

**POVERTY AND ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY IN TORIT COUNTY, EASTERN
EQUATORIA STATE, SOUTH SUDAN**

BY

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2020-01-00652

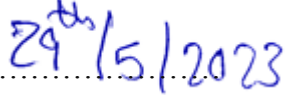
**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF A MASTER'S DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL
ADMINISTRATION OF KAMPALA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY**

MAY, 2023

DECLARATION

I, **Natalina Eghiju Ottome** hereby declare that this report is my original work and has not been submitted to any other University for academic award.

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Date:.....

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this report is done under my supervision and it is now ready for submission to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Kampala International University with my approval.

Signature.....

Date.....

Supervisor: Dr Aloysius Tumukunde

DEDICATION

This research dissertation is dedicated to my parents and family for their parental guidance and education they gave me, my brothers, my supervisor for his guidance and directions in writing this report and not forgetting my friends; for giving their love and ideas during my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to acknowledge the divine presence of my Almighty God to whom this research study would not have been successful without his guidance, love, care and protection. All the Glory belongs to Him.

Special thanks and gratitude go to my family for providing me with all the support towards my studies. I also thank my brothers and sisters for their support. This has opened more chances especially the fact that I am now in position to make a reasonable contribution to the nation and the world at large.

My special thanks go to my supervisor Dr Aloysius Tumukunde for his insight and answering a number of inquiries I put up to him without forgetting the very valuable suggestions and comments.

I also acknowledge all the efforts and support of the entire team of KIU staffs for higher degrees and student body for their contributions towards the success of my studies at the University.

Finally, I thank everyone else who contributed to the outcome of this piece of work.

May the Almighty God bless you abundantly!

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCSSO	:	Council of Chief State School Officers
DEEWR	:	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
ECWA	:	Equatoria Community & Welfare Association
IPA	:	International Literacy Association
MDG	:	Millennium Development Gold
MDGs	:	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	:	Non-Governmental Organisations
OAU	:	The Organisation of African Unity
OWC	:	Operation Wealth Creation
PTSD	:	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RBCs	:	Red Blood Cells
SACCOs	:	Saving and Credit Cooperative Organisations
TRA	:	Theory of Reason Action
ToRA	:	Theory of Reason Action
US	:	United States
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	:	United Nations International Children's Fund
US/A	:	United States of America
WHO	:	World health organization

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at assessing the effect of poverty on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. It was guided by three objectives of; (i) To determine the effect of illiteracy on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan, (ii) To examine the effect of poor standard of living on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan, and (iv) To establish the effect of inadequate income on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. The study employed a descriptive survey design which enabled assessing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group. It determined the effect between variables and the relationship between variables. The study was based on two approaches, and these included quantitative and qualitative approaches for the purposes of proper triangulation of data. The study though targeted a population of 13417 adolescent girls from which a sample of 323 respondents were determined using Solven's formula, (1932). In determining the sample, the study employed both simple random sampling and purposive techniques. The study employed both questionnaires and interviews as data collection instruments for both primary and secondary data. The collected data was sorted, entered into computer package and analysed using SPSS 16. The study results shows that a positive and relatively significant relationship between illiteracy and adolescent pregnancy (Pearson correlation of .640 and P-value < 0.01), which implied that an increase in illiteracy levels resulted into high risks of adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. The findings also shows a positive and significant relationship between poor standard of living and adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan ($r = .570$, P-value < 0.01) which implied that improved standards of living will ultimately lead to reducing rates of adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan and a moderately positive and significant relationship between inadequate income and adolescent pregnancy ($r = .582$, P-value < 0.01) which implied that improvement in income levels will lead to low rates of adolescent pregnancy. This meant that, women of low socio-economic status, whose mothers dropped out of high school, are more likely to give birth as a single teenager if they live in a region of high income inequality. In conclusion, the study concluded that the increasing adolescent pregnancies in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan are highly blamed on the increasing illiteracy levels in the area. Further, the study concludes that the inadequate incomes of some parents/ families partly leads to adolescent pregnancies as adolescents struggle to get a penny for their living, and hence end up into sexual dishonesty for money. The study recommends that there is a need to improve literacy to achieve the higher goal of better meeting the demand for education for children and adults. Improve the living and working conditions of literacy staff to stimulate their enthusiasm for the job and prevent brain drain; and build these players' capacities to guarantee the quality of training on the ground. Access to basic health care is another way to improve the standard of living. Financial and microfinance institutions should employ agents to at least every parish or sub-county to grant households easy access to financial services and services and assistance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, in four perspectives, namely; historical perspective, theoretical perspective, conceptual perspective and contextual perspective. It also presents the problem statement, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, scope and significance to the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 Historical Perspective

Poverty makes a significant contribution to the development of our communities. In the United States, preparing adolescents to read and write fluently has long been a primary responsibility of public schools (Ravitch, 2017), and one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) pillars emphasized the importance of every child having at least a basic level of education to enable them to make responsible decisions about their well-being. Additionally, historically, schools have structured their curricula around academic fields (Sizer, 2004), which significantly rely on texts to preserve and impart information. As a result, reading and writing skills are significant predictors of adolescents' overall success in life.

According to Bennett *et al.* (2012), poverty, as evaluated most frequently by reading ability, adds to a variety of well-established risk variables for adolescent pregnancy, including academic performance and chance of high school graduation. Inadequate reading ability throughout the early years of formal school is difficult to overcome and is associated with later decisions to discontinue formal education and adult poverty. Reading ability in pre-adolescents has the same pattern of racial/ethnic differences as in adolescent parenting. Despite these correlations and the fact that adult poverty is substantially associated with health outcomes across the life course, we are aware of no research examining the association between pre-teen girls' poverty and the risk of eventual adolescent pregnancy in a US community.

The type of poverty that promotes self-determination is not limited to decoding words on a page or retelling the chronology of a tale, both of which are necessary skills for pupils learning to read. Rather than that, it is about interacting with complicated ideas and information via written papers.

The use of texts as vehicles for learning, analyzing, and extrapolating from existing knowledge is a province of the post-primary and especially secondary grades, and it is not limited to language arts classes. Understanding texts, judging their merits, and making use of the information they contain are all abilities that adolescents use throughout their academically fractured school day. Their reading and writing activities, on the other hand, fluctuate greatly during the day. Thus, a fundamental issue of adolescent poverty training is to recognize that successful poverty abilities vary by subject and to assist students in developing the range of skills necessary for success in a variety of situations (Samson *et al.*, 2018).

A second specific issue of teenage poverty training is meeting the developmental requirements of adolescents as they transition from childhood to early adulthood. To engage adolescents, poverty training must attract their attention and address their concerns about the world as they consider their role within it. It must enable children to engage with academically demanding material while honing their capacity to deduce meaning from texts. Pedagogy and material that are too closely aligned with what works with young children are unlikely to engage interested young people, much less prepare them for the rigors of a postsecondary education that values discipline knowledge and critical, independent thinking (Vincent & Alemu, 2016).

In Africa, a high adolescent pregnancy rate is directly related to low female poverty, and the continent has been described as having one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in the world (Odejimi, 2019). The study also revealed a strong correlation between poverty rate, contraceptive prevalence rate, and healthcare expenditure, demonstrating that in African countries with a high poverty rate, contraceptive prevalence rate, and healthcare expenditure are also high. According to her, a policy approach to reducing adolescent pregnancy in Africa is implementing policies and measures to boost female poverty. This will result in an increase in both female contraceptive use and healthcare spending. The total result would be a rise in the nation's Gross Domestic Product per capita. Additionally, it would lessen rural-urban

migration, since more educated females in rural areas would use the skills and information learned throughout their schooling to become more productive and contribute significantly to their communities' growth. Additionally, she noted that programs aimed at increasing female poverty in Africa will help guarantee that individuals are educated about sex and relationships and are able to refute myths and misconceptions.

According to the World Health Organization (2016), the average rate of adolescent pregnancy in Africa is around 118 per 1000 girls, which is much higher than the rate on other continents. According to some studies, the high adolescent pregnancy rate in Africa is due to Africa being one of the poorest continents with a high prevalence of poverty. According to the World Health Organization (2012), limited access to sexual health care and urbanization are additional risk factors for adolescent pregnancy in developing nations. According to the WHO (2012), due to the multiple consequences of Africa's high adolescent pregnancy rate, a strategy addressing the issue of teenage pregnancies in Africa is necessary. Recent World Health Organization research in several African nations highlighted causes such as low educational attainment in Kenya and low contraceptive usage in Morocco, and hence advised measures to address these issues.

According to the Kekeis (2017), more than 29% of pregnant youths reported feeling compelled to have sex, and 33% admitted to being unprepared for a sexual relationship but continued nevertheless out of fear of censure or rejection. According to Lawin (2013), psychological changes that occur throughout adolescence appear to enhance sexual hunger, and that this increase in sexual desire is a response to hormonal, psychological, and social changes that teens undergo. All of these variables may contribute to today's culture's high prevalence of adolescent pregnancy.

Gordon (2017) postulated that the urge for early sexual activity initiation is motivated by a high need for affection and approval. Additionally, they contrasted this to a demonstration of the complexity adolescents feel they have attained. They noted that this belief leaves adolescents exposed to unintended pregnancies and the complications that accompany them. All of these factors increase the likelihood that youngsters will engage in premarital sexual behaviors. Sexual assault or rape can result in a teen becoming pregnant.

According to the Allian Guttmacher Institute (2016), between 43% and 62% of minors admitted to becoming pregnant by an older male, and 2/3 indicated that their infants' father was as old as 27. Adolescent pregnancy results in significant medical, social, and economic costs for women and their children. Adolescent women are more prone to experience medical complications during pregnancy and birth. Their infants are at an increased risk of being born preterm and with a low birth weight. These are worsened by a lack of maternal care and an inadequate nutrition, both of which are prevalent among poor young moms.

Pregnant schoolgirls frequently miss school for a variety of pregnancy-related causes. According to Lemos (2012), pregnancy is unusual in that it is the only state that allows two persons to share one skin, and this two-in-one state has an effect on the mother's physical well-being. Some of the most frequent physical complications of pregnancy are nausea, vomiting, dizziness, fatigue, and edema, which may make it impossible for the girl to attend school.

Adolescent pregnancy is a significant issue in South Sudan, hurting girls' and young women's health and social, economic, and political empowerment. Indeed, South Sudan is one of the ten nations with the greatest frequency of underage marriage (52%), which frequently results in pregnancies. The issue is exacerbated for girls living in low-resource environments, which are marked by poverty, limited access to care, underdeveloped health systems, a lack of education and work opportunities, and frail social safety nets (Vincent and Alemu, 2016).

Catherine & Salome (2018) emphasized the barriers that youth in South Sudan experience when it comes to accessing education. According to them, kids are not receiving the education they need due to long-held cultural customs about marriage in exchange for dowry, with parents marrying off their daughters sooner if they are poor. While basic education is free and mandatory, there are significant expenditures connected with sending children to school in urban or semi-urban regions. This includes the expense of school uniforms, textbooks, and transportation, which impoverished families, cannot readily pay. As a result, some parents choose to keep their daughters at home while sending their sons to school, leaving the females exposed to adolescent pregnancy. Conflict and an insufficient number of skilled teaching personnel also contribute to the barriers to their involvement. Not only in South Sudan or Africa, but also in the Middle East and South Asia, the issues are obvious.

The biggest challenge confronting South Sudan and its foreign education partners is female poverty; almost 90% of women in South Sudan are uneducated; the World Bank estimates that females outnumber boys 7:10 in basic school and 5:10 in secondary education (Boboya, 2015).

In Eastern Equatoria State, this region leads in cases of adolescent marriage and pregnancies, with 1,182 cases. This tells that the situation could be worse in other regions where child marriage was rampant even before the COVID-19 lockdown (UNESCO, 2021). The report released by the Support Peace Development Initiative Organization (SPIDO) found alarming rates of early child marriages, pregnancies and prostitution in Eastern Equatoria state, South Sudan. The report uncovers widespread incidents of sexual-related offences, mostly rape, attempted rape, sexual harassment and murder of children. The organization documented at least 1,535 cases of child marriages and adolescent pregnancies in the Equatoria region since South Sudan shut down schools in mid-March as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic (Lemos, 2012).

1.1.2 Theoretical perspective

The study adopted the use of the Theory of Reason Action (TRA) to explain adolescent pregnancy with American Indian communities.

Theory of Reason Action (TRA)

The Theory of Reason Action was proposed and developed by Martin Fishbein in 1960.

The Theory of Reason Action cited in community Health promotion ideas that work field book focuses on a person's intention to behave in a certain way. An intention is a plan or a likelihood that someone will behave in a particular way in specific situations whether or not they actually do so. For example, a person who is thinking about quitting smoking intends or plans to quite, but may or may not actually follow through on that intent. Our attitudes about a certain activity are impacted by a mixture of two linked elements, according to TRA. Our views about the behavior's result and our assessment of the probable outcome. For instance, one's attitude will be shaped by whether or not he/she believes reading the article will be relevant to his/her work (the outcome of the behavior) and whether or not he/she believes learning something new that might be relevant to his/her work would benefit him/her and his/her organization (Atuyambe, *et al.* 2017).

1.1.3 Conceptual perspective

Poverty refers to the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions. Poverty is said to exist when people lack the means to satisfy their basic needs. The identification of poor people first requires a determination of what constitutes basic needs. These may be defined as narrowly as “those necessary for survival” or as broadly as “those reflecting the prevailing standard of living in the community (Rintaningrum, 2019). The first criterion would cover only those people near the borderline of starvation or death from exposure; the second would extend to people whose nutrition, housing, and clothing, though adequate to preserve life, do not measure up to those of the population as a whole. The problem of definition is further compounded by the noneconomic connotations that the word poverty has acquired. Poverty has been associated, for example, with poor health, low levels of education or skills, an inability or an unwillingness to work, high rates of disruptive or disorderly behaviour, and improvidence (Harris & Hodges, 2015).

According to Robert et al (2019), poverty is a state in which income is insufficient to provide such basic necessities as food, shelter, medical care, and clothing. In every society, the poor live shorter, less healthy lives than those who are better off. The insecurity and vulnerability behind this grim reality has many causes which hinders provision of health care, education. This exposes the poor to health risks, reduction in their productivity and opportunities. In rural areas for instance, teenage pregnancy among the poor is one third higher than among land owning classes underlying all these disadvantages is the denial of rights suffered by women who experience systematic social and economic discrimination from the cradle to the grave.

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Lambani (2015) defined poverty as the deprivation of food, shelter, money and clothing when people can't satisfy their basic needs. There are many factors, other than income and assets, which are associated with poverty; for instance, the accessibility to basic education, health care, drinking water and sanitation. They need to be considered to develop poverty line, the existing mechanism for determining the Poverty Line also does not take into consideration social factors that trigger and perpetuate poverty such as illiteracy, ill health, lack of access to resources, discrimination or lack of civil and political freedoms.

Secura *et al* (2018) defined poverty as the state of severe deprivation of basic human needs. Lack of human and technical skills to exploit available income generating and life improving opportunities are both a cause and symptom of poverty. With the bulk of Uganda's population in the subsistence sector utilizing unskilled labor, it is essential that for growth to be pro-poor it should focus on labor-intensive techniques. But labor intensive production of goods and services in today's competitive world requires that the abundant labor be abundant in skills. Inability to access and process information about available income generating and life improving opportunities is a major constraint to poverty reduction.

Mathewos & Mekuria (2018) defined adolescent pregnancy as the rate of pregnancies of girls under the age of 20. According to them, adolescent pregnancy has significant long term social consequences for the adolescents, their children, their families and their communities; it lowers adolescents' educational attainment and leads to high school dropouts, poor health and poverty. The children of teenage mothers are also more likely to have lower school achievement and drop out of high school, have more health problems, and are sometimes rejected by the family making them more traumatized and vulnerable. Although adolescent pregnancy occurs among all racial, cultural and socio-economic groups, some adolescents are more likely than others to become pregnant. Factors such as economic status, education, religion, place of residence, peer's and partners' behaviors, family and community attitudes, age, mass media, lack of reproductive health services and knowledge are contributing factors to the increase of unintended pregnancy among adolescents in very many countries in Africa including South Sudan.

Mathewos & Mekuria (2018) define adolescent pregnancy as an adolescent girl, usually within the ages of 13-19, becoming pregnant and refer to girls who have not reached legal adulthood, which

varies across the world. The factors affecting adolescent pregnancy are not limited to socio-demographic characteristics. Factors like employment attainment, lower economic status, living arrangement, the sex of the household head, history of maternal adolescent pregnancy, knowledge toward SRH issues, family planning use, presence or absence of sexuality education in schools, and substance use also affects adolescent pregnancy.

Muhwezi *et al* (2015) defined adolescent pregnancy, is pregnancy in a female under the age of 20, according to the WHO. Pregnancy can occur with sexual intercourse after the start of ovulation, which can be before the first menstrual period (menarche) but usually occurs after the onset of periods. In well-nourished girls, the first period usually takes place around the age of 12 or 13.

Ahorlu, *et al* (2015) defined adolescent pregnancy as the occurrence of pregnancy in girls aged 10 to 19. Adolescent pregnancy has become a major public health problem, particularly in Africa. Consequently, the region is known for the high rate of maternal and child morbidity and mortality. Since recent times, several governmental and non-governmental organization in some African countries focused on reducing the adolescent pregnancy rate, although a very slow progress was made.

