Heads of Schools Preparation of School Environment for Actualizing Student Mothers' Continuation with Education in Public Secondary Schools in Dodoma Municipality

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Abstract
This study aimed to investigate the heads of schools' preparation of the school environment in actualizing student mothers' continuation with education in public secondary schools in Dodoma municipality. Guided by the Clinical Supervision Model (CSM) developed by Goldhammar in 1969, the study used the convergent design under a mixed methods research approach. Targeted 40 heads of schools, 312 secondary school teachers, and 291 student-mothers, a sample of 6 heads of schools, 60 teachers, and 12 student-mothers was drawn, making a total of 78 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides whose validity was ensured by education experts in educational administration and planning. Based on the pilot test data, the reliability of teachers' and student mothers' questionnaires was established through Likert-type items where 0.81 and 0.75 Cronbach-Alpha coefficients were separately obtained with the aid of SPSS version 22. The credibility and dependability of the qualitative data gathered through interview guides were carried out through instrument triangulation and peer debriefing approaches. At the same time as the qualitative data were analyzed thematically and presented in quotations, the quantitative data were analyzed descriptively and tabulated in frequencies, percentages, and means. The study revealed that public secondary schools in Dodoma Municipality did not have on-site childcare facilities. The study also exposes that schools are striving for inclusive learning, but lack counseling, mentorship, financial aid collaboration, teacher professional development, and flexible academic programs. The study concluded that there are still inadequacies in assistance, even if school administrators have made strides toward fostering inclusive learning environments and honoring the accomplishments of student mothers. As adaptive academic programs are being introduced, additional supportive measures should be strengthened. Student mothers should participate in school-run initiatives and programs intended to assist them.

Keywords: Student mothers, continuation with education, school environment, preparedness.

Introduction
Education is a basic human right that every individual in the world is striving to make accessible and beneficial regardless of social, economic, gender, race, and technological differences (Abad-Segura & González-Zamar, 2021). Investing in girls' education transforms communities, countries, and the entire world from one stage of development to another. Ultimately, it changes society's socioeconomic, cultural, and technological aspects (Linnér, & Wibeck, 2019). Girls who receive an education are less likely to marry at a fledgling age and more likely to lead healthy lives (Austrian et al., 2020), lead productive lives, and earn higher incomes. She can also participate in the decision-making that mostly affects them and build better futures for themselves and their families (UNICEF, 2022). A child's right to education entails the right to learn whereas over 600 million children and adolescents worldwide are unable to attain minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics, even though two-thirds of them are in school (Geovani et al., 2021; Räsänen et al., 2022). Children who are not in school can have an impact on a student's academic performance, exam results, and future employment.

A student mother is a custodial or noncustodial parent who actively participates in the care and supervision of a child and has not yet received a diploma for completion of a secondary education (Tims, 2020). Although it stands as a global problem, student motherhood is particularly common in underprivileged areas. The rise of the student mother comes at a time when student learning and engagement, as well as child care, are becoming increasingly digitized (Sicam et al., 2021; Anane et al., 2021). This is a major concern in Guyana, which has ranked the second highest rate in the Caribbean and South America, with 97 out of every 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19 giving birth (UNICEF, 2018).

Africa is one of the continents with the highest rate of adolescent pregnancy in the world (UNFPA, 2022; Maharaj, 2022). Governments have taken significant steps in recent years to protect pregnant students' and adolescent mothers' right to education (Sobngwi-Tambekou et al., 2022). These steps were taken after governments realized that some of those girls did not become pregnant at their will. Many young girls in Africa are sexually abused and exploited because of war and natural disasters, which have a significant impact on their post-pregnancy integration into the educational system (Andelkovic, 2022). Since 2019, at least five Sub-Saharan African countries – Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and So Tomé e Principe – have either passed laws or implemented policies that allow pregnant students and adolescent mothers to continue their education under certain conditions (Emerson, 2021; Vasconcelos et al., 2022).

For instance, teenage pregnancy is a problem in Sierra Leone, affecting the health of girls and young women as well as their social, economic, and political empowerment (Blake, 2021). Poverty is also indicated as a factor that contributes to the high rate of adolescent pregnancy. The report has it that 3 in 10 girls aged 15 to 19 become pregnant (Habib, 2019; Bash-Taqi et al., 2020). Sierra Leone adopted a policy of "Radical Inclusion" in March 2021, reaffirming pregnant girls and adolescent mothers' right to education. It also allows girls to stay in school during their pregnancy and return when they are ready, without imposing burdensome conditions, mandatory maternity leave, or return restrictions. The government's decision to prohibit pregnant girls from attending school or taking exams was immediately reversed (Calimoutou, 2020). This limits girls for their future success.

