

# Influence of Introversion Personality Trait on Social Adjustment among Re-admitted Teen Mothers in Kenyan Secondary Schools

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**Abstract** Teen motherhood is a major concern in the world. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of extroversion personality traits on social adjustment among secondary school re-admitted teen mothers in Rarieda Sub-County of Kenya. Eysenck's personality traits theory and Social comparison theory were used in this study. The study adopted a concurrent triangulation design. The study's target population of 217 consisted of all re-admitted teen mothers, 34 teacher counsellors and 34 deputy principals in the 34 day mixed secondary schools in Rarieda Sub-County. The sample size consisted of 149 teen mothers, 10 teacher counsellors and 10 deputy principals. Data collection tools were Eysenck personality questionnaire, social adjustment questionnaire and interview schedules. Validity was ensured by the assistance of the two university supervisor's judgement while reliability was ensured by the internal consistency technique and Cronbach's coefficient of  $r = 0.85$  was reported. Quantitative data was analysed by Pearson correlation while qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. The study revealed a strong negative correlation of  $-0.889$  between introversion personality traits on social adjustment among re-admitted teen mothers. The study recommended that Teacher Counsellors should adopt appropriate therapy techniques to assist the introverts and neurotic teen mothers adjust in school.

**Keywords** Influence, Introversion personality trait, Social adjustment, Re-admitted teen mothers, Secondary Schools Kenya

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## 1. Introduction

Teenagers are at a vulnerable stage in their development as they have to face and deal with many challenges. Becoming pregnant hinders teenagers from reaching their potential and dreams and might limit their future prospects. Lucker (2010) observed that, teen motherhood was a reality of the contemporary society. According to Lowen (2012), the United States of America (U.S.A) led in the rates of teen motherhood, whereas Japan and South Korea were the least affected. Gilda 2015 found out that among the 21 countries with complete statistics, the pregnancy rates among 15-19 years old was the highest in United States (57 pregnancy per 1000 females). The state of world population (2013) published by UNFPA reported that abortion rates among women below 20 years of age are significantly higher in Eastern European countries particularly Moldova and Romania, than in other sub-regions. In developing countries,

the Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest number of teen mothers (Were, 2007). Porta, (2010) further contented that, 53% of the girls in Sub-Saharan Africa were already pregnant by the age of 18 years. In Kenya, 13,000 girls leave school every year due to teen pregnancy and motherhood according to Centre for the studies of Adolescents (CSA, 2008).

Teen motherhood is threatening to impede Kenya's effort in attaining the Millennium Development Goal of Education. The increase in teen motherhood among students was critical because many of these girls either did not continue schooling or if they did, they attained poor grades which might lead the girl and her child to future poverty. Various interventions have been undertaken to address the gender gaps in the education sector created by the teen pregnancy and subsequent motherhood. In Kenya, there is a policy which allows teen mothers to be re-admitted back to school (Ministry of Education, Kenya, 2007). The Ministry of Education, Kenya, endeavours to eliminate gender disparities and promote social equity through provision of basic education to all. One of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology strategies to meet educational objectives was to increase the course completion rates

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through reduction of dropout rates and the introduction of the re-entry and retention education policy (Ministry of Education, Kenya, 2011).

Wekesa (2010), Kenya, observed that teen pregnancy and motherhood is a growing contributing factor to secondary school low performance and dropouts across nations as these pregnant and re-admitted teen mothers fail to adjust to social life in school. The attainment of basic education is one of the Millennium Development Goals for many Commonwealth countries. Kenya is one of the 189 countries which in the year 2000 committed to attainment of these MDGs by 2015 (Wesyanju, 2008). Kenya's efforts to attain these goals are thwarted by a number of factors including teen pregnancy and motherhood (Obanya, 2009).

The study was informed by personality theory which was developed by Eysenck (1990). Eysenck was a theorist who focussed on personality traits. Traits are broad behavioural elements that define who you are like calm or easily excited, (Eysenck, 1990). Eysenck described one's personality as a hierarchy of traits. At the top of that hierarchy we see broad primary characteristics, known as higher order traits. The few broad higher-order traits then determine several lower order traits. The lower order traits help to make up our habitual behaviours and our specific responses. According to Eysenck, personality traits are genetically inherited. The theory focussed on two dimensions of higher-order traits extraversion versus introversion and emotional stability versus neuroticism or emotional stability. Eysenck's (1990), Theory informed the study in that the personality traits dictate the direction and level of social adjustment since the traits are inherent to all human beings. Introverts are reserved hence not expected, not adjusted easily while neurotics are emotional hence expected to moderately adjust socially.