According to Loaiza & Liang (2013), adolescent pregnancy refers to a pregnancy in a woman 19 years of age or younger. A woman can get pregnant if she has vaginal sex with a man at any age after she's begun having regular monthly periods. Many pregnant adolescents drop out of school, and some never complete their education. That means a lot of mothers who get pregnant as teenagers live in poverty. Women who first got pregnant as adolescent are more likely to have more than one child. A woman with little education and multiple children to care for will find it very difficult to earn a living.

1.1.4 Contextual Perspective

Eastern Equatoria State is one of the 10 states in South Sudan. It has an area of 73,472 square kilometers. It has its administrative capital in Torit with a population of 906,126 (Census, 2018). According to Valadez (2020), Eastern Equatoria State has 8 counties namely; Budi, Ikotos, Kapoeta East, Kapoeta North, Kapoeta South, Lafon, Magwi and Eastern Equatoria State but due to limited time and resources, this study covers only Eastern Equatoria State targeting two tribes; Otuho and Lokoya.

The Otuho people are mostly farmers who maintain vast herds of cattle, sheep, and goats in the South Sudanese Mountains. According to history, the Otuhos exemplify a communal way of living in which nothing is hidden from anybody. They follow a sharing system, and as a result, no single individual governs over them. Rather than that, they are guided by a group of elders who are endowed with power.

Additionally, the Otuho tribe is well-known for their staunch opposition to several types of religious and cultural invasion, including marriage. Despite much criticism, they have maintained their marital ritual over the years. In many other regions of the globe, a gentlemanly ritual of turning over a lady to a man is typically performed, most often by the bride's father, after both the man and the woman agree to live together. When an Otuho man wishes to marry a girl, he must first abduct her from her family home and then return to the family to beg for her hand in marriage (ECWA, 2020).

Similar to Otuho is the Lokoya tribe. The Lokoya has been classified as a member of the Eastern Nilotic branch of Nilotic, in the Eastern Sudanic sub-grouping of Nilo-Saharan. The main economic activities of the community are carried out in accordance with the season of the year. They have four seasons: dry season, wet season, mid-rainy season and harvest season. The Lokoya way of life is vigorously organized during the dry season. At the end of the harvest, the chief priest of grain and mountain lift the order banning from fighting or yelling. By this, people in the village are free make ululation, yell and dance (ECWA, 2020). The above however, depicts South Sudan as a country strong in culture and traditional practices which sometimes could be attributed to low poverty amongst the people which consequently leads to very many social issues such as adolescent pregnancy.

According to Valadez (2020), more than a decade after independence, South Sudan remains impacted by fragility, economic stagnation, and instability. Poverty is ubiquitous, exacerbated by conflict, displacement, and external shocks. South Sudan has a population of about 12 million people (Alkire, Kanagaratnam, & Suppa, 2022). The overwhelming majority of the population, about 80%, resides in rural areas. According to the World Bank's latest estimates, about 82% of South Sudanese people endure poverty, surviving on less than \$1.90 per day (Benansio, 2022). South Sudan has one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the world. That's from the

2006 Sudan household health survey data indicates that in Southern Sudan 17% of the girls are married before the age of 15 and 41% before 17 years (World Bank, 2020). Consequently, the high poverty rates in Tority county of South Sudan has resulted into early forced marriages and malnutrition during pregnancy has the potential to lead to later health disparities in children, such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease (Calderón-Villarreal, 2022). Furthermore, mothers experiencing poverty tend to have a diet lacking fruits and vegetables, which provide necessary micronutrients for fetal development.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Adolescent pregnancy is a public health concern in both developed and developing countries and South Sudan is among the top ten countries with highest prevalence of adolescent pregnancy in Africa (Ministry of Gender, 2020). However, the increase in the number of teenage pregnancies in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan continues to attract attention of stakeholders in the area and beyond. Adolescent pregnancy remains a concern for parents and care-givers and the menace continues to affect the potential productivity of girls in the study area. According to annual report from the Ministry of Gender (2020), more than 15% of girls annually got pregnant before the age of 20 years. This reduces the opportunities for them to engage into more productive ventures to help in improving their lives and livelihood. Most of them end up depending on their families for support while some resort to street begging and prostitution (Ministry of Gender, 2020).

In addition to the emotional and social costs that a pregnancy can have on an adolescent, the financial costs to the individual and communities is especially high. The costs of providing adequate federal and local assistance to teen mothers' amounts to at least \$10.9 billion per year, according to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy report (2018). Adolescent mothers encounter major barriers to higher education and career pathways. In a society where a college degree and dual earner income has become a necessity to earn middle-income status, an adolescent pregnancy often has serious repercussions throughout their lifetime. For adolescent mothers, especially single adolescent mothers, it is nearly impossible to earn a living wage or pursue a degree without some form of government assistance (Alkire, 2022). Adolescent pregnancy contributes to a lot of societal problems which largely affect the drive towards national

development. This affects the country's desire towards promoting women and girls empowerment which is seen as mechanism to reduce poverty and inequality. The high rate of adolescent pregnancy increases dependency, where most of the girls after getting pregnant end up becoming a liability to their families (Sassi, 2022). The parents continue to support them before and even after giving birth thus putting so much pressure on the family's meager income. In addition, some of the adolescents who are not getting adequate care and support from their families end up becoming street beggars to cater for themselves and their expected new born babies. Furthermore, some also resort to prostitution which equally has health implications on adolescents and society as whole (Vincent & Alemu, 2015). In light of this, the current study therefore examines the link between poverty and adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the effect of poverty on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study included;

- i. To determine the effect of illiteracy on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.
- ii. To examine the effect of poor standard of living on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.
- iii. To establish the effect of inadequate income on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What is the effect of illiteracy on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan?
- ii. What is the effect of poor standard of living on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan?

- iii. What is the effect of inadequate income on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan?

1.6 Hypotheses of the Study

The study tested the following hypotheses;

H₁: Illiteracy has no significant effect on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

H₂: Poor standard of living has a significant effect on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan

H₃: Inadequate income has a significant effect on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan

1.7. Scope of the Study

1.7.1 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State- South Sudan. This was in specific two tribes Otuho and Lokoya, and the reason of studying the two tribes is because of high numbers of teenage pregnancy and lack of Education which brought about Illiteracy, and also cultural beliefs and poverty. According to annual reports from the Ministry of gender, Child and Social Welfare (2020), the number of teenage pregnancy continue to increase in Torit County hence the need to investigate some of the reasons responsible for the high increase in adolescent pregnancy.

1.7.2 Content Scope

The study content was limited to poverty and adolescent pregnancy. Poverty was looked at in terms of illiteracy, poor standard of living and inadequate income. Whereas adolescent pregnancy was measured in terms of coercive sexual relations, school dropout and lack of parental guidance.

1.7.3 Time Scope

The study covered a period between 2015–2021 from various literature materials and primary data respectively. This provided the researcher the opportunity to gather current and relevant literature related to the study topic which certainly enhanced quality and serve as a reference material for other researchers undertaking similar study. This period was chosen because this

is the period in which there was a high record of illiterates and adolescent pregnancies in the County of Torit Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan (Valadez. *et al.*, 2020).

1.8 Significance of the Study

The Ministry of Gender used the study's results to take action against the area's rising rate of adolescent pregnancies. Additionally, Eastern Equatoria State's administration profited from the study since they will be able to identify plausible causes of the increase in adolescent pregnancy and devise effective ways to address them.

The study will be crucial in that it will provide further information to researchers working on a similar subject. Additionally, the study will benefit scholars and students since it will add to the current body of knowledge about poverty and adolescent pregnancy, which will aid in lowering the rate of adolescent pregnancy.

This study will also benefit the South Sudanese policy makers, as it will equip them with the necessary knowledge and information on poverty and its influence on adolescent pregnancy, enabling them to make educated decisions. Additionally, the study will benefit teens by increasing their awareness and comprehension of the critical role of poverty in decreasing teenage pregnancies.

Additionally, the study will aid in determining the association between poverty and adolescent pregnancy, as well as aid in identifying gaps that earlier researchers on a comparable topic matter missed.

The study will help the adolescents get access to the relevant teachings and sensitizations through the field work that will be carried out in Eastern Equatoria State and thus will be able to perhaps avoid early pregnancy and this may be carried out by the local leaders of researcher herself.

Finally, the study will improve the researchers' knowledge and abilities in the areas of data collection, data analysis, discussion, and interpretation of findings. Additionally, it will broaden the researcher's knowledge and comprehension of poverty and associated ideas, as well as the influence of poverty on adolescent pregnancy.

1.9 Operational definitions of key terms

Poverty; is the lack of enough income and resources in relation to community standards. These standards and definitions of poverty vary according to place and time.

In the context of social work practice, poverty refers to a social problem faced by individuals and may result into other social problems like adolescent pregnancy, stress, lack of basic needs, school drop outs, domestic violence and poor standards of living generally.

Adolescent pregnancy; is pregnancy in a female under the age of 20, according to the WHO. Pregnancy can occur with sexual intercourse after the start of ovulation, which can be before the first menstrual period (menarche) but usually occurs after the onset of periods. In well-nourished girls, the first period usually takes place around the age of 12 or 13.

In the context of social work, adolescent pregnancies are a global problem occurring in high-, middle-, and low-income countries. Around the world, however, adolescent pregnancies are more likely to occur in marginalized communities, commonly driven by poverty and lack of education and employment opportunities.

Illiteracy; is a condition of being unable to read or write, and it is a major problem throughout the world.

In the context of social work, illiteracy refers to the inability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.

Poor standard of living; refers to how poorly a person or group of people live in terms of having their needs and wants met.

In the context of social work, poor standard of living refers to low level of wealth, discomfort, material goods, and necessities not being available to a certain socio-economic class or geographic area.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical review, conceptual review and empirical review. The empirical review follows the objectives of the study. The chapter also shows the research gaps which the study intends to fill. The literature used in this chapter was extracted from existing books, journals and reports.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study adopted the Theory of Reason Action (TRA) to understanding Adolescent pregnancy with American Indian Communities.

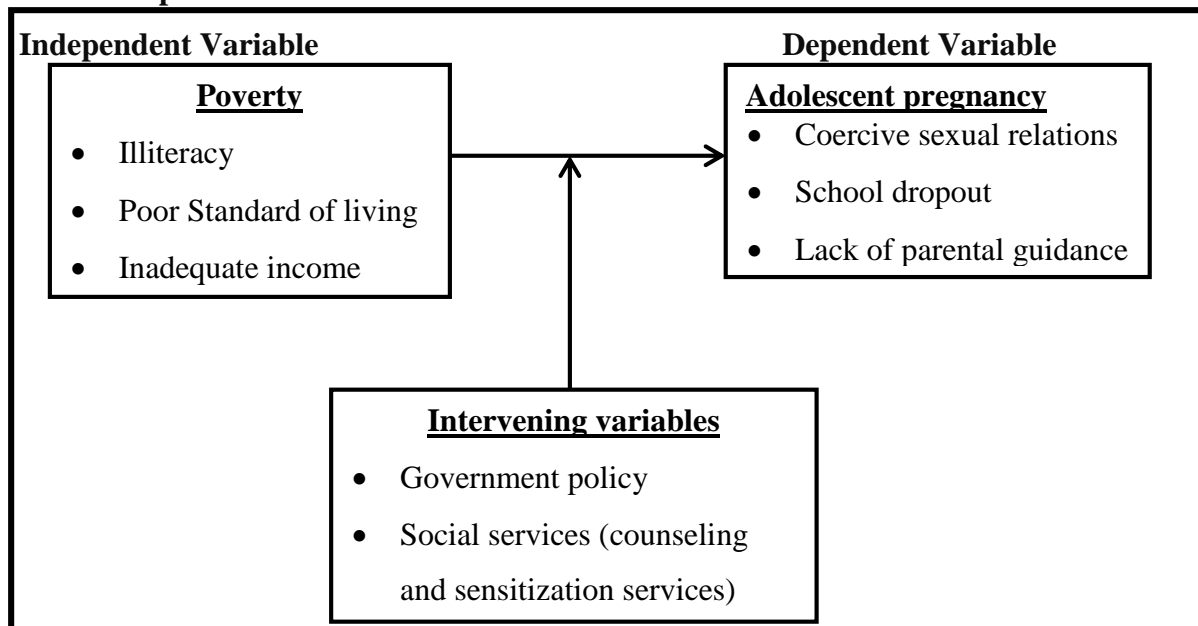
The Theory of Reason Action proposed and developed by Martin Fish be in 1960 cited in Community Health Promotion Ideas that Work field-book focuses on a person's intention to behave in a certain way. An intention is a forecast or a probability that someone would behave in a certain manner in given settings, regardless of whether they actually do so. For instance, a person contemplating quitting smoking intends or plans to quit, but may or may not really do so. According to TRA, our attitudes toward a given conduct are impacted by a mixture of two linked factors: our beliefs about the behavior's result and our assessment of the possible consequence. For instance, one's attitude would be shaped by whether or not he or she believes reading the article will be relevant to his or her work (the outcome of the behavior) and whether or not he or she believes learning something new that might be relevant to his or her work would benefit his or her organization (Atuyambe, et al. 2017).

TRA provides a framework for identifying and measuring the underlying reasons for a person's intent to behave a certain way (or not). It is called the Theory of Reasoned Action because of the emphasis on understanding these reasons not because the beliefs and attitudes themselves are necessarily reasonable or correct. The theory of reasoned action (TRA or ToRA) aims at explaining the relationship between attitudes and behaviors within human action. It is mainly used to predict how individuals will behave based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioral intentions. An individual's decision to engage in a particular behavior is based on the outcomes the individual expects will come as a result of performing the behavior. The primary purpose

of the TRA is to understand an individual's voluntary behavior by examining the underlying basic motivation to perform an action.

According to TRA, a person's intention to engage in a behavior is the primary determinant of whether or not they engage in that action. Additionally, the normative component (i.e. societal norms around the act) has a role in determining whether or not the individual would engage in the action. According to the notion, the desire to engage in a particular conduct occurs prior to the actual behavior. This is referred to as behavioral intention, and it arises from a conviction that engaging in the activity will result in a certain consequence. The notion is critical because behavioral intentions are affected by attitudes toward activities and subjective standards. According to TRA, stronger intentions result in higher effort to carry out the action, which improves the possibility that the activity will be carried out. The theory correspond to the study topic because it helps an individual adolescnent girl to first reason very well and behave in a certain way against the consequences of pregnancy. In addition, the theory of reason action tries to educate the adolescents to first think critically about what they want to do so that they are able to make a wise action which can help them to avoid making poor decisions that expose them to sexual relationships and eventually get pregnant hence dropout of school. Therefore, the identified theory is relevant to this study.

2.2 Conceptual Framework



Source: Adopted from Montoy. (2018). But modified by the researcher.(2022).

From the conceptual frame work, the independent variable in this study is poverty and this will be conceptualized in terms of illiteracy, poor standard of living and inadequate income. Yet the dependent variable (adolescent pregnancy) will be measured in terms of coercive sexual relations, school dropout and lack of parental guidance. The conceptual framework shows the connection between poverty and adolescent pregnancy. However this kind of relationship can be influenced by intervening variables such as government policy and social services (Audu, 2012).

2.3 Related Literature Review

2.3.1 Effect of illiteracy on adolescent pregnancy

Marston and King (2016) demonstrated that a lack of true understanding about sexuality issues appeared to be a significant factor in schoolgirl pregnancies. Adequate understanding of sexuality can only be acquired via education, and the home environment and parents are viewed as the most appropriate venues for informing children about sexuality concerns (Rangiah, 2012). Although pregnancy and motherhood do not typically impair adolescent academic performance, they do introduce a new set of circumstances that influence future educational decisions made by the girl (Grant and Hallman, 2016). However, in many cultures, sexuality matters are the least addressed or spoken about among family members; any sex topic is considered a taboo.

Deng & Nordquis (2019) noted that literacy is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Educational opportunities depend on literacy. Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace, and democracy. It is to exercise conscious dominance over those approaches; to comprehend what one reads and to write what one comprehends: It is to convey information visually. Acquiring literacy does not entail memorizing sentences, words, or syllables, all of which are lifeless objects disconnected from an existential universe, but rather an attitude of creation and recreation, a process of self-transformation that results in an interventionist stance in one's environment.

Additionally, Lual P, (2019) noted that individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole benefit from literacy. It establishes options and avenues for improved health and growth. It facilitates progression and progress. Adult literacy is critical to a nation's overall development since it may be used to calculate the Human Development Index (HDI), which includes indicators such as education, life expectancy, and per capita income. However, literacy is one of the characteristics used to evaluate education and an educational system's performance. A high literacy rate indicates that the school system is capable of providing opportunity for the people to develop strong literacy abilities.

According to Audu (2012), adolescent involuntary pregnancy is a result of a lack of fear of God and a lack of religious convictions. He asserts that the more devout an adolescent is, the more likely she is to attend church and have premarital sex. Premarital sexual activities are prevalent among adolescents, particularly those in secondary schools, according to Moilborn (2015). According to them, many of them are seduced into sex by males who offer them money or other items in exchange for sexual favors. According to Moilborn, the girls sell sex to meet fundamental requirements that their parents are unable to provide.

