The experiences and psychological challenges of Senior High School adolescent student mothers in Jaman South Municipal, Ghana.

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Abstract
Adolescence pregnancy of students in second cycle schools in Ghana is on the ascendency. The study explored the experiences and psychological challenges of Senior High School adolescent student mothers and their coping strategies in the Jaman South Municipal in the Brong-Ahafo Region, Ghana. The study employed a phenomenological design. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to select 15 adolescent student mothers for the study. Data were analysed using thematic and content analysis. The study revealed that psychological challenges of adolescent student mothers included humiliation and shame, stigmatization and ridicule as well as feeling of guilt. The study found that some adolescent student mothers adopted conscious avoidance of incisive remarks, vicarious experience as well as self-determination as coping strategies. It is recommended that Guidance and Counselling Units in high schools should liaise with school authorities to provide support systems that will enable adolescent mothers adjust and cope with academic work in school. Also, parents and significant others around these young mothers should support to enhance their adjustment processes in school and at home.

Key Words: psychological challenges, adolescent, student mothers, coping strategies

Introduction

Parenting can be thought-provoking and hectic experience for any person, but it can be especially difficult for adolescent student motherswhen they combine maternal roles with academic activities (Thomson, 2010; Krugua, Mevissena, Münkela & Ruitera, 2016).Adolescence is the transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood between ages 10 and 19, during which people undergo extensive biological, psychological and social changes (World Health Organization (WHO), 2009; Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2015; Dick & Ferguson, 2015). Similarly, amongst the various ethnic groups in Ghana, adolescence is the pre-pubertal stage after childhood within which the individual attains physical, sexual and social maturity (Awusabo-Asare, Kumi-Kyereme & Biddlecom, 2007). This period is often associated with sexual socialisation and experimentation, and through these, pregnancy may occur. According to Save a Child Report (2000), adolescent motherhood refers to birth in a young woman, who has not reached her twentieth birthday when the birth occurred, regardless of whether the woman is legally married or otherwise.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), 16 million births occur among mothers between ages 15 and 19 years and this number of births constitute 11% of total births worldwide (WHO Fact Sheet, 2014). Approximately 95 percent of these births occurred in less developed countries (United Nations Population Fund, 2013). About 14 million pregnancies occur across Sub-Saharan Africa, with nearly half of them occurring

among women aged 15 to 19 years (UNFPA, 2013; Loaiza & Liang, 2013; Dick & Ferguson, 2015). Report indicates that one out of every ten births that occur in Ghana is from an adolescent mother (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).The Jaman South District also faces a similar situation. For instance, the Jaman South District recorded 73 cases of adolescent pregnancies among aged 10 to 14 between 2014 to 2016 whiles recording 1,467 among ages 15 to 19 years within the same period. This constitutes 16 percent of the total recorded cases of pregnancies in the district (Jaman South Health Directorate, 2016).

Early parenting is overwhelm with psychological implications on adolescent student mothers because they are overwhelmed with difficulties in meeting educational, physical, emotional and financial needs (Paronjothy, Broughton, Adappa & Fone, 2008; Gyan, 2013; Dlamini, 2016). It has also been realized that teenage mothers often blame the school for bringing more stress than solutions and also often reveals their emotional instability in the form of shame, guilt, anger, self-doubt and dissatisfaction with their parental role (Nkwanyana, 2011; Gasa, 2012). They mostly experience unpleasant emotional pressures and receive negative feedback from the academic setting, implying that education is the first priority (Moghadam, Khiaban, Esmaeili & Mahvash, 2017).

Similarly, parenting among adolescent student mothers are mostly characterised with shame, disgrace, stigmatisation and loneliness, which results in gradual school drop-out. This often lead to complex situations where these mothers may have low self-esteem and suffer stress making school environment uncomfortable. Adolescent mothers may experience feelings of fear with the sudden awareness of motherhood while they are in schools. They may also find it relatively difficult to juxtapose schooling with parenting and therefore undergo psychological stress as a result of negative reactions from their parents, teachers and the community at large (Nkwanyana, 2011). Therefore, backup structures both in and out of school to support these teenage mothers are indispensable (Nkani, 2012). A study conducted by Ahorlu, Pfeiffer and Obrist (2015) found social support as a resource that adolescent mothers draw on to cope with the challenges of adolescent motherhood and schooling.

