

**EXPERIENCES OF TEENAGE MOTHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BONDO
SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

MAUREEN AGOLA OKONDO

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DEDICATION

This project paper is dedicated to my late father Mr Okondo whose love for education motivated me to achieve this milestone.

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LIST OF ACRONYMES AND ABBRIVIATIONS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Child
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CRC	Convention on the Right of Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EFA	Education for All
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSE	Free Secondary Education
GoK	Government of Kenya
DAGAS	Department of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies
ICESCR	International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IEP	Individual Education Plan
KII	Key Informant Interview
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MoE	Ministry of Education
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation
NCPD	National Council for Population and Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SADC	Southern Africa Development Convention
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UIS	UNECISO Institute of Statistics
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child
UNFPA	United Nation Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

The study was a descriptive study with the main objective of exploring the lived experiences of teenage mothers after re-enrollment in public secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County. The specific objectives of this study were to: determine the factors that influence teenage mothers to re-enroll in public secondary school; find out the challenges teenage mothers who re-enter public secondary school face and; examine the coping strategies employed by teenage mothers who re-enter secondary school in Bondo Sub-County. The population for this study were teenage mothers in public mixed day secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County and the unit of analysis was an individual teenage mother attending public mixed day secondary school in the area. A qualitative approach was used in collecting and analyzing data while McClelland Need Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory guided the inquiry. The 15 respondents for the in-depth interviews as well as the key informants were selected through purposive sampling. Qualitative data collected were coded and analyzed thematically in line with the study objectives and verbatim quotes used to project the voices of the participants. The study findings indicate that factors that influenced teenage mothers to go back to school were among others family support, optimism, support from school and the existing government re-entry policy. The challenge that teenage mothers experienced included stigma, change in status, absenteeism, financial challenges, poor performance, having multiple roles among others. The main strategies that teen mothers employed to cope with their challenges were skipping school, leveraging on peer-to-peer support and depending on the school's guiding and counselling services. The study concludes that schooling teenage mothers are among the most vulnerable group of learners as motherhood throws into taking responsibility at an early age with multiple and conflicting roles and must be supported adequately to avoid high drop-out rates. The study recommends that the County Government and the other stakeholders should develop and deliver campaigns meant to sensitise the community members about the re-entry policy which would make students, teachers and community members understand the existing policy and how it protects the rights of teenage mothers. With this understanding, learners and teachers will appreciate and provide support to the young mothers who seek re-admission. The study suggests that there is a need for further research on the support services that teenage mothers are provided with at schools to support their retention and completion of education after re-enrollment in both mixed and single sex in the County.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the linkage between teenage motherhood and education. The chapter discusses conceptual issues associated with teenage motherhood and education from global, regional and local Kenyan perspectives focusing on how teenage pregnancy and motherhoods are perceived with the African and Kenyan contexts, the existing re-entry policies and the challenges thereof, the environment teenage mothers operate in as learners and how that affect their overall performance in their academic life. The chapter also presents the problems statement, research questions, research objectives, justification, scope, and limitations of the study and ends with an operational definition of key terms.

1.2 Background to the study

Motherhood is one of the most significant faces in many women's lives globally. For women in traditional societies, motherhood is not only considered critical to women's identity but also confers social status on women within the community (Walgwe et al., 2016). While motherhood is highly celebrated, teen pregnancy, also known as adolescent pregnancy, is often viewed as taboo and a misnomer (Gyan, 2013). In most societies around the world teenage pregnancy is often associated with social stigma and negativity, social isolation, and financial hardships, and can have devastating effects on a young girl who is not strong or mature enough to face the challenges that accompany unplanned and unwanted early motherhood. Teenage motherhood has been pointed out as having great health, social and economic outcomes on young women's lives since it occurs at an extremely critical women developmental stage (Darroch et al., 2016).

Across the globe, approximately 21 million girls aged 15-19 years get pregnant and out of this 12 million give birth annually (Darroch et al, 2016; UNFPA, 2017). It is also estimated that 2.5 million girls under the age of 15 give birth annually worldwide (UNFPA, 2017). The WHO further estimates that one in five girls in the world has started child-rearing or given birth by the age of 18 and, this figure rises to three in five girls in the poorest regions of the world (NCPD, 2020; WHO, 2016). Studies suggest that in developed and developing nations, girls living in poverty-stricken remote rural areas and urban slums with low levels of education and no sources of income are not only the most vulnerable but also are likely to become teenage mothers than those who are

educated, richer, and live-in affluent areas (WHO, 2016; UNICEF/Plan International, 2014). Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) leads in numbers of teenage pregnancies across the globe. It is estimated that 143 per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 years in SSA give birth annually, accounting for about 28% of the adolescent and teen mothers with 15% in Central and West Africa while Eastern and Southern account for 13% (NCPD, 2020; Dlamini, 2016).

In Kenya, like elsewhere in developing countries, teenage pregnancy is a widespread problem. The available statistical data show that over 380,000 teenagers aged between 12 and 18 years in Kenya become mothers every year (NCPD, 2020). Also, it is estimated that 98% of girls in Kenya who fall pregnant drop out of school (Global Childhood, 2020). The teenage pregnancy rate of 18.1% suggests that one in every five girls between the ages of 15 and 19 years is either pregnant with her first child or has already given birth (NCPD, 2020). A study by Plan International (2014) shows that in Homa Bay and Kilifi Counties the percentage of women aged 15-19 who have begun childbearing was 27.0% and 25.7% respectively. With 96 births per 1,000 births, Kenya is ranked as a country with the third-highest teen pregnancy rates in the world (Global Childhood, 2020; NCPD, 2020; UNFPA, 2017). The varied pregnancy rates show that whereas there is positive progress in reducing the numbers nationally, in other parts of the country such as shown above the rate has remained alarmingly high (Dlamini, 2016).

Teenage mothers face a myriad of social and economic challenges which not only jeopardizes their health and welfare but also lead them to drop out of school. Adolescent mothers also exhibit high levels of unemployment, low levels of literacy, poor health conditions for themselves and their children, hunger and starvation, homelessness, poverty, and inadequate access to reproductive and maternal health care services which make it hard for them and their children to live a decent life (Darroch et al., 2016). Teenage mothers not only face discrimination, social stigma, isolation, and rejection from family and community members but also nurse feelings of shame, embarrassment, pity as well as fear of the unknown, all of which discourage them from re-enrolling in school (WHO, 2012, UNFPA, 2013; Malopo et al., 2014; Mangaro, 2008). The issue of teenage pregnancy has received and continues to receive wide publicity in Kenya due to increased public concern over the sheer number of girls leaving schools with much of this occurring in remote areas and informal settlements in urban centres.

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood in Kenya are associated with high school dropout rates. This is attributed to several factors including to take care of their young children, given away for marriage to older men by their parents, parents inability to pay school fees, not valuing girl child's education, engagement of these girls in household chores and farming activities, a limited number of schools especially secondary schools in some rural areas, long-distance to schools and food shortages among other things (Darroch et al., 2016). However, there were inbuilt mechanisms that ensured that underage children did not get pregnant. For example, during the day girls worked with their mothers and boys with their fathers leaving little room for social interaction and sexual intercourse before marriage (Yardley, 2008).

In many traditional communities in Kenya, as is the case with other indigenous communities around the world, women were married early often to older men who became responsible for providing them with economic, social, and physical security. Children generally and girls were highly valued for their labour and contribution to the family by doing domestic chores, cultivating land, planting, and harvesting food as well as preparing to feed the family. Education was therefore considered to be a less important means of earning a livelihood both for boys and girls (Dlamini, 2016). However, since the advent of British colonialism education both for boys and girls has become an important aspect of modern living and parents are increasingly sending their children to school now.

Further, teenage pregnancy and motherhood are associated with many challenges. One such challenge is striking a balance between caring for the child and attending school. This double role is well evidenced with teenage mothers who re-enroll in day school after delivery (WHO, 2016). Many schools do not have mechanisms to support the teen mothers to reconcile the demands of these two competing responsibilities (motherhood and being a learner) (Darrochi et al., 2016). These challenges occur despite the existing school re-entry policy which has been designed to among other things support and protects these groups of mothers from shame and mockery, teasing and discrimination by all stakeholders including educators and learners (Darrochi et al., 2016; Dlamini et al., 2016). As a result, the few teenage mothers who re-enroll to school are subsequently forced to drop out again because of the heightened stigma, ridicule, and marginalization that they face while schooling. Thus, in a bid to seek legitimization for their pregnancies and childbirth,

teenage mothers opt for or are forced by their parents into early marriages (WHO 2016; UNICEF/Plan International 2014).

In Kenya, the school re-entry policy came into effect to ensure that teenage mothers continue with studies after childbirth. While previously adolescent girls who got pregnant were forced to leave school and return after one year of post-delivery, more often in a different school, today the law in Kenya now allows teen mothers to go back to school and continue studying immediately after childbirth and preferably in the same school (Dlamini, 2016; Darroch et al., 2016;). This policy follows other international frameworks that have been put in place to end teenage pregnancy and support teen mothers to continue with their education after childbirth. For instance, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948) provides for the right to education and free and compulsory elementary education (Yardley, 2008; WHO, 2016). Borrowing from the international frameworks, Kenya has ensured that the right to education is provided for in various Kenyan policies and instruments of legislation like the Basic Education Act (MOE 2013) that demands deliberate action to ensure every child has the right to free and compulsory basic learning. As a result, the Kenyan government introduced free secondary education (FSE) in 2008 as a measure to support the acquisition of basic education for children for purposes of increasing enrollment (MOE, 2013). Additionally, the government commitment to supporting teenage mothers has recently been seen in the launching of the national Campaign Against Teenage Pregnancies focusing on galvanizing communities on the need to end teenage pregnancies through awareness and advocacy (Darroch et al., 2016; Walgwe et al., 2016; UNFPA, 2017).

Bondo Sub-County represents one of the regions in Kenya with a higher number of adolescent mothers in Kenya (UNFPA, 2012). Recently, through government, civil society, faith-based organizations and other stakeholders, efforts included a singular focus on the girl child. As such a small but increasing number of teenage mothers in the sub-county have started to re-enroll in school. Studies in Kenya, indicate that these teenage mothers re-enroll in school, but their transition and completion rates are extremely low, and performance in national examinations poor citation needed. However, there has been no empirical study carried out in Kenya generally and Bondo specifically to explore the lived experiences of schooling mothers in secondary schools (UNFPA, 2017; Darroch et al., 2016). This study shade some light as to why teenage mothers drop out of school shortly after re-enrollment, record poor transition and completion rates. The study

sought to investigate and document the experiences of young girls re-enrolled in secondary school after early motherhood in Bondo sub-county.

1.3 Problem Statement

Teenage motherhood is a widespread problem in Kenya, especially in urban slums and rural areas, where a large majority of women and girls live in abject poverty and enjoy a lower status in the community than men. One of the most common and obvious consequences of teenage pregnancy is the loss of educational opportunities. It is estimated that over 380,000 teenage girls become pregnant and leave school every year (UNFPA, 2017; NCPD, 2020). Despite the existence of re-entry policies, teenage mothers are often rejected by good schools because they are seen as models of sexual immorality. A teenage girl who falls pregnant while schooling is often expelled or forced out of school when school administrators learn about the pregnancy and those who return to school are forced to seek admission elsewhere in day schools for them to combine schooling and childcaring roles (Darrochi et al., 2016; WHO, 2016). Further, a study by the Centre for Adolescent Studies indicates that teenage mothers are often reluctant to return to school because of the stigma of pregnancy and discrimination by teachers and peers. Lack of education not only deny these young mothers; access to opportunities and the ability to realize their full creative potential but also to equitably participate in the development process of their communities and country (Gyan, 2013; WHO, 2016; UNFPA, 2017).

Although the problem of teenage pregnancies and its influence on high school drop-out rates among adolescent girls in Kenya and elsewhere are relatively well-researched (UNFPA, 2017; UNICEF, 2014; WHO, 2012, 2016; Gyan. 2013; Dlamini, 2016) and understood in quantitative terms through such reports as the Kenya Population Situation Analysis, Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, situational surveys by the Centre for Adolescent Studies and individual researchers, there is scanty of evidence on the qualitative aspects. There are serious gaps in our knowledge on the experiences that teenage mothers who re-enroll in secondary schools and how these experiences impact their quest for education (NCPD, 2020; Darroch et al., 2016). Guided by this gap, this qualitative study seeks to investigate and document the experiences of teenage mothers who have re-enrolled in public secondary schools in Bondo-sub-county. Subsequently, this has become a major issue of concern for policymakers, development planners, scholars, and perceptive observers.

Despite adolescent motherhood being recognized as a major social problem in Kenya that affects the education of young women, no major study had been conducted in Kenya generally and Bondo Sub-County to explore and document the lived experiences of adolescent mothers in public secondary schools after re-admission. Equally, the factors that influence teenage mothers to re-enrol and the challenges they face in school had not been adequately captured in the existing research literature. This study delved into the realities of teenage mothers in secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County to understand what motivates them to go back to schools as well as their experience while schooling and mothering.

This study, therefore, sought to fill these lacunae by answering the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that influence teenage mothers to go back to public secondary school in Bondo sub-county?
2. What challenges do teenage mothers face in public secondary schools in Bondo sub-county?
3. How do teenage mothers cope with the challenges they face in public secondary schools in Bondo sub-county?

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives.