Literacy is shaped by the needs and habits of particular groups of people. According to Dakley (2017), literacy is a complicated force that is continually mediated and may take on a life of its own in a variety of situations, cultures, and social and political arenas. The capacity to read and write a range of text types, including electronic and multimodal texts, is viewed as a necessary component of literacy. Certain current conceptions of literacy are quite wide, even include dance, music, and movement. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential and participate fully in community and wider society (UNESCO, 2015). In agreement therefore, the more involved a girl is in religious activities, the less likely she is to fantasize about dating someone of the same gender.

Literacy encompasses a variety of means of communication, including music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media, and theatre, in addition to verbal, non-verbal, and visual communication, as well as speaking, listening, seeing, reading, and writing. Electronic and print-based technologies are used to create contemporary literature. In today's increasingly

computerized environment, the capacity to analyze texts critically is an essential component of literacy (Deewr, 2017). Never the less, literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills necessary for students to access, comprehend, analyze, and evaluate information, to create meaning, to express thoughts and emotions, to present ideas and opinions, to interact with others, and to participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school that contribute to a higher standard of living.

Additionally, adult literacy rates are used to calculate a nation's life expectancy, quality of living, and HDI (Prettyman, 2019). As Gilbert et al. (2018) noted that literacy is related to life expectancy via a variety of socio-economic characteristics, including income, education, and employment. This indicates that those with limited reading abilities and those with a lower level of education are more likely to be unemployed.

Gilbert et al. (2018) added that jobless individuals are more likely to have low incomes and unhealthy lifestyles. These socio-economic characteristics may be associated with a reduction in life expectancy. Adequate salaries can help individuals rise up the social ladder and enhance their quality of life. This is because government and corporate entities would engage literate employees who are capable of achieving the organization's objectives. Individuals who are illiterate may be classed as unqualified, resulting in unemployment. Lind (2016) continued by stating that poverty is inextricably linked to low literacy skills and usage. Though, from the researchers view, there is a literacy divide between the wealthiest and poorest households. Illiteracy is claimed to be prevalent in impoverished homes and areas. However, literacy may be employed to alleviate poverty and increase social engagement. Literate persons are more likely to find work and earn a living salary, which helps alleviate poverty.

Literacy is critical for long-term development (UNESCO, 2020). It may be used to forecast the quality of the future work force and to assure policies that promote men's and women's life skills (UNESCO, 2020). Individuals who are literate have easy access to knowledge that can help them enhance their education, health, and safety. Although men and women have a literacy disparity, literate women are more economically self-sufficient. Literacy enables women to contribute meaningfully to society (UNESCO, 2020). While, Basili (2016) states that the capacity to read, write, and communicate unites individuals and allows them to do activities

they never imagined possible. According to UNESCO, learning and strengthening reading skills is a necessary component of education. Thus, literacy and education are inextricably linked and may overlap. The researcher however disregards the above that literate persons are more likely to find work and earn a living salary, which helps alleviate poverty. Hence, literacy reflects both the outcome (status) of an educational process and the educational process itself.

Adolescents are frequently chastised for their lack of engagement and interest in the world around them (Schunk and Rice, 2018). According to a poll of 18–24-year-olds, the Internet was the most effective medium for civic involvement, with social networking technologies cited as the key source for creating personal connections to global concerns (Portney and O'Leary, 2017). For instance, presenting teens who are having difficulty with reading with specific goals for a comprehension exercise and then providing feedback on their progress might result in higher self-efficacy and increased usage of comprehension methods.

Although studies have shown a fall in intrinsic reading motivation as students' progress from elementary to middle school, the reasons for the decline vary, with a number of researchers attributing the decline to variations in teaching approaches (McLaughlin, 2018). Additionally, by developing technological settings that boost students' drive to become independent readers and writers, their perception of competence may be increased (Monica et al., 2020). However, the evidence on the changes in kids' motivation to read through time is less obvious.

Dongarwar & Salihu (2019) conducted a study in Pennsylvania to assess the impact of illiteracy on adolescent pregnancy. The study findings stated that adolescent years are, without a doubt, a challenging time in adolescents' development. Thus, from the researchers view, the need to feel accepted and normal can be overwhelming. Adolescents who enter high school lacking fundamental reading skills often experience a social rejection in the classroom. Adolescents, who are not receiving validation through their school work, look for that acceptance elsewhere.

Marston and king (2006) established that lack of authentic knowledge about sexuality issues seemed to be one of the major causes of pregnancies amongst school girls. Adequate knowledge about sexuality can only be obtained by education and the family milieu and parents are regarded as most suitable to inform the child about sexuality issues (Bezuidenhout, 2004). However, in

certain cultures sexuality issues are the least spoken about or discussed by members of the family any sex topic is taboo (Rangiah, 2012).

Illiteracy, most often measured by reading skill, contributes to a number of well-known predisposing factors for adolescent childbearing including school success and likelihood of high school graduation. Poor reading skill in early years of formal education is difficult to overcome and is predictive of subsequent decisions to drop out of formal education and adult illiteracy. Reading skill in pre-teens also has the same pattern of race/ethnic disparities seen in adolescent parenting (Hansana and Thanh, 2020). The researcher however noted that despite these associations and the fact that adult illiteracy is strongly linked to health related outcomes throughout the life course, there have been no studies that we are aware of that assess the association of illiteracy among adolescent girls and the risk of subsequent adolescent childbearing in Africa including South Sudan.

Huang (2017) also conducted a study to assess the impact of illiteracy on adolescent pregnancy in Tharparkar, Pakistan. The findings of her research revealed the twenty-thousand girls under the age of eighteen give birth every day in developing countries, and complications related to pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death among adolescent girls aged 15-19. Half of these pregnancies are unintended and result from lack of access to reproductive health education, child marriage, sexual violence and low levels of education. Education is key to the reduction of this dangerous global phenomenon; adolescent pregnancy.

According to Huang (2017), one of the best ways to decrease adolescent pregnancy is by increasing the female illiteracy rate, which increases the use of contraception and allows girls to understand sex education resources. While, research has shown that there was universal lack of enthusiasm and negative attitude amongst educators for accommodating pregnant learners in school (Runhare 2017). According to Bhana et al (2017) most of the school principals and educators involved in their research were also unenthusiastic about enrolling and supporting either pregnant school girls or school girl mothers in their school.

Chigona & Chetty (2008) say that educator's objection to pregnant learners in school range from their inability to cope with academic demand to their disruptive influence on the learning environment in class. Some educators also find it difficult to override their own beliefs around

generational hierarchies, reproduction and gender (Mpanza, 2006). According to Bhana et al (2017) the presence of a pregnant girl in school may encourage other girls to do the same and could even lead to sexual anarchy among other learners.

Bhana et al (2008) says that the opinion that the situation concerning school girl pregnancy /motherhood and schooling problems is not always understood in Uganda. Grant and Hallman (2016) view the situation relating to school girl pregnancy and schooling disturbances is inevitably associated with societal problems and should be understood in that context. To them problems range from ignorance, moral collapse, sexual abuse of female adolescents and lack of knowledge about early menarche. Karra & Lee (2012:14) argue that obtaining educational qualifications is no longer a right to school girl mothers but something these girls owe society if they are not to be welfare dependent and a burden to tax payers.

Adolescent pregnancy, mental health conditions and recreational drug use and alcoholism are the three major health risks affecting adolescents (Baptist Health Care Report 2015). Baptist Health Care research has shown that by incorporating education on mental health illiteracy into schools, adolescent understands of where to seek help and recognizing symptoms were improved.

Mngoma (2017) says school girl mothers mostly face an obscured future because there is little to look forward to expect, and there are no plans or tasks. However small is waiting to be fulfilled. In the research done by Beesham (2009) a respondent said “my future is quite hopeless at the moment. I am 18 years old and stuck with two children. I have not completed my schooling and have no permanent job. Furthermore, according to Baptist Health Care report (2015), the need for a health illiteracy program in schools is evident as in 2005, 41% of Year Eight students assessed scored below the basic level of understanding for scientific information. In a nutshell, it is therefore important to design illiteracy programs geared towards improving socio-economic status of adolescents.

Cunningham & Boult (2007) showed that it is mostly female educators whose identification as well as knowledge of the “pain, difficulty, challenges and responsibility” associated with pregnancy and motherhood enables a supportive and caring environment for girls in their school. For adolescent mothers, especially single adolescent mothers, it is nearly impossible to earn a living wage or pursue a degree without some form of government assistance (Monica, *et al.* 2020).

In agreement, the researcher notes that, illiteracy contributes enormously to the reduction of adolescent pregnancy as highlighted by the various sources reviewed furthermore, illiteracy plays an important role in the future of young people as it prepares them for work and life as an adult. In disagreement however, available statistics indicated that a third of pregnant school girls do not complete their schooling (Dhlamini, 2007). Without proper education adolescent mothers do not qualify for jobs to earn enough money to support them and their child (ren).

While, regarding health illiteracy among adolescents, previous studies found rates of low health illiteracy varying from 23% to 48% in males and females. Although the high prevalence of inadequate health illiteracy in our sample may reflect poorer results for rural low-income participants, they may also reflect differences in relation to the health illiteracy tests used by the previous studies, which, in some cases, may use simpler questions and commands (Parker, 1995).

2.3.2 Effect of poor standard of living on adolescent pregnancy

Poor standard of living has dual dynamics in adolescent pregnancy. Being a determinant as well as a consequence of adolescent pregnancy especially in developing countries, many of the individual and environmental risk factors that are determinants of adolescent pregnancy may be tied into experiences of poor standard of living (Chigona & Chetty, 2017). The environment that poor standard of living creates, lack of resources and support, the resulting perceptions of limited educational and financial opportunities may reduce the cost of adolescent pregnancy and motherhood for adolescent females (Creswell, 2019). Having a child may be perceived as the only way to bring meaning into the adolescent's life.

Cunningham (2017) noted that the adolescent parent risks being stigmatized isolated from their peer group and sentenced to live a poor standard of living. Poor standard of living may be a preexisting condition rather than an effect of adolescent. Perhaps the most important consideration of adolescent is the impact it has on the unplanned child (Dakley, 2017). Similarly, the researcher views that, adolescent parents are known to start a vicious cycle that is hard to break once it gets started and where adolescent pregnancy is high, it can be argued that a high number of children are beginning their lives from disadvantaged points.

Dhlamini (2017) noted that the persistently high adolescent rate with its attendant consequences being recorded in many parts of the world has been known to contribute significantly to high

maternal and infant morbidity and mortality especially in developing countries. In addition its effect on population growth rate, development and sexual prevalence is significant, thereby contributing to the already high level of poor standard of living in developing countries.

Dongarwar & Salihu (2019) argued that poor standard of living also hampers further education of female adolescents and earning capacity in later years. This results in limiting their contribution to the nation's economic development. Despite family life education in schools and family planning programmes, high prevalence of adolescent and accompanying negative consequences is still being recorded in South Sudan. While, according to Newman (2009) mothers often fail to communicate the "fact of life" to their daughters and information about menarche is required from an elder sister, peer or nurses from health departments who visit schools. In a study conducted by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) in 2008 concerning sexuality and reproductive issues, it was found that parents are reluctant to discuss these issues with their children (Panday et al, 2009).

Mothiba & Maputle (2012) also carried out a study to examine factors contributing to adolescent pregnancy in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province, South Africa. According to the study findings, unprotected sexual intercourse can lead to an unwanted adolescent pregnancy which is often considered a serious social and public health problem. Their research findings revealed that adolescent pregnancy appears to be encouraged by lack of access to sex education.

According to Ochen et al (2019), there are several factors that are strongly associated with and contribute to the increased risk of an early pregnancy. These factors include poor standard of living and lack of knowledge about sex and how to use contraceptives; barriers to access contraceptives including negative attitudes of health staff; peer pressure; sexual coercion; low self-esteem; low educational expectations; inadequate income; family breakdown; and heightened sex-based messages in the media.

Basili (2016) noted that promising interventions and strategic policy choices are available to avert the human tragedy of pregnancy among girls before age 18 and put girls instead on a path towards prosperity, progress and peace. Investments targeting support for girls who are married or in a union, and interventions that reduce vulnerability to early pregnancy for the poorest, least-educated, and rural or isolated girls are investments in social justice and human rights, producing

benefits for individuals, their families and generations to come. Such investments are a sure and certain means by which to turn the tides of gender inequality, illiteracy, adolescent pregnancies, and associated rates of maternal mortality and morbidity (Grant and Hallman, 2016). In today's demographic realities, reducing child marriage, delaying pregnancies and securing the rights of young women to education can also help offset population momentum.

Bennett (2013) described the costs and consequences of pregnancy before age 18. The data affirm that adolescent pregnancy is first and foremost a threat to girls and a breach of their fundamental human rights to education, health, life opportunities, and, indeed, to life itself. For the sake of the more than 75 million girls at risk over the next decade, it is high time to end adolescent girl pregnancy. In disagreement, Beesham (2019) argued that it is no coincidence that countries with high rates of child marriage and early child-bearing are also grappling with high adolescent-girl birth and maternal mortality rates. This calls for targeted interventions to support girls with an early initiation into marital relationships and child-bearing. Married girls (adolescents that married before age 18) should have systematic support to help them avoid early and frequent child-bearing. They should have ready access to sexual and reproductive health information and programmes that provide family planning, maternal health services and treatment. The fact that data show very low levels of satisfied demand for family planning, including contraception, among married girls underscores this need (Bennett, 2012). However programmes should be put in place that enable girls who are married or in a union to exercise their right to identify and understand their options to delay or limit child-bearing, and to receive support from their husbands or partners and in-laws accordingly.

Bhana et al (2018) argued that to minimize the incidence of poor standard of living in relation to early pregnancy, policymakers and programme managers need to consider the contributions of different demographic factors to population growth, as observed in population projections. Policy options for countries with population growth mainly affected by high levels of unwanted fertility could be different from those for countries with population growth affected by a young age structure, for example. Access to better standard of living is one of the most effective interventions to empower adolescents with the most basic skills to function and contribute to society. This is of greater relevance for girls to obtain comprehensive sexual education; to know and recognize

options; to be able to negotiate reproductive desires, including when and how many children to have; and to be able to demand access to good quality services for reproductive health (Boboya, 2015). However, all of these faculties could be easily denied to adolescent girls who are out of school and unable to complete their secondary education as a minimum.

Kelley et al., (2015) indicated that poor standard of living leads to pregnancies among girls less than 18 years of age have irreparable consequences. It violates the rights of girls, with life-threatening consequences in terms of sexual and reproductive health, and poses high development costs for communities, particularly in perpetuating the cycle of poor standard of living. Existing evidence strongly disputes the rationale of traditional cultural practices such as child marriage (Canavan, 2017). In addition, it supports immediate action to enforce laws protecting the rights of children and particularly of girls; guarantee education and health needs; and eliminate the risks of violence, pregnancy among girls less than 18 years of age, sexual infection, and maternal deaths and disability.

Poor standard of living is connected with unplanned births in young populations, which are associated with negative social and health consequences for both mother and child (Dongarwar, et al., 2019). According to previous studies, more than 90% of adolescent pregnancies occur in low- and middle-income nations, owing primarily to low levels of poor standard of living. Failure to fully evaluate these variables has created a slew of difficulties for many families and society as a whole throughout the years (World Bank, 2019). However, the ongoing rise in adolescent pregnancies in South Sudan, and more specifically in the study region, might be attributed to a variety of variables.

Adolescent pregnancy has been persistently high in most developing countries including South Sudan based on a number of factors. Yakubu & Salisu (2018) conducted a study to assess the factors contributing to adolescent pregnancy. Their findings revealed that adolescent pregnancy is caused by a combination of socio-economic and cultural factors such as peer influence, unwanted sexual advances from adult males, coercive sexual relations, unequal gender power relations, poor standard of living, religion, early marriage, lack of parental counseling and guidance, parental neglect, absence of affordable or free education, lack of comprehensive sexuality education and non-use of contraceptives. However, this notion may overlook alternative channels via which

adolescents relate to global challenges and develop worldviews and a desire for equality and social justice in their environment.

Marston & King (2016) found that a lack of true understanding about sexuality issues was one of the key reasons of pregnancies among school girls in their research on school girl pregnancy. Adequate understanding of sexuality can only be acquired via education, and the home environment and parents are viewed as the most appropriate venues for informing children about sexuality concerns (Rangiah, 2012). However, in certain cultures, sexuality concerns are the least addressed or spoken about among family members; any sex topic is considered taboo.

Health poor standard of living emerges from the convergence of numerous critical components of the broader idea of poor standard of living, including cultural and conceptual knowledge, listening, speaking, reading, writing, and numeracy abilities. As a result, more educational access may expose people to more health information. Years of schooling were omitted from this study due to their correlation with the individuals' ages. This is especially troubling, as these are pregnant adolescents whose academic paths may be altered by pregnancy (Chisolm, et al., 2019).

According to Bezudenhout (2018), pregnant adolescents face a multifaceted crisis that includes emotional and physiological development, a possible shift in educational and career pursuits, as well as parental and kinship support, an increase in medical risks during pregnancy, and premature assumption of the adult role with associated responsibilities. According to Karra & Lee (2012), pregnancy instantly disadvantages adolescent are scholastic and economic prospects; may take longer to complete her studies and so be economically inactive for an extended length of time. She may also fail to complete her schooling, struggle to find suitable job, and rely on a government subsidy or help from family to make ends meet.