Contextual factors interact with the young mother's psychosocial immaturity, putting her at greater risk than older mothers for poor maternal role adaptation and impaired maternal-child interaction (Hanna 2001; Otoo-Oyortey & Pobi 2003; Smith-Battle 2003; Awusabo-Asare et al. 2004; Maputle, 2006). Furthermore, marital or cohabiting relationships between adolescents are often short-lived, causing additional stress and disruption (Sigler, 2006; Oyefara 2009; Mbugua, 2013). Adolescent student mothers may enthusiastically embrace the simultaneous roles of mother and student; however, undertaking these two roles, even in ideal conditions, can pull the person in two directions (Springer, Parker, & Leviten-Reid, 2009). Combining motherhood and studying without compromising the activities of either of them is a great predicament for student mothers (Moghadam, Khiaban, Esmaeili, & Mahvash, 2017). These young mothers transcend to adulthood without the customary support of kinship groups and community institutions (Awusabo-Asare et. al., 2007). This situation imposes a large burden on their shoulders to strike a balance between academic work, motherhood and crucial stage of development.

The Ghana Statistical Service (2012) reported that 12 percent of girls between 15 and 19 years have ever given birth and one out of every ten births that occur in the country is from adolescent girl (Gyan, 2013; GSS, 2012). The Jaman South district recorded 1,540 and this constitutes approximately 15.7% of the total recorded cases of teenage pregnancies (Jaman South Health Directorate, 2016). Similarly, a study conducted in Jama South District by Zango (2013) found that about 3 percent of adolescent girls are out of school due to teenage pregnancy and parenting. This phenomenon has been identified as a key setback facing young girls (Hutchinson, Magnani, Macintyre, Mehyrar & Brown, 2005). Though pregnancy and child birth are supposed to be happy events, to most adolescents, due to unplanned pregnancy and lack of support, this whole experience becomes a nightmare (Antwi-Bosiakoh, 2013). The high incidence of childbearing among adolescents in Ghanaian society needs a research that develops and refines theories and practices related to adolescent maternal roles and psychological implications (Manzini 2001; Otoo-Oyortey & Pobi 2003; Awusabo-Asare et al. 2004; United

Nations Population Fund, 2012). The psychological challenges of adolescent student mothers are still understudied in Ghana and have set the stage as a springboard for the present study.

Beyond this gap, the researcher has lived at the study area for over twenty-five years and has observed that adolescent student mothers are either out of school, or seem not too passionate about their academic work, some of them appear to be unhappy on campus. The observation led the researcher to interact with some adolescent student mothers in Senior High Schools in the study area. The interaction revealed that some of these young mothers had no one to cater for their babies, lack financial support and often times their classmates and even teachers embarrass them in school.

Unfortunately, little attention has been given to psychological implications associated with adolescent motherhood, especially among student mothers in Ghana. To a greater extent, studies on the psychological challenges of student motherhood in Ghana have focused mainly on the student mothers at the tertiary level (Opong-Mensah, Ahiatrogah & Deku, 2008; Adusah-Karikari 2008; Benefo, 2009; Nordzi, 2013; Esia-Donkor, 2014; Eduful, 2016). Apparently, research findings for student mothers at the tertiary level cannot be wholly applied to adolescent student mothers at the Senior High Schools because of contextual differences. As a result, little is known about psychological challenges confronting adolescent student mothers in Senior High Schools and the various strategies adopted to cope with these challenges.
This study thus sought to;
   i.   explore the psychological challenges of adolescent student mothers and
   ii.   examine how they cope with these challenges in senior high schools in the Jaman South Municipal.

Methodology
The study adopted the qualitative research approach underpinned by interpretivism. The interpretive paradigm is a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning. It assumes that understanding of the social world can be deepened when a conscious effort is made to explore the experiences, feelings, and viewpoints of the research participants (Creswell, 2003; Denscombe, 2010; Kusi, 2012). The interpretive design enabled the researchers to create social reality through meaningful interactions with the adolescent mothers. Descriptive phenomenological design helped gain access to adolescent student mothers' lives which are their world of experiences. This design was used because it stimulated the perception, perspectives, and understandings of challenges of adolescent student mothers while emphasising the richness, breadth, and depth of those experiences. It afforded the researchers an opportunity to elicit thick descriptions of the subjective experiences of adolescent student mothers and also gave insight into the phenomenon.

