

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**



**EXPERIENCES OF TEENAGE MOTHERS RE-ENTERING INTO SENIOR  
HIGH SCHOOLS IN KWAHU AFRAM -PLAINS NORTH DISTRICT**



**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**



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HIGH SCHOOLS IN KWAHU AFRAM -PLAINS NORTH DISTRICT**



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**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in  
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of  
the degree of Master of Philosophy  
(Counselling Psychology)**

**DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY  
FACULTY OF APPLIED BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES IN EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**DECEMBER, 2024**

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## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, Mary Tangmee, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work and it has not been submitted, either in parts or whole for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

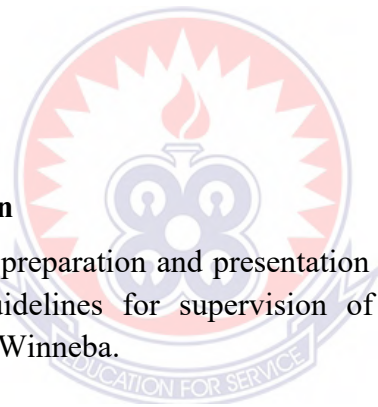
### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Mr. Richard Samuel Ziggah (Supervisor)

Signature: .....

Date: .....



## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my three children Desmond, Beatrice and Bethel for their understanding and support during my absence from home for many months. Also, to my husband Charles and to Mr and Mrs Demegbe Kwame Eric and Asante Anastasia. To my mother for her prayers and my brothers, thanks for the love you showed me during moments when I was away at school and to my late father.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I give thanks to the All-Powerful God who has made my academic ambition come true. I will always be appreciative of the power, love, and wisdom that enabled me to finish this paper. To my supervisor, Mr. Richard Samuel Ziggah, I would like to express my gratitude for all of your help and advice during the study process. Your insights were really valued and helped this work come to fruition. Thank you to all the teenage mothers who made this study possible by allowing me to delve into your individual life stories.

My brothers and mother deserve special recognition for their financial support of my schooling thus far.

To my mother: I appreciate your unwavering commitment to teaching us despite the difficulties. May God grant you a long and healthy life.



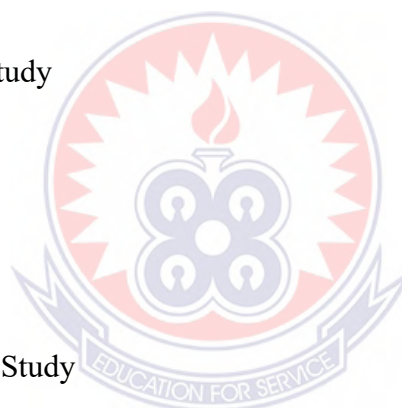
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## ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore the experiences of teenage mothers re-entering Senior High School in Kwahu Afram -Plains North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The study employed a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological descriptive research design. Through an expert convenience purposive sampling technique, 35 teenage mothers were the population and 15 teenage mothers were sampled for the study. Data was collected using an Interview guide. Data was analyzed thematically. The study revealed that teenage motherhood experiences were largely on issues such as financial constraint, stigmatisation and rejection from friends, relatives and the community. Findings from the study indicated that some of the teenage mothers are primarily motivated by the desire to secure a better future for themselves and their children. They value education as a means to break cycles of poverty, gain stable employment, and serve as role models for their children. The study also underscores the need for comprehensive support systems that include academic and professional support, flexible learning schedules, financial assistance, emotional and psychological counselling services and efforts raising awareness to reduce stigma, all of which are critical for ensuring the academic success of teenage mothers. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should consider how the re-entry policy is being implemented in the various institutions. In the chapter's discussion, it was established that very little is done on paper or in documents when it comes to the support systems available to teenage mothers. Instead, parents, the government, and school authorities must collaborate as a family unit or system to understand the needs and circumstances of teenage mothers. It was further recommended that; teachers and counsellors should give teenage mothers the needed guidance and counselling to be able to restore confidence in them to enable them improve academically and to overcome the stress they go through.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Re-entry of Teenage mothers who have left school due to pregnancy involves actively reintegrating these Teenage mothers back into formal education, providing support, tailored programs, and a welcoming environment to empower them to continue their studies and pursue their educational goals (Kubek & Zark, 2020). Teenage mothers are age between thirteen to nineteen years who are pregnant or have given birth to a child. (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2016). School re-entry refers to through which teenage mothers return to formal education after childbirth (Adomako Baafi, 2018). Teenage mother re-entering school refers to the process by which adolescent girls ages 13-19 who have given birth return to formal education after a period of withdrawal due to pregnancy or childbirth. (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2016, UNESCO 2017). It entails identifying and removing the obstacles that contributed to their disengagement, creating effective interventions to encourage their return, and giving them the tools and encouragement, they need to continue their education (Thwala & Kurt, 2022).

To encourage a student's successful return to and completion of formal education, school re-entry initiatives frequently entail outreach programmes, counselling services, academic support, vocational training, and other interventions customized to the specific requirements of the individual student (Thwala & Kurt, 2022). These initiatives are designed to empower teenage mothers by addressing the challenges they face and enabling them to overcome barriers, enhance their educational attainment, and contribute to reducing gender inequality in education. Re-entry is crucial to teenage mothers' human capital development as it provides them with the opportunity to continue their education, acquire knowledge and skills, and enhance their prospects. By promoting re-entry, we can

reduce gender inequality in education by ensuring that girls have equal access to educational opportunities and empowering them to overcome the barriers that may have led to their disengagement in the first place. While there has been a lot of work toward achieving gender parity in education, the ultimate aim is still mostly unmet (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2017). However, a study by Evans et al. (2020), there is a notable inequality in educational equity as women's educational attainment is lower than men's in 90 out of 126 nations globally. Teenage motherhood and girls' aspirations to further their education are inversely correlated, according to a number of researches, including those by Adangabe et al (2021), Naidoo, et al (2021), Narita and Diaz (2016), and Eloundou Enyegue (2004). As a result, one of the challenges to achieving zero gender imbalance in schooling across numerous nations worldwide is adolescent pregnancy. The majority of this problem is found in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where 12 million girls between the ages of 15 and 19 give birth each year (Darroch et al., 2016). This has a negative impact on these girls' educational and economic achievements, as Bhana and Mcambi (2013) and Reddy et al. (2016) have observed.

Despite a global reduction in the rate from 64.5 births per 1000 women (15–19 years old) in 2000 to 41.3 births per 1000 women in 2023, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) remains the region with the greatest prevalence of adolescent pregnancy, with 99.4 births per 1000 women (World Health Organization, 2023). A number of factors, such as the lack of access to and non-use of contraception and the prevalence of gender-based and sexual violence, are responsible for the high rate of teenage pregnancies in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Duby et al., 2021; Parida, et al. 2021; Usonwu, et al. 2021; Kassa et al., 2018). The rising rates of adolescent pregnancies in the SSA sub-region are partly due to inadequate Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education. In other situations, the problem's persistence is

also attributed to societal pressures, such as the urge to marry and have children at a young age (Gerbaka, et al, 2021; Vincent & Alemu, 2016). Additionally, young girls' restricted employment opportunities and low educational attainment may also be factors in the prevalence of adolescent pregnancies. The complex terrain created by the interplay of these several elements contributes to the issue of teenage pregnancies in Ghana and the sub-region as a whole. Some concerning data were found in a 2020 survey conducted by the Ghana Health Service (GHS) regarding the frequency of adolescent pregnancies. According to the study, 2,865 conceptions were reported among girls aged 10 to 14 in 2020, while 107,023 pregnancies were reported among girls aged 15 to 19 in 2020 (GhanaWeb, 2021, May 2). These numbers indicate that, on average, 30 girls are impregnated every day, with 13 teenage pregnancies occurring every hour. Early pregnancies not only have implications for the reproductive health of young girls but also hinder their ability to fulfil their potential, including their educational goals and aspirations. For instance, Odland (2018) established that teenage pregnancies can harm girls' reproductive health, including a higher risk of problems during pregnancy and childbirth, a higher prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), and restricted access to reproductive healthcare services. A study by Adam et al. (2016) also established teenage pregnancy as a major factor that influences school dropout rates among basic school adolescents in Ghana

These figures show that 13 teenage pregnancies occur per hour, and 30 girls are pregnant daily on average. Early pregnancies not only affect young girls' reproductive health but also limit their capacity to reach their full potential, including their ambitions for their schooling. Adolescent pregnancies, for example, have been shown to have negative effects on girls' reproductive health, including increased risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth, increased incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and limited

access to reproductive healthcare services (Odland, 2018). Teenage pregnancy has also been shown in a study by Adam et al. (2016) to be a significant factor influencing Ghanaian adolescents in basic school who drop out of school. Except in cases where girls miscarry or terminate their pregnancy, teenage pregnancy is linked to teenage motherhood. Ghana prohibits abortion, hence the majority of adolescent pregnancies end in childbirth and teenage motherhood (Polis et al., 2020; Ganle et al., 2016; Lithur, 2004). Significant obstacles stand in the way of the transition from girls to teenage mothers (Dzotsi et al. 2020; Espinel-Flores et al., 2020; Chohan & Langa, 2011), especially in light of the dearth of social and family support. Teenage mothers frequently face obstacles to their education due to these variables, which makes governmental interventions necessary to address these issues. To address the educational challenges confronting teenage mothers, a process called school re-entry has been developed, which allows pregnant girls to return to school after giving birth (Malatji et al., 2020; Reddy et al., 2016; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Eloundou-Enyegue, 2004). Various factors have been to influence the educational re-entry of teenage mothers, as highlighted in previous studies (Reddy et al., 2016; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; EloundouEnyegue, 2004). Health issues, such as increased rates of maternal and child sickness and mortality, have been identified as barriers found to school re-entry among teenage mothers (Khanum et al. 2015; Al-Sahab et al., 2012).

According to Malatji et al. (2020), stigmatization, unfavourable teacher attitudes, and challenges juggling academics and childcare duties are further obstacles that prevent teenage mothers from pursuing further education after becoming pregnant. Teenage mothers' re-entry into schools has also been reported to be hampered by teacher snippiness, disruptions in their education, and strained relationships with the child's father (Miwara & Mahajara, 2018). In Kenya, sociocultural elements including gender preference, patriarchy, early marriage, and poverty all play a part in why students fail to

return to school after becoming pregnant (Onyango et al., 2015). Economic constraints, including the inability to afford education and the costs associated with child care, as well as negative schooling environments, have been identified as further barriers (Onyango et al., 2015). Moreover, conditions such as isolation and stigma also impact the re-entry of teenage mothers into the education system (Onyango et al., 2015). Despite the efforts made by the Ghana Education Service (GES) and various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to address the issue through counselling services, the prevalence of teenage pregnancy appears to be increasing among school-age girls (Morgan et al., 2022). According to studies by Tuwor and Sossou (2008) and Lambert, Perrino, and Barreras (2012), adolescent pregnancy severely impedes girls' capacity to enrol in and finish basic and secondary education, especially in Ghana's rural areas. Amoadu et al. (2022) found that teenage pregnancy rates are higher in Ghanaian rural communities than in urban ones for a variety of reasons, including poor access to comprehensive sexual education, inadequate healthcare facilities and services, poverty, a lack of employment opportunities, cultural norms and traditions surrounding early marriage, and a lack of awareness about contraception and reproductive health rights. In response to the pressing need to address this issue, research on teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood—particularly among schoolgirls—has emerged. The causes of teenage pregnancy, the difficulties of becoming a teenage mother, and the long-term repercussions on females have all been examined in these research (Lambert et al., 2012; Tuwor & Sossou, 2008).

Although prior studies have mostly concentrated on the rates of school abandonment among adolescent mothers, there hasn't been much investigation into their return to formal education. Programs encouraging teenage mothers to return to school are designed to alleviate the obstacle of adolescent pregnancy to school completion by giving them the chance to do so and paving the road for their future academic achievement and

possibilities. Various factors, including poverty, access to child care, family support, attitude, interactions with institutional barriers, and gender ideology, have been mentioned in research that focus on school re-entry among Ghanaian adolescent mothers (Baafi, 2020; Baa-Poku, 2016). But the majority of these research have been qualitative, and they haven't looked closely at the consequences or predictive power of these elements. Additionally, significant indicators of school re-entry have been disregarded, including the academic standing of adolescent mothers before to pregnancy and the prevalence of teenage pregnancies in their family (Mezmur et al., 2021; Sámano et al., 2017; Akella & Jordan, 2014; Grant & Hallman, 2008; East et al., 2007). More thorough research is therefore required to examine these variables and their effects on adolescent mothers' postpartum re-entry into the educational system.

Supporting teenage mothers' efforts to further their education is becoming increasingly important in many developed nations. Policies and initiatives are frequently announced and put into action to support their continued education. "Educated girls grow up to be educated women who can compete successfully and have chances to be important members of their society's democratic, governing, and socioeconomic processes." (Mensah, Allah, 2005).

Conventions and declarations at the national and international levels, such as the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), affirm education as a fundamental human right. However, prejudice and gender inequality in formal education settings—particularly against pregnant schoolgirls and adolescent mothers—make it difficult for all people to have equal access to high-quality education. Gendered norms around early pregnancy and motherhood have led to low educational attainment for girls globally, despite efforts to close gender inequities in education (UNESCO, 2003; Okwany and Kamusiime, 2017: 58).

One facet of the experiences of prejudice against teenage females who become pregnant is their gender. The stigmatization of pregnant schoolgirls and adolescent mothers is exacerbated by the gendered identities and ideas that surround them. Okwany and Kamusiime (2017 : 62 “the pervasive construction in policy and practice of girls as ‘sexual gatekeepers’ who only have to say no, locate problems in young people ignoring the complex interplay between social-economic structures, and power relations in the social context within which individual and interpersonal sexual practices and behaviours are embedded” Due to their inability to complete their basic education, pregnant schoolgirls and teenage mothers frequently drop out of school, which lowers their potential for higher education. Less is spoken about early pregnancy as a psychological, social, and health issue with fewer words have been spoken on the phenomenon’s role as an educational problem that contributes to gaps and silences in national education policy (Pillow, 2004). 2013. Many African societies view pregnancy as a blessing, but when it occurs early in a young girl’s life when she is still in school and under her parents’ authority, it becomes an unwelcome social embarrassment. Though little is done to inform these teenage mothers about their sexual and reproductive rights, moral arguments that a pregnancy outside of marriage is morally denying them their right to an education are a common focus of debates across Africa that stem from individual opinions and diverse religious teachings and interpretations. Thus, some view formal education as a luxury that can be taken away from pregnant schoolgirls as a form of punishment. African tribes; nevertheless, the men who conceive these adolescent mothers escape punishment.

The African Union (AU) developed a plan to eliminate gender inequality at all educational levels in order to increase Africa’s human capital through consistent educational investments (Martínez & Odhiambo, 2018). Therefore, continuation and re-entry programs for adolescent mothers were developed by African countries. To protect pregnant

schoolgirls' right to an education, Ghana is one of the many African countries that has enacted a re-entry education policy, allowing them to return to school after giving birth (Okwany and Kamusiime, 2017).

Ghana has dedicated itself to providing all of its children with an education since the colonial era. The nation's establishment of its own legislative and regulatory frameworks, together with its ratification of international agreements, treaties, and protocols, all serve as examples of this dedication to achieving universal education for all children in the nation.

Equal access to education is guaranteed to all people by the Republican Constitution of 1992 in Ghana. In addition, it requires the state to make certain that all children who are old enough to attend school finish at least a basic education. According to Article 25(1), "Basic education shall be free, compulsory, and available to all with the aim of achieving the full realisation of that right. All persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities."

Every child in Ghana is guaranteed the right to free, obligatory, universal basic education by the Pre-Tertiary Education Act of 2020. Ghana's Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy and allied initiatives, which have resulted in a net enrolment of 87% at the elementary level, are further. Despite the advancements, issues related to school dropouts persist and impede further growth. At now, Ghana has more than 192,500 school dropouts, of which more than 102,000 are female. Social and economic issues leading to teenage pregnancy account for up to 30% of school dropouts among girls. Between 2016 and 2020, there were 555,575 adolescent pregnancies reported by the Ministry of Health, with 109,865 of those pregnancies occurring in 2020 alone. It is impossible to overstate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic-related school closures on education, with young girls being the most severely impacted. According to a COVID-19 School

Reopening report from Africa Education Watch, which was monitoring the partial reopening of schools for finalists, 20% of schools had between one and three girls enrolled as a result of migration and teenage pregnancy. This policy brief examines how the Ghana Education Service (GES) is putting the Re-entry Policy for teenage mothers and pregnant girls into practice

Teenage pregnancy has been a significant barrier to girls' enrolment in and completion of senior high school in Ghana, according to Lambert, Perrino, and Barreras (2012) and Tuwor and Sossou (2008). It is more common in rural than in urban populations. Due to social and financial restrictions, adolescent mothers are unable to finish their education, which is the root of their ongoing struggles and low income. In Kwahu Afram North District in Ghana's Eastern Region, young mothers' early pregnancy and motherhood have propelled many teenage girls from childhood into adulthood, placing them in the informal sector and into private caring. All governments have a global duty to ensure that all children receive an equal education in all fields (Odimegwu & Mkwanaenzi, 2016). Pregnant schoolgirls must deal with the fallout from these discourses, including discriminatory acts.

To allow pregnant schoolgirls to return to school after giving birth, the GES developed a re-entry education strategy in partnership with development partners and other important stakeholders. Pregnant schoolgirls cannot be expelled from any public school, according to a 2016 government decree (Baa-Poku, 2016).

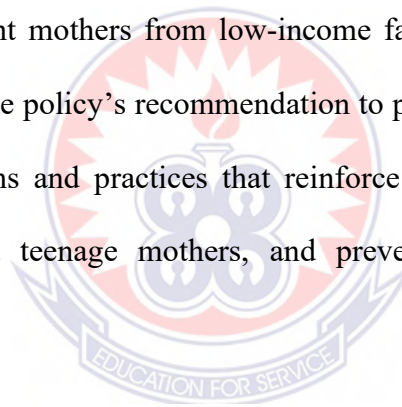
The directive's implementation, adherence, and comprehension differ throughout Ghana due to its lack of specificity. The withdrawal and re-entry procedures, as well as the lack of community and school support systems that may provide these girls with the money, they need to finish school, are further issues. In this sense, despite the government's direction,

the re-entry into school process for young adolescent mothers is still poorly implemented and monitored. The physical, social, and financial effects of pregnancy and childbirth on the living situations of teenage mothers, as well as the interplay of factors influencing their re-entry into school, are not addressed by the policy. Therefore, in addressing the institutional and societal hurdles that contribute to adolescent girls being pregnant and their incapacity to return to school after giving birth, the policy does not use an intersectional approach. Ghana, even though it is acknowledged that pregnancies occur among school girls, there are no standard procedures for handling pregnant school girls or dealing with teenage girls who want to return to school after childbirth. The absence of a standardised system has resulted in school heads using their discretion to deal with the issue.

In order to address this gap, the Ghana Education Service (GES) working through the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) has developed a guideline to adopt measures that seek to prevent pregnancy among school girls and facilitate the re-entry of teenage mothers into school after childbirth. Teenage mothers in Ghana's Eastern Region's Kwahu Afram-Plains North District are still not able to complete their Junior High School (JHS) and Senior High School (SHS) education, even with the re-entry policy in place. Since the majority of pregnant schoolgirls choose to stay at home to give birth, the reintegration education policies have not been implemented. The question, "Why is the re-entry education policy for pregnant schoolgirls not achieving its aim?" is then raised by this. Why do expectant schoolgirls not return to finish their Junior High School (JHS) and Senior High School (SHS) education, schooling after giving birth?

According to scholars, one important element affecting young mothers' decision to never return to school after giving birth is the stigmatization they experience as pregnant schoolgirls and teenage mothers (Birungi et al., 2015). The study has validated this, as the

adolescent mothers who were interviewed disclosed that their choices to return to school following childbirth were primarily influenced by the psychological effects of being stigmatized in the community. The school atmosphere is not a welcoming place for adolescent females to return because of gender discriminatory beliefs and behaviours around the sexuality of young girls. In spite of the re-entry education policy for pregnant schoolgirls, I contend, based on empirical data acquired from interviews with teenage mothers, that young mothers in Kwahu Afram-North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana are still unable to return to school to finish their education. This has brought on by gaps in policy as well as material and psychological factors like parental attitude, childcare help, and poverty. The absence of funding to support the re-entry strategy with scholarships for adolescent mothers from low-income families serves as justification for these obstacles. Despite the policy's recommendation to promote educational inclusivity, it has ignored cultural myths and practices that reinforce gender stereotypes, marginalize pregnant schoolgirls and teenage mothers, and prevent them from pursuing higher education.



## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Teenage mothers face unique and complex challenges when re-entering Senior High School (SHS) after childbirth. While global and regional studies have acknowledged barriers such as stigma, interrupted schooling, and limited support systems, little is known about how these challenges are experienced within rural and underserved districts such as Kwahu Afram-Plains North in the Eastern Region of Ghana. This study therefore sought to examine the lived experiences of teenage mothers who successfully re-entered SHS after childbirth in this specific district, focusing on social stigma, academic adjustment, institutional responses, family and community support systems, and personal growth trajectories.

International bodies such as UNICEF (2021) emphasize comprehensive reintegration strategies—including financial assistance, mentorship, and psychosocial support—to promote gender equity in education. Similarly, several African countries, including Ghana, have adopted re-entry policies to allow pregnant girls and teenage mothers to resume schooling (Okwany & Kamusiime, 2017). However, most policy discussions and empirical investigations have been conducted at national or urban levels, with minimal district-level qualitative evidence to assess how these policies function in rural contexts.

Existing studies conducted globally (Morgan, 2023), in Ghana (Mweemba Gibson Moonga, 2014), and in Zambia have largely employed quantitative survey designs to measure rates of dropout and re-entry. These studies primarily focused on prevalence, policy awareness, or statistical predictors of school return. They did not provide in-depth qualitative accounts of the lived experiences of teenage mothers after re-entry—particularly how they navigate stigma, classroom dynamics, teacher attitudes, childcare burdens, emotional resilience, and academic recovery.

More importantly, none of these studies were conducted in the Kwahu Afram-Plains North District. This district is geographically distinct due to its rural and hard-to-reach nature, limited infrastructure, transportation challenges, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. According to the Kwahu Afram-Plains North District Education Office (2023), only 30% of the 166 teenage girls who dropped out due to pregnancy returned to school. Despite this low reintegration rate, there is no empirical qualitative study documenting the actual experiences of those who returned within this district.

Previous Ghanaian studies (e.g., Birhanu, 2010; Gbogbo, 2020) were conducted in urban or semi-urban settings where access to social services, NGOs, and educational support systems differ significantly from those in Afram-Plains North. Therefore, findings from

Accra, Kumasi, or other urban centres cannot be generalized to rural districts characterized by poverty, limited school resources, cultural stigma, and weak institutional support structures.

This study is therefore different from previous research in the following key ways:

**Geographical Difference** – It is the first known qualitative study focusing specifically on teenage mothers’ re-entry experiences in the Kwahu Afram-Plains North District, a rural and under-researched setting.

**Contextual Difference** – Unlike studies conducted in urban Ghana or other African countries, this study examines re-entry within a rural district where transportation barriers, limited childcare options, and community norms may uniquely influence reintegration.

**Methodological Difference** – Previous studies predominantly used quantitative methods. This study adopts a qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences, emotions, coping strategies, and personal narratives of teenage mothers.

**Population-Specific Focus** – Rather than studying teenage pregnancy broadly, this research focuses specifically on teenage mothers who have already re-entered SHS, allowing for deeper insight into post-reintegration realities rather than dropout statistics alone.

**Policy-Relevance at District Level** – The study provides localized evidence that can guide district-specific interventions and inform implementation of Ghana’s re-entry policy at the grassroots level.

By addressing this geographical and methodological gap, the study contributes original knowledge about how teenage mothers in a rural Ghanaian district experience school reintegration. This localized understanding is essential for designing context-sensitive interventions and supports the broader objective of achieving United Nations Sustainable

Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teenage mothers re-entering into Senior High School in Kwahu Afram -Plains North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Explore the challenges faced by teenage mothers as they re-enter senior high school in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District.
2. Understand the factors that motivate teenage mothers to re-entering into senior high schools in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District.
3. Examine the sources of support systems accessible to teenage mother re-entering senior high schools in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District.
4. Explore the strategies and interventions received by teenage mothers re-entering schools in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District in managing schooling and childcare workloads.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What challenges do teenage mothers experience as they re-enter senior high school in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District?
2. What factors motivate teenage mothers to return to senior high school after childbirth in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District?

3. What sources of support systems are accessible to teenage mothers re-entering Senior high schools in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District?
4. What strategies and interventions do teenage mothers receive to support their re-entry into senior high schools in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District in managing schooling and childcare workloads?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The research will add to our understanding of development studies pertaining to girls' educational attainment. Examining the problems associated with early pregnancy and early motherhood will make it easier to identify and close the gaps, which will help to improve the educational achievement of teenage mothers.

Once more, the study's importance stems from its emphasis on the vital needs of girls, who face the dual issues of a high attrition rate and restricted educational opportunities. But education is a fundamental, unalienable human right, not a privilege. The purpose of the study is to gather first-hand accounts from girls who became pregnant in Senior High School and then went back to school. Furthermore, policy officials in the Ministry of Education as well as educators in Ghana and other nations are expected to find value in the study's conclusions. Additionally, it is intended that the study's findings would provide fresh data that will help with teenage mothers' education and be used to assess the 2016 re-entry policy. Furthermore, it is foreseen that the results of this study will benefit parents, educators, stakeholders, curriculum specialists, legislators, and decision-makers in general. These groups might utilize the results to implement practical policies targeted at enhancing awareness, assertiveness, and education among teenage mothers.

### **1.7 Delimitation**

This study was delimited to the Kwahu Afram Plains North District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The research involved three selected Senior High Schools within the district. The study specifically focused on teenage mothers who had re-entered school after childbirth. Other categories of students, such as teenage fathers, pregnant students who had not returned to school, and female students without parenting responsibilities, were excluded from the study. Additionally, the study was confined to the experiences of teenage mothers within the selected schools and did not extend to other districts or regions. This delimitation was necessary to allow for an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of teenage mothers within a specific socio-cultural and educational context.

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The study's background, problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, significance, delimitations, definitions of terminology, and organizational structure were all covered in the first chapter. The second chapter contains the study's reviewed literature. The study's methodology, which included the population, sample, and sampling techniques, instrumentation, data collection and processing procedures, data analysis procedures, and ethical issues, was covered in detail in Chapter 3. The results are presented, analyzed, and the conclusions are discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter Five concludes with a summary of the study's principal findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of related literature relevant to the study on the experiences of teenage mothers re-entering Senior High Schools in the Kwahu Afram Plains North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The purpose of the literature review is to situate the study within existing scholarly works, identify gaps in knowledge, and provide a theoretical and empirical foundation for the research. The chapter is organized into five main sections. First, the conceptual review discusses key concepts related to teenage motherhood and school re-entry. This is followed by the theoretical framework, which examines the theories underpinning the study. The empirical review then analyzes findings from previous studies related to teenage mothers' educational experiences. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary that highlights key issues from the reviewed literature and establishes the relevance of the current study. This chapter deals with the related literature review under the following sub-headings.

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

The conceptual review focuses on the key concepts that underpin the study on the experiences of teenage mothers re-entering Senior High Schools. These concepts include challenges faced by teenage mothers, motivational factors influencing school re-entry, support systems available to teenage mothers, and strategies and interventions received by teenage mothers. Reviewing these concepts provides a foundation for understanding the lived experiences of teenage mothers within the educational context.

### **2.1.1 Concept of Teenage Mothers Re-entry High School**

Girls' education is a pivotal component of societal development, and it has gained increasing attention in recent years due to its positive impact on empowerment and economic growth. In the Kwahu Afram Plains North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana, there has been a growing phenomenon of teenage mothers re-entering Senior High School (SHS/SHTS) after interruptions in their education. Historically, Ghana has significantly improved girls' enrolment and retention in schools (Amankwah et al., 2021). Senior High Education, in particular, is seen as a crucial step in girls' empowerment and personal development.

There are several factors aims to explore the experiences and challenges that inhibit or prevent teenage mothers from re-entering SHS/SHTS after child birth. Some of these factors are discussed in this study. Teenage pregnancy remains a significant challenge in many developing regions, including Ghana. According to the Ghana Health Service (2021), adolescent pregnancy rates remain high, with many young mothers struggling to reintegrate into formal education. Re-entering Senior High School (SHS) poses multiple challenges for teenage mothers, particularly in academic performance, emotional well-being, and identity formation (UNICEF, 2020). This literature review explores the difficulties faced by teenage mothers in their educational journey, with a focus on the Kwahu Afram Plains North District.

### **2.2 Challenges Faced by Teenage Mothers**

Teenage pregnancy is a complex social and public health issue that significantly affects young mothers, their children, and the broader society. Teenage mothers often encounter various challenges that hinder their overall well-being, educational attainment, and socio-

economic progress. Some of these challenges are academic, financial, emotional, psychological, and social difficulties, among others.

### **2.2.1 Academic challenges**

One of the most pressing challenges faced by teenage mothers is balancing motherhood with education. Many teenage mothers struggle to continue their schooling due to the demands of childcare, lack of support from family and teachers, and inflexible school policies (Smith & Pell, 2020). The need to attend medical check-ups, take care of the child, and recover from childbirth often results in prolonged absenteeism, which affects academic performance.

Studies indicate that teenage mothers are at a higher risk of dropping out of school compared to their peers who are not pregnant or parenting (Dangal, 2019). Some schools lack child-friendly policies such as day-care facilities or flexible schedules that accommodate young mothers. Additionally, societal expectations often pressure teenage mothers into prioritizing family responsibilities over education, further limiting their opportunities for academic advancement (UNESCO, 2021).

Education is often disrupted for teenage mothers due to childcare responsibilities, financial difficulties, and social stigma (Oduro & Adjei, 2022). According to Nyarko and Tawiah (2021), teenage mothers returning to school often experience poor academic performance due to absenteeism and divided attention. Many find it challenging to balance schoolwork with childcare, leading to lower test scores, missed assignments, and overall disengagement from learning activities.

A study by Biney and Dodoo (2020) on teenage mothers in rural Ghana found that over 65% of re-entering mothers struggle to catch up academically, as they often return to

school with learning gaps. Additionally, some teachers and peers perceive them as less capable or unserious, further affecting their confidence and willingness to participate actively in school activities (Amoah, 2019).

### **2.2.2 Financial constraints/poverty**

Teenage mothers often experience financial instability due to their young age and lack of economic independence. Many are unable to secure stable employment due to insufficient education and work experience (Boonstra, 2018). Without financial support from their families or the child's father, these young mothers struggle to afford basic necessities such as food, healthcare, and childcare services.

Research by the World Health Organization (WHO) highlights that financial struggles among teenage mothers can lead to inadequate healthcare for both mother and child, increasing the risk of malnutrition and poor developmental outcomes (WHO, 2020). Some teenage mothers are forced into low-paying jobs or even unsafe labor conditions to provide for their children, further compounding their financial struggles (Kaye, 2019).

Poverty is a condition characterized by a lack of essential resources and opportunities necessary for a decent standard of living. The World Bank defines poverty as “the inability to attain a minimum standard of living, often measured by income or consumption levels (World Bank, 2021).

The UN defines poverty as the absence of the fundamental ability to engage in society and as a denial of opportunities and choices, as well as a violation of human dignity (United Nations, 1995). According to the Oxford English Dictionary, poverty is “the state of being extremely poor, lacking the means to provide for basic needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter.

According to Lareau (2003), Teenage mothers living in poverty often face challenges in accessing quality education due to limited resources, which can hinder their long-term prospects. As cited in Edin and Kefalas (2005), Financial constraints among teenage girls in impoverished communities may lead to disparities in healthcare access, resulting in adverse health outcomes. A study by Whitbeck et al. (2009) suggests that Financial hardship can lead to risky behaviours in teenage mothers, such as early sexual activity and substance abuse, as they seek ways to cope with economic stress.

Collins (2000) argues that Understanding the experiences of teenage mothers in poverty requires an intersectional approach that considers how factors like race, gender, and class intersect to shape their unique challenges. As discussed by Duncan and Murnane (2016), Addressing the financial constraints faced by teenage mothers is crucial for reducing the cycle of poverty. This involves not only educational policies but also broader economic and social policies.

According to Upadhyay et al. (2017), Teenage mothers from low-income backgrounds may have limited access to reproductive healthcare and family planning resources, leading to higher rates of unintended pregnancies. Globally, poverty is recognized as a significant barrier to girls' education worldwide. The international community, as articulated by the United Nations, views poverty as a key factor preventing girls from accessing and continuing their education. The UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education for all, acknowledging that girls living in poverty face particular challenges in accessing education (UN, 2020).

Also, the global perspective on teenage mothers and poverty as a cause of re-entering Senior High School underscores the recognition of poverty as a pervasive barrier to girls' education. International organizations and national governments across different regions

are increasingly committed to addressing this issue through various means, including financial support, social welfare programs, and targeted initiatives to ensure that girls from economically disadvantaged backgrounds have the opportunity to access and complete their education. According to Latin American countries, it can have a direct impact on girls' access to education. Organizations like the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) have worked on projects aimed at reducing poverty and increasing access to quality education, with a focus on gender equality and inclusion (IDB, 2020).

In many African countries, poverty remains a major obstacle for girls' education. Governments and organizations in Africa are increasingly focused on addressing this issue. For example, the African Union's Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA) has recognized the link between poverty, early marriage, and girls' education, and aims to improve the health and education of teenage mothers across the continent (African Union, 2020).

Ghana has recognized the significance of addressing poverty-related challenges in girls' education. The Ghanaian government, in alignment with international goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has launched several initiatives to promote girls' access to and retention in education. One notable program is the Free Senior High School policy, which was implemented in 2017 and expanded to cover all public SHS/SHTS. This policy removes the financial barrier of tuition fees, making it easier for girls from low-income families to enrol or re-enter SHS (Government of Ghana, 2020).

Ghana views girls' education as a tool for poverty alleviation and economic development. The government recognizes that when girls receive a quality education, they are more likely to break the cycle of poverty and contribute positively to the nation's progress.

Therefore, efforts to ensure girls' access to education are seen as an investment in the country's future (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2021).

Beyond government initiatives, various NGOs and community-based organizations in Ghana are actively involved in addressing the intersection of teenage mothers, poverty, and education. These organizations often provide financial support, mentorship, and awareness campaigns to encourage girls from disadvantaged backgrounds to re-enter and stay in school. NGOs like Camfed Ghana work specifically to empower girls in rural communities by addressing poverty-related barriers (Camfed, 2020).

In Kwahu Afram Plains North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana., poverty-related challenges play a critical role in ensuring girls' access to and retention in Senior High School. The government, along with NGOs and civil society organizations, is actively working to create an enabling environment where girls, regardless of their economic background, can pursue and complete their education but with these, there is still a challenge for those girls to re-enter into school again. It is of this view that the researcher wants to delve into these and come out with interventions since girls' education is a pathway to poverty reduction and sustainable development, aligning with broader international efforts to achieve education for all.

### **2.2.3 Emotional and psychological challenges**

The transition to motherhood at a young age can be emotionally and psychologically overwhelming. Teenage mothers frequently experience stress, anxiety, and depression due to the sudden shift in their life responsibilities (McCarthy & Hardy, 2019). Many feel unprepared for parenting and struggle with feelings of fear and uncertainty about their future.

Studies indicate that postpartum depression is more prevalent among teenage mothers compared to older mothers due to limited emotional support and financial stress (Dunkel-Schetter & Tanner, 2019). The psychological burden of motherhood, coupled with societal stigma and lack of adequate counseling services, can lead to feelings of isolation and hopelessness.

Teenage mothers re-entering SHS experience significant emotional distress due to stigma, peer rejection, and the pressures of motherhood. According to Oppong and Kusi (2021), many teenage mothers suffer from stress, anxiety, and depression, primarily due to negative societal attitudes and feelings of guilt. These psychological challenges negatively impact their concentration and motivation to continue schooling.

A study by Mensah and Boateng (2020) revealed that many teenage mothers feel isolated, as they often lose friendships after childbirth. This lack of peer support contributes to low self-worth and emotional instability, which, in turn, affects their academic performance. Additionally, some teenage mothers worry about their child's well-being while they are in school, leading to chronic stress and reduced classroom engagement (Kumi-Kyereme et al., 2019).

#### **2.2.4 Stigmatization**

Teenage mothers often face stigma and discrimination from family, peers, and the community. Many cultures and societies perceive teenage pregnancy as a moral failure, leading to social rejection (Chigona & Chetty, 2017). This stigmatization can manifest in various ways, including withdrawal of familial support, judgment from teachers and classmates, and exclusion from social circles.

According to UNICEF (2021), stigma can have long-lasting effects on teenage mothers, influencing their self-esteem and discouraging them from seeking help. Many teenage mothers internalize this societal disapproval, leading to feelings of shame, guilt, and reduced motivation to pursue their goals (Boonstra,

Stigmatization refers to the process of attaching negative stereotypes, labels, or perceptions to individuals or groups based on certain characteristics, behaviours, or attributes. It often results in discrimination, social exclusion, and the marginalization of those who are stigmatized. Stigmatization can occur in various contexts, including race, gender, sexual orientation, mental health, physical disabilities, and more. Parker, R., & Aggleton, P. (2003).

Luttrell (2003) research sheds light on the experiences of teenage mothers in the educational system. In her book “Pregnant Bodies, Fertile Minds: Gender, Race, and the Schooling of Pregnant Teens,” Luttrell documents the challenges faced by pregnant and parenting teenagers, including stigmatization. She highlights how these girls navigate the educational landscape while dealing with societal expectations and negative stereotypes.

Mollborn (2007) work emphasizes the impact of stigmatization on the academic achievement of teenage mothers. Her research indicates that the stigma associated with teenage pregnancy can lead to lower educational attainment, limiting future opportunities for these young mothers. Luke’s (2011) research explores the intersection of gender, education, and teenage pregnancy. Her work reveals how societal norms and attitudes contribute to the stigmatization of teenage girls re-entering school after giving birth. This stigmatization is often rooted in stereotypes about teenage mothers and their ability to succeed academically. Fergus (2015) conducted a study on the experiences of marginalized youth in education, including teenage mothers. Fergus’s work underscores the unique

challenges faced by these girls, including the isolation and discrimination they encounter, and how these challenges can impact their educational trajectories.

Globally, there is growing recognition of the need to address the stigma that teenage mothers face when re-entering education. International organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF advocate for policies and strategies that create a supportive and non-discriminatory environment for girls. These organizations emphasize that re-entry into education should be seen as an opportunity for girls to continue their learning journey, rather than a source of shame (UNESCO, 2021).

In India, social and cultural factors can contribute to the stigmatization of girls who re-enter school after a break. The government's "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child) campaign aims to change perceptions and eliminate discrimination against girls. This campaign seeks to create an atmosphere where girls are encouraged to return to school without facing judgment or stigma (Government of India, 2020).

The stigmatization of teenage mothers in African societies can be attributed to various cultural, social, and economic factors. It is essential to understand that Africa is a vast and diverse continent with a multitude of cultures and perspectives, so experiences and stigmatization can vary widely across regions. In many African communities, early marriages and teenage pregnancies are still prevalent. These practices often result in the stigmatization of teenage mothers. For instance, a study by Ansell and Young (2004) on rural Tanzania found that teenage girls who became pregnant before marriage were ostracized by their communities and sometimes even expelled from school.

Gender norms and traditional beliefs in some African cultures can perpetuate the stigmatization of teenage mothers. In her book “Women’s Voices, Women’s Power: Dialogues of Resistance from East Africa,” Werbner (1998) discusses how cultural expectations for young girls to be obedient and submissive can lead to stigmatization when they deviate from these roles.

In Nigeria, stigmatization of teenage mothers who drop out of school and later re-enter is acknowledged as a challenge. The government, through its Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), is working to combat this stigma by promoting inclusive and equitable education for girls. Awareness campaigns emphasize the importance of providing a supportive environment for girls who choose to continue their education, even if they had previously dropped out (Universal Basic Education Commission, Nigeria, 2021).

