



ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF TEENAGE MOTHER STUDENTS WHO RETURNED TO SCHOOL; A CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MBEYA CITY COUNCIL

By

Salome Mapigano

Department of Education, Teofilo Kisanji University, Tanzania



Article History

Received: 25/08/2025

Accepted: 01/09/2025

Published: 03/09/2025

Vol – 3 Issue – 9

PP: - 11-20

Abstract

The study aimed to assess the academic performance of teenage mother students who have returned to school, a case of selected secondary schools in Mbeya city council. The study was conducted in Mbeya city council where five secondary schools which provide education to teenage mother students were selected. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling were used to get a sample size of 145 respondents from target population of 228 people. The sample size comprised 90 teenage mother students (40 from level one and 50 from level two), 35 teachers of teenage mother students, 5 school coordinators of re-entry program, and 15 parents of teenage mother students. The study used mixed research design of both qualitative and quantitative research designs to analyze data.

The key findings of the study include; teenage mother students do not perform well academically compared to non-teenage mother female students. The major factors which influence poor academic performance of teenage mother students revealed are; poverty, multiple responsibilities, poor support from family, peers, school, and community, psychological and administrative problems, unconducive school environment, poor guidance and counselling services, and stigmatization and discrimination.

The recommendations of the study include; to increase policy awareness on the existence of the policy of returning teenage mother students to school, provision of education to the society about the importance of the policy of returning teenage mother students to school to minimize discrimination and stigmatization, the government to enact strict laws on parents and guardians who practice forced marriage and child marriage, provision of counselling and guidance services to teenage mother students because most of them experience psychological problems, and provision of support to teenage mother students who have returned to school to improve teenage mother students engagement to studies and for better academic performance.

Key words: *teenage mother students, academic performance, Mbeya City Council, assessment, re-entry.*

1. INTRODUCTION.

“If you educate a man you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman you educate a nation”. It is a slogan used for motivating people to education for all. UNICEF, (1999) in Ngaza & Mwila (2023, p.67) says “Investing in girls education leads not only to the realization of female education attainment but also to benefits such as good mothers’ and children health, sustainable families, women’s empowerment, democracy, income growth and productivity” Chigona & Marishane, (2020) as cited in Ngaza & Mwila, (2023, p.67)

adds “educating females produces far reaching profit for girls and women themselves, their families, and the society in which they live” Education is an important element for gender equality. Moreover education is a child right without consideration of gender.

Teenage pregnancy is a global problem though it is much pronounced to low and middle income countries, it is among the reasons for students drop outs and influence early marriages. Child birth to girls under 18 years old continue to be a major problem affecting more than 16 million girls and

young women worldwide. (Issa & Temu, 2023; Pueyo, 2022). Therefore early pregnancy is among the factors which influence gender inequality since the girls who get pregnancy while are still at school most of them do not get chance to continue with studies leading to high rate of uneducated females compared to their males counterpart.

Chigona & Chetty, (2008) explain that in developing countries teenage pregnancy is one of the factors which hinder educational success to girls since girls who get pregnancy while studying are expelled from studies leading to failure in completion of education cycles. I agree with the explanations because many girls stop schooling due to early pregnancies, the fact which influence the increasing in number of uneducated females leading to emergence of challenges in the society such as the increase of dependence ratio, ignorance, poverty, and increase of gender inequality since there emerges high percentage of uneducated females compared to males. In addition to that it is the reason that some girls are denied their right to education.

According to Ngonyani, (2022) the minister of Education, Science and Technology honourable Joyce Ndalichako under the sixth Tanzania president Samia Suluhu Hassan in November 2021 announced that all the girls who were expelled from studies due to pregnancy are allowed to return to school and continue with the studies. This was implemented by Tanzania Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) which among its key objectives is to increase access to secondary education, to provide responsive learning environment to girls, improve completion of quality secondary education for girls and boys, and to bring schools closer to community. Through this announcement the girls were allowed to be enrolled within two years after giving birth. This is a great opportunity for the teenage mothers to reach their dreams which were lost because of early pregnancies.

Besides, the program of providing education to girls who had dropped studies due to various reason including those who left school because of pregnancies have been provided by Folk Development Colleges in Tanzania for a long time under the program known as “Elimu Haina Mwisho” (EHM) which means education has no end, i.e. a person can get education at any time in his/her life. In Tanzania there are fifty four Folk Development Colleges throughout the country. This is one among the ways of empowering women since through giving another chance of studying to female students, the problem of dependency is minimized since after studies they can be employed in different sectors or they can get access to different opportunities pertaining in the society. Furthermore they can get knowledge and skills on how to overcome different challenges in the society they live, the challenges include diseases, poverty, illiteracy and dependency. Pueyo (2022 p.11) argues that “Becoming the mother is not the end, life has to go on and their dreams need not to end. Education to them is still a way out of their present predicament.” Joachim, Meinck, Toska, Roberts, Wittesaele, Langwenya, & Cluver (2013, p.1) adds “support adolescent mothers educational attainment, and timely return to school, may be

key to interrupting intergenerational cycles of adversity” I agree with the statement that having the child should not be the source of female to stop their dreams. They have to fight for their dreams, they have to study in order to get knowledge to overcome different challenges which occur in the society. Through getting education an individual becomes able to get employment or to employ himself/herself.