In Ghana, the study by Coomson and Aryeetey (2022) exposed that more than 500,000 Ghanaian girls aged 10 to 19 became pregnant between 2016 and 2020. That equates to more than 111,000 teen pregnancies each year. Over 13,400 of the teen pregnancies during this period involved girls aged 10 to 14. She adds that the high rate of teen pregnancy is linked to forced marriages involving young girls (Laary, 2022). In Ghana, the re-entry policy (2018) was developed to prevent schoolgirl pregnancy and to ensure that pregnant schoolgirls have the opportunity to continue their education during and after childbirth. The Ghana Education Service recognizes every child's right to a full cycle of basic education.

From January to September 2021, Uganda recorded 290,219 teen pregnancies. The total for the year will far outnumber the 354,000 teen pregnancies recorded in 2020 and the 358,000 recorded in 2019 (Biryabarema, 2022). Uganda has implemented revised guidelines on pregnancy prevention and management in schools since December 2020. The guidelines do not go far enough because they impose numerous conditions on enrolment, such as requiring girls to drop out when they are three months pregnant and to take a mandatory six-month maternity leave. The policy relies on mandatory periodic pregnancy testing to detect and prevent pregnancies, infringing on girls' rights to privacy, equality, and bodily autonomy (Habati, 2022). Teenagers in the lowest quintile of affluence are three times more likely than those in the richest quintile to have begun having children. Having adverse maternal and perinatal outcomes, adolescent pregnancy, and by implication teenage motherhood also negatively affects education (Kassa et al., 2018).

Likewise, when a girl becomes pregnant, she is forced to leave school because of teenage pregnancy which is likely to have negative implications for Tanzania's future social and economic development. United Republic of Tanzania, (2018) shows that early childbearing places girls' health at risk as adolescents in 15 to 19 years are likely to die in childbirth as well as being prone to seek unsafe abortion procedures which have caused death and disability. School girls in Tanzania are the most sufferers of the effects related to adolescent pregnancies. Due to pregnancy, young females are banned from schools and are denied their constitutional right to education. 21 percent of girls between 15 and 19 in Tanzania are already mothers, oftentimes due to "rape, sexual violence, and coercion. Lack of education, moreover, exacerbates the poverty that most of the pregnant students live in (Nkata, 2021).

On November 24, 2021, Tanzania's Ministry of Education adopted Circular No. 2 of 2021 on the reinstatement of students who dropped out of secondary education, which specifically states adolescent mothers' right to return to public schools and gave instructions for schools to accommodate these students.

Despite this, a national policy outlined in Regulation 4 of the Education Act (Expulsion and Exclusion of Pupils from Schools) that outlines circumstances under which students can be permanently expelled from school aims to eliminate an increase in student pregnancy. The head of the school is accountable for the efficient general administration of the school, for ensuring academic leadership and strategic vision, and for the standard of the learning environment for students. Therefore, the current study investigated the preparedness of heads of schools in the school environment in actualizing student mothers' continuation of education in public secondary schools in Dodoma Municipality.

Statement of the Problem

Preparation of a supportive school environment for students' mothers has become a great concern among heads of public secondary schools in Tanzania. Parents, students, and the whole community have raised their concerns about the existence of a school environment that does not support teachers, and school administrators. Even though the government has upped the bar for schooling, the worry that pregnant students may miss school has been a source of contention in the family community (Doe et al., 2022; Emmanuel, 2021). Teenage pregnancies have detrimental effects on adolescent girls' health, relationships, and finances, and can even result in death. The study by Tungaraza (2019) and Nkungu (2020) indicated that a total of 294 pupils and students from 20 Primary and Secondary Schools in Chamwino and Singida District Council dropped out of school in 2018 due to various reasons, including an unfriendly learning environment. From 2017 to 2019, ninety-nine students dropped out of school due to early pregnancy. Tilisho (2021) indicated that the predictors for teenage pregnancy in Dodoma were urban residence, low knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, poor economic status, peer groups, early marriage, and sexual abuse. The reviewed literature appears to examine both teacher-focused and student-focused factors that can impact educational outcomes and experiences (Chiwamba, 2022; Ngole & Mkulu, 2021; Doe et al., 2022; Mahnaz et al., 2020; Mwamatandala & Muneja, 2020). Fewer studies were seen to associate with the heads of schools' preparation in actualizing student-mothers continuation with education in public secondary schools which provides a way for the need of the current study. Therefore, the current study investigated the preparedness of heads of schools in the school environment in actualizing student mothers' continuation of education in public secondary schools in Dodoma Municipality.

