

Perceptions on Influence of Teenage Motherhood on Teen Mothers School Attendance in Kenya: A Study Across Public Secondary Schools Mbita Sub-County

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Abstract

Motherhood is an identity and an important experience in a woman's life. However, teenage motherhood has been a pressing concern worldwide, affecting the education and life trajectories of millions of teenage girls. The United States leads developed countries with 30% of adolescent girls dropping out of school due to teenage motherhood. In sub-Saharan Africa, Niger is the worst affected at 51%. In Kenya, it has become a national concern with a prevalence of 18%. One in five school-age teens became pregnant by age 20. Homa Bay County had 27.0% of girls ages 15-19 having children in 2019. It is these pregnancies that transform them, into becoming teenage mothers, an issue that significantly affects teenage girls' educational outcomes. To achieve Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5 (quality education and gender equality respectively), governments and key stakeholders need to seriously consider the impact of teenage motherhood on teen participation and academic performance in public secondary schools. The objective of the study was to assess the perceptions on influence of teenage motherhood on student teen mothers school attendance in public secondary schools in Mbita Sub-County. The study findings indicates low school attendance rates by student teen mothers. That is, only 21.1% of teen mothers attended school every day, and majority 78.9% of student teen mothers missed school at least once a week. This implies that teenage motherhood negatively influenced school attendance of student teenage mothers. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should fully operationalise re entry policy. This will enhance attendance of school by student teen mothers.

Keywords: Perceptions, Influence of Teenage Motherhood, Teen mothers School Attendance \, Kenya: Public Secondary Schools Mbita, Sub-County

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I. Introduction

Motherhood is an identity and an important experience in a woman's life. However, teenage motherhood has been and remains a pressing concern worldwide, affecting the educational pathways and lives of millions of adolescent girls (UNFPA, 2020). Rates of teenage motherhood vary from country to country, but it systematically disrupts the educational journey of adolescent girls. The United States leads developed countries with 30% of adolescent girls dropping out of school due to teenage motherhood. In low and middle-income countries, teenage motherhood rates tend to be higher (UNICEF, 2019).

Notably, as much of this research has focused on, teenage pregnancy rates are exceptionally high, posing significant challenges for education systems" Neal, 2019; UNFPA, (2018). During adolescence, young girls who become mothers at an early age often face conflicts between teenage motherhood and participation in school activities. Evidence shows that teenage motherhood hinders human capital development, such as education for girls in developing economies, because it is associated with school dropout and inadequacy of finances to support their own education and child care (Morgan, Agyemung, Dogbey, Arimiyaw & Owusu, 2022). According to the United Nations agency (UNICEF), this practice is very common, with up to 13 million births to adolescents in this age group recorded each year in high-, middle- and low-income countries.

Africa is home to the highest rates of teenage pregnancy, accounting for more than 90% of all teenage

births recorded annually worldwide (Envulada, 2014). Therefore, it is an important global public health and socioeconomic problem affecting large numbers of school-age girls. The number of teenage births is expected to increase in the coming decades; exceeding the total of 4.8 million births to women aged 15 to 19 between 1995 and 2020. This increase, about 400,000 more than in 1996, also reflects an increase in the size of the group of adolescents and higher fertility rates among adolescents in this area compared to other regions of the developing world (McDevitt, 1996).

Over the past two decades, scholars, parents, public health experts, and politicians have been concerned about teenage pregnancy (Malande, 2013). There are also concerns about the health of teenage mothers, the majority of whom are malnourished however this does not appear to be the case in developed countries as at the end of 20th centuries. Additionally, teen mothers use procedures such as caesarean section at approximately half the rate of older women (Smith & Pell, 2001), and older mothers may have perinatal mortality rates higher than among adolescent mothers (Owen, McNeill and Callum, 1998). As a result, an old adage states that young girls who start having children in their teens, often limit women's future options and put them at a serious disadvantage. Likewise, society is concerned that teenage pregnancy reflects a pattern of sexual behaviour that makes teens more likely to become pregnant, contract sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and reduces opportunities to participate in school activities. Even religious organizations view teenage pregnancy as a social and spiritual problem that needs to be addressed (Taffa & Matthews, 2011). According to Birungi (2007), up to 50% of young mothers aged 15 to 17 drop out of school and never return to school, posing a serious social problem. Statistics from the Demographic and Health Surveys indicate that although teen birth rates have declined slightly in several sub-Saharan countries, preterm birth rates remain high.

