



Educational Support Systems for Teenage Mothers in Public Basic Schools in the Ajumako Enyan Esiam District of the Central Region of Ghana

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to explore educational support systems for teenage mothers in public basic schools in the Ajumako Enyan Esiam District of the Central Region of Ghana. We employed qualitative study which was based on phenomenology. The population of the study was teenage mothers and some selected heads of the various schools where the teenage mothers were schooling. The snowballing and purposive sampling procedure was used to select 5 teenage mothers and 4 heads of schools respectively. In all, a total of 9 participants were interviewed for the study. All participants were met in their various schools for the interviews. The main instrument for data collection for the study was semi-structured interview schedule. The interview data were transcribed, coded, and analysed thematically. The thematic analysis was done based on the data transcribed and the research questions. The findings of the study showed that challenges student-mothers face as they re-enrol into the formal public basic school system were difficulty in concentrating on their studies, financial constraints, absenteeism, stigmatization and lateness to school. Finally, the study showed that, educational support systems available to participants as they re-enrol in school were; financial support, provision of stationary, remedial lessons, and provision of counselling services. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made; Since teenage mothers are still desirous of pursuing their career ambitions, all necessary support in terms of financial and social assistance should be made available in our various schools for these mothers. Policy makers, non-governmental organization and corporate bodies should all come on board to contribute their quota to achieving this feat.

Keywords: Teenage Mother, Lived Experiences, School Dropout, Community, Parenting, Young, Re-Enrolment, Educational Support Systems

Received 02 June, 2023; Revised 10 June, 2023; Accepted 12 June, 2023 © The author(s) 2023.

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I. Introduction

The right to education remains one of the basic human rights enshrined in many international conventions and declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989, the 1990 Convention on Education for All (EFA) and the 2016 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In Ghana, the right to equal access for all Ghanaian children to educational opportunities is upheld by both Article 25(1a) of the 1992 Constitution and the 1998 Children's Act. Despite these provisions, the completion of education by school-aged girls still remains a challenge, particularly at the level of basic school. The creation of the national vision for girls' education in Ghana, which resulted in the December 1995 National Action Plan on Girls' Education and the establishment of the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) in 1997, provided the basis for the initial commitment of the government to resolve the gap between boys and girls in education.

In addition, the education of girls is seen as an essential element of inclusive education that specifically targets disadvantaged children. Although the education of girls in Ghana has seen some significant improvements, particularly at the primary level, encounters with some basic school heads and teachers have also highlighted the negative impact of the school girl pregnancy phenomenon and the lack of student mothers' commitment to return to school. The active involvement and participation of girls and women in education in developed countries is a major constraint of teenage motherhood (Maluli& Bali, 2014).

Girls who drop out of school because of pregnancy decrease their chances of having an education that opens up doors for them to live a better life. Baa-Poku (2019) argued that girls dropping out of school seem to be vulnerable to child labor, transactional sex, early marriages, and a recurrent cycle of teen pregnancies as a result of pregnancy. According to the WHO (2013), about 80 million unintended adolescent pregnancies occur annually worldwide, and more than half of those pregnancies are aborted. Vinnerjung andDanielsson(2007) indicated that the United States of America (USA) has the highest teenage birth rate per 1000 women (52.1 percent) aged between 15-19 years, unlike other developed countries, followed by the United Kingdom (30.8 percent), Canada (20.2 percent) and Australia (18.4 percent) in that hierarchical order. A rise in teenage motherhood has been found to be associated with the development of an extensive welfare system in several social democratic countries. In the United States, for instance, it has been recorded that about half of adolescent mothers go to welfare within 1 year of birth and 77% within 5 years of birth (Makiwane, Desmond, Ritcher&Udjo, 2006).

WHO (2011) estimates suggest that in the 15-19 age groups, the worldwide average number of births per 1,000 girls is 65%. In the same age group, Asia has 56 per 1,000 girls and this figure in Thailand rises to 70 per 1,000 girls. 47 per cent of women aged 20-24 were married before the age of 15, and 87 per cent were married before 18 in Nigeria, according to the Health and Demographic Survey (1992). More than one in six teenage girls between the ages of 15-19 have given birth in Niger, Liberia, and Mali, according to the Save a Child Study report of 2000 (Makiwane, Desmond, Ritcher&Udjo, 2006).

Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the world, as 143 out of 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years are estimated to drop out of school because of early pregnancy (Halfaker&Taraborelli, 2015). In addition, underage sexual involvement, inadequate safe sex education in schools and households, social pressure to engage in sexual activity, inappropriate use of contraception and sexual harassment are the causes of early pregnancy (Halfaker&Taraborelli, 2015). Along with these variables, Maluli& Bali (2014) identified poverty, exposure to crime, violence and family conflict at home, low self-esteem and low educational aspirations and priorities, as well as explanations for teenage pregnancies.

Young school-going girls become teenage mothers between the ages of 11 and 19 because of teenage pregnancy, according to Cosden (2014). Because of the young age of adolescent mothers, they are seen as inexperienced people who are unlikely to be competitive in school, find work, and earn high wages (Cosden, 2014).

In Ghana, two government directives encourage the continuation or re-entry into school by pregnant girls: the re-enrolment directive and the inclusive education policy that guarantees their access to formal education after childbirth. In line with GEU policies, the re-enrolment directive lowers the drop-out rate for girls in primary and junior high schools while increasing the transfer rate for girls from junior high schools to senior high schools (Geu, 2002). For example, the re-enrolment process includes: i) the use of re-admission number of old schoolgirls; ii) ensuring that girls stay in school once they are re-enrolled; iii) providing girls counselling services; and iv) ensuring that girls feel welcomed and free from stigmatization. However, a recent preliminary report on the re-entry of girls to school (GEU, 2015b) has shown that only a few girls are involved in the process and ultimately return to school after pregnancy.

Studies have shown that after pregnancy, many factors affect a girl's re-enrolment in school. Dawson, Hosie, Meadows, Selman, and Speak (2005) pointed to the lack of affordable and available childcare arrangements, while Pricilah, Nyang'au, and Chang'ach (2014) also highlighted in a study the reluctance of girl mothers to return to school, among other items. Chigona and Chetty (2007) also stressed that one of the key reasons for their failure to return to school is the reluctance of girls to manage logistics related to mothering and schooling concurrently. The causes have also been attributed by Onyango et al., (2015) to socio-cultural factors such as early marriage, gender orientation and poverty. Madhavan and Thomas (2005) have noted that in the re-enrollment process, child-care assistance and financial support play critical roles.

Unwanted pregnancy and early motherhood are twin propensities with corresponding effects on job prospects to put one's education to a halt. This condition leads to detrimental consequences for both the mother and child for the quality of life. It is also less productive for her to be able to contribute fully to the country's socio-economic development.

Teenage mothers have been commonly viewed and branded negatively, particularly in Ghana, as though they have less integrity, merit, and ambition compared to those who are non-teenage mothers. It is important to recognize that teenage pregnancies and births occur most often between 15 and 19 years of age. It is also important to note that this age period is when, during their high school years, adolescents eventually long

to find their identities while transitioning from adolescence to adulthood. The intense pressure to conquer the negative stigma and strive to fit in at school becomes intolerable for many of them because of the inadequacy of internal and external support structures for adolescent mothers; thus, it leads many adolescents to delay their educational achievement (WHO, 2015).

Negative reports and findings linked to adolescent childbearing and high school dropouts are the big issue of teenage pregnancy and motherhood. The statistics focused on teenage mothers dropping out of school, children of teenage mothers who have joined the child welfare system, and the failure of teenagers to provide for their children financially. According to Berglas, Brindis and Cohen (2003) there is a need to continue researching adolescent mothers, their environment, families, peers, education, and the society in which they reside, in order to have a lasting effect on pregnancy and childbearing among young people. A promising fact that has not been discussed uniformly with the media or policy makers is that since 1958, the number of adolescent mothers who have finished elementary school has risen by 58 % (Berglas et al., 2003). In addition, there are few reports on adolescent mothers who have faced hardship, graduated from high school, attended college, graduated from college, and received high wages. There needs to be more research based on the views and perspectives of teenage mothers to better understand how certain teenage mothers have produced positive results, allowing their voices to be heard about their situation and the support structures available to them. Teenage mothers are often viewed differently by school systems as though they have no ambitions or ability to pursue higher education and/or technical careers (Klaw, 2008). Therefore, schools also have very little to no data on opportunities and possibilities that would improve the learning experiences for future career and educational paths. There is a lack of resources in the educational arena for these people to pursue their education beyond high school due to stereotypes towards teenage mothers.

