NUS, 2019).

Consequently, students should be encouraged to notify their institution as early as possible of their pregnancy so that a health and safety assessment can be conducted. Where a student is unsure whether she will proceed with her pregnancy, it may still be appropriate to conduct a risk assessment. The level of risk to which a student is exposed will depend on the requirements and nature of her course (Pugh, 2018).

Etuah et al. (2018) conducted a study on experiences of pregnant students in a public university in Ghana. It was noted that, the difficulty of combining pregnancy with academic work was a major deterrent among participants. Only 26.7% of the participants indicated that they would like to be pregnant again in school given the second chance whiles 73.3% indicated that they wouldn't like to be pregnant again in school given the second chance. Majority 63.74%, of those who do not want to be pregnant are of the view that study becomes difficult whiles pregnant, 13.64%, indicated that because of busy schedule on campus, 9.09% said they wanted to space their birth, 4.55% said they have finished child bearing.

Etuah et al. added that the task of combining pregnancy with studies is a difficult undertaking considering the different kinds of discomfort and challenges pregnant women experience even when not in school. Although majority of the participants (53.3%) indicated that it was difficult to cope with studies during pregnancy, 93.75% of them have not failed any test so far because of the pregnancy. Missing lectures because of Antenatal care visits lead to some pregnant students missing a lot of vital information from lecturers. Even though they reported their colleagues sometimes explain concepts to them, the explanation might not be exhaustive to make them cope with the lectures fully. Additionally, the length of studying has also been reduced due to frequent tiredness as a result of prolonged sitting.

Good nutrition is key during pregnancy hence it's expected that pregnant women eat well for the desired outcome. It is however during pregnancy that some women lose appetite for food hence become malnourished (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologist, 2018).

A study conducted in Ghana found that among the participants, 43.3% reported to have often lost appetite for food. This loss of appetite leads to nutritional deprivation and associated challenges among majority of the respondents (75%). When participants were asked how many times they ate on campus, 10.0% said they eat once, 16.7% said twice, 3.3% said thrice while 70.0% said they eat as and when they feel like on campus. This could be attributed to the loss of appetite experienced by some pregnant students and financial difficulties pregnant students' experience which prevent them from eating what they actually want and not what they can afford or have (Etuah, et al., 2018).

CHAPTER THREE

MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter talks about the study area and population, the study design, sampling techniques, data collection method and instrument, data analysis techniques, ethical consideration and limitations encountered during the study.

3.1 Study area

The research will be conducted in the Bono Region. The Bono region is one of the 16 administrative regions of Ghana. The region was created after the Ahafo region and Bono East region respectively have been carved out of the then Brong-Ahafo region. The political administration of the region is through the local government system. Bono Region shares a border at the north with the Savannah Region, is bordered on the west by Ghana-Côte d'Ivoire international border, on the east by Bono East, and on the south by Ahafo Region. There are several cultural practices and festivals within this region. Kwafie is celebrated by the Dormaa, Berekum and Nsoatre people in November, December or January, and Munufie by Drobo. The region has the following tertiary institutions; Sunyani Technical University, Berekum College of Education, Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum, University of Energy and Natural Resources and Presbyterian Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Dormaa ahenkro.

3.2 The study population

The target population will be tertiary students in the Bono Region.

3.3 Study design

A quantitative approach will be employed so as to help determine the relationship between factors, and provide an in-depth understanding of the established relationships. Descriptive design was used for the study. The design was used because there was the need to describe the characteristics of the phenomenon being studied. The design does not answer the questions about how, when or why the characteristics occurred but aims to observe, describe and document an already existing situation and report them as they naturally are. The design will be adopted because participants or subjects are observed in their natural and unchanged environment.

3.4 Sampling technique and Size

The sample population will be obtained using convenience sampling technique. convenience sampling technique is a type of nonprobability sampling which involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population which is close to hand and readily available to take part in the study. This method was chosen because is it extremely speedy, easy, readily available and cost-effective sampling method. Fifty tertiary students will be chosen.

3.5 Data collection methods and instruments

Data collection was done through the use of structured questionnaires consisting of closed-ended questions. It was chosen as method of data collection because it is relatively cheaper, avoided embarrassment on the part of the respondents, possible anonymity of respondents and no user bias. The questionnaire will cover areas such as demographic data, respondent's possible cause of pregnancy among students, view regarding to pregnancy at home and in school, the effect of pregnancy on the academic performance in school of students.

