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**INTRA AND INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT AMONG TEEN
MOTHERS AND THE MUSEUM ART THERAPY APPROACH**

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Abstract:

Teen mothers face numerous psychological problems because of the early engagement in sexual activities out of wedlock and the aftermath effects. Most of these female adolescents are purported to be coming from socially and economically marginalised environments, hence opt for solace in early sexual engagement, pregnancy and at times repeated childbearing, being a way to resolve this adolescence crisis. The problem of a childbearing her own child prompts professionals in the field of psychology to develop programs that address adolescents' psychosocial needs. This study employs a qualitative desk research approach, through selecting relevant related literature to the study, grouping the literature according to theme and then analysing the literature. The study explored the forces that compel the female teens into early parenthood, the intra and interpersonal conflict among these females, and the appropriateness of museum art therapy to addressing this problem. Findings of the study show that museum art therapy is a relevant creative psychological intervention, significantly used to explore, and understand and unearth the underlying, conflict within the teenage parents.

Introduction:

1.1 Introduction:

Teen parenthood is a problem globally (Gateshead, 2020) and this challenge, found among adolescents despite of religion, ethnicity and location. In most cases, teenage pregnancy is heavily present in poorer and marginalised societies around the world (McKay, Wood & Brantley 2019). Many girls face considerable pressure to marry early, communities create several compounding variables that end up the teen girls embarking in early indulgence, and subsequently, falling pregnant and become mothers, while they are still children (McKay et al., 2019). With a similar view, Brittain et al., (2019) claims that teenage pregnancy is on the rise world over, and predominantly in societies where the girlchild has limited liberties to decide on their sexual as well as reproductive health wellbeing. Friedman & Valenti, (2019) highlights that a girl child should be able to make her own conscious decision about her body and have access to appropriate psychological care, health care and education as well as make their own decisions about their bodies and future, when that lacks, teens become vulnerable to challenges such as teen pregnancy.

The socio-economic status of a girl child plays a pivotal role in this issue (Brittain et al., 2019). Statistics reveal that approximately 10% of teenage pregnancies in developing countries are from out of wedlock pregnancies (Friedman & Valenti, 2019). While 90% of births, by girls aged 15-19 in developing countries, happen in wedlock through, early marriages, coupled with imbalance of power, sexual violence, limited or no access to contraception, running away from poverty at home to be taken care of by a husband and cultural pressure to prove fertility (Friedman & Valenti, 2019). Parental income and level of education for the girl child also contributes to this problem. A girl, who has gone through minimum education, is five times more likely to be a mother early than a girl with higher levels of education is (Mazibuko, Moodley, & Naicker, 2019). When a girl become pregnant, she oftenly drop out of school, thereby limiting opportunities for future employment, hence perpetuating the cycle of poverty. In many cases in the developing countries, girls view pregnancy to be a better option than continuing with education. In developed and less marginalised countries, the reverse is true, as more than 90% of teenage pregnancies are out of wedlock (Friedman & Valenti, 2019). These teenagers have decisive powers and access to health care as well as psychological care, teenage pregnancies by such, is mostly because of the fun of it or stubbornness.

Interestingly, Clements & Fay-Hillier (2019) proposes that, though there may be vast reasons that cause teenage pregnancies, and their distinctions, there are similar similarities drawn from the effects of teenage pregnancy among these teenage mothers regardless of their background. Many teenage pregnancies change the course of the young mothers' life, by driving her to a place where, not only will she be carrying for herself, but having a minor, another human being to take care of (Hendrickson, 2019). Child bearing not only does it create physical changes, these teen mothers face numerous stressors which include arranging child care, doctors' appointments, sleepless nights and attending to finish school.

Teenage mothers may face mental health and psychological issues related to being a new mother and childbirth (Morton, 2019). Postpartum depression is one of the challenges faced by teenage mothers. This age group of mothers, reported to experience higher rates of suicidal ideation compared to their peers who are not mothers. These teen mothers have also a higher chance to experience post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) compared to other teenage girls, this prompted by the likelihood of these mothers to have gone through

psychological and or physical abuse(Hendrickson, 2019). Symptoms of PTSD include thinking to harm yourself or others, anxiety, panic attacks, feeling worthless, difficulty bonding with baby, difficult to enjoy previous hobbies and overwhelmed fatigue. 'Baby blues' are some of the psychological factors experienced by teen mothers one or two weeks after giving birth and the symptoms include, difficulty in sleeping, difficulty in concentrating, mood swings, anxiety, sadness, and difficulty in sleeping (Musa & Mariamdaran, 2020).