The purpose of the study was to assess the academic performance of teenage mothers who returned to school. Although the government of Tanzania under President Samia Suluhu Hassan has given opportunity to teenage mothers of returning to school after giving birth, there is little support from family, peers, school and society to make sure that the teenage mother students study comfortably. The situation influence poor performance of teenage mother students who have returned to school.

According to Lindert, (2021) teenage pregnancy is the pregnancy before the age of twenty. Most females who get pregnancy at the age below twenty have not finished their education cycles hence leads to the increased rate of uneducated individuals. Moreover their bodies are not matured enough to have safe delivery and to have sufficient skills on how to take care of a baby.

1.1 General Objective

The general objectives of the study was to assess the academic performance of teenage mother students who have returned to school.

1.2 Specific Objectives

- (i) To compare the academic performance of teenage mother students to that of non-teenage mother students who are females.
- (ii) To examine factors affecting academic performance of teenage mother students.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. What is the difference in academic performance of teenage mother students who have returned to school to female non-teenage mother students?
- ii. What are the main factors affecting academic performance of teenage mother students who have returned to school?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study has applied Bronfenbrenner's Ecological system theory. Ettekal & Mahoney (2017) in their article 'Ecological System theory' in Sage Encyclopaedia of out of School Learning (pp. 239-241) have described Bronfenbrenner's Ecological system theory as the theory that describes the way environmental systems influence learners. The theory has put the environment into four layers which are microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystem. The closest system to the learners according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory is microsystem which include parents, siblings, neighbours, school, place of worship, and health services. The second system which influence learners is mesosystem which implies to the way microsystem interact

influencing learners. While exosystem include wide community around learners including parents/family friends, mass media, political system, and policies. The fourth layer which is macrosystem cover extended societal level and the way they influence learners such as ideologies, altitudes, values, laws and customs. All these shapes the way learners (teenage mother students) are treated.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological system theory is relevant to the study since it shows how different environmental systems influence academic performance of teenage mother students. These include the way parents, siblings, peers, neighbours, relatives, family friends, the community, ideologies, values, customs, and policies, influence teenage mother students and their struggle to educational attainment and better academic performance. The way the family interact with teenage mother student and the school brings an impact to the academic performance of teenage mother students. The society values, altitudes, norms and customs, provide an impact to the way they treat teenage mother students who have returned to school. Moreover countries' policies, and laws have an impact to the education of teenage mother students and to their academic performance.

2.2 Comparison of academic performance of Teenage Mother Students to the academic performance of non-teenage mother students girls

Stephen (2017) in his research 'influence of teenage pregnancy on academic performance' contends that most of teenage mother students' academic performance is poor compared to non-teenage mother students or compared to their academic performance before getting pregnancy and before the delivery of their babies. Kiptanui, Kindiki, and Lelan (2015) in their study 'Impact of teenage motherhood on the academic performance in public primary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya' have revealed that in their study about 54% argue that teenage motherhood leads to poor academic performance of teenage mother students. Moreover, Maeleko, *et al* (2018) assert that among the Impact of teenage pregnancy include poor academic performance claiming that teenagers after getting pregnancy their performance deteriorate compared to their performance before getting pregnancy and becoming teenage mother students.

2.3 Factors affecting academic performance of teenage mother students who have returned to school

Empirical literature review from different parts of the world have found different factors which influence poor performance of teenage mother students. Teenage mother students face different challenges which hinder better academic performance. The factors/challenges affecting teenage mother students' academic performance have been discussed by different scholars as analysed below;

2.3.1 Poor support in caring and upbringing the child.

Mangeli, Rayyani, Cheraghi, & Targari, (2017) Support the fact that teenage mothers lack support from their parents,

guardians, family members and the society in the caring and upbringing their babies. The situation brings difficult condition for them to attend classes and to engage in the whole process of learning. Dlamini (2016, p. 39) says "in terms of the altitude of parents, the researchers found that some parents may feel embarrassed and reluctant to support their children, resulting in them spending more time favouring other siblings to make teenage mothers feel bad/ or as a way of punishing her". I concur with the researchers basing on the fact that most of the parents and members of the family feel disappointed by the teenage mother students by getting pregnancy while are still young and unmarried, hence they become furious to them and they decide not to support them as part of the punishment. Besides some parents argue that by not supporting them, it is a lesson to other siblings not to repeat the same mistake. Therefore, lack of support on upbringing their children act as a barrier to teenage mother students' better academic performance.

