

**EXPLORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RE-ADMISSION POLICY FOR
ADOLESCENT MOTHERS IN AN URBAN SLUM CONTEXT IN ELDORET,
KENYA**

BY

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MOI UNIVERSITY

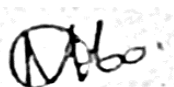
2022

DECLARATION

Declaration by Candidate

I declare that this thesis is my original work and it has not been submitted to any other university for academic purposes.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents Richard Sing'oei and Philomena Kimeto, to my siblings Kevin and Millicent. Thank you for your endless love and support. To lovely daughter Zuri Cheron, may this always encourage you to scale the academic heights.

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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to safeguard the education of the girl child, the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced the re-entry policy (which was later changed to re-admission policy) that was established in 1994. The policy stipulates that pregnant girls should go back to school and complete their education after giving birth. However, from the literature surrounding the policy implementation, that has not always been the case. The policy in paper has been poorly implemented especially in the slum areas. This study, therefore, sought to explore the policy implementation in Langas slum in Eldoret. The following objectives guided the study: to investigate the support mechanisms put in place by the school principals to ensure that the adolescent mothers fit comfortably in the school environment once they are re-admitted, to explore adolescent mothers experiences regarding re-admission and the re-admission policy and finally to seek ways in which the re-admission policy and its implementation can be improved in order to benefit the adolescent mothers. This study was guided by the top-down system theory on policy implementation. It is anchored on the phenomenological design which is based on the qualitative approach. Data was collected using in-depth interviews and drawings. Trustworthiness was achieved through; dependability, transferability, confirmability and credibility. Five secondary school principals were sampled purposively while ten adolescent mothers were sampled using snowball sampling technique. Data was analyzed thematically using the interpretivist lens. The findings revealed that there is inadequate support mechanisms put in place to support adolescent mothers such as inadequate personnel for guidance and counselling and lack of in-service training for guidance and counselling teachers, lack of financial support from the government. It also revealed that adolescent mothers face a myriad of experiences chief being stigma and discrimination from teachers and students and financial constraints. It further established the various ways in which the re-admission policy and its implementation can be improved in order to benefit the adolescent mothers better. This study concluded that the implementation of the re-admission policy was still a challenge in the urban slum context. The main recommendations arising from the study include: capacity building for secondary school principals by the ministry of education, the government should employ teachers who are strictly in-charge of guidance and counselling, training of teachers in charge of guidance and counselling by the MoE, financial assistance for adolescent mothers, introduction of school policies that favour adolescent mothers and sensitization of the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers in schools and in the communities.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EMIS:	Education Management Information System
FAWE:	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FAWEZA:	Forum for African Women Educationalists in Zambia
KCPE:	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE:	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KDHS:	Kenya Demographic Health Survey
MBESC:	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, Namibia
TSC:	Teachers Service Commission
UNESCO:	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO:	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter is composed of the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study, assumptions of the study, scope and definitions of terms used in the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Pregnancy among adolescents and consequent motherhood is one of the major social problems confronting many countries of the world. It is a global phenomenon that is affecting both the developed and developing countries (Lucker, 2010). Research conducted by the World Bank in 2018 estimated that 62 million girls were out of school in 2017 and 52% of them were adolescents. This is in agreement with a study conducted by Darroch et al. (2016) which established that 16 million girls aged between 15-19 years give birth each year. In the United States of America, the birth rate of girls aged between 15-19 years was 20.3 births per 1000 girls (Hellen and Blackman, 2016). They explained that this is a decrease as compared to earlier years, however, it still remains the highest in the developed countries. This is in agreement with a study by Lowen (2012) which allude that the USA leads in rates of adolescent mothers whereas Japan and South Korea are the least affected.