2.3.3 Effect of inadequate income on adolescent pregnancy

As parents struggle to earn a living, poor parenting has played a significant role in the lack of well-molded children. The investigation uncovered several instances of parents reporting to school and administrative officials that they are incapable of managing their children. These youngsters attend traditional dances, as well as nightclubs and other entertainment venues, where they are exposed to unprotected sex, which results in pregnancy. According to Parenting Africa Network research,

child maltreatment occurs often in environments where parental irresponsibility is also prevalent (Parenting Africa Network, 2015). Adolescents are likely to have complications of pregnancy including unsafe abortion and more likely to become young mothers a second time.

Adolescent girls continue to experience the disproportionately high burden of sexual and reproductive ill health, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. High adolescent pregnancies with adverse health and social consequences are urgent problems facing low- and middle-income countries. The infants are also more likely to be born premature and to die in the perinatal period. Babies born to adolescent mothers face a substantially higher risk of dying than those born to women aged 20 to 24 (Ajze, 2012). However, they are at risk of malnutrition, low mental and physical development, and inappropriate social connection with parents and poor education.

Worldwide, 11% of all pregnancies occur among adolescents aged 15–19 years, with around 95% of these pregnancies occurring in low- and middle-income countries (WHO, 2019). Adolescent fertility rates are higher in less advantaged populations for a variety of reasons, including a lack of knowledge about contraception, a lack of access to care, and an inability to navigate health care systems, as well as a lack of knowledge about the effects of pregnancy and childbirth at younger ages on health-related outcomes (Needham et al., 2017). However, adequate income is one of the most effective interventions to empower adolescents with the most basic skills to function and contribute to society.

The World Bank Group's 2019 report on South Sudan expressed rising worry about the growing poverty rate among the productive sector of the South Sudanese population as a serious impediment to the country's prosperity. Poverty, particularly among parents, has been a source of worry in South Sudan, as emphasized in the World Bank Group's 2019 report. Although the country has a large number of grass-root NGOs engaged in a variety of socio-economic activities aimed at improving people's lives and livelihoods, there is still a need to enhance the level of poverty, particularly among youth. This will surely result in a decrease in adolescent pregnancies, hence improving the level of living (Dongarwar, 2019).

Adolescents develop psychological problems from social stigma; suffer physical and domestic violence in their attempt to meet the demands of pregnancy and childbearing. Also, they most

likely would drop out and may not get the chance to return to school. Economic opportunities are limited to adolescents who could not complete school because of unintended pregnancies. This could be the beginning of a poverty cycle in families, however, some are able to face the challenge and become productive later in life (Govender, *et al.*, 2019). However adequate resources in low and middle-income countries should be channeled to cater for the health needs of pregnant and teen mothers including their children.

According to Campos Vazquez (2016), adolescent pregnancy reduces school years, decreases school attendance, and reduces job hours. In contrast to the previous research, which estimated the cost of early childbearing conditional on pregnancy, this study estimates the cost of adolescent childbearing using a propensity score matching approach by comparing teen mothers to teenagers who deferred childbearing. Along with adverse impacts on schooling and job results, Arceo-Gomez and Campos Vazquez discover considerable adverse effects on adolescent mothers' market chances for marriage.

Kruger & Berthelon (2012) study adolescent fertility as a predictor of high school dropout using nine rounds of Chilean household surveys from 1990 to 2019. They calculate propensity score matching and fixed-family effects on a large subsample of sisters in order to account for selection bias and unobservable variables at the household and municipality levels. Their data reveal that becoming a teenage mother considerably affects the likelihood of completing high school. However, after they account for unobservable factors at the family level, the negative implications of teen pregnancy are significantly decreased.

Inadequate income, poor education, inequality and an inadequate ability to make decisions and control their own life plans which puts young girls at greater risk of adolescent pregnancy and early motherhood (Bongaarts, 2018). However, this can be attributed to lower educational, economic and job opportunities in the country.

Inadequate income and lack of opportunity are directly associated to adolescent pregnancy and early motherhood, which can become impediments to women wanting to take full advantage of development opportunities (Bongaarts & Bulatao, 2017). However, even if the adolescents have

some form of contraception; they are using them incorrectly which makes them useless during sexual activity.

Niger (2016) analyzed the risk factors associated with adolescent pregnancy and highlights that adolescent pregnancy rates are directly linked to inadequate income conditions and factors associated with inequality. Results suggest that those adolescents with more education, living in urban areas and belonging to higher income families have a lower probability of getting pregnant. Pregnant adolescents are more vulnerable and poorer than childless adolescents, this in part is explained by the fact that they belong to different at-risk groups.

Santhya (2016) noted that adolescent pregnancy is relevant from the point of view of development because it's a manifestation of lack of opportunity and because early motherhood can have implications in terms of encouraging the inadequate income cycle between generations, social exclusion and high social costs. Addressing this challenge will require better policies, designed to take into account the complexity of the situation.

Adolescents who become pregnant often come from families of inadequate income. Growing up, these children often come from families which are suffering from inadequate income and do not have all the necessary resources to raise their child. These children grow up to have low educational goals and success because of their involvement from their own parents (UNESCO, 2012). These young kids then predisposed to a negative environment end up with less ambition to succeed in school and begin making friendships with other adolescents who are going through similar situations as them. It is these groups of adolescents who begin to experiment with drugs and alcohol and do not do very well in school.

Inadequate income is further linked to low levels of family connectedness. This means that children/youth growing up in these homes do not have strong role models or individuals to look up to or learn from. Within these inadequate income families, abuse is often prevalent and predisposes youth to unsafe and troubling conditions. Whether the child is being abused or witnessing domestic abuse, adolescents are being separated and disconnected from their families which might lead to poor decision making (UNESCO, 2017). This lack of family connectedness

pushes youth away from confiding in the adults within their homes but towards other troubled youth suffering in the same ways.

Basili (2016) argued that with their lack of education and knowledge about reproduction, these adolescents engage in unprotected and unsafe sexual activity. These adolescents do not know about the available contraceptives nor do they explore their options. These adolescents simply engage in intercourse at very young ages, and may have multiple partners which further leads to increased chances of pregnancy.

UNFPA (2012) indicated that inadequate income is another major cause of inadequate income; often females may be pressured or forced by an older male partner to engage in sexual activity. These young females out of fear may feel forced to engage in unprotected sex without a choice.

Inadequate income may also be prevalent in a different form while in relationships adolescents may be pressured by their partner to have unsafe and unprotected sex in order to express their "love" and "true feelings" for their partner (UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017). However the, the partner may manipulate the other to have unprotected sex which leads to unintended pregnancy.

Inadequate income is also another reason why adolescents may become pregnant. Early inadequate income has been linked to later teen pregnancies. Some children have unfortunately been sexually abused by predators or even family even prior to entering puberty. These young kids often are unable to inform a trusted adult about the situation due to fear of being harmed by their predator (UNICEF, 2012). However, these situations, further affect the child as they enter adolescence and increases chances of teen pregnancy.

Adolescents are often forced to become reliant on their family for financial resources as well as support to help get her through raising a child. In some cases, adolescents are shunned by their parents and do not even receive any support from their parents who are not accepting of the pregnancy (Mathewos & Mekuria, 2018). In addition, these young girls are often forced to lose contact with friends and others in their social groups in order to focus on their pregnancy.

Pregnant adolescents often do not have the proper healthy habits in order to go through a successful child rearing process. These mothers thus have heightened health risks, which inhibits healthy child development. Young women can suffer from things such as anaemia as well as blood pressure

which is only possible during pregnancy (Ahmed, 2018). However, these mothers often smoke and drink because they are not properly educated on the child rearing process.

The children are often also likely to suffer health risks in comparison to those born to adults. They are likely to be cognitively impaired and also susceptible to behavioural issues (Lambani, 2015). The children are likely to be born underweight and prematurely, which is detrimental to their health and may even result in infant mortality.

Robert (2019) noted that the child of a teen mother is very likely to live in inadequate income because of its mother's lack of financial resources. Essentially, the birth of this child becomes the beginning of a perpetual cycle in many cases. The child is likely to endure many of the same issues its mother did in her childhood. For instance, the child is likely to grow up in inadequate income and in very poor conditions. They are likely to be missing a father figure, leaving them with fewer role models and increased chances of confiding in other children in the same situation. The children's academic success is also further compromised and these children do not strive to achieve much academically. Furthermore, these kids have social problems and are unable to make friends very easily which leads to poor relationship development which is a crucial stage in adolescence. Poor relationship development can be linked to the child being deprived economically as well as educationally. The children are likely to drop out of high school and also succumb to the use of drugs and alcohol due to lack of parental involvement and monitoring.

2.4 Empirical studies

Vincent & Alemu (2015) conducted a similar study on factors contributing to, and effects of adolescents' pregnancy in Juba, South Sudan. Their study findings revealed that of most importance contributing factors to adolescents' pregnancy were: love/desire for child, females' repression' (i.e. activities such as schooling are curtailed by parents in preparation for marriage); poverty, peer pressure, non-use of contraception, forced marriage, and poor educational level. According to Vincent & Alemu (2015), many adolescents had not completed elementary school, and this lack of knowledge may have rendered the females more susceptible to early sex, as well as family and peer pressures.

According to Newman (2019), moms frequently fail to explain the reality of menarche to their daughters, and knowledge about menarche must be obtained from an older sister, a peer, or school-based health department nurses. In a 2018 survey done by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), it was shown that parents are hesitant to address sexuality and reproductive concerns with their children (Panday *et al*, 2019). However, low socio-economic level, insufficient education, and early sexual engagement all contribute to the perpetuation of adolescent pregnancy.

Mothiba & Maputle (2012) also carried out a study to examine factors contributing to adolescents' pregnancy in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province, South Africa. While, the researcher contended that, unprotected sexual intercourse can lead to an unwanted adolescent pregnancy which is often considered a serious social and public health problem. Their research findings revealed that adolescents' pregnancy appears to be encouraged by lack of access to sex education.

According to Ochen *et al* (2019), there are several factors that are strongly associated with and contribute to the increased risk of an early pregnancy. These factors include lack of knowledge about sex and how to use contraceptives; barriers to access contraceptives including negative attitudes of health staff; peer pressure; sexual coercion; low self-esteem; low educational expectations; poverty; family breakdown; and heightened sex based messages in the media.

Low sexual and reproductive health literacy is connected with unplanned births in young populations, which are associated with negative social and health consequences for both mother and child. Pregnancies among adolescents aged 15–19 years account for 11% of all pregnancies worldwide, with around 95% of these pregnancies occurring in low- and middle-income countries (Dongarwar, 2019). However, the higher rates of adolescent pregnancy can reflect a lack of knowledge about contraception usage and lack of knowledge about the effects of pregnancy and childbirth at younger ages.

Despite the fact that several research have examined the level of sexual and reproductive health literacy among pregnant adolescents, there has been no study to date that has assessed the level of general health literacy in this cohort. Adolescents who have a higher level of health literacy exhibit more favorable health behaviors, including less usage of dangerous and addictive drugs. The purpose of this study was to assess the health literacy of young pregnant adolescents (ages 13–18

years) and a comparable group of young pregnant adults (ages 23–28 years) living in a rural area of Northeast Brazil, as well as to examine associated factors such as socio-economic status, the adequacy of prenatal care, and social support from family and friends (Needham, 2017). Contrary, the researcher argues that, the higher levels of health literacy among pregnant adolescents are expected to be associated with more positive health behaviors throughout pregnancy, which may assist to mitigate the bad health outcomes associated with such pregnancies.

Adolescent pregnancy is caused by a variety of circumstances, ranging from individual conduct to traditional, sociocultural, and religious influences. Additionally, inadequate enforcement of the Penal Code Act (which criminalizes sexual intercourse with girls under the age of 18) and the National Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy by government institutions, as well as a lack of community and social support, contribute to adolescents' pregnancy (United Nations Children's Fund, 2018). Additionally, the researcher viewed that, increasing access to social media and pornographic sharing, cross-cultural influences, and decreasing parental supervision have all contributed to youth initiating sexual behavior at an earlier age, hence getting pregnant.

2.5 Gaps in the Literature

Form the reviewed literature, many studies on the poverty and adolescent pregnancy were done some years ago and in different places not particularly in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan, which breeds a geographical gap. Therefore, this study has been carried in Eastern Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan to cover the gaps and contradiction in the findings of Govender, *et al.* (2019) where he stated that a higher level of poverty is connected with more favorable health behaviors among adolescents, including a reduction in the use of dangerous and addictive drugs. Govender, *et al.* (2019) failed to comprehensively investigate the effect of poverty on adolescent pregnancy, therefore, this study seeks to explore the effect of poverty on adolescent pregnancy in in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

Vincent & Alemu (2015) conducted a similar study on factors contributing to, and effects of adolescents' pregnancy in Juba, South Sudan. Their study findings revealed that of most importance contributing factors to adolescents' pregnancy were: love/desire for child, females' repression' (i.e. activities such as schooling are curtailed by parents in preparation for marriage);

poverty, peer pressure, non-use of contraception, forced marriage, and poor educational level. While, according to Vincent & Alemu (2015), many adolescents had not completed elementary school, and this lack of knowledge may have rendered the females more susceptible to early sex, as well as family and peer pressures. Further, Mothiba & Maputle (2012) also carried out a study to examine factors contributing to adolescents' pregnancy in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province, South Africa. While, the researcher contended that, unprotected sexual intercourse can lead to an unwanted adolescent pregnancy which is often considered a serious social and public health problem. Their research findings revealed that adolescents' pregnancy appears to be encouraged by lack of access to sex education.

Kruger & Berthelon (2012) study adolescent fertility as a predictor of high school dropout using nine rounds of Chilean household surveys from 1990 to 2019. They calculate propensity score matching and fixed-family effects on a large subsample of sisters in order to account for selection bias and unobservable variables at the household and municipality levels. Their data reveal that becoming a teenage mother considerably affects the likelihood of completing high school. However, after they account for unobservable factors at the family level, the negative implications of teen pregnancy are significantly decreased.

Another gap identified is the geographical gap, though there a number of studies that have been conducted on adolescent pregnancy most of them have been stated out in Bangladeshi, Nigeria, Tanzania, Senegal among other countries and even the few that have been conducted from South Sudan focused on other areas other than Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. In conclusion however, hardly any of the above scholars studied the effect of Poverty and adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, target population, sample size, sampling strategies, data collection tools, their validity and reliability, data collection processes, data analysis, and ethical issues.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is the structure, or the blueprint, of research that guides the process of research from the formulation of the research questions and hypotheses to reporting the research findings (Cooper, Schindler, & Sun, 2010; Salaria, 2012).

This study employed a descriptive survey design; this involved assessing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group. It determined the effect between variables and the relationship between variables. The design was chosen because it enables the researcher to obtain information needed for the study; also it helps the researcher to focus on a single unit of study. It helped the researcher in getting a deeper knowledge of a wide problem with Limited resources. The study was based on two approaches, and these included quantitative and qualitative approaches for the purposes of proper triangulation of data.

3.2 Target Population

The target population refers to the group of individuals that the intervention intends to conduct research in and draw conclusions from (Amin, 2005). The target population of this study was the adolescent girls from two tribes (Otuho and Lokoya) in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

According to South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics, Torit County has a total population of 153314, according to the 2017 statistics. From this population, 50.78% are males while 49.22% (75,461) are females; the adolescent population in this area was 25.4% (Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State population Report, 2022). Based on this data therefore, the target population of this study was 13417 adolescent girls, which was 25.4% of the female population in Torit County

(South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics website, 2022). These were distributed in all the 32 villages found in Torit County. This study's accessible population was that of adolescent girls from the four villages within Torit county (these include Torit, Hiyala, Lowoi and Ofiriha). On average therefore, each village has a population of 419 adolescent girls, so the total population of adolescent girls from the four selected villages were 1677 (419 × 4). These four villages were selected due to the reported increasing rates of adolescent pregnancies in the area resulting from the escalating poverty levels (UNICEF, 2018).

In addition to adolescent girls from the four selected villages, there were other stakeholders in the area of poverty and adolescent pregnancy involved as the study's key informants, these included 4 village chiefs, 4 youth leaders and 4 women representatives, hence making a total study population of 1689 respondents (these included 1677 adolescent girls, 4 village chiefs, 4 youth leaders and 4 women representatives).

3.3 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of participants or observations included in a study (Polit et al., 2006). This number was usually represented by n. Given a target population of 1689, a sample size of 323 respondents is reached using Slovene's formula. Whereby, 311 adolescent girls, 4 village chiefs, 4 youth and 4 women representatives was involved as key informants, giving a total sample size of 323 respondents. The Slovene's formula was used to calculate the sample size, and stated as follows;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

N=Population size

n=Sample size

e=Level of significance (0.05 is common level used)

$$\frac{1689}{1 + 1689(0.05)^2}$$

$$\frac{1677}{1 + 1689 \times 0.0025}$$

$$\frac{1689}{5.2225}$$

≈ 323 Adolescent girls

Where; n = the sample size; N = the population size; and e = the level of significance, Which is = 0.05.

Table 3.1: Population, Sample size and Sampling techniques

Category	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques
Teenage girls	1677	311	Simple Random Sampling
Village chiefs	4	4	Purposive Sampling
Youth leaders	4	4	Purposive Sampling
Women Representatives	4	4	Purposive Sampling
Total	1689	323	

Source: South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics. (2022).