This study recognizes the importance of re-enrolling pregnant school girls after childbirth in school and therefore aims to explore the educational support mechanisms available to these teenage mothers and the general factors affecting their re-enrollment after pregnancy in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the problem and to make the support systems known. Although the Government Directive seeking to resolve the policy gap in pregnant student education in Ghana is helpful, it does not include recorded guidance or procedures to systematically guide the process of continuation or re-enrollment to ensure continued access to education for adolescent mothers. Implementation is impaired by this lack of clarification and specificity of the directive.

II. Statement of the Problem

Considerable effort has been made to encourage the education of girls in Ghana. Recent statistics from the JHS Pregnancy Data Report (2015a) of the GEU recognized the significant increase and improvement in the enrollment and completion rates of girls, particularly among nursery, crèche, kindergarten, primary and junior high schools, but also recorded some regional differences. In general, the complete realization of the vision for girls' education in Ghana seems to be threatened by some challenges. A GEU (2015b) preliminary study on girls re-enrolled in school after pregnancy in ten selected districts across the country has also shown that, despite the government's directive to encourage pregnant students to continue or re-enrol in school after childbirth, a higher % age of girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy do not return to school. the prevalence of school girl pregnancy remains one of the major challenges to educational attainment for children (Keitumetse, 2006). The educational support networks for student mothers re-enrolling in school have not, however, been thoroughly examined. There appears to be limited empirical literature and a comprehensive study that examines these teenage mothers' educational support networks as they re-enroll. The district of Ajumako Enyan Esiam was chosen because teenage motherhood problems are rife in the schools. For instance, the Kasapa FM online indicated in their report on November, 15, 2021 during the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) that Ajumako had seven (7) teenage pregnant candidates, Mando had four (4) pregnancies, Bisease had eight (8) pregnancies, Ocheso had three (3) and Sonkwa had three (3) pregnancies.

Also, it was recorded that five (5) nursing mothers came to the examination centres with their breastfeeding children who were catered for by relatives when the examination was in session. Despite the rising number of adolescent mothers in the district's basic schools, little research has been conducted on the educational support structures for these adolescent mothers in raising their children and re-enrolling in schools in the district. Against this background, the researchers seek to conduct a study on the educational support systems available to these school-going teenage mothers in the district of Ajumako Enyan Esiam in the Central region of Ghana in public basic schools.

III. Purpose of the Study

This study explored the educational support systems available to this group of teenage mothers in the Ajumako Enyan Esiam District as they seek to re-enrol into formal education after childbirth.

IV. Research Questions

1. What challenges do teenage mothers face as they re-enrol into the formal public basic school system?
2. What educational support systems are available for the teenage mothers as they re-enrol into the formal public basic school system?

V. Methodology

5.1 Research Design: This study had been designed as a phenomenological qualitative research with an exploratory purpose. Phenomenology is particularly suitable for this study as it is concerned with the study of human existence and how humans understand and perceive their own behaviours. The research sought to examine the educational support systems available for teenage mothers who have re-enrolled in schools' experiences and how they understand and perceive their behaviours.

According to Denscombe (2003) "qualitative research is an umbrella term that covers a variety of styles of social research". It is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of quantification. It may refer to research about school-going mothers' experiences, stories, behaviour and organizational functioning, social movements or interaction and relationships. Qualitative approaches refer to the more descriptive methods of data management which was mainly employed to manage the analysis of interview data which could not have been done by the use of quantitative methods for soliciting information from the teenage mothers. Creswell (2013) has suggested that when little research has been done on a topic and questions are exploratory in nature, and the researchers does not know which variables merit emphasis, then qualitative research would be the appropriate design.

An exploratory study of students re-enrolled as teenage mothers' experiences is undertaken in situations where there is a lack of theoretical understanding about the teenage mothers being investigated so that key variables, their relationships, and their causal linkages are the subject of conjecture. Using exploratory method to identify teenage mothers who dropout and re-enrol in school is very important whenever a researcher is breaking new ground. An exploratory study seeks to uncover the hidden aspects of Educational support systems available for teenage mothers in public basic schools in the Ajumako Enyan Esiam District, using this approach was appropriate since it helped me delve deep into the Educational support systems available to these teenage mothers as they re-enroll in school.

5.2 Population: Research population is all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which a researcher wishes to generalize the results of study. Majid (2018) defines population as a group of individuals or objects with similar or common observable characteristics. The target population therefore refers to that segment of the population that is chosen or selected for a study. The population for this study includes teenage mothers and their respective headteachers in public basic schools in the Ajumako/Enyan/Esiam District. Table 2 indicates the population distribution of the participants.

Table 1: Population Distribution of the Participants

Pupils	Headteachers
5	4

Source: Field Data (2023).