Questionnaires will be distributed to the respondents in the college to answer the questions within duration of 30 minutes after which the answered questionnaires were collected.

3.6 Data analysis techniques

Data was analyzed using Microsoft excel software and presented in the form of tables or figures.

3.7 Ethical consideration

An introductory letter was obtained from Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum. The respondents were well informed about the purpose of the study. The right of each respondent was respected and their personnel integrity safe-guarded. The respondents were allowed to participate and withdraw from the study if and when they felt like. The study was also carried out with no physical or psychological harm on the respondents. Since matters of stress are very sensitive but neglected on the part of the individual and the college as a whole, anonymity was ensured and none of the respondent's answers were discussed with other people in order to ensure confidentiality and also the questions were tactfully asked.

3.8 Limitation of the study

The period for the research also coincided with lectures which reduced the concentration to the work. Some respondents were reluctant to give accurate information even though they were educated on the need to provide valid information on the questionnaire with regards to the study. Limited resource, especially financial constraints since no sponsorship was obtained also accounted for the selection of small sample size.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.0 Data Presentation & Analysis

This chapter deals with analysis of data collected from the field of study and the results obtained from the analysis. The data collected was analysed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistical measures, such as tables with averages and percentages, along with graphs are used to show the occurrence of different observations as investigated in the study.

4.1 Demographic Variables

In finding the demographic variables of the respondents, the following were the outcomes. The age distribution among the respondents it came out to be that 42% (21) of the respondents were aged between 18-23 years, 38%(19) of the respondents were between the ages of 24-29 years and 20% (10)of them falling within 30-35 years. Enquiring about the marital status of the respondents,36.7%(29) were single, 34% (17) were married and only 8%(4) had divorced. In soliciting about their ethnicity, 50%(25) of the respondents were Akans, 24%(12) were Ga's, 9%(9) were Ewe's, 6%(3) were Frafras and 2%(1) were Dagomba .In trying to find out their religious background, 68%(34) of the respondents were Christians 30%(15) were Muslims and 2%(1) were traditionalist . As shown in table 1 below;

Table 1: Demographic Variables

Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-23	21	42
	24-29	19	38
	30-35	10	20
Marital status	Married	17	34
	Single	29	36.7
	Divorced	4	8
Ethnicity	Akan	25	50
	Ga	12	24
	Ewe	9	9
	Frafra	3	6
	Dagomba	1	2
Religion	Christian	34	68
	Islam	15	30
	Traditionalist	1	2

4.2 Contributing factors of pregnancy among respondents

From the findings of factors contributing to pregnancy among respondents. The following questions were sort and multiple choice were allowed: Absence of sex education on campus 88%(44)of the respondents cited it contributes to pregnancy. Forgetting to take contraceptive were 72% (36).lack of condom use during sex were 66% (33). Contraceptive failure were 48% (24), alcohol abuse were 42% (21) and willingness to become pregnant were 30% (15). As shown in the table below;

Table 2: Contributing factors of pregnancy among respondents

Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Absence of sex education on campus	44	88
Students who tend to abuse alcohol	21	42
Lack of condom use during sex	33	66
Forgetting to take contraceptive	36	72
Contraceptive failure	24	48
Willingness to become pregnant	15	30

4.3 How respondents feel with pregnancy in school

In rating how the respondents feel with pregnancy in school, with the scale of 1 to 5(1=low performance, 5=high performance) the following statements were made. Pregnant students sometimes get mocked by students at school, 32% (16) of the respondents rated scale five, 28% (14) rated scale four, 18% (9) rated scale one, 12% (6) rated scale two and 10% (5) rated scale three .When probed about the sense of belonging when pregnant among peers, 24% (12) rated scale one, 22% (11) rated scale four,20% (10) rated scale three,18%(9) rated scale two and 16% (8) rated scale five. The pregnant students who felt discriminated and isolated when in school, 50% (25) rated scale five, 20% (10) rated scale three,16% (8) rated scale two,10% (5) rated scale four and 10% (5) rated scale one. The pregnant students who were unable to attend ANC due to time constraints when in school, 44% (22) rated scale five, 20%(10) rated scale four,16% (8) rated scale 2,10% (5) rated scale three and 10% (5) rated scale one and adequate nutrition when pregnant on campus becomes difficult, 44% (22) rated scale five,22% (11) rated scale one,16% (8) rated scale four,10% (5) rated scale three and 10%(5) rated scale two. As shown in the table below;

Table 3: Response on how respondents feel with pregnancy in School using the scale of 1 to 5(1= low performance, 5= high performance).