1.4.1 Overall objective

The overall objective of this study was to explore the lived experiences of teenage mothers after re-enrollment in public secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County

1.4.2 Specific objectives

1. To determine the factors that influence teenage mothers to re-enroll in public secondary school in Bondo Sub-County.
2. To find out the challenges teenage mothers who re-enter public secondary school face in Bondo Sub-County.
3. To examine the coping strategies employed by teenage mothers who re-enter secondary school in Bondo Sub-County.

1.5 Assumptions of the study

The study made the following assumptions:

1. That there were factors that influenced teenage mothers to re-enrol in public secondary school in Bondo Sub-County.
2. That the teenage mothers who re-entered public secondary school experienced challenges in Bondo Sub-County.
3. That the teenage mothers who re-entered public secondary school had adopted certain strategies to cope with the challenges they face after re-entering secondary school in Bondo Sub-County

1.6 Justification of the study

The increased number of teenage mothers returning to secondary school on the surface appears encouraging, but it is not without challenges. The dynamics of this phenomenon leading to the disruptions of teenagers' lives is not just a concern for Kenya but the world as well. The findings of this study add to the body of knowledge on education and adolescent sexual health specifically on impacts of teenage motherhood and education focusing on social relations within the school, homestead, and community levels. The study findings generate new knowledge that would fill the gaps in our knowledge and literature on the experiences of teenage mothers after re-enrollment in public mixed day secondary schools.

The findings of this research would contribute to the current discourses on re-entry policy and its efficiency and deficiency in addressing the unmet needs of making education accessible to teenage mothers, especially after birth. The findings of the study might be of interest to school administrators, parents, policy planners and makers, experts in the education sector, Civil Society, researchers, teachers, and other stakeholders promoting the education of girls with a specific focus on teenage mothers. The findings of this study might be used to inform interventions aimed at ensuring a conducive school environment for teenage mothers, equality of education between boys and girls. Knowing the factors influencing the re-entry of teenage mothers, challenges they face after re-entry and coping mechanisms provide a rich background for effective programming and implementation of activities designed to increase the number of girls who return to school childbirth. This knowledge would also be useful in providing support to curb the challenges that teenage mothers face and to strengthen the coping mechanisms.

This study by focusing on the experiences of teenage mothers in public mixed day secondary schools has yielded extremely useful information and insights into the problems of teenage pregnancy and its effects on the education of teenage mothers in Bondo Sub- County. Findings generated provide new and welcomed perspectives and contextualized information that would enhance our understanding of the unique experiences of teenage mothers who go back to school, why many are not willing to go back to school and/or why their completion rates are low despite the existence of a school re-entry policy. By extension, the study would have in effect evaluated whether the re-entry policy is achieving its intended goals and improving access to education for teenage mothers.

1.7 Scope and limitation of the study

As a qualitative study, it sought to understand the lived experiences of teenage mothers after re-enrollment in public mixed day schools in Bondo Sub-County of Siaya County. The scope of this study was limited to teenage mothers who were at the time of the study enrolled and regularly attended public mixed day secondary schools in the study area. Teenage mothers in private secondary schools, boarding schools, single-sex secondary schools and primary schools were beyond the scope of this study. The target population were teenage mothers present in public mixed day secondary schools during the time of the study. Those teenage mothers absent from school when the study was conducted were not interviewed. Young mothers out of school were also beyond the scope of this study.

The study employed a qualitative research design featuring qualitative methods of data collection. The choice of this design was necessary since the researcher is more interested in the subjective experiences of the study participants. The study collected data using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The study was guided by McClelland Need Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory and the two theories complement each other.

One weakness of this qualitative study is the small sample achieved in this study which was informed by information saturation. With a small sample size, the study sought to provide a deep description of teenage mothers experiences. The sample size, therefore, reduces the generalizability power of the study where the findings are context-specific and not representative of the study population in the area. The study results do not reflect the experiences of the entire population in this study but can only be used with populations in similar contexts.

1.8 Operational definition of key terms

Challenges: This refers to the problems and difficulties that teenage mothers enrolled back in secondary schools' face in their daily lives as schooling mothers.

Coping strategies: According to this study, it refers to the mechanisms that teenage mothers employ to cushion them against the problems they face while schooling after re-admission.

Parents: Refers all the individuals who provide significant and/or primary care for adolescents, over a significant period of the adolescent's life, without being paid as an employee.

Re-admission: Refers to the process of integrating the teenage mothers back to the formal secondary education system after they left school after getting pregnant and have given birth, and the re-enrollment process is an effort of multiple actors.

Teenage mother: In this study teenage mother will refer to girls aged between 12 and 18 years who have re-enrolled in secondary school after childbirth or has begun childbearing.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the literature relevant to the study topic is presented. The chapter reviews the literature on the experiences of teenage mothers after re-admission to secondary schools. The review is organized along the following themes: teenage motherhood in context; teenage motherhood and education; initiatives to enhance teenage mothers education; Kenyan government policy on teenage pregnancy and schooling; challenges of teenage motherhood and schooling; and teenage mothers adaptation to school life. This chapter also looks at the theoretical framework(s) guiding the study as well as the conceptual framework for the study.

2.2 Teenage motherhood in the context

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood are global health challenges that nations including Kenya must contend with. The phenomenon has become an impediment in the elimination of inequalities between boys' and girls' basic rights to education considering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNICEF (2013) and WHO (2016) reports that yearly more than 16 million teenage girls give birth to infants across the globe. This figure is further projected to increase to over 18 million by the end of 2020 if deliberate efforts are not put taken to curb the malaise (WHO, 2016).

United Nations (2017) notes that in 2016 there were about 13.1 million births across the globe from girls aged between 15 to 19 years. From this figure, 680,000 occurred in developing countries. According to Save the Children (2004), over 70,000 young girls aged between 15 and 19 years die in developing countries from complications and problems associated with teenage pregnancies and childbirth. UNICEF (2009) also observed a similar trend where there was a high rate with 10% of female adolescents aged between 15-19 giving birth each year and this leads to early mortality of girls of that age bracket (UNFPA, 2012). KDHS (2014) indicated that teenage pregnancy is related to education in that a higher rate of teenage pregnancies and motherhood occurs among girls with minimum primary education and those without an education. The report also states that the proportions of teenagers who have begun childbearing remain unchanged since 2008.

Most teenage pregnancies in Sub-Saharan Africa are associated with poor healthcare, poverty, early child marriages, school dropout, unsafe abortions, and a high mortality rate for both the child and the mother (Gyesaw & Ankomah, 2013). These studies demonstrate that teenage motherhood is a social problem and young mothers have become a norm in society. While education is a basic right for boys and girls, girls becoming mothers at a young age is a barrier to educational attainment among young girls. Educational attainment remains a prerequisite for upward mobility, and it is important to look for ways to remove barriers that hinder young girls from completing their education (Njeru, 2004).

Many teenagers drop out of school all over and become teen mothers (Hallman, 2007). This is a clear suggestion that many teen mothers forfeit the opportunities of fulfilling their potential because they do not return to school after giving birth (Dangal, 2006, Hallman, 2007). In many countries across the world, the resultant effects of adolescent pregnancies include non-performance in school with lower aspirations in education for those who return to school (Amin et al. 2006). Although it is shown that many teen mothers would want to go back to school, studies indicate that many of them record low outcomes in terms of performance across high school and tertiary education (Dangal, 2006; Amin et al. 2006). This may be the explanation behind the overrepresentation of females among the unemployed population worldwide since inadequate levels of educational achievement makes it challenging for such young mothers to get employment. Thus, teen mothers become the poorest and vulnerable groups in societies.

In comparative terms, studies (UNFPA, 2013; UNICEF, 2013; WHO, 2016; Walgwe et al., 2016) found that developing countries have the highest cases of teenage pregnancies and motherhood. The economic status of these countries has been cited as one of the contributors to the increased number of adolescents' pregnancies in these countries.

2.3 Teenage motherhood and education

The effect of teenage pregnancies and motherhood are known to affect not only the lives of the adolescents but also the children born and the community in which they live. For instance, many girls school attendance gets interrupted and may end dropping from school completely. Gyesaw & Ankomah (2013) reports in Malawi those teenage pregnancies force young girls to drop out of school completely and as a result lack any qualification for securing meaningful employment

opportunities which makes the young mothers poverty-stricken. Many teenagers who get pregnant and give birth for the first time experience a spectrum of health complications (WHO, 2013).

Recognizing the need to ensure girls stay in school and continue with their education after delivery, many nations introduced re-admission policies to guide the process. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Convention for Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), International Conventions on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) among others have explicitly recognized the rights of a pregnant schoolgirl. These documents have provided the framework for introducing and improving the attainment of education for young girls and mothers (UNICEF, 2012).

The re-entry policies demand that the teen mothers to re-admitted back to the school they were in previously or any other when they wean their children and continue with their education. While the laws give the young mothers priority in educational achievement, there are disparities and misunderstandings on the various international and countries' laws and common practices on this front (WHO, 2016). Consequently, many girls who fall pregnant and become mothers are denied the chance to finish their basic education. A radical difference is observed with boys whose education are not affected but are the ones responsible for making the girls pregnant.

In recent years, studies show that in many Africa countries including Kenya, teen mothers are no longer barred from re-enrolling to schools and continuing with their education. However, many of the teen mothers experience multiple challenges as schooling mothers (Yardley, 2008). This makes it difficult for these groups of mothers to compete favorably with other students and record good performance. Muhuli & Bali (2014) reports that whereas schooling teenage mothers experience challenges such as stigma from their fellow students, pressure from their parents and teachers, many times these young mothers receive little support from key stakeholders such as their teachers and parents to motivate them to stay in school and perform well. The duo also noted that one common experience that teen mothers must undergo is the fact that many times they are misunderstood. WHO (2016) further notes that teenage mothers' problems become worsened by the fact that those who made her pregnant participate very minimally or even play no role in taking care of, raising, and supporting their children.

A study by Cunningham & Boulton (2006) found that in Gambia teen mothers under socialization processes that reinforce the ideology that girls and women's domestic structure. The study found that such cultural systems positively view teenage motherhood, especially where the self-growth and development of young girls are hindered by economic oppression. In yet another study by Shanok & Miller (2007), teenage mothers are considered culturally as means of gaining independence and achieving the status of being responsible. Thus, cultures hold different views and perceive teen mothers differently in such a way that some cultural beliefs support these groups of mothers and others demean teenage motherhood as a misnomer.

According to Sieger (2007). Teenage motherhood is associated with stigma and shaming. While it has been noted from other studies that teen mothers are supported in some cultures, in others especially those in Africa, teen mothers are ridiculed and receive harsh treatment from their parents and peers (WHO, 2016). This harsh treatment has been argued by many scholars are a key factor that makes the situation of these group of mothers worse. Lack of family support and support in taking care of the children while the girls attend schools are demotivating factors. Other necessary support factors that are necessary but are lacking for many of the teen mothers include financial aid, distribution of roles and chores among others (Alfe, 2008; Sieger, 2007). This is because social support is necessary for these young mothers. After all, it offers a haven for the girls from the negative consequences associated with teenage pregnancies and motherhood.

Findings from a study conducted with grandmothers of African American teen mothers in Canada revealed that many of the grandmothers reacted with anger and surprise to the news of their granddaughters' pregnancy (Alfe, 2008). The study findings showed that many grandmothers even considered that their granddaughters' pregnancy was a loss. Further, some of the grandmothers viewed teenage pregnancy positively and this enabled them to feel contented with their granddaughters. This scenario confirms the fact that cultural values and beliefs shape the kind of support teenage mothers are afforded regarding school re-enrolment which has a direct and an indirect impact on the aspirations of the young girls and their performance in school. Besides, WHO (2013) in its study confirms that when teen mothers have supportive families, they can attend school.

Furthermore, the environment or setting in which the young mothers learn could act as a motivator by giving the schooling mothers a sense of belonging and feeling accepted (Khalil, 2008; Hallman, 2007; Amin et al., 2006). When the school setting is unsupportive to the teenage mothers, they feel demoralized and easily drop out or for those who stay, they are not motivated enough to excel in their education (Amin et al., 2006). It is thus paramount that educators provide a conducive environment for teen mothers that give a sense of acceptance. While teenagers may have given birth, many still exhibit similar characteristics and aspirations like their peers and thus they should support in realizing this dream (Khalil, 2008). Additionally, young people always look at other adults besides their parents for support which provides the perfect opportunity for educators to support teen mothers. Thus, the existence of a good relationship from the educators at school serves to support school teen mothers and has a great impact on their academic life and attainment of their future goals and aspirations.

2.4 Initiatives to enhance teenage mothers' education.

Since the Kenyan government is a signatory to several International Agreements that serve to protect and promote children rights in terms of equality to education, it has, through its line ministries, an obligation to ensure that teenage mothers who fall pregnant while schooling complete their education after giving birth (UNICEF, 2014). This legal obligation stipulates those teenagers should finish their education in the same school or another after weaning their children. This should be done in addition to ensuring the teenage mothers' safety and wellbeing while in school and the well-being of their children.

Further, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1976 under article 13 stipulates those nations must recognize the right of all its citizens to education which teenagers are included. ICESCR considers education as a key pillar for ensuring the full development of human capacity, their sense of dignity and a means of strengthening the rights of human beings (UNICEF, 2011; WHO, 2016). Also, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) prevails on every country in the world to prioritize the educations of children by making basic and primary education free and compel parents to ensure their children attend primary schools through a punitive measure on parents who fail to do so (Gyan, 2013).