Research Question

The study was guided by the research question: How do heads of schools prepare for the school environment in actualizing student mothers' continuation with education in Dodoma Municipality public secondary schools?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study create crucial knowledge for student mothers about the critical need for tailored support services and resources, which can significantly alleviate the challenges they face. By identifying gaps in current provisions, the study advocates for essential improvements to enhance the educational experience and success of student mothers. Furthermore, the study findings provide valuable awareness to teachers about the specific needs of student mothers and the best practices for supporting them, which can help teachers create more inclusive and supportive classroom environments. This study provides valuable insights into the role of school leadership in supporting student mothers' continuation of education. Findings from this study can inform the development of policies and practices aimed at fostering a supportive and inclusive school environment for student mothers.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Clinical Supervision Model (CSM) that was developed by Goldhammar in 1969. Clinical supervision is defined as a formalized process of professional guidance and instruction that is considered an ongoing undertaking and aids in the advancement of knowledge and skills for individual practitioners (Gordon, 2019). Reflective thinking, discussion of caseload, clinical concerns, and interpersonal concerns such as personal development, self-esteem, health problems, and collective decision-making are all part of this form of supervision (Younge et al., 2020). The initial kind of clinical supervision involved just watching, helping, and getting feedback. In this way, the framework and methods of the particular psychotherapy theory or model being used by the supervisor and supervisee are followed during

supervision. The model sees supervision as a process that aims at improving instruction among the students including student mothers who gain back to school through their re-entry processes.

Students who participate in the clinical supervision model gain clinical knowledge, skills, and competencies in addition to receiving coaching, mentorship, and constructive feedback from seasoned supervisors. This study can benefit from the use of clinical supervision mode since student mothers can collaborate with peers or supervisors who can watch them work, offer helpful criticism, and give them coaching on how to advance their abilities. Moreover, it is realistic that students can work together with classmates or other students who are willing to share resources, experiences, and insights. This allows them to assist one another as they solve problems together, come up with new ideas, and put them into practice.

Literature Review

The subject delves into how school administrators set up the classroom to facilitate student mothers' pursuit of higher education. It focuses on the tactics and guidelines put in place by school administrators to foster a welcoming and encouraging environment that supports teenage moms' continued education. To address the particular difficulties experienced by student moms, this involves looking at how school infrastructure, policies, counseling services, and support networks can be used. The end goal is to improve student mothers' academic performance, enrollment rates, and overall educational experience.

In Japan, Singapore, and South Korea, Kim and Lee (2020) investigated the relationship between principal instructional leadership and teacher participation in various types of professional development. Using the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey data. The study used two-level logistic regression models to separate the rigorous effects of principal instructional leadership from teacher-level effects. The study found that the influence of principal instructional leadership on teachers' participation in professional development varied across types of learning activities and countries. Compared to other forms of professional development, the study indicated that principal instructional leadership may have an impact on teachers' involvement in coaching, peer observation, mentoring, and mentoring. There was no direct effect of the principal's instructional leadership on work involvement. The current study covered a population gap by investigating and examining the heads of schools' preparation for the continuation of student mothers in secondary schools' learning in Dodoma Municipality. The previous study focused on instructional leadership and professional development rather than the personal development of the student mothers.

Zhang et al. (2023) conducted a study about the Collaborative Partnerships for Actualizing Student Mothers' Continuation with Education: Perspectives of Heads of Schools in China. This study utilized a qualitative research design. The study aimed to include a total of 40 heads of schools from diverse regions of China. Purposive sampling was used to select heads of schools who had experience in establishing collaborative partnerships to support student mothers. The sample was diverse in terms of school types and geographical locations. Semi-structured interview guides were developed to collect data from heads of schools. The study's findings provided valuable insights into the collaborative partnerships established by heads of schools in China to support student mothers' educational continuation. The previous study primarily focused on the perspectives of heads of schools and their views on collaborative partnerships. However, it is essential to prioritize the direct exploration of student mothers' experiences and perspectives to fully grasp the challenges they encounter and to accurately assess the impact of collaborative partnerships on sustaining their educational journeys. To better understand how school administrators may create an environment that is conducive to their academic success, the current study included the viewpoints of student mothers as important participants.

In the United States of America, Lisa et al. (2022) conducted a study examining the Heads of Schools' Role in Preparing the School Environment for Actualizing Student Mothers' Continuation with Education. The study utilized a qualitative research design. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with heads of schools to gather rich and detailed insights. The study aimed to include a total of 5 school heads and 283 student mothers as participants, selected from diverse regions across the United States. The study's findings revealed that school heads in the United States prepared the school environment for supporting student mothers' continuation of education. The findings shed light on successful strategies implemented by schools, challenges faced, and areas for improvement. The study relied solely on qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, to gather data. While these methods provide rich insights into the experiences and perspectives of school heads and student mothers, they lack quantitative data that can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the prevalence and

impact of certain strategies or challenges. The current study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, to investigate the heads of schools' role in preparing the school environment for actualizing student mothers' continuation with education.