In Ghana, the stigmatization of teenage mothers who re-enter senior high school (SHS/SHTS) after dropping out can be a significant barrier to their educational attainment. This stigma can arise from various sources, including peers, community members, and sometimes even family members.

The Ghanaian government has recognized the need to address the stigma associated with girls who re-enter SHS/SHTS. Policies and initiatives have been put in place to create an enabling environment for girls to return to school without fear of discrimination. For example, the Ghana Education Service (GES) has implemented a policy that allows for the re-entry of girls who have dropped out due to pregnancy, emphasizing the importance of giving these girls a second chance to continue their education (GES, 2021).

In Ghana, various community-based organizations and NGOs work on sensitization programs for these teenage mothers. These programs aim to change attitudes and

perceptions within communities regarding girls who re-enter school after dropping out. They emphasize the importance of girls' education and the positive impact it can have on their lives and communities, aiming to reduce the stigmatization of returning girls (Plan International Ghana, 2020).

Stigmatization as a significant barrier to girls' re-entry into senior high school and their overall educational attainment is a problem in Kwahu Afram Plains North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The government, in collaboration with NGOs and community-based organizations, is actively working to combat this stigma through policies, sensitization programs, peer support, and family engagement. The researcher aims to create a supportive and inclusive educational environment where girls can feel encouraged and empowered to continue their education, regardless of any previous interruptions.

#### **2.2.5 Personal identity challenges**

Teenage pregnancy disrupts the normal identity development process, forcing young mothers to take on adult responsibilities prematurely. Many teenage mothers struggle with a loss of personal freedom, as they must prioritize childcare over social and personal growth activities (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2019).

Identity confusion is also common among teenage mothers, as they must balance their roles as students, daughters, and caregivers simultaneously. This conflict often leads to difficulties in forming a stable sense of self, making it challenging for them to set long-term goals or envision a clear future (Grotevant, 2020).

Teenage mothers experience identity conflicts, as they are expected to navigate dual roles as students and parents. According to Ellis-Sloan and Tamplin (2018), many teenage mothers struggle with a sense of lost youth, as they are unable to participate in social activities like their peers. Teenage mothers experience conflicts in their personal identity,

as they struggle to balance being a student and a parent. Many feel a loss of their former teenage life, leading to a sense of detachment from their peers. The responsibility of caring for a child while navigating academic and social expectations forces them to mature faster than their classmates.

Additionally, some teenage mothers develop self-doubt about their future aspirations, questioning whether they can complete their education and achieve their goals. This identity crisis affects their confidence and long-term motivation. Teenage mothers experience identity conflicts, as they are expected to navigate dual roles as students and parents. According to Ellis-Sloan and Tamplin (2018), many teenage mothers struggle with a sense of lost youth, as they are unable to participate in social activities like their peers. A study by Dzomeku et al. (2020) found that teenage mothers often feel conflicted about their aspirations, as motherhood responsibilities make it difficult for them to focus on career goals. This identity struggle leads to low self-esteem, reduced academic ambitions, and in some cases, school dropout.

#### **2.2.6 Low self-esteem**

Teenage mothers frequently experience low self-esteem due to the various challenges they face. The stigma associated with teenage pregnancy, coupled with academic struggles and financial instability, often leads to feelings of inadequacy and low self-worth (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018).

Studies show that teenage mothers who lack a strong support system are more likely to struggle with self-confidence issues, making it difficult for them to pursue opportunities for personal and professional growth (UNFPA, 2021). Low self-esteem can also impact their parenting abilities, as self-doubt may hinder their ability to provide effective care and guidance for their children.

According to Smith (2020), low self-esteem is defined as “a pervasive and enduring negative evaluation of oneself, encompassing feelings of incompetence, unworthiness, and a lack of confidence in one’s abilities. Low self-esteem refers to a person’s negative perception of their self-worth, abilities, and overall value. Individuals with low self-esteem often have a diminished sense of self-confidence and may harbour self-critical thoughts and feelings. This condition can have a significant impact on a person’s mental and emotional well-being.

Low self-esteem is described as “a person’s negative perception of their self-worth, abilities, and overall value” (Smith, 2022,). Individuals experiencing low self-esteem often struggle with “a diminished sense of self-confidence and may harbour self-critical thoughts and feelings” (Smith, 2022,). This condition is acknowledged to have “a significant impact on a person’s mental and emotional well-being” (Smith, 2022,).

Low self-esteem is a significant concern for teenage girls re-entering school after giving birth. These girls often face unique challenges that can impact their self-worth and self-perception. Understanding the factors contributing to low self-esteem and potential interventions is essential for supporting their educational and emotional well-being. Stigmatization is a common experience for teenage mothers re-entering school, and it can significantly affect their self-esteem. Wendy Luttrell’s research, as mentioned earlier, underscores how societal stereotypes and judgments about teenage pregnancy can lead to low self-esteem among these girls (Luttrell, 2003).

Scholars like Laura M. Bogart have examined the relationship between body image and self-esteem among teenage mothers. Bogart’s work highlights that the physical changes associated with pregnancy and childbirth can impact girls’ body image, which, in turn, affects their self-esteem (Bogart et al., 2005). Parenting stress is another factor that can

contribute to low self-esteem among teenage mothers. Research by Rachel M. Kimbro and Jennifer Augustine suggests that the challenges of parenting while attending school can lead to increased stress, which in turn can negatively impact self-esteem (Kimbro & Augustine, 2008).

Scholars have emphasized the role of support systems in mitigating low self-esteem among teenage mothers. Judith S. Musick's work highlights the importance of family and community support in boosting self-esteem and helping these girls regain their confidence (Musick, 2009). Researchers like Karen B. Ersche have explored the effectiveness of intervention programs aimed at improving self-esteem among teenage mothers. These programs often incorporate counselling, mentoring, and skill-building to help girls develop a more positive self-concept (Ersche et al., 2013).

Low self-esteem among teenage girls can indeed be a significant factor contributing to their re-entry into senior high school (SHS/SHTS). Feelings of inadequacy or a lack of self-confidence can impact their motivation to continue their education. Different countries recognize the importance of addressing low self-esteem among teenage girls and have implemented various strategies to support their re-entry into SHS/SHTS. (Kenya, 2020).

Globally, organizations such as UNICEF and UNESCO emphasize the importance of addressing self-esteem and self-confidence issues among girls. They advocate for the inclusion of psychosocial support and mentoring programs in education systems to help girls build self-esteem and overcome personal challenges that may have led to re-entry into SHS (UNICEF, 2021). In the United States, low self-esteem is recognized as a challenge that can affect educational outcomes for teenage girls. Schools and organizations often provide mentoring programs and counselling services aimed at boosting self-confidence

and self-worth. These initiatives empower girls to overcome self-doubt and pursue their education with confidence (National Women's Law Centre, 2020).

In South Africa, self-esteem issues can be especially pronounced among marginalized girls. The government, through its Department of Basic Education, implements programs that focus on building self-confidence and self-worth. These initiatives aim to empower girls from disadvantaged backgrounds and create a supportive environment for their education (Department of Basic Education, South Africa, 2020).

In Kenya, self-esteem issues are recognized as a barrier to girls' education. NGOs like the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Kenya focusses on mentoring and empowerment programs. These initiatives provide girls with the confidence and self-assurance needed to re-enter the education system and succeed in their studies (FAWE). In Ghana, schools and organizations recognize the importance of addressing low self-esteem among teenage mothers. Many institutions have implemented mentoring and counselling programs that focus on building self-confidence and self-worth. These initiatives provide girls with guidance and emotional support, helping them overcome self-doubt and feel more empowered to continue their education (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2021).

NGOs and community-based organizations in Ghana are actively involved in girls' empowerment programs. These initiatives aim to boost the self-esteem of girls by providing them with life skills, leadership training, and opportunities to engage in activities that build their self-confidence. These efforts empower girls to overcome personal challenges and re-enter SHS/SHTS with a sense of self-worth (Camfed, 2020).

In Ghana, there is growing recognition of the role parents and families play in boosting the self-esteem of teenage mothers. Educational institutions and NGOs often engage parents in

workshops and awareness campaigns that emphasize the importance of providing emotional support to their daughters. By involving families, these initiatives aim to create a positive and encouraging environment for girls (UNESCO, 2021). Peer support groups are increasingly common in Ghanaian schools. These groups provide a safe and nurturing space for girls to share their experiences, discuss challenges, and provide mutual support. By connecting with peers who face similar issues, girls can build self-esteem and resilience, which can help them re-enter SHS/SHTS (World Bank, 2020). Advocacy campaigns in Ghana use various media channels to raise awareness about the importance of girls' self-esteem and self-confidence. These campaigns share success stories of girls who have overcome low self-esteem and self-doubt, serving as inspirational examples for others (Plan International Ghana, 2021).

Teenage moms' poor self-esteem is a significant obstacle to their re-entry into senior high school in Ghana's Kwahu Afram Plains North District. The government, in collaboration with NGOs, educational institutions, and community-based organizations, employs various strategies to raise awareness, provide emotional support, and empower girls to overcome self-doubt. The researcher is also making efforts to ensure that girls have the self-confidence and self-worth necessary to pursue their education with determination and success, ultimately contributing to greater gender equality in Ghana's education system

Teenage mothers face multifaceted challenges that impact their education, financial stability, emotional well-being, social standing, personal identity, and self-esteem. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that includes supportive educational policies, financial assistance programs, psychological counseling, and community awareness initiatives. By providing adequate support systems, society can help

teenage mothers overcome these difficulties and achieve a better quality of life for both themselves and their children.

### **2.3 Factors Motivating Teenage Mothers.**

Teenage pregnancy is a significant issue worldwide, with approximately 11% of births occurring among adolescents aged 15-19 (World Health Organization, 2020). In Ghana, the teenage pregnancy rate is estimated to be around 14.2% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020). One of the consequences of teenage pregnancy is the disruption of education, particularly for girls. However, some teenage mothers are motivated to re-enter Senior High School (SHS), and this study aims to explore the factors motivating their re-entry.

Research has identified several factors that motivate teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School (SHS), Drive to Return to School, Role Model, and Financial/Scholarships Support.

Despite the challenges teenage mothers faces, various factors motivate them to return to school. Research suggests that drive for returning to school, role model, personal aspirations, family encouragement, and policy interventions play significant roles in their decision (Nash, 2017). Some teenage mothers are driven by the desire for economic independence and improved future prospects (Panday et al., 2009). Support from parents, guardians, or partners can also be crucial in ensuring a teenage mother's return to school (Grant & Hallman, 2008). Government policies, such as the re-entry programs in several African countries, have been instrumental in encouraging teenage mothers to resume their education (Muganda-Onyando & Omondi, 2008). In the Kwahu Afram-Plains North District, an exploration of these factors can provide insights into how motivation varies based on cultural and socio-economic contexts.

### 2.3.1 Drive to return to school

The drive to return to school is a significant motivator for teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School (SHS), drive is often fueled by a desire to improve their socio-economic status, provide a better life for their children, and regain a sense of purpose and identity (Langa, 2015). Teenage mothers who have a strong desire to return to school are more likely to overcome the challenges associated with re-entry, such as stigma, lack of support, and financial constraints (Macleod, 2014).

Studies have shown that teenage mothers who return to school tend to have higher self-esteem, better academic performance, and improved socio-economic outcomes compared to those who do not return to school (Kabiru et al., 2013). Furthermore, returning to school can provide teenage mothers with a sense of normalcy and routine, which can be beneficial for their mental health and well-being (Makiwane et al., 2018).

### 2.3.2 Role model

A role model is an individual who serves as an example or inspiration for others. Role models can provide guidance, support, and motivation, helping individuals to overcome challenges and achieve their goals (Bandura, 1977).

Having a role model can also motivate teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School (SHS). A role model can be a family member, teacher, or mentor who provides guidance, support, and encouragement (Kabiru et al., 2013). Teenage mothers who have a positive role model are more likely to develop a growth mindset, build resilience, and overcome obstacles to achieve their educational goals (Makiwane et al., 2018).

Research has shown that role models can play a significant role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of teenage mothers (Langa, 2015). Positive role models can provide teenage mothers with a sense of hope and inspiration, encouraging them to pursue their educational goals despite the challenges they may face (Macleod, 2014). **A Family Member:** A family

member who has overcome similar challenges can serve as a role model, providing inspiration and motivation for teenage mothers to return to school (Makiwane et al., 2018).

**A Teacher or Mentor:** A supportive teacher or mentor can provide guidance, encouragement, and motivation for teenage mothers to re-enter SHS (Langa, 2015).

**A Peer or Friend:** A peer or friend who has successfully balanced motherhood and education can serve as a role model, providing motivation and support for teenage mothers to return to school (Kabiru et al., 2013).

Family members can play a significant role in serving as role models for teenage mothers. Effective role models should possess characteristics such as empathy, positive attitude, good communication skills, and consistency. Having a family member as a role model can have a significant impact on teenage mothers, including increased motivation, improved self-esteem, better parenting skills, and increased resilience.

### **2.3.3 Financial/Scholarships support**

Financial or scholarships support is another significant motivator for teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School (SHS). Financial constraints are a major barrier to education for many teenage mothers, and access to financial support or scholarships can help alleviate this burden (Langa, 2015). Financial support can also provide teenage mothers with the opportunity to focus on their studies, rather than worrying about how to support themselves and their children (Macleod, 2014).

Studies have shown that financial support can have a positive impact on the educational outcomes of teenage mothers (Kabiru et al., 2013). Financial support can provide teenage mothers with the resources they need to succeed academically, including textbooks, school fees, and childcare support (Makiwane et al., 2018).

In conclusion, the experiences of teenage mother re-entry into Senior High School (SHS), are complex and multifaceted. The factors motivating teenage mother re-entry into SHS, including Drive to Return to School, Role Model, and Financial/Scholarships Support, play a significant role in shaping their educational outcomes. Understanding these factors can help policymakers, educators, and practitioners develop targeted interventions to support teenage mothers in their pursuit of education.

## **2.4 Support Systems Accessible**

The availability of support systems significantly impacts the reintegration of teenage mothers into the education system. Institutional support, including flexible school policies, mentorship programs, and daycare facilities, can ease the transition back to school (Kyei, 2012). Psychological counseling and peer support groups have also been identified as crucial components in ensuring the well-being of teenage mothers (Jewkes et al., 2009). In some contexts, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based groups provide material support such as scholarships, food assistance, and childcare services (Panday et al., 2009). Evaluating the existing support structures in the Kwahu Afram-Plains North District will help identify gaps and recommend policies that enhance accessibility for teenage mothers.

### **2.4.1 Institutional support**

Schools and educational institutions are often at the forefront of implementing support strategies. They recognize that creating an inclusive and supportive environment is essential for girls to thrive. Schools may offer flexible schedules, access to counseling services, and extracurricular activities that foster personal development and encourage re-entry (Plan International, 2021).

Alumni of educational institutions also play a significant role in supporting teenage girls' re-entry into SHS. They establish scholarship programs, offer mentorship, or provide resources to help girls access education. Alumni networks understand the transformative power of education and want to pay it forward (Girls' Education Unit, Ghana, 2020). NGOs and educational institutions in Ghana often provide psychosocial support services and counselling to teenage mothers. These services help them cope with emotional distress and provide guidance on how to navigate community challenges and stigma, making their re-entry into SHS/SHTS more feasible (UNICEF Ghana, 2020).

Ghana has legal provisions that protect the rights of teenage mothers to education. The Children's Act of 1998 emphasizes the importance of children's welfare, including their access to education. Advocacy groups use legal frameworks like these to advocate for the rights of teenage mothers facing community rejection (Children's Act, Ghana, 1998). Advocacy initiatives in Ghana involve community leaders and elders in the process of re-integrating teen mothers into the education system. By gaining the support of respected community members, these programs work to foster an environment of acceptance for teen mothers seeking to re-enter SHS/SHTS (Plan International Ghana, 2021).

#### **2.4.2 Support from families and friends**

Parents and families of teenage girls are crucial stakeholders in support strategies. They view education as a pathway to a better future for their daughters and actively seek resources and opportunities to facilitate their re-entry into Senior High School. Parents may engage in income-generating activities or participate in parent-teacher associations to support their daughters' education (World Bank, 2020).

The level of support from parents and family significantly impacts a teenage mother's ability to return to school. Some families, due to cultural beliefs and economic constraints,

may discourage young mothers from continuing their education (Panday et al., 2009). Conversely, supportive families can provide financial aid, emotional encouragement, and childcare assistance, enabling teenage mothers to persist in their studies.

Peer groups of girls in the same situation can provide invaluable support. These groups offer a sense of belonging and understanding, making it easier for girls to navigate the challenges of re-entering Senior High School. Peer support can include sharing experiences, study groups, and encouragement to persevere (Camfed, 2020).

Also, peer support and study groups are common in Ghanaian schools. These groups encourage girls to collaborate with their peers in managing their time and completing assignments. Through group discussions and study sessions, girls can learn from each other and develop better time management skills (World Bank, 2020).

Rejection is the emotional or social act of excluding or distancing oneself from another individual or group, often resulting in feelings of hurt, isolation, or inadequacy (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The rejection of teenage girls by their families can be understood as a distressing social issue that occurs in various cultural contexts. It involves situations where families either emotionally or physically distance themselves from their teenage daughters, often due to differences in beliefs, values, or expectations. This rejection can have profound and long-lasting effects on the mental and emotional well-being of these young girls.

The rejection of teenage girls by their families can be a significant cause of their re-entry into senior high school (SHS/SHTS). In many countries, family dynamics and societal norms can lead to girls being pushed out of their homes or disowned due to various factors such as pregnancy, early marriage, or other perceived transgressions. On a global scale,

organizations like UNICEF and UNESCO advocate for the rights of teenage girls to education, even in the face of family rejection. They emphasize the importance of creating awareness, providing support services, and implementing policies that protect and empower girls who have been rejected by their families (UNICEF, 2021).

Advocacy efforts, both at the national and international levels, are working to change societal norms, raise awareness, and promote policies and programs that support these girls. The goal is to ensure that they are not abandoned or disowned by their families when they seek to continue their education, contributing to greater gender equality in education.

In India, family rejection or disownment of teenage mothers can be linked to early marriage or cultural norms. Organizations like Save the Children India engage in advocacy efforts to challenge these practices and raise awareness about the importance of girls' education. They work to change family attitudes and promote the acceptance of girls who wish to re-enter the education system (Save the Children India, 2020).

In an African context, the rejection of teenage mothers by their families can be rooted in various cultural, social, and economic factors. While there may not be a single, universally accepted definition, the phenomenon is often characterized by the exclusion or abandonment of teenage girls by their families, leading to their emotional and sometimes physical isolation.

In Ghana, as in many other countries, the rejection of teenage mothers by their families can be a distressing issue and a barrier to their re-entry into senior high school (SHS/SHTS). Family dynamics, cultural norms, and economic pressures can sometimes lead to girls being disowned or unsupported in their pursuit of education.

Ghana recognizes family rejection as a significant issue that can hinder girls' re-entry into senior high school. The government, in collaboration with NGOs and community-based organizations, employs various strategies to raise awareness, change societal norms, and promote policies that support the acceptance and re-integration of girls who have faced family rejection. These efforts aim to ensure that girls are not left unsupported or disowned when they seek to continue their education, contributing to gender equality in Ghana's education system. The Ghana Education Service (GES) has implemented guidelines and policies that support the re-entry of pregnant and parenting girls into SHS/SHTS, emphasizing the importance of family acceptance (GES, 2020).

NGOs and community-based organizations in Ghana conduct sensitization programs that target parents and families. These programs aim to raise awareness about the benefits of girls' education and challenge traditional norms that may lead to family rejection. By engaging with families, these efforts seek to reduce the likelihood of girls being disowned (Plan International Ghana, 2020). Advocacy campaigns in Ghana use various media channels to raise awareness about the importance of family support for girls' education. These campaigns share success stories of girls who have overcome family rejection and serve as role models for others facing similar challenges (Citi FM, 2020).

### **2.4.3 Support from communities**

The community often plays a vital role in promoting support strategies for teenage girls in many countries. They recognize that supporting girls' education contributes to the overall development of the community. Community leaders may initiate scholarship programs, mentorship initiatives, or awareness campaigns to encourage girls to re-enter SHS and continue their education (UNESCO, 2020).

