

# The Need for Developed Universal Intellectual Traits on Mitigating Teenage Pregnancy

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**Abstract :** The role of developed universal intellectual traits is to impart curable skills necessary for curbing teenage pregnancy. It is however; legitimate to captivate analytical and philosophical precaution processes that are weightily anchored on man's faculty of correct reasoning. This article therefore examines the need for developed universal intellectual traits on mitigating teenage pregnancy in schools. The article appeals to the implications of Richard Paul & Linda Elder in addressing teenage pregnancy. The article used analytical Method of Philosophical consultancy and analysis. The study pinpoints out that if teenage pregnancy is to be addressed once for all, then educators must infuse Universal intellectual traits without omitting or commissioning any of the following: intellectual humility, intellectual autonomy, intellectual integrity, intellectual courage, and intellectual perseverance confidence in reason, intellectual empathy, and intellectual fair-mindedness. Universal intellectual traits triggers the faculty of reasoning among teenagers, concerned stakeholder and even sexual perpetrators to be critical thinkers in resolving and solving social problems like teenage pregnancy in a more logical, valid and sound manner.

**Key words;** Teenage pregnancy and Universal intellectual traits.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy is a global problem greatly impacting on education and the health status of the girl child<sup>[1]</sup>. It is reported that about 21 million cases of teenage pregnancy are recorded worldwide annually with majority of the cases being reported in Sub-Sahara Africa<sup>[2]</sup>,<sup>[3]</sup>. The problem of teenage pregnancy is not only hitting the less developed countries but also the developed countries though at low rates<sup>[1]</sup>. Kenya is one of the Sub-Sahara African Countries affected by teenage pregnancy with an estimate of about 3000 girls dropping out of school every year<sup>[2]</sup>. United Nations Population Fund Report on global reproductive health shows that there were about 378, 397 teenage pregnancies case among girls who are aged 10-19 years between the months of July 2016 to the month of June 2017 were recorded in Kenya<sup>[4]</sup>. The outbreak of Corona virus pandemic COVID-19 which lead to prolonged closure of schools worsen the situation as the cases of Teenage pregnancy with African Institute for Development policy (AFIDEP) in comparison with Kenya Health Information Systems (KHIS) statistics showing that cases of teenage pregnancy increased by approximately 41% (153000) cases between March to June 2020<sup>[5]</sup>.

The rising cases of teenage pregnancy in Kenya demands that teenagers be empowered with appropriate correct reasoning skills based on universal intellectual traits<sup>[6]</sup>. For teenagers to be equipped with appropriate correct reasoning skills, they have to go through the whole process from element of reasoning to Universal intellectual traits without omitting any<sup>[7]</sup>. According to Paul and Elder developed universal intellectual traits include: intellectual humility, intellectual autonomy, intellectual integrity, intellectual courage, and intellectual perseverance confidence in reason, intellectual empathy, and intellectual fair-mindedness<sup>[8]</sup>.

Correct reasoning is a very concrete element for a teenager who is a critical thinker to arrive at logical conclusion. Critical thinking is a pragmatic approach which begins from critical reflection to critical action<sup>[9]</sup>. Therefore, correct reasoning based on Universal intellectual traits is vital in curtailing the menace of teenage pregnancy based on appropriate logical reflection.

*Specific objective*

- (i) To explore Richard Paul and Linda Elder's developed universal intellectual traits on mitigating teenage pregnancy.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the elements of a critical thinker is correct reasoning which is the aspect of critical thinking that is more pragmatic in reflecting on the menace of teenage pregnancy (Paul & Elder 2001). It requires that the student thoroughly revisit the whole process from UIS to EoR without omitting any (Namwamba, 2007). It is important to note that Freire's critical pedagogy fuses into a proper review which requires the students to adopt developed universal intellectual traits which include: intellectual humility, intellectual autonomy, intellectual integrity, intellectual courage, and intellectual perseverance confidence in reason, intellectual empathy, and intellectual fair-mindedness as a possible remedy for teenage pregnancy (Paul & Elder, 2001).

## III. METHODOLOGY

*Analytical method*

Analytical method is used in analyzing philosophical issues thematically. Analysis may be explained as an understanding

of fundamental concepts, other related concepts, and interrelationship between these concepts. According to Foley, (1996) “While analysis is characteristic of the analytic tradition in philosophy, what is to be analyzed (the *analysandum*) often varies. The methods allow, interpretative analysis, and trend analysis conveniently. The method analyses developed Universal intellectual traits thematically with an aim of establishing their role on mitigating teenage pregnancy.