HOW RESPONDENTS FEEL WITH PREGNANCY IN SCHOOL	1	2	3	4	5	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Pregnant student sometimes get mocked by students at school	9	6	5	14	16	50	18%,12%,10%,28%, 32%
There is a sense of belonging when pregnant among peers	12	9	10	11	8	50	24%,18%,20%,22%, 16%
Pregnant student feel discriminated and isolated when in school	5	8	10	5	25	50	10%,16%,20%,10% 50%
Pregnant students are unable to attend ANC due to time constraints when in school	5	8	5	10	22	50	10%,16%,10%,20%, 44%
Adequate nutrition when pregnant on campus is difficult	11	5	5	8	21	50	22%,10%,10%,16%, 42%

4.4 Effect of pregnancy on the academic performance of respondents

In trying to find out the effects of pregnancy on academic performance, the following questions were asked and multiple choice were allowed. The respondents indicated that pregnancy has negative effect on academic life of students 96% (48), forced to defer courses were 94% (47), those who said studying becomes difficult when pregnant in school were 94% (47) and the respondents who said missing lectures due to ANC visits could result in poor academic outcomes were 84% (42) .

In the findings, the following are the percentage of respondents that assigned various reasons for their academic performance before pregnancy. The respondents who mentioned that they were able to spend more time with their books were 82% (41) and that resulted in rating their academic performance high. Those who were able to manage stress better were 72% (36), those who had a stigma free environment and it contributed positively to their academic performance were 62% (31) and those who had no pregnancy discomfort were 46% (23).

In assigning the reasons for academic performance during pregnancy by respondents, those who had relation issues were 72% (36), those who felt sick most times were 62% (31) and those who faced stigmatization from peers were 68% (34) and these factors contributed to poor academic performance. The respondents who said they had less time to study and resulted in low rating were 46% (23). As shown in table 4, 5 and 6 below.

Table 4: Effect of pregnancy on the academic performance of respondents

Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Pregnancy has negative effect on academic life of students	48	96
Forced to defer course	47	94
Studying becomes difficult when pregnant in school	47	94
Missing lectures due to ANC visits could result in poor academic outcomes	42	84

Table 5: Reasons assigned for academic performance of respondents before pregnancy

Statement	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Stress on campus	1	2
Was able to manage stress better	36	72
Spend time with books	41	82
Stigma free environment	31	62
No pregnancy discomfort	23	46

Table 6: Reasons assigned for academic performance of respondents during pregnancy

Statement	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Stress on campus	1	2
Relationship issues	36	72
Stigmatization	34	68
Feeling sick most times	31	62
Less time to study	23	46

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the data analysed in chapter four were interpreted based on scientific evidence. The findings are briefly discussed with references to support the study.

5.1 Discussions

5.1.1 Contributing factors of pregnancy among respondents

In the current study, it was found out that the school environment was the most favorable environment that helped or contributed to pregnancy among the respondents. These factors include (absence of sex education on campus 88%, forgetting to take contraceptives 72%, willingness to become pregnant 66% and lack of condom use during sex 66%). Similarly, Sibeko (2015), reported that absence of designed programs that teach students regarding sex education at the campus was reported as a major contributing factor to pregnancies among tertiary students. Nigatu (2019) reported that 44.8% participants indicated that forgetting to take contraceptive is a cause of pregnancy among students. , Zhou et al. (2017) found that unintended pregnancy among students is hugely caused by lack of condom use during sex.

5.1.2 How respondents feel with pregnancy in school

The current study reveals that the feeling of the respondents with pregnancy when in school is negatively affected which makes it difficult for them to stay on campus and learn. These feelings include (pregnant students are unable to attend ANC 64%, pregnant students feel discriminated and isolated when in school 60% and adequate nutrition when pregnant on campus 60% pregnant students sometimes get mocked by students at school 60%,) one of the statement which was though rated low and have negative impact is (sense of belonging when

pregnant among peers 38%) Contrastingly, Etuah et al. (2018) reported that 10.0% of the participants indicated that they were not able to attend any Antenatal Clinic due to time constraints, a study by Gyesaw & Ankoma (2019), pregnant students were mocked by the other students and teachers until some of them decided to stay away from school, they feel isolated and discriminated against (Nkosi, Makhene, & Matlala, 2018). It is felt that there is no sense of belonging when pregnant among peers. Consistently, a Ghanaian study by Etuah et al. (2018) reported that pregnant students felt loneliness during pregnancy because their families lived far away from them.