3.4 Sampling Techniques

Simple random sampling and purposive techniques were adopted to select the sample size from the study population.

3.4.1 Simple random sampling

Simple random sampling is a technique where all respondents have got an equal chance of being selected (Creswell, 2019). The purpose of using simple random sampling was to give each respondent equal chance of being selected. The 323 adolescent girls were selected proportionately, with each of the four villages taking at most 81 respondents, who were selected using simple random sampling technique.

3.4.2 Purposive sampling

According to Kumar (2016), purposive sampling refers to a method of selecting respondents, where the researcher selects respondents believed (judged) to have the information the researcher wants. The researcher selects respondents according to pre-defined inclusion criteria. In this study, purposive sampling was used to enable the researcher select a specified category of the population

being studied using a set criterion. These included; village chiefs, youth leaders and women representatives who all have a bigger stake in the well-being of adolescent girls. The researcher used a purposive technique to provide the opportunity for these subjects to be included in the study given their positions and level of information (and knowledge) they had about issues concerning adolescent pregnancy and poverty.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

3.5.1 Questionnaires

According to Kumar (2016) a questionnaire refers to a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents. In this study, a researcher used the questionnaire to collect data. The researcher used questionnaires because they enhanced effective and efficient means to quickly collect massive amounts of information from many respondents (in this case 323 respondents) in a relatively short period of time. The questionnaire contained three sections labeled A, B and C. Section A involved questions on the demographic characteristics of respondents. Section B had questions intended to measure the level of poverty and the last section (C) had questions on adolescent pregnancy.

3.5.2 Key Informant Interview

Kumar (2016) defines an interview guide as a list of issues, topics or discussion points to be covered during an interview session with the participants, which helps to remind the researcher (interviewer) of the areas covered in a data collection session. In this study, the researcher also used the key informant's interview technique as a second tool to collect data from at least four participants in each of the four villages. The researcher used the key informant interview technique to enable her to relate directly with people who had more knowledge and information on the study variables. This involved interviewing the selected people to provide deeper information about the study variables. The key informant interview technique targeted village chiefs, youth leaders and women representatives from the four selected villages.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

3.6.1 Validity

According to Taherdoost (2016), validity refers to an instrument's suitability for measuring the variables desired by the researcher. The content validity index (C.V.I.) was used to determine the

validity of the questionnaires and interview guide's questions. Following the instrument's design, the researcher gave it to two experts in the topic area being examined to grade or judge all of the questionnaire's questions. This was done to identify whether they are pertinent or not to the study topic and to mark out those that are not.

The pilot study was tested whether the questions are clear and would be understood by different respondents and lead to improvements in the precision of the questions. Content validity ratio/index (CVR) for the questionnaire were computed using the following formula.

$$\text{CVR} = \frac{\text{Number of items considered valid on the draft}}{\text{Number of items on the draft instruments}}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{CVR} &= \frac{24}{30} \\ \text{CVR} &= \mathbf{0.8} \end{aligned}$$

The CVR for the questionnaire is 0.8 which is above 0.7, which is recommended by Nunnally (1967) cited by Kent (2018). This meant that the questionnaire was valid and therefore suitable for collecting data.

3.6.2 Reliability

According to Phelan and Wren (2016), dependability refers to an instrument's capacity to produce reliable, consistent data. This implied that each time the instrument was used to measure a variable; the findings should be almost same. The instruments' reliability was evaluated using the test-retest approach, which involves conducting the same test to a group of individuals twice over a period of time. To employ the test-retest procedure, the instrument was administered both individually and in a group setting in order to triangulate the data acquired. The instrument's dependability was thus judged by the t-test result, which was 0.82, indicating that it was acceptable.

Table 3.2: Reliability Statistics

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	NO. of Items
Illiteracy	0.837	8
Poor standard of living	0.797	8
Inadequate income	0.828	7
Adolescent pregnancy	0.879	23

Source (Primary Data. 2022).

The results above satisfy the research methodology rule to ensure a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of at least 0.7 was considered, hence confirming the research instrument was reliable. To ensure the reliability of the data collection instruments (questionnaire and interview guide), the test-retest technique also was applied where the instruments were applied on ten respondents and then re-applied on the same ten respondents in a space of seven days to see if they were able to give similar responses and thus test the reliability of the instruments.

3.7 Data Analysis

After data collection, the researcher screened it to check its completeness, which included reading over all questionnaires and the responses gathered from them, as well as the interview guide, to ensure that all questions were correctly filled out or replied. Where there were inconsistencies, the researcher conducted follow-up contacts to obtain clarity. Quantitative data from the surveys were entered and then analyzed and interpreted using basic percentages. Additionally, the interviews and conversations were examined and study findings were presented in the form of tables and narratives. Content analysis were used to assess qualitative data.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

As this research was being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's degree in Social Work and Social Administration, permission from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences' management was sought first, and a formal letter was granted that was presented to targeted respondents and institutions to facilitate effective data collection.

Additionally, suitable measures were taken to ensure that participants' privacy, confidentiality, dignity, rights, and anonymity were protected. The researcher notified the participants that their names were not used for any other reason and that no information revealing their identity was disclosed.

3.8 Limitations of the study

Bias from the respondents to simply fill the questionnaires to please the researcher. The researcher conducted a face to face interaction to clarify the purpose and objective of the study.

Fear of giving confidential information as viewed by the organization they work for. Here the researcher assured them of at most good faith with supporting documents for undertaking the study. Fear of giving confidential information by respondents.

The researcher ensured at most good faith with supporting documents for undertaking the study for the respondents to provide the required information.

On looking at the limited time, some respondents delayed the questionnaires because of busy schedules. However, the researcher used an introduction letter from the university to mitigate the outcome. In addition, the researcher politely requested respondents to participate in answering the questions and return them quickly.

During the study, an informed consent form was attached to each questionnaire, and interview guide which was required to be filled and signed by the respondents before any attempt to partake in this study. This form, as attached to the appendices sought to ensure that the respondents were coerced into taking part in the study which made the research program a success.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF STUDY FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

The study findings and analysis are presented in this chapter. The purpose of the study was to assess the effect of poverty on adolescent pregnancy in South Sudan, with a specific reference of Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. The discussions of the study findings were done in line with the study objectives. The qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis technique.

The chapter also presents the general background information about the respondents of the study. This includes; age bracket, gender, level of education, and their family's economic status. The analysis is based on the data collected using questionnaires and interview guide which were answered by the target respondents. These findings were analyzed using SPSS version 24, Microsoft excel and Microsoft word and presented in tables and percentages as it gives a clear understanding of the study findings. It ends with inferential statistics testing for the hypothesis of the study.

4.1. Response Rate

Table 4.1 below shows that out of the 311 questionnaires distributed, only 264 filled questionnaires were returned giving a percentage response rate of 85.0%. While, 12 interviews were planned, however; only 10 were conducted giving a percentage response rate of 3.2%. The overall response rate was 88.1%. This response rate was above the recommended two-thirds (67%) response rate and could be generalized as observed by Sekaran (2003). This indicates that the researcher was able to obtain enough data for a comprehensive report.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

	Targeted Number	Valid Instruments	Percentage
Questionnaires	311	264	85.0
Interviews guides	12	10	3.2
Total	323	274	88.1

Source: Primary data. (2022).

4.2. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the sample that were considered important for this study are; age bracket, level of education, years spent in the area and the family economic status of the respondents as indicated in the tables 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 below.

4.2.1. Age of the Respondents

A descriptive analysis of the age of the different study participants was carried out and the results were as presented in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Age of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
12- 15 years	127	46.4	46.4
16-18 years	84	30.6	77.0
20-24 years	48	17.5	94.5
25+ years	15	5.5	5.50
Total	274	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary data. (2022).

According to the findings in table 4.2, 127(46.4%) of the study respondents were between the 12-15 years, and 84(30.6%) of the respondents were between 16-18 years of age and 48(17.5%) of the respondents were between 20-24 years of age, while the minority 15(5.5%) of the respondents were 25 and above years of age. This meant that participants were old enough, and therefore were able to understand, articulate and interpret questions given their life time experiences.

4.2.3. Level of Education of the Respondents

Quantitative analysis of the level of education of the participants was considered and presented in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Education Level of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelors	32	11.5	90.3
Diploma	65	23.3	62.7
Certificate	40	16.1	78.8
Primary- Secondary Level	110	39.4	39.4
Never Attended School	18	6.5	96.8
Post Graduate Degrees	09	3.2	3.20
Total	274	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary data. (2022).

According to the findings in table 4.3, 110(39.4%) of the respondents were Primary- Secondary Level graduates/ attendees, 65(23.3%) of the respondents had diplomas in various fields and 40(16.1%) of the respondents were holding certificates in various courses, 32(11.5%) of the respondents had Bachelor's Degree, 18(6.5%) of the respondents had never attended school, while the remaining 9(3.2%) had done post graduate degrees in various fields. This implied that though, the majority respondents were primary – Secondary graduates, a combination of other categories of 65(23.3%) for diploma and 45(16.1%) for certificate holders, the respondents were believed to have acquired a reasonable level of knowledge about the subject under study. The results also indicated that the information got during the research can be depended on as most of the respondents were educated with capability of internalizing issues and making independent decisions.

This is in line with Fujii, (2017)'s study on Interviewing in social science research: a relational approach, who asserted that, investigations in social science research should have some acceptable level of learning in order for them to interpret the content of the study. In agreement, Uma (2000) argued that it is important in social investigation research to involve people that have attained an

acceptable level of literacy and numeracy in order to be in position to understand and interpreted the content in questionnaire.

4.2.4. Economic status of the Respondents Families

Respondents were asked about the rate of economic status of their families in which they were belonging and the study findings are indicated in 4.4 below;

Table 4.4: Economic status of the Respondent’s Families

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
High status	45	59.9	59.9
Medium status	65	21.5	81.4
Low status	164	2.9	93.6
Total	274	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary data. (2022).

Results from table 4.4 above indicate that 167(59.9%) of the respondents were of low status, compared to 65(21.5%) of the respondents who were of medium status and lastly 45(9.3%). This showed that most of the respondents’ economic status were low, an indication that the study contained the right respondents with the right information as the study was about the poverty effect on adolescent pregnancy in South Sudan.

4.2.4. Years spent in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan

Respondents were asked about their length of stay in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan and the study findings are indicated in 4.5 below;

Table 4.5: Years Respondents spent in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
5-9 years	125	45.5	45.5
10-14 years	74	27.2	72.7
Valid 15+ above years	46	16.8	89.5
0-4 year	29	10.5	100.0
Total	274	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary data. (2022).

Results from table 4.5 above indicate that 125(45.5%) of the respondents had spent a period between 5-9 years in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. While, 74(27.2%) had been there for a period between 10-14 years and 46(16.8%) had been there for a period between 15+ years, and lastly, 29(10.5%) had spent a period between 0-4 years. The highest representation was (45.5%), which implied that most respondents were very familiar with the area and therefore had enough experience about the current affairs and issues in the region.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables

These outputs below provide descriptive statistics for all of the independent variables and the dependent variable. The responses were graded on a 5 Linkert scale depicting; SD-Strongly, D-Disagree, N- Neither Agree nor Disagree, A- Agree, SA- Strongly Agree. The descriptive statistics included in the output are, the Mean (or average) for each item and the Std. deviation (the standard deviation). Mean: In the study shows the average of response. Standard Deviation (SD): In the study shows how spread the responses are to or from the mean value. The results are summarized in the tables, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 below.

4.3.1. Level of Poverty

Table 4.6 below presents the Descriptive statistics of the Level of Poverty

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics of the Level of Poverty

Level of Poverty	Mean	SD
Illiteracy		
Education is a priority in our community	3.30	0.43
Government has provided education funds as a way of alleviating poverty in your community	3.22	0.59
Students from government schools have access to diversified content of learning to acquire skills in order to start their own businesses	3.09	0.63
Education programmes have been put in place by the government as a way of reducing illiteracy levels in your community	2.86	0.68
Poor school performance and attendance has caused adolescent girls get pregnant	2.79	0.70

Academic failure or indifference to school-related activities has always tempted adolescent girls into sexual practices	2.61	0.75
Many adolescents feel like pregnancy and Sexual Track Infections are things that only happen to other people	2.55	0.79
Many adolescents don't know the risks of unprotected sex	2.35	0.85
Average Mean & SD	4.1	0.71
Poor standard of living		
I can afford better health care for me and my family members	2.65	0.72
I have been able to expand my business in the past five years	2.54	0.76
I have access to safe and clean water	2.45	0.80
I can afford to provide enough food for my family members	2.35	0.85
Unstable housing arrangements has caused many adolescents into sexual practices	2.40	0.82
Family violence and sexual abuse throughout childhood has made many adolescents engage in sexual activities	2.37	0.85
Many adolescent girls don't see any better options for their future than getting pregnant and dropping out of school	2.30	0.88
Many adolescent girls have always experienced poor living conditions which has tempted them into sexual activities	2.25	0.90
Average Mean & SD	2.49	0.78
Inadequate income		
Trade unions have been put in place as a way of empowering self-employed citizens in Eastern Equatoria State	3.45	0.43
The citizens in our community have always tried to empower themselves by acquiring more of powers in different forms	3.40	0.48
Development policies and investments have been put in place to strengthen the abilities, networks, skills and knowledge among individuals in your community.	3.37	0.51

Some girls after conceiving and producing run to streets to beg for money due to financial difficulties	3.22	0.55
Many adolescents can't afford use of family planning methods	3.35	0.53
Adolescents who can't afford attending school are more likely to get pregnant or start childbearing than those who are in school	3.25	0.57
Most of the girls don't get jobs after producing due to lack of any skills and hence no clear source of incomes	3.12	0.59
Average Mean & SD	3.27	0.53
Overall mean & SD	3.28	0.67

Source: Primary Data. (2022).

Description of the table;

From the results in Table 4.6 above shows, that illiteracy is a crucial factor in escalating the increasing adolescent pregnancies in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan due to increasing high poverty rates.

- **Illiteracy**

Under illiteracy as an attribute of poverty, majority of the respondents agreed that Education is a priority in our community, with a mean value of (3.30), Standard Deviation (SD) at (0.43). And majority of the respondents asserted that the government has provided education funds as a way of alleviating poverty in the community, and this was rated to be high with a mean value of (3.22), and Standard Deviation (SD) at (0.59). A good number of the respondents said that students from government schools have access to diversified content of learning to acquire skills in order to start their own businesses, with an average mean of 3.09 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.63. Similarly, a good number of the respondents said that Education programmes have been put in place by the government as a way of reducing illiteracy levels in the community, with an average mean of 2.86 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.68. This implied that a lack of true understanding about sexuality issues appeared to be a significant factor in schoolgirl pregnancies. Thus, the adequate understanding of sexuality can only be acquired via education, and the home environment

and parents are viewed as the most appropriate venues for informing children about sexuality concerns.

Further, majority of the respondents asserted that the Poor school performance and attendance has caused adolescent girls get pregnant, this is confirmed by mean of (2.79) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.70). While, good number of the respondents agreed that academic failure or indifference to school-related activities has always tempted adolescent girls into sexual practices; as this is confirmed by mean of (2.61) and a Standard Deviation (SD) of (0.75). In addition, a good number said agreed that many adolescents feel like pregnancy and Sexual Track Infections are things that only happen to other people, with an average mean of 2.55 and SD of 0.79. And lastly, a good number agreed that many adolescents don't know the risks of unprotected sex, with a mean of 2.35 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.85, which shows that majority of the respondents agreed to the question. This showed that although pregnancy and motherhood do not typically impair adolescent academic performance, they do introduce a new set of circumstances that influence future educational decisions made by the girl.

- **Poor standard of living**

While under Poor standard of living; an attribute of poverty levels, majority of the respondents asserted that they can afford better health care for themselves and their family members, this is confirmed by mean value of (2.65) and a standard deviation spread from the mean value at (0.72). Further still, a good number of the respondents agreed that they have been able to expand their businesses in the past five years, as this is confirmed by mean value of (2.54) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.76). In addition, a good number said and agreed that they have access to safe and clean water, with an average mean of 2.45 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.80. This showed that literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills necessary for students to access, comprehend, analyze, and evaluate information, to create meaning, to express thoughts and emotions, to present ideas and opinions, to interact with others, and to participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school that contribute to a higher standard of living.

Furthermore, a good number agreed that they can afford to provide enough food for their family members, with a mean of 2.35 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.85. Also, majority of the

respondents agreed that unstable housing arrangements has caused many adolescents into sexual practices, as shown with a mean of (2.40) & Standard Deviation (SD) of (0.82). A good number of the respondents agreed that family violence and sexual abuse throughout childhood has made many adolescents engage in sexual activities, with a mean of (2.37), & Standard Deviation (SD) of (0.85). More so, a good number of the respondents also agreed that many adolescent girls don't see any better options for their future than getting pregnant and dropping out of school, with an average mean of (2.30), & Standard Deviation (SD) of (0.88). Lastly, a good number of the respondents agreed that many adolescent girls have always experienced poor living conditions which have tempted them into sexual activities, with a mean of (2.25) and Standard Deviation (SD) at (0.90), which shows that majority of the respondents agreed to the question. This also implied that Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace, and democracy.