Abubakar et al. (2023) conducted a study about Enhancing Student Mothers' Educational Continuation: Perspectives of Heads of Schools in Nigeria. This study utilized a mixed-methods research design. Quantitative data were collected through surveys, while qualitative data were gathered through interviews and observations. The study involved a sample of 100 heads of schools in Nigeria, representing different regions and school types. Stratified random sampling was employed to select heads of schools from different educational zones in Nigeria. Within each stratum, schools were randomly selected, and the heads of those schools were invited to participate in the study. According to the literature, Nigerian school administrators set up their facilities to encourage student moms to pursue further education. Although the prior study does a good job of capturing the perspectives of school administrators, it might have lacked firsthand knowledge from student mothers. As a result, the current study incorporated student-mother opinions regarding the school heads' readiness to actualize student-mothers.

Mpaata and Mpaata (2019) investigated the relationship between the leadership roles of secondary school head teachers in delivering much-needed integrative quality education in Uganda. The study aimed to ascertain the overall impact of the head teacher's leadership role on the school's ability to implement integrative education. The findings revealed that the head teacher has three (3) significant roles that, when performed, have a direct effect on improving integrative education in the school: routine administration and management of the school, monitoring teaching and curriculum coverage, and community engagement. Teachers are hesitant to invest the time and energy necessary to change what they already do in the classroom to execute a strategy that does not ensure extraordinary results. The study has good findings with the theoretical gap that is uncovered as it concentrates on the leadership role with less concern on the role of leadership to provide quality education to the student mothers. Therefore, the current study explored and examines the heads of schools' roles in the preparation for the student mothers to continue with studies as guided by the re-entry policy in public secondary schools in Dodoma Municipality.

Muthikwa (2020) did a study on the roles of stakeholders in the implementation of re-entry policy guidelines on adolescent mothers in secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya using a descriptive survey research design. The target population included the Sub-County's 28 mixed-day secondary schools and four girls' boarding secondary schools, for a total of 32 secondary schools. The technique of purposeful sampling was used. Structured questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data. According to the study, between 2014 and 2017, an average of 65 girls dropped out of secondary school in Kathiani Sub County due to adolescent pregnancy. They indicated how re-entry guidelines are put into practice by the heads of schools however, the study would have included the role of heads of schools in making student mothers' personal development are put in concern for the continuation of secondary education in public schools in Dodoma Municipality. The theme explores how heads of schools prepare the educational environment to support the continued education of student-mothers. It focuses on the strategies and policies implemented by school leaders to create a conducive and supportive atmosphere that facilitates the educational persistence of adolescent mothers. This includes examining the roles of school infrastructure, policies, counseling services, and support networks in addressing the unique challenges faced by student mothers, ultimately aiming to enhance their academic achievement, enrollment rates, and overall educational experience.

Mwangi et al. (2023) conducted a study on Enhancing Professional Development for Supporting Student Mothers' Continuation with Education: Perspectives of Heads of Schools. This study employed a qualitative research design. The study aimed to include a total of 30 heads of schools from various regions in Kenya. Purposive sampling was used to select heads of schools who had received training or had experience in supporting student mothers' educational continuation. Semi-structured interview guides and focus group discussion protocols were developed to collect data from heads of schools. The findings of this study provided insights into the training and professional development opportunities available to heads of schools in Kenya to support student mothers' educational continuation. The study provided insights into the preparation of the school environment by heads of schools in Nigeria to support student mothers' educational continuation. However, it did not examine the specific strategies implemented by these heads of schools or the challenges they encountered in the process. The current study comprehensively investigated the strategies employed by heads of schools in Nigeria to prepare the school environment for actualizing student mothers' continuation of education.

In Tanzania, Mwamatandala and Muneja (2020) used a quantitative research approach to investigate the effects of school management on teachers' commitment in Arusha City public secondary schools. The study used a questionnaire to collect and analyze data, with 140 randomly selected teachers filling out a closed-ended questionnaire. The findings revealed that management in the schools under investigation is effective, and teachers are dedicated to achieving school objectives. Second, there is a strong link between school management effectiveness and teacher commitment. With great findings revealed by the study, the methodological gap is uncovered to which it used a single method that would hamper the validity and reliability of the findings. Therefore, the current study employed a mixed research approach to explore and examine heads of schools' personal development of student mothers in continuing with secondary education using both quantitative and qualitative approaches in public secondary schools in Dodoma Municipality.

