

Influence of School based Determinants on the Implementation of the Re-Admission Policy of Girls after Teenage Pregnancy in Public Secondary Schools in Kitui County, Kenya.

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Abstract: *This study sought to investigate the influence of School based determinants on implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya. The study objectives sought to determine the influence of; guidance and counseling sessions, school policy, principals' opinion on school related factors and community support on the implementation of re-admission policy. The target population was 275 principals, 275 guidance and counseling teachers and 275 head girls in the 120 girls' schools and 155 co-education schools in Kitui County, Kenya. The study also targeted the County Director of Education and all the 16 sub county directors of education in Kitui County. Using stratified and simple random sampling, a sample of 83 principals, 83 guidance and counseling teachers, and 83 head girls were selected for the study. The County Director of Education was purposively selected while four sub-county directors of Education were selected using simple random sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that; there was a statistically significant association between family-based factors and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy. The guidance and counseling sessions, school policy, principals' opinion on school related factors and community support significantly determine the implementation of the re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy. The study recommends that; Principals, boards of management and guidance and counseling teachers should be sensitized on there-admission policy. This would enhance the implementation of the re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya.*

Key words: *Girls' and Co-education schools, Re-admission policy, Sub county director of education, school based factors, Teenage pregnancies*

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I. Introduction

Policies that support access to education for girls who drop out of school after teenage pregnancy are not only important to the Kenyan government but have been of a major global concern (Omwancha, 2012). Education is basic human right and provides holistic development of all round person (Muema, Kasivu & Mwanza, 2019). Schools are established with the aim of imparting learners with skills and knowledge to enable them fit in the society even after some learners drop from the school system. Schools mirror the society which is rapidly changing hence educational managers are compelled to carefully analyze the academic and social needs of the students (Mutisya, Mulwa & Mwanja). Girls are disadvantaged in education and therefore deserve special attention as they drop out more easily than boys because of various reasons, including early marriage, teenage pregnancy, traditions, domestic violence and sexual harassment in the school setting. Girls should therefore be given opportunity to continue with education, which offer them the opportunity to compete favorably with their peers whose school life went uninterrupted. Schools in the 21st century are therefore avenues for transforming learners to better individuals despite the challenges faced during the schooling period (Nguli, Kasivu & Kamau, 2018).

As girls transit the turbulent stage of adolescent, they increasingly seek to be free from their parents and gain more autonomy (Njagi & Mwanja, 2017). In order to prevent girls from dropping out of school because of pregnancy, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) committee recommends measures to ensure that pregnant teenagers are given the chance to complete their education by not excluding them and by developing special programs (Mieke, 2006). According to the United Nations Children's Fund report (2010), tens of

millions of girls are not getting basic education across the developing world and especially in the rural and poor areas of Sub Saharan Africa, the Middle East and South Asia due to teenage pregnancies among other factors. Lewis and Lockheed (2007) argue that very little is known about how to successfully attract excluded girls into primary schools and retain them through secondary school. Though useful, existing knowledge on generic problems is unlikely to be sufficient in shaping policies that meet the needs and concerns of parents and children from excluded communities. They further found that experiences with excluded groups in some countries such as New Zealand and United States of America, showed that traditional incentives were insufficient to attract girls back to school, meaning, extra effort was required to reach them.

According to Isaac (2011), the school through the head teachers, should be sensitized on how to deal with the girls after re-admission. The guidance and counseling department in each school should actively counsel these girls and the girls be exempted from heavy manual duties. Marypiah, Muola, Kithuka and Mwanja (2015) found that exposure to more hours of pre-service and in-service training in guidance and counseling improves management of counseling resources and enhances the application of counseling skills. Mwanja (2017) points out that if people who have been previously isolated from those around them continue to suffer alone; it is very hard for them to normalize. Teachers should avoid abusive languages to these girls. Another complicated challenge these girls face is self-hatred. This is a psychological problem that needs adequate guidance and counseling. The socio-cultural barriers facing girls in Africa therefore appear related to traditional attitudes to the different roles of boys and girls.