The sample for the study was 15 adolescent mothers. The first criterion for inclusion was to select adolescent girls who have ever given birth and are still in senior high schools in the district. This was because several studies have argued that adolescent mothers who are still schooling face strenuous multiple roles of being mothers and learners (Mohase, 2006; Lynch, 2008; Davies, 2000; Musili, 2015). The second criterion was to select adolescent student mothers whose babies are under the age of five. The reason is that children under the age of five required more attention as compared to children over five years (Maynard, 1999; Zeck, Bjelic-Radish, Haas & Greimel, 2007).

Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were therefore employed to select participants for the study. Firstly, the participants were purposively selected from all the senior high schools for the study. The recruitment was done through appropriate gatekeepers in the respective schools such as housemistresses and school counsellors. The participants were recruited purposively because they were perceived to be rich in information. Finally, snowball technique was employed to expand the list of potential participants. With this, the index participants aided in identifying other adolescent mothers they knew. This process continued until the required number of adolescent student mothers was identified for the study. The participants were selected from Drobo SHS, Our Lady of Providence SHS and Jejemereja Presby SHS from the study area.

Interview guide was used for data collection. Interview guide is neither fully fixed nor fully free and is perhaps most flexible (Kusi, 2012). It had two parts: Section 'A' and Section 'B'. The section 'A' elicited information on socio-demographic characteristics of adolescent student mothers whilst the section 'B' focused on psychological challenges associated with adolescent student mothers and associated coping strategies. The face and content validity of the interview guide were ensured through expect review and judgment.

The entire data collection process lasted 21 days (three weeks). Principal activities that went into the data collection were community entry process and field work. To ensure consistency during the interview, an interview protocol was developed to guide the study (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2003). Prior to each interview, the researchers re-introduced themselves, described the research purpose, category of interviewees, steps being taken to maintain confidentiality and their anonymity, and notified them about the duration of the interview. Averagely, each interview lasted for 50 minutes. Participants were also informed that the period of interaction would last for about 2 to 3 months as they could be contacted after the interview for further clarification or verification.

Adequacy and Trustworthiness of the Study
Trustworthiness in qualitative studies is of much essence as it aids researchers to justify findings and interpretations in order to truly reflect participants experience and are reliable. In this study, trustworthiness was ensured by utilizing Guba and Lincoln's criteria (1982). The elements of the criteria include credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability.

The analysis was guided by an inductive content analysis approach. This approach offered an opportunity to thoroughly read the data before analysing in order to identify major themes as well as sub-themes (Thomas, 2003; Kusi, 2012). The principal themes that emerged were developed. After that, sub-themes were created and assigned codes. In ascribing quotations to the participants, the adolescent mothers were represented by pseudonyms. The serial numbers for the adolescent mothers were generated with initials of adolescent student mothers (ASM).

For instance, quotations from views raised by the participants were used to support the findings. For example, a comment like *"…They make your family look disgraced, shameful and paint a picture that there is a problem and that there is no discipline in the family. Your neighbours wonder about you as a teen mother and as you walk in the streets there are fingers pointing at you describing you as they deem it fit" (ASM12, 2017)*was coded *"Humiliation and Shame"* Moreover, to attribute comments to the individual adolescent school girls, the interview transcripts were assigned some serial numbers. For example, Interviewees were assigned ASM 1-15.

Findings
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants
The ages of adolescent student mothers ranged from 15 to 19 years whilst the ages of their children ranged from 1-4 years. The ages at which the participants gave birth ranged from 15 to 17 years. Five (5) of them gave birth at the age of 15 years, seven (7) of them gave birth at the age of 16 years whilst the remaining three (3) gave birth at the age of 17 years. With respect to the number of children, each of the adolescent mothers had one child and the ages of their children ranged from 1 to 4 years old. Nine (9) of them were day students while six (6) of them were in the boarding house. With regard to their marital status, thirteen (13) of the participants were separated whilst two (2) were still together in relationships with the fathers of their babies.

Summary of Themes
This section presents the results from thematic analysis of transcribed data. In all, the findings have been categorised into two (2) themes with seventeen (7) sub-themes. Details of the themes and sub-themes are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 1: Summary of Themes

Themes	Sub-Themes
Psychological Challenges	Humiliation and Shame
	Stigmatisation and Ridicule
	Loneliness in School
	Feeling of Guilt
Coping Strategies	Taking inspiration from vicarious experiences
	Avoidance of biting comments
	Self -determination to complete school

Psychological Challenges and School Life of Adolescent Student Mothers
The interaction with adolescent student mothers indicated that they experienced psychological challenges in so many ways. The most common forms of psychological challenges faced include humiliation and shame, stigmatisation and ridicule, loneliness in school and feeling of guilt.