In Uganda, 68% of girls aged 20 to 24 become mothers before the age of 20, in Kenya it is 58% and in Zimbabwe, 49% give birth before the age of 20. Premarital pregnancy is on the rise, especially evident in cities (Bledsoe & Cohen, 1993). According to a study by the World Health Organization (2020), preventing pregnancy among adolescents and young adults has not received adequate attention in the Millennium Development Goals era due to the competitive priority. As the world moves towards the Sustainable Development Goals, adolescent girls are placed at the heart of the global health and development agenda, and WHO now partners with UNICEF, UNFPA and United Nations Women as part of a global initiative to accelerate prevention of teenage pregnancy and motherhood. Teen motherhood has unpredictable effects on teen mothers' school engagement and academic performance. Because of the many disruptions caused by childcare arrangements and children's health, education experts believe that teenage motherhood has a significant influence on education. This is because most teenage mothers do not have a babysitter and therefore have to prioritize childcare instead of schoolwork, which is a challenge for them. Likewise, many teenage mothers whose education is interrupted by pregnancy are often unaware that options are still available to them, while those who often return find it difficult to succeed in their future careers. Becoming a teenage mother comes at the cost of many sacrifices to ensure that their children have a brighter future. Compared with their classmates, individuals have higher levels of academic maladjustment, which affects their academic persistence and academic success. However, it should be noted that in Kenya, teenage mothers have the right to return to school after giving birth to continue their studies. Unfortunately, the obligation to implement this right often falls to school administrators, who sometimes filter guidelines based on their own ethics and values (Morrell et al., 2012).

Faced with the challenge of teenage pregnancy, the government introduced a reintegration policy in 1994. This aimed to give girls a second chance at education after becoming teenage mothers. This policy aims to ensure that more girls continue to complete primary and secondary education. According to Birungi et al. (2015), implementing a return-to-school policy for teenage mothers requires appropriate counselling to help them overcome the stigma and discrimination they face after giving birth and returning to school as a teenage mother. Despite all the efforts of the government to enhance the status of teenage mothers and their access to education after gaining new status, some education stakeholders still lack understanding and do not accept the implementation of this regulation (Omwancha, 2012).

II. Synthesis Of Literature On Student Teenage Motherhood And School Attendance

Murray (2012) documents that effective participation and engagement in formal education set up is a precursor to educational success. This assertion cannot be achieved when a adolescent becomes a teenage mother. Pregnancy among teenagers is commonly associated with high absenteeism, dropouts. Its complications predispose youths to permanently leaving school often (Kearney, 2008). Moreover, educators and other stakeholders associate frequent absenteeism to pregnancy. Natalie-Rico (2011) agrees with Kearney that teenage pregnancy has a negative effect of dropping out of high school. This study attempted to examine if the above assertions are true by obtaining the perceptions of various stakeholders in Mbita Sub County.

Nobukhosi, Tladi and Kgole (2014) conducted a study to investigate the effects of teenage

motherhood on the secondary education of the female learners in Limpopo, South Africa. The study adopted descriptive, exploratory research design and a qualitative research method. The analysed data generated three thematically. The result from the data was that teenage motherhood does not have a negative effect on the ability of the learner to continue attending school. Whereas, this study majorly relied on qualitative methods, the current study equally used both quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain data from teenage mothers, class teachers and parents to explore their perceptions on influence of teenage motherhood on teenage mother school attendance.

A study conducted in the year 2018 by Boateng, Acheampong, Ganu and Gyan to establish influence of teenage pregnancy among senior schools' children as a public health issue in Amansie, Ghana revealed that 67.7% of teenagers and society, believes it brings about school dropout. The above study adopted random and purposive sampling whereas my study will use purposive sampling to select the sample. Worth not is the fact that the study has not clearly stated the study design and method of data collection yet those are well mentioned in this study.

Maemeko, Nkengbeza, and Chikomosi (2018) while researching on the Impact of teenage pregnancy on Academic performance of Primary school learners in Zambezi Region, interviewed four pregnant learners and two teachers. Their findings depicted increased school dropouts and poor academic performance after pregnancy. Their conclusion was teenage mothers do not attend school regularly due to parenting role and sometimes drop out cases are witnessed of school. The research was conducted among grade 7 learners (primary school level) whereas my study will be conducted in high school. Six respondents were used as this study used bigger sample of 209.

Gyan (2013) in carrying out his research in Chorkor, Ghana to establish the effects of teenage motherhood on the educational attainment of girls. Data was collected from 55 respondents was used for the research. The research revealed that most teenage mothers drop out of school. In the above study, methods of data collection included observation and focus group discussions whereas interviews, questionnaires and document analysis were used in this study to obtain data.

In a similar study, Maritim, Ngeno and Sang (2017) investigated the effect of teenage pregnancy on the academic progression of girls in primary schools in Ainamoi sub county, Kericho, Kenya. A sample of 180 respondents were used for the research. Descriptive survey research design and mixed method methodology was adopted. Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were used as methods of data collection. Simple random sampling technique was used to identify respondents to the questionnaire. The findings showed that 51.5% dropped out completely as the remaining percentage 48.5% of the girls who became pregnant re-entered. The above study was carried out among primary school students, whereas the current research was amongst secondary school students in Mbita Sub County.

