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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### CHALLENGES FACING TEEN MOTHERS' INTEGRATION IN MIXED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYAMIRA SOUTH SUB-COUNTY, NYAMIRA COUNTY, KENYA

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#### ABSTRACT

Teenage pregnancy leads to dropout of girls from school. As a consequence, it makes the girl child incapable of fending for herself and to become socially and economically unproductive in society. In Nyamira South Sub-County, the number of teenage pregnancies is on the increase despite the various government interventions to mitigate the vice and enable teenage mothers continue with their studies. Such interventions include the government policy of integration of the teen mothers in school which was introduced in 1994. The policy allows teen mothers to come back to school to continue with their studies after delivery. However, little is known in the international literature on the challenges teen mothers who come back to school after delivery to complete their studies face and to what extent they are taking advantage of the integration policy. The purpose of this study was to establish the challenges facing teen mothers' integration in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County of Nyamira County, Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to establish the academic and socio-economic challenges teen mothers face in mixed schools and to establish measures that can curb teenage pregnancies in schools in Nyamira South Sub-County. Descriptive survey design was employed in the study. The study population comprised 42 principals, 42 guidance and counseling teachers and 5953 girls. Clustered sampling was used to select 13 public mixed secondary schools in the Sub-County whose principals, guidance and counseling teachers and students participated in the study. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. Face validity of the instruments was determined by three experts from the faculty of Education, Kisii University, who ensured they complied with universal standards of proposal and research finding reporting. Data collected was summarized and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The study revealed that teenage mothers in school were stigmatized, discriminated and experience financial challenges that make them drop out of school. The study concluded that the challenges teenage mothers face in school need urgent remedy for Kenya to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Vision 2030. The study recommended further research on challenges facing teenage mothers' integration in pure girls' boarding schools and in primary schools.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Teenage Pregnancy cases amongst school girls are a major concern worldwide. It has been quoted as a constraint in the elimination of gender disparities in education and the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), universal basic education, gender equality in education and vision 2030 (Centre For rights Education and Awareness, 2007). As per 2010, an average of 36.4 million women in developing countries, age bracket 20-24 were established

having had a baby before the age of 18, where by the African continent contributes 28% of these women. According to the UNFPA 2014, every day in developing countries an average of 20,000 girls aged below 18 years gives birth which affects their schooling. The World Bank Report (2005) confirms this when it established that teenage pregnancy is one of the main reasons for girls dropping out of school, once they are faced with child care and lack of support to attend school after delivery. Kirby (2007) observes that today's economy demands a sophisticated and educated workforce. Teenage pregnancy, however, prevents adolescents from preparing themselves for employment and becoming competitive in the labour market. Mieke (2006), indicates that girls are underprivileged in education as compared to boys and,

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therefore deserve special consideration so as to remain in school. To prevent girls from dropping out of school because of pregnancy, the African Population and Health Research Centre (2007) recommends that pregnant teenagers and mothers should be given a chance to complete their education by not excluding them from school. Even though the Kenya government introduced free Secondary Education in 2008 which allows re-admission of teenage mothers to school, the enrolment of girls in school is still low, The Centre for the Study of Adolescence (CSA, 2008) shows that 13,000 girls drop out of school every year in Kenya because of pregnancy. The low enrolment is a matter of concern as it amounts to denying the girl child their right to education. Siringi (2012) while citing the gender policy in Kenya says that even though the law allows girls to come back to school after delivery, social issues such as stigmatization, mockery of teen mothers by other students, teachers and parents lowers their confidence and force them out of school to get married. This is contrary to those girls who complete their studies without becoming pregnant as they score good grades, delay their marriage, do not subject their daughters to archaic practices such as female genital mutilation, practice family planning and bring up children with high survival chances ( Central Bureau of Statistics, 2004). Grant and Hallman (2008) assert that limited studies have been conducted to establish challenges teen mothers face in school that force them to drop out. They maintain that many studies that have been conducted in developing countries, including Kenya are based on the causes and effects of teenage pregnancies. They therefore recommend establishment of challenges that discourage girls from school so as to mitigate the problem of low enrolment of girls and gender disparities in education. It is therefore important to know what these factors are in school which keep teen mothers away and are barriers in their access to education.

The problem of teenage motherhood has been studied by many researchers with the intention of establishing the causes and effects of teenage pregnancies and how to prevent them (Hopane, 2008). However, little is known in the international literature about the challenges faced by pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers in school. The researcher therefore, sought to establish the extent of teenage pregnancy problem in Nyamira South and the challenges teenage mothers face in school. Tanui (2013) reported that in the South Western part of Kenya, former Nyanza province of Kenya, where Nyamira South Sub-County is located, 60 percent of girls aged 15 and below were found to have started their sexual encounters. The counties in this region include Nyamira, Kisii, Homabay, Migori, Siaya and Kisumu. Nyamira South is one of the four sub-counties in Nyamira. This translates to 6 in every 10 girls being sexually active before age 18, the legal and consensual age for sex and marriage. In Nyamira South Sub-County where the study was conducted, it was noted that many girls join Form 1 while those who complete the Form 4 course are less as many drop out of school while almost all the boys who join form 1 complete their form 4 course as shown in Table 1

**Statement of the Problem:** Teenage pregnancy has become a serious problem in many societies. The number of teenage mothers in school keeps on increasing. Globally, 65 out of every 1000 girls become pregnant every year while in Developing Countries, 20,000 girls younger than 18 give birth every year. The teenage mothers who come back to school to complete their studies face many challenges as they take the roles of being both students and mothers at the same time.