Humiliation and Shame
Giving birth to a child while still in school does not grant a girl high status; instead, they are looked down upon and disrespected. The shame and embarrassment are mostly extended to their entire family. Some of the adolescent student mothers admitted that their situation has exposed their families to public ridicule and humiliation. The shame and disgrace attached to teenage motherhood tended to cling to the teen mother and their families. This participant commented that:

> "...They make your family look disgraced, shameful and paint a picture that there is a problem and that there is no discipline in the family. Your neighbours wonder about you as a teen mother and as you walk in the streets there are fingers pointing at you describing you as they deem it fit" (ASM12, 2017).

Stigmatisation and Ridicule
The adolescent student mothers reported being stigmatised because of having children and being in school at the same time. Adolescent student mothers were stigmatised which perpetually affected their psychological state. Some of them confessed that their classmates were calling them by the names of their children. This name-calling sometimes intimidated some of them to the extent that they had to report to the school authorities for redress. This participant recounted that:

> "My classmates eventually replaced my name with the name of my daughter and it was quite disturbing. They do call me 'Maame Rose' or 'Bervilin Maame'. I know this situation has hurt me a lot but I know one day I will reap some benefit from the child. This child can fetch water for me" (ASM01, 2017).

For some adolescent student mothers, name calling coupled with teasing and mocking initiated sudden outbursts of anger and frustrations:

> "Some of my mates will at times want to embarrass me. Whilst in class, they will come and call me 'Maaame' (mother) go and breastfeed your baby, your baby is crying. This makes me annoy and despair"(ASM01, 2017).

It was revealed that adolescent student mothers tended to be passive in class for fear that should they make a mistake or answer a question wrongly, they might be laughed at by their colleagues. Most of the students always wanted to hear what adolescent student mothers would say and mock them for giving wrong answers. At times,

some boys made it a habit to laugh at teen mothers, thus teen mothers remained silent learners. One teen mother recounted that:

> *"I always keep quiet in class because some boys whether you get it right or wrong will still mock you, complimenting you as a queen, mother of all"* (ASM04, 2017).

Again, actions and inactions of teachers in certain ways worsened the plight of adolescent student mothers in the school. One participant had this to say:

> *"Teachers used to send me a lot but since I gave birth they hardly send me on an errand. There was a young teacher in the school; he once said to me that he can't send a mother"* (ASM05, 2017).

To this effect, stigma is an attribute that is deeply discrediting and puts adolescent student mothers in the position of shame and disgrace. The adolescent student mothers felt stigmatised and not fully humane people and as such, they found themselves in an unfriendly environment. This disadvantaged them from learning, socialising and concentrating in school. Therefore most adolescent student mothers out of frustration left school and opted to stay with their families who understood their behaviour and accepted them for who they were.

Loneliness in School

It was found from the interview that adolescent student mothers were predisposed to being lonely largely because of the negative feedback from fellow pupils and other people around them. Most of the friends shun them for fear of being classified in the same category with teen mothers. One of the participants commented:

> *"It is difficult to join them when they are conversing because of the kind of things they talk about. They don't talk about things in relation to child caring, weighing and marriage. I hardly join them and I have to be alone"* (ASM13, 2017).

Feeling of Guilt

Most of the participants had a sense of deep regret and guilt for being student mothers. The interview unfolded guilty feelings among most of the participants who envisaged that they had done something unpardonable. Some of the participants felt guilty of their actions because they had set a bad precedence for their siblings. One of the participants indicated that she felt guilty about her situation and lamented that:

> *"Hmmm…. I feel that I am a bad girl. I think a lot about this situation and at times feel disappointed. This is because my aunt who is now looking after me in school promised to send me to Canada when I complete JHS but this situation halted the whole arrangement so I think a lot"* (ASM11, 2017).

Another participant added that aside the fact that she feels guilty about her situation, she has set a bad precedent for the young siblings in the family. She said that:

> *"Mmmmm… it pains me a lot that I couldn't wait for the right time before giving birth. It actually pains me too much. I feel much guilt within me because I have set a bad precedence for my younger siblings"* (ASM07, 2017).

The findings showed that adolescent student mothers faced diverse psychological challenges. Adolescent pregnancy is mostly unplanned; and as a result, adolescent student mothers react to the challenges differently. The teenage mothers have to come to terms with the unexpected demands of being an adult, and in some cases, they may also have to deal with disapproval and dissatisfaction shown by parents, teachers, and classmates. It is indeed a great challenge to adolescent student mothers because this disrupts their interest in schooling and forces them out of school to make ends meet.