The Ministry of Education developed a Gender Education Policy in 2003. This policy is enshrined in the Millennium Development Goal 4.4.3 (Affirmative Action) in which a law has been enacted for the readmission of girls who drop out of school due to pregnancies (Republic of Kenya, 2002). The 2007 gender policy aims at improving girls' participation, transition, completion and performance in secondary education. Among the strategies in this policy is to advocate for girls' education among parents and communities, sensitizing them against negative socio-cultural practices and facilitating readmission of girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy and early marriage (UNESCO, 2007).

Even though there is legislation in place allowing pregnant girls to re-enter school after delivery, researchers still witness many cases where these girls never return to school (UNICEF, 2012). Many schools prefer to expel pregnant girls who are seen as a bad influence on other girls in the school because they might trigger multiplier effect among them (Push Journal, 2008). In view of all these research, the MOEST policy on re-admission of these girls is wanting. It lacks the back-to-school formula owing to the fact that these girls who have had babies have social, physical financial and psychological turmoil. They need guidance and counseling sessions so that they can continue with education.

Distance from school makes the girl child to become fatigued due to long walking. This also results in early pregnancies as the girls meet a lot of challenges on their way to school when they walk to and fro as in case of day scholars or when they are sent home as in cases of boarders. The researcher suggests the need to carry out the study to determine other factors affecting girl child participation in secondary.

To enable girls to access education as embedded in the Kenya Constitution (2010), the government has been providing teachers to public secondary schools. The teacher resource is an important input in achieving the objectives of readmission of girls to secondary schools after teenage pregnancy. The socio-cultural barriers facing girls in Africa therefore appear related to traditional attitudes to the different roles of boys and girls.

Although the inclusion as a policy has received attention globally through debates, there are difficulties in its full attainment resulting in piecemeal reforms in many African countries. The re-admission of girls who become pregnant while in school is one of the on-going initiatives to address gender disparities and affirmative action in education in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2007). It explains that one of the objectives of the policy is to increase participation of disadvantaged girls and women in education, and ensure gender equity in education. The situation of teenage pregnancy and motherhood in Kitui County is at worrying proportions. So many potential girls keep on dropping out of school because of this situation (CDE, Kitui County, 2013). The society has accepted circumstances where a girl can be pregnant while in school and the parents and community consider it as normal. This is contrary to the ancient times when such girls who became pregnant before marriage are treated as outcasts. It was against this background that this study intended to investigate the school based determinants influencing the implementation of re-admission policy of girls' after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya.

Statement of the problem.

Education for girls is one of the criteria pathways to promote social and economic development of the society. The dropout of girls leads to great financial and material wastage with the nation losing billions of shillings annually in financial, policy and man power investment (MOE, 2010). Understanding the implementation of the re-admission policy could help understand this missing link between the policy and the practice. According to FAWA News (2014) it was evident that there were factors that were hindering the implementation of the re-admission policy. Statistics and data held in the County Directors of Education office

in Kitui County, supports the need to investigate the level of implementation of readmission policy of girls' after teenage pregnancy. In the year 2015; Kitui North (Mwingi) had a total of 97 girls who dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancies. Kitui South (Mutomo) 83 girls, Kitui East (Mutitu) 78 girls and Kitui Central, 65 girls had dropped within a span of one year. A total of 323 girls had dropped in the whole county. Out of the total number of dropouts, only 42 (13%) had gone back to school after delivery (CDE Report Kitui, 2015). There was therefore a need to investigate the school determinants that influence the implementation of re-admission policy of girls' after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya.

Purpose of the study.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which school based factors has influenced implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in Kitui County, Kenya. Specifically, the study was to establish the extent to which guidance and counselling, school policy on re-admission, principal's opinion on school related factors and community support on implementation of re-admission policy influenced implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in Kitui County, Kenya.

Research hypothesis.

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant association between school frequency of guidance and counseling sessions and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya

H₀₂: There is no statistically significant relationship between school policy and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya

H₀₃: There is no statistically significant relationship between school related factors and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya

H₀₄: There is no statistically significant association between community support and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya

II. Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate determinants that influence the implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya. The target population was 275 principals, 275 guidance and counseling teachers and 275 head girls in the 120 girls' schools and 155 co-education schools in Kitui County, Kenya. The study also targeted the County Director of Education and all the 16 sub county directors of education in Kitui County. Using stratified and simple random sampling, a sample of 83 principals, 83 guidance and counseling, and 83 head girls were selected for the study. The County Director of Education was purposively selected while four sub-county directors of Education were selected using simple random sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires, document review and interview. Quantitative data was done using descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data was analyzed thematically.