Kenya has shown commitment to the demands of the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW) (1979) through approaches designed to reduce women

discrimination (UNFPA, 2011). The government has over the years made remarkable strides in eliminating discrimination of women and girls in areas of education and ensuring that boys and girls and men and women have the same chances and equal opportunities in accessing education. According to CEDAW, countries are protecting the right of women and girls to education through:

The reduction of female student dropout rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who left School prematurely (Article 10(f) of CEDAW, 1979, cited in WHO, 2016. p 88).

Whereas the country has made progress in this front as far as the commitments and the prerequisites therein are concerned, teenage pregnancy and motherhood is still a social problem not only in the county but the rest of the region (WHO, 2016). This problem is compounded by the many expulsions of teenage mothers being experienced in the country despite the existence of commitments and laws to protect these groups of mothers. The few who manage to return to school after giving birth are still being discriminated against and are excluded socially from their peers. Despite the government increasing advocacy to ensure teen mothers go back to school and finish their education, Walgwe et al., (2016) contends that the institutions of learning are not equipped and prepared to provide and support the young mothers with their unique needs. Besides, clear monitoring plans do not exist for follow up to see that these group of scholars complete their education through other alternate mechanisms that might exist in the education system (Walgwe et al., 2016; Dangel, 2006).

Kenya subscribes to other regional bodies and instruments that have a mandate to protect human rights including the right to education for all persons. Among them is the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights Protocol that must protect women's rights in the African continent (Hallman, 2007). To this end, nations subscribed to this charter are required to:

Promote enrollment and retention of girls in schools and other training institutions and the organization of the programme for women who leave school prematurely (The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, Article 12: 2 (c) p.76).

Another regional body Kenya is a member of is the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The body proposes that countries develop and adopt specific policies and laws that target girls and especially those who are vulnerable like a teenager in ensuring they have equal rights in accessing education as enshrined in its Articles 11 and 14 (Molapo et al., 2014; UNFPA, 2012). As a result, states are state parties are required to promote equality in education access by formulating

regulations to support vulnerable groups of girls like teenage mothers in continuing with their education (WHO, 2016).

Further, the right of girls to education are also enshrined in the African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) of 1979 (Amin et al., 2006). The Charter clearly in explicit terms recognizes the right of teen mothers to education through Article 11 (3) (a) and (c) requiring member states to put strategies that will support the achievement of equality to education for both boys and girls (Dangel, 2006; Amin et al., 2006; UNICEF, 2012). From the Charter, states are required to reduce school dropouts among teenagers and encourage attendance but most importantly ensure that teenagers who fall pregnant while in school should complete their education after weaning their children (WHO, 2016; UNICEF, 2011). In it noted that some of the African countries like Bostwana, Namibia, Malawi, South Africa and Kenya have made tremendous progress in promoting the rights of teenage mothers. Educational policies of some of these countries like that of Kenya, allow teenage mothers to be readmitted back to schools which affirms this commitment to the education of girls (Molapo et al., 2014).

Most of the challenges in adolescent motherhood are due to the cultural practices of communities as they uphold their customs and values. The social-cultural values and practices of a given community have a great bearing on challenges unmarried adolescent mothers face. In rural communities, values and practices have led to many challenges they face. When girls become, pregnant blame is taken to their mothers, who are blamed for teaching their daughters bad norms and practices. According to Walgwe *et al.*, (2016) fathers blame their mothers and chase the girls away when they are pregnant or when they have given birth. When girls are chased away, they face a lot of challenges in the process since in most cases they have nowhere to go. Also, girls leave their kids to their mothers and go to towns to look for jobs. In the process, they found themselves getting more kids and the problem is increased. They also say that illegitimate children have a lot of problems even inland sharing. And they are chased away from their mothers' land as young as possible hence they are involved with a lot of problems.

According to most cultures, pre-marital pregnancies is taken as an evil thing. Girls are punished heavily and boys or men who are responsible are left out as if they have done nothing. The act is termed as a stigma, disgrace to parents and in most situations, it leads to single motherhood. Most men do not want to marry women with kids. Their children will live the life of single parents as

their mothers in most cases they would not get married and face a lot of challenges in livelihood (Hotz *et al* 2007).

2.5 Kenyan Government Policy on teenage pregnancy and school enrollment

According to WHO (2016), approximately 180,000 adolescent girls who are in primary and secondary school levels drop out because of pregnancy. Shefer *et al.*, (2012) opine that many leave school due to pregnancy and become mothers which disrupts their progress in educations. Resultantly, teenage girls who drop out in this manner fail to return to school since they are faced with the crisis of dealing with their situation of raising children while at the same time, they are children. Equally, even those who return to schools still experience multiple challenges ranging from financial support to family and school support system (Ritcher & Moreell, 2006).

Gyan (2013) found many teenage mothers opt to re-enter schools because of their infant or babies. Gyan reports that many of the teenage mothers he interviewed were determined to go back to school and have educational achievement since they felt education would give them the advantage to fend for their babies. The report further indicates that teenage mothers also wanted to make sure they complete school because they were never sure if the father of their child would help them raise the child. As much as the babies were making the teenage mother's life in school difficult, they were very much motivated by the fact that they were mothers and wanted the best for their children. Worth noting is the fact that parents and teachers/educators sometimes give up on these young mothers hence not walking with them throughout the journey as schooling mothers. This has seen some teenage mothers drop out gain from school even after re-enrolling (Yardley, 2008).

In its study, UIS (2016) showed that when teen mothers are supported by their parents and guardians, teachers as well as their entire community from which they exist, they usually feel motivated and can complete their education (WHO 2012; GOK 2009 cited in WHO, 2016). As much as teenage motherhood is abhorrent, other communities in the world consider this kind of motherhood as a blessing not only to the community but the family of the teenage mothers (Walgwe *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, in such setups, family members and teachers join hands in setting up teenagers for school re-entry immediately after child weaning.

Another study by Gyan (2013) also found that support that teenage mothers receive from those around them has a positive impact on their life goals including educational achievement. He found

that when teen mothers are supported by parents, teachers, and social workers, they change their perception about life and strive to be better and get out of their prevailing situation. He further noted that a good support system aids young mothers in terms of self-esteem, imparting better parenting abilities, and better competence among their peers. On the other hand, teen mothers who do not receive good support may be pessimistic about life and may devour education. Thus, teenage motherhood is a great challenge that must be supported by all stakeholders in the spectrum. The few girls who decide to go back to school after weaning their children should be given support since their responsibilities will have doubled when they act as mothers and scholars at the same time (WHO, 2012). Also, counselling is a key necessity for teen mothers since pressure from the community, parents and their peers are recorded as being common and acting as a demotivator to those who return to school (Dlamini, 2016; Shefer et al., 2012).

In Kenya, programs exist in many countries to give much-needed support to teen mothers through many approaches. Programmes have been installed in schools with a view of promoting school retention and completion among teen mothers. Also, plans have been put in place to support and provide childcare for the schooling mothers (UNICEF, 2014). Organizations working in Reproductive Health and Education, have been instrumental to the teen mothers in providing maternal education and other health-related education that the young mothers are lacking. While progress has been made in providing support to teen mothers, many of these new mothers' experience challenges and sometimes do not complete their education in addition to poor academic performance due to their double roles (WHO, 2016).

Furthermore, the non-state actors have set up projects to fight for the rights of adolescent mothers and empower them to pursue education after giving birth. These projects help those who could not manage to go back to school get the opportunity to do so. The projects also serve to cushion teenage mothers from the challenges of motherhood. The non-state actors support the teenage mothers to encourage them to accept their situation and re-enrol in school to finish their schooling (WHO, 2016); Maholo et al., 2009). WHO (2016) argues that basic knowledge of knowing some policies may have helped teenage mothers be able to solve the problems and challenges that they face. When community members are aware of government policies of re-admission to school after delivery which enables girls to pursue their studies and attain their life dreams. UNICEF/Plan International (2014) also discovered that the rate of school dropout's due to pregnancy was high

in Kenya but at the same time government is promoting the increase of literacy. This enables adolescent mothers to attain their dreams in life like if one wanted to be a lawyer, she would attain the same since they are given chance to go back to school and most of the time they excel.

Finding from a study among teenage mothers from Mexico and Africa who were experiencing challenges ranging from economic to maternal challenges, found that these group of mothers were not optimistic about life and thus they could not cope well with the challenges of being a teenage-schooling mother (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). The duo observed that optimism as a characteristic aided in motivating the young mothers to continue with school and even excel. They further observed that optimism in life enabled the teenage mothers to perceive life differently and this helped them cope better than other teenage mothers. Further, WHO (2016) and UIS (2016) notes that before they depart from school, pregnant teenagers must be informed of the need to continue with their schooling after delivery and the available support system in school to aid their educational achievement. Thus, WHO (2016) concludes that education, training, and employment pathways should be made available to teen mothers and that all those who get pregnant are followed up and encouraged to plan for their school readmission after weaning their children.

2.6 Challenges of schooling and motherhood

Mahuli & Bali (2014) contends that teenage mothers are considered globally to be more vulnerable and in trouble since societal norms and values discriminate against them. They are considered deviants whose mistake was to get pregnant at an early age thus not fitting among the society members. From peers, family to school, teenage mothers find themselves in a crisis when they give birth. UNICEF (2011) contends that society's views teenage pregnancies differently. For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa, more so the rural areas, teenage pregnancies are considered a normal phenomenon and hence no proper mechanisms to help address the plight of teenage mothers in this region despite the well-documented challenges that they face. Further, UIS (2016) also concludes that Sub-Saharan countries consider teenage pregnancies and births as an accident or were predetermined to happen and in most cases, they have more depressive symptoms in young adulthood.

Results from WHO (2016) and UIS (2016) reports indicate that teenage motherhood is associated with poor socio-economic backgrounds. As such, teen mothers live in rural poor environments with myriad of challenges thus making them resort to prostitution to earn income to sustain

themselves, their child and their education (World Bank, 2009; Shefer et al., 2012). Yardly (2008) in his study on Adolescents Health and Education among Australians, states that besides society regarding adolescent girls who become mothers as deviants to their societal norms and values, many are considered as outcasts and immoral thus are not given any form of support by the community they exist in. This group of mothers are not respected as they are seen as a bad example to other young girls. He further states that even in schools' teenage mothers are considered as bad examples among their peers and by their teachers. They can influence innocent girls to be involved in immorality leading to pregnancies.

The family that adolescents come from has been cited by WHO and World Bank as the challenge that has detrimental effects on teenage mothers the most. Their experience as young mothers is heavily depending on the support that they receive from their family members. Ntinda et al., (2014) study among the Swats of Botswana found that adolescent mothers are forced to get married to people who are responsible for their pregnancy. This is due to the cultural construction of the role of girls or women within the African context (Malabo et al., 2014; Dlamini, 2016). In the process, these younger mothers find themselves in the streets. Others end up committing suicide since they are rejected by their families. They are married to reckless men who torture them day in day out. They do not run away since they were chased away from their homes and will not be accommodated back (Walgwe et al., 2016).

A UNICEF study conducted in Kenya among other countries found that adolescent mothers face physical challenges when they are being beaten and tortured by their parents. They lack a good and conducive environment to stay with their children and attend school at the same time (UNICEF, 2011). The report further indicates that also face psychological and emotional challenges since they are not at peace. They are much confused about what to do since their family members have disowned them. They fear what others are saying about them and the community at large, how they have held their parents in big shame and how their future is put in a mess.

A study conducted by Bhana et al (2010) investigating the responses of teachers to teenage pregnancy and schooling teenage mothers found that in many contexts the phenomenon of being a teen mother is ridiculed, shamed, and receive punishment in many schools. Finding from this study show that teachers have the opinion that teenagers getting pregnant and allowed back into

school was disastrous as it acted as a bad example. Yet another study by Muhuli & Bali (2014) found that support from family and educators had a great impact on the way the teenage mothers coped with their peers and fellow students in the school and community as well as their educational achievement. The study concluded that the dislike of teenage and schooling mothers directly affected their study in the school after readmission. From the litany of literature available, it's indicated that even during pregnancy the more family and support from the school community is given to teenage mothers increases the chances of these young mothers returning to school after weaning their children.

Related to school retention, WHO (2016) opine that the support that teen mother receives from school, and specifically their teachers, to motivate them to stay in school is hindered by the widespread perception that communities have about teenage pregnancy and motherhood. Teenage mothers are perceived as sexually immoral and are shamed and thus some school communities are considered as places where individuals are modelled. However, because of the growing concern for teenage pregnancies that knowledge and understanding have been reshaped by the increased cases of adolescent mothers.

Nonetheless, the literature indicates that the education of teenage mothers remains an important part of their development as well as a human right. Many teenage mothers want to continue with and finish their education but their efforts are fraught with challenges emanating from school, family and community in which they live. As such, WHO (2016) contends that the education of girls and more teenage mothers are important in improving their agency to compete well in the market force and improving their living standards. This is because teenage and early childbearing denies the young girls the opportunity to participate in the labour force and lowers their competence in the labour market including lowering their aspirations in life (Mokwena et al., 2016). However, despite the efforts to ensure teenage mothers enrol back to school, lack of financial, peer, school, parent, and community support prevent many of them from re-enrolling to schools to finish their education.

2.7 Teenage mothers' adaptation to school life

As demonstrated in the previous sections, teenage motherhood is portrayed in media, literature and many institutions including the government as a social problem. In this regard, teenage mothers have become centres of shame and blame as key contributors to social and moral ills in the

community (Dlamini, 2016). The blame directed at these young mothers who never made themselves pregnant is driven by the common discourses that are fueled and drawn from morality undertones about sexuality on teenagers, the distortion of family structure such as nuclear family and the dependency on others (Chigona & Chetty, 2008).