Religious and cultural leaders often influence community attitudes toward education. Many recognize the importance of supporting teenage girls in their educational pursuits and use their influence to advocate for support strategies. They may organize community discussions or events that emphasize the value of girls' education and the need for support (UNICEF, 2021).

Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups often work closely with communities to implement support strategies. They are instrumental in organizing awareness campaigns, advocating for policy changes, and mobilizing resources to assist teenage girls in re-entering SHS (Plan International Kenya, 2021).

The rejection of teenage mothers by their communities can be a significant barrier to their re-entry into senior high school (SHS/SHTS). Community attitudes and perceptions play a crucial role in shaping the experiences of teenage mothers who wish to continue their education.

Globally, organizations such as UNICEF and UNESCO advocate for the rights of teenage mothers to education. They emphasize the importance of creating awareness, providing psychosocial support, and implementing policies and programs that protect and empower teenage mothers facing community rejection (UNICEF, 2021).

South Africa acknowledges that teenage mothers often face community rejection, stigma, and discrimination. The government, through its Department of Basic Education, has implemented policies to ensure that these girls are not excluded from education due to community attitudes. These policies aim to create a supportive environment that encourages community acceptance of teenage mothers re-entering SHS/SHTS (Department of Basic Education, South Africa, 2020).

Nigeria recognizes the issue of community rejection of teenage mothers, especially those who face early pregnancy. NGOs like Girls' Power Initiative (GPI) Nigeria work to create awareness and offer support to these girls. GPI Nigeria provides psychosocial support and empowerment programs that help teen mothers regain their confidence and integrate into their communities. Teenage mom rejection by the community is acknowledged as a problem in Kenya. Teenage moms' rights and educational opportunities are promoted by the Center for the Study of Adolescence (CSA) in collaboration with the Kenyan government. They emphasize that young moms should not be denied the opportunity to receive an education and strive to alter societal perceptions and foster acceptance (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, Kenya, 2021) including returning to school (Girls' Power Initiative, Nigeria, 2020).

In Ghana, the Ghanaian government acknowledges the challenges faced by teenage mothers and the role of community attitudes in their re-entry into SHS/SHTS. Government policies aim to create a supportive environment for these girls to continue their education. The Ghana Education Service (GES) has guidelines and policies that allow for the re-entry of teenage mothers into SHS, emphasizing that community acceptance is crucial (GES, 2020).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations in Ghana conduct sensitization programs that target community members, including opinion leaders and parents. These programs seek to change community attitudes and raise awareness about the importance of girls' education, even for teenage mothers. By engaging with communities, these efforts aim to reduce community rejection (Plan International Ghana, 2020).

Advocacy campaigns in Ghana use various media channels to raise awareness about the rights of teen mothers to education and challenge community stigmatization. These campaigns share success stories of teen mothers who have overcome community rejection and serve as role models for others in similar situations (Citi FM, 2020).

In Kwahu Afram Plains District of the Eastern Region of Ghana, rejection of teenage mothers by their communities is a recognized issue in many other countries, and it is significantly impacting their re-entry into senior high school. Advocacy efforts, both at the national and international levels, seek to change societal norms, raise awareness, and promote policies and programs that support these young mothers. The goal of the researcher is to ensure that they are not isolated or stigmatized by their communities when they seek to continue their education, ultimately contributing to greater gender equality in education.

#### **2.4.4 Financial assistance/scholarships**

Financial support is a crucial element of serving teenage mothers re-enter and succeed in school. Scholarships specifically designed for teenage mothers, as well as need-based grants can alleviate the financial burden associated with education and childcare costs.

Teenage Mothers' capacity to pursue further education is significantly impacted by the availability (or lack thereof) of financial aid and scholarships. These scholarships can alleviate some of their financial burdens, allowing them to focus on their studies without the constant worry of financial strain.

The disparity in access to financial assistance among teenage mothers implies that not all young mothers have equal opportunities to secure the financial resources they need to stay in school. In Ghana legal provisions that protect the rights of teenage mothers to education

is the children's Act of 1998 emphasizes the importance of children's welfare, including their access to education. Advocacy groups use legal frameworks like these to advocate for the rights of teenage mothers facing community rejection (Children's Act, Ghana, 1998). Which highlights the need for expanded access to scholarships and financial aid programs that target teenage mothers, as financial barriers are a significant obstacle to their education. Schools, local governments, and community organizations should collaborate to create more scholarship opportunities and raise awareness about existing financial aid programs. Without financial assistance, many teenage mothers may struggle to continue their education, highlighting the critical role that financial support plays in their academic journey.

Additionally, schools can provide information about and access to community resources and financial aid programs that support teenage mothers. Studies by National Women's Law Centre (2020) advocacy organizations like the National Women's Law Centre work to raise awareness about the rights of pregnant and parenting girls and provide resources for schools to support their re-entry and educational success.

In the United States, various individuals and organizations recognize the importance of support strategies and interventions for teenage girls re-entering education. Scholarships and financial aid programs are commonly provided to help girls overcome financial barriers. Mentoring programs, often initiated by community members and educational institutions, offer guidance and emotional support, enabling girls to navigate the challenges of re-entering school (National Women's Law Center, 2020).

## **2.5 Strategies and Interventions for Managing Schooling and Childcare Workloads**

Support strategies and interventions for teenage girls are crucial for facilitating their re-entry into Senior High School (SHS) after facing various challenges or interruptions in

their education. These strategies and interventions can include time management and planning for childcare and workloads, academic and professional support, financial support, advocacy for girls, emotional and psychological counselling, mentorship, and community engagement.

Globally, the United Nations and international organizations emphasize the need for comprehensive support strategies and interventions for girls re-entering education. They advocate for policies that address financial barriers, provide mentorship, and ensure girls receive the necessary psychosocial support to thrive in the education system. Support strategies are viewed as a fundamental component of promoting gender equality in education (UNICEF, 2021)

### **2.5.1 Academic and professional support**

Balancing academic responsibilities with childcare is one of the most difficult aspects of being a teenage mother in school. Research highlights that time management skills, social support networks, advocacy for girls and institutional flexibility are essential in managing this dual responsibility (Molosiwa & Moswela, 2012). Schools that implement flexible schedules, provide on-campus childcare, and integrate parental education programs create a more accommodating learning environment for teenage mothers (Runhare & Vandeyar, 2011). Furthermore, community-based interventions such as subsidized daycare centers and family support initiatives have proven effective in other regions (Kyei, 2012). Understanding how teenage mothers in the Kwahu Afram-Plains North District navigate these challenges can inform the development of more effective interventions to support them.

In South Africa, support strategies and interventions are viewed as essential for girls facing various barriers to education. Government agencies, NGOs, and community leaders

actively promote support programs such as bursaries and mentorship initiatives. These strategies help girls overcome financial constraints and build the confidence they need to re-enter SHS (Department of Basic Education, South Africa, 2020).

In India, there is a growing recognition of the significance of support strategies and interventions for girls who wish to re-enter education. NGOs and community-based organizations often offer scholarships, vocational training, and counseling services to empower girls. These initiatives are seen as a way to address challenges and provide girls with the necessary support to re-enter SHS (Save the Children India, 2020).

Kenya places great importance on support strategies and interventions for teenage girls re-entering education. Organizations like the Centre for the Study of Adolescence (CSA) partner with government agencies to provide financial support, mentorship, and psychosocial services. These strategies and interventions are seen as vital in enabling girls to overcome barriers and successfully return to school (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, Kenya, 2021).

Schools and educational institutions in Ghana frequently provide counselling and mentorship programs that encompass time management training. These programs offer guidance on how to prioritize tasks, set goals, and allocate study time effectively. Such support helps girls re-entering SHS adapt to the demands of their education (UNICEF Ghana, 2020).

Many individuals, including teachers, parents, and community members, view support strategies and interventions as a way to empower teenage girls. They understand that these strategies and interventions can provide girls with the resources, guidance, and emotional support needed to overcome obstacles and achieve their educational goals. Also,

individuals often actively participate in community-based support programs and mentorship initiatives (Plan International, 2020).

### **2.5.2 Time management/planning for workloads and childcare**

Time management is a valuable skill that helps individuals optimize their work and personal lives. Planning, arranging, and setting priorities for tasks and activities in order to maximize productivity and minimize waste of time is known as time management. It entails establishing objectives, delegating time to different jobs, and putting techniques into practice to reduce distractions and boost output. Time management is a critical aspect of teenage girls' lives, especially for those re-entering school after giving birth. Scholars have explored the challenges these girls face in balancing their educational pursuits with parenting responsibilities. Understanding their experiences and time management strategies is crucial to supporting their academic success and overall well-being.

Scholars like Sylvia Chant have highlighted the importance of understanding how teenage mothers balance school and parenthood. Chant's work emphasizes that managing time effectively is central to the success of these girls, as they juggle the demands of both education and childcare (Chant, 2016).

Research conducted by Angela L. Dye and Katherine M. Hensley has focused on the strategies teenage mothers employ for time management. Their study found that these girls often rely on organizational skills, support networks, and flexibility in scheduling to effectively manage their time between school and parenting (Dye & Hensley, 2019).

Scholars have emphasized the role of support systems in helping teenage mothers manage their time. Mary E. Haskett's research underscores the significance of supportive family, school, and community networks in facilitating effective time management and reducing the stress associated with re-entering school after childbirth (Haskett et al., 2009). Scholars

have also examined the role of educational policy and support programs in facilitating time management for teenage mothers. Leslie S. Kaplan's work highlights the importance of policies that provide flexible scheduling, childcare assistance, and academic support to help these girls effectively manage their time and succeed in school (Kaplan, 2005).

Internationally, organizations like UNESCO and UNICEF advocate for the inclusion of time management skills in education. They emphasize the need for schools to provide students, especially those who have faced interruptions, with the tools to manage their time efficiently. These organizations recognize that time management is a fundamental skill for academic success (UNESCO, 2021).

In the United States, time management is considered a crucial skill for students, including teenage girls re-entering education. Schools often offer workshops and support services to help students improve their time management skills. These programs provide strategies for effective planning, setting priorities, and managing study time, helping girls re-enter SHS/SHTS successfully (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2020).

In Kenya, time management is viewed as essential for teenage girls who wish to re-enter SHS. Schools and organizations often provide mentoring and coaching programs that include time management training. These programs equip girls with the skills they need to juggle their studies with other commitments, contributing to their academic success (Plan International Kenya, 2021).

In Ghana, as in many other countries, the importance of time management for teenage girls re-entering senior high school (SHS/SHTS) is recognized as a critical factor in their academic success. Effective time management skills enable these girls to balance their educational commitments with other responsibilities. The Ghanaian education system recognizes the significance of time management. Time management skills are often

integrated into the curriculum, helping students, including girls re-entering SHS, develop the ability to manage their study time efficiently (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2021).

Awareness campaigns in Ghana emphasize the importance of time management for educational success. These campaigns, often organized by NGOs and educational authorities, aim to motivate girls to take control of their time effectively and maximize their learning opportunities (Plan International Ghana, 2021).

In Kwahu Afram Plains North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana, which is a farming and fishing community, time management is a vital skill for teenage mothers re-entering SHS, enabling them to balance their educational pursuits with other responsibilities. The education system, along with governmental and non-governmental organizations, incorporates time management training into various aspects of girls' education, including the curriculum, counselling, and support programs. The researcher also wants to put interventions in place to equip girls with the tool they need to succeed academically and manage their time effectively, contributing to their educational achievement and personal development.

### **2.5.3 Emotional and psychological counselling**

Individual and group counselling sessions can address the emotional and psychological challenges faced by teenage mothers. These sessions provide a safe space for them to express their feelings, discuss their struggles, and receive professional guidance. Group counselling, in particular, allows teenage mothers to connect with peers and provides a safe space to share similar experiences, reducing feelings of isolation and build a support network. Professional counselling and therapy services also provide emotional support and equip them with coping mechanisms. These services include individual counselling that

helps teenage mothers process emotions and develop self-confidence, crisis intervention services address immediate psychological needs during high-stress periods.

Many teenage mothers experience stigma, anxiety, and stress due to the dual pressures of education and motherhood. Counseling services provided by schools offer emotional support, teaching teenage mothers coping mechanisms to manage these pressures (Allen & Morgan, 2020).

Counselling plays a crucial role in supporting teenage mothers as they navigate the challenges of re-entering school after childbirth. These young women often face a myriad of emotional and practical obstacles, including feelings of guilt, anxiety about academic performance, and concerns about balancing parenting responsibilities with schoolwork (Smith, 2020). Counselling services tailored to their needs can provide a safe space for them to explore these emotions, develop coping strategies, and set realistic goals for their educational journey (Johnson & R Chards, 2019). Additionally, counselors can help teenage mothers build self-esteem and resilience, addressing any stigma or negative perceptions they may encounter within the school community. By fostering a supportive and understanding environment, counselling can empower teenage mothers to overcome barriers and thrive academically (Williams, 2021). Counseling services also offer teenage mothers' strategies to manage stress and build resilience, which are crucial for maintaining their emotional stability while balancing academic and parenting roles. Access to school counselors plays a pivotal role in supporting both their emotional and academic well-being.

Peer support groups and mentorship programs can complement individual counselling sessions, providing additional sources of encouragement and advice from others who have faced similar experiences (Rafkin et al., 2017). Overall, integrating comprehensive counselling support into school programs for teenage mothers not only enhances their

academic success but also promotes their overall well-being and personal development (Blum et al., 2022). According to Kumar and Davis (2021), peer support groups and mentorship on emotional resilience further contribute by creating safe spaces for teenage mothers to share their experiences, learn from one another, and build a sense of community.

Access to these interventions help teenage mothers maintain emotional stability and focus on their studies despite societal judgment and internal struggles (Lopez et al., 2019). Mentorship programs have proven invaluable that is mentors not only provide emotional support but also serve as role models, offering practical advice and encouragement to help teenage mothers stay motivated. Academic advisors further enhance this support system by helping teenage mothers plan their course load in a way that aligns with their capacity and personal circumstances. The provision of emotional and psychological counseling has far-reaching implications for the well-being and success of teenage mothers. By addressing their mental health needs, school's foster resilience, reduce dropout rates, and improve academic engagement. Peer support groups and emotional resilience workshops also encourage teenage mothers to form networks that provide ongoing encouragement and practical advice. To maximize the benefits, schools must expand access to counseling services and ensure that trained professionals are available to offer personalized support.

Counseling services and peer support groups are essential interventions that help teenage mothers manage the stigma and emotional stress associated with re-entering school. These programs equip them with coping strategies to balance the demands of academics and parenting while reducing the psychological burden of societal judgment.

#### **2.5.4 Advocacy groups**

Advocacy refers to the act of speaking, writing, or acting in support of a cause, idea, or group of people to promote change, raise awareness, or influence public opinion and policies. Advocacy can take various forms, including lobbying, public speaking, organizing campaigns, and using various media to convey a message.

Michelle Fine has researched advocacy against gender-based violence, emphasizing the need to create safe spaces and support systems for teenage mothers who may experience various forms of violence. Fine's work highlights the importance of survivor-centered advocacy (Fine, 2018). Advocacy for teenage mothers often includes promoting their active participation and empowerment. Researchers like Jessica Taft have explored youth-led advocacy initiatives, which provide girls with opportunities to engage in social and political change processes (Taft, 2014).

Chant (2016) examined policy advocacy efforts aimed at addressing issues like poverty and inequality that disproportionately affect teenage mothers. Effective policy advocacy can create systemic changes to improve the lives of girls. Kuhlmann (2015) focused on advocacy for teenage mothers' health and reproductive rights. They emphasize the significance of providing comprehensive sex education and access to healthcare services that respect the autonomy and choices of adolescent girls.

Globally, advocacy organizations such as UNICEF and UNESCO promote the re-entry of teenage mothers into education after childbirth. They emphasize the importance of providing comprehensive support to ensure that girls can continue their education and achieve their full potential. These organizations advocate for policies and programs that address the challenges and barriers faced by pregnant and parenting girls (UNICEF, 2021).

In the United States, advocacy for pregnant and parenting teenage mothers has been ongoing for several decades. Federal laws such as Title IX ensure that pregnant and parenting girls have equal access to education. Advocacy organizations like the National Women's Law Centre work to raise awareness about the rights of pregnant and parenting girls and provide resources for schools to support their re-entry and educational success (National Women's Law Centre, 2020).

In Africa, advocacy for teenage mothers is crucial to address the unique challenges and vulnerabilities they face. It involves raising awareness, promoting policies, and implementing programs that empower and protect the rights of teenage girls across the continent. Advocacy efforts should focus on ensuring that teenage mothers have equal access to quality education. This includes addressing barriers such as gender-based violence, early marriages, and economic constraints that often hinder girls' education in Africa (UNICEF, 2020). Advocacy should emphasize the importance of sexual and reproductive health rights for teenage mothers. Organizations like the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provide support for comprehensive sexual education and reproductive health services for girls (UNFPA, 2021).

The rate of teenage pregnancy remains unacceptably high worldwide, but mostly in countries of the developing world. In Rwanda, studies of the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda show a rapid increase in teenage pregnancy over the past two decades despite the country's achievements in the field of women's empowerment, and efforts to curtail child sexual abuse. Indeed, data from this institution indicate teenage pregnancy aged 19 years old and under is increasing in 2017 it was 17337, 27%, 2018 was 19817, 30%, 2019 was 23622, 36%, and Jan to March 2020 is 4377, 7%.

In Kenya, advocacy efforts focus on the re-entry of girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy. Organizations such as the Centre for the Study of Adolescence (CSA) collaborate with the government to advocate for policies that support the re-entry of pregnant and parenting girls. These efforts are essential in reducing the challenges faced by girls when returning to school (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, Kenya, 2021).

In Ghana, advocacy for teenage mothers who drop out of school due to pregnancy and the challenges they encounter when re-entering senior high school (SHS/SHTS) is an important focus for various stakeholders. The Ghanaian government has shown a commitment to supporting pregnant and parenting teenage mothers in their educational pursuits. The Ghana Education Service (GES) has implemented policies and guidelines that promote the re-entry of pregnant and parenting girls into SHS. These policies emphasize the importance of providing a second chance for these girls to continue their education (GES, 2020).

### **2.5.5 Re-entry policy implementation**

In 2016, the Ghanaian government introduced a re-entry policy that advocated for the readmission of girls who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy after giving birth. This policy was a response to the growing problem of pregnant school girls and related issues, which are not unique to Ghana. Prior to this, advocacy groups had pressed for the introduction of such a policy. Under this re-entry policy, pregnant girls were allowed to take leave and go on maternity leave, after which they could continue with their education. The policy was implemented by the Ghana Education Service (GES) and was in line with the government's commitment to the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy, which guarantees the right to free compulsory education for every Ghanaian child.

The implementation of the re-entry policy aimed at addressing the challenges of school dropouts, with teenage pregnancy being a significant factor, accounting for up to 30% of school dropouts among girls in Ghana. As of 2020, there were over 192,500 school dropouts in Ghana, with over 102,000 being girls. Nevertheless, there were several difficulties in putting the re-entry policy into practice. According to a COVID-19 School Reopening study from Africa Education Watch, which monitored the partial reopening of schools for finalists, 20% of schools reported that between one and three females did not return to school as a result of adolescent pregnancy and migration. This implies that more work has to be done to address the issue of adolescent pregnancy among Ghanaian schoolgirls and to successfully implement the re-entry policy. With rates twice as high as those in England, Wales, and Canada and nine times higher than those in the Netherlands and Japan, the United States of America has one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the developed world. The following are some important conclusions from US studies on adolescent parenting and education:

The fastest-growing group of parents were girls between the ages of 10 and 14, who had a hard time adjusting to life after giving birth. For the youngest age group (10–14 years old), the birth rate dropped to 0.9. The decline in teen births over the past three decades is likely due to changing economic and societal contexts

NGOs in Ghana, such as Camfed Ghana and Plan International Ghana, actively advocate for the rights and educational opportunities of pregnant and parenting teenage girls. These organizations work to raise awareness about the challenges faced by these girls and collaborate with local communities and educational authorities to create supportive environments for their re-entry into SHS/SHTS (Camfed, 2020).

Advocacy efforts in Kwahu Afram Plains North District of the Eastern Region Ghana is often involve awareness campaigns that target communities, parents, and school authorities. These campaigns aim to challenge stereotypes and reduce the stigma associated with teenage pregnancy and re-entry into education. They emphasize that every girl has the right to education, regardless of her life circumstances (Plan International Ghana, 2021).