Research conducted by UNICEF (2018) found out that sub-Saharan Africa has the highest proportions of young mothers. The birth rates among the adolescents are estimated to reach over 200 births per 1000 girls aged 15-19 as compared to other regions due to the social, cultural and economic factors in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Loaiza (2013), pregnancy among young girls less than 18 years of age is alleged to likely show a paramount increase over the next 20 years in sub-Saharan

Africa. This is in agreement with studies conducted by World Health Organization (2018) which projected that countries with the greatest projected increases are all in sub-Saharan Africa: Nigeria (9.2 million), United Republic of Tanzania (3.7 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (3.3 million), Uganda (2.5 million) and Kenya (2.3 million). It was further established by the World Health Organization (2018) that sub-Saharan Africa has 1.8 million adolescents out of school in the lower school level. It continues to state these girls miss out on great opportunities to acquire vital life skills. A survey conducted by Save the Children (2018) also echoes that 13 million children are born to women under the age of 16 years and more than 90% are in developing countries.

According to the 2014 Kenya Demographic Health Survey report (cited by Omoro et al., 2017) pregnancy and motherhood rates stood at 18 per cent among adolescents (those aged between 15 and 19 years). Similarly, a report by the Kenya Demographic Health Survey (2018) indicated that approximately 449 girls failed to sit for their national examinations (KCPE and KCSE) in 2018 because of teenage pregnancies. Statistics from the United Nations Population Fund (2016) indicates that between June 2016 and July 2017, 378,397 adolescents in Kenya aged 10-19 got pregnant. In Western Kenya, 23% of young girls disclosed having a history of pregnancy (Omoro et al., 2017). Many girls drop out of school before completing their studies due to pregnancy (Kioko and Nyambane, 2015). This is because in Africa many societies still view pregnancy and education as irreconcilable. Motherhood outside marriage is degraded morally, culturally and socially (Moletsane, Mitchell and Lewin, 2015).

In sub-Saharan Africa, there have been attempts to address adolescent pregnancies. Many countries came up with policies regarding the education of young mothers. Kenya, for example, through the MoE came up with the re-entry policy (which was

later changed to re-admission policy) in 1994 in a bid to salvage the education of young girls who got pregnant while still in school (MoE . Some countries on the other hand, such as Tanzania, came up with policies that ensured that girls who became pregnant while still in school were expelled from school thus jeopardizing their education. In Namibia, pregnant girls are permitted to stay in school until delivery and return to the same institution after delivery within one year (Namibia MBESC, 2001). In Cameroon, girls have the right to negotiate the duration of their maternity leave with the school administration and are also allowed to take extra classes as not to lag in their classwork (Barmao, 2015). According to UNESCO (2003), in Madagascar, the young mothers could return to school immediately after delivery if they desired to.

However, even with the policies being present in many African countries, Onyango et al. (2015) report that many challenges come with the implementation of the policies. These challenges such as lack of support from the teachers and other students derail the abilities of the adolescent mothers to realize their goals. They added that the school rules are also discriminating against adolescent mothers who have to balance parenting and studies. A study by Bhana and Mcambi (2013) revealed that in South Africa, most principals and teachers treat pregnant girls unequally and even fail to readmit them to school despite having the re-admission policy. Despite the re-admission policy being in place for many years, studies done by Omondi, et al. (2016) revealed that principals in Homa Bay County in Kenya, thought that young mothers should only be re-admitted if they showed remorsefulness for being pregnant. This portrays that even the principals' attitudes towards the re-admission policy is questionable hence challenging its implementation.

In Kenya, there are no clear guidelines on how the re-admission policy should be implemented and the adolescent mothers who have to balance their education with

parenting roles find themselves at the receiving end (Onyango et al., 2015). A survey by the Population Council in Kenya (cited in Undie, Odiwe and Obare, 2015), shows that 21% of adolescent mothers do not go back to school due to the stigma and negativity associated with pregnancy both in school and the broader community. The re-admission policy also does not provide measures that are to be taken when a school principal refuses to allow an adolescent mother to re-enter schooling. This makes some secondary school principals to implement the policy as they please (Mutua et al. 2019). In addition, many students are not aware of the policy, the policy is only known by the teachers and the principals. Students who have come across the policy admit that they are not aware of what the policy constitute (Mwenje and Kessio, 2015). This possess as challenge in the policy implementation as the key beneficiaries of the policy are not aware of it. The study further revealed that in Kenya, re-admission guidelines were not implemented and that there is no suitable framework to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policy.