2.3.2 Financial constrains/ Economic problems.

Apart from taking care of their babies, teenage mothers need school requirements such as bus fare, food at school, and other school requirements like school uniforms, exercise books, books and pens. Lack of these requirements forces them to poor attendance to school and poor concentration in studies (Adangabe, Emmanuella & Tigdig, 2021). Moonga, (2014, P. 37) says "many teenage mothers do not work and are dependants and cannot afford the service of taking care of the babies." Morris, (2023) concurs with the explanations by arguing that teen mothers find it difficult to attend classes since they have no income to support their children and to support themselves. This is due to the fact that most of the teenage mothers are not married and only few among them get support from their families but most of them have to struggle to get children needs. Therefore, poverty, or financial constraints is among the factors which hinders better academic performance of teenage mother students.

2.3.3 Psychological constrains.

Pueyo, (2022) contend that most of teenage mothers have got psychological problems since parents, guardians, family members and the society despise them and call them bad names. Moreover, psychological problem to teenage mother student is influenced by low self-esteem. This is also supported by Adangabe *et al* (2021) who argue that low self-esteem makes teenage mothers feel worthless, anxious, and depressed because of the way they are treated. They are undermined and accused of being immoral since they got pregnancy while they are still young and most of them are unmarried. Moonga, (2014) adds that teenage mothers are stressed and depressed due to different challenges they get leading to difficulties in doing better in studies. I concur with the literature since the teenage mothers have many things in mind including thinking about the wellbeing of their babies, thinking about the wellbeing of themselves, thinking about the studies as well as on the despises from the family, and the society at large. Teenage mother students need support in order to perform better academically and achieve their

dreams, facilitating gender equality and development in general.

2.3.4 Stigmatization and biased perceptions.

The teenage mothers are stigmatized in the society since they are considered immoral and as having bad manners (Mgunda, Kano, & Sungwa, 2023). Moonga, (2014) contends that teenage mothers are judged unfavourably in front of other students. They are regarded as problematic, prostitutes and having bad manners. Some of the elders in the society forbid the youths to interact with teenage mothers complaining that those teenage mothers would teach those youths (their fellows) bad behaviours. Niboye, (2018) support the fact that teenage mothers are being stigmatized by their fellow students as well as their teachers. Some of the teachers and students harass teenage mothers instead of motivating them so as they can engage to studies for better academic performance and for achieving their dead dream of completing their education cycle. Through getting education teenage mothers can be able to take care of their kids and to eradicate poverty and dependence.

2.3.5 Rejection of teen mothers by the family, peers, school and society

Moonga, (2014) asserts that some of teenage mothers have been chased away from home by family members especially fathers and brothers from the day they noticed that their daughter/ sister is pregnant. Moreover, some are beaten or harassed through the use of harsh words. Hence, some of the teenage mothers are living alone whereby they have rent the room making the situation more difficult in getting basic needs for them and for the babies and the school requirements. We have seen such situations in our societies too, instead of comforting the pregnant girls they are harassed leading to the increase of stress. The family should not chase the teenage mothers, they should support them because by chasing them we are increasing the problems. Lack of support may result teenage mothers taking bad decisions such as throwing away the babies, committing suicide and engaging in drug abuse and other immoral behaviours.

2.3.6 Unfavourable environment at school to attend with their children.

The teenage mothers who return to school are allowed to go with their kids to school but the environment is not favourable for learning with the child. The children bring disturbances in the class where sometimes they cry, or they want to go outside while outside there is no one to take care of them (Timothy & Juhudi, 2023). Ngaza & Mwila, (2023) contend that the school environment are not conducive to support teenage mothers who attend school and their kids. There is no technical structures there are only regular classrooms.

Hence if the environment at school would be conducive for the children to stay there, for instance if there could be a maid to take care of the children while their moms are learning, there would be high engagement of teenage mother students in studies yielding to better outcome including passing examination for higher levels, passing for middle colleges, and permanent change of behaviour.

3. METHODOLOGY.

The study applied mixed research approach where both qualitative and quantitative research approach was used. The sample size selected included five secondary schools which provide secondary education to teenage mother students in Mbeya city council. There are five schools in Mbeya city council which enrol teenage mothers who return to school. The schools are Sinde secondary school, Legico secondary school, Iyunga secondary school, Nzondahaki secondary school and Uyole secondary school.