To determine the influence of teenage pregnancy on completion rates among girls on day secondary schools a study was conducted by Kato, Riechi and Obae (2015 in Kimilili sub county, Kenya. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. Data was obtained 319 respondents. The findings of the study established that dropout rate amounted to over 40 % of cases in a period of four years. The current study will use 209 respondents to explore if the above assertions are true. This literature reviewed overwhelmingly indicates that teenage motherhood does influence school attendance of the teenage mothers negatively. It is therefore necessary to conduct this research in order to find out from the stake holders' perceptions if teenage motherhood influence teenage mothers' participation and performance in education in secondary schools in Mbita Sub County

Research Objective

The research objective was to assess the perceptions on influence of teenage motherhood on student teenmothers school attendance in public secondary schools in Mbita Sub-County.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework Figure 1 was informed by Grounded theory which advocates for use of available data in literature to develop a conceptual framework in an attempt to clearly hypothesize the relationships between independent and dependent variables. Grounded theory is particularly useful for exploring social phenomenon such as the topical issue of teenage mothers and can help to identify their perceptions on factors that influence their participation and academic performance. The study can use grounded theory to analyse data collected from teen mothers, parents, class teachers and games teachers to develop a theory that explains how teenage motherhood affects their participation and academic performance. The theory can be used to inform interventions and policies that supports teenage other in their education and help them to achieve their academic goals. The conceptual framework identifies the essential concepts under study and demonstrates how different concepts relate to each other. In quantitative research, these may be variables that are presented before the research project begins to demonstrate their hypothesized relationship. Finally, they

map the discovered relationships. These can be diagrams that organize qualitative research concepts to show relationships between codes, categories, or themes. The conceptual framework links data to theory. Even as they develop, they can help examine the meaning of concepts, how they are related, and ambiguities (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003; Creswell, 2011; Boije, 2010; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996; Cole, 2011).

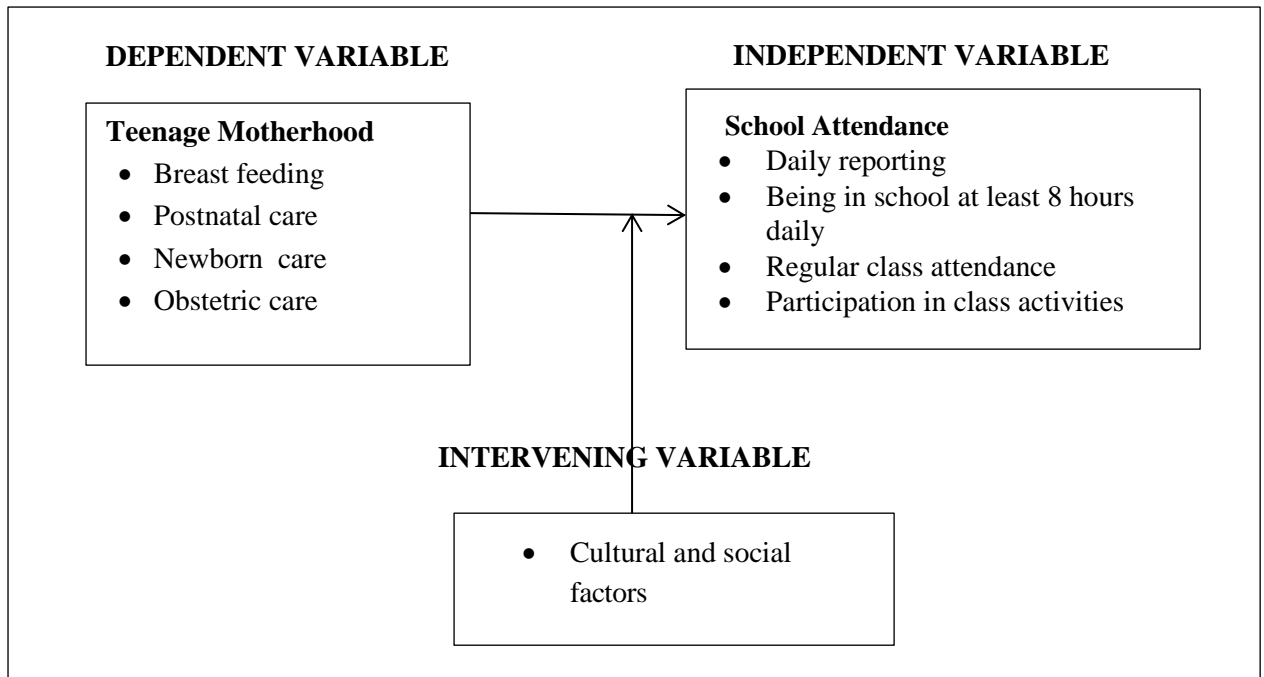


Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing influence of teenage motherhood on student teen mothers school attendance

It is postulated that the independent variable, teenage motherhood, in the conceptual framework presented Figure 1 has influence on teenage mothers' school participation and academic performance in secondary school education. Attendance at school, engagement in class activities, involvement in co-curricular activities, and self-study are all sub-scales of school participation. However, intervening variables such as cultural and social factors moderate the influence of teen motherhood on teenage mothers attendance at school .