There are a number of interventions put in place to address the issue of teenage mothers' psychological problems (Morton, 2019). To note is that the teen mothers, though they have assumed the adult role of parenthood, which does not negate the fact that they are still adolescents and undergoing the puberty stage(More, Jackson, Dimmock, Thornton, Colthart & Furzer (2018). Adolescents have a lower concentration span than adults and they can easily get bored, irritated or fail to complete atherapeutic program easily(Flynn, Sharp, Walsh, & Popovic, 2018). Teen mothers are therefore a delicate age group to deal with. There are a number of therapeutic programs, which support teen mothers into realigning their goals as well as replacing unhelpful thoughts and behaviours (Flynn et al., 2018). Individual and or group-based counselling sessions around parental stress, infant care, development; positive parental techniques, conducted with teen mothers. These therapeutic programs significantly support teen mothers and the majority who manage to complete the therapeutic session, lead a better life ahead (Kit & Tang, 2018). Rapport building and assessment of mental health concerns of these mothers also provided for teen mothers, as well as referrals to support services to teen mothers in the community who give the psychological motivation to teen moms (Kit & Tang, 2018). The current study however, shall focus on Museum art therapy as a creative psychological intervention to addressing the issue of teenage pregnancy.Thompson (1996) asserts that this type of therapy is creative and interactive and suits the energy of the teens as the environment is not so restrictive, rather museum art therapy is fun and engaging while achieving the set goals. The current study seeks to explore the intra and interpersonal conflicts on teen mothers and the intervention strategy of museum art therapy on teen mothers.

1.2 Problem Statement:

There is a problem of teenage pregnancy globally despite race, religion or geographical location. World Health Organisation (2020) reports that approximately, 12 million girls who are aged between 15-19 years and about 777 000 young girls under 15 years give birth each year in developing countries On the other hand, 10 million unintended pregnancies occur each year to girls between the ages of 15-19 in developed countries (World Health Organisation, 2020). World Health Organisation, (2020) highlight that 3.9 million deaths are recorded yearly due to unsafe abortions and about 11 million teen mothers suffer psychological effects of teen pregnancy and parenthood, of which 1 million resulting in suicides.

1.3 Research Questions:

- i. What are the psychosocial inter and intra conflicts faced by teenagers when they get pregnant?
- ii. How is Museum Art Therapy Approach relevant to mitigate to the problem of teen pregnancy?

1.4 Research objectives

- To discuss the psycho-social inter and intra conflicts faced by teenagers when they get pregnant.
- To discuss how museum art therapy approach is relevant to mitigate to the problem of teen pregnancy.

1.5. Significance of the study:

The study is of importance to researchers in the field of psychology pertaining to the problem of teenage pregnancy globally. The study by providing a general analysis of art therapy the intervention to teenage mothers through exploiting the forces that compel the young, female adolescents into early parenthood. The study also looks into the intra and interpersonal conflict among these females, inclusion of art therapy into pregnancy programs for girls and, the use of interactive museum gallery visits, drawing and painting the psychological crisis to enhance art therapy, treatment goals. By doing so, the study helps future studies by providing a baseline on the bearing and course to take in administering art therapy as an intervention strategy for teenage pregnancy in various jurisdictions, thereby improving the rehabilitation strategies for this crisis.

1.6 Methodology:

The current study used a qualitative study using secondary data in the form of an online desk research study. Desk research study is appropriate in gathering facts and existing data that can help explore a study, inform, and provide the need to proffer foundation or recommendations for ground research (Maxwell, 2008). The study was with the motive to gain an understanding of the psycho-social inter and intra conflicts faced by teenagers when they get pregnant and how art therapy, approach relevant to mitigate to the problem of teen pregnancy. Relevant peer reviewed literature to do with teenage pregnancy and art therapy rehabilitation, looked into. The desk research, carried out in a structured manner according to Mallat (2007) whereby, key words and terms, selected, these being teenage, pregnancy, rehabilitation, art therapy, and intra- inter conflict. After that a search for relevant sources with useful information, done. Relevant information that best suits the scope of work, selected then the study proceeded to analyse and compile the findings. Existing data was analysed and collated to come up with the the exploration findings on art therapy and teenage pregnancy. Secondary data is low cost and is a research method that can be effective when one is far from the research area (Johnson & Walsh, 2019). Technology advancement has made it possible to collate a comprehensive study online (Johnson & Walsh, 2019).

