Implementation Strategies of the Re-Entry Policy of Teenage Mothers to School in Bungoma County, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

The Kenyan government developed the policy of the re-entry of the teenage mothers to school in 2001. The policy allows teenage mothers to re-enter schools after delivery. Despite the policy being in place, very few teenage mothers have been returning to school. This study sought to assess the implementation strategies of the re-entry policy of teenage mothers to school in Bungoma County. The main objective of the study was to assess the implementation strategies of the re-entry policy of teenage mother to schools in Bungoma County. The critical theory by Habernes was adopted as the theoretical framework. The convergent parallel mixed method research design was used. The research population comprised of teenage mothers, student girls, head teachers, principals, Guiding and Counselling teachers, Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. The main data collection instruments were Questionnaires and Interview schedules. Questionnaires were administered to the Teenage mothers, school girls, Guidance and counselling teachers, while the interview schedule were administered to Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers and head teachers. Pilot study was carried out in Trans Nzoia County. Reliability index of 0.79 was obtained. Quantitative data was coded and presented using tables and analyzed through frequency distribution and percentages. Qualitative data was organized and broken into themes synthesized to search for patterns and meaning. This study was significant for it identified various strategies that are used in implementation of the re-entry policy. The study revealed that there are a number of strategies that are used in articulating the policy, support that are given to the teenage mothers and the enforcement of the policy. There is need to harmonise the implementation strategies so that the various stakeholders are reading form the same script.

Introduction

There are a number of global organizations and declarations that are committed to the elimination of gender inequalities in education such as Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Education for All (EFA), The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Millennium Declaration of 2000, The Beijing Platform for Action, United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Girls and women education has been embedded in these international visions of development priorities (UNESCO, 2005; UNESCO, 2003; MoE Jamaica, 2013; FAWEZA, 2006; UNCRC, 1989; Laiser & Muyinga, 2017; Maluli & Bali, 2014; Mensah & Babayara, 2016; Ncube & Mudau, 2017).

At the United Nations (UN) summit in 2000, elimination of gender inequalities informed goal number two on universal education and goal number three on gender equality, expressing the need to provide universal access to education and to eliminate gender disparities in education by 2015. Goal number two aimed to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (Salvi, 2014; UNESCO, 2005).

Salvi (2014) further observed that goal number three focused on gender by encouraging countries to eliminate disparities in primary and secondary education, by 2005 and at all levels of education. These goals were developed from 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA) and expanded in the follow up World Education Forum (WEF) (UNESCO, 2005; Salvi, 2014; Hanushek, 2008; McCadden, 2015).

All children have a right to quality education, and realizing this right for girls goes a long way in ensuring a healthy family and a healthy nation. Educated girls grow into women who tend to have healthier and better nourished babies (UNICEF, 2005; Tembon, 2008; MacCadden, 2015) and who most likely will do everything to have their own children attend school as well, thus breaking the vicious cycle of poverty. On the same breath, they observed that educated girls can better protect themselves against Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), human trafficking and various forms of abuse (Hanushek, 2008; MacCadden, 2015). It also means that as a woman, she is empowered and more likely to participate in development efforts, political and economic decision-making.

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Women who went to school usually manage to increase the household income. The advantages of girls' education thus do not stop at the boundaries of a single child, but ripple through families, communities, and nations.

One important issue affecting girls' education is low enrollment in many developing countries indicating aspects of social injustice and gender inequality in education. A number of reasons have been identified for learners dropping out of school leading to low enrolment. These include disenchantment with school, lack of support at home, negative learning experiences and having to repeat years because of poor performance (OECD, 2008). However, not all girls face the same challenges in educational participation. Pregnant school girls and young mothers' learners in school face unique challenges in ensuring that their new mothering roles and identities do not translate into premature exit from formal education (Karimi, 2015)