In conclusion, both countries and individuals recognize the importance of support strategies for teenage girls re-entering SHS. These strategies are viewed as essential tools for addressing various challenges and barriers, including financial constraints, lack of confidence, and psychosocial difficulties. By providing comprehensive support, it becomes possible to empower girls to successfully re-enter and excel in the education system, contributing to their personal development and broader goals of gender equality in education.

## **2.6 Theoretical Framework**

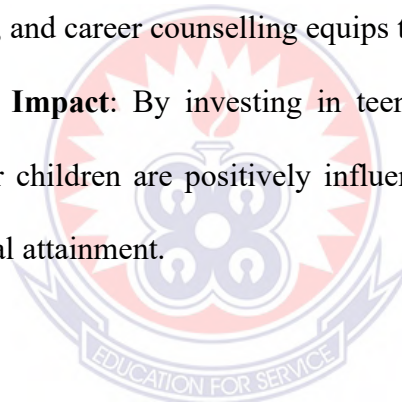
Three theories underpinned the study. These are Human capital theory, Resilience Theory and Ecological Systems Theory.

### **2.6.1 Human capital theory**

The proponent Becker, (1964) is widely regarded as the father of Human Capital Theory. Human Capital Theory is an economic framework that treats education and training as investments in human beings, similar to investments in physical capital such as machinery or infrastructure. The theory suggests that individuals can enhance their productivity and earning potential through investments in education, training, and health. Also, the theory is opted for the study because it suggests that economic factors, such as the cost of education and potential income gains, play a significant role in girls' decisions to re-enter school. Therefore, factors like poverty, financial constraints, and the opportunity cost of education

should be considered when analysing why girls may drop out and not re-enter. The theory emphasizes investing in individuals to increase their productivity and contributions to society. For teenage mothers:

- **Education as Investment:** Re-entering SHS allows them to acquire knowledge, skills, and qualifications that can improve their long-term earning potential and societal participation.
- **Economic Implications:** Supporting teenage mothers in completing their education reduces the likelihood of dependence on social welfare and increases their potential contributions to the economy.
- **Skill Development:** Providing tailored support like vocational training, flexible learning schedules, and career counselling equips them with marketable skills.
- **Intergenerational Impact:** By investing in teenage mothers, the education and well-being of their children are positively influenced, breaking cycles of poverty and low educational attainment.



### 2.6.2 Resilience theory

Resilience theory highlights the need to not just identify challenges but also amplify the strengths and support systems that help these mothers succeed. The theory focuses on how individuals adapt and thrive despite adversity. It is about the ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune (Ledesma, 2014) Garmezy, (2001) a pioneering psychologist, significantly contributed to the study of resilience in the 20th century. His work aimed to understand why some individuals demonstrate remarkable psychological resilience in the face of adversity, while others succumb to the challenges. Garmezy's resilience theory emphasized several key components that teenage mothers face unique challenges, including

**Challenges:** Balancing academic responsibilities with parenting, managing stigma, and overcoming financial constraints.

**Protective Factors:** Garmezy highlighted the importance of protective factors an individual, familial, or environmental aspects that shield individuals from the negative impact of stressors. These protective factors could be built through supportive networks (family, school counselors, peer groups), personal traits (self-motivation, adaptability), mentorship programs, flexible schedules, coping skills, and access to resources (Garmezy, 2001).

**Coping Mechanisms:** Teaching problem-solving skills, fostering self-efficacy, and promoting mental health services can enhance resilience in teenage mothers re-entering SHS.

**Stressors and Adversity:** Central to Garmezy's theory is the recognition that individuals encounter various stressors and adversities throughout their lives. These challenges can range from personal hardships to environmental stressors. Garmezy emphasized understanding how individuals navigate and overcome these difficulties.

**Individual Differences:** Garmezy acknowledged the role of individual differences in shaping resilience. Factors such as temperament, personality traits, and coping mechanisms were considered influential in determining how individuals respond to and cope with adversity.

**Developmental Context:** His theory incorporated a developmental perspective, recognizing that resilience is a dynamic process that evolves over the lifespan. Garmezy studied resilience in different age groups, emphasizing the changing nature of protective factors and stressors across various life stages.

**Longitudinal Research:** Garmezy conducted extensive longitudinal research, often focusing on high-risk populations, such as children facing socio-economic disadvantages or those with developmental challenges. His studies aimed to identify patterns of resilience and vulnerability over time.

**Outcome-oriented Approach:** Garmezy's approach was outcome-oriented, seeking to understand why certain individuals not only withstand adversity but also go on to thrive despite challenging circumstances. This perspective contributed to the positive psychology movement's emphasis on promoting well-being and optimal functioning.

Garmezy's resilience theory is highly relevant because Teenage Mothers often face numerous challenges, stressors, and adverse experiences while re-entering senior high school.

According to Ramzy (2016), resilience theory helps us understand how individuals can thrive despite significant adversity, making it pertinent to exploring how caregivers cope with their experiences. Garmezy's resilience theory also highlights the strengths, coping strategies, and personal resources that individuals draw upon in times of adversity (Hatton & Becker, 2011). For caregivers, this approach can shed light on the strategies they employ to manage the challenges they encounter in their role.

Garmezy's resilience theory offers a comprehensive perspective, considering multiple factors that contribute to resilience, such as personal attributes, external support systems, and the individual's environment (Hatton & Becker, 2011). This can be particularly beneficial when examining the complex context of caregiving and its various stressors among teenage mothers re-entering into senior high schools.

### 2.6.3 Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological Systems Theory (EST), is an ecological/system framework developed in 1979 by Bronfenbrenner (Harkonen, 2007), It offers a holistic perspective on human development, emphasizing interconnected environmental systems. Ecological Systems Theory provides a comprehensive lens for understanding Teenage Mothers' school re-entry experiences spanning individual, interpersonal, community, and societal factors). This theory emphasizes the influence of various environmental systems on an individual's development. Teenage mothers re-entering SHS are affected by multiple layers of their environment, including:

- **Microsystem:** (individual relationships), Immediate environments such as family, school, and peers. Supportive relationships with teachers, peers, and family members can significantly influence the success of teenage mothers.
- **Mesosystem:** (interactions between microsystems), Interactions between microsystems, such as the relationship between school and family. Coordination between schools and families can help address childcare, academic schedules, and emotional support needs.
- **Ecosystem:** (indirect influences), External systems that indirectly influence the individual, like policies on education for teenage mothers, availability of daycare, and access to healthcare.
- **Macrosystem:** (cultural values), Broader cultural and societal attitudes towards teenage motherhood and education. Overcoming stigma and ensuring inclusivity can create a more supportive environment.
- **Chronosystem:** (historical influences) Changes over time, such as the evolving roles of the teenage mother as both a student and a parent. Understanding how life transitions impact re-entry experiences is crucial. (Harkonen, 2007),

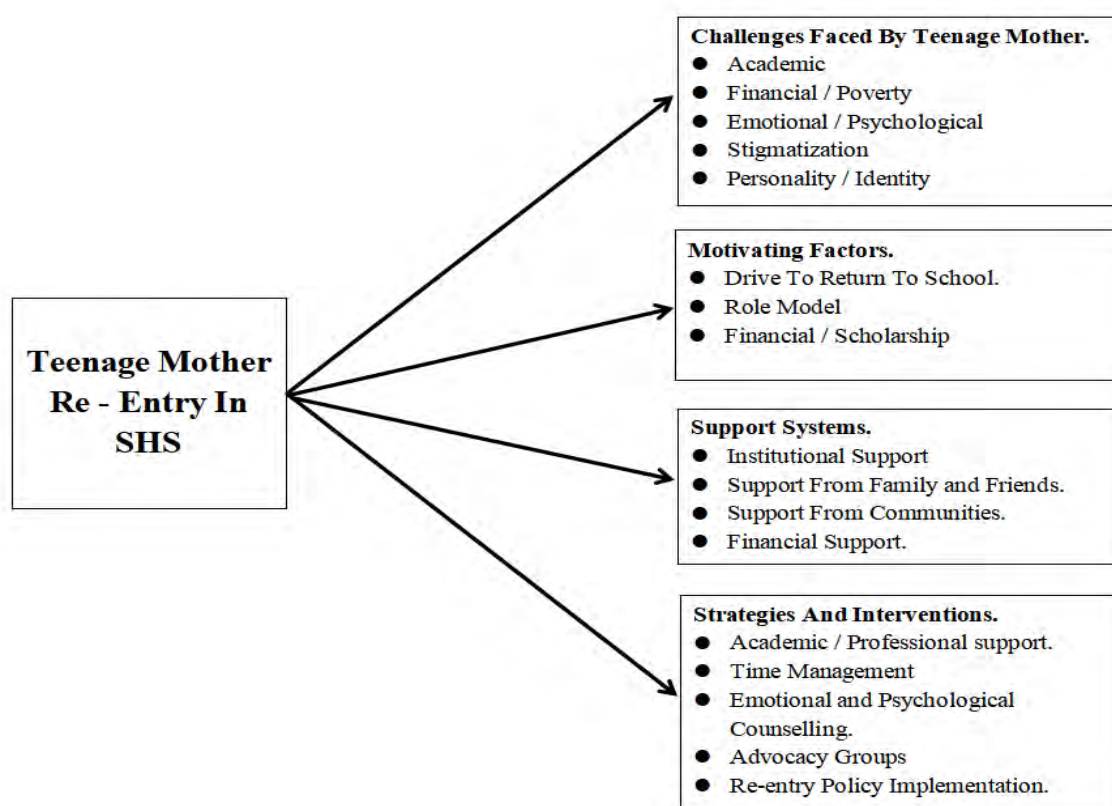
In Teenage Mothers, the microsystem involves their individual relationships, the mesosystem includes support services, the ecosystem considers workplace policies, the macrosystem involves societal attitudes, and the chronosystem accounts for historical changes. Applying Ecological Systems Theory to Teenage Mothers school re-entry experiences. Individual factors (microsystem) interact with support services and societal attitudes (mesosystem, macrosystem), shaped by historical contexts (chronosystem) (Bronwich, 2014).

Ecological Systems Theory aim to provides a nuanced exploration of Teenage Mothers beyond individual traits, considering the broader environmental context Insights from Ecological Systems Theory inform interventions, identifying leverage points for Teenage Mothers well-being and support systems. These theories collectively highlight the multifaceted nature of the challenges and opportunities faced by teenage mothers re-entering SHS. They stress the importance of holistic support systems (Ecological Systems Theory), building resilience through personal and external resources (Resilience Theory) and long-term societal and individual benefits of education investment (Human Capital Theory).

Integrating these perspectives can guide policies and interventions to create a more inclusive, supportive, and productive environment for teenage mothers returning to school.

## 2.7 Conceptual Framework

The figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for the study



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study.**

**Source: (Author, 2024).**

Figure 1 shows a description of the experience of Teenage mothers re-entering Senior High School. The figure suggests that Teenage mothers re-entering Senior High School includes challenges such as academic, financial/poverty, stigmatization, factors motivating them, the support system accessible for them, strategies put in place and interventions received by Teenage Mothers re-entering schools in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District. Understanding how these elements interact can provide insight into the experiences of teenage mothers, opportunities and challenges faced by teenage mothers pursuing education.

## **2.8 Empirical Review**

The empirical review examines findings from previous studies that relate directly to the objectives of the study. The review is organized according to the main objectives of the research, namely: challenges faced by teenage mothers in re-entering school, motivational factors influencing their re-entry, support systems available to teenage mothers, and strategies and interventions received by teenage mothers to support school re-entry and retention.

### **Empirical Studies on Challenges Faced by Teenage Mothers**

Several empirical studies have documented the challenges teenage mothers encounter when they re-enter formal education. Research conducted in sub-Saharan Africa indicates that teenage mothers experience significant difficulties balancing academic responsibilities with childcare demands. These studies report frequent absenteeism, fatigue, and limited study time as major obstacles to academic engagement.

Empirical evidence further shows that financial hardship is a critical barrier to school re-entry. Studies reveal that many teenage mothers lack stable sources of income and depend heavily on family support, which is often insufficient. Inadequate financial resources have been linked to delayed re-entry, irregular attendance, and eventual dropout.

Additionally, studies highlight the role of stigma and discrimination within school environments. Empirical findings indicate that negative attitudes from peers and teachers contribute to emotional distress, reduced self-esteem, and withdrawal from school activities. Psychological challenges such as stress, anxiety, and feelings of shame have been shown to affect teenage mothers' academic performance and persistence.

Health-related challenges have also been identified in empirical studies. Postnatal health complications and limited access to healthcare services have been reported as factors that disrupt schooling among teenage mothers.

### **Empirical Studies on Motivational Factors Influencing School Re-entry**

Empirical research suggests that despite the challenges, teenage mothers are motivated to return to school for various reasons. Studies have found that the desire to secure a better future for their children is a dominant motivational factor. Education is perceived as a means to achieve economic independence and provide improved living conditions for their families.

Other studies emphasize personal resilience and determination as significant motivators. Empirical evidence shows that teenage mothers with strong self-efficacy and goal orientation are more likely to resume and persist in schooling. Research also indicates that serving as a role model for their children motivates many teenage mothers to overcome barriers to education.

Furthermore, empirical findings reveal that encouragement from family members, teachers, and peers enhances teenage mothers' motivation. Studies report that emotional support and positive reinforcement contribute to sustained school attendance and improved academic confidence.

### **Empirical Studies on Support Systems Available to Teenage Mothers**

Research across different contexts highlights the importance of support systems in facilitating teenage mothers' school re-entry. Empirical studies show that family support, particularly childcare assistance from parents or grandparents, is a key determinant of successful school re-entry.

School-based support has also been widely documented. Studies indicate that access to guidance and counselling services, teacher support, and flexible school arrangements positively influence teenage mothers' educational experiences. Schools with inclusive policies and supportive cultures have been associated with higher retention rates among teenage mothers.

Community-level support has been identified as an additional source of assistance. Empirical studies report that support from non-governmental organizations, religious institutions, and social welfare agencies contributes to teenage mothers' ability to remain in school through financial aid, counselling, and mentorship programs.

### **Empirical Studies on Strategies and Interventions Supporting Teenage Mothers**

Empirical literature reveals various strategies and interventions aimed at supporting teenage mothers' educational re-entry and retention. Studies examining re-entry policies indicate that such policies have improved access to education for teenage mothers, although implementation challenges remain in some contexts.

Research findings also show that interventions such as mentorship programs, parenting education, and life skills training enhance teenage mothers' coping abilities and academic engagement. Flexible school schedules and distance learning options have been found to reduce conflicts between childcare responsibilities and academic demands.

Financial interventions, including scholarships, fee waivers, and provision of learning materials, have been empirically linked to improved attendance and retention. Studies further suggest that comprehensive interventions combining financial, psychosocial, and academic support are more effective than isolated approaches.

## **Research Gaps Identified in Empirical Literature**

Although numerous studies have examined teenage motherhood and education, empirical gaps remain. Many studies adopt quantitative approaches and focus on enrollment and dropout rates, with limited attention to the lived experiences of teenage mothers. Additionally, there is limited qualitative and geographical empirical evidence specific to rural districts such as the Kwahu Afram Plains North District. This gap justifies the need for a phenomenological study to explore in-depth experiences of teenage mothers re-entering Senior High Schools within the Ghanaian context.

## **2.9 Chapter Summary**

The literature revealed that the re-entry of teenage mothers into Senior High Schools is a multidimensional issue influenced by personal, institutional, and societal factors. While challenges such as financial constraints, stigmatization, and time management persist, motivation from personal aspirations, family support, and policy interventions play a crucial role in their return. Accessible support systems and strategic interventions can significantly improve their educational experiences and outcomes. A comprehensive study within the Kwahu Afram-Plains North District will provide valuable insights to inform policies and programs that support teenage mothers in their educational pursuits. Literature further highlights that teenage mothers frequently face judgment and discrimination from peers, teachers, and school authorities, fostering feelings of exclusion and reducing their motivation to succeed academically. This stigmatization often extends to the broader community, where societal norms and stereotypes label them as irresponsible or morally deficient. Such attitudes exacerbate the emotional burden on these young mothers, making it harder for them to reintegrate into the school environment.

In addition to external pressures, teenage mothers often struggle with internal conflicts such as low self-esteem, which is heightened by negative societal perceptions and their own insecurities about academic performance and parental responsibilities. Low self-esteem can hinder their ability to actively engage in class and form meaningful relationships with peers. Time management emerges as another critical barrier, as teenage mothers must navigate the competing demands of childcare, academic responsibilities, and personal development. Studies reveal that a lack of time management skills often leads to stress and burnout, further jeopardizing their academic progress. Collectively, these challenges underscore the need for supportive structures within schools, families, and communities to facilitate the successful reintegration of teenage mothers into the educational system.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter dealt with the methodology of the study which includes research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, instrumentation, validity and reliability, pilot testing, data collection procedures data analysis procedures and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1 Research Paradigm

This study adopts an interpretivism paradigm, recognizing the subjective and socially constructed nature of human experiences and the importance of understanding phenomena from the perspective of those involved (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interpretivism is particularly suited to exploring the lived experiences of teenage mothers re-entering Senior High School, as it values the meaning individuals attach to their realities. Under this paradigm, the researcher seeks to understand the complexities of the participants' experiences within their specific socio-cultural and educational contexts. This approach acknowledges that reality is not a fixed entity but is constructed through interactions, perspectives, and interpretations. It aims to delve into the thoughts, feelings, and narratives of teenage mothers to uncover the nuanced challenges and opportunities they encounter upon re-entering the educational system.

Using interpretivism allows the study to go beyond surface-level observations and statistical generalizations. It prioritizes the voices of teenage mothers, positioning them as active agents in their educational journeys rather than mere subjects of inquiry. By employing qualitative methods such as interviews and thematic analysis, this paradigm facilitates a deeper exploration of themes like societal expectations, stigma, support

systems, and personal resilience. The ultimate goal is to generate insights that are rich, contextual, and grounded in the lived realities of these young women, contributing to a more empathetic and effective educational framework that supports their dual roles as students and mothers. By embracing this paradigm, the researcher seeks to explore the lived experiences of teenage mothers returning to Senior High Schools (SHS/SHTS) in Kwahu Afram Plains North District, aiming to uncover the meaning and essence of their experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

### **3.2 Research Approach**

The research employed a qualitative approach, recognizing the richness and depth of qualitative data in capturing the intricate nuances of human experiences (Merriam, 2009). Through in-depth interviews, this approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of the experiences of teenage mothers re-entering into Senior High Schools (SHS/SHTS). (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). By engaging directly with participants and immersing in their contexts, the research aims to generate rich, contextually embedded data that facilitate a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015).

Despite their differences, Creswell and Poth (2018) characterize the qualitative research approach as being based on the interpretivist viewpoint, which is concerned with how a specific phenomenon of interest is perceived, comprehended, and experienced. Analytical techniques that consider the intricacy, specificity, and context of the phenomena of interest form the foundation of qualitative approaches.

Bryman (2012) defines qualitative research as a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. The study's qualitative nature stems from the researcher's employment of a qualitative research strategy to address his research objectives and collect pertinent data for the topic at hand.

This methodology provides the researcher with a thorough and all-encompassing understanding of the subject.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1994), it is the readers' responsibility to evaluate the context of the findings in qualitative research and determine whether extrapolation to their situation is appropriate (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). According to Moll (2012), a paradigm is also a set of presumptions that characterize a certain perspective on reality and guide the kinds of methodologies that are suitable for gathering and analyzing data.

Because the qualitative paradigm lends itself well to the researchers' goal of gathering exclusively qualitative data, the technique of inquiry was employed, with a focus on comprehending the experiences of adolescent mothers re-entering Senior High School (SHS/SHTS) in Kwahu Afram - Plains North District. Additionally, the researcher discovered that the qualitative method was practical due to its efficacy in investigations with a limited number of participants (Creswell, 2017). Furthermore, according to Creswell (2017), qualitative research can be a valuable method for gathering detailed information about a phenomenon from study participants and relying only on their opinions. This provides compelling support for the qualitative paradigm's application, as the study attempted to explain the phenomena of teenage mothers' experiences re-entering Senior High School (SHS/SHTS).

Furthermore, explaining the phenomenon of teenage mothers experienced from the standpoint of the participants was apparently flexible. This could be attributed to the flexible nature of most qualitative designs.