III. Research Methodology

Descriptive survey and correlational research designs was adopted. The researcher used snowballing and purposive sampling methods to select the respondents. From a target population of 209 respondents, questionnaires were administered to a sample of 95 student teenage mothers and 36 class teachers. In depth interview schedules administered to 10 teenage mothers, 5 class teachers, 5 games teachers from the same sample. The target population also included, 29 principals, 12 parents 3 beach leaders and 1 County Director of Education. Expert review from supervisors helped ensure the validity of the data collection tools. A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the data collection tools. This tool had a reliability coefficient of 0.854. The researcher adhered to ethical principles when conducting the study by seeking consent from the participants by explaining the purpose of the study and ensuring their confidentiality. Data analysis was computed by use of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (t-test) using Window 26 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

IV. Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Teenage Mothers' Demographic Information

The demographic information of teenage mother students investigated included Age, their status in motherhood, class and marital status.

Ages among Teenage Mothers

Table 1: Distribution of Ages among Teenage Mothers (n=95)

		AGE they became teenage mom					
		Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	primary	Total
age of the teenage mothers	>19Years	0	1	0	1	0	2
	12-14Years	4	1	2	0	10	17
	15-17Years	5	22	18	2	2	49
	18-19Years	0	2	10	13	2	27
Total		9	26	30	16	14	95

It is evident from the figure that teenage motherhood prevalence is highest (49 out of 95) within 15-17 years' age bracket translating to 51.6% of teenage mothers who took part in the survey. This was followed by 18-19years at 28.4% (27 out of 95). The least group represented were those 19 years and above who were 2.1% (2) of the teenage mothers. This is not surprising because the nineteen-year-olds are already in the age of being adult and there is possibility that some of them who give birth at this age decides on their own not to get re-admitted back to school but instead seek for marriage or find away how to provide for the baby. However, the study established that even those as young as below 15 years of age were already teenage mothers, having given birth and already re-admitted back to school. They formed 17.9% (17) of the teenage mother students who were surveyed.

Onset of Teenage Motherhood

The respondents were asked to indicate the class at which they acquired teenage motherhood and their responses were displayed in Figure 2.

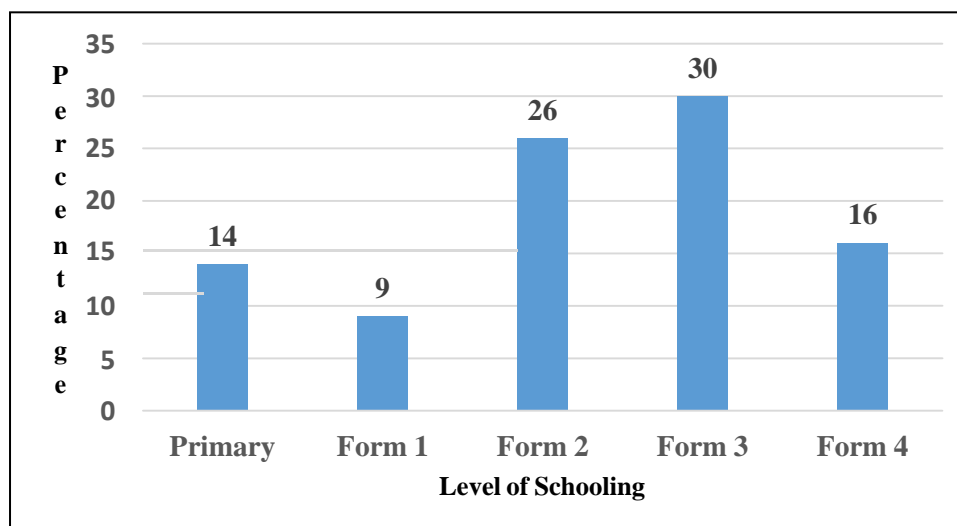


Figure 2: Onset of Teenage Motherhood

As shown in Figure 2, the study found out that teenage pregnancy is more prevalent in Form 3 than in other classes. This was reflected by 30 out of 95 equivalents to 31.6% of the teenage mothers who indicated that they became teenage mothers at Form 3. They were closely followed at 27.4% (26 out of 95) by those who acquired teenage motherhood status at Form 2. Equally, the results of the survey revealed that 14.7% of the teenage mothers get pregnant while still in primary schools, as indicated by 14 of the surveyed re-admitted teenage mothers.

