

Teen Moms & Educational Goals

Sara Xiong & Rebecca Radle, Advisor: Dr. Susan Wolfgram,
University of Wisconsin-Stout

Research Question & Hypothesis

What resources do young single parents need to attain their educational goals? Based on the literature, we hypothesized that young mothers would agree that they would struggle with:

- finishing their education
- not having the emotional or financial support of the father
- and that they would feel isolated as a single teen parent.

Purpose

1. To examine the attitudes of young single mothers and their perspective towards the resources available to them while obtaining an education
2. To develop a reliable survey instrument to measure what resources are already available and what resources are needed
3. That the results from this study would increase awareness of the additional resources that would better benefit young single mothers and to get their perspective heard

Literature Review

Mollborn & Lovegrove (2011): These two researchers studied teen fathers in comparison with adult fathers to see if there is a relation between the child's overall well-being. The father's lower educational attainment and income can cause a risk for their children.

Mollborn (2010): Studied the relationship between resources and responsibilities teenagers have after becoming parent and the variations in their educational outcomes. Resources for childcare and support from their family provides a greater opportunity for continuing education.

Pagani et al (2008): Research was based on three components: having a mother who did not finish high school, being from a single-parent family and repeating a grade in primary school. Single parent families were associated with behavioral problems such as delinquency and education attainment.

Hallman (2007): Discussed the difference between parenting teens and non-parenting teens in a school facility. Parenting teens benefit from having curriculum that encompasses their role as a mother and student.

Mollborn (2007): Studied how the lack of resources can affect the educational outcome of teen parents. Teen mothers benefit from their support by fulfilling their education. Both teen parents also work to solve the financial situation, but overworking can have an effect on educational outcomes.

Methods

Participants

- 3 young mothers using a resource facility in northwestern Wisconsin

Research Design

- Cross sectional
- Purposive sampling
- Non-random pilot study

Data Analysis Plan

- Cleaned & coded surveys
- Analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)
- Frequency, means comparison, correlations, Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis

Data Collection Instrument

- IRB approved, informed by literature, implied consent
- 12 demographic, 10 survey statements, Likert Scale (1-5)
- 3 open ended question

Procedure

- questions given to agency staff with directions
- Surveys administered by agency staff
- Staff explained implied consent, confidentiality and stressed the importance of open-ended questions



Frequency Distribution

Variable	SD	D	N A/D	A	SA	Total
IFE	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%
YPI	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
CAF	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	100.0%
EFE	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%
FFE	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	100.0%
ACE	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%
AHE	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%
RTE	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%
ESF	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%
FSF	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%

Dependent Variables

IFE (Being a young parent has impacted finishing my education)

YPI (Being a young parent, I feel isolated)

CAF (My education may suffer because I cannot afford basic materials for myself or my baby)

EFE (Receiving emotional support from the father of my child would help me focus on my education)

FFE (Receiving financial support from the father of my child would help me focus on my education)

ACE (Having access to affordable childcare would help me focus on my education)

AHE (Having access to affordable housing would help me focus on my education)

RTE (Having access to reliable transportation would help me focus on my education)

ESF (I would benefit if I had emotional support from my family)

FSF (I would benefit if I had financial support from my family)



Results

Our hypothesis was supported due to respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing for variables IFE; being a young parent has impacted my education, EFE; receiving emotional support from the father of my child would help me focus on my education and YPI; being a young parent, I feel isolated. Variable FFE; receiving financial support from the father of my child would help me focus on my education had mixed results.

Implications

Practitioners:

➢ Practitioners may find this study useful for understanding what young mothers would benefit from while they are trying to pursue their education.

➢ The qualitative comments in two out of three surveys mentioned how much they liked the socialization and support that the Family Resource Center provided.

➢ Studies show that support is one the most important resources a young mother needs. This study also shows what material resources young mothers would benefit from.

➢ This information is useful for school counselors, college admission staff, principals, teachers, etc. so they can better support and assist mothers

Future Research:

➢ Recommendations for future research would include a larger, more diverse sample.

➢ Being able to sample young mothers who are under the age of 18

➢ Qualitative interviews to better understand their lived experience

➢ Likert scale: range wider to minimize the undecided responses.

➢ Future research could be done on finding answers as to why teenage parents and young mothers tend to get ignored in their learning environment. Research could also be done on how families, school counselors, teachers, and other support systems can help young mothers while they are pursuing an education.

Conclusion

This research study has illustrated the importance of resources that would be beneficial to young mothers while they are working to obtain an education. The lack of resources available for young mothers is known, but their perspective is often overlooked and ignored. Our hope in this research study was to identify what resources young mothers would benefit from. It is also a hope to reduce the risk of young mothers and their children living in poverty. Anything that helps these young mothers achieve their educational goals would be very beneficial to society. This study is important in the field of Family Studies because children of young mothers are put at such a high risk for poverty and reliving the life of their parents. That is why it is important to understand what is needed for young parents to get an education and get out of poverty. We believe our study has taken a small step to begin filling the gap of understanding the perspective of young mothers and the difficulties they face while trying to pursue their educational goals. This is our goal; to have this population of young, student mothers being supported by many people in their life while in pursuit of achieving their educational goals. "They have already helped by giving me relationships with friends and information about support services" (anonymous).