

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE READINESS OF TEENAGERS WHO
PREGNANT OUT OF WEDLOCK TO BECOME
MOTHERS: A STUDY AMONG PREGNANT
TEENAGERS PLACED AT RUMAH TAMAN SERI
PUTERI, CHERAS**

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EMAS

JUNE 2018

ABSTRACT

Teenage pregnancy has emerged to be a significant social issue throughout the world including Malaysia. Pregnancy among female teenagers is recognized morally by the society as long as they get married legally with their partners. However, the problem that need to be addressed by the government or other parties is nowadays, many teenagers get pregnant outside the marriage. There are several risk factors that influence teenage pregnancy which are lack of exposure on sex education, problematic family, poor family, lack of religious belief and mass media influences. Besides that, the reasons why female teenagers can get pregnant are either they have consensual sex activity with their partners or have been raped by the unknown person. Hence, this study aimed to examine the readiness of teenagers who pregnant out of wedlock to be mothers, to explore the motherhood feelings among them and identify what are the future plan of the potential mothers after deliver their babies. For this study, a cross sectional study is performed on the 4 respondents who are pregnant in Taman Seri Puteri. Furthermore, the study adopts qualitative research approach and used in-depth interviews to explore and understand the current phenomenon of teenage pregnancy among unmarried teenagers in the country. Before conducting interview, a set of questions was developed to provide guidelines in order to obtain required data and information from the respondents. Then, the recorded answers and information had been transcribed for findings purpose. The findings of the study revealed that two respondents felt unsure whether they are ready or not to be young mothers while the other two respondents are ready to be mothers to their babies. However, due to the several reasons such as age factor, family acceptance as well as financial instability, all of the respondents plan to adopt their babies to the adoptive families after they give births. This study also provides several recommendations to the teenagers, societies (parents and civil societies, community) and policy makers for them to tackle the issue. It is hoped that the study would contribute to some improvements, changes and actions in the future so that the number of teenagers who are pregnant out of wedlock can be reduced.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I thanked Allah the Almighty for easing this extremely and challenging path for me. Alhamdulillah. I would like to express my greatest gratitude to my dedicated supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Yarina binti Ahmad for guiding me from the beginning until I complete this dissertation. A million of thanks to Dr. Yarina for your support. If it is not you, I would not be able to make it. Without your guidance, I would not be able to successfully complete this dissertation and managed to submit it within the stipulated time. Again, thank you so much.

On the other hand, I would like to use this opportunity to thank my lecturers who are Dr. Azizan binti Zainuddin and Dr. Hajah Fadilah binti Puteh for their guidance and encouragements to provide necessary information in order for me to complete the research proposal during my study in Semester One. The research proposal cannot be done without their contributions and endless supports.

My sincere thoughts to those who made this journey possible especially to Taman Seri Puteri's staffs that welcomed me warmly and gave permission to interview the pregnant teenagers who live in that home. I got lots of information from them during the interview session. Those informations were very useful for this study. Thank you very much.

To my strongest backbone which is my family, I am blessed with their prayers and continuous motivation to me. They had sacrificed a lot to ensure I am able to survive well during my study journey. Last but not least, my thanks and appreciations go to those who rendered their help and support to me either directly or indirectly during the period in completing this dissertation.

Thank you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Teenage pregnancy issue can be considered as one of the critical social issue in Malaysia. This is because teenage pregnancy issue is intertwined with many other social issues such as out of wedlock pregnancies, sexual abuse (rape and incest), child abandonment (popularly known as baby dumping in Malaysia), abortion, child adoption and can also lead to baby selling syndicate. According to a study undertaken by Lee et al. (2006), there was an increasing trend of sexual activities among Malaysian teenagers. While this social trend involved teenagers accross cultures; the most worrying situation is when the teenagers who got pregnant out of wedlock were mostly among Malays. In addition, a report by Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) in 2010 stated that there was an increasing number of female adolescents who sought help from the Welfare Department Malaysia every year due to cases of unwanted pregnancy (Ng, 2010).

There are many reasons for the rising of teenage pregnancy issue in Malaysia. A study by Omar et al. (2010) mentioned that among the factors which contribute to teenage pregnancy are lack of self efficacy, low educational status, lack of religious beliefs and poor family background. Teenagers are in the stage whereby they are curious to try new things. That is why most of them do not have ability to control their desires especially the desire to conduct sexual activities with their partners. Besides, poor family or also known as poverty family is the major risk factor which influences teenage pregnancy (Katerndahl et al., 2005). When parents do not have enough money to support for their children's education, the teenagers tend to skip school and socialise with negative friends. This situation could lead to teenage pregnancy problem among unmarried teenagers.

Teenage pregnancy is not an easy issue to deal with. Most of the teenagers get pregnant unexpectedly which cause them to become unready for parenthood. As an option, they choose to undergo illegal abortion or dump the babies after giving birth. That is why almost every week, there are news in the newspapers about babies being