Literature is scarce on coping strategies that schooling teen mothers adopt for them to remain in school and finish their education after delivery. Although the challenges that teen mothers experience as learners and mothers while on the route to complete their education have been extensively documented in existing literature, the way they cope with these challenges while serving in their double roles is lacking and that is worth investigating. According to UIS (2016) and WHO (2016) family support strengthens teenage mothers coping ability. As indicated in the previous sections, teenage mothers are being supported by all stakeholders for them to continue with their education after giving birth in the wake of a myriad of challenges that the girls go through as schooling mothers. Further, many of the schooling mothers have also embraced their situation and the challenges that come with having the double roles and have adopted mechanisms to allow them to cope well and excel in school.

While many teenagers go back to school after weaning their children, WHO (2016) contends that their school life is characterized by the frequent missing school where the young mothers have to attend to the problems of their children such as seeking health care in case of illness. This scenario of school absenteeism of teen mothers is supported by another study by UNICEF (2014) wherein they found out that 90% of teenage mothers often left school or did not attend classes for a period close to a month as they would be held up seeking medical attention in hospitals and health centres for their ill babies and nursing them while they are unwell. As a characteristic of health facilities, teenage mothers must contend with the long queues to receive medical attention for the babies and even for themselves. This denies them the chance to attend school for a full day and sometimes for longer periods depending on the condition of their babies. Thus, the above scenario shows that teen mothers can lose one schooling every month to take their children to clinics or health centres in addition to other cases where the child may be ill for a longer period and the teenager may have other personal problems inviting reasons for missing school.

In a bid to cope with schooling, teenage mothers have had to assess their prevailing situation and devise mechanisms to improve their school attendance, relations with teachers and students as well as academic performance. A study by Shaningwa (2007) recorded that teenage mothers who lived with adult female relatives in the home coped with schooling better than those without such a relative. The teen mothers who attended day schools would entrust the adult female members in the family to take care of their children for them to go to school. He also recorded that teen mothers who were in boarding schools had no issues related to caring for the children as they were far away which made them cope better with academics and school life because they have time to study as compared to those in day schools. A study by Hill (2011) found that teenage mothers coped with schooling by enrolling for extra lessons and coaching from teachers and educators who are dedicated to seeing them succeed. Yet another study by Tillman (2008) reinforces that when teen mothers are provided with a flexible schooling schedule that incorporates their child-caring roles especially for those in day schools can improve their performance and completion.

Results from Dawson & Hossie (2005) study among pregnant young women and mothers and education in England provides that schools should encourage teenage mothers to stay and remain in schools through engaging the young mothers opening and having discussions on what they hold as fears and needs. They further recommended that proper support offered to young schooling mothers should be centred on the needs of the young mothers and be encouraging and flexible to allow the young mothers to choose how their schooling should run. Chigona & Chetty, (2008) observed that although it is expected that teachers can assist teenage mothers in coping with their new responsibilities, the teachers themselves are not properly trained to offer such guidance and support to these new mothers. However, despite the support given to teen mothers, some teachers sometimes serve to demoralize the young mothers from completing their education. Teachers who discuss the issues of teen mothers such as poor performance in classrooms threaten the overall school attendance and performance of these groups of scholars (Bhana et al., 2010). Teachers need some form of coaching to understand the situation of teen mothers and how they can assist them to cope with their new roles (Maholo et al., 2009; Chagona & Chetty, 2008).

The school readmission policy that demands that teenage mothers be re-enrolled to school and allow them to complete their education is a key step toward ensuring that teen mothers attain their educational aspirations but the policy alone as a strategy is not an adequate measure. Nevertheless,

Ogutu, (2008) points out that the re-entry policy is an inadequate measure in Kenya for ensuring teenage mothers succeed in their education because it lacks legal backing to support its implementation hence making its implementation poor and inconsistent. Kadzamira, (2007) in the assessment of Policies of re-admission of teenage mothers in South Africa reported that the policies were not appropriate and did not deal with teenage pregnancy and motherhood and education adequately. In this respect, it is useful, therefore, in finding out in the current times what support mechanisms exist to aid teenage mothers in completing their education and how successful have they served their purpose.

The study by Gyan (2013) found that after delivering their babies, these vulnerable mothers would encourage themselves to pursue their dreams through education and training and achieve a higher education level even after being out of school for over 2 to 5 years. This motivation provides that teen mothers can perfectly reconcile their two roles when supported despite the challenges that come with it being a schooling mother. Further, there is an increasing number of adolescents leaving their parents with their children after giving birth to attend school. Ntinda et al., (2014) consider the socio-economic background of young and teen mothers as a key mechanism for coping with school life for teenagers after weaning their children.

From the foregoing, school and caring for children is a challenge for teenage mothers. Whereas support systems have been put in place to encourage teen mothers to return to school, those who re-enrol still experience challenges and can cope with them. The mechanisms that they adopt to cope with these challenges as schooling mothers have a great influence on their schooling and performance.

2.8 Theoretical framework

This study adopted McClelland's Need and Vroom's Expectancy Theories as lenses that guided the inquiry. The choice of these two theories was owed to the fact that they originate and belong to the motivational grand theories which employ diverse perspectives and eyes to have an in-depth understanding of human beings' motivations and desires to act in a certain way, the ability to do certain things and the ultimate objective for performing certain actions.

2.8.1 McClelland Need Theory

As one of the earliest theories for understanding human motivation to act, McClelland Need for Achievement Theory was authored by McClelland in 1968 to fill this gap. The theory is strongly associated with learning concepts as a primer for motivation. The theory presupposes human action and desire as the driving factors for certain behavior. It postulates that when a need is strong in a person, its effect is to motivate and drive the person to behave and act in a manner that satisfies the need or the desire. At the centre of the theory is the concept that needs are learned through coping and adapting to the human environment. Therefore, since needs are the product of learning and imitation, behaviour which is an aspect that is rewarded tends to recur at a higher frequency (Gibson, Ivancavich & Donnelly, 1979). According to McClelland, the need for achievement involves the desire by the teenage mothers to independently master objects and ideas and to increase one's self-esteem through the utilization of one's ability and capabilities. Teen mothers are motivated by the desire to perform well and have higher educational achievement. Educational achievement according to the theory is associated with income generation and better living standards.

2.8.2 Vroom's Expectancy Theory

The Expectancy theory as a process theory was first propounded by Victor Vroom in 1964 as a response to the need by employers to understand what factors motivated certain employees to act in certain ways and achieve certain results (Ramlall, 2004). This theory sees motivation as a multiplication of three factors (Klitzner and Anderson, 1977). Vroom's theory incorporates many of the elements of the needs, equity and reinforcement theories (Gordon et al., 1990). According to Vroom theory, teenage mothers are encouraged and motivated to act and behave in ways that produce their desired goals and outcomes (Kreitner and Kinicki, 1998). The theory tries to explain that motivating behaviour is goal-oriented and Vroom argues that teenage mothers would want to act in a hedonistic way in that they would prefer the actions that will bring the highest subjective utility (Vroom, 1964). Essentially, Vroom's Expectancy theory is premised on the argument that the strength of a tendency to behave and act in certain ways is dependent on the strength of an expectation that the action will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the teenage mothers. As a result, the behaviour of teenage mothers to re-enrol and after re-enrolling could be oriented towards expected and individualized goals.

Vroom's theory holds that: "choices made by a person among alternatives courses of action are lawfully related to psychological events occurring contemporaneously with the behaviour" (Vroom, 1964, p. 15). A deduction from the theory is that teenage mothers will choose to aim other alternatives before them and in a conscious manner. These choices are attached to their psychological processes particularly those concerning beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions (Pinder, 1984). Motivation in Vroom's lenses is determined and mediated upon by three factors which are asl the key variables on which the theory is centred. The key concepts of the theory are valence, instrumentality and expectancy. Valence as the first concept is the preference for a particular outcome while instrumentality is the degree and extent to which those outcomes lead to a second level outcome. Expectancy is the probability that the action will be lead to the preferred first-level outcome. Therefore, valence and expectancy combine to form motivational factors and forces as they lay much emphasis on the mental processes of choice.

2.8.3 Relevance of the theories to the study

These two theoretical perspectives were applied to this study as they predicted how teenage mothers learn and understand their needs and act in a manner that is geared towards the fulfilment of their intrinsic goals and needs. The action of teenage mothers as means of meeting their personal goals is also linked to behavioural a consequence. To the extent that teenage mothers learn and acquire favourable beliefs about parenthood outcomes and zeal and confidence in their capacities and abilities, they become more likely to attempt to cope with challenges of teenage motherhood through modelling behaviours and developing new ones. In this study, other contributing factors that drove teenage mothers to invest in knowledge were explored.

The two theoretical standpoints helped the researcher in understanding the factors that influence teenage mothers to go back to school, the challenges that teenage mothers face after re-enrollment, and how they cope with these challenges. Thus, the two theories helped explain how motivation occurs among teen mothers, the factors that dictate and influence the motivation and the relations between these factors. The theories posit those teenage mothers were motivated to pursue education when they believed that the effort would lead to performance and that they saw a clear relationship between performance and success/results and that success is important to them. Furthermore, the social exclusion of teenage motherhood stressed the importance of information concerning adolescent motherhood, perceptions, norms, beliefs and attitudes, and social relations

and institutions as determinants of teenage motherhood experience. Hence, this study has suggested better-coping ideas based on a deeper understanding of teenage mothers' experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of a presentation and a detailed description of the overall methodology used in this study to generate answers to the research objectives set forth. It specifically describes the research site, research design, study population and sampling procedure, sample size and unit of analysis, data collection methods, data processing and analysis and ethical considerations that were adhered to throughout the study.

3.2 Research site

The study was conducted in Bondo Sub-County of Siaya County in Western Kenya. The County is in the southwest part of Kenya between latitude 0° 26' to 0° 18' north and longitude 33° 58' east and 34° 33' west (See Figure 3.1). Siaya County is bordered by Winam Gulf (Lake Victoria) to the South, Busia County to the Northwest, Kakamega and Vihiga counties to the Northeast, Kisumu County to the South East and Homa Bay County to the South (ADP, 2019).

According to the 2019 population census result a total population of 993,183 people, of whom 471,669 males, 521,498 females and 18 intersexes (KNBS, 2019) live in Siaya County. It is estimated that nearly 64% (578,283) of the 993,183 are youths aged 24 years and below while 98,324 are teenagers in secondary school respectively (ADP, 2019; CIDP, 2017-2022). The total population of primary schooling going children is about 220,334 out of which 111,334 are males and 109,000 are females accounting for 22.4% of the total population while the population of school-going teenagers in secondary school is estimated to be 98,324 (49,524 males and 48,800 females) accounting for 10% of the total population (ADP, 2019-2020). There are 703 primary schools, 244 secondary schools, seven tertiary institutions, 12 special education schools, one public university and 13 special units in regular primary schools. According to KDHS (2019), the total number of young people of secondary school-going age and are out of school are estimated to be 18,576 while those of primary school-going age and are out of school are estimated to be 35,345 (CIDP, 2017; ADP, 2019).

Bondo Sub-County is the second largest in size among the six sub-counties with a total size of approximately 593-kilometer square. In terms of population, Bondo is the third largest with a

population of 180,487 (87,616 males and 92,871 females) and a population density of 304.4. The sub-county is divided further into six administrative Wards namely; West Yimbo, South Sakwa, Central Sakwa, Yimbo East, West Sakwa and North Sakwa (CIDP, 2017; KNBS, 2019). Bondo Sub-County is predominately inhabited by the dholuo speaking people whose main source of livelihood is subsistence farming and fishing (CIDP, 2017; Odhiambo et al., 2012). Fishing is the main economic activity for a large majority of the people and source of income which most families use to buy food and meet other non-food activities like health and school fees. Most households supplement their livelihoods by growing maize, beans, and vegetables while others have started to diversify and supplement their sources of income including wage labor and small-scale businesses (CIDP, 2017).

Over the past few years, the sub-county has experienced massive livelihood losses, food insecurity and extreme poverty due to depletion of fish in Lake Victoria decline in agricultural production occasioned by adverse climatic condition population increase, environmental degradation and economic exploitation and marginalization (ADP, 2019). These poor economic conditions have contributed to the deterioration of the overall welfare and well-being of the local people as manifested in poor health status, overexploitation of natural resources and lack of opportunities crowned by the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS. Women, especially adolescent girls more adversely affected than men.

Despite primary education is free in Kenya, many children in Siaya generally and Bondo-sub-county specifically do not attend school because of cultural factors and poverty. Secondary education in the sub-county lags as many parents cannot afford fees and the cost of school supplies for their children. For the few children whose parents can afford fees completion and transition rates are extremely low (Plan International, 2014). This is particularly the case for girls whose education is hampered by retrogressive cultural practices such as early/child and forced marriages, and teenage pregnancies poor menstrual hygiene due to lack of regular supply of sanitary pads and absence of girl-friendly latrines and water to wash at school; HIV/AIDS and its associated socio-economic impact (orphans and vulnerable), little value on girl child's education and preference to engaging them in domestic chores. The gender imbalance among teachers as well as the long trek to public day secondary schools exposes girls to several other risks including gender-based violence and sexual harassment and thus, impeding them from attending school regularly hence

warranting the need for this study. Another major factor for girls' low levels of education in the sub-county is teenage pregnancy. Teenage motherhood in Siaya County has steadily risen to 39% in 2018 down from 17% in 2014 inviting a worrying trend. Currently, 3 out of 10 teenagers in the county, and essentially in the whole country, are either pregnant or have given birth (CIDP, 2017; Plan International, 2014).