2. Literature review:

2.1 Inter and intra conflicts by teenage mothers:

The transition stage from being a child to being a young and unprepared parent in teens brings about various inter and intra conflicts among this age group (Friedman & Valenti, 2019). Teen mothers are usually troubled young girls that have decided to have children. In often times these teens they end up getting pregnant and face the harsh aftermath of it, to note is that mostly these youth would have numerous problems prior to getting pregnant (McKay et al., 2019). However, there are vast inter and intra feelings that teen mothers go through during this period of being a young mother, whether in or out of wedlock (Pasalich, Cyr, Zheng, McMahan, & Spieker, 2016). Low self-esteem is one of the major inner feelings that the teen mothers express, usually caused by both physical and inner changes within the youth (Pasalich et al., 2016). Change in body shape from pregnancy and baby fat and the shame of

being a young mother at a tender age make the teen mother are some of the big challenges that lead to the teen mother experiencing low self-esteem (Barlow et al., 2015). These teen mothers usually find it difficult to speak up for themselves around others and prioritising their own needs and feelings (Barlow et al., 2015). Teen mothers with low self-esteem, known to ever apologizing or feeling sorry for every little action, because of the sense of wronging the community and feeling undeserving of anything (Pasalich et al., 2016).

Mazibuko, Moodley, & Naicker (2019) gathered that, self-blame is one of the inner conflicts by most teen mothers. The “what if” and “if only” reasoning dominates the teen mothers so much that they do not dwell on the here and now, rather, they wish to reverse situations that they are unable to (McKay et al., 2019). The cognitive process of the teen mothers is usually, clogged with attributing the pregnancy and childbearing situation to themselves and this direction of blame leading to emotional and behavioural change in teen mothers (Kit & Tang, 2018). This results in the the teen mother being sad and at times angry with themselves. While they are having these internal conflicts, these mothers create problems with their own parents, community and friends usually by being uncorporative, shying away from usual activities with friends, overwhelmed and neglecting their parenting role to those around them (Kit & Tang, 2018).

Clements & Fay-Hillier (2019) highlight that teen mothers are in othen times feeling worthlessness. In most cases, teen mothers drop out of school, fail to get employment because of lack of skills and fail to cope with the new assumed role of motherhood (Mulaudzi, Dlamini, Coetzee, Sikkema, Gray, & Dietrich, 2018). When everything is falling in place, the youth fail to hold it up together and fail to find meaning, and goals in their lives, teen mothers feel worthlessness (Thompson, 1996). For the religious youth, they often in times feel that they are big sinners, a misfit to the religious sect and a disgrace. Without adequate psycho-social support, these teen mothers can sink into depression or some end up being suicidal (Diamand, Regev & Snir, 2019).