Studies conducted by Kabiru et al. (2013) in one of the informal settlements in Nairobi Kenya established that adolescent girls living in the informal settlements have a high chance of having unintended pregnancy as compared to the adolescents living in the formal settlements. The same studies also established that 37% of girls aged between 15-22 years have had an unintended pregnancy and when the sample was limited to adolescents who are sexually active the number raised to 62%. These girls tend to be married off at an early age and consequently there is a lower education attainment.

This provides evidence that there is a challenge in the implementation of the re-admission policy and especially in the urban slum context, as can be seen with the number of girls leaving school never to return.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Kenya has the third highest adolescent pregnancy worldwide, one in every five adolescent is already a mother or pregnant with their first child. 45,724 pregnancies were recorded in January and February 2022 (MoH, 2022). Statistics from the Kenya Demographic Survey (2014) shows that 98% of girls who have ever been pregnant are out of school despite having the re-admission policy in place as the girls are still barred from school when they are found pregnant (Onyango et al., 2015). This raises a question on the implementation of the re-admission policy which state's that all girls who get pregnant while still in school should be allowed to return to school.

Adolescent girls living in slum settlements face more challenges of unintended pregnancies compared to non-slum counterparts this can be seen in the increasing number of young girls who are leaving school and never come back to complete their studies (Nyariro, 2018). Despite a large proportion of adolescents girls living in urban slum areas dropping out of school as a result of pregnancy, little is known about the extent to which the girls are taking advantage of the re-admission policy within this harsh environment, and the level of awareness of the re-admission policy by the school administration and the girls themselves and its implementation (Omwancha, 2012).

This shows that there is a gap between the policy which is on paper and its implementation. This study, therefore, seeks to explore how the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers is being implemented in Langas slum in Eldoret, as it is the second-largest slum in Kenya, and most studies on the re-admission policy conducted in Eldoret have not specifically focused on the slum areas. This study employed a qualitative method which was key in understanding how the re-admission policy was being implemented in the urban slum settlement and amplifying the voices of the adolescent mothers.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study explored how the MoE re-admission policy is being implemented in Langas slums in Eldoret.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives

1. To investigate the support mechanisms put in place by the secondary school principals to ensure that the adolescent mothers fit comfortably in school environments once re-admitted.
2. To explore how the adolescent mothers have experienced re-admission and the re-admission policy in secondary schools in Langas slums.
3. To seek ways in which the re-admission policy and its implementation can be improved in order to benefit the adolescent mothers.

1.6 Research Questions

The following are research questions that guided the study;

1. What are the support mechanisms put in place by the secondary school principals to support adolescent mothers to fit comfortably in the school environment once re-admitted?
2. What are the experiences of the adolescent mothers regarding re-admission and the re-admission policy in secondary schools in Langas slums?
3. How can the re-admission policy and its implementation be improved in order to benefit the adolescent mothers?

1.7 Justification of the Study

Pregnancy among adolescents is one of the main challenges affecting the education of girls worldwide. Studies conducted on the education of girls in sub-Saharan Africa

found out that pregnancy is the main factor that leads to school dropout among girls (Onyango et al., 2015). This, therefore, leads to education wastage among girls. According to UNICEF (2018), as mentioned earlier sub-Saharan Africa has the highest birth rates globally among adolescents and the birth rates are estimated to reach 200 births per 1000 girls between the ages of 15-19. This concurs with studies by Loaiza (2013) which projected that in the next 20 years there is likely to be a big increase in pregnancy among girls who are less than 18 years.

In a bid to respond to the educational challenges brought about by adolescent pregnancies, governments in sub-Saharan Africa came up with policies that would enable the young mothers to go back to school after having their babies. In Kenya, this was done through the introduction of the re-admission policy. However, there have been challenges associated with the implementation of the policy and the policy itself is seen as inadequate in cushioning the adolescent mothers from the challenges related to parenting while still pursuing their studies (Karimi, 2015).

