



Exploration of Teenage Mother Students' Challenges in Secondary Schools in Tanzania: A Case of Ifakara, Morogoro

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Abstract: This study was carried out in Ifakara town council in Morogoro region Tanzania, to explore challenges faced by teenage mothers upon returning to school as mothers and students in public secondary school settings in Tanzania. The study was qualitative in nature and employed phenomenological research design because it is wholly focused on understanding the experiences of others. The study used an interpretative phenomenological research design to explore the challenges faced by teenage mother students in public ordinary secondary schools where interview and focus group discussion were employed. The findings of the study revealed that; teenage mothers experience a number of challenges, including increased burden of responsibilities, time management, insufficient physical, and moral support from peers and teachers at school, family, and society as well as financial challenges. This situation has resulted into a failure to achieve their desired goals and expectations and hence has led to poverty. The study recommends that: The government should find a way to allocate the teenage mothers in boarding secondary; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, through Secondary Education quality Improvement Program should extend the support to reach as many as possible teenage mothers to not only finance their education but also their individual needs; NGOs which are dedicated to help teenage mothers to collaborate with the ministry of education to create awareness to the society through school visits and the use of radio, televisions, and other social media to eliminate stigmatization of the teenage mothers at the family, school, and society level.

Keywords: Teenage pregnancy, Teenage mothers, Ifakara, Morogoro, Challenges, Re-admission policy

How to cite this work (APA):

Timothy, J. & Juhudi, C. (2023). Exploration of teenage mother students' challenges in secondary schools in Tanzania: A case of Ifakara, Morogoro. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 7(4), 724 – 735. <https://doi.org/10.59765/bhry8943>.

1. Introduction

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood are among the problems impacting countries in both developed and developing ones in a way that endangers girls from successfully participating in education (Wekesa, 2010). A notable impact of early pregnancy is an inability of the girl to complete education as a result deteriorates their chances of engaging in significant employment in their adulthood and eventually in socio-economic activities. (Wekesa, 2010).

1.1 Experiences from Sub-Saharan Africa

In developing countries, approximately 21 million teenagers aged between 15 and 19 become pregnant each year, of which approximately 50 percent are unplanned (Sully et al, 2020). The overall prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Africa is estimated at the rate of 18.8 percent and 19.3 percent in the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) region (Sully et al, 2020). In East Africa, teenage pregnancy is higher at 21.5 percent above SSA records

(Kassa et al, 2018). High rates of teenage pregnancy have been reported in Uganda and Tanzania, with 140 and 132 births per 1000 women aged between 15 to 19 respectively (UNFPA, 2019).

In most SSA countries, teenage pregnancy leads to a loss of education opportunities due to the widespread practice of expelling pregnant teenage girls from primary and secondary schools (Niboye, 2018). Expulsion leads to early marriage which is a problem for teenage girls and society at large as they become vulnerable and potentially marginalized as a result they become at risk of socioeconomic disadvantage and could result into teenage parenting (Subban et al, 2022).

To address the challenge of teenage pregnancy, expulsion from school has been used as a way to discourage other girls from engaging in sexual misconduct and finally getting pregnant (Mandanda, 2014). The approach has been applied in many other countries including Sierra Leone, Malawi, Uganda, and Kenya (Mandanda, 2014).

With the realization of teenage mothers as an individual, national, regional, and global challenge, the United Nations (UN) endorsed different policies that aim at improving access to education for all. One such policy is the Sustainable Development Goal Four (SDG4) which pursues the education agenda for equitable access to post-basic education and training for youth and adults through equitable access to appropriate learning opportunities both for the world of work, as well as for citizenship in a global and interconnected world (UNESCO, 2017). This implies that both girls and boys have the right to access appropriate learning without limitations.

Further, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Heads of State and Governments developed the African Charter on The Rights and Welfare of the Child. Article 11 of the charter is about how an African child is to be educated, furthermore, paragraph 6 of article 11 states clearly that; *“States Parties to the present Charter shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children who become pregnant before completing their education shall have an opportunity to continue with their education on the basis of their individual ability”*. (Organization of African Union, 1999. pg. 12). The article laid a foundation for teenage mothers to be given the opportunity to complete the circle of education despite individual ways in which such children should continue with their education.