Teenage pregnancy has been identified as one of the main causes of low enrollment of girls in school. It's evident from research, that pregnancy is one of the major reasons for girls dropping out of school especially in many developing countries (Meena, 1996; UNICEF, 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Jackson & Abosi, 2007; Laiser & Muyinga, 2017; Mwenje, 2015). It has remained a tangible source of concern as it occurs during those years generally devoted to formal schooling and as such, motherhood is likely to cause conflicts with human capital investment, thereby, raising the opportunity cost of time spent in education. Subsequently it's listed among the main causes of school dropouts where it accounts for approximately 18% of all female dropouts in secondary schools and 7.3% in both secondary and primary school (Chigona & Chetty, 2007; Women's United Nations Report Network, WUNRN, 2007). In Kenya for example, it was estimated that between 10000 and 13000 girls leave both primary and secondary schools each year due to pregnancy alone (Mwenje, 2015). This is better than in South Africa where by the age of 18 more than 30% of the teenage girls had given birth at least once (Mahy & Gupta, 2002)

The policy of the re-entry of teenage mothers to school is one of the outcomes of the Beijing conference of 1995, a conference in which the women's movement drew up its own priorities and action plan. The conference demanded that girls who dropped out of school because of pregnancy should be readmitted (Mwansa, 2011). By allowing pregnant teenagers to remain in school and return after giving birth is both considered significant in delaying a second birth and also in offering young women increased opportunities to get education and increase their economic standing (Bhana, Morrel, Shefer and Sisa, 2010; Mwansa, 2011; UNESCO 2013).

On paper, Kenya has a very progressive "return to school policy" for teenage mothers introduced in 2001. A girl that gets pregnant is really supposed to be allowed to remain in school until she is about to be due. After delivery, she is supposed to be allowed to come back or be given support to gain admission into another secondary school where she feels comfortable and not stigmatized or discriminated against. The policy also says that pregnant school girls and their parents should receive counselling to enable them cope with their new status of their teenage mothers (Migiro 2014). In their study, Koskey, Changach and Kipsoi (2012) identified first-hand information from teenage mothers and other key respondents on challenges facing teenage upon readmission to school. They exposed the difficulties of simultaneous parenting and schooling despite the teenage mothers' tender age and inexperienced health and emotional issues related to premature birth which pose great difficulties in the learning process.

CEDAW calls up on state parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure that they have equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure on a basis of equality of men and women, same conditions for carrier and vocational guidance, equality at all levels of education as well as all types of professions, same curricular, funding opportunities, participation and other aspects of education (Republic of Uganda, 2013)

One of the intervening strategies to save the lives of young mothers and their children is to help more girls go to school and stay in school. Both formal and informal training gives girl's knowledge, self-confidence, practical skills and hope for a bright future (Save the Child, 2004). Chilisa (2002) distinguishes three kinds of policies targeting in-school pregnancies. These are expulsion, continuation and re-entry policies. Continuation policies are the most progressive whereas the other two categories contribute to the reproduction of some forms of gender inequalities through limiting access to education for girls who become pregnant. He further categorizes Mozambique within the group of states adhering to rigid expulsion policies. However, Mozambique has recently undertaken a process of transition, mirrored among other things. The policy indicates that pregnant girls should be transferred from day to night courses making a shift from Chilisas' analysis. It also mandates that school staff should be suspended if found to be involved with pregnancy at all. This shift in policy has important consequences both for those targeted by the degree and for the position of the state using the international community. However, Jansen (2000) warns that no one educational policy can be transfered to other situations, no matter how useful it might be proved elsewhere. What might have worked in developing countries may not necessarily apply to some other situations in a whole sale manner.

Hass (1999) and Jansen (2002) observed that in as much as the formal policy measures are in place, the extent to which they are effectively implemented to benefit the affected learners is still subject to speculations because of inadequate feedback from both the policy duty and right bearers. It's not uncommon for the policies to be in place while implementers and targeted beneficiaries are not adequately informed and equipped to effect the desired changes. They further observed that in most African states, the inclusion of pregnant learners into formal schooling is still a new development which is now replacing the common exclusion, suspension and expulsion punitive measures for girls who fell pregnant while at school. One of the reason for ineffective policy implementation is the inadequate knowledge and appreciation of the inclusive education policy for the inclusion of pregnant teenagers in regular schools.