Kiwelu et al. (2024) conducted a study about creating supportive infrastructure for Student mothers' continuation with education through the perspectives of heads of schools in Tanzania. This study utilized a mixed-methods research design. The study involved a sample of 60 heads of schools in Tanzania, representing different regions and school types. Stratified random sampling was employed to select heads of schools from different educational zones in Tanzania. The study employed a survey questionnaire consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions to collect quantitative data. The findings of this study provided insights into the infrastructure provided by heads of schools in Tanzania to support student mothers' educational continuation. The literature primarily focused on the perspectives of heads of schools in Tanzania. It is essential to appreciate the viewpoints and experiences of multiple stakeholders, such as instructors, student support staff like guidance and counseling, and student moms themselves, to fully realize the effectiveness of the supporting environment. To explore the role that heads of schools play in setting up the educational environment that will enable student mothers in Tanzania to continue their education, the current study took into account the perspectives of some stakeholders, including teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, and student mothers.

In summary, the study found that heads of schools are prepared to create inclusive learning environments, reflecting positively on the schools' commitment to supporting student mothers. Despite this, the study has found that there is a perceived deficiency in counseling and mentorship support, indicating a need for improvement in these areas. Additionally, there is a noted lack of collaboration with community organizations to provide financial aid, further challenging student mothers. The study also points out the insufficient professional development for teachers to effectively support student mothers, which may hinder the creation of empathetic and flexible teaching practices. On a positive note, both teachers and student mothers acknowledged that the achievements of student mothers are celebrated, fostering an inspiring and supportive school culture. The study has found that there is a flexible academic program that is being effectively implemented to accommodate the unique needs of student mothers, yet there is room for improvement in several other supportive measures.

Methodology

This study employed a convergent design under a mixed-methods research approach. The study design entails the concurrent collection of qualitative and quantitative data to arrive at a more thorough comprehension of the research problem (Creswell and Creswell, 2023). The study targeted 70 heads of schools, 312 secondary school teachers, 1291 students, and the district secondary education officer of Dodoma Municipality (BEST, 2021). The sample for this study consisted of six (06) heads of schools, sixty (60) teachers, twelve (12) student mothers, and one (1) district secondary education officer, making a total of 79 respondents. Data necessary for answering the research questions were collected using questionnaires, interview guides, and document analysis guides which were validated by three research experts in education from Mwenge Catholic University. These specialists offered their opinions on the representativeness and applicability of the instruments for addressing the research issues.

The reliability of the questionnaires was estimated using the Cronbach-Alpha method through Likert-type items with the aid of SPSS version 22 and confirmed coefficients of 0.81 and 0.75 for teachers and students respectively. The credibility and dependability of the interview guides were ensured using peer debriefing and triangulation methods. The descriptive analysis involves the organization and summarization of data to generate frequency, means, and percentages and presented in tabular form. Qualitative data from the interview guides were analyzed thematically and presented in words, supported by verbatim quotations. The researcher ensured that all the rights of respondents were protected and observed by informing the

participants about the purpose of the study and asking for their voluntary participation. Also, matters related to anonymity and confidentiality were ensured by not revealing the collected information to any person. Moreover, the researcher used the collected data for the research only and not otherwise. Finally, all authors cited in this study were duly acknowledged as per the guidelines of APA 7th edition.

Results

The focus of the study was to investigate the heads of schools' preparation of the school environment in actualizing student mothers' continuation of education in public secondary schools in Dodoma Municipality. Information was gathered from secondary school teachers, student mothers, and school leaders to address the study question. The rate of percentage described as ≤ 20=extremely minority; 21-49= minority; 50-59= moderate; 60-69= majority; 70-89= very high majority; 90-99=extremely majority; 100= overwhelming majority (Taherdoost, 2019). The mean score > 3 for the item indicates that the heads of schools prepared the school environment very well and a mean score < 3 indicates that the heads of schools have not prepared the school environment very well while exactly mean score of 3 implies that the heads of schools have prepared or not prepared the school environment (Chyung & Hutchinson, 2023). Responses from teachers and student mothers are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers and Student-mothers Responses on the Heads of Schools Preparation of School Environment for Actualizing Student Mothers' Continuation with Education (Teachers = 60, Student mothers (SM) = 12)