Table 2: Status of Motherhood (n=95)

Status of teenage motherhood				
Age of student teenage mothers	Aborted	Delivered	Expectant	Total
>19years	0	2	0	2
12-14 years	3	6	8	17
15-17 years	11	26	12	49
18-19 years	5	21	1	27
Total	19	55	21	95

With regard to status of teenage motherhood shown by Figure 4.2, out of the 95 teenage mothers who took part in the survey, majority 55 (57.9%) of them gained re-entry to school after they had given birth. A considerable number 21 (22.1%) of teenage mothers were still attending school while expectant but 19 (20%) others indicated that they had aborted. This suggests that all status of teenage motherhood were represented in the study, implying that generalization of the results of this study is realistic.

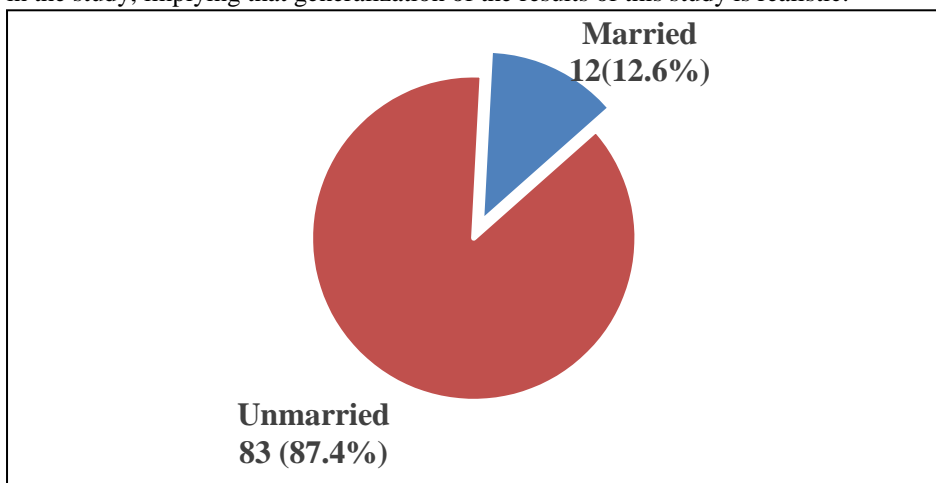


Figure 3: Marital Status of the student Teenage mothers.

The findings of the survey established that a significant majority 83 (87.3%) of the teenage mothers who were re-admitted back to school were unmarried, this is not surprising because majority of them were found to be below 18 years and marrying them would not augur well with societal norms and values. Only 12 (12.6%) of re-admitted teenage mother indicated that they had been married.

Table 3: Teachers' Demographic Information (n=36)

Attribute	F	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	14	38.9
Female	22	61.1
Total	36	100.0
Age		
Below 35 Years	6	16.7
35-45 Years	24	66.6
Above 45 Years	6	16.7
Total	36	100.0
Educational Level		
Diploma	4	11.1
Bachelor's Degree	22	61.1
Masters	8	16.7
PhD	4	11.1
Total	36	100.0

The study aimed to explore teacher gender, considered an underlying genetic difference among the teachers surveyed. Gender information was considered important for this study as it was anticipated that their responses might differ depending on their gender. It is clear that female teachers dominate secondary education. Twenty two out of thirty-six teachers (61.1%) are female, indicating that they make up the majority of teachers in public secondary schools in Mbita sub-county. This reflects the predominance of women in secondary education in the sub-county. Regardless, both genders were represented in the study, implying that the results of this study can be generalized to a broader population as it captures the perspectives of both genders. Indeed, each gender can make unique contributions to research that cannot be fully made by the other gender.

Regarding the age of the surveyed teachers, the survey results showed that most teachers 24 (66.6%) were between the ages of 35 and 45, of which 6 (16.7%) were under 35 years old and the remaining 6 (16.7%), are all over 45 years old. Similarly, at the teacher education level, research results indicate that 4 (11.1%) have a diploma in education, the vast majority of 22 (61.1%) teachers have a bachelor's degree in education, about 8 (16.7%) of them have a master's degree in education. However, another minority (11.1%) have a PhD. These results reflect a combination of age and education level, making it reasonable to generalize the study results.