Flexibility schooling is seen as one way of helping girls to manage an education and still be able to help in the home. A number of additional strategies have been attempted to encourage girls' school attendance. Abolishing school fees altogether as in Malawi and Mauritius, raising awareness on the importance of girl's education, promoting poverty reduction and advocacy. (UNESCO, 2004). Incentive programmes are implemented in cases where it's believed that the cost of schooling is significant but not necessary the only barrier to girls attending school. They may be targeted at a certain geographical area or section of society according to the needs of the girl's resources available.

Available research also seems to suggest that apart from promoting children access to schooling, the boarding schools approach can be used to achieve gender equality in enrolment, retention and achievement, enhance academic achievement and performance of children especially girls, give security and protection to girls, protect children who are at emergencies. They must be well managed and sufficiently funded to be considered a viable approach to EFA (Bista & Cosstick, 2005).

Valdes (2008) while discussing the re-entry policy of girl mothers in Mexico suggested that effective policies to increase school re-entry rates for poor girls should include free access to community nurseries and kindergartens, availability of secondary schools and reduction of class sizes. Although in principle girls who fall pregnant while in school are not denied access to education, the intervention strategies for achieving this in most developing countries have been the non-formal education system. Even in developing countries where mainstreaming of pregnant and teenage mothers in formal education has been in place for sometimes, the debate on whether mainstreaming them in formal schools is the idea that continues to rage on (Barbosa & Owens, 2001).

In Jamaica for example, the state machinery for providing transition education for girls who leave school during pregnancy currently resides in Women Centre of Jamaica Foundation (WCJF). This agency caters for the needs of pregnant girls. It assists to reintegrate all school age mothers into the formal school system, monitor their education to ensure they complete their education and also increase preventive messages to reduce incidences of teenage pregnancy (MoE Jamaica, 2013)

Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance report (2010) reports that the civil society, church and other stakeholders have joined hands to see to it that young mothers are able to complete their education by going back to school. Various initiatives have been started in Zambia as a direct response to persistent gender gaps in education such as re-entry policy, affirmative action in Grade seven and Grade nine levels that allows girls to progress to the next level of education with slightly lower points. The re-entry policy has been in operational for 14 years and has benefitted many young girls. It further reports that action taken include: advocacy to ensure pregnant girls go back to school after giving birth and they mix freely with other pupils, counselling services are offered to girls who fall pregnant, bursaries offered to vulnerable girls, workshops and discussions forums are being held to discuss challenges encountered by implementing the policy and how these can be addressed and rules are instituted in schools to protect girls from gender based violence and other abuses.

Smith battle (2007) observed the gap between teenage mothers' aspirations and the support they receive suggests that educators are missing the opportunity to facilitate teenage mothers' school progress and their long term educational attainment.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Bungoma County in Western Kenya. The study adopted constructivism as its epistemological perspective. Constructivism claims that meaning does not exist in its own right, rather it's constructed by human beings as they interact and engage in interpretation. It recognizes that reality is a product of human intelligence interacting with experience in the real world. Constructivism accepts reality as a construct of human mind and therefore reality is perceived as subjective. For constructivism reality is socially constructed (Oleary, 2004; Andrew, Pedersen & McEroy, 2011). Constructivism was used since the researcher relied on participant's view of the situation being studied. It sought to generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning. The study population was used to present their views about the re-entry policy of teenage mothers the perception of the policy and cultural practices that tend to inhibit effective implementation of the policy. In this study, Convergent parallel mixed method research design was used. It is used when the researcher uses concurrent timing to implement the quantitative and qualitative strands during the same phase of the research process, prioritizing the methods equally and keeps the strands independently during analysis and then mixes the results during the overall interpretation in other words, it collects and analyses two independent strands of qualitative and quantitative data at the same time in a single phase. The methods are prioritized equally and keeps data analysis independently, mix the results during the overall interpretation. The researcher tries to look for convergence, divergence, contradictions or relationship of the two phases (Creswell, 2009). The study targeted the Teenage mothers, 40866 School girls, 1015 Head teachers, 1015 Guidance and Counselling teachers and 9 Sub County Quality Assurance Officers (SCQASO). A Simple random sampling, purposive sampling and Snowball sampling technique were used to identify the samples. Gay (1992) said that 10% of the population sample is representative enough when dealing with survey. Gay (1992) and Krejcie and Morgan (1975) Table was used to identify the sample size. There are a total of 9 sub counties in Bungoma County. 2 SCQASO were selected using simple random sampling. 10 primary schools, 2 girls' schools and 1 mixed secondary school were selected using simple random sampling.