Data collection tools included questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interview. Focus Group Discussion was done to 50 teenage mother students of level two making one group discussion of ten participants in each school. Questionnaires were filled by 40 teenage mother students of level one whereby 8 teenage mother students filled questionnaires in each centre and 7 teachers of teenage mother students filled the questionnaires in each centre making a total of 35 teachers of teenage mother students who filled the questionnaires. One coordinator of re-entry programme from each centre filled questionnaires making a total of 5 school coordinators. 15 parents of teenage mother students participated in an interview. Therefore, the total number of respondents was 145 i.e. 90 teenage mother students, 35 teachers of teenage mother students, 5 school coordinators of re-entry programme and 15 parents of teenage mother students.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study provides findings and discusses them. The findings have been arranged according to research objectives, which are; to compare academic performance of teenage mother students and that of non-teenage mother female students and analyse factors affecting academic performance of teenage mother students. The findings of the study were analysed and discussed after data collection as follows;

4.1 Comparison of Academic Performance of Teenage Mother Students to non-teenage Mother Students Females

National form two assessment results of school A of teenage mother students and non-teenage mother students females were analysed as indicated in table 4.1.1

Table 4.1.1 Form two National Assessment 2024 Results of School A

School	Teenage mother students' Results			Non- Teenage mother students' Results		
	Results	Frequency	Percentage %	Results	Frequency	Percentage %
A	Division I	0	0	Division I	09	8
	Division II	0	0	Division II	06	5
	Division III	0	0	Division III	06	5
	Division IV	3	30	Division IV	78	70
	Division 0	7	70	Division 0	13	12
	Total	10	100	Total	112	100

Source Field work, May 2025

Table 4.1.1 indicates that teenage mother students did not perform well as compared to females non-teenage mother students. Seventy percent (70%) of teenage mother students got division 0 while 30% obtained division IV. The non-teenage mother students results comprised division I (8%), division II (5%), division III (5%), division IV (70%) and division 0 (12%).

Form two National Assessment Results of School B which is a boys school were analysed, the results are as indicated in table 4.1.2

Table 4.1.2 Form two National Assessment 2024 Results of School B which is a boys' school

School	Teenage mother students Results		
	Results	Frequency	Percentages %
B	Division I	0	0
	Division II	01	07
	Division III	0	0
	Division IV	06	43
	Division 0	07	54
	Total	13	100

Source; Field Work, May 2025

Table 4.1.2 indicates that teenage mother performance of school B comprise 1(7%) student who obtained division two, 6(43%) got division IV, and the rest 7(54%) got division zero. The school is a boys' boarding school hence it does not has

non-teenage mother students who are female students. The results of school B for teenage mother students is not quite different from teenage mother students of school A. Majority fall on division zero and division four.

Form two National Assessment results of school C were analysed and the results are as indicated in table 4.1.3

Table 4.1.3 Form two National Assessment 2024 results School C

School	Teenage mother students Results			Non-teenage mother students Results		
	Results	Frequency	Percentages %	Results	Frequency	Performance %
C	Division I	0	0	Division I	06	03
	Division II	0	0	Division II	14	07
	Division III	0	0	Division III	35	17
	Division IV	06	46	Division IV	125	62
	Division 0	07	54	Division 0	22	11
	Total	13	100	Total	202	100

Source; Field Work May 2025

Table 4.1.3 indicates the national form two assessment results of school C whereby teenage mother students did not perform well compared to non-teenage mother female students. Forty six percent (46%) teenage mother students got division IV while the rest 54% got division zero. Non-teenage mother student results comprised 6(3%) students with division I, 14(7%) division II, 35(17%) division III, 125(62%) division IV and 22(11%) division 0.

Form two National Assessment results of school D of teenage mother students and non-teenage mother student are as indicated in table 4.1.4

Table 4.1.4 Form two National Assessment 2024 results of School D

School	Teenage mother students			Non-teenage mother students		
	Results	Frequency	Percentage %	Results	Frequency	Percentage %
D	Division I	0	0	Division I	09	05
	Division II	01	17	Division II	18	10
	Division III	0	01	Division III	29	16
	Division IV	0	0	Division IV	110	59
	Division 0	05	83	Division 0	19	10
	Total	06	100	Total	185	100

Source; Field Work May 2025

Table 4.1.4 indicates National form two assessment results of school D which shows that teenage mother students' performance is not good compared to the performance of non-teenage mother student females. The majority of teenage mother students (83%) got division zero, where only one teenage mother students (17%) got division two. Non-teenage mother student females' performance indicates that 5% students got division I, 18(10%) students got division II, 29(16%) got division III, the majority 110(59%) got division IV, and 19(10%) got division 0. The performance of both school C and school D are not much different, in both schools teenage mother students did not perform well compared to non-teenage mother students.