The circuits in the district are Abaasa, Ajumako, Besease, Amia Ba, Sunkwaa, Enyanmaim and Denkyira. The researchers used Besease circuit because teenage pregnancy issues and re-enrolment are very common in that circuit. The research purpose sought to find out the Educational support systems available for teenage mothers who returned to school after childbirth. Information gathered from the respondents constituted the experiences and perspectives on teenage motherhood and its impact on girls' education. The choice and selection of the other key informants was informed by the multi-dimensional nature of student mothers' challenges emanating from the school, family and the community. School heads were selected because they could provide information on teenage mothers who re-enrolled while Ministry of Education Official represented the policy making arm of the government from where the girls school re-enrolment directive emanated.

5.3 Sampling Procedure: The researchers employed two basic sampling techniques for the selection of participants for this study, namely purposive and snowball. Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research since it involves selecting research participants according to the needs of the study (Etikan et al., 2016). Purposive sampling procedure involves the judgment of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. Researchers choose participants who give richness of information that is suitable and detailed for research (Patton, 2002).

We visited the Girl Child coordinator in the district for information on teenage mothers relating to the research through purposive sampling procedure. Snowball sampling or chain-referral sampling is defined as a non-probability sampling technique in which the samples have traits that are rare to find (Johnson, 2014). This is a sampling technique, in which existing subject provides referrals to recruit samples required for a research

study. Upon the information from the Girl Child Coordinator's desk, a circuit and initial school was chosen due to the rampant issues of teenage motherhood.

The headteacher of the school welcomed me, I showed her my permission letter and the necessary assistance was given. A girl was identified and upon talking to her, she directed me to other colleagues in other schools. The reason for choosing those schools was that incidence of teenage pregnancies and re-enrolment is common in schools. Five teenage mothers were selected from the four schools, with their respective headteachers. According to Patton (2002), interview participants can range from 5-30. The total number of teenage mothers got in the four schools visited with their respective headteachers were used. The sample size was nine (9).

Table 2: Sample Size of teenage Mothers and their headteachers

Name of Schools	Teenage mothers	Headteachers	Total
Carrot	1	1	2
Lettuce	1	1	2
Cucumber	1	1	2
Spinach	2	1	3
Total	5	4	9

Source: Field Data (2023)

Snowballing and purposive sampling technique were used to select the participants (teenage mothers and headteachers) respectively based on inclusion criteria. The inclusion criterion is that the participants must have returned to school after giving birth.

5.4 Data Collection Instrument: A research instrument has been described by Kothari (2011), as a tool that a researcher employs to elicit information or data from a respondent. Given the nature of the study, individual interviews in line with the research objectives using a semi-structured interview schedule were used to collect data from all the respondents. A semi-structured interview guide because it provides closed ended questions that offer the opportunity to probe the respondents for descriptive information resulting in deeper and better understanding. An audio recorder was used to capture data during the interviews. However, the use of the recorder depended on the agreement with the respondents. Detailed notes were also taken with the help of the field assistant.

The interview was conducted with five (5) teenage mothers with their respective headteachers (4) on one-on-one basis on different dates agreed upon by both the researchers and the participants. Two sets of interview schedules for teenage mothers and their respective headteachers were used.

The main purpose for using interview guide was to provide a framework in which respondents could express their own thoughts in their own words in the form of conversation between two people. The interviewer-initiated contact and the interviewee consent was established for the right to ask questions and agreed to answer those questions (Miller & Brewer 2003). The interview was capable of producing situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes.

The disadvantage of interviews in collecting qualitative data is that it is tiresome while face-to-face methods of collecting data could be the primary and most effective strategy for collecting empirical data, the researchers had a huge task of locating respondents. Despite having made an appointment with the respondents, there was always a problem in locating them. To curb this, rewards were given to participants who kept the scheduled time.

5.5 Data Collection Procedures: Prior to the interviews, an introduction letter collected from the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) was sent to the head teachers to seek their consent on my initial visits. During t

hese meetings respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their views expressed and for that, the purpose of the research was clearly outlined and communicated to them. Interviews with the teenage mothers who have re-enrolled back to school took place at an agreed location on the school compounds. Interviews with the school heads were carried out in their offices during working hours.