III. Result

The response was 65 for Principals, 65 for counselling teachers and 65 head girls. In order to establish the extent to which implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, questionnaires were administered to principals, counselling teachers and head girls. The data was then analyzed on the basis of these questionnaires.

Table 1: Frequency of guidance and counseling and implementation of re-admission policy.

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.928(a)	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	23.003	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.080	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	65		

a 8 cells (80.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .30.

Table 1 shows that the Pearson Chi-Square is $\chi^2_{(1,4)} = 26.928$, $p = .000$. This tells us that there is a statistically significant association between school guidance and counseling frequency and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy. We do therefore reject H₀₁ that says that there is no statistically significant association between school frequency of guidance and counseling sessions and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui

County, Kenya. These results agree with Isaac (2011) who argued that, the guidance and counseling department in each school should actively counsel expectant girls and exempt them from heavy manual duties. There was a statistically significant association (Pearson Chi-Square is $\chi^2_{(1,4)} = 26.928, p = .000$) between school guidance and counseling frequency and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy

Table 2: School policy on re-admission of girls.

		School policy	Implementation of re-admission policy
School policy	Pearson Correlation	1	.852(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	65	65
Implementation of re-admission policy	Pearson Correlation	.852(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	65	65

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

Table 2 shows that there is a strong positive relationship $r(65) = 0.852, p < 0.05$ between school policy and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools. The better the policy the higher the re-admission of girls after teenage pregnancy.

Table 3: Principals opinion on school related factors on girls' re-admission

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Most schools discriminate pregnant girls	18	27.7	22	33.8	14	21.5	5	7.7	6	9.2	65	100
Peer pressure discourages girls from re-admission after pregnancy	35	53.8	25	38.5	2	3.1	2	3.1	1	1.5	65	100
Schools with strong Guidance & Counseling have less pregnancy cases.	21	32.3	30	46.2	10	15.4	1	1.5	4	6.2	65	100
Pregnant girls' are stigmatized in our schools	18	27.7	30	46.2	5	7.7	7	10.8	5	7.7	65	100
Girls are allowed back to school after teenage pregnancy	20	30.8	35	53.8	6	9.2	3	4.6	1	1.5	65	100
Girls are ashamed of going back to the same school after teenage pregnancy	39	60.0	22	33.8	1	1.5	2	3.1	1	1.5	65	100
Girls are not accorded proper pre-natal and post-natal attention in our schools	18	27.7	31	47.7	9	13.8	3	4.6	4	6.2	65	100

Table 3 revealed that majority (60%) of the respondents strongly agreed that girls were ashamed of going back to the same school after teenage pregnancy. This meant that there was a need to encourage the girls to be re-admitted to their former schools as their teachers will understand them better. This was followed by 53.7% who strongly agreed that, peer pressure discouraged girls from re-admission after pregnancy. Other 47.7% and 46.2% agreed that, girls were not accorded proper pre-natal and post-natal attention in the schools and Guidance & Counseling had less pregnancy cases respectfully. These results agree with Isaac (2011) who argued that the school, through the head teachers, should be sensitized on how to deal with the girls after re-admission.

Table 4: principals' opinion on community support and implementation of re-admission policy

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	133.333(a)	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	102.737	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	36.977	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	65		

a 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 65.

Table 4 shows that the Pearson Chi-Square is $\chi^2_{(1,4)} = 133.333, p = .000$. This tells us that there is a statistically significant association between community support and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy. We do therefore reject H_{04} .

IV. Conclusions And Recommendations.

The school based determinants influences the implementation of the policy on re-admission of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools. These factors include school size, school guidance and counseling frequency, school policy and community support. Schools which had well established guidance and counseling departments and did frequent counseling to the girls before and after teenage pregnancies supported the implementation of the readmission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy. The researcher also found out that majority members of school community were aware of the readmission policy. However, many girls

preferred to be readmitted in a different school other than the one they previously schooled before pregnancy to avoid stigmatization.

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