National form two assessment results of teenage mother students and non-teenage mother students of school E are indicated in table 4.

Table 4.1.5 National form two assessment 2024 results of school E

E	Teenage mother students' Results			Non-teenage mother students' Results		
	Results	Frequency	Percent ages	Results	Frequency	Percentages %
	Division I	0	0	Division I	12	05
	Division II	0	0	Division II	14	06
	Division III	02	15	Division III	35	15
	Division IV	03	23	Division IV	125	55
	Division 0	08	62	Division 0	22	10
	Total	13	100	Total	228	100

Source; Field Work May 2025

Table 4.1.5 indicates form National assessment results of teenage mother students and non-teenage mother student females of school E. The results show that teenage mother students' results are not good compared to the performance of non-teenage mother student females within the same school. There is no division I and division II to teenage mother students, 2(15%) teenage mother students got division III, 3(23%) teenage mother students got division IV and the majority 08(62%) got division 0. Non-teenage mother female students 12(5%) got division I, 14(06%) got division II, 35(15%) got division III, while the majority 125(55%) got division IV, and 22(10%) got division 0.

Qualitative data from interview with parents of teenage mother students have revealed that among the reasons of poor academic performance of teenage mother students is poor attendance due to the fact that teenage mother students, apart of being students they are mothers too. Sometimes their infants and toddlers fall sick hence they have to take their children to hospital and to take care of them. One female parent of teenage mother student said;

'Sometimes teenage mother students fail to attend school when their babies get sick, for example my daughter was admitted at a hospital with her child for almost two weeks. For all two weeks she did not attend classes, and I could not stay with the child in hospital because the child still being breast fed needed his mothers' care'. (Female parent, 23th April, 2025)

Qualitative responses through FGD from teenage mother students of level two revealed that multiple responsibilities, was among the reasons for teenage mother students' poor academic performance. One teenage mother student had this to tell;

'When I come back from school I take care of the baby including making sure that she is not hungry, I bath her, wash her clothes, give her comfort and make sure that all the baby's needs are met for the next day'. (Teenage mother student 29th April, 2025.).

This is the real situation to most teenage mothers who have returned to school. They have inadequate time for studying at home, the only time they can get is at night when the child is asleep since at day time even if the child is asleep the mother is having many tasks to attend including cooking, cleaning the house and fetching water. The explanations concur with Ngaza & Mwila (2023, p.73) who explains that "managing to care of an infant and devoting adequate time to school work is a great challenge for teen parents". This challenge is facing almost all teenage mothers except those who stay at school (boarding students) in the case of my study there is no boarding facilities or hostel for teenage mother students.

4.2 Factors Affecting Academic Performance of Teenage Mother Students

The second objective was to analyse factors which affect academic performance of teenage mother students. The study revealed that non-teenage mother students are treated as children hence they get all support from family, siblings, peers, school and society while most of teenage mother students are treated as grown up adults. Moreover, teenage mother students are despised and considered as people with immoral behaviours, a situation which accelerates poor treatment and poor support from family, peers, school, and society. Therefore, teenage mother students are treated different from other students influencing their poor academic performance.

Factors which hinder better academic performance of teenage mother students were revealed by respondents through questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions and Interviews. The responses have been indicated in table 4.2.1 where teenage mother students, teachers of teenage mother students, coordinators of re-entry programme, and parents of teenage mother students have provided their responses on factors affecting academic performance of teenage mother students.

Table 4.2.1 Respondents' responses on Factors affecting academic performance of teenage mother students in frequencies and percentages

Responses	Frequencies and percentages			
	TMS	PTMS	TTMS	C-REPT
Multiple responsibilities	27(68%)	10(65%)	21(60%)	3(60%)
Support from families, peer, teachers and community	20(50%)	3(20%)	5(15%)	2(40%)
Psychological and Administrative problems	27(68%)	6(40%)	21(60%)	3(65%)
School environment and guidance and counselling services	22(55%)	2(11%)	5(15%)	1(10%)
Poverty	28(70%)	11(75%)	25(72%)	4(74%)
Stigmatization and discrimination	15(37%)	2(10%)	8(24%)	1(10%)

TMS= Teenage mother students, PTMS=Parents of teenage mother students, TTMS=Teachers of teenage mother students, C-REPT=Coordinator of –Re-entry programme of teenage mother students

Source: Field Work, May 2025

Table 4.2.1 indicates that the majority 27(68%) of teenage mother students (TMS) mentioned multiple responsibilities as among the factors influencing their poor academic performance. 20(50%) mentioned poor support from family, peers, school, and society, 27(68%) mentioned psychological and administrative problem, fifty five percent 22(55%) mentioned school environment and lack of guidance and counselling services, seventy percent 28(70%) mentioned poverty, while 15(37%) mentioned stigmatization and discrimination.