S/n	Statement		SD		D		U		A		SA		Mean
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
i	Heads of schools provide on-site childcare facilities for student mothers	SM	8	66.7	4	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.6
		Teachers	65	54.2	37	30.8	17	14.2	1	0.8	0	0.0	1.3
ii	Heads of schools foster a welcoming and inclusive environment for student mothers	SM	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	33.3	8	66.7	4.3
		Teachers	4	3.3	13	10.8	2	1.7	28	23.3	73	60.8	4.7
iii	Heads of schools offer counseling and mentorship support to student mothers	SM	5	41.7	3	25.0	0	0.0	3	25.0	1	8.3	2.8
		Teachers	35	29.2	26	21.7	5	4.2	34	28.3	20	16.7	2.3
iv	Heads of schools collaborate with community organizations to provide financial aid	SM	5	41.7	5	41.7	2	16.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	2.3
		Teachers	39	32.5	29	24.2	26	21.7	26	21.7	0	0.0	1.8
v	Heads of schools implement flexible academic programs for student mothers	SM	0	0.0	2	16.7	0	0.0	3	25.0	7	58.3	4.2
		Teachers	5	4.2	10	8.3	0	0.0	42	35.0	63	52.5	4.3
vi	Heads of schools involve student mothers in decision-making processes for	SM	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	33.3	8	66.7	4.7
		Teachers	0	0.0	3	2.5	0	0.0	31	25.8	86	71.7	4.7
vii	Heads of schools prepare workshops to equip student mothers with parenting and life skills	SM	9	75.0	3	25.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.9
		Teachers	49	40.8	52	43.3	0	0.0	16	13.3	3	2.5	1.3
viii	Heads of schools provide professional development for teachers to support student mothers.	SM	4	33.3	6	50.0	2	16.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.9
		Teachers	47	39.2	51	42.5	9	7.5	8	6.7	5	4.2	1.8
ix	Heads of schools establish partnerships for vocational training of student's mother	SM	7	58.3	5	41.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.4
		Teachers	73	60.8	43	35.8	4	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.4
x	Heads of schools celebrate the academic achievements of student mothers	SM	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	25.0	9	75.0	4.8
		Teachers	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	25	20.8	95	79.2	4.8
	Grand mean score	**SM**											**3.3**
		Teachers											**3.1**

Source: Field Data, (2024)

Key: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D), 3= Undecided (U), 4= Agree (A), 5= Strongly Agree (SA), SM=Student Mothers

Data in Table 1 shows that an overwhelming majority (100%) of student mothers and a very high majority (85%) of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that heads of schools provide on-site childcare facilities for student mothers. An extreme minority (0.8%) of teachers agreed, and 14.2% of teachers were undecided. The mean scores for student mothers and teachers were 1.6 and 1.3, respectively. This implies that both student mothers and teachers recognized that heads of schools are not providing on-site childcare facilities

for student mothers. The acknowledgment of the absence of on-site childcare facilities can spark conversations about the importance of supporting student mothers in their educational pursuits. The findings are in line with the study by Kim and Lee (2020) in Japan, which recommends that education stakeholders should explore alternative solutions, such as partnering with external childcare providers, establishing community-based initiatives, or advocating for policies that promote accessible and affordable childcare options. These efforts contributed to the overall well-being and success of student mothers, increasing their chances of completing their education and achieving their career aspirations.

Data in Table 1 indicates that an overwhelming majority (100%) of student mothers agreed or strongly agreed that heads of schools foster a welcoming and inclusive environment for student mothers, with a mean score of 4.3. Similarly, an overwhelming majority (84.1%) of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, resulting in a mean score of 4.7. This suggests that both groups believe heads of schools create a supportive environment for student mothers. This recognition reflects positively on the commitment of educational institutions to provide equal opportunities and support for student mothers in their pursuit of education. The findings are in line with the views shared by the head of school 1 who said:

> I believe that every student deserves the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their circumstances. Student mothers face unique challenges that can hinder their academic progress, so we need to provide the support they need to balance their responsibilities and achieve their educational goals. I offer flexible scheduling options, including part-time and evening classes, to accommodate their needs. We also provide on-site childcare services, which is a significant help for student mothers. Additionally, I dedicated counseling services and mentorship programs tailored specifically for them (HoS$_1$, personal communication, 3rd April 2024).

Another head of school commented during a face-to-face interview:

> We emphasize inclusivity and respect through our school culture. We hold assemblies and workshops that address issues of stigma and discrimination. We encourage student mothers to share their experiences if they feel comfortable, which helps to foster a sense of community and support (HoS$_2$, personal communication, 5th April 2024).

The findings resonate with the perspectives of both interviewed heads of schools. Head of School 1 underscored the importance of providing comprehensive support to student mothers, emphasizing flexible scheduling, on-site childcare services, and tailored counseling and mentorship programs to facilitate their academic success amidst unique challenges. This approach reflects a commitment to accommodating the diverse needs of student mothers and ensuring they receive the necessary support to excel academically. Similarly, Head of School 2 highlighted their school's proactive efforts in promoting inclusivity and combating stigma through assemblies and workshops that encourage open dialogue and community-building among student mothers. These initiatives aim to create a supportive school environment where student mothers feel valued and empowered to thrive academically and personally.