Table1. Sample Frame Table

RESPONDENTS	POPULATION SIZE	SAMPLE SIZE
SCQASO	9	2
Primary Schools	797	90
Sec School (Girls and Mixed Sch)	208	27
Students (Girls)	19826	378
Pupils (Std 6, 7 And 8)	21040	378
Head teachers (Primary)	797	90
Principals	208	27
G/C Teachers	1005	117
Teenage Mothers	-	25
TOTAL		**1129**

Source: Bungoma County Education Office, 2016.

The main instruments for collecting data were questionnaires and interview schedule Validity of the research instruments was tested for the content validity and face validity. Test retest method was used to determine the reliability of the research instruments. The correlation coefficient was computed and the Spearman rank order correlation co-efficiency was used to determine reliability. A correlation coefficient of 0.79 was gotten and was considered high enough to judge the reliability of the research instrument. The analysis of qualitative data assumed the descriptive and explanatory analysis. Explanatory analysis involves examining and explaining relationship between variables while Descriptive analysis includes the aspect of examining, organizing and identification of categories, themes and patterns. Qualitative approaches used include indexing, manual and verbatim or writing and organizing data into themes. Quantitative data were coded analyzed using multiple analysis of variance since there were several independent variables against one dependent variable

(Oleary, 2004; Creswell, 2014), and were then be presented using tables.

Findings

The interview schedule was administered to the Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, primary school head teachers and the high school principals while questionnaires were administered to the Guidance and Counselling teachers and the teenage mothers. There are three main strategies which are identified in the policy are:

1. Articulation of the policy

Articulation refers to the process of creating an awareness over an idea. As part of the implementation strategy, the various stakeholders are to be informed about the policy. The Guidance and Counselling teachers were asked how they came to learn about the policy, the results are presented in Table below.

Table2. How the G/C teachers came to learn of the reentry policy of the teenage mothers.

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Media	76	65
Seminars	34	29
MoE Circulars	7	6
Totals	117	100

Source: Field Notes

The analysis of data revealed that 65% (N=76) of the Guidance and Counselling teachers said they learnt it through the media, 29% (N=34) said they learnt it through seminars organized by the Ministry of Education while 6.0% (N=7) said they learnt it through the Ministry of Education circular. The head teachers and Principals were asked about how they came to learn about the policy. Most head teachers and Principal said that they got the information about the policy through the barazas and others through head teachers' seminars. One head teacher said:

> *"We attended a heads meeting and we were informed that there's a new policy from the Ministry of Education which says that pregnant school girls should not be expelled from school. Instead they should be allowed to learn and when their time is due they are to be allowed to go and deliver and then allowed back to school."*

One Principal said:

> *"I have heard about the policy through media but I haven't seen the circular. What i know is that once a girl is expectant, she is not supposed to be expelled but allowed to continue with education until such a time that she is due to deliver then she can be allowed to go home to deliver and be allowed back to school."*

This view was held by several head teachers and Principals. However, the head teachers and Principals interviewed none could provide a copy of the policy for they didn't have it. Of all the Head teachers and Principals interviewed, none seemed to have even seen the circular from the Ministry of Education on the re-entry policy of teenage mothers to school.

The Head teachers and Principals are supposed to bring to the attention of the public about the re-entry policy. Asked how they pass the information to the public, from the interviews the head teachers and Principals said that they pass the information to the parents through the Annual General Meetings and academic day. One Principal said:

> *"We had an AGM and parents raised concern why we had so many pregnant girls in school. I had to explain to them that my hands are tied because there is a policy by the government that allows such girls in school. I had to do a lot of explaining so that the*

> *parents could see sense of what I was saying despite not having the copy of the policy.*

However, the parents who attend this meeting seems to have reservations about the policy especially those parents in county schools.