The nature of the problem at hand, as previously said, along with the research topic and questions led to the universal adoption of this research approach. But it's important to

remember that, in addition to their advantages, qualitative research methodologies include drawbacks that the researcher is fully aware of. According to some, qualitative research methods are less accurate than quantitative research methods and have a weak structure (Creswell and Poth, 2017).

### **3.3 Research Design**

This study employs a descriptive phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of teenage mothers re-entering Senior High Schools in the Kwahu Afram Plains North District. Phenomenology as a qualitative research approach, seeks to understand how individuals perceive and make sense of their lived experiences within a specific context. Drawing on the principles of phenomenology, the research design focused on uncovering the essence and meaning of the experiences of teenage mothers re-entering Senior High Schools (SHS/SHTS) (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology allows for the exploration of the lived experiences of individuals, emphasizing the importance of bracketing preconceptions and understanding the world from the perspective of the participants (Van Manen, 2014). This design is particularly suitable for this study as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the unique challenges, emotions, and coping strategies of teenage mothers, emphasizing their subjective experiences. The phenomenological approach also focuses on uncovering common themes and patterns that emerge from their narratives, offering rich insights into the complex interplay of societal, familial, and personal factors that influence their educational reintegration.

Through this design, the study captures the essence of teenage mothers' experiences by prioritizing their voices and perspectives which is geared towards providing insights into the lived realities of teenage mothers re-engaging with education in the specific context of Kwahu Afram Plains North District.

### **3.4 Target Population**

The population comprised all teenage mothers re-entering Senior High School in the Kwahu Afram Plains North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The population 35 teenage mothers were selected from teenage mothers at St Mary's Girls Technical Institute Adeemmra, Donkorkrom Agric Senior High School, and Amankwakrom Fisheries and Agricultural Technical Institute.

### **3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The population for this study comprised thirty-five (35) teenage mothers who had re-entered Senior High/Technical schools in the Kwahu Afram Plains North District. These teenage mothers were drawn from three selected schools, namely St. Mary's Technical Institute, Adeemmra; Amankwakrom Technical Institute and Donkorkrom Agric Senior High School. From this population, a sample size of fifteen (15) teenage mothers was selected for the study, with five (5) participants drawn from each of the three schools. The sample size was considered adequate for an in-depth qualitative study, as it allowed for rich, detailed exploration of the lived experiences of teenage mothers re-entering school. The study employed purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to deliberately select teenage mothers who had experienced pregnancy, childbirth, and subsequent re-entry into school, as they possessed relevant knowledge and experiences needed to address the objectives of the study. Convenience sampling was then applied to select participants who were readily available, accessible, and willing to participate at the time of data collection within each school.

This method is helpful for creating in-depth and perceptive knowledge in a specific topic (Tongco, 2007). Inclusion of teenage mothers from the three schools was the study's main goal. McCombes and George (2022), defined Purposive sampling as gaining detailed

knowledge about a specific phenomenon rather than make statistical inferences, or where the population is very small and specific. An effective purposive sample must have clear criteria and rationale for inclusion” (McCombes & George, 2022). This was due to the group of individuals—the pregnant females who had returned to school under the re-entry policy after giving birth—who were thought to be trustworthy for the study. Most often, a descriptive phenomenological analysis has been used to choose a small number of individuals who have experienced something in common or have participated in a shared phenomenon.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

The research instrument used for this study was a semi-structured interview guide. According to Creswell & Clarke (2017) research instruments are data collection tools (for example, questionnaires, interview questions) designed to obtain data on a topic of interest from research subjects. This instrument was considered appropriate because the study adopted a qualitative phenomenological research design, which seeks to explore and understand the lived experiences of teenage mothers re-entering senior high schools in the Kwahu Afram Plains North District.

The semi-structured interview guide consisted of open-ended questions developed in line with the objectives and research questions of the study. The questions focused on key areas such as the challenges faced by teenage mothers upon re-entry into school, motivational factors influencing their return, sources of support systems available to them, and the strategies and interventions received to aid their academic and emotional adjustment. Probing questions were also used to seek clarification and encourage participants to provide detailed explanations of their experiences. The use of semi-structured interview guide provided flexibility during the interview process, allowing the researcher to ask

follow-up questions and explore emerging issues while maintaining consistency across all interviews. This approach ensured that participants freely expressed their views in their own words, thereby generating rich and in-depth data relevant to the study.

To enhance the credibility of the instrument, the interview guide was reviewed by experts in guidance and counselling and educational research to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in a conducive and private environment, and responses were recorded with the consent of participants to ensure accurate data capture for analysis.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

Data for the study were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with teenage mothers re-entering Senior High Schools in the Kwahu Afram Plains North District. The data collection process was carried out over a period of three (3) weeks. Prior to the commencement of data collection, the researcher sought official permission from the heads of the selected schools, namely St. Mary's Technical Institute, Adeemmra; Amankwakrom Technical Institute; and Donkorkrom Agric Senior High School. Ethical clearance was observed, and participants were adequately informed about the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences.

The researcher spent an average of three (3) days in each school, making a total of nine (9) days across the three schools. During each school visit, the researcher conducted interviews with five (5) teenage mothers, resulting in a total sample size of fifteen (15) participants. Each interview session lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the participant's level of openness and depth of responses. The interviews were conducted

in a quiet and private environment within the school premises to ensure comfort, confidentiality, and minimal interruption.

Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide, which allowed the researcher to ask predetermined questions while also probing further based on participants' responses. With the consent of the participants, audio recordings were used to capture the interviews accurately. This helped to ensure that participants' views and lived experiences were recorded verbatim. In addition to audio recording, the researcher engaged in detailed note-taking during and immediately after each interview. Field notes were used to capture non-verbal cues, emotional expressions, pauses, and the general atmosphere of the interview, which could not be fully captured through audio recordings alone. At the end of each interview day, the researcher listened to the audio recordings and reviewed the field notes to ensure accuracy, clarity, and completeness of the data. The recordings were securely stored and later transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis.

### **3.8 Data Analysis Procedures**

Thematic analysis was used to make sense of the data collected from the participants. The data was organized in themes for easy analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. One of the most acceptable definitions of what counts as a theme is that given by Ryan and Bernard (2003) who opined that something counts as a theme if it captures something that is important and aligned to the research question and problem statement. Data presentation and analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) generation of themes in thematic data analysis. This involved several steps.

- **Familiarization with data** – the researcher became familiarized with the contents of the data collected by repeatedly reading it.

- **Initial coding** – the researcher generated initial codes. The coded data were related to the research objectives.
- **Searching for themes** – the researcher examined several codes and grouped them into different preliminary themes.
- **Reviewing themes** – the researcher gathered all the data relevant to different themes. The data associated with each theme were highlighted coded. At this stage, the researcher identified subthemes.

**Defining the themes** – the researcher explored the meaning of the themes in relation to its sub-themes and eventually did the write-up.

### 3.9 Ethical Consideration

The researcher sought for clearance from the University of Education, Department of Counselling Psychology. Informed consent letters were sent to the authorities of teenage mothers who took part in the study. Consent of respondents was sought before the interview took place. Again, consideration was given to anonymity, autonomy, and confidentiality. In ensuring anonymity, the real names of participants were kept hidden. Autonomy involves ensuring that participation in the study was completely the choice of the individual and not under compulsion of any form. The researcher went further to ensure that anyone who participated in the study did so by his or her own choice. Information that was obtained from the study was treated with a degree of confidentiality. Thus, no part of the data from participants was given out. Beside its academic purpose for which the data was collected, no part was produced in any form for public consumption.

### 3.10 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness refers to the extent to which the findings of a study are credible, dependable, confirmable, and transferable. To ensure the trustworthiness of

this study, the researcher applied the four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

### **Credibility**

Credibility refers to the confidence in the truthfulness of the findings and whether the results accurately represent the participants' lived experiences. To ensure credibility, the researcher used prolonged engagement and persistent observation by spending sufficient time in each of the selected schools during the data collection process. This allowed the researcher to build rapport with participants and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences as teenage mothers re-entering school.

Additionally, the researcher employed member checking, where participants were given the opportunity to clarify or confirm their responses during the interviews. Lincoln and Guba cited in Silverman (2013) further make clear that credibility is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a credible conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data. In this regard, the research undertook to use the process of member checking whereby participants were provided with transcripts of the interviews and themes identified after the analysis of the data to provide clarification on the information obtained. Probing questions were also used to ensure that participants' views were clearly understood and accurately captured. The use of audio recordings alongside note-taking further enhanced credibility by ensuring that participants' responses were recorded verbatim.

### **Dependability**

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings over time. To ensure dependability, the researcher maintained a clear and detailed audit trail of the research process, including the research design, sampling procedures, data collection

methods, and data analysis steps. This allows other researchers to follow the procedures used in the study and assess the consistency of the findings. (Lincoln and Guba cited in Silverman (2013). Berg and Lune (2017) states that dependability within qualitative research indicates the extent to which a researcher would be convinced that the findings occurred as proposed. The researcher achieved this by providing rich, detailed descriptions of the process of data collection to the participants during the data collection process. Further, the researcher ensured that the process of data collection, the analysis and reporting of the findings were described in as much detail as possible.

Furthermore, the researcher used a semi-structured interview guide, which ensured consistency in the questions asked across participants while still allowing flexibility for probing. Detailed documentation of interview durations, field notes, and transcription processes further contributed to the dependability of the study.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings are shaped by the participants and not by researcher bias or personal assumptions. Berg and Lune (2014) explains that confirmability looks at the degree to which the results of one study could be confirmed and corroborated by other researchers. Confirmability is further explained as a measure of how well the inquiry's findings are supported by the data collected (Lincoln and Guba cited in Silverman (2013). To enhance confirmability, the researcher ensured that interpretations and conclusions were grounded in the actual data collected from participants. The use of audio recordings and verbatim transcriptions allowed findings to be supported with direct quotations from participants. The researcher also practiced reflexivity by remaining aware of personal beliefs and assumptions and ensuring they did not influence data interpretation.

Field notes were kept to document decisions made during data collection and analysis, thereby strengthening objectivity.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to other contexts or settings. To enhance transferability, the researcher provided thick and rich descriptions of the study context, participants, sampling procedures, and data collection processes. By clearly describing the characteristics of the participants and the setting of the study, readers and future researchers can determine the extent to which the findings may be applicable to similar contexts involving teenage mothers re-entering Senior High Schools in comparable districts.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussions of the data obtained from the participants. It interprets the findings of the survey and its implication of the study. Fifteen teenage mothers' participants were duly interviewed within the Kwahu Afram -Plains North District. The study was to explore the experiences of teenage mothers re-entering into Senior High School in Kwahu Afram -Plains North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The first part of the analysis deals with the demographic characteristics of the participants. The second part presents the thematic analysis of the research questions.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
13 – 15	1	6.7
16 – 18	10	66.7
19 – Above	4	26.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of the teenage mothers re-entering to Senior High School were between the ages of 16 and 18 years, 66.7% of the participants. This aligns with the common age bracket for high school attendance, suggesting that most teenage mothers are likely returning to education soon after childbirth. The teenage mothers in the 13-15 age group 1% suggests the need for early intervention programs that encourage younger teenage mothers to return to school as soon as possible after childbirth, to prevent them from falling too far behind academically.

**Table 2: Number of Children Teenage Mother had**

<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	14	93.3
2	1	6.7
<b>Total</b>	15	100.0

The largest group of participants 14 (93.3%) which have one child and one person have two children. This indicates that most teenage mothers still want to return to school, which may influence their decision-making in terms of balancing education and family responsibilities. These may have a direct impact on their access to emotional and financial support systems. Those in relationships may rely on their partners for financial or emotional support, but unmarried partnerships can also present challenges, such as relationship instability. Single teenage mothers will likely need additional support from family, school, or the community to manage both childcare and their education. Counseling services for teenage mothers should consider the diversity in relationship statuses. Single mothers may need guidance on how to access community resources and manage the demands of school and childcare independently. Those in relationships, whether married or not, might benefit from counseling on how to navigate their relationships while balancing the demands of motherhood and education.

#### **4.2 Thematic Analysis of the Research Questions**

The thematic analysis of the research questions in this study focused on understanding the experiences of teenage mothers re-entering Senior High Schools in the Kwahu Afram Plains North District. Each research question was explored in depth on how teenage mothers navigate the complex balance between education and motherhood.

### **4.3 Research Question 1: What challenges faced by teenage mothers as they re-enter Senior high School in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District?**

The re-entry of teenage mothers into Senior High School (SHS) is a complex and challenging process. This objective aimed to explore the challenges faced by teenage mothers as they re-entry into SHS. The findings of this objective are organized around following sub-themes: academic challenges, financial/poverty challenges, emotional/psychological challenges, and stigmatization.

#### **4.3.1 Sub-themes 1. Academic challenges**

The findings of this objective indicate that teenage mothers face significant academic challenges as they re-enter into Senior High School (SHS). Teenage mother one shared: *Some teachers think I'm not serious because I got pregnant. They don't give me the attention I need.* (TM1).

Teenage mother two noted, *"I struggled to catch up with my peers because I had been out of school for a while"* (TM 2). This finding support by previous research, which suggests that teenage mothers often experience difficulties in balancing their academic responsibilities with childcare and other domestic responsibilities (Makiwane et al., 2018).

As Vibert (2007) notes, the academic challenges faced by teenage mothers are often compounded by the lack of support from teachers, classmates, and family members. This lack of support can make it difficult for teenage mothers to succeed academically, leading to feelings of frustration and disappointment.

#### **4.3.2 Sub-themes 2: Financial/poverty challenges**

Financial/poverty challenges are another significant obstacle faced by teenage mothers as they re-enter into Senior High School (SHS). another participant noted, *"I had to drop out of school because I couldn't afford to pay my school fees"* (TM3). This finding support

previous research, which suggests that poverty is a major barrier to education for teenage mothers (Kabiru et al., 2013).

As Langa (2015) notes, teenage mothers often face significant financial challenges, including the cost of childcare, transportation, and school fees. These financial challenges can make it difficult for teenage mothers to access education, leading to a cycle of poverty and disadvantage.

#### **4.3.3 Sub-themes 3: Emotional/psychological challenges**

The findings of this study also indicate that teenage mothers face significant emotional/psychological challenges as they re-enter into Senior High School (SHS). Teenage mother four noted, *"I felt anxious and stressed about returning to school because I didn't know how I would balance my studies with childcare"* (TM 4).

Another participant shared *"I am not just a student anymore; I am also a mother. It's hard to fit into both roles."* (TM6)

This finding supports previous research, which suggests that teenage mothers often experience high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Macleod, 2014).

As Vibert (2007) notes, the emotional/psychological challenges faced by teenage mothers are often compounded by the lack of support from teachers, classmates, and family members. This lack of support can make it difficult for teenage mothers to cope with the emotional/psychological demands of returning to school.

#### **4.3.7 Sub-themes 4: Identity versus stigmatization**

Returning to school also presents emotional encounters, particularly concerning identity and the stigma attached to being a teenage mother. The societal judgment faced by teenage mothers is well-documented in the literature, where stigmatization can impact their

confidence and sense of belonging in educational settings (Johnson & Harris, 2022). Addressing the stigma requires schools to create an inclusive environment that fosters understanding and support for teenage mothers (Edwards, 2021). Peer support groups, counselling, and workshops focused on confidence-building can reduce stigma, enabling teenage mothers to embrace their roles as both students and mothers with pride and confidence (Klein, 2023).

The findings indicate that teenage mothers face significant stigmatization as they re-enter into Senior High School (SHS). One teenage mother noted, *"I felt ashamed and embarrassed about being a teenage mother, and I didn't want my classmates to know"* (TM6). This finding supports previous research, which suggests that teenage mothers often experience high levels of stigma and social isolation (Langa, 2015).

As Makiwane and Gumede (2011) note, "stigmatization can have serious consequences for teenage mothers, including low self-esteem, depression, and social isolation." This stigmatization can make it difficult for teenage mothers to access education and other social services, leading to a cycle of disadvantage and exclusion.

While returning to school offers hope for a better future, it also comes with emotional struggles related to identity and societal stigma. Teenage Mother 1 voiced her optimism about her return to school:

*"I feel excited and hopeful about my future. Going back to school gives me a chance to improve my life and provide better opportunities for my child."* (TM1).

On the other hand, Teenage Mother 2 shared her apprehensions about the challenges she anticipates:

*“I feel nervous about balancing school and motherhood, but I’m determined to make it work because education is important to me.”(TM2).*

These experiences reflect the internal conflict many teenage mothers face - balancing their roles as mothers while striving to redefine themselves through education, often in the face of societal judgment. Addressing the stigma faced by teenage mothers in educational settings requires creating a more inclusive and supportive school environment. Schools should implement programs that provide emotional and psychological support to help these mothers manage feelings of shame or fear. Peer support groups, counselling, and workshops focused on confidence building can help reduce the stigma, enabling teenage mothers to embrace their dual roles with pride and confidence. The primary motivation for re-entering school is the desire for a better future, as cited by most of the respondents. Other significant motivations include being a role model for their children, achieving academic goals, and obtaining financial support or a stable job.

Many experience nervousness and anxiety in balancing their roles as students and mothers while other respondents reported feeling the stigma associated with being a teenage mother. Again, balancing the development of a strong self-identity with the challenge of facing societal stigma can be particularly difficult for teenage mother students re-entering school. These teenage mothers often struggle with self-esteem issues and the fear of judgment, making it essential for educational institutions to provide supportive environments that foster both personal growth and academics.

The following are some of the narrations from the Teenage Mothers:

*“I am not just a student anymore; I am also a mother. It’s hard to fit into both roles.” (TM2).*

*“I miss being a regular teenager. My life is different now, and I feel like I’ve lost a part of myself.” (TM1).*

*“I sometimes wonder if I will ever achieve my dreams. The responsibility of motherhood is overwhelming. (TM3).”*

*I’m nervous about balancing school and motherhood, but I’m determined to make it work because education is important to me. (TM5).*

*It’s overwhelming to manage both responsibilities, but I’m motivated by the thought of achieving my goals. (TM4).*

*I feel confident in my ability to succeed. I know it will be challenging, but I’m ready to face those challenges head-on. (TM7).*

*Having a child has made me more focused and driven. I have a clear goal in mind, and I’m working hard to achieve it. (TM12).*

*I feel a bit apprehensive about managing my time and ensuring I can keep up with schoolwork, but I’m ready to try my best. (TM13).*

*I feel challenged but in a good way. This is an opportunity for personal growth and development, and I’m ready to take it on (TM15)*

The findings indicate that while teenage mothers are motivated by strong personal and familial aspirations, they encounter emotional challenges tied to stigma and societal judgment. These aligns with Mollborn (2007) work emphasizes the impact of stigmatization on the academic achievement of teenage mothers. Her research indicates that the stigma associated with teenage pregnancy can lead to lower educational attainment, limiting future opportunities for these young smothers. Balancing their identity as students and mothers creates an internal conflict, where they must navigate both hope for the future and anxiety about being judged. Schools must provide a supportive and

inclusive environment that helps alleviate these emotional burdens while reinforcing the long-term benefits of education for teenage mothers and their families

In conclusion, the findings of this objective indicate that teenage mothers face significant challenges as they re-entry into Senior High School (SHS) including academic challenges, financial/poverty challenges, emotional/psychological challenges, and stigmatization. These challenges can make it difficult for teenage mothers to access education and other social services, leading to a cycle of disadvantage and exclusion. Policymakers, educators, and practitioners must work together to develop targeted interventions to support teenage mothers in their pursuit of education.

#### **4.4 Research Question 2: What factors motivates Teenage Mothers re-entering Senior High Schools in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District?**

The second objective was to determine the factors motivating Teenage Mothers re-entering Senior High Schools in the Kwahu Afram Plains North District. This research question sought to explore the driving forces behind teenage mothers' decision to return to formal education after having children. Most of the primary factors motivating teenage mothers in the Kwahu Afram Plains North District to return to school revolve around improving their future prospects, both for themselves and their children. Financial support, academic goals, and stable employment also play crucial roles. These findings underscore the need for educational policies and programs that cater for both the emotional and practical needs of teenage mothers, ensuring they have the support they need to succeed.