Table 4: Parents' Demography (n=12)

Attribute	F	Percentage%
Gender		
Male	3	25
Female	9	75
Total	12	100.0
Age		
Below 35 Years	1	8.3
35-50 Years	2	16.7
Above 50 Years	9	75
Total	12	100.0
Educational Level		
Primary	6	50
Secondary	4	33.3
College/University	2	16.7
Total	12	100.0

There is no doubt that female parents dominated the study as more than three-quarters (77.8%) of the sampled parents were mothers of re-enrolled teenage mothers. This is not surprising because information on issues related to girls, especially teenage motherhood, is considered preserve of female parents. However, both genders were represented in the study, implying that the results of this study can be generalized to a broader population because they capture the perspectives of both genders.

Regarding the age of the parents interviewed, the survey results showed that the majority of parents, 9 (75%) were over 50 years old, of which 1 (8.3%) parent was under 35 years old and 2 (16.7%) were under 35 years old. The remaining 22.2%) belong to the parents' age group. age group from 35 to 50 years old. Similarly, in terms of parents' education level, the research results show that the majority of 6 (50%) parents only have primary education or have no formal education at all. However, another 4 (33.3%) had a high school education and only 2 (16.7%) of them had a college/university education. These results show that most teenage mothers come from families where parents have low levels of education.

Research Objective

The research objective of the study was to assess the perceptions on influence of teenage motherhood on student teen mother school attendance.

This study considers adolescent mothers' schooling as their regular or irregular return to school. The objective was addressed first, by using descriptive statistics to explore indicators of school attendance and second, by using inferential statistics (t-test) to verify the perception that teenage motherhood is associated to school attendance among teenage mothers. The study attempted to establish the attendance and absence rates of student teen mothers at school. When respondents were asked to indicate how often they went to school in a week, the survey results showed that they did not go to school regularly as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Responses of student teenage mothers on attendance (n = 95)

Response	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four Times	Daily
F	4	13	39	19	20
%	4.2	13.7	41.1	20.0	21.1

Table 5 presents an exploratory analysis of the data, showing that of the 95 re-entry teenage mothers participating in the study, only 20 (21.1%) of them were typically present at school every day of the week, as currently expected of a student. The majority of them 58 (61.1%) said they only go to school three or four times a week. It appeared that about 17 respondents, or 17.9% of the readmitted teenage mothers sampled for the study, confirmed that they only went to school once in a week.

These findings are supported by the results of the literature review which showed that an average of 22 teenage mothers (23.2%) miss school each week as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Average weekly school absence rates among student teenage mothers

	WK 1	WK 2	WK 3	WK 4	AV
F	24	22	20	21	22
%	25.3	23.2	21.1	22.1	23.2

This implies that many of teenage mother registered high levels of school absenteeism, suggesting that there is high prevalence of school absenteeism among the teenage mothers.

Table 7: Test for Influence of student Teenage Mothers School Attendance

Test Value = 0						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Week Attendance	30.252	94	.000	3.400	3.18	3.62

A one sample t test was used to compare the sample mean of school attendance to a critical t value (t value from the t distribution tables) (Kothari, 2004). The study found a calculated t value of 30.252 at 94 degrees of freedom. The t value from the t distribution table was 1.66 which is less than 30.252 and this led to conclusion that teenage motherhood influences school attendance. This is also evident in the frequency table in table 6 above, 82% of the respondents attended school three to five days in a week while only 18% attended school one to two times a week.

Table 8: Class Teachers Response on student teen mothers School Attendance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	daily	5	13.9	13.9
	four	11	30.6	44.4
	thrice	15	41.7	86.1
	twice	5	13.9	100.0
	Total	36	100.0	100.0

From the response given by the class teachers, 15 (42%) said that teenage mothers attend school thrice in a week, 11 attend school four times in a week, 5 attend school twice in a week and 5 also attend daily. This is consistent with the information given by the teenage mothers themselves that the highest percentage of them (41%) of them attend school thrice a week.

Table 9: Class teachers' response on student teen mothers Class attendance

Test Value = 0						
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Attendance	22.748	35	.000	3.444	3.14	3.75

The calculated t value is 22.748 at 35 degrees of freedom and the t value from the t table is 1.684 at 35 degrees of freedom. $22.748 > 1.671$ and therefore the study rejected the null hypotheses and concluded at 95% confidence level that teenage motherhood influences school attendance of teenage mothers.

Extent of student teenage motherhood on school attendance

To determine whether teenage motherhood was associated with low school attendance among student teen mothers, student teenage mothers surveyed were asked their opinion on whether their motherhood reduced their school attendance. Their responses were as shown in Table 10.

Table 10:
Opinions of student Teenage Mothers on the influence of their Motherhood Status on their School Attendance.

Rating of Influence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
None at All	12	12.6
Only a little	13	13.7
Moderate	14	14.7
A lot	29	30.5
Very Much	27	28.4
Total	95	100.0

Key: **None at All** (Never Absent in a week); **Only a little** (Absent once/week); **Moderate** (Absent at least twice/week);

A lot (Absent at least thrice/week);

Very Much (Absent at least four days/week).