Parents of teenage mother students (PTMS), majority 11(75%) mentioned poverty, 10(65%) mentioned multiple responsibilities, and forty percent 6(40%) mentioned psychological problems, twenty percent 3(20%) Poor support, eleven percent 2(11%) mentioned unconducive school environment and lack of guidance and counselling services, ten percent 2(10%) mentioned stigmatization and discrimination.

Teachers of teenage mother students (TTMS), majority 25(72%) mentioned poverty, 21(60%) mentioned multiple responsibility, 21(60%) mentioned psychological and administrative problem, 8(24%) mentioned stigmatization and discrimination, 5(15%) mentioned poor support, and 5(15%) mentioned poor school environment and lack of guidance and counselling services.

Coordinators of re-entry programme of teenage mother students (C-REPT) responses; majority 4(74%) mentioned poverty, 3(65%) psychological and administrative problems, 3(60%) mentioned multiple responsibility, 2(40%) poor support, 1(10%) mentioned unconducive school environment and lack of guidance and counselling services, and 1(10%) stigmatization and discrimination.

The analysis shows that most of respondents mentioned poverty as a factor for poor performance, followed by multiple responsibilities, and followed by psychological problems. Teenage mother students mentioned poor support to a large extent compared to the percentage of other groups. Therefore poverty, multiple responsibilities, poor support from family, peers, teachers, and society, psychological problems, school environment, lack of guidance and counselling services, and stigmatization and discrimination are the major factors that influence academic performance of teenage mother students.

To my opinion the main factors affecting academic performance of teenage mother students is multiple responsibilities, followed by poor support from family, peers, school and society, poverty, and psychological problems. Teenage mother students face the problem of multiple responsibilities because they are mothers and at the same time they are students. Besides, teenage mother students do not get support from family, peers, school and society a factor which influence psychological problems.

Karimi, (2015) asserts that some schools do not have any form of counselling a situation which provide a challenge to teenage mother students due to fact that most of teenage mother students are stressed and are having psychological problems because of different difficulties they encounter.

Qualitative data from Focus Group Discussion from one teenage mother students who had this to tell;

'I have been raised up by my grandparents, unfortunately my grandmother had passed away, now I'm left with my grandfather, I have to take care of my grandfather and my child. I have send my child to day-care so that I can have enough time for school. Hence I am working as hair stylist in order to get money to accommodate all the needs. As a result sometimes I miss classes while working.' (Teenage mother student 29th April, 2025).

The explanation of the teenage mother student shows that teenage mother students they experience a number of difficulties and most of the people consider teenage mother students as grown up adults, hence they give them big responsibilities.

Another respondent a teenage mother student through FGD explained her situation. She said;

"Before getting a chance of returning to school I was working as a tailor, I was also selling clothes. I am living alone, I am not married. My mother and my father divorce. My mother is married to another man

and my father is married to another woman. My step father does not know that his wife is having another child who is me, hence I cannot send my child to my mother nor to my father. I can no longer have time to do my businesses. Hence, I have a problem of having money pay house rent, to take care of my child, and to get all home requirements. Although the father of my child is supporting me a limited extent" (Teenage mother student, 29th April, 2024).

In addition, there are some students who had complained that they lack essential requirements for their children. As a result, they have to work while studying so that they can get some money to take care of their children. They had further said that sometimes teenage mothers decide to dropout again from school due to difficult of getting requirements for themselves and for their children.

The teenage mothers fail to concentrate in the classroom due different problems they face in the process of learning. As quoted to respondent Q who said;

'One day I was doing the examination, suddenly I heard my baby crying outside the classroom, because that day I went with the child to school since I had no one to leave the child with. The teacher tried to persuade me to proceed doing the exam, unfortunately I couldn't because I felt my stomach paining, as a result I went out to look what had happened to my child. Hence I missed the examination' (Teenage mother student 30th April, 2025)

Niboye (2018) concur with the fact that sometimes the concentration of teenage mothers to lessons is not good basing to the fact that they have many responsibilities to take care of including thinking on the wellbeing of their children.

Some of the respondents on Focus Group discussions said that they get poor support from family members leading to difficulties in getting school requirements, children requirements and to have someone to leave a baby with. Many family members have been disappointed by the action of their daughters of getting pregnancy hence they see that there is no need to provide a support to them again. Some of the family members discourage the teenage mothers to proceed with studies leading to difficulties of continuing with the studies.