As a strategy to meet the basic need of those teenage girls who become pregnant before completing their education, some countries in SSA for example South Africa, Zambia, Kenya, Botswana, Cameroon, Zanzibar and Zambia adopted re-entry policies that allow teenage mothers to return to schools (Kapasule, 2020).

Nevertheless, in most of these countries, the re-entry policies had been poorly implemented and in some countries it has not worked, consequently the teenage mothers didn't return and stay in schools (Kapasule, 2020). The reasons associated with the poor implementation of the policy are failure to interpret the policy and ignorance (Kapasule, 2020).

1.2 Experience in Tanzania

In Tanzania, thousands of teenage girls are expelled from school each year due to pregnancy without considering factors that led to the pregnancies (Niboye, 2018). For instance, in 2010, more than 8000 teenage girls (about 1760 from primary schools and more than 6300 from secondary schools) were forced to drop out from school due to pregnancy (UNICEF, 2011). Pregnant students in mainland Tanzania were expelled because of expulsion regulation instituted in 2002 amendment to the Education Act that requires expulsion of students who commit an act seen as an offence against morality (HakiElimu, 2011). Nevertheless, the regulation does not explain the crimes that are considered against morality, but school officials often interpret pregnancy as an offence (Niboye, 2018).

The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) as a member of UN and AU has signed the international and regional agreements, declarations, policies and laws that aim at providing equitable access to education to all without discrimination, but the Government didn't put into implementation because the Government wanted to prevent other girls from getting pregnant (Tanzania Education Network, 2021).

However, in complying with UN and AU policies like other SSA countries, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, on 22nd June 2021 issued an order calling for the return of school dropouts, including teenage mothers to be readmitted to public schools (Tanzania Education Network, 2021). The call was followed by the instatement of guidelines which came into implementation in February 2022 aiming at ensuring that both girls and boys have equal rights and opportunities for education, regardless of their sex, ethnicity, and socio-economic status as well as teenage mothers do not strip off educational potentials that can be realized. (Wizara ya Elimu, Sayansi na Teknolojia, 2022).

Despite the government's intention of ensuring everyone completes the circle of education, there have been mixed feelings among education stakeholders in the country, including teachers. The education stakeholders are curious and fearful of the way teenage mothers will manage to play multiple roles as mothers and students. Elsewhere, some research on the practical and workable approaches to the re-admission of teenage mothers to formal schools has been carried out. For instance, the

Center for the Study of Adolescence (2008), Niboye (2018), Dalia et al (2020), and Asey (2012) all realized the re-entry policies are either poorly implemented or not carried out at all. As a result, only a few teenage mothers are returning and staying in school due to a number of challenges they encounter upon returning to school.

The finding signals that the challenges of re-admitted teenage mother students as mothers as well as students in public secondary schools is not yet empirically revealed as a result they do not stay in schools. This study therefore aims to explore challenges which re-admitted teenage mothers are facing as mothers and students in public secondary school settings in Tanzania.

2. Literature Review

Different studies have been conducted on the challenges faced the teenage mothers upon return to school. A study conducted in Kenya by the Centre for the Study of Adolescence (2008) revealed that teenage mothers are facing a wide range of challenges including negative perceptions from the community and stigma. Moreover, the sociocultural factors in the environment prejudice young mothers to drop out, thus denying them education which could provide for their livelihood and escape from social exclusion. (Onyango et al, 2015).

Further, Moonga (2014) postulates that, teen mothers who returned to school, faced challenges arising from negative perception among fellow learners, and lack of support from teachers and parents. It was also found that teen mothers experienced emotional instability due to lack of professional counseling and faced a lot of withdrawal from their family and friends (Moonga,2014). Although the re-entry policy has given the girl-child a chance to return to school upon giving birth, the environment within the school and community remains unfavorable for the full implementation of the policy (Moonga,2014).

Furthermore, a study conducted in Sierra Leone by Coinco (2010) revealed that, the major challenges facing teenage mothers upon returning to school are harassment and stigmatization by fellow students and some teachers. This is because the fellow students and some teachers perceive that becoming pregnant before being married is immoral and hence those who become pregnant are deemed of bad manners (Coinco,2010). The study further revealed that other challenges that the returnee teenage mothers face includes lack of sufficient time to revise especially if the teenage mother lacks support in caring for the baby after school hours; and furthermore, most teenage mothers had poor concentration in class because of tiredness resulting from lack of sufficient sleep at night when they take care of their young ones (Coinco,2010).