Coping Strategies Employed By Adolescent Student Mothers
Adolescent student mothers employed several strategies to cope with the psychological challenges that come with having children and schooling concurrently. Specifically, they adopted self-determination, avoidance of biting comments as well as drawing inspiration from vicarious experiences.

Taking Inspiration from Vicarious Experiences
Most of the adolescent student mothers recounted that seeing other people in similar situations excelling strengthens them. Therefore, effective learning through observation of the consequences of actions of other people influences the adequacy and competence of adolescent student mothers to cope with parenting and psychological challenges. Some of the participants mentioned during the interview that they took solace from friends and sisters in similar situations who have gone through school successfully. One of the adolescent student mothers recounted that:

> *"I encouraged myself and also took solace from those in similar situation who have gone through successfully in school. If others have succeeded in similar situation then I have to rise to fulfill my dreams. This has made me focus so as to achieve my aim" (ASM04).*

Similarly, this participant had this to say:

> *"The same thing happened to the younger sister of my mother. She gave birth when she got to JHS but eventually she is now a nurse at Sunyani Regional Hospital. This motivated me to study hard as all is not lost" (ASM15)*

Avoidance of Biting Comments
The narrations of adolescent student mothers identified avoidance of biting comments as a strategy they used to cope with psychological challenges. Some of the student mothers intentionally denied and ignored their friends' sarcastic and biting remarks.The following statements express how some participants utilised avoidance to cope:

> *"Mmmm, if I had decided to think about all those biting remarks I would have been dead by now so I decided not to mind them. This helped me to confront all the unnecessary emotional challenges (ASM01, 2017)*

Self-determination to complete school
It was also realised that some of the student mothers were able to motivate themselves in order to carry on their daily routines. Some of the student mothers determined to pursue their education just to restore self-respect and also to put their enemies to shame. This intrinsic motivation was of much essence in their lives as espoused by one of them:

> *"…I want to become a nurse as my elder brother that is why I didn't stop schooling when my friends were making fun of me" (ASM06, 2017).*

Another student mothers indicated :

> *"I was eager to go back to school to shame my enemies and recoup self-respect. I encouraged myself and also took solace from those in a similar situation who have gone through successfully in school" (ASM14, 2017).*

Discussion
Psychological Challenges of adolescent student mothers
It was noted from the study that adolescent student mothers faced various psychological challenges both in school and the communities in which they live. The study found that adolescent student mothers as well as their families were humiliated, disgraced and shamed. Their families failed to unleash emotional support because of the embarrassments they brought to their families. As a result, they encountered psychological problems which may limit their academic progression in school. However, when they are not well treated by immediate personalities particularly family members, adverse implications could result. This finding confirms studies that

found that adolescent pregnancy and its associated motherhood bring shame to the entire families (Gyan, 2013; Barmao-Kipanui, Kindiki & Lenan, 2015). It has similarly been noted that shame and disgrace incurred by adolescent motherhood to their families has the tendency to impede emotional support from significant others (Moonga, 2014). It has also been observed that teenage mothers often blame the school for bringing more stress than solutions and also often reveals their emotional instability in the form of shame, guilt, anger, self-doubt and dissatisfaction with their parental role (Gasa, 2012). This may contribute to high rates of depression, poor school performance, and emotional instability as similarly observed by an earlier study (Sodi, 2009).

The study again established that adolescent student mothers were stigmatised, mocked and ridiculed by their teachers and classmates in school which left them in an awkward situation. Most of them recounted being given nicknames by their classmates and teachers which affected their concentration in class. Name-calling could intimidate some of them to the extent that they will feel uncomfortable in school. This finding confirms a study by Shaningwa (2007) that noted that teenage mothers did not see the school as a welcoming environment because both fellow learners and educators no longer called them by their names. This has the tendency to intimidate and make them resentful which may steadily affect their contribution in class (Dlamini, 2014). This situation could belittle, humiliate and embarrass the student mothers; hence, making the school environment not conducive for them.