The results show that many 29 (30.5%) student teenage mother respondents indicate that their school attendance has very much reduced because of their motherhood status. Another 27 (28.4%) of them believed that their school attendance has reduced a lot. However, some 14 (13.7%) said the reduction of school attendance due to their motherhood status is moderate, but only 12 (12.6%) of them feel that their school attendance has not reduced at all because of their motherhood status. In the overall analysis, it was determined that the majority of teenage mothers 56 (58.9%) confirmed that their motherhood status had significantly reduced their attendance, with only 25 (26.3%) of them believing that their motherhood status does not affect their school attendance.

Reasons for Absenteeism from School among the student Teenage Mothers

The research aimed at establishing reasons for absenteeism of the teenage student mothers from school. Social environment at school, family support, community support and general child care are some of the reasons for poor school attendance and high absenteeism among the teenage mothers in secondary schools. Asked to give reason for their much absenteeism from school, teenage mother respondents identified baby related factors as illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11: Reasons for School Absenteeism among student Teenage Mothers (n=95)

Reason Absenteeism	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sickness of the child	25	26.3
Sickness of self (teen mother)	18	18.9
Nursing the baby	35	36.8
To collect school fees	10	10.5
Just Tired	7	7.4
Total	95	100.0

From Table 11, it can be seen that the main reason why teenage mothers miss school is breastfeeding, as evidenced by the response rate of 36.8%. Often, many teenage mothers come from families with financial difficulties and parents cannot afford to hire a babysitter for their grandchildren. Added to this is the lack of support from the children's father. Therefore, when there is no family member to take care of her child, the teenage mother has to absent herself from school to take care of her child. The next most prevalent reasons cited by many respondents were children's illnesses (26.3%) and their own illnesses (teen mothers) (18.9%). This means that complications related to pregnancy and childbirth in adolescent mothers often affect pregnant mothers' school attendance or hospital readmissions. Teen mothers also face other health risks and complications due to their immature bodies, and children born to young mothers are also at higher risk of poor health. These reasons explain the high incidence of illness among teenage mothers and their children, leading to frequent absences from school.

V. Discussion

Comparing the response of class teachers and the response of student teenage mothers, the results both indicated that teenage motherhood influences the school attendance of teenage mothers. The researcher also conducted in-depth interviews with 5 out of 36 sampled class teachers. They made observations on the negative

effects of the teenage motherhood on School attendance. "It is true that teenage mothers cannot have a normal school attendance lifestyle. This can be caused by the fact that they have to attend clinics, take the babies to hospital whenever they are sick. Mother child bonding is also a factor to the teenage mothers often being absent from school." (Class Teacher 1)

Social scientists and school officials believe that teenage pregnancy and motherhood are linked to delinquency and school dropout (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Hosie (2007) also found out that bullying by teachers or other students were instrumental in their dislike of school. Those students whose attendance are poor and who dislike school prior to pregnancy have a negative attitude from their schools on disclosure of their condition and are less likely to remain in school than those who had good attendance beforehand. When the views of re-admitted teenage mother respondents was sought on whether the time they go to bed or wake up really determine their school attendance, a significant majority (84; 88.9%) of them agreed that it does. These findings were supported by the excerpt of interview of both parents and class teachers. For example, one of the parents observed: "My daughter nowadays is always late for school. She usually sleeps late and when she wakes up in the morning, she has to wash her baby's nappies and bedding before she goes to school." (P 3). This implies that the teenage mother has faced many challenges since gaining her new status, thus affecting her getting to school on time because she has to take care of her child's needs first before going to school. Similarly, one class teacher had this to say; One of the teenage girls in my class who has a baby always come to school after the morning remedial lessons. I have talked until am now tired.... she cannot change. She will always tell you something to do with her baby (Class Teacher 4) . This means that the teenage mother comes to school late frequently hence missing the morning classes on a regular basis on the excuse of still attending to the baby as confirmed by student teenage mother 6. "...I know I had to attend the remedial, when I was about to leave the baby just woke up and she needed food and her nappies to be changed. I had to do all these and prepare myself before coming to school." (Student Teen Mother 6). This is an indication of poor school attendance in terms of punctuality among the re-admitted teenage mothers. This finding suggests that teenage motherhood has negative impact on class attendance. In addition, they are not able to concentrate fully in class even if they go to school given that they are usually tired because of inadequate sleep at night, suggesting that some of them prefer to remain at home instead of going to school. These findings show that there are many more respondents who agreed that their teenage motherhood status has affected their school attendance than those of them who were of the contrary opinion. This means that teenage motherhood has an impact on the schooling of teen mothers re-entering high school. Thus, research has demonstrated that teenage motherhood has a negative impact on secondary school attendance.