Recently, there have been concerted efforts by civil society organizations to support the girl child not only to access education but also to enhance their transition and completion rates (ADP, 2017). These efforts have also been supported by policies such as the school-re-entry policy after childbirth. While these efforts have seen a small but increasing number of girls who return to secondary school after childbirth, available data suggests that many of these teenage mothers record low transition and completion rates. Thus, this study sought to understand the factors that influence teenage mothers to go back to school, the challenges that they face after re-enrolling as schooling mothers and how they cope with these challenges.

Figure 3. 1: Map showing study site and location.



Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2011



Source: www.googlemaps.com (2019)

3.3 Research design

A research design is conceptualized (Orodho, 2003) as a plan, outline and scheme that is utilized to provide solutions and answers to research problems. The research design can also be described as the structure of the study that highlights the objectives and the main ideas that are pertinent to the study that was assessed (Tobi & Kampen, 2017). This study employed a descriptive study design featuring qualitative methods of data collection. Descriptive research designs are useful in generating data about the situation of a certain phenomenon at a specific point in time and drawing valid research conclusions (Chandran, 2004). This can be explained as reported research that simply gives an exact account of the situation without altering the facts because the researcher does not control the different parameters (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The choice of qualitative research methods in this study helped the researcher understand the research participants and their social and cultural world. The methods of data collection provided an effective avenue to determine the deeper meaning of participants' experiences as well as give a nuanced description of the phenomenon under investigation (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

3.4 Study population and unit of analysis

The population for this study was teenage mothers in public mixed day secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County. The unit of analysis was an individual teenage mother in public mixed day secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County.

3.5 Sampling procedure and sample size

The study employed purposive and convenient sampling procedures in selecting the study participants. Using these sampling procedures, a sample size of 15 teenage mothers drawn from 5 public mixed secondary schools in the study site were recruited. The schools were selected through purposive sampling in that the researcher only selected schools that were close to each other. A total of three teenage mothers were recruited from each of the 5 schools to participate in the study. Banerjee & Chaudhury (2010) contend that convenient sampling is deemed appropriate for this study because the study has limited resources.

In this study, only girls who had been re-admitted after giving birth and were attending secondary school regularly at the time of the study were interviewed. Recruitment of participants was done at the school level but the interviews were conducted away from the schools in private spaces

where the teenage mothers were most comfortable and away from other students and onlookers. Interviewing teenage mothers in spaces where they were comfortable ensured that they were relaxed and gave as many details on their experiences as possible and without hesitation. A list of all public mixed secondary schools which had reported to the county commissioner of education to have re-admitted girls after giving birth and child weaning were used to conveniently sample the study participants.

3.6 Data collection methods

3.6.1 In-depth interviews

The primary method of data collection was the in-depth interviews (IDIs) which were conducted with a total of 15 teenage mothers from the study area. Creswell (2009) avers that in-depth interviews have the potential to reveal multiple attitudes about a given topic because they allow the participants to provide their answers in their own words and are not limited to the pre-designed set of responses. In-depth interviews provide room for participants to freely give detailed and rich information. An IDI guide had been developed to aid in data collection (Appendix II). The interviews were conducted with individual teen mothers in places where they were very comfortable such as their homes. This ensured that the interviews were conducted with teen mothers away from the school environment to avoid further stigma from fellow students and teachers. Since Covid-19 has crippled research activities across the world, the researcher conducted some of the interviews through telephone. With permission from the study respondents, the interviews were audio-recorded for purposes of later transcription.

3.6.2 Key informant interviews (KIIs)

KIIs were conducted with ten (10) people who were knowledgeable and experienced on teenage mothers experience with schooling in Bondo Sub-County. These included two (2) secondary school teachers in charge of guiding and counselling, two (2) secondary school headteachers/principals, one (1) Director from the County Government Department of Education, two (2) programme managers from local CSOs, one (1) local administrator and two (2) officials from NGOs directly working on issues relating to the education of the girl child who provides reproductive health services/education to adolescents within the community. The informants were selected purposively from the sample population as key informants. The key informants canvassed their views and shared their knowledge on factors influencing teenage mothers to re-enrol in

school, the challenges the teenage mothers face after re-admissions as well as the support given to those girls who have re-enrolled and how the teenagers coped with those challenges. A key informant guide (Appendix III) was used to collect data.

3.6.3 Secondary sources

Relevant sources from books, journals publications on experiences of teenage mothers after re-admission back to school were used to develop the study proposal. These materials have continuously been reviewed to enrich the study proposal as well as the study findings. The main documents that have informed and shaped this study include but were not limited to WHO, Siaya County CIDP and ADPs, UNICEF, Plan International and UNFPA reports and publications.

3.7 Data processing and analysis

Data collected from the in-depth interviews and key informant interviews were translated into English for those conducted in translated guide for readability (Dholuo). Since the interviews were recorded using audio tape recorders, they were transcribed verbatim in the language in which the interview was conducted. Properly done transcriptions began as soon as the first few interviews were conducted. Transcripts that were done in the local language were then translated into English after transcription. Transcripts were then checked for clarity and consistency and cleaned for completeness. The researcher then read and re-read the transcripts to develop themes before doing the write-up.

Data analysis was done through context and thematic analysis but in line with the specific study objectives as key themes. The themes were then discussed against the existing literature to understand the participants' construction of meaning. Further, NVivo 12 plus software was used to aid in the management and analysis of data. Appropriate qualitative descriptions were used to have a comprehensive analysis of data. Direct verbatim quotes have been used to project participants' voices in the presentation of findings.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are conceptualized by Resnik (2011) as principles that protect the rights of research participants. The nature of this study called for high observation of standards in terms of respecting and upholding the dignity of the participants, particularly the teenage girls. This ensured that the research participants were shielded from the stigma and discrimination which they

habitually faced in school and community. The researcher then presented her proposal in a seminar at DAGAS for feedback and approval. Once endorsed by the Post Graduate Committee (PSC), the researcher then sought a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) to conduct the study as well as approval from the Commissioner of Education Siaya County Government.

The researcher obtained informed consent from all the study participants. All participants were informed about the study objectives, their voluntary participation, right to withdraw from the study at any time and that the information they would provide would be kept private, that they could choose not to participate, and that they would not be identified when the information would be reported since the researcher would use non-identifiers in reporting the findings. Written informed consent was obtained from all the guardians of teenage mothers below the age of eighteen years. The findings of this study will also be available at the University of Nairobi Library for consumption by the wider public. The recording and transcripts were entered into a computer and protected using a password. The researcher also ensured that during research activities, social distancing, wearing of masks and sanitizing was adhered to.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXPERIENCES OF TEENAGE MOTHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings and discussions of the study investigated the experiences of teenage mothers in public mixed secondary schools in Bongo Sub-County of Siaya County of Western Kenya. The chapter presents findings on the socio-demographic characteristics as the first parts and the findings of the study based on the three study objectives as the second part.

4.2 Socio-demographic characteristics

This study set out to understand the socio-demographic characteristics of study respondents as means of opening up the world of the study respondents to the researcher. The study investigated the age, level of education (form level) and religion of the study respondents. The socio-demographic profiles of the study respondents allow the researcher to understand the respondents better which was useful during analysis.

On the age of the respondents, the study investigated three levels of age brackets which were 13-15, 16 to 18 and 19 years and above. The findings of the study show that the majority (9) of the study respondents were aged between 16 and 19 years, four (4) were aged between 13 and 15 years while the remaining two (2) were aged above 18 years. In understanding the age of the study respondents, the study findings show the age at which many of the secondary school students become pregnant which in this case was between 13 and 18 years. While these findings confirm the average age at which many teenagers in secondary schools belong, it shows that in dealing with the menace of teenage pregnancy, targeting of these teenage girls from as early as the age of ten years when they are still in primary schools before transitioning to the secondary schools.

The education level was recorded for all the respondents of the study. Four levels of education were investigated starting from form one to form four. The findings of the study show that the respondents were distributed in all the forms/classes but not equally owing to the nature of the study. The findings of this study indicate that about half, seven in number (7), of the respondents of this study, were sampled from form three. Those who were sampled and were in form four were three (3) in number while only one (1) of the study respondents was in form one at the time of the study. Respondents who reported that they were in form two at the time of the study were four (4) in number. The form level of the respondents showed the age at which many teenage mothers fall

pregnant. In this study, eleven (11) of the study respondents were in forms two and three which indicates the years of secondary schooling where teenagers are vulnerable to teenage pregnancies especially for public mixed secondary schools in the study area and similar contexts.

Regarding religion, the findings of the study show that they subscribe to various religions with Christianity being the dominant religion in the area. As such, an overwhelming majority (14) of the respondents indicated that they were Christians and only one of the study respondents indicated that she was a Muslim. Further analysis of religion indicated that Christians were divided into Catholics, Pentecostal, and other Christian religions. Those who indicated that they were Catholic were seven (7) in number, those who indicated that they belonged to Pentecostal churches were four (4) in number and those who reported that they attended other religions under Christianity such as the traditional churches were categorized as others and were three (3) in number.

4.3 Factors influencing re-enrolment of teenage mothers in secondary schools

This section concentrates on the findings of the first objective of this study that sought to determine the factors that influence teenage mothers to re-enroll in public secondary school in Bondo Sub-County. The teenage mothers were asked about the factors that influenced them to re-enroll back into schools after they gave birth. The findings are presented below.

The findings of the study show that the families of the teenage mothers played a big role in influencing them to seek re-admission in secondary after giving birth and completing their education. Family members who noted to have been the biggest support system for the teenage mothers as they accepted their situation and were ready to see them complete their education.

The following quotes put the situation into perspective.

“Our parents have been good to us and encouraging us to become better for ourselves and our children” (IDI#15 17 years old).

“My parents and siblings have been a big encouragement to me....I had to come back because they were ready to support me and they pushed to plan and come back to school as soon as the baby was one year old” (IDI#2 16 years old).

“It's my mother who look for another school for me so that I would re-enrol as soon as I was ready to....my brothers have also been my source of motivation because they have held

my hand ever since I got pregnant until now. They have encouraged me to work hard and excel for me to have prospects of a better future” (IDI#9 18 years old).

“My father was very interested in seeing me continue with education because he was really upset and wanted to marry me off to the person who made me pregnant. He said that he was never going to pay for my schools but when my uncles and mother talked to him he later agreed and he is the one who took me back to school” (IDI#10 18 years old).

The family of the teenage mothers played a key role in the re-enrollment of teenage mothers back in school. They supported these groups of mothers by taking care of their children and guiding them on how to care for their babies.

“My family has been supporting me because they promised me to accept and go back to school as they take care of my child and I can tell they have never disappointed me on that” (IDI#12 17 years old).

Thus, the family was found to have a big role in the re-admission of teen mothers back in school, In agreeing with the above findings one key informant had the following to say.

“Families as we all know play a big role in the lives of teenage mothers. These young mothers are children themselves despite the fact they have given birth. So supportive families will encourage and support their teen daughters in completing their secondary education” (KII# 7 Local Leader)

Thus, teenage mothers are supported by their families over decisions to return to school and finish their education. The nature of the family of the teenage mothers may define the way they would handle teenage pregnancy and the resulting motherhood. Teenage mothers are very young and can only be supported financially by their parents, families and relatives when they seek re-admission in secondary schools.

The findings of the study show that teenage mothers were supported and motivated to go back to school through the support of the local organizations working in the area and who had identified them when they were pregnant. The teenage girls reported that non-governmental organizations and women groups existing and working within their communities played a key role in seeking re-enrol back in school to complete their education.

“If it was not for the support and encouragement I got from that organization that works on issues affecting teenagers and those who have become mothers, I may not have returned to school” (IDI#14 18 years old).

The organizations were recognized as a pathway to ensure that girls who become mothers at a young and while still in school are aware of the challenges ahead of them and how to overcome them,

Key informants confirmed the role of these non-governmental organizations in the lives of teenage mothers by saying that

“Many organizations have partnered with schools and communities through social institutions to empower young mothers. The empowerment programme seeks to educate the young mothers on their rights, abilities, strengths and the resources available to them to tap” (KII#7 NGO Official).

The findings of the study show that teenage mothers are empowered through educating them about their rights as adolescents, improving their optimism and encouragement to be better in life. The outcome of the empowerment programme is to increase the agency of the young mothers by boosting their self-esteem and self-confidence as they can accord themselves value and self-worth even when they are operating in environments where they are surrounded by stigma and discrimination.

The non-state actors have been at the forefront in targeting adolescent girls and boys in educating them about their human rights. This drive has been necessitated by the rampant sexual abuse and exploitation of children in primary and secondary schools in the country. Specifically, young girls like adolescent mothers are taught their rights, how to recognize abuse, reporting channels and how to avoid sexual abuse. The findings of this study indicate that teenage mothers have been empowered to know their rights as children and young mothers. The child mothers are taught how to protect themselves from sexual abuse and the signs they can read signs early enough to ensure those who may want to abuse them because they considered mature minors do not succeed.

The empowerment on their rights also focuses on their rights to education as children and how they are protected by the law. For instance, some of the young mothers noted they were informed

about their rights not to be expelled from school after getting pregnant. They were informant on their rights to stay in the same school during pregnancy and even after delivering their children, the law (re-entry policy) allowed them to go back to the same school and continue with their education. Some of the participants put this situation into perspective:

“Some people from these organizations usually come to talk to us and girls who are pregnant and us who are mothers about our rights as children and that we are protected by the laws of Kenya...if someone tries to do to us anything bad, we report to the area chief and school administration so that action can be taken: (IDI#8 16 years old).