- **Inadequate Income**

While under the attribute of inadequate income, majority of the respondents agreed that Trade unions have been put in place as a way of empowering self-employed citizens in Eastern Equatoria State as agreed with a mean of (3.45) & Standard Deviation (SD) of (0.43). Additionally, a good number of the respondents agreed that the citizens in our community have always tried to empower themselves by acquiring more of powers in different forms, with a mean of (3.40), & Standard Deviation (SD) of (0.48). More so, a good number of the respondents agreed that development policies and investments have been put in place to strengthen the abilities, networks, skills and knowledge among individuals in your community, with an average mean of (3.37), & Standard Deviation (SD) of (0.51). Still, some girls after conceiving and producing run to streets to beg for money due to financial difficulties as shown by an average mean of (3.22), & Standard Deviation (SD) of (0.55). This showed that individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole benefit from literacy since it establishes options and avenues for improved health and growth. It facilitates progression and progress.

Also majority respondents, many adolescents can't afford use of family planning methods, with a mean of (3.35) and Standard Deviation (SD) at (0.53). While, adolescents who can't afford attending school are more likely to get pregnant or start childbearing than those who are in school, with a mean of (3.25) and Standard Deviation (SD) at (0.57). And finally, most of the girls don't get jobs after producing due to lack of any skills and hence no clear source of incomes, with a mean of (3.12) and Standard Deviation (SD) at (0.59); which shows that majority of the respondents agreed to the question. Also the finding meant that a high literacy rate indicates that the school system is capable of providing opportunity for the people to develop strong literacy abilities.

The study results indicated that high poverty levels had a far reaching impact on adolescent pregnancies in Torit County, Eastern Equatorio shown by an overall mean of; 3.28 & Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.67, and this was interpreted as relatively high. This is therefore a clear indication that the respondents were fully convinced that illiteracy levels in Torit County, Eastern Equatorio is unprecedentedly responsible for the increasing adolescent pregnancies in the area.

4.3.3. Adolescent pregnancy

Table 4.7. Below presents the Descriptive statistics of Adolescent pregnancy

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics of Adolescent pregnancy

	Mean	SD
Adolescent pregnancy		
Coercive sexual relations	3.10	0.58
The physical and emotional impact of early marriage on adolescents greatly influence them into being married to older men	3.05	0.64
Rape is a profoundly negative and traumatic life event with widespread psychological and sociological effects among adolescents	2.95	0.67
Most of families which force adolescents in marriages are normally poor	2.80	0.69
Adolescents girls many times believe that having sex will give them emotional intimacy	3.09	0.68
Many adolescents feel pressured to have sex because everyone is doing it	2.85	0.72

Adolescents are not emotionally mature enough to make safer choices about sex	2.67	0.75
Many adolescents girls feel pressured by their partners to have unprotected sex	2.55	0.60
Being a victim of sexual abuse has made many adolescents get pregnant	3.09	0.68
Average Mean & SD	2.98	0.65
School drop out		
Because of high levels of poverty, the need to feel accepted and normal can be overwhelming once approached	2.85	0.68
Adolescents who enter high school lacking fundamental requirements often experience a social rejection	2.78	0.70
Adolescents, who are not receiving validation through their school work, look for that acceptance elsewhere	2.70	0.72
Adolescents who are failing in school and searching for validation	2.65	0.76
Many Adolescent girls come from lower income groups and don't expect much from their future	2.75	0.74
Many adolescents think having a baby seems like a good alternative to finishing school	2.57	0.61
Being in an environment where teen pregnancy is common has made adolescents copy the same	2.45	0.65
A combination of cultural, traditional arguments also justifies adolescents marriage in Eastern Equatoria State	2.40	0.68
Average Mean & SD	2.75	0.72
Parental guidance		
Lack of information about sexual and reproductive health and rights highly causes adolescent pregnancies	2.70	0.73
Inadequate access to services from parents highly causes adolescent pregnancy	2.60	0.78

Family, community and social pressure to marry highly causes adolescent pregnancy	2.58	0.81
Lack of parental guidance and right up bringing highly causes pregnancy among adolescents	2.45	0.83
Adolescents often do not get good information about sex, relationships, and values from reliable sources, such as parents.	2.57	0.79
Adolescents believe that having sex will give them higher social status with their peers	2.50	0.83
Many adolescents feel embarrassed about asking for or buying contraception and are not guided by their parents	2.47	0.86
Hostile distant relationships between parents has led adolescents to an unplanned pregnancy	2.38	0.91
Average Mean & SD	2.53	0.79
Overall Mean & SD	2.75	0.75

Source: Primary Data. (2022).

The results in Table 4.7 indicated that Coercive sexual relations, School dropout and Parental guidance are attributes in assessing the leading crucial factors of Adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

- **Coercive sexual relations**

Under the Coercive sexual relations attribute, majority of the respondents agreed that the physical and emotional impact of early marriage on adolescents greatly influence them into being married to older men, with a mean of (3.10), Standard Deviation (SD) at (0.58). And majority of the respondents asserted that rape is a profoundly negative and traumatic life event with widespread psychological and sociological effects among adolescents, with a mean value of (3.05), an Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.64). Similarly, a good number asserted that most of families which force adolescents in marriages are normally poor, with a mean value of (2.80) and Standard Deviation (SD) of (0.69). And adolescent girls many times believe that having sex will give them emotional intimacy with a mean of (3.09) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.68). This

implied that adolescent pregnancy changes the course of a young mom's life. It puts her in a place where she's responsible not only for herself, but also for another human being. In addition to higher rates of postpartum depression, teenage mothers have higher rates of depression; teen mothers face significant levels of stress that can then lead to increased mental health concerns.

Comparatively, many adolescents feel pressured to have sex because everyone is doing it, with a mean of (2.85) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.68). And a good number of the respondents agreed that adolescents are not emotionally mature enough to make safer choices about sex, as this is confirmed by mean of (2.67) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.75). In addition, a relative number agreed that many adolescent girls feel pressured by their partners to have unprotected sex, with an average mean of 2.55 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.60. Lastly, a good number agreed that being a victim of sexual abuse has made many adolescents get pregnant, with a mean of 3.09 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.68. This finding meant that parents are the single largest influence on their adolescents' decisions about sex, and parents underestimate the impact they have on their decisions. Hence, parents should offer clear, accurate, and developmentally appropriate information about the behaviors expected from their children and how to keep them safe.

- **School Dropout**

While under school dropout, majority of the respondents asserted that because of high levels of poverty, the need to feel accepted and normal can be overwhelming once approached, with a mean of (2.85) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.68). While, the respondents added that adolescents who enter high school lacking fundamental requirements often experience a social rejection, this is confirmed by mean of (2.78) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.70). In addition, a relative number agreed that Adolescents, who are not receiving validation through their school work, look for that acceptance elsewhere, with an average mean of 2.70 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.72. Also, Adolescents who are failing in school and searching for validation, with a mean of 2.65 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.76. The study findings meant that adolescent pregnancy changes the course of a young mom's life. It puts her in a place where she's responsible not only for herself, but also for another human being.

Further, the majority respondents had it that many adolescent girls come from lower income groups and don't expect much from their future, with a mean of 2.75 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.74. Also, majority referred many adolescents think having a baby seems like a good alternative to finishing school with an average mean of 2.57 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.61. Also, a good number agreed that being in an environment where teen pregnancy is common has made adolescents copy the same, with a mean of 2.45 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.65. And also, a combination of cultural, traditional arguments also justifies adolescents' marriage in Eastern Equatoria State, with a mean of 2.40 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.68.

- **Parental guidance**

Then under Parental guidance, majority of the respondents asserted that lack of information about sexual and reproductive health and rights highly causes adolescent pregnancies, with a mean of (2.70) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.73). Also a good number of the respondents agreed that inadequate access to services from parents highly causes adolescent pregnancy, this is confirmed by mean of (2.60) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.78).

In addition, a relative number agreed that family, community and social pressure to marry highly causes adolescent pregnancy as showed by an average mean of 2.58 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.81. Well, the lack of parental guidance and right up bringing highly causes pregnancy among adolescents with a mean value of (2.45) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.83). The study findings also meant that unwanted pregnancies, the beginnings of sexual relationships in unsafe settings and other difficulties experienced by vulnerable teenagers often do not occur randomly but in the context of a background that leaves them prone to some misfortune

Additionally, adolescents often do not get good information about sex, relationships, and values from reliable sources, such as parents with a mean value of (2.57) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.79). And a good number of (45%) and (43%) agreed that adolescents believe that having sex will give them higher social status with their peers with a mean of 2.50 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.83. This also showed that some parents do not monitor their children either through lack of education or broken homes. Some parents don't even care about things that their children wear

and even where they get those things from. Therefore, this care- free attitude of the parents gives room to children to feel at ease and go out with boys leading to unwanted pregnancies.

And lastly, majority respondents agreed to the statement that many adolescents feel embarrassed about asking for or buying contraception and are not guided by their parents, and that hostile distant relationships between parents has led adolescents to an unplanned pregnancy, with a mean value of (2.38) and Standard Deviation (SD) value at (0.91) and Mean value of 2.75 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.75 respectively. Thus, the study results indicated that adolescent pregnancies had an average Mean value of 2.75 and Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.75, and was interpreted as good. Thus, a clear indication that despite the varying measures /interventions set in place, adolescent pregnancy remains a scratching phenomenon. And there are still high cases of adolescent pregnancies in the region.

4.3.5. General descriptive statistics for combined variables

Table 4.8 below presents the General descriptive statistics for combined variables

Table 4.8: General descriptive statistics for combined variables

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Relationship Total	310	10.98	2.33	-.362	.235
Valid N (listwise)	274				

Source: Survey data computed by the researcher.(2022).

The results in table 4.8 above show statistics on the combined influence of illiteracy, poor standard of living and inadequate income as crucial factors of poverty increase in Torit Country, Equatoria-South Sudan. The mean score of 10.98 and the standard deviation of 2.33 indicate that the responses were close to the mean. The negative skew of -.362 indicates that the mean is less than the median because few low scores shifted the mean to the left and more values were concentrated on the right with low values to the left. This means that, basing on the patterns between responses, the majority of respondents agreed that illiteracy, poor standard of living and inadequate income

as crucial factors of poverty increase in Torit Country; Equatoria-South Sudan had an influence on adolescent pregnancies.

The study sought to establish the relationships between the study variables (illiteracy, poor standard of living and inadequate income).

Correlation analysis and Regression analysis were used to accomplish this purpose.

4.4.1. Correlation Analysis (Hypothesis Testing)

Correlation is used to find the relationship between two or more sets of variables. Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation was employed in establishing the relationship between the study variables. The results of the correlation are presented in Table 4.9 below;

Table 4.9: Pearson's Zero Order Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4
Illiteracy (1)	1			
Poor Standards Of Living (2)	.554**	1		
Inadequate Income (3)	.570**	.582**	1	
Adolescent pregnancy (4)	.640**	.622**	.607**	1

***. Correlation is positive at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Source: Primary data analysis by the researcher. (2022).

The purpose of the study is to assess the effect of poverty (illiteracy, poor standards of living, and inadequate income on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

4.4.1. Illiteracy and adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

Results in Table 4.9 above show a positive and relatively significant relationship between Illiteracy and adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. (Pearson correlation of .640 and P-value < 0.01). Therefore, an increase in the level of illiteracy resulted into improved a high number of adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

Thus, from the above findings, the researcher rejects the hypothesis that Illiteracy has no a significant effect on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

The results are in line with the qualitative results as expressed by the respondents in the interview guide as explained below;

During the interviews, a respondent was quoted saying, “There are three main contributors that link poor reading skills with teen pregnancy: a search for social acceptance, low self-esteem, and the effects of poverty (often correlated with race). Researchers believe these risk factors, linked to literacy, enhance the risk of teen pregnancy.

“.....Adolescent pregnancies are a global issue but most often occur in poorer and marginalized communities. Many girls face considerable pressure to marry early and become mothers while they are still children themselves.....”

“.....Teenage pregnancy increases when girls are denied the right to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and well-being.....”

“....Girls must be able to make their own decisions about their bodies and futures and have access to appropriate healthcare services and comprehensive sexuality education.....”

“.....The causes of teenage pregnancy include; Lack of information about sexual and reproductive health and rights, Inadequate access to services tailored to young people, Family, community and social pressure to marry, Sexual violence, Child, early and forced marriage, which can be both a cause and a consequence and Lack of education or school drop-out etc.”

Another respondent was quoted saying, *“.....Approximately 90% of births to girls aged 15-19 in developing countries occur within early marriage where there is often an imbalance of power, no access to contraception and pressure on girls to prove their fertility.....”*.

He added that, *“.....Factors such as parental income highly influences the girl child’s education level. A child from low-income parent have high chances of starting school late and or even not completing school than their peers who come from more affluent families, as shown in measures of school readiness.....”*

“.....Girls who have received minimal education are 5 times more likely to become a mother than those with higher levels of education. Pregnant girls often drop out of school, limiting opportunities for future employment and perpetuating the cycle of poverty. In many cases, girls perceive pregnancy to be a better option than continuing their education.....”.

“.....In addition, the unique risks faced by girls during emergencies increase the chances of them becoming pregnant. Factors include the desire to compensate for the loss of a child, reduced access to information and contraception and increased sexual violence.....”.

“.....Adolescent pregnancy remains a major contributor to maternal and child mortality. Complications relating to pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death for girls aged 15-19 globally. Pregnant girls and adolescents also face other health risks and complications due to their immature bodies. Babies born to younger mothers are also at greater risk”.

“For many adolescents, pregnancy and childbirth are neither planned, nor wanted. In countries where abortion is prohibited or highly restricted, adolescents typically resort to unsafe abortion, putting their health and lives at risk. Some 3.9 million unsafe abortions occur each year to girls aged 15-19 in developing regions.....”

4.4.2. Poor Standard of Living and Adolescent Pregnancy

Results in Table 4.9 indicated a positive and significant relationship between the Poor Standard of Living and Adolescent Pregnancy with ($r = .570$, $P\text{-value} < 0.01$) and a moderately positive and significant relationship between inadequate income and Adolescent Pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan ($r = .607$, $P\text{-value} < 0.01$). This indicates that improved standards of living may influence the social life of adolescents, of which social life may dictate the behaviors of adolescents.

Hence, from the above findings, the researcher accepts the hypothesis that poor standard of living has a significant effect on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

This is also confirmed by the qualitative data as stated below;

During the interviews, the respondent was quoted saying, “.....*Teens living in poverty are more likely to get pregnant than teens who do not, and furthermore, teen parents often had lower lifetime earnings, as well as more social problems throughout life . Pregnancy rates were highest among teens from single-parent families who had experienced poverty.....”*

Another respondent said, “*Teenage girls from low income families are falling pregnant at a higher rate than those from middle and upper income families. Posel (2013) stresses that adolescent pregnancy most often is caused by lack of access to schools, employment, quality information and health care.”*

And the youth leader had this to say, “.....*Teen pregnancies carry extra health risks to both the mother and the baby. Often, teens don't get prenatal care soon enough,*

which can lead to problems later on. They have a higher risk for pregnancy-related high blood pressure and its complications. Risks for the baby include premature birth and a low birth weight.....”

More so the management systems coordinator added,

“.....the increasing rate of unemployment among many parents had resulted in abject poverty, forcing them to shirk their obligations, forcing their girls to unscrupulous men who lured them into unprotected sex leading to teenage pregnancies and creating a vicious cycle of poverty.”

And that, “.....Poverty is both a cause and a consequence of teen pregnancy. More than 60% of young, unmarried mothers live in households that qualify as being in poverty”. The higher the ratio, the larger the gap between low-income and middle-income households. Results clearly suggest that women of low socioeconomic status, whose mothers dropped out of high school, are more likely to give birth as a single teen if they live in a region of high income inequality.....”.

4.4.3. Inadequate Incomes and Adolescent pregnancy

Results in Table 4.9 indicated a moderately positive and significant relationship between Illiteracy and Adolescent pregnancy with ($r = .582$, $P\text{-value} < 0.01$) and a moderately positive and significant relationship between Inadequate Incomes and Adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan with ($r = .607$, $P\text{-value} < 0.01$). This indicates that improved Illiteracy levels and income generations will raise more awareness about the dangers, how to avoid it etc. which will also lead to a gradual reduction in the rate of adolescent pregnancies.

Finally, from the study findings above, the researcher accepts the hypothesis that inadequate income has a significant effect on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

This is also confirmed by the qualitative data as stated below;

“.....Several factors contribute to adolescent pregnancies and births. In many societies, girls are under pressure to marry and bear children early. In least developed countries, at least 39% of girls marry before they are 18 years of age and 12% before the age of 15. In many places girls choose to become pregnant because they have limited educational and employment prospects. Often, in such societies, motherhood is valued and marriage or union and childbearing may be the best of the limited options available.....”

“.....Adolescents who may want to avoid pregnancies may not be able to do so due to knowledge gaps and misconceptions on where to obtain contraceptive methods and how to use them. Adolescents face barriers to accessing contraception including restrictive laws and policies regarding provision of contraceptive based on age or marital status, health worker bias and/or lack of willingness to acknowledge adolescents’ sexual health needs, and adolescents’ own inability to access contraceptives because of knowledge, transportation, and financial constraints. Additionally, adolescents may lack the agency or autonomy to ensure the correct and consistent use of a contraceptive method. At least 10 million unintended pregnancies occur each year among adolescent girls aged 15-19 years in developing regions.....”