5.6 Pilot Testing: The interview guide was piloted at Abura Asebu Kwamankese District in the Central Region of Ghana. I chose Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District because of similar teenage motherhood issues of students who have returned to school after delivery. The participants were 2 teenage mothers and 2 headteachers who were purposively selected. The total sample size of the pretest was 4. The trustworthiness of the instrument was ascertained during the pilot testing. However, internal reliability was achieved during the study through triangulation, member checks, careful auditing of the data, by reaching consensus regarding the findings with the participants, and using audiotapes and video recordings to store information on computers for the processing of data, while external reliability refers to the verification of the findings of the research, when the same research is conducted by an independent researcher under the same circumstances and using the same

participants (White, 2005). Hence, in this current research, the trustworthiness of the findings was achieved where the researchers went back to show the transcribed findings to the participants to confirm whether what they said were the exact words captured.

5.7 Data Processing and Analysis: The data collected from interviews with the teenage mothers and their respective headteachers were first of all transcribed verbatim using the Hyper Transcribe software. The data collected was edited and coded and grouped under themes after which numbers were used to identify similar responses. The interview data were analyzed using the Braun and Clarke thematic analysis. The qualitative analytical technique is used for defining, analyzing, and reporting themes within data analysis. It minimally organizes the data set in detail and explains it. Sometimes, however, it goes further than this and interprets different aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the flexibility of thematic analysis makes it a relevant tool for analyzing interviews. This study adopted Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis guideline. This guideline is made up of six steps. They further asserted that research analysis is not a linear process that moves in a straight line but rather research is recursive, all the parts are intertwined and in making analysis the research moves back and forth the process. Drawing on the works of Braun and Clarke (2006), van Manen (1990), provides the process the study adopts to make logic out of the verbal data collected through interviews. This study opened up avenues for thinking about the educational support system for teenage mothers in public basic schools.

5.7.1 Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis Strategy

According to Lubrosky (1994) as cited in Agbevanu (2014), the thematic analysis makes meaning out of textual data. It helps the researcher and the readers of the study bring out the recurring themes cropping up in the textual data (van Manen, 1990). Themes, according to van Manen (1990), as cited in Agbevanu (2014), are contents that keep recurring in the textual data. For this study text or textual data refers to transcribed interviews from participants. Braun and Clarke (2006), give the following process as being the steps for working through thematic analysis which is adopted as the method for analyzing data for this study. The six steps are enumerated below;

5.7.2 Familiarise yourself with the data. In this step according to Braun and Clarke (2006), if the researcher collects the data himself, he would have a fair idea of what is contained in the data, and also some sort of interest and thoughts. The researcher is expected to have in-depth knowledge about the data to know about all the prominent issues in the data. In familiarising oneself the researcher is supposed to read the transcript over and over again. In this step, the researchers went to the field and collected the data, after the researchers transcribed the interviews and read the textual data several times just to gain the thought the participants want to put across. As we read the transcripts, he searched for all the patterns and the recurring thoughts in the transcript.

5.7.3 Generating initial codes. This is the second step in the process of doing thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After we had read and familiarized ourselves with the textual data and has been able to develop an initial set of ideas that are running through the transcripts, the researchers then assigned codes to the textual data. Codes show a feature of the data that appears very interesting to the analyst and refers to "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998). The researchers coded using the manual coding system. The researchers read through the transcripts again and now used numbers to code the different responses, with similar responses she used the same number.

5.7.4 Searching for themes. This is the next step after the codes have been assigned to the textual data. At this stage, the analysis is moving from the individual transcript to broad analysis using all the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Having identified the meaningful statements otherwise known as codes, now the researchers continued to read selectively. At this stage, the researchers analyzed using codes to get the sub-themes to form the overarching theme of the study. Using visual representations to help you sort the various codes into themes (Braun & Clarke 2006) can be helpful at this point. You could use charts, mind maps, or you could write on a separate piece of paper the name of each code (and a brief description) and play around with organizing them into theme piles. A table is created here by the researcher to form the sub-themes and overarching themes of the study. The researchers used excerpts from the textual details to tell the overarching themes and point out the sub-themes.

5.7.5 Reviewing the themes. It requires the refinement of certain themes, according to Braun and Clarke (2006). It becomes apparent during this process that some candidate themes are not themes, while others have fallen into each other. It was important to break down other themes into distinct themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) opined that; "at this stage the we went through two activities, reviewing and refining themes" (p. 21). The reviewing has to do with the researchers reading through the extracts again and making sure that the themes form a 'coherent pattern' (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researchers then developed a thematic map using the main themes and grouping the subthemes under the main themes.

VI. Findings and Discussions

6.1 Research Question One: What challenges do teenage mothers face as they re-enrol into the formal public basic school system?