“We know our rights as children and that even if someone gets pregnant by bad luck they are supposed to continue with their education and should not be treated like an outcast as has been the case in the before” (IDI#11 19 years old).

In agreeing with the above sentiments one of the informants said the following.

“The girls are taught about their rights as human beings and how they are protected by the government since they are still children. You know what the law says about the education of children it's not easy to go against it, So, we ensure all the teenage mothers go back to school and even while in school they are treated well and equally as the rest of the students so that they feel they belong to that community” (KII#1 Local Leader).

The focus of the rights of the young girls as part of the empowerment programme is important in educating them about their human rights as this may prevent further abuse. Teenage mothers operate in an environment where there are boys who are their peers, empowerment on their rights is necessary to hold them and co-exist with other learners without fear of being ridiculed.

Findings of the study established that the optimism that the teenage mothers has about life and the excelling in their academic life was one of the drivers that saw them re-enrol in secondary schools to finish their education. Being optimistic about their future and life in general despite the young and vulnerable age of the teenager was a key factor in how they experienced life at school and how they coped with the challenges that come with being a schooling teenage mother.

Some of the teenage mothers had this to say.

“For me, I have always wanted to be a teacher since I was young and I know this pregnancy and motherhood came as a setback but I never gave up.....even when my parents were very disappointed in me, I still told myself that I would take care of the child and after then go back to school to become that teacher that I wanted to be” (IDI#15 19 years old).

“Because the father of my child wanted to marry and because of poverty my parents had agreed but for I refused because I still wanted to finish my education so that I can have prospects of getting a better job and life” (IDI#3 17 years old).

The findings show that optimism characteristics in teenage mothers have enabled them to look and perceive life differently. As much as these groups of mothers are still children by the virtue of their age, many of them adapted to the fact that they have children who are their responsibility and the felt the only way to give their children the best life has to offer is by working hard. Consider the following assertions.

“ ...I will work as I have never before because I want good grades to help in future so that I can also hold my child” (IDI#8 17 years old).

“ when I come back, I was doing well but now after gaining traction I am back to my top position that I use to hold before I got pregnant” (IDI#2 16 years old).

Optimism is a trait that has also enabled teen mothers in secondary schools to cope better with challenges in school and at home. These young mothers can face their challenges with an open mind while only focusing on what they want to achieve in school.

Views from the study respondents also corroborated the views of the key informants

“They are very motivated and optimistic to get something good out of their studies which has been a driver for some of them. This has helped better have hope in themselves and realize the need to work extra hard” (KII#5 School Teacher).

“They are working hard and the results from the various schools are showing that they are doing well. They want to ensure they can care for their children in future” (KII#1 School Teacher).

Thus, teenage mothers being optimistic about themselves and believing in their ability to excel propels them to work extra hard. Teenagers become confident about themselves and perform well in school since they are optimistic about a better future for themselves and that of their children which they believe can only be made possible through working hard in school and excelling.

Findings of the study show that teenage mothers were encouraged to return to school because the schools they were in when they were pregnant had treated them well and had informed them, they should return immediately after giving birth and winning the child. Some of the teenagers said that.

“The school promised to care for us well the way they did when we were pregnant, so it was easy for us to go back when the baby was six months” (IDI#2 18 years old).

“The school principal and teachers had treated us well and we also saw how they were treating other teenage mothers.... I was motivated by that because I knew I wouldn't suffer a lot as compared to going to a new school altogether and so I decided to go back to my former school” (IDI# 9 17 years old).

As scholars, motherhood presents challenges to the young girls who become pregnant without being psychologically and biologically prepared to care for other children while they are still being cared for. The challenges that teenage mothers experience require that they are given material support. The findings show that many schools have put deliberate measures to ensure teenage mothers are supported while in school. The school principals directed teachers to give teenage mothers extra lessons as a means of helping them compensate for some of the classes that they usually miss. The teenage mothers also noted that they are given texts books by teachers so that they can try and cover areas that they may have missed or could not understand during the normal class teaching.

This is illustrated in the following quotations.

“The principal told us to be going to teachers for extra lessons on areas that we don't understand well” (IDI#15 19 years old)

“Because someone like me I am currently waiting to sit for my KCSE, my teachers usually help me with extra lessons and work to make me improve” (IDI#11 18 years old).

The above findings were confirmed by key informants who noted material support accorded to teenage mothers such as offering them text and revision books, giving them extra lessons and homework as well as providing sanitary towels have motivated the young mothers to remain in school and excel in their education.

“The young mothers are given supported in many ways. You will find that in school, principals agree with teachers to give teenage mothers extra work to help them improve” (KII#7 School Teacher).

Thus, support from schools to teenage mothers ensures that they are well equipped to compete with the rest of the students. The provision of textbooks, revision materials, extra lessons and sanitary towels motivates teenage mothers to remain in school.

The study also revealed that teenage mothers were knowledgeable about the existing government re-entry policy that required teenagers who get pregnant while in school should not be punished and condemned through expulsion like it was before. Teenage mothers who were aware of the re-entry policy found the solution to their misfortunes and challenges because they can ask for the opportunity to go back to school as exemplified in the following voices of the study respondents.

“When I got pregnant, I had about the re-admission policy that the government had....so I knew that then I would come back” (IDI#1 18 years old)

“The re-entry policy starts that no young girl should stay out of school because of pregnancy and even after getting pregnant, the young girl should be allowed back in school to complete their education. therefore, I went back to school because I knew the government would support me” (IDI#4 16 years old).

“.... but instead the teachers talked to me in a good way and told me to remain in school until the time I would be ready to deliver and after weaning the child I was asked to come back to school. They told me about the government policy on re-admission of teenage mothers which motivated me to come back” (IDI#12 18 years old),

“So, I know the ministry of education is very supportive of our situation which makes life a bit easy for us as teenage mothers. We have been able to get a chance to go back to school” (IDI#11 17 years old).

The supportive re-entry policy was further highlighted by key informants who agreed that the existing government policy was supportive to the young mothers as it encouraged many of them to go back to school knowing that they were supported by the government.

“There is a very high number of teenage pregnancies and motherhood in the country. This has led to high numbers of teen mothers in secondary schools which has been made possible only by the activist policy framework that advocates for the needs of the young mothers” (KII#10 County Government Officer).

The findings also show that with the widespread knowledge of the re-admission policy some community members would be in the frontline encouraging girls through their teachers and parents to continue with their education after delivery. The young mothers feel part of the community when the drive for them to return to school after delivery is pushed by other community members other than their teachers and parents.

One study respondent had this to say.

“...that kind of support from outsiders shows us love and they accept us with our situation and that they are willing to see us become better for ourselves and children” (IDI#6 16 years old),

The governments drive through the ministry of education to reduce poverty and increase literacy by ensuring that all children attend school and that those parents whose children are out of school but are of school-going age are arrested and charged. This push is also applauded by the teenage mothers as an important step that has seen them receive so much support and acceptance from the schools are in.

The findings on the Kenyan government re-entry policy providing the guidelines on how teenagers who get pregnant should be integrated back into their previous or other schools for them to continue and finish their education has been highlighted as progressive and supportive to the teenage mothers whose future education would otherwise be doomed. The findings of this study

correspond with those of the WHO (2016) which found that African countries which have re-entry policies such as Botswana, Guinea, Tanzania Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zanzibar, Zambia, Malawi and South Africa are among the countries whose educational policies allow for readmission of teenage mothers in public schools. With such a policy environment, teenage mothers derive support to complete their education which portrays these governments commitments to the education needs and gender sensitivity to the girls' experiences.

A similar study by WHO (2012) also reported that teenage mothers were optimistic about going back to school because they thought that it was the only way they could take good care of their babies since they were not sure if the fathers of their children would give them any support. The findings on school support to ensure teenage mothers have an easy time in school as a motivation to help them work hard and secure a good future for their babies were also recorded in other studies. For instance, Mokwena et al (2014) recorded that teenage motherhood is a challenge that made schools and communities offer the young girls' material and financial support regardless of the mother's age and socioeconomic status. Maluli and Bali (2014) also observed that since teenage mothers have double responsibilities of being mothers and learners at the same, they must be supported by their teachers through extra lessons and coaching to make them cope with academic life.

4.4 Challenges faced by schooling teenage mothers

This section presents the findings on the challenges teenage mothers who re-enter public secondary school face in Bondo Sub-County as outlined in the second objective of the study. The challenges that teenage mothers experience as schooling mothers range from personal to community-level challenges. The teenage mothers were asked to describe the challenges they experienced after returning to school after giving birth. The findings are presented below,

Finding from the study show that low self-esteem and confidence was some of the key challenges that teenage mothers had to deal with as learners. The teenage mothers reported that low self-esteem was a big issue to them because it negatively impacted their academic life and prevented them from getting the best from the school and their lives in general. Some of the teenagers had this to say.

“Teachers make you feel like you want to leave school and go home by the way they talk to you in front of other students” (IDI#7 17 years old).

“Many students and teachers don’t value us....they use you as a bad example to the rest of the school community to extent you feel they you don’t belong there” (IDI#9 16 years old).

“It is hard for us.....you are looked down on by everybody. People don’t associate with you much so we just keep each other company as teenage mothers” (IDI#1 17 years old).

The low self and confidence emerged from how the teenage mothers viewed themselves and their appearances as compared to that of their fellow students. The change in the body appearance of the teenage mothers after delivery concerned them because they noted that some students and teachers made fun of them and looked down upon them which lowered their self-esteem. One respondent noted that.

“Teachers consider us as adults and expects us not to make any mistakes...when you make a mistake you are called bad names just to put you down” (IDI#14 18 years old).

Thus, teenage mothers noted that they felt like they did not belong or they were outcasts in the school community. Teachers and fellow students were reported to be fond of putting down and criticising teenage mothers. Criticizing the teenage mothers in front of their peers and teachers made them feel unloved, uncared for and unvalued even though they are still teenagers who need guidance and elements of love from their seniors.

Findings show that teenage mothers experienced economic challenges based on the fact that they had limited resources. Teenage mothers are by their very age children who do not work but are dependants on their parents. The inability to engage in economic activities to earn income means that teenage mothers can not afford to meet the needs of their children and hence care for them effectively.

The following voices exemplify the situation.

“Sometimes the needs of the child are expensive or the child needs something which we can afford because we don’t have money” (IDI#11 14 years old).

“We are not to work because we are still young and we are still in school so that puts us in a situation where we can only depend on our parents or guardians or maybe if the father or our children have taken responsibility they can support” (IDI# 15 15 years old).

The need to afford services and resources to care for their children reduces the chances of the teenage mother to concentrate in school and complete their education considerably.

“We need to be supported to care for our children because if you have trouble thinking about the needs of the bay then we can even put our minds in school” (IDI#12 16 years old).

Teenage mothers face financial challenges since their parents may not be willing to assist them in meeting their financial needs. Some teenage mothers agreed that their parents and guardian saw them as children who were not serious with education and that the parents considered any investment in them as a waste of time and resources.

In supporting the findings from teenage mothers one of the key informants noted that

“These girls are very vulnerable and if they are not supported then we will be talking of a different story but I must tell you many have challenges with basic financial resources that they need to care for their children let alone themselves. Their babies have needs which means they must have money and you can agree with me that these girls can engage in income-generating activities and still manage to come to school” (KII#2 NGO Official).

In some cases, teenage mothers were faced with situations that left them to care for themselves and meet their own economic needs. These include cases where the men who impregnated them were not working or failed to accept responsibilities of providing for the children and the parents or guardians also neglected the teen mothers. In some instances, the parents of the teenage mothers may also be poor hence can't provide for the teenager needs and that of their babies. In such circumstances, teenage mothers are forced to look for opportunities to earn income to feed their babies and this may force them to drop out of school even after re-admission.

The study established that stigmatization is one of the challenges that teenage mothers have to contend with in secondary schools. Stigmatization among peers, relatives and teaches was a usual challenge that the young mothers had to cope with. Stigmatization as a result of discrimination is

meted on the teenage mothers within the school, at home and the community spaces. One of the study respondents had this to say.

“Teachers and students think that you are not a good example and they label you as immoral and call you bad names” (IDI#3 17 years old).

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood are perceived negatively by their peers, teaches and relatives. Teenagers who fall pregnant are considered immoral and of bad character, since they have become mothers while they are still learners at the same time. Study findings show that discrimination has led to teenage mothers being socially excluded from their peers and relatives. This is so because the young mothers noted that they are regarded as children of bad manners and bad examples to others.

Consider the following voices.

“Our fellow students, some teachers and even community members look at you as an outcast...people call you a mother which is not good” (IDI#5 16 years old).

“Some girls who used to be my friends now don’t talk to me like they use to. Even teachers treat us like parents” (IDI#10 17 years old).

The study shows that with stigmatization teenage mothers are verbally called names that situated or identify them with their status. Such name-calling works negatively on the self-esteem and self-worth of teenage mothers because they are still very young and dealing with stigma becomes a challenge to them.

The following voice exemplifies this situation.

“The boys in this school are very bad, they wait until it's time to go home and then they will start calling different bad names because we have refused them taking advantage of you” (IDI#14 19 years old)

In supporting the findings on stigmatization that teenage mothers went through in secondary schools, one key informant who has been dealing with the challenges that teenage mothers had this to say.