As much as there have been various strategies put in place to ensure that girls who get pregnant while still in school get re-admitted and get a chance to continue with their education, little has been done for adolescent girls living in marginalized contexts such as the informal settlements and more adolescent mothers continue to drop out of school (King and Withrop, 2015). In addition, similar studies have been done in big cities such as Nairobi such as by Nyariro (2018) and ignored slum dwellers in small towns such as Eldoret. Therefore, there is need to explore implementation of the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers living in an urban slum context in Eldoret.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will assist in amplifying the voices of the adolescent mothers living in the informal settlements, it will also be useful to future policymakers when developing policies related to girls' education in the informal settlement. In addition, it will also be useful to the MoE officials when they will be evaluating the implementation of the re-admission policy. Besides, it will provide literature for future policymakers who are interested in girls' education. Also, it will assist in providing literature to researchers who are interested in researching young mothers living in the slums.

1.9 Scope of the Study

This study is positioned in the field of Education Management and Policy Studies which focuses on the area of girls' education. The study sought to explore how MoE re-admission policy is being implemented in Langas slums in Eldoret. Eldoret town is located in Uasin Gishu County.

Langas slum is located on the outskirts of Eldoret town along Eldoret-Kisumu road. It is the second-largest informal settlement in Kenya. The living conditions in Langas is characterized by deteriorating infrastructure and decay of the physical environment (Ng'au, 2019). This area was selected for this study because secondary school pupils in this area encounter unique challenges in a bid to find education as compared to their counterparts in formal settlements. The setting is also ideal for the study since it is the largest informal settlement in Eldoret hence there is a significant population of adolescent mothers living in the area.

The findings of these studies can be transferred to similar contexts as findings of a qualitative study cannot be generalized. The participants in this study were the principals in secondary schools and adolescent mothers. The study focused on

exploring how the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers is being implemented in an urban slum context in Eldoret, Kenya. Data collection and analysis took place from January to August 2021.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study was that the findings of the study could not be generalized to a wider population. However, the findings can be transferred to a population with a similar context. Secondly, some adolescents lacked confidence in their drawing capabilities, they were however assured that they do not have to draw perfect pictures but rather a representation of their experiences. In addition, being a purely qualitative study, it is limited in that qualitative research involves a small number of participants. To mitigate this, the researcher ensured that the participants selected for the study were selected by virtue of the capacity to provide rich textured information.

1.11 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the assumption that; there is no single reality on how the adolescent mothers have experienced the re-admission policy as their realities are constructed through their lived experiences and interactions with others within and outside the school environment. The researcher therefore reported different perspectives as themes develop in the findings. In addition, it is an assumption that in the process of research, the researcher used inductive logic. Lastly, the researcher assumed that evidence obtained from research participants is known through the subjective experiences of the participants hence the researcher made use of quotes as evidence from the participants.

1.12 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on a top-down system approach model of policy implementation founded by Pressman and Wildavsky in 1973.

Policy implementation is the translation of the goals of a policy into action, it involves the public officials actions directed at the achievement of the goals and objectives set out in prior policy decisions (Khan, 2016). It is influenced by many factors such as the political, economic, social, organizational and attitudinal. These factors work hand in hand and have an impact on how well the policy will be implemented (Stewart et al., 2008).

The top-down system approach was developed by Pressman and Wildavsky in 1973. Top-down approaches view the politics of policy implementation from the perspectives of the policy makers on the assumption that when policy implementers comply with the authoritative decisions then the policy will be effectively implemented (Imamura, 2015). This means that they define policy implementation in terms of the relationship between what is happening on the ground and the policy laid down on paper. Pressman and Wildavsky argue that how a policy is implemented will always determine its outcome. They explain that for a policy to be successfully implemented, the goals set must be in harmony with the actions that are directed towards achieving the set goals. Therefore, policy implementation is key to the policymaking process. Therefore, the research tasks for scholars who are adhering to the top-down approach is to identify obstacles that limit the perfect implementation of a policy (Hood, cited in Imamura, 2015).