The challenges which the young mothers face make them to score poor grades or opt to drop out of school. The low grades they score also restrict their educational progression to college or university which affects their future economic opportunities and this is likely to be passed to their next generation as their children may also be teen mothers, repeating the path taken by parents, thereby becoming social dependents. Kenyan Government introduced free secondary education in 2008 and so that girls to come back to school to complete their studies after delivery, still the enrolment of girls in school was still low. This is a setback to Kenya's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) NO.4 which targets 100% admission to inclusive, justifiable and excellence in education to all while promoting enduring learning chances for all Kenyans by 2030. In order to growth and sustain achievements in school, it is necessary that all these barriers to education are exhaustively investigated with the objective of removing them while making school safe for all learners, especially girls. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the challenges facing teen mothers' Integration in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County, Nyamira County, Kenya.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the study was to establish the challenges facing teen mothers' Integration in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County of Nyamira County, Kenya.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Academic challenges teenage mothers face:** Human capital theory affirms that children bearing may have far-reaching consequences on the teen girl education and society (Becker, 1964) According to this theory, the incidence of early childbearing seems to raise the opportunity costs of accumulation in human capital. Being a teen mother may impede human capital investment because it is during adolescence that one's education is attained. Given the high secondary school dropout rates of teen mothers, they are less likely to attain a university degree, which is more valued in labour markets. Teenage motherhood may hinder young women from participating in the labour force due to incompatibility between employment and child rearing. Since teenage mothers are still young, it becomes more difficult for them to take responsibility and as a result, they tend to be more dependent on welfare and trapped in poverty (Furstenberg, 1991).

Chauke (2013) study shows that education may be put on hold when a teen becomes pregnant. In many cases, teenage mothers are unable to go back to school after delivery as they are compelled to look after their children. In some cases, the young mother's physical health conditions do not make it conducive for them to return to school. Other teenage mothers who were planning to attend college in future may put off those intentions after becoming pregnant as they may decide to focus on the baby rather than pursuing further education. Chohan's (2010) research on young mother-hood highlights that young mothers experience many challenges and demands. This is especially when the baby is sick or when they have a lot of school work. The research points out that teen mothers start their day three hours earlier than their peers to prepare themselves and their baby. The research further says that some teen mothers may wish to stay at home and care for their babies, which would reinforce the attitude of teen mothers as 'reckless' because they don't return to school.

The re-admission of teenage mothers back to school policy clearly stipulates the role of parents in supporting teenage mothers in school. The current study therefore sought to find out if parents understand their roles and adequately support teenage mothers in meeting school requirements. Studies indicate that the academic performance of teenage mothers also decrease when they come back to school to complete their studies. Bunyi (2008) study, for instance notes that when teen mothers come to school, their performance is often affected and most of the girls moved from doing well academically to a mere average or below average as they try to balance between motherhood and schooling. Another study by Morrell, Bhana and Shefer (2012) supported the above assertion by noting that 41% of teenage mothers who experienced successive pregnancies repeated at least one grade or more. This is emphasized by Ardington (2012) who points out that teenage mothers were two thirds of a grade behind their peers and the teen mothers are 25 per cent more likely to drop out of school. Wanyama (2011) observes that teen mothers require a maternity break after delivery. As concerns provision of the maternity break before they come back to continue with their studies, 57% of the teachers interviewed in Emuhaya Sub-County felt that this break is necessary so as to enable the teen mother quick recovery and also enable the mother child to bond. However, the teachers observed that when teen mothers resume schooling, their performance was found to have declined and they required special attention from the teachers so as to be at par with the other students which cannot be provided by the rigorous school routine. The study revealed that teachers in school were too busy to prepare, teach and mark the learners' books that they did not have time to guide and assist teen mothers for continuity and allowing them to attain good grades. The current study, therefore sought to investigate if schools have formal arrangements and support programmes for teenage mothers to cover syllabus when they miss lessons.

**Socio-economic challenges teenage mothers face:** Pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers also experience stigma from friends, peers and the community. Studies indicate that a greater percentage of pregnant teenage girls and mothers experienced instances of being shunned by peers, in some instances, pregnant girls are compelled to leave school at an early stage of pregnancy because of discrimination by teachers and fellow learners (Bhana, Morell & Shefer, 2012). Other studies also indicate that the lives of teenage girls who become pregnant are at stake. According to Martin (2010), adolescents who become pregnant have increased chances of hypertension and becoming anemic during pregnancy. These medical conditions risk the lives of pregnant teenagers when they undergo labour, especially when they are not attended to by trained medical personnel. As a consequence of pregnancy, teenagers are teased, gossiped and also branded unkind comments both at school and at home (Mpetshwa, 2000). Therefore, teen mothers opt to change schools after childbirth, as a way of avoiding the 'environment of shame'. Others are even discouraged by the community from completing school and even shunned as the 'other girls' (Chohan, 2010). The current study therefore sought to find out to what extent teenage mothers are discriminated in Nyamira South. One's social status is lowered when a teenager becomes pregnant. Most respondents interviewed in Ritcher & Mlambo (2005) study on the perceptions on teenage pregnancy, reported that having a child was seen as a disgrace to the parents and the community.

The same sentiments were also expressed by respondents in the study conducted by Mpetshwa (2000) in which they said that the community members tended to have developed a negative reaction towards adolescent mothers. Some of the participants expressed having experienced a lot of mistreatment from their family members, especially their parents who felt let down by their children falling pregnant. The participants indicated that they were not treated equally like other members of the family while in some cases, pregnancy made some participants to be rejected by friends. The study also indicates that once a girl feels rejected, she becomes isolated and even decides to be married at an earlier age than expected. It is worth noting that these studies were not focused on teenage mothers in school. The current study therefore sought to investigate perceived challenges faced by teenage mothers who seek re-admission in schools to complete their studies. According to Wanyama (2011), some teachers do not accept teenager mothers back to school after delivery. The study revealed that the teachers resist re-admission of the teen mothers, and once the school accepts them back unconditionally, the teachers have no option but to accept them too. The challenge lies in what happens during teacher-student interaction. For some teachers, they encourage them to work hard to improve, while others mock and make them reference materials in class which makes them lose concentration and hope and hence perform poorly or opt out of school. For some school principals, they are also opposed to the government policy on integration due to the perception that the presence of teen mothers in school would prompt other girls to get pregnant as well (Achoka, J. & Njeru, F, 2012). The re-admission policy of teenage mothers back to school clearly stipulates that they (teenage mothers) should be allowed back unconditionally. The current study therefore sought to investigate if school principals have fully implemented the re-admission policy in their schools.