The researcher was interested in exploring from the teenage mothers challenges they are confronted with as they re-enrol in school on their education. The challenges drawn from interviewees are themed as follows: studies, financial constraints, absenteeism, stigmatization and lateness.

6.1.1 Theme 1: Studies

A teenage mother said as a result of her newborn baby, her studies has been affected. She has to be thinking about the child and studies at the same time.

"It is my studies. Now that I have a child, I think about both my child and studies and this made concentrating on learning difficult". At first, I only concentrated on how to study hard to become somebody great in future but it is not like that now, I need to think about the welfare of my baby at home and my studies as well while in school and this made have divided attention. (St. 5).

"Learning hard to perform well in school was my hallmark at first and sometimes my mates called madam assistant teacher but now I struggle very hard to perform well in class due to inadequate concentration." (St. 1).

"I have to come to school and go back home to breast feed my baby since he is just few months old and this made me miss a lot of periods." (St. 4).

"They find it difficult to study in their state of being teenage mothers because they tend to compare the time they were without babies to now thinking learning could have been easier for them if they were not teenage mothers". (Ht. B).

6.1.2 Theme 2: Financial Constraints

The teenage mothers were financially handicapped. Money to buy basic needs like books and to cater for their daily needs were all not forth coming. For instance, *"They face financial problems; buying books and paying other levies in the school are usually difficult for them. Most at times staff support them financially (Ht. A). "Sometimes I come to school on an empty stomach because my mother says she has used the money she has to care or the baby." (St. 5).*

6.1.3 Theme 3: Absenteeism

A major challenge that teenage mothers faced is absenteeism according to the interview results. Participants explained that they usually absent themselves because they financially constrained. Some participants said: *I sometimes do not feel like going to school simply because of the hardship I have brought upon my family so I need to go to the market with my mother for us to sell together to get enough money to care for the baby and the other expenses. Again, the baby might not be feeling well and I had to take her to the clinic for care... (St. 4).*

Another participant also explained:

"Teenage mothers sometimes think because they have babies, they are adults and this gets into their heads and shun doing task assigned to them by absenting themselves from school without permission." (Ht. C)

6.1.4 Theme 4: Stigmatization

The pain of stigmatization is another challenge the teenage mothers involved in the study face as they re-enrol. They explained that their peers sometimes make fun of them and call them names. A participant explained:

"Some of my classmates mock and tease me sometimes especially during group work and class discussions. They will say I am the oldest so I should bring more ideas simply because I have a baby." (St. 2).

Another participant said:

For the classmates, sometimes, they become a little bit rough towards them. And because you know the person is a mother, sometimes in the class when they are doing something, they will pass a comment like "Eiii, Abaatan no". (Ht. D).

6.1.5 Theme 5: Lateness to school

Another theme under challenges facing re-enrolment into school is lateness to school. Participant explained that they are usually late to school due to the fact that they have to take care of the baby's needs before going to school. Some teenage mothers said:

"Major challenge is lateness to school which affects my performance and education as a whole. Sometimes I have to bath and feed the baby before I come to school and this eats into the stipulated time to report to school." (St. 2).

"They sometimes come to school late and at times they do not come at all." (Ht. A)

Evidence from the responses of the participants indicate that the major challenges that teenage mothers had, had to do with their studies, financial constraints, absenteeism, stigmatization and lateness which affected their

academic performance. In some instance, head teachers added that teenage mother had financial difficulty. Acquisition of basic needs like stationary, levies and other materials which support teaching and learning became difficult for such students because of finances.

6.2 Discussions

Revelation of the study found that the challenges that teenage mother students greatly faced were with their studies, financial constraints, absenteeism, stigmatization and lateness to school. Teenage mothers faced difficulty with their studies because they had divided attention. They had to care for their new-born babies and their studies at the same time. Teenage mothers were mostly late to school and had to miss some contact hours as a result of their babies. At times, teenage mothers had to rush home to breastfeed their babes. All these challenges to a larger extent had significant impact on teenage mothers' academic performance, coupled with financial difficulty. Revelations by research point to different views on the challenges that teenage mothers are confronted with when it comes to re-enrolment in schools. The works of Chigona and Chetty (2008), Olivier (2000), Dlamini et al (2003), Ritcher and Mlambo (2005), indicated that challenges that teenage mothers were confronted with had to do with they not receiving support from their educators, for instance, when a learner had missed classes due to infant related issues; teachers are reluctant to go over the lesson. They also reported another major challenge which had to do with stigma, lack of professional counsel and lack of parental support. These researchers' findings are in sharp contrast to the finding of this study. It can therefore be said that this study has pointed out some of the actual challenges that teenage mothers are confronted with especially with issues pertaining to their academic success.