First, the top-down approach policy implementation is a process that begins with a clear statement from the policymaker who states his or her intentions and it proceeds

downwards and becomes more specific and defines what is expected from each implementer (Shimanda, 2010). At the bottom, one states as clearly as possible what a satisfactory outcome would be and is measured in terms of the original statement of intent. This shows that the policymaking process should be as transparent as possible. With this theory, this study sought to understand if the adolescent mothers clearly understand the roles and the goals of the re-admission policy. For the re-admission policy to be fully implemented then awareness of the policy is important. The young mothers are supposed to understand the policy and its provisions. Using this theory, the researcher was in a position to find out if there is adequate awareness of the re-admission policy.

Secondly, another feature of the top-down approach is that in the top-down approach, different conditions and factors influence policy implementation and there is no one size that can fit all policy (Payne, 2008). Therefore, this means that it will be incorrect to look for general solutions and not looking at the particular context as it can lead to incoherent implementation efforts. This study will be based in an urban slum area. The living conditions that the adolescent mothers go through in the slums are quite different compared to the conditions in the formal settlements. This feature will be useful in this study as the researcher will be trying to seek an understanding of how the adolescent mothers experience the re-admission policy in an urban slum area. Re-admission policy implementation in an urban slum environment is quite different from the policy implementation in the formal settlements. This, therefore, will be useful when critically examining how the re-admission policy is being implemented in the informal settlements as the students in the informal settlements face peculiar challenges as compared to their counterparts in the formal areas.

Thirdly, this model proved significant in trying to establish if the secondary school principals have put up support structures that will enable the adolescent mothers to fit comfortably in school once they are re-admitted. The top-down approach points out that for effective implementation of a policy, there should be resources put in place to assist in the implementation of the policy. This will be significant to the study as the study seeks to find out what social support mechanisms have been put in place by the secondary school principals in order to ensure that the re-admission policy is fully implemented.

The top-down approach has faced various criticisms and one of them is by Berman (cited in Immamura, 2015) who stated that the top-down approach looks at the implementation process as being purely administrative and tries to ignore the political aspects or tries to eliminate them. The approach does not acknowledge that the local policy implementers are the experts and have true knowledge of the challenges making them in a better position to propose purposeful policy. It also does not acknowledge that the reality of policy modification or distortion lies in the hands of the implementers. They do not put into consideration the fact that policymakers control the process that affects the implementation of the policy.

This theory, explains how the MoE re-admission policy is being implemented in an urban slum settlement as it seeks to understand the awareness level about the re-admission policy among adolescent mothers, the social support systems put in place by the secondary school principals, the experiences of the adolescent mothers in regard to the re-admission policy and finally how the re-admission policy could be improved in order to benefit the adolescent mothers.