It was also observed that articulating the policy is a challenge since the head teachers will be seen as advocating for early pregnancies and irresponsible sexual behavior. One head teacher interviewed said;

> *"I don't know where to categorize this issue of early teenage pregnancy and whether it's an indiscipline issue. And if it's an indiscipline issue how do I handle it?"*

Most of the head teachers and principals interviewed were in this dilemma.

The SCQASO are supposed to articulate the re-entry policy to the head teachers, principals and other stakeholders. Asked how they sensitize head teachers and parents about the re-entry policy, The SCQASO said that they use head-teachers forums and parents meeting to articulate the policy to the concerned stakeholders. One SCQASO said:

> *"During BOMs meeting, Annual General meeting, we take time to inform those concerned about the government policies especially those that touch on education matters and student's welfare."*

Some Ministry of Education officials and head teachers expressed their views that the re-entry policy was not elaborate enough and therefore articulating some issues becomes a challenge. Their views confirmed what Omwancha, 2012; Mashishi & Makoelle, 2014 observed that there were particularly conflicting views about how to interpret the guidelines and different practices with regard to when pregnancy was discovered, when the girls should leave school for delivery, how long should pregnant girls be absent from school and re-entry to school after delivery among others. Maluwi and Bali (2014) further added that School heads and religious leaders were apprehensive of the rationale underpinning the government plan, claiming that the policy is still controversial in Tanzania society. They emphasized that girls should maintain discipline, arguing that the policy will encourage more girls to fall pregnant since they would be assured of readmission after delivery.

In some schools however, the head teachers tasked the class teachers to track these students once they go home to deliver and to find out how they are doing. This was mainly observed in Primary schools and mixed day schools. However, these was mainly done in cases where the bright students were the ones affected. One principal said:

> *"The class teacher of the affected student is tasked to find out how the student is doing. We don't do this to all students but those who we feel are bright in class."*

For those students who were not bright, this was not done and therefore they were excluded increasing the aspect of inequity. In other schools, there's no tracking of these teenage mother by the school authority after they have left school. This is in agreement with what Mwenje (2015) observed when she says that every student who leaves school for any reason, should be followed up. In Basic Education Act (MOE, 2013) head teachers are obligated to investigate and establish the reasons for a child's absence in school.

2. Support

As part of the implementation strategy, the teenage mothers are supposed to be supported when they go for leave and when they reenter school. One of the ways they are to be supported is to assist them cope with schooling. The teenage mothers were asked whether the teachers have helped them to

settle in school after re-entry, their responses are provided in Table below.

Table 3. Teenage mothers responses on whether teachers helped them to settle in school after reentry.

	Frequency(f)	Percentage(%)
Teenage mothers received support	18	72
Teenage mothers didn't receive support	7	28
Total	25	100

Source: Field Data

The analysis of data revealed that 72% (N=18) of the teenage mothers said they were supported while 28% (N=7) said they received no support. It was therefore evident that majority of the teenage mothers agreed that teachers have helped them to settle in schools. However, the policy does not say which type of help these teenage mothers should be given.

When the school girls were asked what kind of support they think the teenage mothers need, their responses are provided in Table below

Table 4. School girl's responses on the kind of help teenage mothers need.

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
School fees	145	19.2
Provision of basic needs	130	17.2
Need of house help for the child	122	16.1
Life skills	80	10.6
Guidance and counseling services	228	30.1
Flexible timetables	51	6.7
Total	756	100

Source: Field Data

The analysis of data revealed that 19.2% (N=145) of the school girls said that teenage mothers needed school fees, 17.2% (N=130) said they should be provided with basic needs, 16.1% (N=122) said they needed house help for the child, 10.6% (N=80) said they required life skills, 30.1% (N=228) said they required guidance and counselling services while 6.7% (N=51) said they required flexible timetable. From the above data, the issue of fees was the major problem highlighted by the school girls as having a high effect on the re-entry and that the teenage mothers require support in this area.