##### **4.4.1 Sub Theme 1: Drives for Returning to School.**

The primary motivation for teenage mothers returning to school in Kwahu Afram Plains North District is the desire to create a better future for themselves and their children. Teenage mothers often view education as a means of improving economic prospects and

breaking the cycle of poverty, a finding supported by research suggesting that education provides long-term financial and social benefits (Martín-Martínez & Gómez, 2025).

Many, like Teenage Mother one, see education as a pathway to economic stability and greater opportunities, not only for themselves but also for their families.

*Returning to school was motivated by my desire to create a better future for my children and myself. I realized that education is key to opening doors of opportunities, and I want to provide a better life for my family. (TM 1).*

Additionally, Teenage Mother 12 reflects on breaking the cycle of poverty and being inspired by financial aid opportunities like scholarships that are available for teenage mothers.

*I want to break the cycle of poverty in my family by getting a good education and a stable job. I learned about scholarships available for teenage mothers, which motivated me to go back to school (TM12).*

For teenage mothers, the prospect of gaining the skills necessary to enter the job market is not only personally fulfilling but also offers a route to economic security (Miller, 2018). Schools and policymakers should focus on promoting awareness about the long-term benefits of education for teenage mothers. Providing targeted financial assistance, such as scholarships, can be an effective way to motivate more young mothers to return to school. Additionally, emphasizing the role of education in creating a better future can help reinforce their determination and resilience.

Narratives from the participants revealed that teenage mothers are often driven by various motivations when deciding to return to school after childbirth. Intrinsically, some of these teenage mothers were primarily motivated by their desire to secure better futures for themselves and their children.

*Returning to school was motivated by my desire to create a better future for my children and myself. I realized that education is key to*

*opening doors of opportunities, and I want to provide a better life for my family. (TM1).*

She has seen education as a pathway to improved employment opportunities and financial stability. These achievements, she thought when attained, would help her break the cycle of poverty. As cited in the literature by Lareau (2003), Teenage mothers living in poverty often face challenges in accessing quality education due to limited resources, which can hinder their long-term prospects. Many teenage mothers recognized that furthering education is crucial for gaining access to jobs and career advancement. Teenage Mothers 3, 4 and 6 shared similar motivating factors for their desire to return to school.

*I want to provide a better life for my child, and I believe education is the key to securing a good job. (TM3).*

*I want to be a positive role model for my child and show that it's possible to overcome challenge (TM4).*

*I want to prove to myself that I can overcome this setback and achieve my academic goals. (TM6).*

The most cited factor motivating teenage mothers to return to school is the desire for a better future. This suggests that the majority of these young women are driven by a long-term vision of improving their lives through education, which highlights the role of personal development in their decision-making. Other motivations, including being a role model for their child, achieving academic goals, securing financial support, and obtaining a stable job. This indicates a diverse range of personal and practical reasons that encourage these teenage mothers to re-enter education. *I was motivated by the desire to improve my skills for the job market (TM)* while another one cited scholarship as a motivating factor. The dominant motivation of seeking a better future reflects the understanding among these young mothers that education is key to breaking the cycle of poverty and opening up more opportunities. Their return to school may be an important step in securing upward social mobility. These findings align with existing research which highlights the importance of

financial stability and educational aspirations as key motivators for teenage mothers (Anderson et al., 2021).

Most of the primary factors motivating teenage mothers in the Kwahu Afram Plains North District to return to school revolve around improving their future prospects, both for themselves and their children. Financial support, academic goals, and stable employment also play crucial roles. These findings underscore the need for educational policies and programs that cater to both the emotional and practical needs of teenage mothers, ensuring they have the support they need to succeed.

Additionally, some teenage mothers were externally inspired to set a positive example for their children, demonstrating the value of education and perseverance. Most of them expressed their opinions as follows:

*My parents encouraged me to return to school so I could have better opportunities in the future. They have always believed in my potential. Their belief in me gave me the confidence to pursue my education again. (TM2).*

*Seeing my friends continue their education motivated me to not be left behind. I didn't want to miss out on the opportunities they were getting. Their progress inspired me to take action for my own future (TM3).*

*My family's encouragement and their willingness to take care of my child while I'm at school motivated me to return. They emphasized the importance of education for my future. This support made it possible for me to focus on my studies (TM1).*

The majority of respondents expressed two dominant emotions: excitement and hope for their future and nervousness about balancing school and motherhood. This highlights the complex emotions teenage mothers' face when re-entering school after having a child. Nearly half of the teenage mothers were optimistic and view returning to school as a pathway to a brighter future. This optimism may stem from the desire for self-improvement, academic achievements, and better career prospects. Some respondents are

nervous about how they will manage the dual responsibilities of being a mother and a student. This concern underscores the significant challenge of time management, childcare, and academic workload. Others also feel anxious about how they will be perceived by peers and teachers. This indicates that societal judgment and stigma are still relevant issues for some teenage mothers, potentially affecting their confidence in the school environment. The interviewed reveals that teenage mothers returning to school after childbirth experience a combination of positive emotions and apprehension. While they are hopeful about improving their futures, they are also nervous about the practicalities of balancing school and motherhood. Schools must be aware of these mixed emotions and provide resources such as counseling, time management workshops, and flexible schedules to ease their transition. The anxiety related to balancing responsibilities suggests a need for support systems such as affordable daycare services, after-school programs, and parental support networks within the school system. Addressing the concerns about peer and teacher perceptions could involve promoting a more inclusive and supportive school culture to reduce stigma.

The findings suggest that while teenage mothers are generally optimistic about returning to school, their nervousness about balancing motherhood and academic responsibilities poses a significant challenge. Addressing these concerns through supportive services and fostering a stigma-free environment could enhance their school experience and improve retention rates. Schools and communities should ensure that adequate resources are available to help them manage their dual roles effectively.

Understanding these motivating factors is essential to identifying the personal, social, and economic influences that encourage teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School. Teenage mothers are often motivated by a desire for personal growth and the potential for

better economic opportunities (Allen & Brown, 2021; Davis, 2022). Returning to education is also seen as a way to serve as a role model for their children and improve their own lives (Smith et al., 2020). This question not only addresses their personal aspirations but also highlights the broader societal and institutional support that contributes to their decision. This aims to uncover how teenage mothers view education as a tool for improving their own and their children's future, while also identifying the challenges they may face in this journey. The most cited factor motivating teenage mothers to return to school is the desire for a better future. This suggests that the majority of these young mothers are driven by a long-term vision of improving their lives through education, which highlights the role of personal development in their decision-making. Other motivations, including being a role model for their child, achieving academic goals, securing financial support, and obtaining a stable job. This indicates a diverse range of personal and practical reasons that encourage these teenage mothers to re-enter education. Others were also motivated by the desire to improve their skills for the job market, while some cited scholarships as a motivating factor. The availability of financial assistance appears to play a role in encouraging some respondents to return to school, underlining the importance of financial aid programs. The dominant motivation of seeking a better future reflects the understanding among these young mothers that education is key to breaking the cycle of poverty and opening up more opportunities. Their return to school may be an important step in securing upward social mobility. These findings align with existing research which highlights the importance of financial stability and educational aspirations as key motivators for teenage mothers (Anderson et al., 2021).

#### **4.4.2 Sub Theme 2: Role model**

The role of a role model in motivating teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School (SHS) cannot be overstated. A role model can provide inspiration, guidance, and support,

helping teenage mothers to overcome the challenges associated with re-entry. As Vibert (2007) notes, a role model can provide a sense of hope and possibility, helping teenage mothers to envision a better future for themselves and their children.

The findings of this objective indicate that role models play a significant role in motivating teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School (SHS). One teenage mother noted, "*my mother was a role model for me, she encouraged me to return to school and pursue my education*" (TM5). This finding is supported by previous research, which suggests that role models can have a positive impact on the educational aspirations and outcomes of teenage mothers (Makiwane et al., 2018). Another Teenage Mother noted, "*my teacher was a role model for me, she provided guidance and support, helping me to balance my studies with childcare*" (TM 3). This finding highlights the importance of teacher support in motivating teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School (SHS). As Langa (2015) notes, teachers can play a critical role in supporting teenage mothers, providing guidance, encouragement, and motivation.

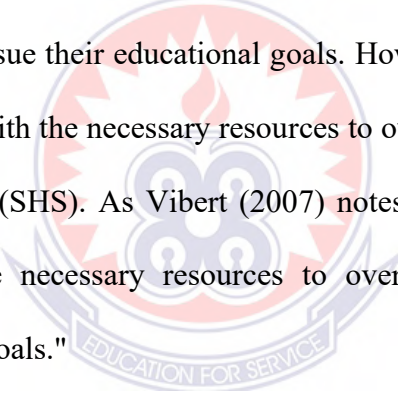
The findings of this objective indicate that teenage mothers are inspired by different types of role models, including family members, such as mothers, sisters, and aunts, can serve as role models, providing inspiration, guidance, and support. Teachers can also play a critical role in motivating teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School (SHS), providing guidance, encouragement, and motivation.

Furthermore, peers, such as friends and classmates, can also serve as role models, providing support, encouragement, and motivation. Community leaders, such as counselors, social workers, and community organizers, can also serve as role models, providing inspiration, guidance, and support.

In conclusion, the findings of this objective indicate that role models play a significant role in motivating teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School (SHS). Effective role models possess certain characteristics, including empathy, supportiveness, positive attitude, and good communication skills. Policymakers, educators, and practitioners must work together to develop programs and interventions that provide teenage mothers with access to positive role models, helping them to overcome the challenges associated with re-entry and achieve their educational goals.

#### **4.4.3 Sub Theme 3: Financial/scholarship**

Financial constraints are a significant barrier to education for teenage mothers. The cost of tuition, textbooks, childcare, and other expenses can be overwhelming, making it difficult for teenage mothers to pursue their educational goals. However, financial/scholarships can provide teenage mothers with the necessary resources to overcome these challenges and re-enter Senior High School (SHS). As Vibert (2007) notes, "financial support can provide teenage mothers with the necessary resources to overcome financial constraints and achieve their educational goals."



The findings of this study indicate that financial/scholarships support is a significant motivator for teenage mothers to re-enter SHS. One teenage mother noted, "*I was able to return to school because I received a scholarship that covered my tuition and other expenses*" (TM 2). This finding is supported by previous research, which suggests that financial support can increase the likelihood of teenage mothers returning to school (Kabiru et al., 2013).

The availability of scholarships and financial support is another factor encouraging re-entry, which is consistent with findings from previous studies that indicate financial

assistance as a significant incentive for young mothers seeking to complete their education (Jackson, 2021).

As Langa (2015) notes, financial support can provide teenage mothers with the necessary resources to overcome financial constraints and achieve their educational goals. This finding highlights the importance of financial support in motivating teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School (SHS).

The findings of this study indicate that teenage mothers receive various types of financial/scholarships support, including: resources to cover tuition, textbooks, and other expenses, NGOs can provide teenage mothers with financial support, counseling, and other forms of assistance.

The findings indicate that financial/scholarships support has a positive impact on teenage mothers' educational outcomes. Another teenage mother noted, *"receiving financial support helped me to focus on my studies and achieve better grades"* (TM 3). This finding is supported by previous research, which suggests that financial support can improve teenage mothers' educational outcomes and increase their likelihood of completing school (Makiwane et al., 2018).

As Vibert (2007) notes, financial support can provide teenage mothers with the necessary resources to overcome financial constraints and achieve their educational goals. This finding highlights the importance of financial support in motivating teenage mothers to re-enter Senior High School (SHS).

Despite the positive impact of financial/scholarships support, the findings of this study indicate that teenage mothers still face challenges in accessing these resources. One teenage mother noted, *"I had to wait for a long time to receive the scholarship, and it was*

*a struggle to make ends meet" (TM 1)*. This finding highlights the need for more efficient and effective systems for providing financial/scholarships support to teenage mothers.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that financial/scholarships support is a significant motivator for teenage mothers to re-enter SHS. Financial/scholarships support can provide teenage mothers with the necessary resources to overcome financial constraints and achieve their educational goals. However, more needs to be done to address the challenges that teenage mothers face in accessing these resources. Policymakers, educators, and practitioners must work together to develop more efficient and effective systems for providing financial/scholarships support to teenage mothers

#### **4.5 Research Question 3: What sources of support systems accessible to Teenage Mothers' re-entering Senior High Schools in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District?**

Support systems facilitating the re-entry of teenage mothers into education are crucial for ensuring teenage mothers to continue their studies while managing their responsibilities. Community and family support play a significant role in facilitating school re-entry for teenage mothers. Family members, especially parents, often take on caregiving roles to allow the teenage mothers to attend school.

##### **4.5.1 Sub theme 1: Support from Family, Friends and Community.**

The role of family, friends, and community is crucial in helping teenage mothers balance their educational and parental responsibilities.

Teenage Mother 1 shared, *"My family helps by caring for my child while I'm at school, making it easier for me to focus on my studies."* This highlights the importance of family involvement in providing practical support.

Teenage Mother 3 emphasized emotional support from her peers, saying, *“My friends offer emotional support by listening to my struggles and encouraging me to keep going.”*

The largest participants reported receiving community support. Most teenage mothers especially Teenage Mothers 6, 7, and 11 reported of receiving community support while the rest of the respondents received their support from different sources.

*Local community programs provide resources and workshops for teenage mothers, helping me manage both school and parenting. (TM6).*

*Community programs supported me in returning to school, and their assistance motivated me to return to school. (TM7).*

*My community has provided access to online resources and virtual tutoring, which have been very helpful. (TM11).*

These suggests that, in Kwahu Afram-Plains North District, community members play a key role in helping teenage mothers navigate their academic and maternal responsibilities. This support likely includes moral encouragement, resources, and informal networks as stated in the literature, these policies aim to create a supportive environment that encourages community acceptance of teenage mothers re-entering SHS/SHTS (Department of Basic Education, South Africa, 2020).

Additionally, Teenage Mother 6 mentioned the role of community programs, stating, *“Local community programs provide resources and workshops for teenage mothers, helping me manage both school and parenting.”*

This theme underscores the critical role that emotional and practical support from family, friends, and the community plays in the educational journey of teenage mothers. The study implies that the presence of a strong support network can alleviate the burdens of parenting while studying, which highlights the need for communities and schools to create structured support systems. Schools and community organizations should work to strengthen these support networks by providing access to childcare, workshops, and emotional counseling,

which can make a significant difference in a teenage mother's ability to focus on her studies. Encouraging the involvement of family members and friends can also improve the overall well-being and academic success of these young mothers. According to a study by Osei et al. (2023), community support networks significantly influence teenage mothers' ability to balance their dual roles. The emotional encouragement and practical resources provided by community members can alleviate some of the burdens associated with parenting while studying.

Access to community resources and school facilities plays a significant role in supporting teenage mothers. Local programs offering workshops, scholarships, and parenting classes provide practical assistance that helps them manage their responsibilities more effectively. The presence of supportive community, family and friends plays a crucial role in facilitating the re-entry of teenage mothers into the education system. These was establishing in the literature in Ghana, community rejection of teenage mothers as a barrier to their re-entry into Senior High School (SHS/SHTS) is an issue that has been recognized, and efforts have been made to address it. The Ghanaian government acknowledges the challenges faced by teenage mothers and the role of community attitudes in their re-entry into SHS/SHTS. Government policies aim to create a supportive environment for these girls to continue their education. The findings confirm other studies. (GES, 2020) Ghana Education Service (GES) has guidelines and policies that allow for the re-entry of teenage mothers into SHS, emphasizing that community acceptance is crucial. A teenage mother revealed *that community programs supported me in returning to school, and their assistance motivated me to return to school. (TM7). Seeing my friends continue their education motivated me to return to school and not be left behind. (TM5).*

The study further revealed that the Ghana Education Service (GES) has implemented guidelines and policies that support the re-entry of pregnant and parenting girls into

SHS/SHTS, emphasizing the importance of family acceptance (GES, 2020). Another teenage mother expresses as follow:

*My family helps by taking care of my child while I'm at school, which makes it easier for me to focus on my studies (TM1).*

Support from family and peers is another critical factor in motivating teenage mothers to re-enter school. Many participants noted that encouragement from parents and peers played a significant role in their decision to continue their education. The responses reveal that:

*I was motivated by my parents, who encouraged me to return to school so I could have better opportunities in the future. (TM2).*

*My parents provide financial support to cover school fees and supplies, reducing my financial burden. (TM2).*

*My friends offer emotional support by listening to my struggles and encouraging me to keep going. (TM3).*

*My classmates have offered to help me with my schoolwork, tutoring me in subjects I'm struggling with. (TM4).*

*A neighbor helps with transportation, driving my child and me to school when needed. (TM10).*

Support groups were reported by participants as a key source of help. This suggests that peer groups, designed for teenage mothers or young women in similar situations, may provide emotional, social, and motivational support for these students. Several respondents also received family support, financial support, emotional support, and help from classmates and teachers. These encouragement helps to build confidence and provides a sense of belonging and motivation, making the re-entry process less daunting.

#### **4.5.2 Sub Theme 2: Institutional Support.**

Institutional support are critical components in helping teenage mothers successfully re-enter and thrive in senior high school. Schools that offer flexible academic schedules, such as extra-classes and evening classes, enable teenage mothers to balance their educational responsibilities with their parenting duties. School initiatives and facilities, health services,

and mentoring programs also contribute to their overall well-being and academic success. Institutional support provided by schools is essential for teenage mothers to balance their academic and personal lives. Most of the participants expressed their opinion as follows:

Teenage Mother 2 mentioned, *“I have access to school counsellors who provide emotional and academic support.”* This support helps ease the emotional burdens and academic challenges these mothers face.

Similarly, Teenage Mother 13 highlighted the importance of health services, stating, *“I have access to health services on campus, which is helpful for both my child and me.”*

These institutional supports provide a safety net for teenage mothers, ensuring that their health and emotional well-being are prioritized alongside their education.

These are some of the responses from some of the Teenage Mothers:

*My teachers reached out and encouraged me to come back to school, offering their support. (TM8).*

*The school offers workshops on parenting skills, which have been very beneficial for me. (TM12).*

Other respondents also noted receiving school support and support from school counsellors. This indicates that the formal structures within schools, including counselling services, provide valuable help in facilitating the return of teenage mothers to school. Schools are perceived as offering necessary emotional, psychological, and sometimes academic assistance.

*The academic advisors have been supportive, helping me plan my course load in a way that is manageable. (TM14).*

*I have access to school counsellors who provide emotional and academic support. (TM2).*

The study confirms from the literature. Schools and educational institutions in Ghana frequently provide counselling and mentorship programs that encompass time management training. These programs offer guidance on how to prioritize tasks, set goals, and allocate

study time effectively. Such support helps girls re-entering SHS adapt to the demands of their education (UNICEF Ghana, 2020).

Institutional support from schools is essential for the academic success of teenage mothers. The availability of counselling and healthcare services in schools is vital for teenage mothers alleviate the stress associated with balancing school and motherhood. This implies that schools should offer holistic services that address both academic and personal needs, including counselling, healthcare, and mentorship. By providing these resources, schools can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for teenage mothers, ensuring their emotional and physical health is taken into account, thus enabling them to stay in school and succeed.

#### **4.5.3 Sub Theme 3: Financial Assistance/Scholarships**

Financial support is a crucial element of serving teenage mothers re-enter and succeed in school. Scholarships specifically designed for teenage mothers, as well as need-based grants can alleviate the financial burden associated with education and childcare costs.

Teenage Mothers' capacity to pursue further education is significantly impacted by the availability (or lack thereof) of financial aid and scholarships.

Teenage Mother 2 expressed the difficulty of not receiving aid, stating,

*“No, I have not received any financial assistance or scholarships.”  
This lack of financial support poses a significant barrier to my  
educational progress.*

Teenage Mother 7 also shared a more positive experience: *“I was fortunate to receive a scholarship from a local community organization.”* This scholarship alleviated some of her financial burdens, allowing her to focus on her studies without the constant worry of financial strain.

The disparity in access to financial assistance among teenage mothers implies that not all young mothers have equal opportunities to secure the financial resources they need to stay

in school. These aligns in the literature; Ghana has legal provisions that protect the rights of teenage mothers to education. The Children's Act of 1998 emphasizes the importance of children's welfare, including their access to education. Advocacy groups use legal frameworks like these to advocate for the rights of teenage mothers facing community rejection (Children's Act, Ghana, 1998). which highlights the need for expanded access to scholarships and financial aid programs that target teenage mothers, as financial barriers are a significant obstacle to their education. Schools, local governments, and community organizations should collaborate to create more scholarship opportunities and raise awareness about existing financial aid programs. Without financial assistance, many teenage mothers may struggle to continue their education, highlighting the critical role that financial support plays in their academic journey.