Ngaza & Mwila, (2023) concurs to respondents' explanations by explaining that teenage mothers receive little support from home making difficult for them to succeed with their schooling. However it is a good thing at least there are some students who have proved that they are being well taken care with their children by their family members. Moreover they are supported well and being encouraged to do better.

The respondents explain about the discouragement they get from the society including discouragements from their peers. Most members of the society tell the teenage mothers that they are just wasting their time that instead of taking care of their babies they are busy with studies. Furthermore, they tell them that they are not going to make it. Therefore the teenage mothers feel discouraged and they are left in a dilemma of

either to continue with the studies or to drop out of the studies.

The government, parents, guardians, and the society should support the teenage mothers in order to fulfil their dreams of getting education with better academic performance leading to the reduction in dependency ratio, reduction in poverty and increase in educated elites for sustainable development. According to Kindiki, Lelan, & Kiptanui, (2015) supportive services for teenage mother students include good relationship among students, good communication with parents and teachers, and availability of guidance and counselling services.

5. CONCLUSION.

The main objective of the study was to assess academic performance of teenage mother students who have returned to school. The study has revealed that teenage mother students are not performing well as compared to non-teenage mother students. Poor academic performance of teenage mother students have been influenced by different factors which among others the factors include multiple responsibilities, psychological problems, poor support from family, peers, school and society, poverty, unconducive school environment, poor guidance and counselling services, and stigmatization and discrimination. The government should make sure that different initiative are established to make sure that the academic performance of teenage mother students is improved for the wellbeing of teenage mother students as well as for sustainable development of the nation because the policy of returning teenage mother students to school fulfils child's right to education and is a way to gender equality.

6. SUGGESTIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS.

The study suggests educational stakeholders such as parents/guardians, teachers, and the society to educate teenagers on the impact of early pregnancies and the impact of early practice of sexual intercourse. As it has been revealed that early pregnancy leads to girls dropout and influence early marriages. By educating teenagers especially girls, trends of early pregnancies will be minimized girls will get their education smoothly, as it has been noted that teenage mother students do not perform well because of different challenges they face as they are young mothers and students too.

The following areas were revealed by the study which need to be implemented by educational stakeholders concerned with the re-entry policy.

The government should increase policy awareness on the policy of returning teenage mother students to school since some people are not aware of the existence of the policy. The respondents including teachers, teenage mother students, coordinators of re-entry programme, and parents of teenage mother students have revealed that there are teenage mother students who have not returned to school because they are not aware that they are allowed to return to school.

Furthermore, education to the society on the importance of the policy of returning teenage mother students to school is very important. This is due to the fact that some of the parents and guardians do not see the benefits of returning teenage mother students to school. Hence, they discourage the teenage mother students on returning to school. The society is supposed to know that by educating teenage mother students dependency ratio is minimized, women get chance of getting professions which would help to engage in world market and correlate to the digital world. Moreover, teenage mother students will be aware on better ways of raising their children.

Moreover, the government should establish strict laws on the parents/guardians who practice child marriage and forced marriage discouraging girls to access education opportunities which lead them to become dependents throughout their life and to end up in poverty. In addition, strict laws should be enacted to men who impregnate students. The act will minimize the trend of teenage pregnancy as a result will foster education to girls and improve academic performance. It has been noted that teenage mother students do not perform well as compared to their fellow girls who are non-teenage mother students because teenage mother students face different challenges on their returning to school.

The schools should provide guidance and counselling services as it has been revealed that teenage mother students encounter different challenges. They experience more psychological problems as compared to non-teenage mother students. The presence of counselling and guidance services will make teenage mother students more engaged to studies stimulating better academic performance.

The government, parents, siblings, school, and society should provide support to teenage mother students on their returning to school so as to make them more engaged to studies for better academic performance. The support to teenage mother students will eradicate stigmatization and discrimination which is among the factors which hinder teenage mother students' better academic performance. Parents should provide unconditional love to all children, they should provide support services to teenage mother students as they are doing to other children. Teachers should devote in teaching and helping students the same way they are doing to non-teenage mother students.

7. REFERENCES.

1. Adangabe, A.A. Emmanuella, D. A. Tigig, J. (2021). Exploring the challenges facing Teenage Mothers in School and how they cope in the West District. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary; Applied Business and Educational Research*. 2(8). 689-698.
2. Adangabe, A. A. (2020). Challenges Facing Teenage Mothers in School, Teachers' Perspective: The Case of Wa West District. *South Asian Journal of Social Science and Humanities*. 1(3). 1-6. DOI.10. 48165/sajssh. 2020.1301.