The social comparison theory was advanced by Festinger Leon in 1954 (Festinger 1954) which highlights comparisons between the self and others are a fundamental psychological mechanism influencing people's judgements, experiences and behaviour. This is a remarkably unique process which influences how people think about themselves, how they feel, what they are motivated to do, and how they behave (Mussweiler & Epstude, 2009). In a group set up, people compare themselves with others, in three dimensions. First, upward comparison where individuals compare who are thought to be slightly better off or superior to them. Others engage in downward comparison where people make comparison with others they consider as inferior or less fortunate (Suls, 2000). The theory informed the present study in that, the teen mothers would look at the other students who have not undergone teen pregnancy and try to compare themselves with them or compare with other teen mothers who have adjusted well to the teen motherhood. In downward comparison, the teen mothers with very low self-esteem in school or at home arising from attitudes towards their predicament and from generally unhealthy negative feelings could compare with those they consider are not coping very well.

Paramjeet and Sharma (2013) in India showed a significant relationship between personality trait exhibited and the performance of the students in teacher training programme. Narges and Abdollah (2012) showed that team athlete is more extroverted than individually athlete. The study also revealed that there is no significant difference between team and individually athlete in emotional intelligence and its sub-scales (emotional adjustment, emotional assessment and expression use of emotional and social skills). Simukonda (2012) showed that students who were introverts conformed more than extroverted students. Adeniyi and Okewole (2014) showed no significant relationship between personality traits and students' academic adjustments. Okoh (2008) at Delta University revealed that emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, works involvement were significant correlates and predictors of marital adjustment. Salami (2011) revealed that all the independent variables predicted adjustments. Mkoji and Sikalieh (2012) showed that the conscientiousness personality trait was the most predictive of job performance and followed by openness to experience, agreeableness and emotional stability.

Some reviewed studies used children of the ages between 3years to 6 years while the current study focused on re-admitted teen mothers of the ages between 15 years to 19 years to fill the gap in the reviewed literature. Other studies were on job performance adjustment and not social adjustment as in the current study. Moreover, the study was expatriates and not secondary students. Some other studies were on social intelligence and personality traits of teachers while the current study focused on social adjustment of re-admitted teen mothers to fill in the gap in the reviewed literature. Another study was on teachers and teen mothers as was in the present study. Another reviewed study focused on only male learners in India, it did not include re-admitted teen mothers which was the focus of the present study.

The plight of teen mothers as in the secondary schools as reported by Standard Newspaper's Team dated 10th August, 2014, Nyanza region was leading in Kenya with teen pregnancy and motherhood at 27%, source Ministry of Health. Rarieda Sub- County is one of the sub-counties within Nyanza region therefore it is accurate to state that teen pregnancy in Rarieda sub-county was alarming. In a study conducted by Nyanza Education Women's Initiative (NEWI) in 30 districts in former Nyanza province titled "Improving Girl Child Education for Sustainable Academic Performance" found out that due financial difficulties, girls see relationships with older men as the only way to meet financial needs. Fishermen, in the case of Homa Bay and Kisumu sugarcane workers in the sugar belt, and "boda boda" operators, are some of the people who prey on these girls and the result is myriad cases of early pregnancies leading to increased dropout rates from schools.

The Kenyan education policy on return to school and retention of teen mothers and teen pregnant girls formulated in 1994 and revised in 2009 does not address the issue of

social adjustment and the re-admitted teen mothers and does not specify how the policy should be implemented in schools. Information gap therefore exists between the re-entry retention policy; the Affirmative Action programmes and how the re-admitted teen mothers should be assisted to adjust socially to school life. There is a large number of teen mothers who go back to school to pursue education after giving birth. The existing education policies in Kenya of re-admission and retention (Ministry of Education, Kenya, 1994 and 2009) do not provide guidelines on how the re-admitted teen mothers should be assisted to adjust socially to school life. Due to this gap, many re-admitted mothers undergo adjustment problems like withdrawal, obtaining poor grades, temperamental and may drop out of school. This gap in education policy is what this study sought to fill by understanding it better.