Additionally, schools can provide information about and access to community resources and financial aid programs that support teenage mothers. These are some of the responses from them.

*Yes, I received a merit-based scholarship from my school. (TM1).*

*No, I haven't received any financial assistance or scholarships. (TM2).*

*I was fortunate to receive a scholarship from a local community organization. (TM7).*

*I haven't received any scholarships, but I did get a work-study job to help cover expenses. (TM9).*

*Yes, I was awarded a scholarship for my volunteer work in the community. (TM10).*

*I haven't received any direct financial assistance, but I do get some support from my family. (TM 14).*

The findings confirm other studies by National Women's Law Centre (2020) advocacy organizations like the National Women's Law Centre work to raise awareness about the rights of pregnant and parenting girls and provide resources for schools to support their re-entry and educational success.

#### **4.6 Research Question 4: What strategies and interventions received by Teenage Mothers re-entering schools in the Kwahu Afram- Plains North District in managing schooling and childcare workloads?**

The research question sought to explore the specific interventions provided to teenage mothers to facilitate their successful re-entry into Senior High Schools. The interventions were categorized into academic and professional support, and emotional and psychological counseling. These interventions aim to address the unique challenges faced by teenage mothers, ensuring they can balance their academic pursuits with their parenting responsibilities while fostering emotional resilience and long-term career aspirations.

##### **4.6.1 Sub-theme 1 Academic and professional support.**

Teenage mothers face unique challenges as they navigate the dual roles of parenting and personal development. Academic and professional support significantly enhance their ability to thrive in these roles. Academic and professional support is a critical intervention for teenage mothers re-entering school, as it provides the resources and flexibility they need to succeed academically while managing their parenting responsibilities. In view of these, academic and professional support emerged as a critical intervention for teenage mothers re-entering school, as it provides the resources and flexibility they need to succeed academically while managing their parenting responsibilities.

Some schools provided tailored academic programs, including catch-up classes, tutoring, and access to academic advisors, designed to help teenage mothers' bridge gaps in their education and meet academic requirements.

For example, one participant shared *that her school has allowed her to create a flexible schedule that accommodates her parenting responsibilities (TMI)*. Similarly, another

respondent *highlighted the availability of tutoring programs designed to help her catch up on subjects she missed during her time away from school (TM3).*

*The academic advisors have been very supportive, helping me plan my course load in a way that is manageable. (TM14).*

Teachers have also played a supportive role by being understanding of their situations and *offering extended deadlines for assignments when needed (TM5).* These programs ensure that mothers returning to school after childbirth are equipped to manage the curriculum and improve their academic performance (Doe, 2021). Mentorship programs were another vital intervention, with teachers and counselors offering personalized guidance, which provided encouragement and motivation (Nguyen & Adeyemi, 2022). Some schools have gone a step further by *providing on-campus daycare facilities, allowing teenage mothers to leave their children in a safe environment while attending classes (TM6).* Access to academic resources, such as textbooks, study materials, and computers, has further contributed to their success, with one participant stating that these resources have made it easier for her to perform well academically (TM15). Professional support, such as career counseling, was also integral, helping teenage mothers align their education with future career goals and understand the pathways available to achieve their aspirations (Smith & Clarke, 2020).

The findings reveal that academic and professional support is crucial interventions for teenage mothers re-entering senior high schools. Tailored academic programs and support help them align their education with long-term aspirations (Nguyen & Adeyemi, 2022).

These interventions highlight the importance of a holistic approach to academic and professional support. Flexible schedules and online classes allow teenage mothers to continue their education without neglecting their parenting duties. Tutoring programs and access to resources ensure that they can overcome gaps in their education, while understanding teachers and on-campus childcare reduce logistical challenges. Schools

should institutionalize these support systems to empower teenage mothers to achieve their academic and professional goals, contributing to their personal growth and socio-economic advancement.

The most common strategy, used by the participants, is employing a detailed planner to schedule their day. This shows that a significant portion of teenage mothers rely on structured planning to balance their schoolwork, childcare, and other responsibilities. Some of the participants prioritize their tasks each day, a time management method that helps ensure they complete the most important duties first, even when faced with multiple responsibilities. Another respondent takes advantage of resources, showing that flexible learning options play a key role in helping teenage mothers manage their time effectively. Similarly, A smaller percentage of respondents combines activities when possible or reassess and adjust their schedule regularly, highlighting the importance of adaptability in time management for teenage mothers. Study groups and breaking tasks into manageable chunks are also used by the respondents, indicating that seeking support and simplifying tasks are other key strategies. These strategies align with existing literature, which highlights that effective time management tools, like planners, help individuals balance multiple responsibilities and reduce stress (Glynn et al., 2020; Harmsen, 2021).

The analysis shows that teenage mothers use a variety of strategies to manage their time, with the most common methods involving structured planning, technology, and task prioritization. Schools and communities should continue to support these mothers by offering resources, workshops, and flexible learning opportunities to help them effectively balance their responsibilities.

The most commonly cited strategy, reported by participants, is focusing on staying motivated. This suggests that internal motivation is a key factor in helping teenage mothers persevere in their studies despite the challenges they face balancing motherhood and

education. Some of the participants sought to help, whether from peers, teachers, or other support systems, to stay on track. This highlights the importance of having a support network to lean on when challenges arise, both academically and personally. The use of a planner to organize assignments and positive affirmations to maintain a positive mindset and stay focused. These tools help participants to manage their workload while reinforcing a sense of purpose and self-belief. Some respondents prefer breaking their study sessions into shorter segments, which can make study time more manageable alongside their other responsibilities. Others rely on a healthy diet, recognizing that maintaining good physical health supports their mental focus and academic performance.

The analysis shows that teenage mothers use a variety of strategies to stay motivated and focused, from internal strategies (e.g., staying motivated, using affirmations) techniques to external support systems (e.g., seeking help, using planners). Schools and communities should offer workshops or mentoring programs that encourage teenage mothers to identify and utilize both personal and external strategies to stay focused.

#### **4.6.2 sub- theme 2 Time management/ planning for workloads and childcare.**

Teenage mothers use a variety of strategies to manage the challenging balance between schoolwork and childcare.

Teenage Mother 1 shared, *“I use a detailed planner to schedule my day and ensure I allocate enough time for schoolwork, childcare, and personal tasks.”* This demonstrates the importance of structured time management to juggle multiple responsibilities.

Similarly, Teenage Mother 7 emphasized breaking tasks into manageable pieces, stating, *“I break my tasks into smaller, manageable chunks and tackle them one at a time.”* This approach helps in reducing feelings of being overwhelmed.

Additionally, Teenage Mother 11 highlighted the use of technology, sharing, *“I use apps and digital tools to keep track of deadlines and appointments,”* illustrating how digital tools can assist in organizing both academic and parental duties. The use of planners, digital tools, and task segmentation implies that teenage mothers rely heavily on strategic time management to balance their academic and childcare responsibilities. Schools and community organizations can support these efforts by offering workshops on effective time management and introducing digital resources that can help young mothers stay organized. Additionally, making flexible learning options, such as online classes, available can further ease the pressures of managing multiple roles. A common strategy used by teenage mothers is breaking tasks into smaller, manageable chunks, which helps in preventing overwhelm and enhancing task completion (Smith & Johnson, 2023). Moreover, teenage mothers increasingly utilize digital tools and online resources to manage their academic and childcare responsibilities. These tools have proven beneficial in enhancing task organization, especially for individuals managing diverse responsibilities (Clark et al., 2022; Jones, 2022). The use of technology for time management reflects a broader trend where digital solutions are employed to increase productivity and streamline daily routines (Baxter, 2021).

In addition to time management, teenage mothers adopt specific strategies to remain focused and motivated.

Teenage Mother 5 mentioned, *“I set clear, achievable goals for each study session to keep myself on track and motivated,”* showing the importance of goal setting in staying disciplined and maintaining academic progress.

Teenage Mother 8 shared her mental approach, saying, *“I use positive affirmations and visualize my success to stay inspired,”* which highlights the significance of maintaining a positive mindset and using motivational techniques to stay on course.

Lastly, Teenage Mother 13 pointed out the value of seeking help, stating, *“I seek help when I am struggling with a topic to avoid frustration.”* This reflects the importance of accessing support when faced with academic challenges.

Planning, goal-setting, and seeking help are essential strategies that help teenage mothers stay organized and manage their workloads effectively. Schools should encourage the use of these strategies by providing academic counseling services, peer tutoring programs, and mentorship opportunities. Additionally, promoting a culture that values emotional well-being, including the use of positive affirmations and mental health support, can keep teenage mothers motivated and engaged in their studies. Creating a network of academic support and resources can help them overcome the academic and emotional challenges they face.

The most commonly strategies for managing school and childcare workloads by the respondents, is focusing on staying motivated. Key time management strategies include using a detailed planner, seeking help from others, and taking advantage of online resources. Other strategies include breaking tasks into smaller, manageable chunks and utilizing digital tools for tracking deadlines.

The diverse strategies employed by teenage mothers indicate their resourcefulness and adaptability in managing multiple responsibilities. Educational institutions can further support these mothers by offering workshops on time management and access to digital tools that facilitate learning and organization

#### **4.6.3 Sub- theme 3 Emotional and psychological counselling.**

Access to school counselors plays a pivotal role in supporting both their emotional and academic well-being, as one participant noted that :

*“the counselors provide essential guidance to help me navigate my responsibilities effectively (TM2)”.*

*“I have access to school counsellors who provide emotional and academic support. (TM2)”*.

Peer support groups and mentorship programs can complement individual counselling sessions, providing additional sources of encouragement and advice from others who have faced similar experiences (Rafkin et al., 2017). Overall, integrating comprehensive counselling support into school programs for teenage mothers not only enhances their academic success but also promotes their overall well-being and personal development (Blum et al., 2022). According to Kumar and Davis (2021), peer support groups and mentorship on emotional resilience further contribute by creating safe spaces for teenage mothers to share their experiences, learn from one another, and build a sense of community.

Access to these interventions help teenage mothers maintain emotional stability and focus on their studies despite societal judgment and internal struggles (Lopez et al., 2019). Mentorship programs have proven invaluable, with one participant highlighting how being paired with a *mentor has helped her address both academic and personal challenges (TM11)*. Mentors not only provide emotional support but also serve as role models, offering practical advice and encouragement to help teenage mothers stay motivated. Academic advisors further enhance this support system by helping teenage mothers plan their course load in a way that aligns with their capacity and personal circumstances, *ensuring that they can handle their academic workload without feeling overwhelmed (TM14)*.

The provision of emotional and psychological counseling has far-reaching implications for the well-being and success of teenage mothers. By addressing their mental health needs, school's foster resilience, reduce dropout rates, and improve academic engagement. Peer support groups and emotional resilience workshops also encourage teenage mothers to

form networks that provide ongoing encouragement and practical advice. To maximize the benefits, schools must expand access to counseling services and ensure that trained professionals are available to offer personalized support.

The findings disclose that counseling services and peer support groups are essential interventions that help teenage mothers manage the stigma and emotional stress associated with re-entering school. These programs equip them with coping strategies to balance the demands of academics and parenting while reducing the psychological burden of societal judgment. Individual and group counselling sessions can address the emotional and psychological challenges faced by teenage mothers. These sessions provide a safe space for them to express their feelings, discuss their struggles, and receive professional guidance. Group counselling, in particular, allows teenage mothers to connect with peers and provides a safe space to share similar experiences, reducing feelings of isolation and build a support network. Professional counselling and therapy services also provide emotional support and equip them with coping mechanisms. These services include individual counselling that helps teenage mothers process emotions and develop self-confidence, crisis intervention services address immediate psychological needs during high-stress periods.

Many teenage mothers experience stigma, anxiety, and stress due to the dual pressures of education and motherhood. Counseling services provided by schools offer emotional support, teaching teenage mothers coping mechanisms to manage these pressures (Allen & Morgan, 2020).

Counselling plays a crucial role in supporting teenage mothers as they navigate the challenges of re-entering school after childbirth. These young women often face a myriad of emotional and practical obstacles, including feelings of guilt, anxiety about academic

performance, and concerns about balancing parenting responsibilities with schoolwork (Smith, 2020). Counselling services tailored to their needs can provide a safe space for them to explore these emotions, develop coping strategies, and set realistic goals for their educational journey (Johnson & R Chards, 2019). Additionally, counselors can help teenage mothers build self-esteem and resilience, addressing any stigma or negative perceptions they may encounter within the school community. By fostering a supportive and understanding environment, counselling can empower teenage mothers to overcome barriers and thrive academically (Williams, 2021). Counseling services also offer teenage mothers' strategies to manage stress and build resilience, which are crucial for maintaining their emotional stability while balancing academic and parenting roles

#### **4.6.3 Sub-Theme 4 Advocacy groups raising awareness to Reduce Stigma**

The re-entry of teenage mothers into Senior High School (SHS) is a transformative journey that offers a second chance at education and personal growth. However, it is often marred by stigma, judgment, and systemic challenges. Teenage mothers often drop out of school due to societal pressures, unplanned pregnancies, and lack of support. The effects these stigmata are Feelings of shame, low self-esteem, isolation, difficulty focusing, absenteeism, and high dropout rates, challenges in forming peer relationships and accessing mentorship opportunities. Mollborn (2007) work emphasizes the impact of stigmatization on the academic achievement of teenage mothers. Her research indicates that the stigma associated with teenage pregnancy can lead to lower educational attainment, limiting future opportunities for these young smothers.

Raising awareness about this critical issue is essential to fostering an inclusive environment that supports their academic and social reintegration while addressing the stigma they face. Schools should conduct awareness campaigns to educate students,

teachers, and the community about the challenges faced by teenage mothers. These campaigns can reduce judgment and stigma, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for all students. Re-entering signifies a commitment to education and a brighter future for themselves and their children.

Teenage Mother 3 touched on the social challenges of re-entry, sharing,

*“I have faced judgment and stigma from some of my peers and even teachers because I am a teenage mother.”*

Raising awareness to reduce the stigma surrounding teenage mothers re-entering SHS is crucial to their success and societal progress. Public forums to host open discussions to educate communities about the challenges and strengths of teenage mothers, social media companies share success stories and testimonials to challenge stereotypes. Workshops for educators and students to train school staff and peers on inclusivity and the importance of empathy.

By fostering empathy, implementing supportive policies, and engaging communities, we can create an environment that encourages educational equity and helps teenage mothers thrive. Together, we can break the cycle of stigma and empower young mothers to achieve their dreams. inclusive school culture equips teenage mothers with life skills necessary for their dual roles as students and mothers.

The findings underscore that teenage mothers face multifaceted challenges as they attempt to re-enter senior high school. The balancing act of parenting responsibilities is the most pressing concern, highlighting the need for flexible school policies that accommodate their dual roles as students and caregivers. Additionally, the judgment and stigma they encounter from peers and educators further complicate their educational experience and emotional well-being. Financial strain remains a significant barrier to their academic

progress, emphasizing the importance of financial support systems. Despite these challenges, teenage mothers demonstrate resilience and ambition, with a strong desire to develop skills, achieve job satisfaction, and advocate for others in similar circumstances. These insights call for comprehensive support systems that address the educational, emotional, and financial needs of teenage mothers, facilitating their successful reintegration into the school system and promoting their long-term personal and professional development.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Study

Primarily, the study aimed to explore the experiences of teenage mother's re-entry into Senior High School in Kwahu Afram-Plains North, located in Ghana's Eastern Region. The study employed a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological research design. Through an expert purposive sampling technique, 15 teenage mothers were sampled for the study. Data was collected using an Interview guide. Data was analyzed thematically, while participants' demographic data was analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages.

#### 5.2 Findings

The findings indicated that some of the teenage mothers were primarily motivated by the desire to secure a better future for themselves and their children. They value education as a means to break cycles of poverty, gain stable employment, and serve as role models for their children. Support systems play a vital role in their success, with help from family, friends, and community organizations being crucial. However, many teenage mothers face challenges such as financial strain, judgment and stigma, and unsupportive school policies, which make balancing education and motherhood difficult.

Time management strategies, such as using planners, breaking tasks into manageable chunks, and leveraging digital tools, are commonly used to manage the dual responsibilities of school and parenting. Teenage mothers also place great importance on

education, viewing it as a tool for personal fulfilment and a way to advocate for their children's needs. However, their educational journey is often hindered by the lack of flexible school policies, financial aid, and emotional support.

The study underscores the need for comprehensive support systems that include flexible learning schedules, financial assistance, mental health services, and efforts to reduce stigma, all of which are critical for ensuring the academic success of teenage mothers.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study found that teenage mothers in the Kwahu Afram-Plains North District face significant challenges after re-entering school, including stigma, financial difficulties, childcare responsibilities, and academic adjustment problems. However, they remain highly motivated and resilient, driven by the desire to secure a better future for themselves and their children. The findings further show that strong family support, positive school environments, and access to guidance and counselling services are key factors influencing their successful reintegration. Therefore, strengthening support systems and reducing stigma are essential to improving educational outcomes for teenage mothers in the district.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study

1. To strengthen the re-entry policy and reduce societal barriers, the Ministry of Education should review and enforce the re-entry policy, including legal protection against early marriage and pregnancy. This aligns with Human Capital Theory, emphasizing the importance of investing in education to secure future opportunities and minimize barriers.
2. To enhance coordinated support systems, parents, schools, community and stakeholders should collaborate to provide consistent and structured support for

teenage mothers. This reflects Ecological Systems Theory, highlighting how family, school, and community environments interact to influence a young mother's successful reintegration.

3. To support coping strategies schools should offer specialized guidance and counselling programs that address the emotional and psychological needs of teenage mothers. This recommendation is supported by Resilience Theory, emphasizing the role of supportive interventions in fostering adaptability and academic success.
4. Schools should create peer groups and mentorship opportunities where teenage mothers can share experiences, gain guidance, and serve as role models. This strengthens resilience, motivation, and personal development, reflecting both Resilience Theory and Human Capital Theory.

### **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

Some of the participants did not want to open up to share their experiences in relation to the situation assuming that their anonymity will not be protected by the researcher.

### **5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies**

From the findings of the study, it is recommended that future research should focus on the following:

1. Exploring the Psychological and Emotional Impact of Re-entry among Teenage Mothers at the Senior High School Level.
2. Obstacles that teenage mothers' new-borns face when their mothers are not around.
3. The attachment to their children that teenage mothers miss while in class.
4. The success of providing inclusive education to teenage mothers.

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## APPENDIX A

### Qualitative Questionnaires

EXPERIENCES OF TEENAGE MOTHERS RE-ENTERING INTO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN KWAHU AFRAM -PLAINS NORTH DISTRICT OF THE EASTERN REGION OF GHANA.

Age .....

Number of children .....

1. What motivated you to return to school?
2. How do you feel about re-entering school after having a child?
3. What challenges have you faced in returning to school?
4. What support have you received from your family, friends, and community?
5. How has the school supported your re-entry process?
6. Have you received any financial assistance or scholarships?
7. How do you manage your time between school, childcare, and other responsibilities?
8. What strategies do you use to stay motivated and focused on your studies?
9. What are your aspirations for the future?
10. How do you think completing your education will impact your life and the life of your child?
11. What changes or improvements would you suggest to support other teenage mothers in similar situations?
12. Do you have any advice for other teenage mothers considering re-entering school?

## APPENDIX B

### INTRODUCTORY LETTER



13<sup>th</sup> June, 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I write to introduce to you **Mary Tangmee**, the bearer of this letter, who is pursuing a Master of Philosophy Degree Programme, in the Department of Counselling Psychology of the University of Education, Winneba.

As part of the programme, she is conducting a research on the topic: **Experiences of Teenage Mothers Re-Entering into Senior High Schools in Kwahu Afram - Plains North District.**

She needs to administer questionnaire to enable her gather information for her data analysis and she has chosen to conduct this exercise in your outfit.

I would be grateful if she is given the needed assistance.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

**Nyuiemedi Agordzo Edoh-Torgah, PhD**  
AG. Head of Department

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