3. Chigona, A & Chetty, R. (2008). Teen mothers and Schooling. *South African Journal of Education*. 28. 261-281.
4. Creswell, J. K. (2009). Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Approach. Sage, London, Britain.
5. Dlamini, N. (2016). Teen mothers' experience of motherhood-schooling stigma and learned responsibility: A case study of teenage mothers of school going age in a peri- urban area Kwa- Zulu Natal. (Masters Dissertation) Stellenbosch University. South Africa.
6. Ettekal, A. & Mahoney, J. (2017). Ecological system theory. In *SAGE Encyclopaedia of Out of School Learning*, pp. 239-241. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
7. Issa, F. (2023). Enrolling Teenage Mothers in the Formal Secondary Education System: A New Policy Implementation Assessment. *Research in Education Policy and Management*. 5(2). 16-33. <https://doi.org/10.46303/repam.2023.7>.
8. Joachim, J. Meinck, F. Toska, E. Roberts, K. Wittesaele, C. Langwenya, N. Cluver, L. (2013).
9. Who goes back to school after birth? Factors associated with post partum school return among adolescent mothers in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. *An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice*. 18(1).
10. Lindert, L. Deijin, M. Elirehema, A & Elteren, M (2021). Perceptions of Factors Leading to Teenage Pregnancy in Lindi Region, Tanzania. A Grounded Theory Study. *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*. 104(4). DOI: 10.4269/ajtmh.20-152.
11. Maeleko, E. Nkengbeza, D. & Chokomosi, T. (2018). The Impact of Teenage Pregnancy on Academic Performance of Grade 7 Learners at a School in Zambezi Region. *Open Journal of Social Science*, 6, 88-100. doi: 10.4236/jss.2018.69006
12. Malimbwi, D.P (2018). Social Economic Factors influencing Adolescent's' pregnancies in Secondary Schools. The case of Mvomero District (Masters Dissertation). The Open University of Tanzania.
13. Mangeli, M Rayyani, M Cheraghi, M Tirgari, B. (2017). Exploring the Challenges of Adolescents Mothers From Their Life Experience in the Transition to Motherhood: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Family and Reproductive Health*. 11(3). 165-173.
14. Mgunda, T. Kano, E. Sungwa, R. (2023). Challenges Facing Teenage Mothers Re-entry in Secondary schools in Tanzania. *Journal of Issues and Practice in Education*. 15(2). 179-196.
15. Moonga, M. G. (2014). Challenges faced by teen mothers who re-entered school. A case of Selected Schools on the Copper belt Province of Zambia. (Master's Thesis). University of Zambia. Zambia.
16. Morris, S. R. (2023). Teen mothers forgotten: The gap between high school and higher education. *Journal of higher education policy and leadership studies*. 4(2), 107-117. <https://dx.doi.org/10.61186/johepal.4.2.107>.
17. Ngaza, B & Mwila, P.M. (2023). Secondary school re-entry programme of teenage mothers. Views of Stakeholders in Zanzibar, Tanzania. *Journal of Education and Management Studies*. 12(4), 65-78. DOI: 10.54203/jems.2022.9.
18. Ngonyani, R. (2022). To Explore Views of Teachers and Students on Readmission of teenage Mothers in the formal schooling in Tanzania. *International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences*. 9(6). 10-15.
19. Niboye, E. P. (2018). Back to school after delivery, the Plight of Teenage Mothers in Zanzibar: Experience from Mjini Magharibi's Urban and West District in Unguja. *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education. (IJHSSE)* 5(3), 54-67. Doi: <http://org/10.20431/2349-0381.0503006>.
20. Onyango, G. Kioli, F. N. Nyambedha, E. O. (2015). Challenges of School Re- Entry Among Teenage Mothers in Primary Schools in Muhoroni District, Western Kenya. *SSRN Electronic Journal* .DOI. 10.2139/ssrn.2546761. 1-11.
21. Opondo, C. M. & Oloka, P. J. O. (2022). Effects of School Category on Adjustment of re-admitted Teenage Mothers in Secondary Schools. *Science Rise*. 3 (1). 48-56. Doi: <http://org/10.21303/2313-8416.2022.002534>.
22. Parker, J. (2018). Factors impacting the financial independence of women who were teen mothers. (Phd Dissertation). Walden University. USA.
23. Philemon, M. (2009). Factors contributing to high Adolescent Pregnancy rate in Kinondoni Municipality, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
24. Pueyo, J. (2022). Moms Too Soon: Status and Challenges of Teenage mothers-Implications for Extension. *Journal of International Women's Studies*. 23(6). 1-15.
25. Tanzania-Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) (English). Washington. DC: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/299851580138262444/-/Tanzania-Secondary-Education-Quality-Improvement-Project-SEQUIP>.
26. Stephen, E. (2017). Influence of teenage pregnancy on academic performance case study of secondary schools within Kakure Sub-County Kaberamaido District. Uganda: Kampala International University.