A study conducted in South Africa by Chigona and Chanty (2008) revealed that teenage challenges comes when they have to miss classes because they have to take care of their babies, for instance, when they have to be with their babies in hospital for some time or if there is nobody at home to take care of the baby. While it could be contended that learners could miss school for various reasons, rationally or irrationally, the obligation remains to the learners to catch up with the rest of the class, some teachers are not willing to support when the teenage mothers are unable to make connections with prevailing knowledge just because they were busy with their babies (Chigona and Chanty, 2008). The study further revealed that returning to school is not easy for teen mothers because of the hardship in organizing time for both studying and parenthood (Chigona and Chanty,2008). So, it is obvious that teenage mothers had their roles as mothers, daughters, and learners that go concurrently and conflicted, with conflicting roles in those teenage mothers' experiences, it is evident that such conflicting roles cost teenage mothers time management in school. (Chigona and Chanty, 2008).

Further, Kiburi (2022) argued that many teenage mothers do not have enough time for studying and doing their homework, sometimes as girls, they have to do household duties, when they return from school, their relatives who were looking after the children become unrestricted of the childcare responsibilities and the babies want the attention from their mothers. This hinders the teenage mother from having enough time to self-study and do homework as a result they always lag behind as compared to other students which do not have such challenge (Kiburi ,2022).

Further, the study by Gatsinzi (2021) observed that teenage mothers are faced with a multitude of responsibilities and a sharp increase in workload, therefore, they experience physical and mental fatigue and need help and support from others. In line with this, Coinco (2010) revealed the major challenges facing teenage mothers upon returning to school is multiple responsibilities, they are responsible for their family as daughters so they are required to perform household duties when they come back from schools, they are accountable for school activities such as studying, doing other extra curriculum activities and doing homework's, moreover, they are accountable for their child particularly if the teenage mother lacks support from someone to take care of the baby after school hours. So, most teenage mothers have poor concentration in class because of tiredness resulted from lack of sufficient sleep at night when they pay attention of their young ones which leads to poor academic performance (Coinco, 2010).

Furthermore, Abotsi (2020) mentioned poverty as a major challenge affecting teenage mothers since most teenage mothers are from very poor and deprived homes, as sch they are unable to meet their most basic needs and

the necessary support required to complete their education. Their parents do not have enough money to cater for their basic needs such as clothing, sanitary pads, food, books, and school uniforms (Abotsi,2020). Some girls who find themselves in this kind of situation end up having sex with men who are willing to provide them with these basic necessities leading to another pregnancy (Abotsi,2020).

Furthermore, Moonga (2014) pointed out that, the societies in which teenage mothers live had a big challenge in their way to accomplish their education desire, instead of supporting them, the societies discouraged them, society usually treats teenage mothers as adults, they have bad manner as a result, the society does not want teenage mothers to learn together with other girls in the same school or class. Moonga (2014) further, argues that teenage mothers face the challenge of discrimination as the community does not value or recognize them as students, they are consider them as prostitutes, consequently they do not easily get married as men would not accept someone else's child since they consider it as a burden, as a result old men take them for granted and sexually abuse them for small favors in most cases leading to unwanted pregnancies and or infections (Moonga, 2014).

In most African communities, teenage mothers met with disapproval and stigmatization, this traditional perspective has been transplanted into the current spirit and combined in the educational practices hence teenage mothers are viewed as 'adults' who have no business remaining in school (Onyango et al,2015).

3. Methodology

This section presents the methodology that was used by the researcher in the study. The section further presents the location of the study, sample size and sampling techniques, research approach and research design, validity and reliability of the study as well as data analysis method.

3.1 Research Approach

The study employed a qualitative research approach. This is because the qualitative research approach accounts for the contextual conditions of the participants, it takes place in the natural settings of human (participants) life, it stresses holistic accounts and multiple realities, it is flexible to the circumstances during the research process, participants are treated as active respondents, as well as the researcher is the means through which the research is undertaken (Holloway and Wheeler, 2013).