From interviews about teenage motherhood, teachers and teenage mothers themselves also emphasized that school attendance cannot remain the same after childbirth. For example, some interviewees commented: "It is true that teenage mothers cannot have a normal school attendance lifestyle. This can be caused by the fact that they have to attend clinics, take the babies to hospital whenever they are sick. Mother-child bonding is also a factor to the teenage mothers often being absent from school (Class Teacher 4). This implies that teenage mothers often have to miss school unlike their counterparts who aren't teenage mothers. This is due to the need to meet their baby's needs such as taking your baby to the clinic or babysitting.:

Another class teacher said that; "Complications that arise due to pregnancy and teenage motherhood deny the re-admitted teenage mothers the opportunity of being in school daily hence miss out on effective syllabus coverage in schools. A good number of the teenage mothers are not able to balance between attending school regularly and to take care of their baby (Class Teacher 6) This means that regular absenteeism from school costs the teenage mothers the opportunity to attend school regularly and they therefore miss out on syllabus coverage in full. A teenage mother whose experience agrees with those of the class teachers said that; "You know; I have to miss school mostly in the afternoons during my late pregnancy period. And immediately after birth, I could not go to school" (Student Teen Mother 4). This implies that a teenage mother observed that she missed out in learning sessions in school during later stages of pregnancy as well as after she gave birth.

Another teenage mother said that; "I miss school because at times I have to attend clinic. My mother cannot do that for me. Sometimes, the baby is sick and so I have to take care of her so I cannot go to school." (Student Teen Mother 5) This implies that the teenage mother missed school as she attended to the baby, like taking him to the hospital. Similarly, through interviews with selected teenage mothers, it was also found that poor learning environment and social stigma are other reasons why adolescent mothers do not regularly attend school. For example, TM 3 attests that: "I don't go to school because some teachers and even classmates say bad things about me. My classmates even insulted me with names like "our mother" (Student Teen Mother 3). The above answer is consistent with some of the participants' responses (Horwitz, Klerman, Kuo, & Jekel, 1991), in which one of their participants stated that: "Due to the stigma associated with being a pregnant learner, I stopped attending school regularly as expected". Similarly, one of the teenage mothers pronounces the effect of stigma as one of the factors that discourages her from attending school regularly: "Sometimes my

fellow learners tease me a lot because I have a baby while in school. Sometimes it is like a fashion show, when walking in the corridors then everyone looks at you, like you become the centre of attention. Sometimes I feel like I am out of place and even want to stop coming to school but I can't stop because I have to complete my education for the sake of my baby..." (Student Teen Mother 2) The above teen mother decries stigmatization that she faces among her school mates in relation to her status of being a teen mother. This she says tends to demoralize her but she has to press on.

Gouleta and Schools (2004) suggested that peer pressure is more prevalent than support and understanding among teen mothers. Therefore, the teen mothers need to make mature decisions as grownups if they want to face a new life after becoming mothers. The researcher also conducted in-depth interviews with selected class teachers. Two of them commented on the negative effects of teenage motherhood on schooling. "The moment a student conceives, they are stigmatized...most of them decide to miss school out of stigma. They fear how their fellow students talk about them. However much some of them still soldier on to return to schools, this effect is still felt in the skipping of school attendance." (Class Teacher 5) This implies that the reason for missing school mainly borders on the stigma she faces when going to school while pregnant and that subsequently affects their performance. Social scientists and school officials believe that teenage pregnancy and motherhood are linked to delinquency and school dropout (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Hosie (2007) also found that bullying by teachers or other students contributes to children's dislike of school. Teenagers with low school attendance who disliked school before pregnancy had negative attitudes toward disclosing their status and were less likely to stay in school than students with low school attendance before.

VI. Conclusion

From the findings of the study it was concluded that there is generally poor class attendance among the re-admitted student teenage mothers and majority of them do not concentrate fully in class. They usually take less time concentrating in class because they sleep more during lessons, attributed to the fact that they go to sleep late. This was not surprising because many student teenage mothers have to remain awake until their babies are asleep occasioning lack of adequate sleep. This subsequently affects their academic performance hence always being below average as compared to other students. It was therefore concluded that teenage motherhood status negatively affects school attendance among re-admitted student teenage mothers in secondary schools.

VII. Recommendations

- i) Principals of secondary schools should provide adequate individual, peer and group guidance and counseling services to student teen mothers and their parents who are custodians of the children while their mothers are in school as this will enhance school attendance.
- ii) The re-entry policy should be fully operationalised with great benefits to the student mothers so that the student mother prioritizes schooling.
- iii) Student teen mothers should be encouraged to join boarding schools and be provided with basic requirements with assurance of the social, cultural, and economic benefits to their children left in the custody of the care takers so that student teen mothers can fully pursue their education.

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