Low education background of the girls who drop out of school to get married leads to increased unemployment rates. The National Campaign to Prevent Teenage Pregnancies (2011) survey on the impact of teenage pregnancy reports that the correlation between earlier teenage pregnancy and dereliction to complete high school decreases career opportunities for many young women. A survey of 100 teenage mothers in the United Kingdom found that only 11 percent were formally employed while the remaining 89 percent were unemployed (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999). The report further reveals that, majority of teenage mothers live in deprivation, with almost half in the bottom fifth of the income distribution. The current study therefore, sought to find out to what extent teenage mothers in Nyamira South were taking advantage of the re-admission policy to better their future lives. UNESCO (2014) asserts that non-voluntary pregnancy testing in schools is a violation of the girls' rights, privacy and dignity. In a bid to evade these violations, pregnant school girls may opt to drop out of school or procure an insecure abortion. Centre For Reproductive Rights (2013) notes that even though the essence for pregnancy testing in school is to attend the health needs of the pregnant learners, in reality, many girls are excluded from the school system once they have been discovered through such testing, which violates their right to education. CSA (2008) report also notes that Kenyan girls in many communities who wish to come back to school after delivery are forced into marriage by their parents who fear loss of bride price due to pregnancy or the lowering of such prices as a result of pregnancy.

As a consequence, the teenage mothers are married off to older men, especially in polygamous marriages to at least get the anticipated benefits from such marriages. The report also reveals that taking such a girl to school is viewed as increasing the risks of the girl getting pregnant again which will reduce bride price further in case the girl became pregnant again. This study was carried out in pastoralist communities in Kenya. The current study however sought to find out if teenage girls in Nyamira South are subjected to forceful and under age marriages. Teenage pregnancies also strain the state resources to the citizens. This is as a result of the children of adolescent mothers utilizing public health care services while others are likely to be placed in foster care. Thus the economic cost of teen pregnancy to society adds up to billions of dollars per year which includes increased health care services, foster care and lost productivity. (African Development Bank, 2018). The health of the teen mother can be affected when she becomes pregnant. The body of a woman has to naturally develop to such an extent that it can comfortably accommodate a baby. The teenage girl's body which is not fully developed would obviously pose some problems for both the woman and the baby she carries. The medical complications that teenage mothers may experience include: pre-eclampsia, premature births and low birth weights. Mayors (2004) says that risks for medical complications are greater for girls aged under 15, as an underdeveloped pelvis can cause difficulties during childbirth. One of these is obstructed labour which is usually dealt with by caesarean section in developed nations. However, in less developed regions where medical services might be hampered by unavailability, it can cause eclampsia, fistula, infant mortality or death of the mother. The current study therefore sought to investigate on the availability and accessibility of pre- natal and ante- natal services in place for teenage mothers in Nyamira South.

Teenage pregnancy can also lead to depression. Uncertainty about the future may be realized when a teen becomes pregnant. She may feel she does not have enough skills to be a mother. She may also develop anxiety about how having a baby will affect her life and future prospects. The above feelings coupled with rejection of the teenage mother may culminate into a severe psychological condition such as depression. Participants interviewed in a study done by Clemmens (2002) on the impact of teenage pregnancies reported feeling depressed after the delivery of their babies of which none of these respondents had a history of being treated for depression in the past. The depression makes the teenage mothers in school to perform poorly in their studies, or even repeat classes. This study apparently indicates that teenage motherhood is associated with confusion and uncertainty of the young mother. The current study therefore sought to find out the effect of teenage motherhood on teenage girls in school.

**Teenage pregnancy prevention:** Teenage pregnancies can be reduced by offering the students curriculum – based comprehensive sexuality education. Thus, educate the youth with age – appropriate, culturally relevant and scientifically correct information. The education also provides adolescents with structured opportunities to develop attitudes and to practical skills they require to be able to make informed decisions about their sexual lives. There are two main approaches to sexuality education that is, advocating abstinence only or providing age-appropriate, comprehensive programs. Kirby (2008) revealed that abstinence – only programs are not efficient at stopping or delaying sex.

The effective approach is comprehensive sexuality education which teaches abstinence as the best method for preventing teenage pregnancies but also teaches about condoms and contraception use to minimize the risk of teenage pregnancies and infections and sexually transmitted diseases; including HIV/AIDS. It also teaches about interpersonal and communication approaches and helps the youth to explore their own values, goals and options (Advocates for Youth, 2001). Looking at comprehensive sex programmes, it was found that they increased awareness on sexuality, and two thirds of these programmes had a positive impact on behaviour of adolescent girls, including delayed sexual debut. Wanyama (2011) observes that in Kenya, the setback to provision of comprehensive sex education in school is that teachers do not have sufficient training to give students correct information coupled with resistance by religious organizations which claim that the responsibility lies with parents, yet the parents do not have the skills or the information to help the young people. Pattman & Chege (2003) also recognize teachers' attitude towards implementation of comprehensive sex education in school as a barrier. They say that teachers who feel awkward with the subject matter or who are judgmental about adolescent sexuality may impart information that is inaccurate, confusing or incomplete. They also reveal that comprehensive sexuality education that is offered to boys and girls in the same classroom may result in low attendance by girls, and once the girls have withdrawn, they will remain ignorant on sexuality knowledge and risk teenage pregnancy. The current study therefore sought to find out if teachers have adequate skills to handle comprehensive sex education syllabus and their attitude towards teenage mothers in school.

