

EFFECT OF SCHOOL CATEGORY ON ADJUSTMENT OF RE-ADMITTED TEENAGE MOTHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Christine Mwajuma Opondo¹, Peter Jairo Odhiambo Aloka²

¹Department of Psychology, Maseno University, Kondole Kisumu-Busia Rd Maseno, Kisumu, Kenya
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6284-344X>

²Wits School of Education, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4298-9211>

✉Corresponding author: Peter Jairo Odhiambo Aloka, e-mail: jairopeteraloka@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

The object of this research: The study examined the adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers on the bases of school categories in selected secondary schools in Kenya.

Investigated problem: There are reported low levels of adjustment among readmitted teen mothers in secondary schools in Kenya as many of them perform poorly in academics.

Methods: The sequential explanatory design was adopted. A modified Student Adjustment to School Questionnaire (SASQ) and interview schedule were used to collect data.

The main scientific results: The findings indicated that there was a significant difference [$t(164)=4.22, p<0.05$] established in overall adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers between the two types of schools.

The area of practical use of the research results: This is for teacher counsellors, school principals and parents. School principals should be trained on comprehensive guidance and counselling skills so that they are equipped to provide support to the re-admitted teen mothers in schools.

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1. Introduction

Adjustment is seen as a way in which the individual attempts to deal with stress, tensions, conflict and meet their needs [1]. [2] opines that adjustment is the reaction to the demands and pressures of social environment imposed upon the individuals. Therefore, school adjustment involves an array of demands varying in kind and degree which requires a variety of coping responses or adjustments [3] and it comprises of academic, social, psychological and emotional aspects [4]. [5] considers social and psychological adjustment to be an element of the activities, the function of which is mastering relatively stable environmental conditions, solving repetitive typical problems through the use of the adopted ways of social behaviour, action. Thus, social adjustment includes student involvement in social activities, and satisfaction with the various aspects of lecture experience [6]. Adjustment among students is very important and studies have reported that if students are not able to normalize their state of mind to the potential challenges they might face in universities, there is bigger probability of refraining from their studies and it normally ends up in suicide [7].

Adolescent mother is defined as one who gave birth to their first child before the age of 20 years. The age 20 years' cut-off has been adopted by the World Health, and is used consistently in studies of adolescent motherhood [8]. Adolescent motherhood has become an important policy concern in many countries such as Latin America, which among others has the highest adolescent motherhood rates in the world [9]. [10] reiterates that teen motherhood makes teen mothers have more years of education and this later interferes with their work life. In Mexico, [11] found that teenage pregnancy decreases school attendance, years of educational attainment, and hours of work. It has also been reported that teenage mothers have higher levels of distress than their childless counterparts [12]. Their self-esteem is generally low and when an adolescent becomes pregnant, the psychological adjustment of pregnancy is added to the challenges in the transition of adolescence then life becomes unbearable to the teenage mother [13].

1.1. The object of this research

The study examined the adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers on the bases of school categories in selected secondary schools in Kenya.

1. 2. Problem description

According to [14], the teen mothers Kenyan secondary schools are usually forced to drop out due to ridicule, stigma and hostility faced from other students and teachers. When an adolescent becomes pregnant, the psychological adjustment of pregnancy and subsequent parenthood is added to the challenges in the transition of adolescence [15]. [16] adds that teenage pregnancy and parenting in teenage mother contemporaries is not always viewed positively. Different interventions have been implemented by governments to assist the teen mothers to return back to complete their schooling. [17] notes that if the teen mothers have to return back to complete their education, they need to be counselled in order to adjust to their new roles as mothers as well as psychologically, academically and emotionally, however many factors do affect their adjustment. Overall, there is evidence that programs can promote outcomes related to teen parents' self-sufficiency, although effects were typically small. The Education White Paper 6 of South Africa 2001, which addresses lifelong learning through education and training, emphasizes that all children and adolescents require support, respect and acceptance. Differences among teenage learners should be respected, whether they are age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV status or teenage pregnancy [18]. In Malawi, the return to school policy on re-admitted teenage mothers has been on since 1995, however it has been reported that the process of applications for re-admission takes more than a more than a year [17]. In Kenya, a gender and Education policy developed in 2003 made provision for re-admission of girls who become pregnant while still at school even allowing them to seek re-admission at different institutions, to avoid the girls from being stigmatized by their former schoolmates, as a result of pregnancy [19]. Thus, there is a policy by the Ministry of Education which allows teen mothers in Kenya to be re-admitted back to school to complete their education [20].