It was discovered that adolescent student mothers felt lonely and isolated. Most of their friends shunned them for fear of being classified in the same category with teen mothers. Consequently, they were no longer interested in mingling with their peers who were not mothers. This finding confirms some prior findings which noted that having a baby influenced a teenage mother to feel lonely and isolated and no longer willing to interact with their peers (Rickel, 1989; Omar, Hasim, Muhammad, Jaffar, Hashim & Siraj, 2010; Moonga, 2014). They perceive them as adults who can cater for themselves and expected to assume adult responsibilities (Lema, 1997; Atumbe, Taiwo& Gray (2010). Adolescent student mothers are to have good family relationships, cordial and warm relations from classmates and teachers so as to have a good learning and enabling environment to complete school.

Moreover, it was realised that adolescent student mothers felt guilty about their situations. This finding confirms a study by Kids Health (2011) which observed that adolescent mothers felt guilty and worried because they had the conviction that their younger siblings might copy the act and become teenage mothers. It is emphasised that adolescent student mothers should be motivated to see themselves as smart, confident and strong to help them meet the challenges of schooling. This study finding is contrary to the study findings by Mlambo and Ritcher (2005) that adolescent student mothers had the impression that childbearing gives a woman a high status and they were therefore bound to have children. For some categories of adolescent mothers, pregnancies may be socially condemned Eghan, 2015). However, for others, pregnancy can be a strategy for obtaining a husband or economic gain and can outweigh health risks and the loss of education and career opportunities (Henry &Fayorsey 2002;Otoo-Oyortey&Pobi 2003; Awusabo-Asare et al. 2004). Similarly, teenagers regard motherhood as a positive choice and a way to a more adult role (Bryant, 2006).

Coping Strategies by Adolescent Student Mothers
It was found from this study that adolescent student mothers employed so many strategies to cope with psychological derailments that came with parenting and schooling concurrently. Effective learning through observation of the consequences of actions of other people influences the adequacy and competence of student mothers to cope with parenting and psychological challenges. Most of the adolescent student mothers recounted that seeing other people in similar situations excelling well was motivating enough for them to study hard. Some of the participants mentioned during the interview that they took solace from friends and sisters in a similar situation who have gone through school successfully. Vicarious experience is a pathway to self-efficacy that is derived from seeing others act in a particular domain (Bandura, 1982; Bandura, 2002; Brown & Walsh-Childers, 2002). Adolescent student mothers drawn inspiration from people who have relatively succeeded in education in similar situations. They had personal sense of pride and the sense that they can accomplish this

same task. This study finding confirms a study finding by Apfel and Seitz (1991) that vicarious experience can change the negative perception of the difficulty of the task and consequently revitalise the adolescent student mothers' confidence. Similarly, Hockenbury & Hockenbury (2007) have observed that when adolescent student mothers observe the success of other people similar to themselves, it has the tendency to bolster their confidence. Vicarious experiences can be used to bring about attitude modification. The behaviour of role models is particularly influential. People, who experience an aversive reaction such as anxiety or tension, are less likely to expect success (Ray, 2009).

Additionally, this present study found that adolescent student mothers avoided biting comments that seem to belittle or humiliate their status. This study confirms a study by Sodi (2009) that noted that in order to cope with adolescent motherhood; they resolve to avoid situations that were found to cause distress. The avoidance of sarcastic remarks that had a tendency to cause distress enables them to live a comfortable and meaningful life in the school. Furthermore, it was noticed that adolescent student mothers were self-determined to pursue their education in whatever way possible just to restore self-respect. Some of the student mothers were determined to pursue their education just to restore self-respect and also to put their enemies to shame. This study confirms a study by Grant & Hallman (2008) that teenage mothers who returned to school after the pregnancy were determined to do whatever to succeed with their second chance. Vincent (2009) and McNeeley (2008) similarly asserted that most of the teen mothers forced themselves to study though they had less support from the school, parents, and classmates. This helps adolescent student mothers manage their way successfully through challenging task of motherhood and academic work.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that parenting among adolescent student mothers make life more complicated when they add demands of the academic roles to childcare and household chores. In such situations, it was established that adolescent student mothers go through distress in the hands of their teachers and classmates in school. They felt stigmatised and humiliated and find themselves in an unfriendly environment in the school. In an attempt to overcome all these, they adopted self-determination, avoidance of incisive biting remarks coupled with drawing solace from vicarious experiences in order to cope effectively with psychological implications associated with schooling and parenting. It is therefore, recommended that Guidance and Counselling Units in high schools should liaise with school authorities to empower adolescent student mothers and provide academic and social support systems to help them adjust into the school system. This will help in the smooth integration of adolescent student mothers and result in improving psychological outcomes of these young mothers.

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