Provision of contraceptives to adolescent girls can also stop or delay the teenage pregnancies. UNFPA (2014) reports that adolescents often do not access contraceptives and information about their use. The report continues to say that to make it easier for adolescents to learn about preventing pregnancy, or to obtain contraceptives, an increasing number of contraceptives have established youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services which ensure adolescent's privacy, accessibility are open at hours that are convenient to young people. However, the National Council for Population and Development (NCPD, 2013) notes that in Kenya, laws have been formulated but implementation is the problem. For instance, The National Reproductive Health Policy (2007) and The Adolescent Health and Development Policy (2003) both recognize that access to quality health care is a right to every person, including adolescent girls. Previous studies indicate that emergency contraception is inaccessible to the Kenyan youth. UNFPA (2013) points out that access to emergency contraception is especially important to adolescent girls who often lack the skills or the power to negotiate use of condoms and are vulnerable to sexual coercion, exploitation and violence. The report also affirms that emergency contraception is a method that can prevent pregnancy within five days of unprotected sex or failure or misuse of contraceptive such as forgetting to take pills, rape or coerced sex. The current study therefore sought to investigate the attitude of girls towards contraception use and to what extent girls in Nyamira South access and use emergency contraception to prevent teenage pregnancy. Legislation of stringent rules against coercion and violence against adolescents or any woman can stop unwanted pregnancies. Heise (2011) says that countries need to strengthen laws against sexual violence and protect girls against rape and unwanted pregnancies.

Once the laws have been enacted, perpetrators of sexual violence to women should be brought to justice and survivors of these injustices to be supported to regain their normal life. The strict laws will deter sex pests from molesting and impregnating adolescent girls. The current study sought to investigate to what extent laws formulated to support and safeguard girls in school are implemented in Nyamira South.

Provision of intervention and prevention services can also reduce teenage pregnancies. Brace (2009) explains that the intervention services begin with the identification, referral and delivery of services to teen mothers through partner agencies. The intervention programmes are designed to work together to prevent the livelihood of pregnancy and improve educational outcomes of the teen mother. Some of these programmes include family planning assistance services, counseling and parenting classes. Save the Children and UNFPA (2009) point out that ante-natal services provided to teenage are necessary to prevent a second birth and improve the health of the teenage mother. The current study therefore sought to find out which guidance and counseling programmes and services are available for teenage mothers in school.

The program "Let the circle be unbroken: Rite of passage" which was assessed by Elliot (1998) involves an adaptation of socialization processes frequently observed in African – American culture which openly acknowledge the necessity of formally assisting adolescents in the transition from childhood into adulthood. The rite of passage from the African-American standpoint is meant to train the young person for a new stage of life. In this case, it includes educating teenagers about teen pregnancy. It follows that the basic principle that the teenager can achieve and train to become a productive and responsible member of society, which prevents becoming a teen mother on welfare or on social programmes. The transition from youthful to adult stage presents a challenge to majority of the youth. Presler- Mashall & Jones (2012) assert that the youth enter adolescent stage without understanding clearly the physiological processes their bodies are undergoing as young adults. The current study therefore sought to investigate the socializing programmes and activities available in school to assist the youth smoothly transit from the youthful to adult stage. The Bible is an important medium that can be used to combat teenage pregnancies. The Bible has many verses regarding how Christians should conduct themselves. For instance, it states "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy spirit that is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in Spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, KJV)".

This verse teaches that people are not simply flesh, but they are wrapped around the Holy Spirit, making the person a temple for God's Holy spirit to dwell within. If more adolescents believe their bodies are as temple, or Christ-like structures, then it would follow that they would make better choices about how they conduct themselves in regard to sexual relationships. The Bible also speaks about pre-marital sex being a sin and that people are to respect their bodies. It is apparent that God's plan for his children is to remain abstinent until they are married. If teenagers can understand the sanctity of their bodies and not put themselves in situations where pre-marital sex could occur, then the temptation would be greatly diminished. 1 Corinthians 6:18 states "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are external to his body, but he who sins sexually, sins against oneself".

While teens engaging in pre-marital relations may not cause death in the literal sense, it can be said that it is indeed the death of their childhood. However, Kirby (2008) observes that the Biblical approaches to teenage pregnancy prevention which emphasize on abstinence till marriage is basically moralistic and tends to ignore the fact that some teenagers are sexually active and denying them information on contraceptive methods of birth control, only places them at increased risks of teenage pregnancy. The study further reveals that withholding information on contraception use does not stop or delay sex.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Research design:** Ogula (2005) defines a research design as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation to obtain answers to research questions and control variance. In addition, a research design is the plan the research adopts for answering the research questions and sets up the framework for the study. A research design therefore guides the researcher to collect data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of the existing conditions, identifying the standards against which existing conditions can be compared and determining the relationship that exists between specific events (Orodho, 2005). The study adopted a descriptive survey design which involved asking a large group of respondents questions about a particular issue or event (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Orodho (2005) describes a survey research as a technique of gathering information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. In this method, participants answered questions administered through interviews or questionnaires. After participants have answered the questions, the researcher describes the responses given. From the research sample, the results obtained were used to draw generalizations on the entire population. The advantage of the descriptive survey design is that researchers have face to face interaction with respondents and it is easy to supply research instruments such as questionnaires which capture data from a large number of respondents in a relatively short period.