“Stigmatization of teenage motherhood and pregnancy is a big issue in primary and secondary schools. Stigmatization is deeply entrenched that needs all the stakeholders involved in issues of teenage pregnancy to put their concerted efforts together to reverse the way this group of mothers are perceived by their family, fellow students and community members” (County Government Official).

Thus, stigmatization against teenage mothers harms their academic and emotional well-being. With stigma, teenage mothers feel unwanted and not accepted in the school community. Communities were reported to also discriminate the teenage mothers as people who have gone against their culture that considers children born out of wedlock as not appropriate. At home and community levels, teenage mothers reported that they are looked down upon and considered people who started expressing themselves sexually at an early age which is not the norm.

From the study, findings show that missing school and classes is a key challenge for teenage mothers in public mixed schools. Teenage mothers often are absent from school because teen motherhood comes out as one of the most difficult times in the lives of teenage mothers who become gives and return to school. The teenagers are expected to carry school work like the rest of the students while at the same time performing their responsibility o being mothers back at home.

Findings show that one of the major challenges that teenage mothers face is absenteeism. Teenagers noted that they often missed school and classes because they had other competing needs such as those of the bay that required them to stay out of school. For instance, taking the baby to the clinic was one of the reasons teen mothers would be away from school to attend to.

The following voice expands on this.

“When you have to care for your child when there is no one to look after him or her then you will miss school because it's your responsibility to ensure the baby is okay” (IDI#11 17 years old).

In instances where the teenage mothers are required to take the baby to the clinic or when there is nobody at home to look after the baby or when they are not feeling well will automatically make them not attend school. The teen mothers noted that sometimes they notify their teachers about the

issues and the fact that they would be absent while others don't when such issues occur unplanned like when the baby abruptly falls ill.

This scenario is illustrated by some of the study respondents who noted that.

“Even when you tell the teachers that your baby was sick and you had to miss school because of that then they wouldn't have a problem because they understand our situation” (IDI#5 16 years old).

“We usually miss school a lot of times that the other students I would say which a big issue to deal with” (IDI#3 14 years old).

“When the baby is unwell, you have to take care of it and so you are forced not to go to school to take care of the baby” (IDI#15 19 years old).

The study findings mean that when teenage mothers miss school they remain behind other students in academic programmes which is one of the causes of poor performance among schooling teenage mothers.

A key informant corroborated the above findings from teenage mothers by confirming that absenteeism was a key challenge for teenage mothers had certainly become one of the patterns of school life for teenage mothers. One key informant opined that *teenage mothers not attending school because they have to care for themselves and their children is not unique. This is something we are dealing with every day in this area. Missing school is something we are dealing with every day in school. Many teenage mothers would just miss school and when you ask them the reason, they would tell you the baby was unwell or they were not feeling well which you have to understand because of the situation they are in. We try to keep in touch with their parents whenever such situations happen and also encourage them to always inform us (KII, School Teacher).*

Thus, teenager mothers' challenge of absenteeism implies that this group of young mothers may automatically become among the poor performers in their classes hence the loss of interest in continuing or completing their education. Absenteeism may result in a lack of motivation and derive to do better. findings on while others cited school non-attendance as a major cause of poor performance others also agreed that even with full school attendance the teenage mothers struggled to compete with the rest of the students. Teenage mothers noted that because of the adverse effects

of pregnancy and motherhood, their school performance was poor. This could be because some of the teenage mothers would lack motivation and have low academic aspirations which resulted in poor performance.

The findings of the study revealed that choice of status was a major challenge that teen mothers in the public mixed secondary schools had to deal with daily. The choice of status in this study was reported as how teenage mothers were perceived by teachers, fellow learners and community members. The teenagers were considered as adults whom the teachers cited as bad examples and that made many of their fellow students not befriend or cooperate with the teen mothers. Teachers and community members consider motherhood as adulthood. The teenage mothers noted that they, however, remained positive to all these challenges of embarrassment and name-calling and insisted on being regarded as equal to the other students.

The following assertions print this picture.

“Teachers will at you when they see you walking or befriending another study because they think we assumed adult duties and hence we will influence other students” (IDI#13 17 years old).

“Whenever you are seen in a group of other students with some teachers they make fun of you and tell your fellow learners not to be around you and this makes us feel bad. Even if we gave birth, it doesn't mean we are different from the rest of the students” (IDI#7 16 years old).

Based on this association of teenage mothers with adulthood, the respondents reported that they were offered no support of any nature to help them cope with the school challenges and excel in their academic life. Findings show that teen mothers were not given support in the school by teachers and fellow students. Teenage mothers indicated that a few teachers were willing to listen to them and support them.

“The teachers are very harsh when we want to share with them our challenges. They feel like we are giving them too much work by asking them to take through what we would miss when we are out of school” (IDI#1 16 years old).

The results of the study provide that when teenage mothers miss classes due to absenteeism very few teachers were willing to take them through what they would have missed. In addition to this,

some teachers would even label them as poor students and call them others names that had a great impact on how they feared academically.

The study also found that some of the teenage mothers could be absent from school for so many days may be due to the same reasons of taking care of an ill baby or other reasons back at home. . The teachers were also not considerate to the needs of these groups of mothers and would not take their time to bring them up to speed on the classes they would have missed,

One of the respondents put the situation in perspective.

“Some teachers are good while are not. The teachers usually say that they are paid to teach the students in school, not mothers are deciding to stay at home” (IDI#10 18 years old).

Thus, the change in status that makes teachers and students consider teenage mothers as adults and hence not offer them support could be due to cultural underpinnings which accord any women who give baby adult responsibilities. This kind of cultural connotation leaves teenage girls open to ridicule in the school community not given the necessary support to cope with their challenges.

The study established that teenage mothers have challenges of conflicting roles. Teenage mothers are always never ready to be parents yet at the same time they are children that are still under the care of their parents. Findings show that teenage mothers have many roles that include them being children or daughters of their parents or a wife to their husband, being a student and at the same time being a mother. These are competing roles that require time leaving the teen mothers with limited time for other activities.

The burden of roles shape the way teenage mothers live their lives as the roles are sometimes competing resulting in role conflict. The teenage mothers complained of experiencing time poverty emanating from the many roles as is explained in the following voices.

“Us girls and mothers, we have a lot of work to do because you are still leaving with your parents and they require you to help them at home when your baby also needs your time and also school work awaits you” (IDI#12 17 years old).

“....to get time even to do some of the homes of work is difficult because you have to help with house chores at home and care for the baby” (IDI#11 16 years old).

“For someone like me is lives with the husband life is so hard because of all the duties in the house I am the one to do them” (IDI#9 17 years old).

You are coming from school and you are tired then you have work to do and the baby is also there waiting to be fed” (IDI#1 15 years old).

The findings show that teenage mothers have many roles at a very young age. Motherhood throws teenagers into taking responsibility at an early age. Such roles include taking care of themselves and their infants. The multiple roles require more time hence the teenage mothers are left to trade off some of the roles such as attending school and others. From the findings becoming a parent at a young age also influence the way community members, teachers and fellow students relate with teenage mothers.

The above findings are explained further by one key informant who stated that.

“These teen mothers have challenges.... you will find that they are the ones helping their parents at home, they will take care of their baby and will still manage to come to school” (KII#7 School Teacher)

When you try to find out some of the causes for their absenteeism, you will be shocked that these roles are the major issue. They can not concentrate in class with the heavy workload and even if they come to school, they are already tired. Their situation is very unique and can't be compared to their fellow students” (KII# NGO Official).

Thus, teenage mothers have a heavy burden from their triple roles which require them to balance their time well so that they manage to accomplish all the activities including school work. Since many teenage mothers live under the care of their parents and guardians, they have to take care of their social roles as daughters in their homes. The findings also show that the teenage mothers who live with their spouses or father of their children are treated as wives are therefore required to fulfil the prescribed duties of a wife. As a result of these challenges brought by the many roles, teenage mothers have struggled with very little support accorded to them.

Many of the young mothers have adapted to the life of multiple roles which they feel have also changed their identities as children to mature minors. This adaptation has helped them plan about their future and that of their children. The findings of this study concur with those of Mahuli and Bali (2014) who also observed a similar trend in terms of the roles of teenagers. The duo noted that teenage mothers reported having a challenge in balancing between two responsibilities of being a learner and being a parent simultaneously. The duo further concluded that teenage mothers were unable to finish school homework or even prepare the next day's schoolwork because of the many duties at home which presented a major problem to the teenage mothers in finding a balance between schoolwork and parenting.

The findings on absenteeism come out as a common feature of teenage mothers' school life which is directly linked to poor performance academically. The observation made in this study has also been made by UNICEF (2011) who recorded that the school of teenage mothers is characterized by absenteeism which comes from the young mothers attending to infant problems such as illness. The report further noted that 90% of teenage mothers did not attend school every month because of the very reason of taking their babies to clinics where they would spend almost the rest of the day.

As reported in this study that teenage mothers were shamed and ridiculed, Bhana et al (2010) also found similar results. He observed that teenage pregnancy and motherhood was always punished and shamed in schools and that teachers and parents would consider teenagers who get pregnant and give birth while still in school are not allowed in school to influence others to follow their route. Similarly, UNICEF (2011) also recorded those teenage mothers who got pregnant were often discriminated against as they are considered deviants whose mistake was to get pregnant at an early age and therefore do not fit to be in society and school. The findings of this study on stigma from the community members also have a huge impact on the lives of this group of mothers and may not complete their education were the same as those of Shefer et al., (2012) who found that some parents and community members do not want to see teenage mothers learning together or associating with other girls in the school.

4.5 Mechanisms employed by schooling mothers to cope with the challenges

The study examined the coping strategies employed by teenage mothers who re-enter secondary school in Bondo Sub-County. The study shows that teenage mothers experienced challenges as

scholars which required strategies of coping for them to excel in their academic life and finish school. Teenage mothers noted that they were well aware of the fact that they were the ones to provide a good life to their babies as well as to themselves. They, therefore, had to cope with the challenges because they had to be in school to acquire academic qualifications that could help them secure a job.

The findings of the study show that teenage mothers adopted many strategies to cope with some of the key challenges that they experienced in school, Among the copying strategies was missing or skipping schools days to avoid stigma and prejudices from school teachers and fellow learners as a means of coping. Despite the discrimination and prejudices that teachers and students had against teen mothers, they noted they always manage to cope. Missing school was noted as a major mechanism of coping since it enabled the teen mothers to stay away from the teachers and fellows prejudices leading to stigmatization and discrimination. However, missing school affected their level of involvement in lessons, schools activities and learning in general.

“Sometimes the way these teachers and students talk you feel like the world is coming to an end and so you can only stay away from people who don’t love you all but only hate you” (IDI#8 15 years old).

Teaches and other students embarrassed and abused teenage mothers by ridiculing them in front of other students which acted negatively on their self-esteem and confidence.

“Sometimes you will find that some of us teen mothers would stay away from school and just sit at home. When teachers and fellow students are fond of calling you bad and treating you badly because you have a baby, then I have to just sit at home for a time for me to calm down” (IDI#11 17 years old).

“In school you most of the time feel like people don’t like you at all and that everybody was against you, so I could just decide to face that I am unwell and go stay at home just to be away from these environments” (IDI#7 18 years old).

“Some teachers would embarrass in front of other students and you feel ashamed....I would then miss school even for one week because of that shame and guilt being thrown on our faces by the vert people who are supposed to care for us” (IDI# 10 15 years old).

“I got tired with some teachers using me as a subject every time they come to class. I could miss school but eve doesn’t stay at home but just hide around the village. Sometimes even when I am just in school, I do get out of class during English lessons because the teacher usually ashames me and puts me down” (IDI#14 18 years old).

It was noted that the young-mothers learners at some point would feel fed up and resisted the teachers’ use of judgmental language in the presence of their fellow learners and spoke back.

The study findings show that teenage mothers supported each other through their peer groups. The peer groups included teenage mothers in the schools and churches where the teenage mothers would discuss the challenges and share in their experiences on how to overcome them. The peer-to-peer groups included other teenage mothers who acted as champions in dealing with challenges that come with teenage mothers and education. Consider the quote below.

“Our peer groups have been our strongest source of support.... these are people who have been through or are going through the same issues you are experiencing and therefore it has been a good place to share, learn and encourage each other” (IDI#11 18 years old).

The peer to peer groups was organized for different classes that suit the needs of different teenage mothers in different forms. In these groups, the schooling mothers would meet every week and share their experiences for the week. Even when they meet in the community spaces like the churches they would organize meetings every month where they share the challenges they experience.

“We meet as teen mothers in the community or school and because we in different classes so those of us who ahead share with those who are still in the lower classes on how we have been able to cope with the challenge” (IDI#7 17 years old).

From the groups, challenges and serious issues affecting any of the group members are addressed by the peer champion and if they are serious then they are referred to the teachers in charge of guiding and counselling. Consider the following quotes:

“Yes, on counselling, we have peer to peer groups where we discuss our issues as teenage mothers and that has helped us so much” (IDI#15 19 years old).

“.....we usually meet regularly as people with the same challenges and discuss among ourselves and with our teacher in charge on how to deal with some of these challenges” (IDI#5 17 years old).

Peer to peer counselling services propel teenage mothers and make them adapt to challenges that they experience in public mixed schools. The key informants had this to say

“Through peer-to-peer groups, teenage mothers offer each other emotional and psychological support that improves their mental well being and confidence” (KII#7 School Teacher).