3.2 Research Design

The study employed phenomenological research design because it is wholly focused on understanding the experiences of others. So the study used this design to explore the challenges experienced by teenage mother students in public ordinary secondary schools. The design provides an opportunity for the researcher to generate data through face-to-face interaction with the teenage mother students in their natural school settings through interviews.

3.3 Location of the study

This study was conducted at Ifakara in Morogoro Region, Tanzania. This is because Morogoro Region is among the regions with the higher number of female students who dropped out from secondary school due to varying reasons, including pregnancy (United Republic of Tanzania, 2019), and Ifakara Town Council has a high rate of re-admitted teenage mothers compared to other districts in the region (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2023). Therefore, it was easy to obtain teenage mother students who are in school learning settings.

3.4 Sample size

The participants were drawn from two (02) ordinary secondary schools which are the only schools re-enrolled teenage mother students in Ifakara. The sample comprised 15 teenage mothers who were re-enrolled in the respective schools. The participants were recruited until the saturation point reached for the study in Ifakara Town Council, Morogoro Region, Tanzania.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

In this study, purposive sampling procedures were employed to select participating teenage mother students. In this case, the teenage mother students (participants) are believed to have rich information arising from their experiences on teenage pregnancy and motherhood in the school setting to support the study.

3.6 Validity and reliability of the study

In order to ensure validity, the instruments were piloted to a nearby secondary school before they were administered in the field. In addition, reliability of the finding ensured by administering the instruments twice to a pilot secondary school after two weeks. During the second pilot study, all questions used in the first study were administered to the same sample group (test re- test method).

3.7 Data analysis

The Inductive conventional content analysis approach by Graneheim & Lundeman (2003) employed for data analysis. The initial audio files of interviews listened and recorded, interviews were read there after immediately transcribed verbatim and then read several times to gain a general impression. The resulting text from the interviews read line – by – line and were broken down into meaningful units (words or sentence or paragraphs), which were condensed, abstracted, coded, and labelled. Next, the codes were re-read in order to be arranged into categories and sub-categories based on their similarities and differences. Data analysis was done simultaneously with data collection whereby the data and the generated codes were constantly compared.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings and discussion of the study, the chapter will lay down the Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the main themes deductively established from the specific objective of the study which is exploring challenges facing teenage mother students as mothers and students in the school setting.

Quotation of participants

Participant B	<i>“Having many responsibilities is a major challenge most of us face, for example, if the child is sick, I cannot go to school, I have to go to the hospital to take care of the child. Worse enough when the child is admitted to the hospital, I cannot attend classes for the whole period until the child recovers.”</i>
participant L	<i>“After giving birth, I have become an unhappy person, I can’t go anywhere and do anything, I can neither go out for refreshment nor travel because all the time I feel occupied with many things to carry out as a mother and as a student. I cannot think freely, I always think about my child and how I can carry out my studies.”</i>
participant M	<i>“Giving birth is an increased burden to me, I have to do all the child care. Bad enough, my baby cries most of the time and I have to calm him down, I wake up several times at night to breastfeed, and sometimes I need to attend the baby’s clinic especially when the baby is sick, in fact, the child brought too much work, in addition, I have to do housework, I get so tired.”</i>
Participant A	<i>“The society regards me as an adult simply because I have a child, so I have to bear household responsibilities, to attend to social occasions such as funeral activities whenever they happen in the village.”</i>

Source: Interview data, August 2023.

Discussion in the interview implies that multiple responsibilities are obstacles for teenage mothers to have regular attendance in schools, hence they do not participate actively in classroom teaching and learning, as a result they have poor academic performance. Consequently, poor performance discourages them from

4.1 Challenges facing teenage mother students

Participants’ descriptions of their challenges as mothers as well as the students centered on four themes. Those themes were: (1) increasing load of responsibility (2) time management constraints, (3) Receiving insufficient support. (4) Financial challenge constraints,

4.2 Increasing load of responsibility

The increasing load of responsibilities such as being a student and at the same time having responsibilities as a mother is among the main challenges that teenage mothers face whereas teenage mothers need to abide by school rules and regulations, attend classes as per the school timetable while taking responsibilities as a daughter to her family and mother to her child.