The Guidance and Counselling teachers were asked how they help these teenage mothers to cope up with social and academic pressure. For the social pressure, the Guidance and Counselling teachers offered them guidance and counselling services, ask others students to accept them, grouping them with others and giving them responsibilities. For the side of academic pressure, the Guidance and Counselling teachers said that they offered them guidance and counselling services, advising them to repeat a class, giving them extra tuition and involving them in group discussions. As for the head teachers, some of them allow them to leave early from school so as to attend to their babies. One head teacher said:

"I know she has a small baby i allow her to come to school at 8 am while the rest come as early as 6.30 am. I also allow her to leave early at games time to go home. This is my little contribution to make her life bearable."

Some principals exempt the teenage mothers from going home for fees frequently so that they can be retained in school. One principal said:

"I talked with her parents and we agreed how the fees will be paid and so even if they default for a week I

don't send them away. They have already lost a lot and I don't find it wise to send them away again for they will lose even more"

This view was held by a number of Head teachers and Principals interviewed.

Others said that they have no role to play as far as the welfare of the teenage mothers is concerned and they usually advice the parents to go with their child and seek readmission somewhere else. One principal said:

"We feel sorry for what has happened to the girl but the only thing we advise the parent is to seek another school somewhere else for their daughter. We don't have facilities to cater for the pregnant girls."

However, one Principal said:

"We tried to accommodate pregnant girls and teenage mothers in school but we couldn't cope with their dietary requirements. We once retained a pregnant girl in school but we didn't know she was anemic. We had to buy for her iron rich food for a whole month. It became expensive to us and we just had to ask her to take early leave and go home so that the parents could take care of her"

It can be seen that some principals are willing to retain these girls to school but some circumstances beyond them make them to release them to go home. However, this is done quietly without involving the Ministry of Education officials.

From the head teachers' interview it was also observed that in some of the schools, the head teachers had special arrangement for those teenage mothers who insisted in remaining in school, for instance, the prefect body is usually informed about the special cases so as not to involve them in heavy manual work. One Principal said:

"The head student is informed not to assign heavy manual work to student mothers. This is not to mean that we treat them as very special students but as a way of creating time for them to catch up with what they missed while at home. Sometimes during manual work time I release them to go home early"

This view was held by a number of head teachers and Principals.

As part of support the teenage mothers and other students have to undergo guidance and counselling sessions. The school principals and the head teachers are supposed to liaise with the Guidance and Counselling teachers to ensure the teenage mothers are counselled before leaving for home. As part of the implementation of the policy, the Guidance and Counselling teachers are supposed to offer counselling session to these teenage mothers. Asked how frequent the guidance and counselling teachers offer counselling session to the students, the results are presented in Table below.

Table 5. Frequency of holding Guidance and Counselling sessions.

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Once a week	31	26.5
Regularly	23	19.7
Not regularly	16	13.7
When need arises	20	17.1
Several times	9	7.7
Twice a week	18	15.4
Total	117	100.0

Source: Field Data

The analysis of data revealed that 26.5% (N=31) said they hold it once a week, 19.7% (N=23) said they hold it regularly, 13.7% (N=16) not regularly, 17.1% (N=20) when need arises, 7.7% (N=9) several times and 15.4% (N=18) twice a week.

There was mixed reaction and inconsistencies to the frequency of holding the counselling session.

The frequency varied from one school to another school and it depended on the school policy. Most school didn't have guidance and counselling policy. Therefore, G/C sessions depended on whether there was an issue to be addressed. This was more prevalent in primary schools than in secondary schools. The teenage mothers said that most of the counselling sessions are general ones and they are counselled together with the other students. There's no special guidance and counselling sessions that are specifically designed for the teenage mothers. One head teacher interviewed said:

"We don't have teenage mothers here, all these are school girls and therefore there's no special G/C sessions for the teenage mothers"

3. Enforcement of the policy

Another aspect of implementation that can be deduced from the re-entry policy is the issue of enforcement of the policy. The Guidance and Counselling teachers were asked whether they faced resistance while implementing the policy, the responses are provided in Table below

Table 6. G/C teachers responses on whether they face resistance as they implement the reentry policy.