According to [3], the Kenyan return to school policy states that school girls who have given birth should be re-admitted back to school unconditionally and that they should be assisted by the school administration to avoid psychological and emotional suffering. The teen mothers are admitted in different school categories, single sex girls' only schools and mixed gender schools. However, there are reported low levels of adjustment among readmitted teen mothers in secondary schools in Kenya as many of them perform poorly in academics.

1. 3. Suggested solution to the problem

Literature on school adjustment among teenage mothers exists to a small extent in different contexts but it is scanty with varied findings. For example, [21] reported that rural and urban higher secondary school students differ significantly on social skills, anti-social tendencies, family relations, school relations and community relations. According to [22], the adolescent mothers of government schools have better adjustment as compared to adolescent mothers of private schools. Similarly, [23], study in the United Kingdom showed that there was a significant link between attending a single sex school and lower levels of truancy and the majority of males showed dislike of school and malaise. [24] revealed that there was no significant difference between adjustments of students residing either at urban or rural schools. [25] showed that on application of the school district fixed effects models, they found that single sex schools produced a higher percentage of graduates who attended two year junior colleges than those in co-educational schools. [26] reported that students from single sex schools were more likely to both declare and graduate in gender neutral majors than those from co-educational schools. [27] showed female participation increased in the single-gendered setting in competitive contact activities and it was concluded that competitive contact activities should be offered in single-gendered setting to allow female students the opportunity to enhance their participation.

In another study, [28] indicated that the personality of single sex students was more positive than the students in co-educational schools. Similarly, [29] showed that there was no difference in school adjustment of boys and girls students in Ahmedabad. [22] study reported that adolescents of government schools have better adjustment as compared to adolescents of private schools. [30] indicated that significant differences are observed among four schools on the academic and emotional factors of adjustment. Similarly, [26] found that, women from single sex schools were more likely to declare gender neutral majors but were not different from their co-educational peers at graduation.

In Kenya, there are several cares of teen mothers in schools. In one sub-county in Western Kenya, there are numerous teen mothers readmitted in secondary schools whose age brackets fall between 12 to 18 years [3]. The teen mothers are re-admitted back to school in response to the Kenyan government directive on the implementation of the return to school policy for girls.

The present study.

The present study examined differences in adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers on the bases of school categories in selected secondary schools in Ugenya-Sub-County of Kenya.

Research hypothesis.

The null hypothesis was therefore stated as follows:

H_0 : *There is no significant difference in adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers on the bases of school categories in selected secondary schools in Ugenya-Sub-County of Kenya.*

2. Materials and methods

2. 1. Research design

The sequential explanatory design was adopted in this study. This design is highly popular among researchers and implies collecting and analyzing first quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases within one study [31]. In sequential explanatory design, the quantitative method is conducted in the first stage, followed by the qualitative approach [32]. The qualitative data and their analysis refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth [33].

2. 2. Research participants

This research was conducted between the months of January to July 2017. A sample size of 242 teen mothers re-admitted in secondary schools in Ugenya sub-county of Kenya were obtained using saturated sampling technique. In addition, 3 teacher counselors and 3 principals were selected using purposive sampling technique for interviews. The three principals were selected because it is in their schools that had the highest number of re-admitted teen mothers in school. The sample size of 6 participants for qualitative data was deemed appropriate as [34] states that in qualitative research a sample of 6–10 are enough for interviews.

2. 3. Research tools

A modified Student Adjustment to School Questionnaire (SASQ) was used to obtain data on adjustment among re-admitted teen mothers. This scale includes dimensions study are personal/emotional, academic, social and academic adjustments. There were a total of 40 items and the response scale format was a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. In addition, interview schedule was also used to obtain qualitative data from principals and Heads of guidance and counselling in schools. Two Experts in Psychology from one public university in Kenya ascertained the face, construct and content validity of the questionnaire.