All participants (teenage mother students) during the interview sessions expressed increasing responsibility as one of the main challenges as they pointed out the following:

carrying out their study, they opt to do other business instead of studying.

The findings were supported by the existing literature as Mangeli et al (2017) revealed that the inability to accept the maternal and multiple responsibilities is among of the

greatest challenges facing teenage mothers, most of them don't regularly attend school, especially when the child is sick and needs the attention of the mother, so this affects the academic performance of the teenager mothers and their family adversely.

Similarly, a study conducted in South Africa by Chigona and Chanty (2008) revealed that teenage challenges come when they have to miss classes because they have to take care of their babies, for instance, when they have to be with their babies in hospital for some time or if there is nobody at home to take care of the baby (Chigona and Chanty, 2008). While it could be argued that learners could miss school for various reasons, legitimately or illegitimately, and the responsibility rests with the learners to catch up with the rest of the class, some teachers are not willing to assist when the teen mothers are unable to make connections with existing knowledge just because they were busy with their babies. (Chigona and Chanty, 2008)

Further, the study by Gatsinzi (2021) observed that teenage mothers were faced with multitude of responsibilities and a sharp increase in workload, therefore, they experience physical and mental fatigue and need help and support from others, most teenage mothers were unable to handle the workload (Gatsinzi, 2021)). In line with this, Coinco (2010) revealed the major challenges facing teenage mothers upon returning to school is multiple responsibilities, they are responsible for their family as daughters, so they are required to perform household duties when they come back from schools, they are responsible for school activities such as

studying, doing other extra curriculum activities and doing homework's. Moreover, they are responsible for their child particularly if the teenage mother lacks support from someone to take care of the baby after school hours, so, most teenage mothers have poor concentration in class because of tiredness resulted from lack of sufficient sleep at night when they pay attention to their young ones which leads to poor academic performance (Coinco, 2010).

In general, the increasing load of responsibility such as being a student while having responsibilities as a mother, hinders teenage mother's morale to carryout their studies in school since they are experiencing academic poor performance in schools due to passive participation in the class room teaching and learning resulted by parental caring of their baby particularly when they don't have someone to look for the child especially when the child needs medical attention.

4.3 Time management constraints

Time management is reported to be a great challenge to teenage mothers, since immediately after giving birth, they encounter many responsibilities at once, and they all need time to handle them properly. Being a student whereas taking responsibilities as a mother, one needs proper time management since teenage mothers need to have time for attending to school daily, abiding by school rule and regulations, attending classes as per the school timetable, while fulfilling their responsibilities as mothers to their children. On this, participants said;

Quotation of participants

participant N	<i>"The challenge I am going through is failure to organize time for studies and raising my child, because they both need time, to take care of the child and at the same time studying need time and high concentration. I can't divide the time between studying and taking care of the child, especially if the child is sick."</i>
participant K	<i>"What I can say is that, the worst challenge we face as teenage mothers is how to balance time for studying especially self-study at home and rearing the child. This is because when we go back home, we have to take all responsibilities of motherhood and other home activities, and sometimes, we fail to do school homework."</i>
Participant O	<i>"I can assure you that balancing time to study, to take care of my child, and perform other domestic duties as a family daughter is problem. I can't manage to have time for studying especially self-study at home since when I go back home the child is left under my care."</i>
Participant E	<i>"Balancing time to study and perform other domestic duties as a family daughter is a great challenge to me. It is difficult to manage time for studying, especially self-study because when I go back home the child is left in my care."</i>
Participant N	<i>"I do not have free time, I have several responsibilities in life, always the time is not enough for me. I cannot manage time for self-study at home due to a lot of activities that need to be accomplished by me."</i>
Participant I	<i>"Among the challenges facing me as a mother student is not being able to divide the time between studying and taking care of the child, often when I return home the child needs me, so it affects my studying. Society sees that I'm already an adult, so I should participate in all social activities, such as funeral service like other women in the society, etc. Doing so affects my studying as well."</i>

Participant C

“I come from a poor family, so i need to do casual business so as to generate income for my family, my own, and my baby’s needs. So apart from having time to study and deal with my baby, i need to have time to sell fruits and vegetables passing through the streets.”

Source: Interview data, August 2023.