2.2 Museum art therapy:

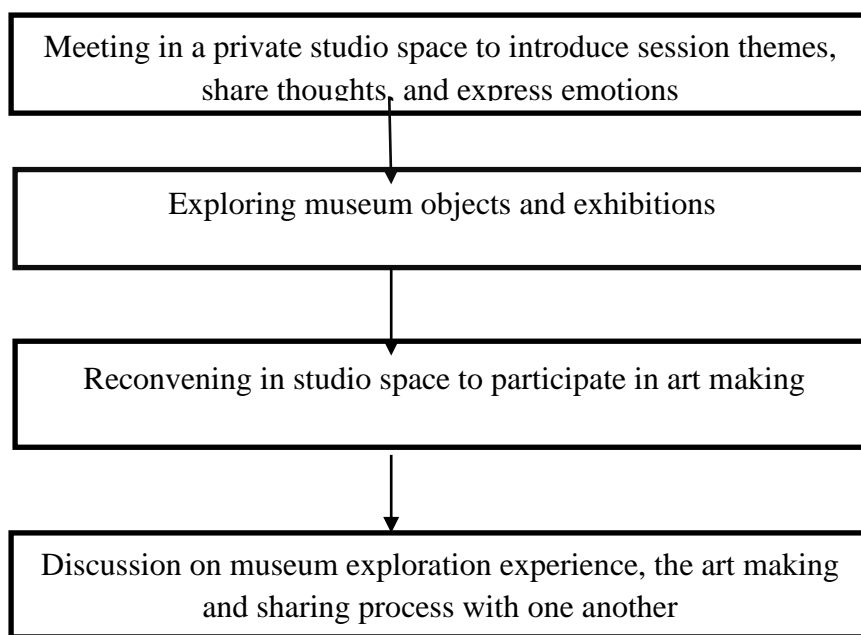
Art therapy in the form of museums and galleries are being famous in the field of psychology, and has been growing quickly in recent years (Peacock, 2012). Linesch (2004) asserts that museums, known as institutions that only allowed entry to specific, select members of society; they only of late have been considered as means of well-being and social change for people of all identities and credentials. Deane, Carman & Fitch, (2000) purpot that the museum environment and space has evolved towards a more social and inclusive platform with more emphasis on education and public programming, and of late becoming, a therapeutic space through art therapy. The conceptual model of museums has become dwellings of healing and change (Deane et al., 2000). Museums work to enhance knowledge and social skills of their community members as well as respond to societal issues responsibly (Betts, Potash, Luke, & Kelso, 2015). The museums and galleries provide such a calm and warm environment as such leading to the workable partnerships between educators and art therapists (Treadon, Rosal & Wylder, 2006). The link between museums, art galleries, and therapeutic action lies in the hospitable environment that these facilities provide (Betts et al., 2015). Teen mothers are usually sad and irritable, the calmness and warmth of galleries gives room for reflection and clearing of the mind in a transformative and educational way. There are some concerns on the appropriateness of art therapy sessions conducted in a public community space (Treadon et al., 2006). There is the argument of stigma that the teen mothers face in the community, and as such require traditionally therapeutic spaces.

2.3 Framework for Art Therapy Gallery sessions:

However, Coles and Harrison (2018) provide a framework for art therapy sessions in gallery spaces that can serve as a relaxing, convenient and therapeutic point for teen mothers. Four parts of a museum-based art therapy session, identified by Coles and Harrison (2018). Firstly being meeting in a private studio space to introduce session themes, share thoughts, and express emotions. This allows teen moms to have an understanding of the flow of the session as well as setting their personal goals (Musa & Mariamdarani, 2020). The calmness of this, environments fosters rapport and disclosure by the teen mothers other than being in a formal therapeutic environment. Secondly Coles and Harrison (2018) highlights on the therapeutic aspect of exploring museum objects and exhibitions by teen mothers. This broadens their horizons and enables them to think in artistic dimensions that they have not previously tapped into. Thirdly, Coles and Harrison (2018) speak of reconvening in studio space to participate in art making, in response to museum exploration. This therapeutic approach supports many teen mothers by externalizing their inner world. A teen does not require, have any artistic talent in order to benefit from this session.

Rather, the teen mother focus on the process of creating, and expressing their feelings through paper art (Frostig, 2011). It is up to the teen mother to talk or share about their final product. In this gallery session, the therapist does not comment on the final product by the client, but rather, pays attention to the verbalised words and non-verbal cues by the client during the creating process (Musa & Mariamdarani, 2020). Some teens do not express themselves well verbally; hence, this session enables the teen mothers to express their problems, painful hidden challenges that are very complicated to, put into words. For some teens, art therapy session in the gallery is a more comfortable language to communicate than sharing through talking. The art gallery session becomes a safe outlet for hidden feelings in a non-threatening way (Frostig, 2011).