2. 4. Procedure

Ethical clearance was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI) in Kenya and the Ethical Clearance Certificate Number (NACOSTI/P/16/55487/12452) was issued. Permission to conduct the main study was obtained from the principals of the selected secondary schools in Ugenya sub-county of Kenya. On the day of data collection, the teen mothers were invited into the school counselling rooms where they were briefed of the study, and conditions of ethical considerations well explained to them. The Questionnaires were then issued to them to complete after which the filled in questionnaires were collected. A follow up interview session was held with the heads of guidance and counselling and school principals. The right to participation in the study was ascertained because the participants who accepted to participate in the study signed consent forms.

2. 5. Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages with the help of Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Inferential

statistical test, the Independent samples *t*-test was used to compare the adjustment of teen mothers on the bases of the two school categories. To ascertain the effect of the independent variable (school category) on the dependent variable, adjustment among teen mothers, the effect size (Eta squared) was calculated. An effect size is simply an objective and (usually) standardized measure of the magnitude of observed effect [35]. The determination of effect size is important because it indicates the relative magnitude of the differences between means or the amount of total variance in the dependent variable that is predictable from the knowledge of the levels of the levels of the independent variable in a given research [36]. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic process.

3. Results

3. 1. Respondents' bio-data

The study sought to establish the types of schools where the respondents came from; this was important because school type was regarded to be influential on the adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers in schools. The results are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1
Re-admitted teenage mothers Respondents' Bio-data

Respondents	Type of school	Girls' only schools	Mixed gender (co-educational) schools	Total
Group A	<i>n</i> =98	20	78	98
	<i>f</i> (%)	20.4	79.6	100
Group B	<i>n</i> =68	13	55	68
	<i>f</i> (%)	19.1	80.9	100
Total	<i>n</i> =166	33	133	166
	<i>f</i> (%)	19.9	80.1	100

The study explored the adjustment level of re-admitted teenage mothers in single sex school and co- educational schools. It was reported that mixed (co-educational) secondary schools had the bulk of re-admitted teenage mothers who took part in the study; nearly four of five 78 (79.6 %) of category A respondents were from mixed secondary schools and only a negligible 20 (20.4 %) were from girls' schools. This was replicated in category B respondents, where a majority of 55 (80.9 %) of them was from mixed secondary schools. In overall, only 33 (19.9 %) of all the re-admitted teenage mothers who took part in this study were from girls secondary schools. The study investigated whether there were differences in adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers in secondary schools category.

3. 2. Results of Descriptive Analyses

This was done by testing the null hypothesis that:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers in selected secondary schools in on the basis of school category.

To ascertain this hypothesis, the study used an independent sample *t*-test to investigate whether there was any statistical significant difference in adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers on the basis of the school category. In this study, the two variables used are school type and level of adjustment. An independent-samples *t*-test indicates whether there is a significant difference in the mean scores for the teenage mothers in girls and mixed school differ significantly in terms of their adjustment levels. The results of descriptive analyses are presented in **Table 2**.

The results in **Table 2** shows that teenage mothers who were re-admitted to girls' schools had a higher adjustment in Academics ($M=2.26$, $SD=0.71$) than teenage mother who were re-admitted in mixed secondary schools ($M=1.47$, $SD=0.66$). This was also evident in the other two aspects of adjustments; psychological and social. On the contrary, re-admitted teenage mothers in mixed schools reflected slightly higher emotional adjustment scores than their counterparts in girls' schools. Nonetheless, in overall, re-admitted teenage mothers from girls' schools had higher mean overall adjustments ($M=2.41$, $SD=0.41$) than teenage mothers from mixed schools ($M=2.07$, $SD=0.41$).

Table 2
Mean Adjustments given Category of School of Re-admitted Student Mothers

Adjustment Aspects	School Category	N	Mean±	±Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Academics Adjustment	Girls only	33	2.26	0.71	0.12
	Mixed	133	1.47	0.66	0.05
Emotional Adjustment	Girls only	33	2.41	0.31	0.05
	Mixed	133	2.48	0.44	0.03
Psychological Adjustment	Girls only	33	2.14	1.01	0.17
	Mixed	133	1.79	0.85	0.07
Social Adjustment	Girls only	33	2.82	0.56	0.09
	Mixed	133	2.55	0.80	0.07
Overall Adjustment	Girls only	33	2.41	0.41	0.07
	Mixed	133	2.07	0.41	0.03

3. 3. Hypothesis Testing

To confirm whether the differences indicated in the descriptive analysis is statistically significant the independent-samples t-test was conducted. The independent variable, school category was categorical (girls’ school and mixed school), while the dependent variable (overall level of adjustment) was continuous. The independent-samples t-test result is represented in **Table 3**.