The finding implies that time management is a hindrance factor for teenage mothers to undertake their study smoothly, hence they do not participate fully in teaching and learning in school due to time management constraints as they cannot be able to participate fully in all increased responsibilities. The remained time for them to do school activities is during the night, unfortunately during the night they become tired due to the number of activities they attended during the daytime, their babies want their attention too, so time management is an obstacle to them to manage their studies while doing other responsibilities as mothers as a result they have poor academic performance and drop out.

In support of these findings, Chigona and Chanty (2008) revealed that going back to school after giving birth is not easy for teen mothers because of the hardship in organizing time for both studying and parenthood, since these teen mothers have assumed new status, their roles are always in conflict because of some emergency frequenting issues pertaining to school and parenthood. So, it is obvious that teen mothers have roles as mothers, daughters, and learners that go concurrently and conflicted. With conflicting roles in those teen mothers’ experiences, it is obvious that such conflicting roles cost teenage mothers time (Chigona and Chanty, 2008).

Similarly, Coinco (2010) revealed that, the major challenge facing teenage mothers upon returning to school is lack of sufficient time to revise, particularly if the teen mother lacks support in taking care of the baby after school hours. Furthermore, most teenage mothers had poor concentration in class because of tiredness resulting from lack of sufficient sleep at night when they attend their young ones (Coinco, 2010).

Further, Kiburi (2022) argued that many teenage mothers have limited time to study and do their homework, sometimes as girls, they have to do household responsibilities when they return from school and the only time they can do their homework is at night, uneasily, some come from families where the house is just too small making it hard for the girls to study or do their homework at night, as they cannot have the lights on while other people are sleeping. In addition, Kiburi (2022) noted that, when teenage mothers go back home after school hours, their relatives who were taking care of the children are freed of the childcare responsibilities, and the babies too want the attention from their mothers when they return from school. This hinders the teenage

Participant Quotations

mother from having enough time to self-study and do homework.

Therefore, since these teen mothers have acquired new motherhood state, their roles are always in battle because of some emerging issues pertaining to school and motherhood. So, it is obvious that teen mothers have roles as mothers, daughters, and learners that go concurrently and conflicted. With conflicting roles in those teenage mothers’ experiences, it is apparent that such conflicting roles cost teen mothers time management in school (Chigona and Chanty, 2008). So, this hinders active participation in learning as a result teenage mothers experience poor academic performance which reduces their morale to stay in school. This boosts the chain of poverty, particularly for teenage mothers and their generation.

4.4 Receiving insufficient physical and moral support from peers, family, school, and society

Findings revealed that, teenage mothers agreed that insufficient support is an obstacle that hampers them from successfully completing their education since their parents and other relatives have little time to stay with the baby because they need to have time for other things too. In addition, insufficient support from fellow students and teachers in school delays teenage mothers from achieving their academic goals since the teenage mothers in one circumstance or another fail to attend all allocated classroom teaching and learning sessions due to different reasons like attending their children especially when they get sick or doing business to generate income to cater for their basic needs. Moreover, insufficient support from society has been observed as an awful challenge facing teenage mothers since society treats them as adults so they should bear the responsibilities of adult mothers in society, this leads to time constraints challenge.

Teenage mothers expected support from their spouses in all child-related responsibilities, lack of support from spouses is a bitter experience for teenage mother students. They further, expected their mothers, other family members, friends, and the school community to support them in their role as mothers. But this was not the case. Most Participants shared at least the same views and they shared the following:

Participant O	<i>"I do not rely on anyone, my mother does not get along well with me, and I have a bad relationship with my boyfriend. I have no help from my family, caring for my child is solely my responsibility. My relatives hate me."</i>
Participant L	<i>"My boyfriend does not help me. He can't buy a kilo of sugar as he does not have the ability to fulfill all the baby's needs and he believes that my mother should cover all the requirements of the child. Worse enough, when the child gets sick, he always doesn't provide any funding for medication of the child."</i>
Participant M	<i>"My parent needs to do business so as to generate income for their family, sometimes they need to walk far away from home to find activities, so they need someone to stay home with the child so in such circumstances no one should stay at home rather than me, this reduces the regular school attendance."</i>
Participant C	<i>"Support from my family is a challenge, particularly when my child is sick and needs medication, it requires someone to take the child to the hospital and worse enough if the child gets admission to the hospital it is rarely my relatives agrees to stay in hospital with the child while there is no one to undertake their activities out there, so it requires me to stay with the child in the hospital until my child recovers."</i>