Moreover, this is an attractive and more appealing and fun type of therapy for teens, who are more likely to continue to participate and complete with the process until their situations and problems improve (Stiles & Mermer-Welly, 1998). By participating in the art painting and drawing sessions, the teen mothers feel that they are in control of something, and as such, learn to be in control of their own lives (Krytus & Burstein, 2019). While the session is interesting and creative, it enables to create quick rapport between the therapist and the client as well as unearthing and discovering underlying thoughts and feelings (Langley et al., 2015). Lastly, there is the discussion on museum exploration experience, the art making and sharing process with one another. The figure below describes the framework of art gallery sessions by Coles & Harrison (2018):



2.4 Teen mothers and art therapy, gallery sessions:

By engaging teenage mothers into art gallery visits, makes them engage in dialogue on media and techniques, the teenage mothers become animated, impart positive self-comments on themselves and begin to ask questions (Frostig, 2011).The museum and art gallery platforms enables these teen mothers to think broadly as most teens have limited exposure to cultural opportunities and as such, such experiences broaden their thought processes and in turn widen their scope of silutions to their problems(Triunfo, Petrillo, Lofoco, Volpe & Lanzone, 2019). The museum gallery, art therapy bridges over, into supporting the teen mothers conceptualise their lives while encouraging awareness and spontaneity (Krytus&Burstein, 2019). Museum visits, also serve to stimulate the brain's reaction to the visual stimuli of a piece of artwork, resulting in a multi-step process. Art therapy can help teenage mothers to express themselves, explore and understand their feelings, thoughts, or issues that concern them in efforts to resolve their challenges (Stiles & Mermer-Welly, 1998). Through espousal of concepts of compassion, solidarity and empathy, it supports teenage mothers to achieve positive revolutions and progression through a psychological artistic journey of self-discovery, the artwork playing an essential role in this journey of self-awareness (Treadon, 2016). The works, visualised in an art therapy session become bridges between the verbal and the non-verbal, the conscious and the unconscious, the inner world and external reality for the teenage mothers(Triunfo et al., 2019).

Pipher & Gilliam (2019) affirm that art gallery and museums sessions are also important to teen mothers as they help themselves to understand the self-better. Being in a relaxed and interesting environment helps reduce mounting pressure on the teen moters, hence find room to understand themselves better, fing ways to foster sustainable peace within themselves and relationship with others(Gateshead, 2020). Moreover, Diamond (2019) claims that these art gallery sessions encourage social inclusion and engagement with others for teen mothers who usually shy away from their age group, family and community because of the pregnancy and childbearing predicament at a tender age. The art gallery experience is also an inspiring creativity to the teen mothers, as they will be having a vast interesting ways to express themselves as well as synthesis their thoughts(Langley et al., 2015).

3. Findings:

The study established that teen mothers go through various inter and intra conflicts within themselves as a result of being pregnant at an early age. Devastating is the issue that some of these teens lose the bearing of the course of action in life and end up withdrawing from community, friends and family and sinking slowly into depression. Key feelings that the study established to be hovering the teen mothers' emotions include worthlessness, sadness, low self-esteem and anger. Some teen mothers end up being overwhelmed by the stressful predicament they find themselves in, having a child, unpreparedness and the community and societal perceptions on the young mothers (Mulauzi et al., 2018). Museum art therapy, established by the current study to be a significant method to support teen mothers to solve unhelpful thoughts, beliefs and problems that they will be facing. Museum art therapy is a very interactive and fun way to engage the youth, while they will be in a relaxing environment (Krytus & Burstein, 2019). The therapy as established by the study makes it easy to establish rapport between the therapist and the client other than conventional therapy sessions (Treadon et al., 2006). While other scholars dispute the aspect of moving the therapy session out of the therapeutic room, the museum art therapy provides with different ways of self-expression to the teen mothers who can visualise paintings and gallery objects and art, express hidden feelings in drawings or verbally express themselves (Pipher & Gilliam 2019).

4. Recommendations and conclusion:

The study recommends for future studies to conduct studies with teen mothers and verify if indeed museum art therapy is effective in therapy for that group. There is still a discourse as some studies argue that therapy sessions should be limited to the conventional therapy session rooms and also that this method of museum art therapy is not suitable for the introverted teen parent. As such, the findings of the current study through a desk research study ought to be verified by future studies. In conclusion, the study comprehended that the problem of teen pregnancy is indeed a problem globally despite of race, ethnicity, religion or continental beating. The teen mothers go through a lot of inter and intrapersonal conflicts, and as such require support and the study established museum art therapy to be a welcomed measure in supporting teen mothers into self-discovery and realigning their lives back in track.

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EXHIBITS:

Adolescents design according to their psychological concept