**Sample size and sampling procedures:** A sample is a set of respondents selected from a large population for the purpose of a survey (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). According to Orodho (2005), sampling is a process of selecting a number of individuals from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. It is a process of selecting a number of individuals in such a way that the individuals selected represent the large group from which they were selected. The study applied both clustered sampling and simple random sampling procedures to obtain the respondents. At least 30 per cent of the total population is considered representative (Gall and Borg, 2003). This is illustrated in Table 3.1. In this study, public mixed secondary schools were clustered into the four educational zones from which proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select a total of 13 schools to participate in the study. Simple random sampling was used to select 4 out of 14 schools from Township, 2 out of 7 schools from Gesiaga, 4 out of 12 schools from Kebirigo and 3 out of 9 schools from Nyagachi zones. The researcher considered this sample size large enough to contain all the variations in the population and equal chances were given to each individual in the population. This made sure that sample obtained was proportionately and adequately distributed among the four educational zones.

**Table 3.1 Sample size against target population**

Strata	Target	Sample size (30% Target)
Principals	42	13
Teachers	42	13
Girls	5953	1786
QASO	1	1
Sub-County Director of Medical services	1	1
Total	6039	1814

**Table 4.5. Principals' responses on teenage pregnancies and motherhood leading to poor syllabus coverage (n = 13)**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	4	30.77
Strongly Agree	9	69.23
Total	13	100

**Table 4.6 Principals' response on number of hours lost by expectant teenagers or mothers per week. (n = 13)**

Response	Frequency	Percent
30 minutes per week	0	0
1 hour per week	9	69.23
1 ½ hours per week	1	7.69
2 hours per week	2	15.38
2 ½ hours per week	1	7.69
3 hours per week	0	0
Total	13	100

**Table 4.7 Guidance and counseling teachers' responses on the effect of teenage pregnancy on learner's concentration (n = 13)**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	1	7.69
Agree	2	15.38
Strongly Agree	10	76.92
Total	13	100

**Table 4.8 Guidance and counseling teachers' responses on instances of stigma in schools (n = 13)**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	69.23
No	4	30.77
Don't know	0	0
Total	13	100

**Table 4.9 Responses of students on teenage pregnancy prevention strategies (n =1786)**

Strategies	Frequency	Percent
Offering compulsory sex education in schools	1483	83.03
Expansion of youth development programmes	1375	76.99
Youth involvement in recreation activities	1106	61.92
Improvement on adult-teenage communication	1446	80.96
Strict rules on boy-girl relationships in schools	910	50.95

All the 13 Principals and guidance and counseling teachers from the selected schools automatically qualified to participate in the study. The Sub-County Quality and Standards officer and Sub-County Medical officer were purposively included in the study because they were the only ones to be selected.

**Table 4.10 Teachers' responses on teenage pregnancy prevention strategies (n = 13)**

Strategy	Frequency	Percent
Responsible parenthood	11	84.61
Legislation of stringent laws	8	61.54
Economic empowerment of parents	9	69.23
Involvement of youth in recreation activities	7	53.85
Limiting students' free time outside school	9	69.23
Guidance and counseling of girls	8	61.54

**Table 4.11 Principals' Responses on teenage pregnancy prevention strategies (n=13)**

Strategy	Frequency	Percent
Responsible parenthood	9	69.23
Legislation of stringent laws	11	84.61
Economic empowerment	12	92.31
Involvement of youth in recreation activities	8	61.54
Limiting students free time outside school	10	76.92
Having responsible teachers in school	11	84.61

According to Uma (2010), purposive sampling makes it possible for the selection of subjects on the basis of their expertise in the subject of investigation. Therefore, the study sample comprised of 13 principals of schools, 13 guidance and counseling teachers, 1 Sub-County Medical officer, 1 Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO) and 1786 girls from the selected schools. From each of the selected schools, 137 girls were issued with questionnaires to respond to the questions. The principals were involved in the survey because they are the managers of the schools from where the sampled population was obtained. The guidance and counseling teachers were interviewed because they handle cases of boy-girl relationships in schools and counsel expectant teenage girls and mothers in schools. The District medical officer was interviewed to provide information on adolescents who underwent successful deliveries in hospitals, those who lost their lives and also those who aborted.

## DATA PRESENTATION

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### Academic Challenges teenage mothers face in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County

**Response of principals on Academic challenges teenage mothers face in mixed secondary schools:** When asked to indicate if teenage pregnancies and motherhood lead to poor syllabus coverage, their responses were as shown in Table 4.5. From Table 4.5, none of the principals indicated strongly disagree, disagree or neutral. 4(30.77%) of the principals indicated "agree" while 9(69.23%) indicated "strongly agree". All the principals (100%) cumulatively agreed that teenage pregnancies and motherhood lead to poor syllabus coverage because a lot of time is lost when the teenage mother misses school to attend the needs of the baby such as breastfeeding or attending clinics. The researcher further sought to know from the principals the approximate number of hours lost when expectant teenagers or mothers miss school. Their responses were given as indicated in Table 4.6. From Table 4.6, none of the principals indicated 30 minutes lost per week. Principals 9(69.23%) indicated 1 hour, 1 principal (7.69%) indicated 1 ½ hours and 2½ hours, respectively and 2 principals (15.38%) indicated 2 hours.