Table 3
Independent-Samples t-test Results between School category and Overall Adjustment in Re-admitted Teenage Mothers

Title	Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
Overall Adjustment	Equal var. assumed	0.026	0.87	4.22	16	0.00	0.34	0.080
	Equal var. not assumed	–	–	4.22	49.20	0.00	0.34	0.080

From **Table 3**, given that the Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances was not significant ($p>0.05$) the assumption of equal variances was attainable. Hence, from the row of equal variances not assumed, it was evident that there was statistically significant difference [$t(164)=4.22, p<0.05$] established in overall adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers between the two types of schools. Since a statistical significant difference was established, the null hypothesis that, there is no statistically significant difference in adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers in selected secondary schools in Ugenya-Sub-County on the basis of school category” was is rejected. Hence, it was concluded that there is indeed significant difference in overall adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers between girls’ and mixed schools, with teenage mothers from girls’ school being more adjusted than their counterparts from mixed school.

3. 4. Evaluation of the effect size

To assess the importance of the findings it was necessary to calculate the ‘effect size’ or ‘strength of association’. The effect size indicated the relative magnitude of the differences in means of adjustment of re-admitted teenage mother between the two types of schools. In other words, the effect size described the ‘amount of the total variance in the level of adjustment among the re-admitted teenage mothers, which is predictable from knowledge of the category of school of the re-admitted teenage mother. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, is given by:

$$Eta\ squared = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + (N1 + N2 - 2)} \text{ was } 0.098.$$

Hence, from the $Eta\ squared=0.098$, it is concluded that the proportion of variance of the level of overall adjustment of re-admitted teenage mother that was explained by the school type

was fairly large. Nearly ten percent (9.8 %) of the variance noted in the level of overall adjustment was affected by type of the school, with the re-admitted teenage mothers in girls' school favored to be better adjusted than their counterparts in mixed secondary schools.

3. 5. Independent samples T-Test results

The study sought to investigate the existence of significant differences in the various aspects of adjustment between the re-admitted teenage mothers from the two types of schools. This was done using independent samples t-test whose results is summarized in **Table 4**.

Table 4

Independent-Samples t-test Results between School Category among Re-admitted teenage mothers in the Four Aspects of Adjustment.

Aspects of adjustment		Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Difference
Academic adjustment	Equal variances assumed	0.09	0.75	6.06	164	0.00	0.79	0.13
	Equal var. not assumed	–	–	5.78	46.51	0.00	0.79	0.14
Emotional adjustment	Equal variances assumed	3.54	0.04	–0.83	164	0.41	–0.06	0.08
	Equal var. not assumed	–	–	–1.0	66.98	0.03	–0.06	0.06
Psychological adjustment	Equal variances assumed	0.49	0.48	2.04	164	0.04	0.35	0.17
	Equal var. not assumed	–	–	1.84	43.94	0.07	0.35	0.19
Social adjustment	Equal variances assumed	4.72	0.03	1.83	164	0.06	0.27	0.14
	Equal var. not assumed	–	–	2.26	68.47	0.02	0.27	0.12

The findings of the t-test in **Table 4** indicate that there is significant difference [$t(164)=6.06$, $p<0.05$] in academic adjustment among re-admitted teenage mother between different school categories. Thus, the finding confirms that there is significant difference in level of adjustments of re-admitted teenage mother between the school categories in all the four facets of adjustment. Similarly, a statistical significant difference was also established in emotional [$t(66.98)=-1.0$, $p=0.031$], psychological [$t(164)=2.04$, $p=0.042$] and social [$t(68.47)=2.26$, $p=0.027$] adjustments.