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
G/C teachers face resistance while implementing the policy	67	57.3
G/C teachers don't face resistance while implementing the policy	50	42.7
Total	117	100

Source: Field Data

The analysis of data revealed that 57.3% (N=67) of the Guidance and counselling teachers said they faced resistance while 42.7% (N=50) said they don't face resistance while implementing the policy. Asked to rank from where resistance is most to the least, the traditional community was mentioned as where resistance is most, followed by parents, then teachers and lastly students. The community has offered very little help for these teenage mothers to reenter school.

From the discussion with head teachers and Principals, it was felt that the principals were not well prepared to deal with the issue of stigmatization and labelling of the teenage mothers. One Principal said:

"We try to discourage other students from calling these teenage mothers name by making it a punishable offence. However, this does not change the fact that they are already mothers."

This view was shared by other head teachers and Principals. This resonates with the findings of Omondi, 2008; Wekesa, 2014; Laiser and Munyinga, 2017 who observed that some school heads fear allowing the young mothers to return to school because of the stigma and labelling associated with having mothers in the learning environment. So they send these teenage mothers home immediately they are discovered to be pregnant to discourage other students from getting pregnant and to avoid extra expenses that the school might incur.

From the Principals interview it was evident that there were conflicting views on how the Principals implement the policy. Principals from better endowed high schools said that the issue of teenage mothers is a private affair and due to the fear of setting precedence, they don't tolerate teenage mothers in their schools. One principal said:

"We don't want to have the teenage mothers in our school for we fear to set precedence. You know girls.

They might become promiscuous and hence spoil the name and image of the school"

Other principals fear having the teenage mothers in school due to the risks involved. One Principal said:

"We had a case of pregnant girl in our school. We counselled her and we thought she had accepted her situation, but one night we were called to the dormitory that she was sick and we found her bleeding. We took her to the dispensary and we were told that she had swallowed drugs to aid her terminate her pregnancy. We almost lost her. Due to this experience, I don't allow such girls in my school."

The Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (SCQASO) interviewed said that they do understand the policy and that they have received the circular from the ministry. One SCQASO said:

"We are well informed about the re-entry policy through a circular from the ministry headquarters in-fact I do have a copy of the same document and I have given the head- teachers in my Sub County."

The same SCQASO however could not produce the copy of the same document. Even after five visits to the office, a copy could not be traced. The same applies to the other sampled SCQASO.

The SCQASO interviewed further said that the policy is implemented by referrals only meaning that those cases that are reported to them, they act on them. One SCQASO said:

"We can't go from school to school and ask how many students have been denied education or readmission on the account of them being expectant. We only act once a parent or the teenage mother has come to our offices for assistance."

This implies that once the parents of the teenage mother reports to the Sub County Education office, then they get assistance and if they don't report, the education office may be unaware of the situation.

As part of their duty, the SCQASO are supposed to do routine visit to schools to do monitoring and evaluation. From the interviews, it was observed that Monitoring and Evaluation of primary schools is done once in a year while in secondary schools its done once in two or three years. During these visits to schools, apart from normal routine checkups, emerging issues are noted. The main issue monitored concerns mainly student's welfare and includes curriculum, games and sports. The issue of teenage mothers is never discussed.

They main challenge observed by the SCQASO facing the implementation of the policy is lack of adequate staff. There are no adequate staff at the sub county level to do monitoring and the enforcement of the policy. One SCQASO said:

"We are very few in this office and we are supposed to cover so many schools. There are a lot of other programs of the ministry we are supposed to facilitate and seminars to attend. This makes our work very demanding and we are very few. We can't be all over the place at the same time. So monitoring of this policy is not well done."

The County Quality Assurance and Standards officer also cited lack of adequate finances from the national government and staff to facilitate the implementation of the policy. There are no funds set aside for the implementation of the policy. This resonates with what Mwenje (2015) said that for effective implementation of the re-entry policy, funds should be provided during budgetary allocations. This finances should go towards creating awareness, fund prevention

campaigns, ensure implementation or fund monitoring and evaluation exercise and strengthen Guidance and Counselling departments.