Majority of the principals 9(69.23%) indicated that expectant teenagers or mothers lose one hour per week, either to attend to the baby needs or routine clinics at hospital. This translates to 4 hours lost per month. The study also revealed that teen mothers miss school to breastfeed the young babies especially at break or lunch time when they have permission to get out of school. The time lost by teenage mothers creates gap in their syllabus coverage leading to decline in their academic performance. When asked to comment how teenage pregnancies affect performance, 8(61.53%) of the principals revealed that the performance of the teenage mothers decrease when they come back to school. The decrease in performance is as a result of the dual responsibilities of the mothers; both as a parent and at the same time as a student. This concurs with Furstenberg (1991) who observed that teenage pregnancy hinders women opportunities in the labour force due to inadequate academic qualifications attained by the teen mothers. Therefore, teenage mothers who drop out of school tend to be dependent on relatives or welfare because of lack of the high qualifications required to compete favourably in the labour market. Principals were also asked to indicate if their schools have formally organized make-up lessons for teenage mothers who miss school. All principals indicated 'NO' implying that teenage mothers who miss school only know from their classmates the content taught by the teachers and it is therefore upon them to read and understand the topic without the teacher's input, which makes it difficult for the teen mothers to fully understand and internalize the syllabus content. The study findings are supported by Kraneis(2013) study which revealed that 70% of teenage mothers in school dropout because teachers refuse to organize make-up lessons for them or ask them do assignment on content covered by teacher while they were out. This implies that teen mothers cover the syllabus poorly when they miss school to attend their motherhood responsibilities which negatively impacts on their performance.

**Guidance and counseling teachers' responses on academic challenges facing expectant teenagers or mothers in mixed secondary schools:** The study sought to seek the relationship between teenage pregnancies and concentration in class. The teachers were asked to indicate if teenage pregnancies affect the learner's concentration in class. The responses from the learners were as shown in Table 4.7 page 51. From Table 4.7, none of the teachers either disagreed or strongly disagreed that teenage pregnancy has no effect on learner's concentration. The teachers 1(7.69%) indicated 'neutral', implying that teenage pregnancy may or may not have an impact on the learner's concentration. The teachers 2(15.38%) agreed that teenage pregnancy has an impact on learner's concentration. Majority of the teachers, 10(76.92%) strongly agreed that teenage pregnancy has an impact on learner's concentration. Therefore, 12(92.30%) of the teachers cumulatively agreed that teenage pregnancy impacts on learner's concentration.

The study revealed that teenage mothers who come to school to continue with their studies exhibit low concentration in class which adversely affects their performance. The concentration of teenage mothers decreases because they spend long hours at night taking care of the baby and sometimes they are deeply disturbed when they attend school while their baby is sick at home. The study findings are supported by Chohan (2010) who revealed that the concentration of teen mothers in school declines because they (teen mothers) start their day three hours earlier than their peers in the same class so as to prepare

themselves and the baby and also sleep late because of many responsibilities and further their concentration is affected by their young bodies which cannot withstand sitting in class for long hours after delivery. Kraneis (2013) also reveals that teenage mothers lose concentration when teachers refuse to grant them permission to attend doctor related appointments or by disparaging, discouraging and disapproving comments from teachers and students, all contributing to high dropout rates of teenage mothers.

**Socio-Economic challenges teenage mothers face in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County:** The third objective of the study examined the socio-economic challenges teenage mothers face in mixed secondary schools. First, the study identified the social challenges teenage mothers face in mixed secondary in Nyamira South sub-county.

This information is important as the manner the teenage mother socializes with other students and teachers in school directly influences the performance of the learner. The respondents to this research objective were the guidance and counseling teachers and the students.

**Responses of guidance and counseling teachers on stigmatization of expectant teenagers or mothers in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County:** When guidance and counseling teachers were asked to indicate whether instances of stigma on expectant teenagers or mothers have been reported in their schools, their responses were as indicated in Table 4.8. From Table 4.8, 9(69.23%) of the teachers indicated that instances of stigma on expectant teenagers or mothers have been reported in their schools. 4(30.77%) of teachers indicated that cases of stigmatization of expectant or teenage mothers have never been reported in their schools while none of the teachers indicted " don't know". When asked to explain the instances of stigma in schools, the teachers who indicated "yes" reported that expectant teenagers or mothers in school are stigmatized when they are not accepted by their peers, especially in discussion groups. The peers are said to shun them because they consider them "immoral" and keep distance from them in fear of being contaminated. Also, the teen mothers in school are stigmatized when they are not referred to by their names. Instead, they are called "mothers in school" which makes them feel unwanted in school. When teen mothers are mocked by other students as having loose morals and are excluded, they feel alienated and thus isolate themselves from the other students which negatively impacts on their studies. Sometimes, expectant teenagers or mothers in school feel stigmatized when they see other students talking while looking at them. This makes them feel suspicious that the other girls are gossiping about them. On the other occasions stigma is noted when teenage mothers try to join the other girls in their groups. When they do so, the other girls who were initially talking all over a sudden, keep quiet and disperse because they have been joined by somebody whom they consider "immoral". Ritcher and Mlambo (2005) support the study findings when they conclude that teenage pregnancy and motherhood make girls to be considered a disgrace to the parent and community and as a result they experience ill treatment from family and community members leading to stigmatization.