VII. Research Question 2: What educational support systems are available for the teenage mothers as they re-enrol into the formal public basic school system?

The research question sought to find out educational support systems available to participants as they re-enrol in school. An analysis of the data gathered revealed that the educational support systems available to teenage mothers as they re-enrol are as follows: Institutional support, friendly support and home support. For the purpose of presentation, the findings of this research question together with its discussions are presented under the themes below.

7.1 Theme 1: Institutional support

Institutional support includes all expenditures and provisions offered to students in terms of administrative services, legal and financial support, space, infrastructure, and facilities to ease their involvement and therefore completion effectiveness. It is the support earned as a member of an organization by an individual. The policies and practices aimed at creating a favorable business environment are characterized by attractive new entrepreneurial opportunities.

Under institutional support, most of the participants referred to support they received from teachers and headteachers. Unanimously, the teenage mothers said teachers and headteachers of the various schools helped them in their studies by offering (financial support, provision of stationary, remedial lessons, and provision of counseling services).

7.1.1 Sub Theme 1: Financial support:

The teenage mothers interviewed reported that they received some financial assistance from some of their teachers and headteachers. Some participants stated:

I am most grateful to the head and the teachers for their support since I came back to school, they sometimes give me money to buy food, this is because of additional responsibility that I have brought to the family I sometimes come to school on empty stomach.

"Most at times I am exempted from paying some levies in school such as ICT fee, extra classes fee and fees from the education office such as the educational week and others." (St. 3).

7.1.2 Sub Theme 2: Provision of stationary

The second subtheme related to institutional support is the provision of stationery. Teenage mothers explained that they are usually assisted with some stationaries such as books, pens, and pencils. Some teenage mothers said:

As I said earlier on teaching goes with learning and for a pupil to come to school without writing material will hinder the progress of that pupil so we go to the extent to provide them with some stationaries like exercise and notebooks, pens, and school uniforms. (Ht. C)

Sometimes teachers support me with some of the things I need to continue my education such as exercise books, pens, and other writing materials to be able to do my classwork because the financial burden I have brought on my family is too much. (St.2).

7.1.3 Sub Theme 3: Remedial lessons

The remedial lesson is another subtheme that emerged out of the main theme of institutional support. The data analyzed revealed that institutions provided teenage mothers with remedial lessons because they sometimes miss some lessons. A participant stated:

Since I am still breast feeding the child I am allowed to go home intermittently to take care of the child and this makes me lose a lot of contact hours so sometimes teachers give me extra time to do a task given to me. Also, they find extra time to explain things to me whenever I contacted them for extra tuition. (St.1).

7.1.4 Sub Theme 4: Provision of counseling services

Similarly, the analyzed data revealed that participants received counseling support from their institutions. Participants explained that their institutions provide them with this support to avoid future occurrences as well as to encourage them to complete their basic education. Some participants said:

My teachers support me by giving me advice on the measures to follow to avoid similar situations from happening again. They told me to strive had to be able to finish my education in order to achieve my goal in the near future because education is the key to everything and knowledge is power so I should obtain it. (St.4).

Children of such teenage age needed to be talked to or mentored, but most at times is not everyone gets the chance or the privilege to get someone to mentor him or her so in this case wherever the wind blows they follow. Most teenage mothers who have become victims were influenced by their peers and their curiosity. With this at the back of our mind's teachers are talked to, to counsel the pupils on sexual reproductive health and sex education in general. (Ht. D)

It may be concluded from the participants' comments that teachers gave immeasurable support to teenage mothers. The support they received included financial support, Provision of stationary, remedial lessons, and Provision of counseling services for teenage mothers

7.2 Theme 2: Support from friends and classmates

Still exploring educational support systems available to teenage mothers as they re-enroll to school, to this end the researcher was interested in finding out if classmates and friends in the school offered any assistance to the teenage mothers. It was found out that the classmates also help them financially, give them stationery like notebooks, pens, and textbooks, and also spent extra time to explain whatever teachers taught in their absence and advise them too.

7.2.1 Sub Theme 1: Financial support

The results showed that teenage mothers received some form of financial support from their friends. Participants explained that their friends sometimes gave them money to purchase food. Some participants said:

"Whenever I come to school on an empty stomach, some of my friends recognize it on my face and buy food for me or give me money to buy what I need." (St. 3).