“An additional cause of unintended pregnancy is sexual violence, which is widespread with more than a third of girls in some countries reporting that their first sexual encounter was coerced.....”

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY OF THE STUDY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STUDY

5.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the discussions of the findings, summary and interpretation of the study findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the study objectives.

5.1. Discussion of findings

5.1.1. Bio Data

5.1.1.1. Gender of the Respondents

Results indicated that the highest proportion 184 (65.9%) of the study respondents in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan were males and the rest 95(34.1%) were females. The gender disparities could be attributed to the nature which entails more of production, thus the need for energy. However, obtaining information from both male and female is an indicator that the information contained in this report is gender considerate hence the report data being genuine.

During the face to face interviews, the researcher found out that gender biasness was insignificant to cause adolescent pregnancies in Torit County, Eastern Equatorial state of South Sudan; hence such issues were never raised as some of the ailments influencing adolescent pregnancies in the area. This finding was supported by Creswell (2014) who contends that data collection that integrates responses from both genders is consistent than data from a single gender.

5.1.1.2. Age Group of the Respondents

Results in Table 4.2 showed that 127 (46.4%) of the respondents in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan were between the 12-15 years, and 84(30.6%) of the respondents

were between 16-18 years of age and 48(17.2%) of the respondents were between 20-24 years of age, while the minority 15(5.4%) of the respondents were 25 and above years of age.

This meant that the majority of respondents (who took part in the study) were aged between 12-15 years. During the interview sessions, it was noticed that respondents in this age bracket (12-15 years) had more attachment to their organization since they were energetic and ambitious to work. The study findings are almost similar to a study done in America by Muijanack, Vroonhof and Zoetmer (2003) who determined that the optimum age for entrepreneurs was 25-35. The age of 10-14 is therefore the age at which the capacity of the respondents was active as shown in above table.

5.1.1.3. Education Level of the Respondents

Results in Table 4.3 indicated that 110(39.4%) of the respondents were Primary- Secondary Level graduates/ attendees, 65(23.3%) of the respondents had diplomas in various fields and 40(16.1%) of the respondents were holding certificates in various courses, 32(11.5%) of the respondents had Bachelor's Degree, 18(6.5%) of the respondents had had never attended school, while the remaining 9(3.2%) had done post graduate degrees in various fields. This implied that though, the majority respondents were primary – Secondary graduates, a combination of other categories of 65(23.3%) for diploma and 45(16.1%) for certificate holders, the respondents were believed to have acquired a reasonable level of knowledge about the subject under study. The results also indicated that the information got during the research can be depended on as most of the respondents were educated with capability of internalizing issues and making independent decisions.

This is in line with Fujii, (2017) investigations in social science research should have some acceptable level of learning in order for them to interpret the content of the study. Uma (2000) who argued that it is important in social investigation research to involve people that have attained an acceptable level of literacy and numeracy in order to be in position to understand and interpreted the content in questionnaire.

5.1.1.4. Economic status of the Respondents Families

Results in table 4.4 indicated that 167(59.9%) of the respondents were of low status, compared to 65(21.5%) of the respondents who were of medium status and lastly 45(9.3%). This showed that most of the respondents' economic status were low, an indication that the study contained the right respondents with the right information as the study was about the poverty effect on adolescent pregnancy in South Sudan

5.1.1.5 Years spent in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan

Results in table 4.5 indicated that 125(45.5%) of the respondents had spent a period between 5-9 years in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. While, 74(27.2%) had been there for a period between 10-14 years and 46(16.8%) had been there for a period between 15+ years, and lastly, 29(10.5%) had spent a period between 0-4 years. The highest representation was (45.5%), which implied that most respondents were very familiar with the area and therefore had enough experience about the current affairs and issues in the region.

5.1.2. The Relationship between the Variables

5.1.2.1. Objective one: Illiteracy and adolescent pregnancy

Results showed a positive and relatively significant relationship between illiteracy and adolescent pregnancy (Pearson correlation of .640 and P-value < 0.01), which implied that an increase in illiteracy levels resulted into high risks of adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

This is because Global investments in girls' education have been motivated, in part, by an expectation that more-educated women will have smaller and healthier families. However, in many low- and middle-income countries, the timing of school dropout and first birth coincide, resulting in a rapid transition from the role of student to the role of mother for adolescent girls. This is consequently due to the fact that their education will take a back seat as pregnancy issues will first lead to poor academic performance, school absenteeism before they become school dropouts. These girls very rarely return to school after they have given birth, which means that their education level remains at a low standard.

The study descriptive results indicated that illiteracy had 2.61 & SD of 0.78, and was interpreted as relatively medium. This is a clear indication that adequate understanding of sexuality can only be acquired via education, and the home environment and parents are viewed as the most appropriate venues for informing children about sexuality concerns, since in many cultures, sexuality matters are the least addressed or spoken about among family members; any sex topic is considered a taboo.

The above results are supported by Nordquis (2019) noted that literacy as a human right, is a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Educational opportunities depend on literacy. Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace, and democracy. It is to exercise conscious dominance over those approaches; to comprehend what one reads and to write what one comprehends: It is to convey information visually. Acquiring literacy does not entail memorizing sentences, words, or syllables, all of which are lifeless objects disconnected from an existential universe, but rather an attitude of creation and recreation, a process of self-transformation that results in an interventionist stance in one's environment.

In agreement, Max (2019) also supported the findings that individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole benefit from literacy. It establishes options and avenues for improved health and growth. It facilitates progression and progress. Adult literacy is critical to a nation's overall development since it may be used to calculate the Human Development Index (HDI), which includes indicators such as education, life expectancy, and per capita income. However, literacy is one of the characteristics used to evaluate education and an educational system's performance. A high literacy rate indicates that the school system is capable of providing opportunity for the people to develop strong literacy abilities.

This is in congruent with the ideas of Audu (2012), adolescent involuntary pregnancy is a result of a lack of fear of God and a lack of religious convictions. He asserts that the more devout an adolescent is, the more likely she is to attend church and have premarital sex. Premarital sexual activities are prevalent among adolescents, particularly those in secondary schools. However, in

disagreement, Moilborn (2015) established that, many of them are seduced into sex by males who offer them money or other items in exchange for sexual favors. Further Moilborn stated that, the girls sell sex to meet fundamental requirements that their parents are unable to provide.

Similarly, Gilbert et al. (2018) disagreed with the findings and asserted that jobless individuals are more likely to have low incomes and unhealthy lifestyles. These socio-economic characteristics may be associated with a reduction in life expectancy. Adequate salaries can help individuals rise up the social ladder and enhance their quality of life. This is because government and corporate entities would engage literate employees who are capable of achieving the organization's objectives. Individuals who are illiterate may be classed as unqualified, resulting in unemployment. In agreement with Gilbert et al. (2018) study findings, Lind (2016) established that poverty is inextricably linked to low literacy skills and usage. Though, from the researchers view, there is a literacy divide between the wealthiest and poorest households. Thus, from the above discussion, illiteracy is claimed to be prevalent in impoverished homes and areas. However, literacy may be employed to alleviate poverty and increase social engagement. Thus, literate persons are more likely to find work and earn a living salary, which helps alleviate poverty.

5.1.2.2. Objective two: Poor standard of living and adolescent pregnancy

Results indicated a positive and significant relationship between poor standard of living and adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan ($r = .570$, $P\text{-value} < 0.01$) which implied that improved standards of living will ultimately lead to reducing rates of adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. The study results indicate that teens living in poverty were more likely to get pregnant than teens who do not, and furthermore, teen parents often had lower lifetime earnings, as well as more social problems throughout life. Pregnancy rates were highest among teens from single-parent families who had experienced poverty. Hence, the increasing rate of unemployment among many parents had resulted in abject poverty, forcing them to shirk their obligations, forcing their girls to unscrupulous men who lured them into unprotected sex leading to teenage pregnancies and creating a vicious cycle of poverty.

The above results are supported by the work of Cunningham (2017) noted that the adolescent parent risks being stigmatized isolated from their peer group and sentenced to live a poor standard

of living. In agreement with the findings, Dakley, (2017) argued that the poor standard of living may be a preexisting condition rather than an effect of adolescent. Perhaps the most important consideration of adolescent is the impact it has on the unplanned child. Similarly, the researcher (Dakley, 2017) views that, adolescent parents are known to start a vicious cycle that is hard to break once it gets started and where adolescent pregnancy is high, it can be argued that a high number of children are beginning their lives from disadvantaged points.

While, Dhlamini (2017) noted that the persistently high adolescent rate with its attendant consequences being recorded in many parts of the world has been known to contribute significantly to high maternal and infant morbidity and mortality especially in developing countries. In addition its effect on population growth rate, development and sexual prevalence is significant, thereby contributing to the already high level of poor standard of living in developing countries.

Dongarwar & Salihu (2019) argued that poor standard of living also hampers further education of female adolescents and earning capacity in later years. This results in limiting their contribution to the nation's economic development. Despite family life education in schools and family planning programmes, high prevalence of adolescent and accompanying negative consequences is still being recorded in South Sudan. While, according to Newman (2009) mothers often fail to communicate the "fact of life" to their daughters and information about menarche is required from an elder sister, peer or nurses from health departments who visit schools. In a study conducted by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) in 2008 concerning sexuality and reproductive issues, it was found that parents are reluctant to discuss these issues with their children (Panday et al, 2009).

Though, the study results disagrees with Mothiba & Maputle (2012) who carried out a study to examine factors contributing to adolescent pregnancy in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province, South Africa. According to the study findings, unprotected sexual intercourse can lead to an unwanted adolescent pregnancy which is often considered a serious social and public health problem. Their research findings revealed that adolescent pregnancy appears to be encouraged by lack of access to sex education.

Similarly, Ochen et al (2019) disagreed that, there are several factors that are strongly associated with and contribute to the increased risk of an early pregnancy. These factors include poor standard

of living and lack of knowledge about sex and how to use contraceptives; barriers to access contraceptives including negative attitudes of health staff; peer pressure; sexual coercion; low self-esteem; low educational expectations; inadequate income; family breakdown; and heightened sex-based messages in the media.

While, Basili (2016) agreed with the study results and established promising interventions and strategic policy choices available to avert the human tragedy of pregnancy among girls before age 18 and put girls instead on a path towards prosperity, progress and peace. Investments targeting support for girls who are married or in a union, and interventions that reduce vulnerability to early pregnancy for the poorest, least-educated, and rural or isolated girls are investments in social justice and human rights, producing benefits for individuals, their families and generations to come. Such investments are a sure and certain means by which to turn the tides of gender inequality, illiteracy, adolescent pregnancies, and associated rates of maternal mortality and morbidity (Grant and Hallman, 2016). In today's demographic realities, reducing child marriage, delaying pregnancies and securing the rights of young women to education can also help offset population momentum.

5.1.2.3. Objective three: Inadequate income and adolescent pregnancy

Results indicated a moderately positive and significant relationship between inadequate income and adolescent pregnancy ($r = .582$, $P\text{-value} < 0.01$) which implied that improvement in income levels will lead to low rates of adolescent pregnancy. This is due to the fact that poverty is linked with negative conditions such as substandard housing, homelessness, inadequate nutrition and food insecurity, inadequate child care, lack of access to health care, unsafe neighborhoods, and under resourced schools which adversely impact our nation's children. Therefore, women of low socio-economic status, whose mothers dropped out of high school, are more likely to give birth as a single teen if they live in a region of high income inequality.

In support to the findings of this study, Campos Vazquez (2016) pointed out that, adolescent pregnancy reduces school years, decreases school attendance, and reduces job hours. In contrast to the previous research, which estimated the cost of early childbearing conditional on pregnancy, this study estimates the cost of adolescent childbearing using a propensity score matching approach by comparing teen moms to teens who deferred childbearing. Along with adverse

impacts on schooling and job results, Arceo-Gomez and Campos Vazquez discovered considerable adverse effects on adolescent moms' market chances for marriage.

Further the study results agrees with Kruger & Berthelon (2012)'s study on adolescent fertility as a predictor of high school dropout using nine rounds of Chilean household surveys from 1990 to 2019. They calculate propensity score matching and fixed-family effects on a large sub-sample of sisters in order to account for selection bias and unobservable variables at the household and municipality levels. Their data reveal that becoming a teenage mother considerably affects the likelihood of completing high school. However, after they account for unobservable factors at the family level, the negative implications of teen pregnancy are significantly decreased. Inadequate income, poor education, inequality and an inadequate ability to make decisions and control their own life plans puts young girls at greater risk of adolescent pregnancy and early motherhood (Bongaarts, 2018). However, this can be attributed to lower educational, economic and job opportunities in the country. Further, inadequate income and lack of opportunity are directly associated to adolescent pregnancy and early motherhood, which can become impediments to women wanting to take full advantage of development opportunities (Bongaarts & Bulatao, 2017). However, even if the adolescents have some form of contraception; they are using them incorrectly which makes them useless during sexual activity.

The findings of this study concurs with the ideas of Niger (2016) who analyzed the risk factors associated with adolescent pregnancy and highlights that adolescent pregnancy rates are directly linked to inadequate income conditions and factors associated with inequality. Results of this study suggest that those adolescents with more education, living in urban areas and belonging to higher income families have a lower probability of getting pregnant. Pregnant adolescents are more vulnerable and poorer than childless adolescents; this in part is explained by the fact that they belong to different risk groups.

While, Santhya (2016) disagreed with this study findings and argued that adolescent pregnancy is relevant from the point of view of development because it's a manifestation of lack of opportunity and because early motherhood can have implications in terms of encouraging the inadequate income cycle between generations, social exclusion and high social costs. Addressing this challenge will require better policies, designed to take into account the complexity of the situation.

5.2. Summary of the study findings

5.2.1. Objective 1: Illiteracy and adolescent pregnancy

Results showed a positive and relatively significant relationship between illiteracy and adolescent pregnancy (Pearson correlation of .640 and P-value < 0.01), which implied that an increase in illiteracy levels resulted into high risks of adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

The study descriptive results indicated that illiteracy had 2.61 & SD of 0.78, and was interpreted as relatively medium. This is a clear indication that adequate understanding of sexuality can only be acquired via education, and the home environment and parents are viewed as the most appropriate venues for informing children about sexuality concerns, since in many cultures, sexuality matters are the least addressed or spoken about among family members; any sex topic is considered a taboo.

5.2.2. Objective 2: Poor standard of living and adolescent pregnancy

Results indicated a positive and significant relationship between poor standard of living and adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan ($r = .570$, P-value < 0.01) which implied that improved standards of living will ultimately lead to reducing rates of adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

The study results indicate that teens living in poverty were more likely to get pregnant than teens who do not, and furthermore, teen parents often had lower lifetime earnings, as well as more social problems throughout life were rated satisfactory with an average mean value of (2.65) and Std of (0.72). This implied that the increasing rate of unemployment among many parents had resulted in abject poverty, forcing them to shirk their obligations, forcing their girls to unscrupulous men who lured them into unprotected sex leading to teenage pregnancies and creating a vicious cycle of poverty.

5.2.3. Objective 3: Inadequate income and adolescent pregnancy

Results indicated a moderately positive and significant relationship between inadequate income and adolescent pregnancy ($r = .582$, $P\text{-value} < 0.01$) which implied that improvement in income levels will lead to low rates of adolescent pregnancy. This meant that, women of low socio-economic status, whose mothers dropped out of high school, are more likely to give birth as a single teen if they live in a region of high income inequality.

Further, the results showed that majority of the respondents agreed that Trade unions have been put in place as a way of empowering self-employed citizens in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State as agreed with a mean of (3.45) & SD of (0.43). This implies that the citizens in our community have always tried to empower themselves by acquiring more of powers in different forms.

5.3. Conclusions Based on Objectives of the Study

5.3.1 Objective one: Illiteracy and adolescent pregnancy

It has been concluded that there is a positive and relatively significant relationship between Illiteracy and adolescent pregnancy (Pearson correlation of .640 and $P\text{-value} < 0.01$), which implied that an increase in illiteracy levels resulted into high adolescent pregnancies in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. Thus it is concluded that, illiteracy as a factor is a significant predictor of adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. From the descriptive, it can be concluded that the respondents were convinced that the increasing adolescent pregnancies in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan are highly blamed on the increasing illiteracy levels in the area.

5.3.2 Objective two: Poor standard of living and adolescent pregnancy

It has been concluded that there was a positive and significant relationship between Poor standard of living and adolescent pregnancy ($r = .570$, $P\text{-value} < 0.01$) which implied that any slight improvement in one variable automatically affects the other.

And from the regression analysis, it was concluded that poor standard of living was a major predictor of adolescent pregnancy as it gave a co-efficient value of 0.504 and a significance level

of 0.000, which implied that it is important that Poor standard of living be improved effectively in order to realize a decrease in the rate of adolescent pregnancies in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

5.3.3 Objective three: Inadequate income and adolescent pregnancy

It has been concluded that there was a moderately positive and significant relationship between Inadequate income and adolescent pregnancy with ($r = .582$, $P\text{-value} < 0.01$), which implied that any slight changes in the income levels of the respondents would automatically cause a similar change in the rates of adolescent pregnancies in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. The study results (3.14 & SD of 0.58) concluded that the respondents were convinced that the inadequate incomes of some parents/ families partly leads to adolescent pregnancies as adolescents struggle to get a penny for their living, and hence end up into sexual dishonesty for money.