**Teenage Pregnancy Prevention strategies**

**Response of students on teenage Pregnancy prevention strategies:** When asked on the teenage pregnancy prevention strategies in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South sub-

county, the responses of students were as indicated in the table 4.9. From Table 4.9, 1483(83.03%) students indicated that teenage pregnancy can be managed by offering compulsory comprehensive sex education in secondary schools. 1375(76.99%) indicated expansion of youth development programs; youth involvement in recreation activities was reported by 1106(61.92%) students; 1446(80.96%) students indicated improvement on adult- teenage communication and 910(50.96%) indicated strict rules on boy-girl relationships in schools. The students, 1483(83.03%) cited offering compulsory comprehensive sex education in secondary schools as a strategy of preventing teenage pregnancy in mixed secondary school. The study findings are supported by Achola (2017) who concludes that introducing to secondary school curriculum a policy that makes sex education mandatory can eliminate teenage pregnancies. The study findings also reveal that girls are victims of teenage pregnancies as a result of being ignorant on sex matters. Thus, if girls are taught comprehensive sex education in schools, they will make informed decisions on matters related to sex and hence prevent teenage pregnancies. The students, 1446(80.96%) also indicated that improvement on adult-teenage communication at home can prevent teenage pregnancy. The study established that most of the teenagers are victims of teenage pregnancies because parents at home rarely discuss with the children about sex-related matters. To most parents, it is inappropriate for them to discuss sex with their children especially on pregnancy prevention methods. To them, this is a reserve of the teachers at school. In such situations, the youth especially the girls remain ignorant and hence become pregnant. The study findings are further supported by Elliot (1998) when he says that the youth should formally be socialized to transit from childhood to adulthood by the parents. The parents should talk with the youth through open discussion for them to understand the various developmental stages they undergo and how to prepare adequately for each stage. The study also asserts that it is the responsibility of the parent especially the mother to teach teenage daughters about adolescence and the dangers of pre-marital sex and the need to abstain up to maturity when one can make informed decisions pertaining sex.

**Teachers' Responses on teenage pregnancy Prevention strategies:** When asked to indicate the strategies for preventing teenage pregnancies, the guidance and counseling teachers responded as tabulated in Table 4.10. From Table 4.10, the teachers 11(84.61%) indicated responsible parenthood as a strategy to prevent teenage pregnancies. 9(69.23%) indicated economic empowerment of parents and reducing the students' free time when they (student) are outside school; 8(61.54%) indicated legislation of stringent laws and intensifying guidance and counseling by the teachers. The study findings reveal that teenage pregnancy can be prevented if all parents are responsible by providing the requirements of their daughters so as to make adolescent girls not to engage in transactional sex as a means of acquiring the things they need. The parents should monitor closely the behaviour of their teenage daughters to ensure that they are not negatively influenced by the media by watching pornographic materials on television, print media or phones. Responsible parenthood also entails parents making sure that their daughters do not attend social functions such as discos or overnight parties that may create room for sexual abuse. The Centre for the Study of Adolescence (2008) supports the study findings when it says that the morals of the youth are compromised when they attend social functions at night such

as discos or parties while unaccompanied by parents. Economic empowerment of parents can also prevent teenage pregnancies. The long-term plan for empowering future parents is through education whereby parents are equipped with the required skills to enable them to be employed or for self-employment. When the parents are economically empowered, they will fully provide for their families and hence the daughters will not engage in transactional sex. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and Unplanned Pregnancy (2011) supports the study findings when it asserts that poverty is the major (80%) reason teenagers fall pregnant, and therefore recommends that young people should be supported fully by their parents and the government to access basic commodities so as to continue learning in school.

**Principals' Responses on teenage pregnancy prevention strategies:** The principals were asked to indicate the strategies that can be used to curb teenage pregnancies in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South sub-county. Their responses were as indicated Table 4.11. From Table 4.11, 9 (69.23%) of the principals indicated responsible parenthood, 11 (84.61%) indicated legislation of stringent-laws and having responsible teachers in school, 12 (92.31%) economic empowerment of parents, 10 (76.92%) indicated reducing students' free time when outside school and 8 (61.54%) indicated involvement of the youth in recreation activities. Like the guidance and counseling teachers, 12(93.31%) of the principals also indicated that teenage pregnancies can be solved through economic empowerment of the parents because teenage pregnancies could be as a result of poverty in the teenage girl's home. Economic empowerment of parents will ensure that children are well provided for by the parent and they will not engage in sex to access what they are missing.

To empower parents of the poor students, creation of more job opportunities for the poor parents can mitigate the problem of teenage pregnancies, more so at the school level. The school can offer the poor employment if they have the required qualifications, they can either be employed as the support staff in school or be given tenders to supply cheap farm produce such as vegetables, maize or firewood to the school so as to obtain some income to support the family. This is supported by Amin, S & Suran (2005) who concluded that cash transfer interventions and policies including support for adolescent mothers and their families can help keep teenage mothers in school to continue learning. The principals also supported legislation of stringent laws as a strategy to prevent teenage pregnancies. These laws will ensure that the people who impregnate teenage girls are punished to deter them and others from such a vice. Heise (2011) supports the study findings when he says that laws should be formulated to protect the girls against rape and teenage pregnancies. The other leading strategy supported by majority of the principals 11(84.61%) is having responsible teachers in school who respect adolescent girls and protect them. The principals pointed out that some teachers who accompany students for sports and school tours allow students to engage in immoral activities such as drinking and smoking which lead to irresponsible sexual behaviour. Studies indicate that some teachers even have love affairs with their learners. Further, some teachers are bad examples to the students when they drink and smoke together with students who easily copy what they (teachers) are doing. WHO (2011) supports the study findings when it asserts that school girls are affected negatively by their immediate school environment which includes the behaviour of their teachers.