Source: Interview data, August 2023

This finding implies that receiving insufficient physical and moral support from peers, family, school and society retards the effort of the Ministry of Education to provide quality education for all without discrimination since teenage mothers are victims of their situation, they do not acquire what meant for quality education as they have limited time to regular attend to schools due to lack of support, especially when it happens that they missed classroom teaching for several days, the teachers rarely teach them as individuals, they are always fighting to cover the syllabus, so the responsibility to cover what has been missed is left to the teenage mothers, so this becomes an obstacle for teenage mothers to meet their academic dreams.

The findings from this study supported the existing literature as Niboye (2018) pointed out that, teenage mothers experience diverse challenges upon returning to school, these challenges include absence of family support in taking care and providing supplements for newborns. Likewise, Moonga (2014) indicated that teen mothers, who resumed school, encountered challenges arising from the negative perception among fellow learners, and the lack of support from teachers and parents (Moonga,2014).

Similarly, Coinco (2010) revealed that the major challenge facing teenage mothers upon returning to school is minimal support from fellow students and some teachers. This is because fellow students and some teachers perceive that becoming pregnant before being married is immoral and hence those who become pregnant are deemed of bad manners (Coinco, 2010). The study further pointed out that teenage mothers have insufficient support from their family especially in looking after the baby after school hours hence, most teenage mothers have poor concentration in class because of tiredness resulting from lack of sufficient sleep at night when they spent most of the night dealing with their young ones (Coinco (2010).

Further, Chigona and Chanty (2008) revealed that sometimes teenage mothers miss classes because they have to stay with their babies on some occasions, for example, when their babies get admitted in hospital for some time or if there is no one to stay with the baby at home. No matter what reasons that hinder them from attending to school, the responsibility to cover what has been taught in their absence rests with the learners, (Chigona and Chanty, 2008).

Therefore, the findings revealed that receiving insufficient physical and moral support from peers, family, schools and society impedes the effort of the Government to provide a second chance at education which was recently provided after a long period of time where there was no such a chance. Insufficient support become obstacles to them to attend and concentrate in the teaching and learning process as a result they face academic underperformance which discourages them from staying in schools as a result many teenage mothers who were readmitted to secondary schools decided to quit from schools.

4.5 Financial Challenges that Encounter the Teenage Mothers

Most teenage mothers agreed that they are facing financial challenges as they are getting minimal financial support from parents and guardians. They said that the support they do receive from parents, guardians, and relatives is not enough to cater to all of their needs, their parents and relatives have other responsibilities as well, and they do not have money enough to support the teenage mother and her child in all the needs.

In the discussion with the teenage mother, it was further revealed that some relatives and parents opted to take care of the child's welfare, and teenage mothers were left to fight for themselves. Moreover, it was found out that, some parents and relatives do not support teenage

mothers' education because they take it as a means of punishing them and provide a lesson for other siblings to learn from what is happening to these teenage mothers. To combat the challenges, some teenage mothers used to

do some casual business ranging from being housemaids walking around houses in the street looking for clothes to wash and selling vegetables and fruits in the street. On this, Participants said:

Participant F	<i>“Having no money is a big challenge for me. I used to postpone classes so as to go to the market to do some business so as to get money for myself and my child this caused academic underperformance. My parents told me they don't have another money to waste.”</i>
Participant A	<i>“There are a lot of challenges in the school setting, one of them is financial problems, my parents are still angry at me because I don't have the confidence to ask them to finance me, they once told me that they are out of anything concerning my education.”</i>
Participant O	<i>“Society and parents see us as if we just wasting money and time, that is why they don't support us financially, they used to tell us that, if we have lost the first chance there is nothing new, we can do.”</i>
Participant J	<i>“My parents said I have to learn from my mistakes, so I see it as they are punishing me, but I don't care as long as they stay with my child, that alone is enough for me though it is not so easy.”</i>
Participant C	<i>“As a woman, I have several need that requires a lot of money these include school needs like pens, books, etc., and my personal needs. Lack of money for my personal needs sometimes may lead to getting into new relationships with men which is far more dangerous and risk of getting pregnant.”</i>
Participant B	<i>“My parents are trying their level best to support me, but the support is very minimal to cover all my academic, personal, and the needs of the baby so I have to find new alternatives to generate income to supplement my needs, I used to pass through different houses asking for small activities like washing clothes so as to get little money.”</i>
Participant D	<i>“I am going through many challenges including lack of money, to buy things like pens, books, etc., and my personal needs, I used to pass around the street selling fruits and sometimes vegetables to get some money. Occasionally my mother assists me with little support, though the support doesn't cover all my needs at least I'm getting something, having little is better than nothing.”</i>
Participant H	<i>“Sometimes my aunt used to assist me with little money, though the support didn't cover all my school needs, this was due to her economic hardship, but at least she is doing something for me. She is also staying with the child while I'm at school. During the morning before class sessions and during the weekend I went to wash clothes in a nearby guest house.”</i>
Participant E	<i>“Sometimes my aunt used to assist me with little money, though the support didn't cover all my school needs, this was due to her economic hardship, but at least she is doing something for me. She is also taking care of the child while I'm at school. During the morning before class sessions and during the weekend I went to wash clothes in a nearby guest house.”</i>

Source: Interview data, August 2023.

The findings imply that lack of money to cater to educational and individual needs hinders the initiative of the government to re-admit teenage mothers in secondary schools, as teenage mothers suffer economically it reduces their concentration in the process of teaching and learning as a result they are lagging in examinations. Some of them establishes new relationship with men who shows interest to help them to solve some of their challenges, these could lead to getting another pregnant.

The findings from this study supported the existing literature as Abotsi (2020) mentioned poverty as a major challenge affecting teenage mothers since most teenage

mothers are from very poor and deprived homes, as such they are unable to meet their most basic needs and the necessary funding, they need to accomplish their education dreams. Their parents do not have enough money to afford for their basic needs such as clothing, sanitary pads, food, books, and school uniforms, some girls who find themselves in this kind of situation end up having sex with men who are willing to provide them with these basic necessities leading to another pregnancy (Abotsi, 2020). Further, Onyango et al (2015) pointed out that teenage childbearing is disruptive to the educational process of girls and as a result, many teenage mothers leave school and never return due to their

inability to manage logistics and finances associated with mothering and schooling simultaneously.

In general, financial challenge hamper the dream of teenage mothers to complete their circle of education. The teenage mothers spend much of the time that they are required to be in the classroom doing small-scale business, walking around the streets selling fruits and vegetables, and looking for small-wage casual work, when they go back to school, they find that they can't catch up with others, some of them becomes demoralized and decide to quit from school. So, this hinders the government's initiatives to provide quality education to all its citizens so that they can contribute to the economic development of individuals and the country at large.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This section draws conclusions from the findings and provides recommendations for appropriate measures to overcome challenges facing re-admitted teenage mothers at the school and society level.

5.1 Conclusion

The study on re-admission of teenage mother students in ordinary public secondary schools in Tanzania, particularly on the lived challenges of teenage mother students concluded that teenage mothers live a painful kind of life characterized by sorrow, living with minimal support from their parents, peer students and teachers, increased load of responsibilities, time management constraints, and financial problems. These experiences are driving factors for teenage mothers do not agree to resume school, which prevents them from taking advantage of the re-admission policy and hinders government initiatives to make sure that no child is left behind. Every child should have the right to education without any barrier as it is stated in Education and Training Policy 2014. Therefore, more effort is still needed to change people's mindset about teenage mothers returning to school. Due to its complications, the prevention of teenage pregnancy, and the re-admission of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Tanzania requires participation, collaboration, and partnership with all stakeholders.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that:

1. The government should find a way to allocate teenage mothers who are willing to resume studies in boarding secondary.
2. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, through Secondary Education Quality Improvement Program should extend

the support to reach as many as possible teenage mothers to not only finance their education but also their individual needs.

3. NGOs which are dedicated to help teenage mothers to collaborate with the ministry of education to create awareness to the society through school visits and the use of radio, televisions, and other social media to eliminate stigmatization of the teenage mothers at the family, school, and society level.

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