*Implication of Richard Paul & Linda Elder’s developed universal intellectual traits on teenage pregnancy*

Intellectual traits have been described as a standard of thoughts that a student grow with and transform into a self-independent individual<sup>[10]</sup>. Some of these traits include, intellectual integrity, independence, empathy, independence, humility, courage, confidence in reason and fair mindedness<sup>[11]</sup>. It is believed that for one to have an aspect of critical thinking he or she must have a composite of these aspects for instance, intellectual humility where one accepts that they are human and do not know everything and they continue to learn and grow as they age<sup>[10]</sup>. Paul and Elder refers the term intellectual humility as “developed knowledge to an extent of one’s ignorance.” It includes an acute awareness that one’s native egocentricism is likely to function self –deceptively to tell the mind that it knows more than it does<sup>[12]</sup>.

Intellectual courage is another trait that students must have to be self-autonomous. The term intellectual courage means “facing and fairly addressing ideas, beliefs or viewpoints even when it is painful. Intellectual courage is recognizing that ideas that society considers dangerous or absurd are sometimes rationally justified (in whole or in part) or simply in matters of subject taste, conclusion and beliefs inculcated in people by society are sometimes false or misleading”<sup>[12]</sup>. Intellectual perseverance and confidence in reason and fair – mindedness are also very necessary in the teenage stage. Intellectual perseverance has been tagged as “never give up trait” where individuals are encouraged to face their situation despite of the difficulties. Confidence in reason and fair-mindedness on the other hand is the ability of one to utilize the elements of thought to instill confidence in one’s reasoning<sup>[13]</sup>.

Instilling development intellectual traits among the teenagers has been reported to playreducing role in the cases of teenage pregnancy. For instance, intellectual humility has been helpful for teenagers to identify individuals with irrational mind who might lead them tounfair-mindedness. Lack of intellectual humility has led to students being unable to resist the causes of teenage pregnancy like ignorance and negative peer pressure which emanated from other individual’s intellectual arrogance which make teenagers to succumb to the bondage of teenage pregnancy<sup>[12]</sup>. Therefore, there is need for schools administrators to focus on intellectual humility during life skills lessons which are purely capitalized for academics.

This will transform the teenagers hence, make them autonomous subjects at the expense of Freirean Banking Concept of education.

*Intellectual courage* enables the teenagers to tackle ideas and viewpoints with courage. Such teenagers will be ready to engage peer groups and sexual predators whose mind is out of their point of view. In general, teenagers are not supposed to fear constructive intellectual confrontations based on reason and evidence. In so doing they are able to critique, question and challenge any problems posed to them with courage. Therefore, there is need to impart learners with the skills of intellectual courage that will lay concrete precipice for teenagers to tackle severe and nonconformity issues that the society poses to them<sup>[13]</sup>.

*Intellectual empathy.* Intellectual empathy means “to put oneself imaginatively in the place of others or a routine basis so as to genuinely understand them. It requires one to reconstruct the view points and reasoning of others accurately and to reason from premises, assumptions, and ideas other than one’s own”<sup>[12]</sup>. Therefore, an intellectual thinker is one who is critically conscious and tentatively feels the pain of other people for example teenagers<sup>[12]</sup>. When an individual puts themselves in the situation of fellow individuals it helps the thinker to understand the point of view of the other party. It has been reported that, parents lacked intellectual empathy to their children as they have left the responsibility to teachers and some do not provide basic need to their daughters. An intellectually empathetic parent will take an action of enlightening the teenagers or their children on the consequences of teenage pregnancy or to encourage them abstain from sex. School administrators and teachers should wear the uniform of intellectual empathy by imparting teenagers with the skills of critical thinking<sup>[14]</sup>.

*Intellectual perseverance* is the “disposition to work one's way through intellectual complexities despite frustration inherent in the task.” Some problems are complicated and cannot be solved easily. Intellectual perseverance enables one to face complex or difficulty frustration. The intellectually perseverant understands that carefully and methodically reasoning through complex issues and problems takes precedence over coming to conclusions. Intellectual perseverance involves adhering to rational principles firmly despite the natural tendency to go with first impressions and simplistic answers. It also entails a realistic sense of the need to struggle with confusion and unsettled questions over an extended time to archive understanding or insight”<sup>[13]</sup>. Therefore, a teenager who is a critical thinker has the element of intellectual perseverance.