3. 6. Qualitative Results

Qualitative data was also obtained from participants on the influence of school category on the adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers in selected secondary schools. Most participants reported that the teen mothers in mixed secondary schools or co-educational schooling had difficulties in adjustment to school. However, the teen mothers who were in girls only schools were reported to have adjusted appropriately on a relative note. This implies that the school environment and type contributed a lot to adjustment among the teen mothers. As narrated by the principal 2. In this regard, excerpts from participants were:

According to the teachers girls in co-educational schooling suffer more teasing and taunting than those who attend all girls' schools they therefore prefer to go to different schools after having a baby.... (Principal, 2).

Principal 2 indicated that girls in mixed schools suffer because there is a lot of teasing going on there and that the teenage mothers would prefer to join other schools. The respondents from single sex schools however had a totally different experience to share as indicated below:

I first joined a mixed school, but I can say being in girls' school has helped me a lot as I am able to cope well. Most students are very supportive and this makes our lives a bit easier here. We are treated well and at times given time off occasionally to go see the baby... (Teen mother, 2).

On the other hand, another teen mother reported that girls in single sex schools coped well and that other girls were more supportive of them making their lives easier. This meant that the

girls in single sex school had a better environment for adjustment compared to girls who were in coeducational schools. One HODG&C asserted:

In our school, since it's mixed, the teen mothers face a lot of challenges in such an environment since the boys tease them. Though if one is reported then we take action as a school. However, cases of teasing them are very common...(Teacher Counselor, 3).

Similarly, teacher counsellor, 3 seem to concur with principal, 2 that the school category influenced adjustment among the teen mothers. The boys in most cases mocked teen mothers and this made them suffer psychological torture and hence low self-esteem in school. Therefore, school type is a contributory factor to adjustment among teen mothers.

4. Discussion

The study investigated difference in adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers in selected secondary schools in on the basis of school category. The findings indicate that there is a significant difference in overall adjustment of re-admitted teenage mothers between girls' and mixed schools, with teenage mothers from girls' school being more adjusted than their counterparts from mixed gender schools. Further analysis on the effect size, (9.8 %) of the variance noted in the level of overall adjustment was affected by type of the school, with the re-admitted teenage mothers in girls' school favored to be better adjusted than their counterparts in mixed gender secondary schools. Qualitative findings indicated that re-admitted teenage mothers in mixed secondary schools had difficulties in adjustment because they suffered torture and abuses from the boys who knew their status as teenage mothers, compared to girls in girls' only secondary schools. This finding agrees with In agreement, [21] reported that on dimensions of social adjustment, rural and urban higher secondary school students differ significantly on social skills, anti-social tendencies, family relations, school relations and community relations. Similarly, [22], agreed that the adolescent mothers of government schools have better adjustment as compared to adolescent mothers of private schools. Similarly, [25] found that girls in single sex girls' schools produced a higher percentage of graduates who attended two year junior colleges than those in co-educational schools. Moreover, [28] indicated that the personality of single sex students was more positive than the students in co-educational schools. [22] study also concur that there is significant difference between adjustment of adolescent students of Government and private schools. On the contrary, the findings disagree with [24] which revealed that there was no significant difference between adjustments of students residing either at urban or rural schools. In agreement, [29] also showed that there was no difference in school adjustment of boys and girls students.

Limitations of the study. The study has one limitation in that it was done in public secondary schools and private institutions were not studied.

Prospects for further research. Future studies could focus on both private and public secondary schools. Future studies could focus on the role of the teenage father on psychological well-being of the re-admitted teenage mothers.

5. Conclusions

The study concludes that the re-admitted teenage mothers in girls' schools were more adjusted than their counterparts in boys' secondary schools. The study concluded that re-admitted teenage mothers in single sex girls' only schools adjusted better than their counterparts in mixed secondary schools. Most participants reported that the teen mothers in mixed secondary schools or co-educational schooling had difficulties in adjustment to school. However, the teen mothers who were in girls only schools were reported to have adjusted appropriately on a relative note.

This finding implies that purely girls' school has more conducive environment for re-admitted teenage mother adjustment than mixed schools. Therefore, the girls in mixed schools needed more support to adjust. The implications of the study finding are that school type is very significant in the adjustment of readmitted teen mothers in secondary schools. The study recommends that the school principals should be trained on comprehensive guidance and counselling skills so that they are equipped to provide support to the re-admitted teen mothers in schools.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in relation to this paper, as well as the published research results, including the financial aspects of conducting the research, obtaining and using its results, as well as any non-financial personal relationships.

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