There's also a challenge on the length of stay in the school for the teenage mothers. Some teenage mothers start experiencing pregnancy complications early while others don't have a problem until the third trimester. It's therefore difficult to determine the earliest possible time these teenage mothers can be allowed to go home. One principal said:

"I usually call the parents of the pregnant student and tell them about the condition of their child. Most usually don't want to go home with their child despite the child being uncomfortable in school. They think by doing this it's serving as a punishment to their child"

As part of the effort to enforce the policy, those who were found to have impregnated the school girls are supposed to be identified and action taken against them. Asked if this is done, one Principal said:

"I don't know that bit but I usually don't ask because it won't add up to anything good for a mistake has already happened and most of these girls don't usually want to talk about it."

The SCQASO interviewed said:

"The community cannot stand up and face the boys or men involved. There is a way that they always end up escaping with the problem."

Conclusions

There are three main strategies which are identified in the policy are:

i. Articulation of the policy

The research found out that as part of articulation several strategies are used such as the use of Circulars, media, seminars, Public meetings and Annual General Meetings.

Some parents have reservation about the policy. This makes the articulation of the policy by the head teachers a challenge since they could be seen as advocating for early pregnancy and irresponsible sexual behavior. As part of the articulation of the policy, the teenage mothers are to be tracked so as to ensure that they return to school after delivery. This is done to a very small extent. Some head teachers interviewed said that they do tracking to teenage mothers who are bright. This is mainly done at primary schools and day secondary school.

ii. Support

The re-entry policy advocates that the teenage mothers should be assisted when they renter school. One of the ways they are to be supported is to assist them cope up with schooling. A number of ways were identified to help learners cope with schooling. For the social pressure, the Guidance and Counselling teachers offered them guidance and counselling services, ask others students to accept them, grouping them with others and giving them responsibilities. For the side of academic pressure, the Guidance and Counselling teachers said that they offered them guidance and counselling services, advising them to repeat a class, giving them extra tuition and involving them in group discussions. As for the head teachers, some of them allow them to leave early from school so as to attend to their babies, some principals exempt the teenage mothers from going home for fees frequently so that they can be retained in school while others said that they have no role to play as far as the welfare of the teenage mothers is concerned and they usually advice the parents to go with their child and seek readmission somewhere else. It observed that some principals are willing to retain these girls to school but some circumstances beyond them make them to release them to go home.

However, this is done quietly without involving the Ministry of Education officials.

As part of support the teenage mothers and other students have to undergo guidance and counselling sessions. The school principals and the head teachers are supposed to liaise with the Guidance and Counselling teachers to ensure the teenage mothers are counselled before leaving for home.

There was mixed reaction and inconsistencies to the frequency of holding the counselling session. The frequency varied from one school to another school and it depended on the school policy. Most of the guidance and counselling sessions are general and there was no specific counselling session for the teenage mothers

iii. Enforcement of the policy

From the research it was observed that there is resistance in the enforcement of the policy. The resistance is mostly from the traditional society, followed by parents, teachers and lastly the students. it was also felt that the principals were not well prepared to deal with the issue of stigmatization and labelling of the teenage mothers. This view was shared by other head teachers and Principals. So they send these teenage mothers home immediately they are discovered to be pregnant to discourage other students from getting pregnant and to avoid extra expenses that the school might incur.

There were conflicting views on how the Principals implement the policy. Principals from better endowed high schools said that the issue of teenage mothers is a private affair and due to the fear of setting precedence, they don't tolerate teenage mothers in their schools. Other principals fear having the teenage mothers in school due to the risks involved. The head teachers, principals and SCQASO interviewed could not produce a copy of the document.

It was also observed that Monitoring and Evaluation of primary schools is done once in a year while in secondary schools it's done once in two or three years by the SCQASO. During these visits to schools, apart from normal routine checkups, emerging issues are noted. The main issue monitored concerns mainly student's welfare and includes curriculum, games and sports. The issue of teenage mothers is never discussed. There are no adequate staff at the sub county level to do monitoring and the enforcement of the policy. The County Quality Assurance and Standards officer also cited lack of adequate finances from the national government and staff to facilitate the implementation of the policy. There are no funds set aside for the implementation of the policy.

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