"Friends sometimes went beyond learning materials by offering financial support" (Ht. A)

7.2.2 Sub theme 2: Provision of Stationary

The teenage mothers elucidated that their friends sometimes assisted them in terms of some stationaries such as books, pencils and pens. A participant who has benefited from such support illustrated:

My friends give me textbooks, exercise books and other stationary to support my study. I recall one incident where we had an unannounced class test a friend came to my rescue to support me with an exercise book because I came in late and could not find my book too and was very stranded (St.2).

7.2.3 Sub Theme 3: Extra time to explain what has been taught and advice

Participants explained that in their attempt to cope with the situation they have found themselves in, they sometimes miss classes. Hence, some of their friends assist them when they are free. The participant explained that their friends take time to explain what has been taught to them. Some of such participants expressed their concern:

"They encourage me every day to learn and how to handle the situation perfectly not to disrupt my studies the more and also carefully gather notes and teaches me what the teachers taught in my absence (St.5).

"...they give me their copied notes and teach me what was taught in class when I was absent during break time and after school sometimes and also advise me to pursue my education despite being a teenage mother" (St 4).

It may be said that classmates and friends in their small way assisted teenage mothers in their studies. Classmates supported teenage mothers financially, give them stationery like notebooks, pens, and textbooks, and also spent extra time explaining whatever teachers taught in their absence, coupled with these supports enjoyed by teenage mothers from classmates and friends, they also spent time to advise these mothers. These supports helped teenage mothers in their continuous stay in classroom and the school specifically.

VIII. Discussions

The finding of the study showed that teenage mothers had support from headteachers, teachers and classmates. Teachers supported teenage mothers to buy books and other stationery to support their studies. In some instances, teachers had to also organize extra classes for these teenage mothers to leverage their studies with their colleague students. Some teachers bought school uniforms and give money to teenage mothers on a number of occasions. Many studies have revealed that teenage mothers suffered from their classmate in that teenage mothers were mostly teased by their classmates, nevertheless, in this study, classmates rather offered massive support to teenage mothers. Classmates gave their written notes to some of these teenage mothers in their absence, some even went beyond that and supported them financially. Counseling services were also offered to teenage mothers from the various schools they find themselves. Not much is known in the field of research on support systems for teenage mother, however, the few works that have been done by Bunting and McCauley (2004), Benson (2004) and Klaw (2008), posit that support that teenage mothers basically received was from the family. Their study showed that, “family support leads to positive outcomes for teenage mothers and also reiterated that positive impact of family on teenage mothers promoted their well-being”. However, this current study points out that support systems available in schools for teenage mothers basically came from headteachers, teachers and classmates. The support they received from headteachers, teachers and classmates included financial, stationary like notebooks, pens and textbooks and also extra time to explain whatever teachers taught in their absence. These supports received from teachers and classmates went a long way in supporting teenage mothers in their academic work.

IX. Conclusion

The World Health Organization (2013) and Save a Child Report (2000), point to the fact that teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood is on the increase in Africa. Research has again shown that Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the world, as is reported that out of 1,000 girls aged 15- 19 years, 143 drop out of school because of early pregnancies. These teenage mothers were mostly end their education after childbirth. However, over the years, series of interventions have been put in place to help these teenage mothers for them to continue their studies, especially in the advanced countries. But in Africa and for that matter Ghana, much was not done for these teenage mothers because of societal perception towards teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers. Despite the plethora of challenges surrounding teenage pregnancy such as lack of parental support, financial difficulties, poor academic performance and a host of others, some measures such as the introduction of Free Senior High School policy and the government policy on re-enrolment of teenage mothers into schools have helped these teenage mothers in Ghana, nevertheless, support from the government, parents and other cooperate organisations should gear towards these teenage mothers to aid them finish their education because childbirth should not be an end to one’s education.

X. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made for practice and policy:

1. Since teenage mothers are still desirous of pursuing their career ambitions, all necessary support in terms of financial and social assistance should be made available in our various schools for these mothers. Policy makers, non-governmental organization and corporate bodies should all come on board to contribute their quota to achieving this feat.
2. Even though the study revealed that teenage mothers enjoyed support from teachers and classmates. A lot more has to be done by the Ghana Education Service such as establishing nursing mothers’ centres in these schools that will take care of the babies of these teenage mothers on campus.
3. The government as a matter of urgency must bring out the policy guidelines on how the re-enrolment has to be rolled out to help the implementing body have a uniform practice.

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