Regression analysis results concluded that inadequate income was the third predictor of adolescent pregnancy with (Beta. = .428 Sig. = .000, which implied that it is also important that the government considers improving the house hold incomes, if it is to reduce on the rate of adolescent pregnancies in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.

From the theoretical perspective, the study employed the Theory of Reason Action which states that ideas that work field book focuses on a person's intention to behave in a certain way. Theory was relevant in a way that it provides a framework for identifying and measuring the underlying reasons for a person's intent to behave a certain way (or not). It is called the Theory of Reasoned Action because of the emphasis on understanding these reasons not because the beliefs and attitudes themselves are necessarily reasonable or correct. It thus, explained the relationship between attitudes and behaviors within human action, and it predicts how individuals may behave based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioral intentions, hence being relevant to the study.

5.4. Recommendations Based on Objectives of the Study

5.4.1 Objective one: Illiteracy and adolescent pregnancy

There is a need to improve literacy to achieve the higher goal of better meeting the demand for education for children and adults. Training structures at all levels need to ensure there is always a built-in link between literacy/training and students' professional activities, including the different elements of their environment.

The type of literacy targeted is literacy in line with Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goal 4 to ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning for all. Literacy also needs to comply with the targets of the African Union's Agenda 2063, one of the main thrusts of which is to make education a priority sector for the continent's development.

In addition to the beneficial effects of literacy for individuals, literacy programs need to act as vehicles to build universal values and a springboard for African cultural renaissance to advance continental integration.

Improve the living and working conditions of literacy staff to stimulate their enthusiasm for the job and prevent brain drain; and build these players' capacities to guarantee the quality of training on the ground. Gender mainstreaming and positive discrimination strategies in support of women and other specific underprivileged groups, especially in rural areas, in the different literacy programs.

Politically committed local governments and better governance of literacy led by Heads of State governments. This could help solve literacy program funding issues. Power up the public-private partnership with the promotion of new methods and successful private initiatives.

5.4.2 Objective two: Poor standard of living and adolescent pregnancy

One's standard of living is measured according to his or her income, access to basic services and amenities, and the conditions in which that person lives. A person's ability to earn wealth and comfort can improve standard of living for that person, though it can also lead to a poorer standard of living. Increased income is one way to improve people's standard of living, as is access to public programs that can help those people with low incomes to easily improve on their standards of

living. Most changes in standard of living must be implemented by an entire society, however, which means change can come quite slowly.

A society can improve standard of living for many of its members, for example, simply by providing efficient means of transportation. When people are allowed to travel, they are able to get to jobs that may not be close to their homes. This is a common problem throughout the world, as jobs can be concentrated in small areas but residential areas may be spread out over greater distances. Public transportation such as trains and buses are useful in helping a person improve standard of living because that person will be able to access more services in addition to more jobs.

Access to basic health care is another way to improve the standard of living. People who forgo medical care often live more difficult lives, as chronic health problems can develop and prohibit those people from being as productive as possible. Having health insurance usually ensures a person can access health care when necessary; if health insurance is not available or a person cannot afford it, health clinics often offer basic services at lower prices so even less wealthy people can get the treatments they need. Some countries throughout the world have implemented universal health care, which insures all citizens of that country can get access to basic health care when necessary.

Getting an education is perhaps one of the most important ways to improve standard of living. More educated people are more likely to get jobs that pay well and offer health or retirement benefits. In many societies throughout the world, a high school education is the bare minimum requirement for securing decent employment. A person with a college degree is likely to earn more, thereby allowing that person to afford more amenities for comfort or enjoyment. Leisure time is of course an important element of one's standard of living, and more educated people tend to have more leisure time as well as more resources with which to enjoy it.

5.4.3 Objective three: Inadequate income and adolescent pregnancy

Financial and microfinance institutions should employ agents to at least every parish or sub-county to grant households easy access to financial services.

Government through District commercial officers should encourage households to organize into village savings and credit cooperative organizations (SACCOs) at parish level and identify unique financial products that promote savings and investments for different groups.

Government agencies such as the Micro Finance Support Centre and Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) should partner with private financial institutions to organize financial literacy trainings for households on how to save as well as identify and invest in productive investment ventures.

The cost of financing should be reduced to rates that are affordable by households. This will improve household income for both consumption and investment. Financial institutions should design financial products (micro-loans, micro insurance services, ease of access to credit services and micro-saving services etc) that would enable households to access funds for construction as long as there is a clear payment plan and evidence of source of income for loan repayments.

5.4. Contributions of the study to the existing body of Knowledge

This study aimed at investigating the effect of poverty on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. It was guided by three objectives of: determine the effect of illiteracy, poor standard of living and inadequate income on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. The study unearthed to international bodies like UNICEF, OAU and the others on the best ways to formulate better arrangements suitable for unearthing and completely doing away with adolescent pregnancies in Africa as far as control measures, protection, and preventive, on top of promoting education and good health for the girl child among party states. Additionally, this research was of fundamental importance because it would assist government and the South Sudanese policy makers, as it will equip them with the necessary knowledge and information on poverty and its influence on adolescent pregnancy, enabling them to make educated decisions. Additionally, the study will benefit teens by increasing

their awareness and comprehension of the critical role of poverty in decreasing teenage pregnancies.

5.5. Areas of further study

This study was delimited to assessing the effect of poverty in terms of; illiteracy, poor standard of living and inadequate income on adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. However, poverty can be measured using various elements / attributes of which this study only focused on three of them. Thus, the researcher recommends that future scholars to similarly study the remaining other elements / measures / indicators of poverty against adolescent pregnancy in Africa, particularly in the context of South Sudan.

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PART B: Level of Poverty

The following statements are about poverty in your area. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Tick your best option; 5 = strongly agree (SA), 4= Agree (A), 3= Not sure (NS), 2 = Disagree (D) 1= strongly disagree (SD).

Illiteracy	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Education is a priority in our community	5	4	3	2	1
Government has provided education funds as a way of alleviating poverty in your community	5	4	3	2	1
Students from government schools have access to diversified content of learning to acquire skills in order to start their own businesses	5	4	3	2	1
Education programmes have been put in place by the government as a way of reducing illiteracy levels in your community	5	4	3	2	1
Poor school performance and attendance has caused adolescent girls get pregnant	5	4	3	2	1
Academic failure or indifference to school-related activities has always tempted adolescent girls into sexual practices	5	4	3	2	1
Many adolescents feel like pregnancy and Sexual Track Infections are things that only happen to other people	5	4	3	2	1
Many adolescents don't know the risks of unprotected sex	5	4	3	2	1
Poor standard of living					
I can afford better health care for me and my family members	5	4	3	2	1
I have been able to expand my business in the past five years	5	4	3	2	1
I have access to safe and clean water	5	4	3	2	1

I can afford to provide enough food for my family members	5	4	3	2	1
Unstable housing arrangements has caused many adolescents into sexual practices	5	4	3	2	1
Family violence and sexual abuse throughout childhood has made many adolescents engage in sexual activities	5	4	3	2	1
Many adolescent girls don't see any better options for their future than getting pregnant and dropping out of school	5	4	3	2	1
Many adolescent girls have always experienced poor living conditions which has tempted them into sexual activities	5	4	3	2	1
Inadequate income					
Trade unions have been put in place as a way of empowering self-employed citizens in Eastern Equatoria State	5	4	3	2	1
The citizens in our community have always tried to empower themselves by acquiring more of powers in different forms	5	4	3	2	1
Development policies and investments have been put in place to strengthen the abilities, networks, skills and knowledge among individuals in your community.	5	4	3	2	1
Some girls after conceiving and producing run to streets to beg for money due to financial difficulties	5	4	3	2	1
Many adolescents can't afford use of family planning methods	5	4	3	2	1
Adolescents who can't afford attending school are more likely to get pregnant or start childbearing than those who are in school	5	4	3	2	1
Most of the girls don't get jobs after producing due to lack of any skills and hence no clear source of incomes	5	4	3	2	1

PARTC: Adolescent Pregnancy

The following statements are about adolescent pregnancy in your area. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Tick your best option; 5 = strongly agree (SA), 4= Agree (A), 3= Not sure (NS), 2 = Disagree (D) 1= strongly disagree (SD).

Adolescent pregnancy	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Coercive sexual relations	5	4	3	2	1
The physical and emotional impact of early marriage on adolescents greatly influence them into being married to older men	5	4	3	2	1
Rape is a profoundly negative and traumatic life event with widespread psychological and sociological effects among adolescents	5	4	3	2	1
Most of families which force adolescents in marriages are normally poor	5	4	3	2	1
Adolescents girls many times believe that having sex will give them emotional intimacy	5	4	3	2	1
Many adolescents feel pressured to have sex because everyone is doing it	5	4	3	2	1
Adolescents are not emotionally mature enough to make safer choices about sex	5	4	3	2	1
Many adolescents girls feel pressured by their partners to have unprotected sex	5	4	3	2	1
Being a victim of sexual abuse has made many adolescents get pregnant	5	4	3	2	1
School drop out					

Because of high levels of poverty, the need to feel accepted and normal can be overwhelming once approached	5	4	3	2	1
Adolescents who enter high school lacking fundamental requirements often experience a social rejection	5	4	3	2	1
Adolescents, who are not receiving validation through their school work, look for that acceptance elsewhere	5	4	3	2	1
Adolescents who are failing in school and searching for validation	5	4	3	2	1
Many Adolescent girls come from lower income groups and don't expect much from their future	5	4	3	2	1
Many adolescents think having a baby seems like a good alternative to finishing school	5	4	3	2	1
Being in an environment where teen pregnancy is common has made adolescents copy the same	5	4	3	2	1
A combination of cultural, traditional arguments also justifies adolescents marriage in Eastern Equatoria State	5	4	3	2	1
Parental guidance					
Lack of information about sexual and reproductive health and rights highly causes adolescent pregnancies	5	4	3	2	1
Inadequate access to services from parents highly causes adolescent pregnancy	5	4	3	2	1
Family, community and social pressure to marry highly causes adolescent pregnancy	5	4	3	2	1

Lack of parental guidance and right up bringing highly causes pregnancy among adolescents	5	4	3	2	1
Adolescents often do not get good information about sex, relationships, and values from reliable sources, such as parents.	5	4	3	2	1
Adolescents believe that having sex will give them higher social status with their peers	5	4	3	2	1
Many adolescents feel embarrassed about asking for or buying contraception and are not guided by their parents	5	4	3	2	1
Hostile distant relationships between parents has led adolescents to an unplanned pregnancy	5	4	3	2	1

Thank you so much for participating in this study

APPENDIX II: Interview Guide for Village Authorities (Local Council Leaders)

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Natalina Eghiju Ottome, pursuing a Master of Arts in Social Works and Social Administration at Kampala International University. I am currently conducting a study on; *Poverty and Adolescent pregnancy in Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan.*

I have selected to participate in my study, by participating in this brief interview. Your opinions and views are to be used for this study only and will be confidentially treated. Please provide all the answers as much as you can.

1. How has adolescent pregnancy impacted life of adolescents and the community in general?

.....
.....
.....

2. What other factors are responsible for the high rate of pregnancy among adolescent girls in this village?

.....
.....
.....

3. Do you have any other information you would like to tell me about poverty and adolescent pregnancy? Yes No if yes what is it?

.....
.....
.....

4. Explain how has family situations with regular conflict between family members has led adolescents to an unplanned pregnancy

.....
.....
.....

5. Explain how poverty among parents has lured/ led adolescents into sexual activities

.....
.....
.....

6. What are the ways and solutions that adolescents can be empowered to make healthier choices?

.....
.....
.....

7. What are some of the other factors that are equally responsible for adolescents' pregnancy in South Sudan, specifically, Equatoria province?

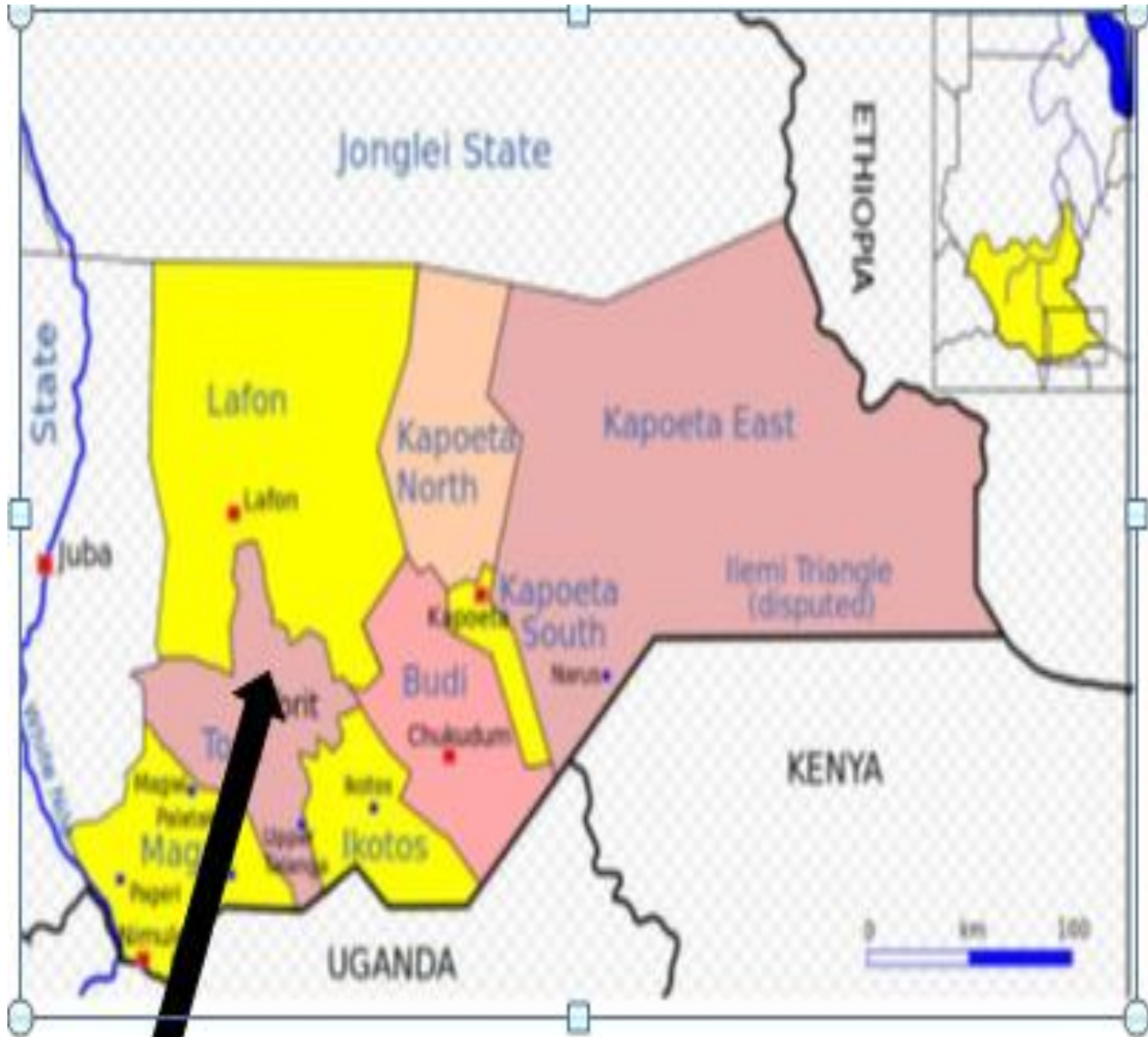
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8. Clearly, explain how the lack of parental guidance and unprotected sexual intercourse are leading predictors of adolescents' pregnancy in South Sudan, specifically, Equatoria province?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for participating in this study

APPENDIX III: Map of Eastern Equatoria State-Torit County.



Source: en.wikipedia.org

APPENDIX IV: INTRODUCTION LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT



**KAMPALA
INTERNATIONAL
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**Directorate of Higher Degrees and Research
Office of the Director**

Our Ref. 2021-08-04757

Monday 06th June, 2022

Dear Sir

**RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR NATALINA EGHUJU
REG. NO. 2020-01-00652**

The above mentioned student is a student of Kampala International University pursuing a Master's Degree of Conflict Resolution and Peace Building.

The student is currently conducting a research study titled, *"Poverty & Adolescent Pregnancy in Eastern Equatorial State, Torit County, South Sudan.*

Your organization has been identified as a valuable source of information pertaining to the research subject of interest. The purpose of this letter therefore is to request you to kindly cooperate and avail the student with the pertinent information needed. It is our ardent belief that the findings from this research will benefit KIU and your organization.

Any information shared with the researcher will be used for academic purposes only and shall be kept with utmost confidentiality.

I appreciate any assistance rendered to the researcher

Yours Sincerely,


Ibrahim Abdulahi, PhD
Director

C.c. DVC Academic Affairs
Principal CHSS



"Exploring the Heights"

APPENDIX V: PLAGIARISM REPORT

POVERTY AND ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY IN ESTERN EQUATORIA STATE, TORIT COUNTY, SOUTH SUDAN

ORIGINALITY REPORT

16%

SIMILARITY INDEX

13%

INTERNET SOURCES

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