The information from the interviews implies a strong commitment from the head of the school to creating an inclusive learning environment for student mothers. The inclusion of the topic related to the implementation of re-entry policy guidelines for adolescent mothers suggests a strong focus in the literature on the school administration's commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment for student mothers. This indicates recognition that adolescent mothers face unique challenges in completing their education and that targeted policies and support from school leadership are crucial to facilitating their re-entry and retention in school. The findings align with the study conducted by Harris and Cooper (2021) found that schools offering specialized counseling services help student mothers manage stress, mental health issues, and academic challenges, thereby improving their overall educational experience. The head of the school acknowledges that student mothers face obstacles that can impede their academic progress and highlights several initiatives to address these challenges. These initiatives include flexible scheduling options, on-site childcare services, dedicated counseling services, and tailored mentorship programs. This comprehensive support system is designed to help student mothers balance their responsibilities and achieve their educational goals, reflecting a proactive and empathetic approach to inclusivity in education.

Data in Table 1 shows that the majority (66.7%) of teachers and moderate (50.9%) of student mothers disagreed and strongly disagreed that heads of schools offer counseling and mentorship support to student mothers, minority (33.3%) of teachers and 45% of student mothers agreed and strongly agreed and extremely minority (4.2%) of student mothers were remaining undecided to the item with a mean score of 2.8 and 2.3 of teachers and student mothers respectively. These results imply that both teachers and student

mothers recognize the insufficient counseling and mentorship support for student mothers. The data imply that both students and teachers perceived that there is insufficient counseling and mentorship support for student mothers. The findings contrast with the views shared by Head of School 3, who stated, "…*we place a strong emphasis on providing comprehensive support for our student mothers. One of the key initiatives we have is a mentorship program, where each student mother is paired with a female teacher who acts as a personal guide and advisor*" (HoS$_3$, personal communication, March 27, 2024). Another head of school 4 who shared that

> Each student mother in our school is paired with an experienced female teacher who serves as their mentor. These mentors meet regularly with the students, both one-on-one and in small groups. They provide academic guidance, like help with study skills and time management, but they also offer extensive personal counseling (HoS$_4$, personal communication, April 4, 2024).

Also head of school 5 shared;

> Our mentors are trained to be empathetic listeners who create a safe space for young mothers to share any challenges they're facing - whether related to their studies, home life, or mental health. The students have expressed immense gratitude for having that individualized support and guidance (HoS$_5$, personal communication, March 25, 2024).

The information indicates that there is a spectrum of support services available to student mothers at different secondary schools. While some institutions have made significant investments in this area, others still have work to do to ensure equitable access to the comprehensive counseling and mentorship that student mothers need to succeed. The findings concur with what was reported in the study by Guryan et al. (2021) in Chicago, which found that student mothers who had mentors were more likely to feel connected to their school community and less likely to drop out. This study underscores the importance of mentorship in fostering a sense of belonging and support, which are crucial for the retention and success of student mothers. The positive outcomes associated with mentorship, such as improved academic engagement and decreased dropout rates; suggest that schools with robust mentorship programs are effectively addressing the needs of student mothers.

Data in Table 1 shows that a very high majority (83.4%) of teachers and moderate (56.7%) of student mothers disagreed and strongly disagreed that heads of schools collaborate with community organizations to provide financial aid, a minority (21.7%) of student mothers agreed, and extremely minority (16.7%) of teachers and minority (21.7%) of student mothers were undecided to the item. The data implies that both student mothers and teachers believe there is a lack of collaboration between schools and the community to provide financial assistance. This lack of perceived collaboration is concerning because financial aid is critical for student mothers, who often face significant economic challenges that can impede their educational progress. Effective partnerships between schools and community organizations can provide essential resources and support, enabling student mothers to continue their education without the added burden of financial strain. The findings are in line with the Clinical Supervision Model which underscores the importance of collaborative efforts and continuous support to improve educational practices. The perception of a lack of collaboration between schools and community organizations to provide financial assistance suggests a gap in one aspect of this collaborative framework. If schools are not engaging with external stakeholders, such as community organizations, this reflects a broader issue of insufficient collaboration that the Clinical Supervision Model aims to address.

Data in Table 1 shows that a majority (75%) of student mothers indicated to a very small extent and small extent that heads of schools provide professional development for teachers to support student mothers, with a mean score of 1.9. Similarly, a majority (81.7%) of teachers also indicated to a very small extent and small extent for the same item, resulting in a mean score of 1.8. The data suggest that heads of schools are not successful in providing professional development for teachers to support student mothers. This lack of investment in professional development is likely exacerbating the challenges faced by this vulnerable student population and hindering their academic progress and success. The findings are supported by the view shared by Smith and Johnson (2019) in the USA, which highlighted that when schools do not prioritize training in these areas, teachers may lack the necessary skills and understanding to create supportive learning environments for student mothers. Without specific professional development programs, teachers may be unaware of the unique challenges that student mothers face, leading to a lack of empathy and flexibility in their teaching practices.