Self-esteem is necessary for retentions and completion of school characterized by good academic performance for teenage mothers. As the key drivers of guiding and counselling programmes in secondary schools, teachers under this mandate ensure that students especially teenage mothers receive the necessary support for their wellbeing.

The guiding and counselling programmes are igneous programmes in the education system that provide psychosocial support for students. Teachers who are mandated with guiding and counselling are usually trained in psychosocial support of children and hence are well placed to offer this kind of support to teenage mothers who seem to need special attention as compared to other students.

Findings from the study teachers who are in charge of guiding and counselling have been instrumental to the well being teenage mothers in schools. The teen mothers reported that counselling teachers walk with them through the journey of pregnancy until they deliver and report back to school.

The following perspectives illustrate this.

“We have our guiding and counselling teachers who often support us emotionally and talk to us about so many things....” (IDI#2 15 years old).

“Our school has two guiding and counselling teachers who have been good to me. They accepted me and encouraged me to still be in school when I got pregnant.... when I come

back to school after giving, she has been with me asking me if I have any problems and trying to listen to me and advice” (IDI#1 18 years old).

The young mothers confirmed in the focus group discussions that they rely on emotional and psychological support from their guiding and counselling teachers. Guiding and counselling teachers were touted as go-to people within the school whenever the teenage mother had challenges of any nature.

Some of the study respondents had this to say:

“My school is very keen on our wellbeing. The principal always calls us to her office to check on us and encourages us to talk to her guiding and counselling teachers whom she usually refers to as our mothers in school” (IDI#10 16 years old).

“I don’t go to the teacher in charge of guiding and counselling so much nowadays because I have adapted and I can cope with these challenges but as I peer education” (IDI#13 16 years old).

“I usually refer a lot of my fellow teen mothers to her and they always come back happy.... she is like a mother and she listens to us and supports us” (IDI#12 17 years old).

The support offered by teachers to teenage mothers through counselling affirms the commitment of the government to see that teenage mothers who fall pregnant and give birth can continue with their education and complete successfully. Teachers being the people that spend the time with students or the teen mother offer the best emotional and psychosocial support to ensure the young mothers remain focused and succeed in their education. This support serves a great deal in the education as it encourages other teenagers who fall pregnant not to shy away from re-enrolling back in school due to stigma and discrimination as the teacher makes the school environment conducive for them.

From the foregoing, the finding shows that counselling from other partners working with the schools complements the support provided by peer-to-peer counsellors and guiding and counselling teachers. The support provided improves the well being of the teenage mothers who in turn remain in school as they cope with other challenges therein. Thus, when teenage mothers are not supported and counselled, they are likely to have a negative attitude about themselves

which directly impacts their educational attainment. The above findings corroborate those of other studies that have been conducted before. For instance, a study by UIS (2016) observed that before pregnant teenagers could depart from the school, they were counselled and advised by their school counsellor on the challenges that they could experience. The report further documents that teenage mothers are put together in groups and counselled by their teachers and helped to develop education plans that suit their needs.

The findings of this study on the support received from teachers also resemble those by WHO (2016) which concluded that emotional support strengthens teenage mothers coping ability. It further stated that teenage mothers were being supported by all stakeholders for them to continue with their education after giving birth in the wake of a myriad of challenges that the girls go through as schooling mothers. Further, many of the schooling mothers have also embraced their situation and the challenges that come with having the double roles and have adopted mechanisms to allow them to cope well and excel in school.

A study by Shaningwa (2007) also recorded that those teenage mothers who lived with adult female relatives in the home coped with schooling better than those without such a relative. The teen mothers who attended day schools would entrust the adult female members in the family to take care of their children for them to go to school. A study by Hill (2011) also found that teenage mothers coped with schooling by enrolling for extra lessons and coaching from teachers and educators who are dedicated to seeing them succeed. Also, Tillman (2008) observed that teen mothers were provided with a flexible schooling schedule that incorporates their child-caring roles especially for those in day schools which was important in improving their performance and completion rate.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study on the experiences of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County. The chapter also includes a presentation of the study conclusion drawn from the study findings and recommendations for policy and programmes as well as the suggestion for further research

5.2 Summary of findings

This study was designed to explore the lived experiences of teenage mothers after re-enrollment in public mixed secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County. The study specifically set out to answer the following objectives: to determine the factors that influence teenage mothers to re-enrol in public secondary school in Bondo Sub-County, to find out the challenges teenage mothers who re-enter public secondary school face in Bondo Sub-County and to examine the coping strategies employed by teenage mothers who re-enter secondary school in Bondo Sub-County.

From the findings, teenage mothers are supported by their families members over decisions to return to school and finish their education. Families offer financial support and emotional support to teenage mothers. The non-state actors have been at the forefront in targeting teenage mothers and adolescent girls in educating them about their rights which have seen many teenage mothers return to school in study area, The fact that teenage mothers were optimistic about their future was found as the key factor that enabled them to look and perceive life differently. Optimism is a trait that has also enabled teen mothers in secondary schools to cope better with challenges in school and at home. In motivating teen mothers to return to school, the school offer services and go the extra mile to try to meet the needs of teenage mothers like provision of textbooks, revision materials, extra lessons and sanitary towels motivates teenage mothers to remain in school and compete well with the rest of the students. The supportive re-entry policy provided the environment for teenage mothers re-enrollment in schools. The policy has served to help teen mothers be integrated back into their previous or other schools for them to continue and finish their education.

Teenage mothers are among the most vulnerable group of mothers whose challenges are compounded by the fact that they are children and leaders at the same. The teenagers had low self

and confidence which the change in the body appearance of the teenage mothers after delivery concerned them because they noted that some students and teachers made fun of them and looked down upon them which lowered their self-esteem. Teenage mothers face financial challenges since their parents may not be willing to assist them in meeting their financial needs. Some teenage mothers noted that their parents and guardian saw them as children who were not serious with education and that the parents considered any investment in them as a waste of time and resources

As schooling mothers, they are perceived negatively by their peers and teachers. Teen mothers are stigmatized which has to teenage mothers being socially excluded from their peers and relatives. This is so because the young mothers noted that they are regarded as children of bad manners and bad examples to others. Stigmatization against teenage mothers harms their academically and emotional well-being. Besides stigma, teenage mothers were also faced with absenteeism from school which means they miss classes and record poor performance. Teenage mothers miss classes due to absenteeism very few teachers were willing to take them through what they would have missed, and some would even label them as poor students. The change in status makes teachers and students consider teenage mothers as adults and hence not offer them support could be due to cultural underpinnings which accord any women who give birth to baby adult responsibilities. This kind of cultural connotation leaves teenage girls open to ridicule in the school community not given the necessary support to cope with their challenges.

Conflicting roles of teenage mothers leading to heavy burden limited the time available for the teenage mothers to attend to their children and school matters well. The many roles require teenage mothers to balance their time well so that they manage to accomplish all the activities including schoolwork. Since many teenage mothers live under the care of their parents and guardians, they must take care of their social roles as daughters in their homes which increased the work burden on other roles as mothers and learners.

In dealing with the challenges, findings demonstrate that teenage mothers adopted various mechanisms to cope and finish their education. One of the mechanisms was skipping school because it allowed the teen mothers to stay away from prejudices leading to stigmatization and discrimination. Supporting each through peer-to-peer groups was highlighted as one of the methods that provided teenage mothers with spaces where they could share their challenges with fellow teen mothers and educate each other on the mechanism to cope. Schools have also been

supportive of teenage mothers in dealing with their challenges. This was delivered through guidance and counselling programmes. The support provided improves the well being of the teenage mothers who in turn remain in school as they cope with other challenges therein.

5.3 Conclusion

The study explored the lived experiences of teenage mothers after re-entry into public mixed secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County. As shown in the findings, numerous factors influence teenage mothers to seek re-admission into secondary schools after giving birth such as family support, re-entry policy, school support and optimism from the teenage mothers on the need to become better in future. Teenage mothers experience a spectrum of challenges after getting re-admitted to secondary schools which have an overall effect on their academic, social, and emotional wellbeing. In dealing with these challenges, teenage mothers have developed mechanisms to cope with challenges such as missing school, forming a support group and using counselling services in schools and churches.

The study concludes that schooling teenage mothers are among the most vulnerable group of learners. Motherhood throws teenage mothers in public mixed day secondary schools into taking responsibility at an early age with multiple and conflicting roles that require them to be supported. This is one of the reasons counselling programmes in secondary schools are necessary and that they should be improved to reflect the needs of teenage mothers. When teenage mothers who have sought re-admission back in schools are not supported adequately, the challenges they experience will lead to a high drop rate since many of them would be unable to cope.

5.4 Recommendations

From the foregoing, the study concluded that teenage mothers experience a spectrum of challenges that serve to reduce or reverse the gains made in empowering teenage mothers through education. Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made as key strategies that would go the extra mile in encouraging teenage mothers' participation in education.

1. The ministry of education and the other education stakeholders should set up a committee on the school re-entry policy that will ensure its full implementation. Full implementation would mean that secondary school heads and teachers are implored to explicitly implement

all aspects of the Kenya's re-entry policy to ensure that it respects and upholds the rights and dignity of teenage mothers.

2. The association of secondary schools and secondary school teachers should jointly re-look at the secondary school guiding and counselling manual and curriculum to ensure that they are holistic and responsive to the needs and realities of teenage mothers. Incorporating the pregnancy cycle until birth and re-admission are key areas to be re-looked at. This will ensure is teen mothers are supported and are better placed to cope with the challenges of being schooling mothers.
3. The County Government and the other stakeholders should develop and deliver campaigns meant to sensitive the community members about the res-entry policy which would make students, teachers and community members understand the existing policy and how it protects the rights of teenage mothers. With this understanding, learners and teachers will appreciate and provide support to the young mothers who seek re-admission.
4. The county government through the county department of education and other line ministries should introduce special programmes to support teenage mothers in the study area. Like having health nurses in schools to disseminate information on early child birth and its challenges by concentrating on high-risk populations and high-risk behaviour in the area.

5.5 Suggested areas for further research

There is a need for further research on the support services that teenage mothers are provided with at schools to support their retention and completion of education after re-enrollment in both mixed and single-sex in Siaya County.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Consent form

Investigator: Maureen Agola Okondo

Introduction

My name is **Maureen Agola Okondo** from the Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies, University of Nairobi. I am conducting a study on **THE EXPERIENCES OF THE TEENAGE MOTHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BONDO SUB-COUNTY, KENYA.**

Purpose

The study seeks to explore the experiences of teenage mothers after re-entry back to public secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County.

Procedure

If you agree to participate in the study, a face-to-face or phone in-depth interview will be conducted by the researcher. The nature of the questions will be about the topic of experiences of teenage mothers after re-entry back to school as well as questions on your demographic characteristics.

Risks/Discomfort

There is no risk in participating in this study. However, you may experience some discomfort due to the personal nature of the questions, but this will be asked in private and your confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit in participating in the study but in case you have any questions the investigator will readily assist you. The findings of this study will help understand the factors influencing re-enrollment of adolescent mothers back to school, the challenges they face after re-enrollment and coping mechanisms to the challenges.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be always maintained. There shall be no mention of names or identifiers in the report or publications which may arise from the study.

Compensation

There will be no compensation for your participation in the study.

Voluntariness

Participation in the study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, you will not be compelled to. You will also be free to withdraw from the study at any time. However, I humbly request your full cooperation.

Persons to contact

If you have any questions regarding the study, you can contact Maureen Agola Okondo through telephone number **0725942160** or Prof Tom Ondicho through email at tondicho@uonbi.ac.ke
Your participation in the study will be highly appreciated.

I _____ hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the study. I acknowledge that a thorough explanation of the nature of the study has been given to me by Master/Miss._____. I clearly understand that my participation is completely voluntary.

Signature_____Date_____

Signature of Researcher _____Date_____

Appendix II: In-Depth Interview Guide

Demographic characteristics

Name of school

Age

Form level

What is your religion?

Influencing factors

What were the school and home environments like while you were carrying your pregnancy?

What kinds of support did you get from the school and a homemade return to school?

Is this the same school you were in before giving birth? If yes how easy or difficult was it to return?

Why were you not able to return to the school you were in while pregnant?

Challenges

What is your experience like after coming back to school?

What difficulties do you experience in being a mother and a student at the same time?

What specific challenges do you experience coming from the school, family and community for being a teenage mother in school?

What challenges do you experience related to your health and school performance?

Coping mechanisms

What do you do when facing the challenges, you have mentioned above?

What does the school, family and community do to help you cope with the challenges?

What kinds of support do you get from the school and community as teenage mothers?

Are there governments or organizations that support you to cope with the challenges of being a mother and a learner at the same time?

We have come to the end of the interview.

Thank you for participating.

Appendix III: Key Informant Interview Guide

Background information

Age

Gender

Carder

Institution

Years of service

Influencing factors

What is your role concerning teenage pregnancies and motherhood?

Please tell me about the frequency and occurrence of teenage pregnancies in the area?

Tell me about the experiences of adolescents after getting pregnant and giving birth?

What kinds of support do they get after giving birth to return to school?

How do you support teenage mothers to enrol back to school?

Challenges

What challenges do you face in dealing with teenage mothers as learners?

What challenges do teenage mothers face while in school?

How do the challenges affect them socially and academically?

Coping mechanisms

How do teenage mothers cope with the challenges they experience as learners?

Are school mechanisms to support teenage mothers in school?

What should be done to support teenage mothers to re-enrol back to schools?

What should be improved regarding the policy on re-entry?

Other recommendations

Thank you for participating.