Some of the risks associated with school environment include exposure to sexual abuse of students by members of the school community, which includes teachers and the support staff. Through interview schedule the sub-county QASO was asked to comment on strategies of preventing teenage pregnancies in Nyamira south sub-county. The response was:

*“Teenage pregnancy can be solved when all stakeholders join their hands to tackle it. All cases of teenage pregnancies should be reported for appropriate action to be taken so as to protect the rights of the girl child to education”*

The respondent said that the parents who protect those who impregnate school girls after being bribed should also be reported or arraigned in court. The respondent concurs with Psimol, D & Kajiliwa, D.(2005) who concludes that bodaboda (motor bike) riders and sponsors are to blame for early teenage pregnancies. The study further asserts that the riders and sponsors buy their freedom after impregnating the girl by bribing the parents of the expectant girl. As a result of this, the respondent advocates for collaboration between the Ministry of Education, civil society, the judiciary and other agents of law enforcement to implement programs and laws related to girls' education, teenage pregnancies and retention of girls. The media should also generate awareness by designing teenage pregnancy related programs such as drama and focus group discussions to create awareness of the consequences of teenage pregnancy. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (2010) supports the study findings when it asserts that most teenage pregnancies are as a result of ignorance of teenage pregnancy prevention approaches and sexuality. The QASO further said,

*“Secondly, parents should also be sensitized on their responsibilities at home. They should provide their daughters with all the school and personal requirements for the girl to learn comfortably in school”.*

World Health Organization (WHO,2010), supports the study findings when it asserts that girls engage in transactional sex as a result of poverty in their home and because of their young age, they are unable to protect themselves against teenage pregnancy. Parents should teach their daughters on sexuality related matters at home. Presler-Marshall & Jones (2012) support the study findings when they say that girls in school receive inadequate knowledge from their parents to prepare them for sexual and reproductive lives. The respondent is supported by Advocates for Youth (2012) which says that when youths are denied sex education, they remain ignorant and engage in unhealthy relationships leading to teenage pregnancy. The Sub-County Medical officer was asked to comment on teenage pregnancy prevention strategies through interview schedule. The response was:

*“To prevent teenage pregnancies, young girls should be exposed and taught fully comprehensive sex education to understand themselves and how their bodies develop and undergoes different stages. The girls in secondary schools are adolescents who are changing from youthful age to adults and their bodies are undergoing a lot of changes.”*

The respondent further said that teenagers in school should also be taught fully about pregnancy and birth control and the impact of sexual intercourse on the youth. CDC (2010) supports this assertion when it established that teenagers who received sex education were 60 per cent less likely to be impregnated or get someone impregnated. The respondent said that the topic of sexuality is so wide that teachers alone cannot

exhaustively cover it at school. This implies that even parents at home should help their daughters to understand the course of adolescence which takes some girls by surprise, without them knowing how to approach it. Presler- Marshall and Jones (2012) confirm this when they say that teenagers approach adulthood faced with conflicting and misleading information about sexuality, making them to experiment what they are told about sexuality and hence risk becoming pregnant. The parents should therefore assist their daughters to understand adolescence as a developmental stage. Also, the adolescent girls who have become pregnant should have to be encouraged to attend post-natal clinics which will enable them avoid a second pregnancy as a teenager. Kothari (2012) says that postnatal clinics are important to the health of the teenage mothers as they provide her with knowledge and opportunities to delay or prevent a second pregnancy. UNFPA (2012) confirms this when it says that post-natal clinics presents the teenage mothers with crucial and quality knowledge to prevent or delay second pregnancy. Teenage mothers who come to school to complete their studies need professional guidance and counseling for them to prevent another pregnancy. Olivier (2000) complements this when he says that teenage mothers need professional counseling and guidance in order to avoid second pregnancy and succeed with their schooling needs. The study further points out that learners need to be equipped with life saving skills to help them deal with their challenges as they grow.

### Summary and Conclusion

**Academic challenges teenage mothers face in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County:** The study found out that teenage mothers in school lose a lot of time attending to the baby needs leading to poor syllabus coverage, have much work to do as they are both parents and students at the same time, exhibit low concentration in class which negatively impacts on their performance and others drop out of school as a result of many challenges they face.

**Socio-economic challenges teenage mothers face in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County:** The study found out that teenage mothers in school are discriminated when they join the other students in discussion groups, gossiped, are not referred to by their official names, but as “mothers in school” and experience financial difficulties in meeting their needs and those of the baby.

**Strategies for teenage pregnancy prevention in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County:** The study found out that teenage pregnancies can be prevented by offering comprehensive and compulsory sex education in mixed secondary schools, expanding youth development programmes, involving the youth in recreation activities, enhancing adult-teenage communication, having responsible parents and teachers, economic empowerment of parents, increasing guidance and counseling for students, legislation and implementation of stringent laws, limiting students' free time outside school and during holidays, ensuring that schools are drug and substance abuse free zones and reporting all cases of teenage pregnancies to the education office.

### Conclusion

**Academic challenges teenage mothers face in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County:** The study concluded that teenage mothers in school cover the

syllabus poorly and exhibit low concentration in class leading to decrease in their academic performance.

**Socio-economic challenges teenage mothers face in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira south sub-county:** The study found out that teenage mothers in school are discriminated, gossiped, stigmatized and have financial problems which negatively impacts on their academic achievements.

**Strategies for teenage pregnancy prevention in mixed secondary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County:** Based on the study findings, the following strategies can be used to prevent teenage pregnancies: offering compulsory comprehensive sex education in schools, expanding youth development programs, involving the youth in recreation activities, enhancing adult youth communication, having responsible parents and teachers, legislation and implementation of stringent laws to protect girls in school, limiting the students' free time in and outside school, eliminating drug and substance abuse by students and reporting all teenage pregnancy cases to the education office.

### Recommendation

**Based on the study findings, the researcher made the following recommendations:**

Teenage pregnancies can be prevented if teenagers are enlightened on sexuality and on all approaches of teenage prevention. Comprehensive sex education should be integrated in secondary school curriculum. The principals in mixed secondary school should make sure that the teenage mothers in school are not discriminated, stigmatized or gossiped by members of the school community. Instead, these girls should be given the necessary support they need to enable them complete their studies. Teenage mothers in school face financial constraints when meeting their needs in school and those of the baby. The parents should meet financial needs of the teenage mothers fully for them to learn comfortably. The national and county governments should formulate and ensure complete implementation of stringent laws to support and safeguard the rights of the girl child in school.

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