## 2. Methodology

The Concurrent triangulation design was used to guide the study. The target population constituted 217 participants, that is, 149 re-admitted teen mothers in mixed day secondary schools in Rarieda sub-county, 34 teacher counsellors and 34 deputy principals in all the 34 mixed secondary schools. The sample size of the study included 149 re-admitted teen mothers in the 34 mixed day secondary schools, 10 teacher counsellors and 10 deputy principals. This was 30% of the population as recommended by Mugenda. (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2008). The present study employed saturated sampling technique to get the 149 re-admitted teen mothers because their population of 149 (Rarieda D.E.O.s Office, 2015), was adequate for the study. The 10 teacher counsellors and the 10 deputy principals were obtained by using purposive sampling technique. Eysenck's personality Questionnaire, Social Adjustment Questionnaire were used to collect data from teen mothers while Interview schedule was used to collect data from Teachers Counsellors. Responses in the questionnaire were recorded on a Likert – Scale such as the 5point Likert scale of strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and strongly disagree. For the purpose of this study the two experts (supervisors) pointed out some judgement on the instruments and also assessed the relevance of the content in the adopted questionnaires. The reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha and a reliability co-efficient of 0.85312 was obtained.

## 3. Results

The study sought to establish whether there is a significant statistical correlation between introversion personality trait and social adjustment among re-admitted teen mothers in Rarieda Sub County. Pearson Correlation was run between scores on introversion scale and scores on the social adjustment scale. The results are shown in the Table 1.

**Table 1.** Correlation between Introversion Personality Trait and social Adjustment

		Correlations	
		Introversion	Social Adjustment
Introversion	Pearson Correlation	1	-.889**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	106	106
Social Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	-.889**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	106	106

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The study findings in Table 1 revealed a strong negative correlation of -0.889 between introversion personality traits on social adjustment among re-admitted teen mothers at a significance level of 0.01. This implied that as the introversion personality significantly increased the tendency towards social adjustment decreased. This finding agrees with Paramjeet and Sharma (2013) in India which showed a significant relationship between personality trait exhibited and the performance of the students in teacher training programme. Narges and Abdollah (2012) also revealed that there is no significant difference between team and individually athlete in emotional intelligence and its sub-scales (emotional adjustment, emotional assessment and expression use of emotional and social skills. Simukonda (2012) showed that students who were introverts conformed more than extroverted students. That is, the introverted females also conformed more than introverted males and a positive relationship was established between the age of subjects and conforming behaviour. Adeniyi and Okewole (2014) showed no significant relationship between personality traits and students' academic adjustments.

Qualitative data from interviews carried out from teacher counsellors and deputy principals indicated that most introverted teen mothers who returned back to school took too long to socially adjust in school. Such students had few friends, were very selective in their interaction, were very quiet, didn't trust other students, and were very selective thus not easy to help. Such introverted girl was dependent, shy and did not engage themselves in communicating with others in school. The introverted girls were very aggressive in their behaviour and engaged in fight with other girls in school. They were very suspicious of others and this affected their social adjustment with other girls and teacher in school. Some participants reported that;

*"Introverts find it difficult to adjust and see themselves as victims. They coil and imagine that other people are talking about them"* (Deputy Principal, 1).

*"Introverts are not free to associate with others especially in academics"* (Deputy Principal, 2).

*"Introverted girls take time to adjust and in most cases they don't interact easily"* (Teacher Counsellor, 1).

*"Introverts are quiet and still quiet when they came back"* (Teacher Counsellor, 2)

The interviews indicated that the introversive personality nature of the readmitted teen mothers affected their social adjustment to school life negatively. This would later affect their academic performance and adjustment in school. This finding agreed with Paramjeet and Sharma (2013) who revealed that there was a significant relationship between personality trait exhibited and the performance of students in teacher training programme. Similarly the findings agreed with Uziel (2014) that men adjust better than women in the four personality dimensions.

In conclusion, the introverted teen mothers have poor adjustment techniques socially. This makes them withdrawn and quiet while in school. The study recommended that, Schools to adopt a policy for Teacher-Parent Collaboration as one tier of an intervention model to help teen mothers who are struggling with social and behavioural problems at school. Moreover, The Ministry of Education to ensure that guidance and counselling be strengthened by providing appropriate facilities to run the programme and posting of trained teacher-counsellors to head the departments for the programmes to be effective.

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