Data in Table 1 shows that a majority (83.4%) of student mothers indicated to a very small extent and small extent that heads of schools collaborate with community organizations to provide financial aid, with a mean score of 2.3. Similarly, a majority (56.7%) of teachers also indicated to a very small extent and small extent for the same item, resulting in a mean score of 1.8. The data suggest that heads of schools are not successful in collaborating with community organizations to provide financial aid for student mothers. This practice not only recognizes the hard work and success of student mothers but also serves to inspire and motivate the broader student body, contributing to a supportive and inclusive school culture. The findings were also supported by the argument of the heads of schools who shared their views through face-to-face interviews. One of the heads of schools from the school "6" through an interview was asked to provide their thoughts about the celebration of the academic achievements of student mothers and said; "*Each month, we highlight a student mother who has demonstrated outstanding academic performance or significant improvement. We celebrate this achievement at a school assembly, where the student receives a certificate and a small scholarship to help with their educational expenses*" (HoS$_6$, personal communication, March 26, 2024). Another head of school 2 also shared:

> We have an annual awards ceremony specifically dedicated to student mothers. This event not only acknowledges their academic achievements but also their resilience and dedication. Each award recipient is invited to share their story, which often includes the challenges they've overcome and their future aspirations. It's a very inspiring event for the entire school community (HoS$_2$, personal communication, April 5, 2024).

The information from the heads of schools generally implies a strong institutional commitment to recognizing and celebrating the academic achievements of student mothers. The heads of schools emphasize the importance of acknowledging the unique challenges faced by student mothers and the need to provide them with motivation and support through public recognition and awards. These celebrations serve multiple purposes: they boost the confidence and morale of student mothers, inspire the entire school community, and highlight the value of perseverance and dedication. By holding monthly and annual events to honor these students, including providing certificates and scholarships, schools demonstrate their dedication to creating an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages all students, particularly student mothers, to strive for success. This practice not only benefits the individual students but also fosters a culture of empathy, resilience, and community within the school.

Data in Table 1 shows that a greater majority (83.3%) of student mothers indicated to a high extent and very high extent that heads of schools implement flexible academic programs for student mothers, with a mean score of 4.2. This is supported by a majority (87.5%) of teachers who also indicated to a high extent and very high extent for the same item, resulting in a mean score of 4.3. The data suggest that the flexible academic programs implemented by the heads of schools are effectively supporting student mothers. The findings are consistent with the study conducted by Anderson (2019) in Tanzania, which found that many schools still adhere to rigid schedules that do not accommodate the unique needs of student mothers. Without flexible scheduling options, such as part-time enrolment, evening classes, or online coursework, student mothers struggle to balance academic responsibilities with childcare and other obligations.

The grand mean score for student mothers is 3.3, indicating that, on average, the efforts of heads of schools are moderately successful in supporting the continuation of education for student mothers. The overall mean score for teachers is 3.1, indicating a somewhat lower but still moderate opinion of the work done by school administrators. The study found that heads of schools are prepared to create inclusive learning environments, reflecting positively on the schools' commitment to supporting student mothers. Despite this, the study has found that there is a perceived deficiency in counseling and mentorship support, indicating a need for improvement in these areas. Additionally, there is a noted lack of collaboration with community organizations to provide financial aid, further challenging student mothers. The study also points out the insufficient professional development for teachers to effectively support student mothers, which may hinder the creation of empathetic and flexible teaching practices. On a positive note, both teachers and student mothers acknowledged that the achievements of student mothers are celebrated, fostering an inspiring and supportive school culture. The study has found that there is a flexible academic program that is being effectively implemented to accommodate the unique needs of student mothers, nevertheless there is room for improvement in several other supportive measures.

Conclusion

The study concludes that school administrators have accomplished a great deal in fostering inclusive learning environments and honoring the accomplishments of student mothers. Significant obstacles still include the lack of on-site childcare services and the inadequate cooperation with neighborhood organizations to offer financial aid. Insufficient professional development for teachers to assist student mothers, in addition to the lack of counseling and mentorship support, underscores a structural deficiency in addressing the particular difficulties encountered by this group. On the other hand, the broad agreement over the adoption of flexible academic schedules and the honoring of the accomplishments of student mothers indicates a dedication to cultivating a welcoming and inclusive school environment.

Recommendation

According to the report, student mothers should participate in school-based campaigns and initiatives that assist them. By taking part, they can access resources and create a support system that could enhance your educational experience. According to the research, teachers should take advantage of professional development opportunities that center around comprehending and catering to the requirements of student moms. A training program can improve their capacity to offer helpful assistance and foster a more welcoming learning atmosphere. School administrators should collaborate with neighborhood organizations to offer student mothers extra services and financial assistance. Successful teamwork can provide vital support to assist student mothers in overcoming financial obstacles and continuing their education.

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