5.1.3 Effect of pregnancy on the academic performance of respondents

The current study found out that there are numerous effects of pregnancy on the academic performance of the respondents which have negative impact on their schooling and sometimes result in withdrawal. These effects include (pregnancy has negative effect on academic life of students 96%, been forced to defer course 94%, studying becomes difficult when pregnant in school 94%, missing lectures due to ANC visits could result in poor academic outcomes 84%. Similarly, Etuah et al. (2018) reported that 63.74%, of those who do not want to be pregnant are of the view that study becomes difficult whiles pregnant. Etuah et al. added that the task of-combining pregnancy with studies is a difficult undertaking considering the different kinds of discomfort and challenges pregnant women experience even when not in school. Etuah et al. (2018) reported that missing lecturers because of Antenatal care visits lead to some pregnant students missing a lot of vital information from lecturers.

5.2 Conclusions

The study concluded that the school environment is a fertile area to promote pregnancy. Our induction concluded that their feelings are tempered with in school. The study concluded that their schooling and academic performance were affected negatively.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made.

1. Fertility awareness should be created or be intensive.
2. Female students who become pregnant are to be supported in school(physically, psychologically, spiritually)
3. Same research should be conducted out in a similar school.

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To Whom It May Concern

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I wish to introduce to you the under-listed names of final-year students of the College:


1. Agyeiwaa Kodie Rose
2. Inserko Immaculate
3. Kwarteng Esther

As part of the pre-requisite for the award of Diploma in Midwifery, they are to conduct a research study, hence the data collection on "Coping with pregnancy in an academic environment: Experience of Tertiary Students in the Bono Region".

I would be grateful if you could assist them with any material or help they may need to accomplish this task.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully


Martha Kyeremaa
Supervisor

For: Principal

APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC: COPING WITH PREGNANCY IN AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT: EXPERIENCES OF TERTIARY STUDENTS IN THE BONO REGION

Dear respondent, this questionnaire is part of an ongoing research conducted by students of Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum. This study is purposely for academic work, and be rest assured that all the information you will provide remains confidential. You can choose to opt out if there are any personal concerns. We are counting on your cooperation. Thank you.

PART ONE: RESPONDENT'S DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Please indicate your answer with a (tick x) and write in the spaces provided

1. Age: (a) 18 – 23 years [] (b) 24 – 29 years [] (c) 30 – 35 years []
2. Marital status: (a) Married [] (b) Single [] (c) Divorced []
3. Ethnicity:
4. Religious background: (a) Christian [] (b) Islam [] (c) Traditionalist [] d. Others (specify).....

PART TWO: CONTRIBUTING FACTORS OF PREGNANCY AMONG STUDENTS

Please indicate your answer with a [tick(√) to agree and tick(×) to disagree and write in the spaces provided. Multiple choice allowed.

5. Absence of sex education on campus []
6. Students who tend to abuse alcohol []
7. Lack of condom use during sex []

- 8. Forgetting to take contraceptive
- 9. Contraceptive failure
- 10. Willingness to become pregnant
- 11. Mention any other cause you know

.....

.....

.....

PART THREE: HOW RESPONDENTS FEEL WITH PREGNANCY IN

SCHOOL Using a scale of 1 to 5 1=Low performance 5=High performance. Answer the following by ticking in the box numbered.

- 12. Pregnant students sometimes get mocked by students at school

1	2	3	4	5
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- 13. There is the of sense belonging when pregnant among peers

1	2	3	4	5
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- 14. Pregnant students feel discriminated and isolated when in school

1	2	3	4	5
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- 15. Pregnant students are unable to attend ANC due to time constraints when in school

1	2	3	4	5
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- 16. Adequate nutrition when pregnant on campus is difficult

1	2	3	4	5
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PART FOUR: EFFECT OF PREGNANCY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS

Please indicate your answer with a (tick ✓) (multiple choice allowed)

17. Pregnancy has negative effect on academic life of students

18. Forced to defer course

19. Studying becomes difficult when pregnant in school

20. Missing lectures due to ANC visits could result in poor academic outcomes

21. Indicate your academic performance before pregnancy (assign reason)

.....
.....

22. Indicate your academic performance during pregnancy (assign reason)

.....
.....