Thinking is neither easy nor a linear projection but more cumbersome and frustrating because it involves deeper understanding, analysis, and critical reflection on some complexities. Making a decision requires that one review every time the decision they make before especially if they are

in frustrating situations or when they find themselves in dilemma on what to do to escape some situations<sup>[14]</sup>. In this regard, we infer that the thinker has to review not only his/her decision but also his/her critical consciousness that leads to the decision they made before. Instilling the trait of critical thinking among youth will not only lower the case of bad behaviour and involvement to drug abuse but will also lower the cases of teenage pregnancy.

*Intellectual Integrity and autonomy* is striving to be true to one's own disciplined thinking and holding oneself to the same standards that one expects others to meet. It is also another key aspect guiding our day to day doings<sup>[15]</sup>. It gives one the sense of ideological thought and independence, for example, it involves holding oneself to the rigorous standards of evidence and proof to which one holds one's antagonists<sup>[15]</sup>. It requires honestly admitting discrepancies and inconsistencies in one's own thought and action and identifying inconsistencies within one's thinking<sup>[13]</sup>. A teenager who is a critical thinker with intellectual integrity therefore, can decide that teenage pregnancy is not for them, then the decision must be held for as long as possible. Hence, intellectual integrity does not stop the teenager from being critical conscious but it extends their horizon of acting on certain prevailing situations of oppression. Intellectual autonomy promotes freedom in thinking hence opening the mind of teenagers to be rational beings on the prevailing oppressions<sup>[16]</sup>. The aspect of intellectual autonomy has not been so practical among the teenagers as they have fallen victims of peer pressure ending up engaging on various social issues like unprotected sex and drug abuse practices which rekindles teenage pregnancy<sup>[17]</sup>. One's own higher interests and those of human kind at large are best served by giving the freest play to reason, by encouraging people to come to their own conclusions through the use of their own rational faculties. It is based on the belief that, with proper encouragement and cultivation, people can learn to think for themselves; form insightful viewpoints; draw reasonable conclusions; think clearly, accurately, relevantly and logically; persuade each other by appeal to good reason and sound evidence; and become reasonable people despite deep-seated obstacles in human nature and social life<sup>[13]</sup>. Therefore, school administrators and teachers are supposed to empower the learners to make independent decision depending on the prevailing situations. This further discourages the banking concept of teaching at the expense of dialogical or Socratic method so that the learners can possess intellectual autonomy. This will enable the teenagers to be critical thinkers who do not passively accept belief of others rather, they think through situations and issues for themselves.

*Intellectual fair-mindedness* should be inculcated in people's growth in behaviour so that they can consider all relevant viewpoints equally, without reference to one's own feelings or selfish interests, or the feelings or selfish interests of friends, community or nation. It implies adherence to intellectual standards (such as accuracy, sound, logic and breadth of

vision) uninfluenced by one's advantage or the advantage of one's group<sup>[13]</sup>. This will reduce the effects of peer pressure among teenagers as each will be mindful of each other on the positive way. The society should be mindful of the teenage girls rather than taking advantage of their economic deficiencies and luring them to sexual activities. Therefore, a student who is an intellectual thinker has dialectical ability. This is the ability to entertain more than one opinion or ideas without admitting all of them.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Teenage pregnancy is a global problem greatly impacting on education and the health status of the girl child. A number of factors have been associated as the major causes of teenage pregnancy such as peer pressure and lack of basic and social factors among the teenage girls. These factors are directly or indirectly linked to intellectual traits among the teenagers as well as the other members of the society. Intellectual traits are key components that every member in a society should be having irrespective of the age brackets. Though it is known that intellectual traits are well adopted as one ages, it is key that it should be inculcated to the teenagers as early as possible so that they can be critical thinkers and be able to make sound judgement when confronted with challenges. Studies have shown that teenagers with well-developed intellectual traits e.g. intellectual humility, intellectual courage and intellectual autonomy have the ability to make sober decision and are able to overcome challenges of peer pressure. They are also able to accept mistakes and take positive steps in life to correct their issues. Intellectual traits among the teenagers can therefore be very handy on reducing and handling the cases of teenage pregnancies and associated challenges.

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