1.13 Conceptual Framework

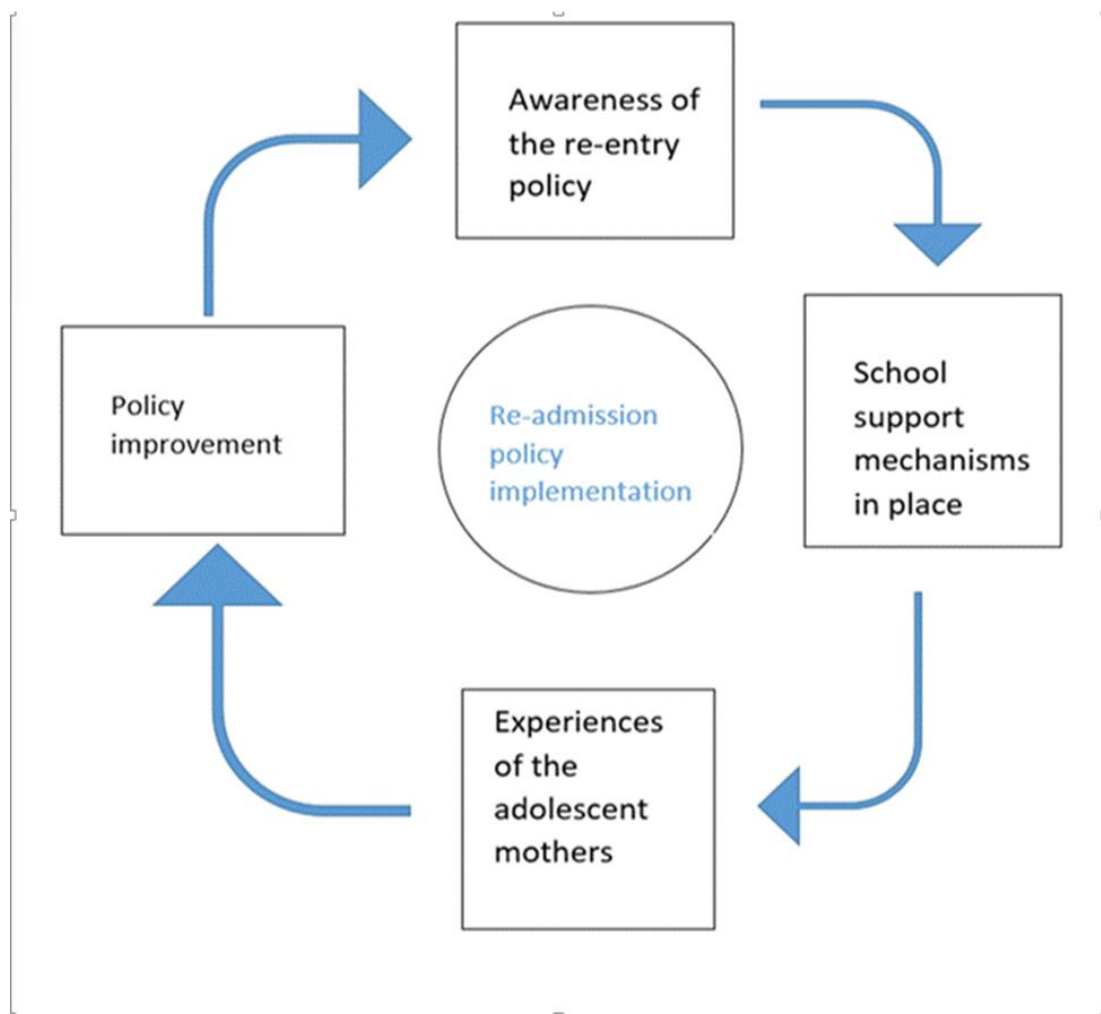


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

For any policy to be fully effective, it has to be implemented. The re-admission policy is no different. The key stakeholders have to be aware of the policy for them to implement it and those who the policy is intended to benefit must always be aware of the policy and its provisions. If the secondary schools' principals and the teachers are aware of the policy but the adolescent girls are not aware of the policy, it may hinder its implementation as the girls may not come back to school after delivery. This is in line with a study conducted by Wekesa (2014) which established that despite the policy being in place for more than twenty years, education stakeholders are not aware of the provisions of the re-admission policy. A study by Kessio and Mwenje (2015) found out

that most principals did not talk openly about the re-admission policy to their students as it was seen as a way of encouraging premature sexual behavior and that if the adolescent mothers came back to school, they were re-admitted silently. This portrays that students are not informed about the re-admission policy and if anyone of them gets pregnant, they are left to discover the policy on their own as it is not openly talked about. Awareness of the policy is therefore key since a lack of awareness hinders its implementation.

Support from the school is also key to the implementation of the policy. Studies by Mutua et al. (2018) show that the lack of support from the principals and the board of management has crippled the implementation of the policy. This is because the policy implementation largely relies on them as they are the ones who are in contact with the affected girls. The same studies which were conducted in Narok County exposed that most school administrators prefer to say that there are no vacancies in their schools in a bid to avoid readmitting teenage mothers. Support from the school administration is very important as it will decide whether the affected girls will stay in school or drop out. The adolescent mothers need guidance as balancing motherhood and education might be a very difficult task. Without being mentored they may fail to complete their studies. Adolescent mothers also face discrimination from their fellow students who make them feel isolated, make hurtful comments and this may lead to low self-esteem. Therefore, social support in the school environment is key to the implementation of the re-admission policy.

The experiences of how the adolescent mothers in regard to the implementation of the re-admission policy is important. This is because it is the basis upon which the researcher will determine if the policy has been well implemented or not. The adolescent mothers will be required to give a narration of how they have experienced

the policy in school. If the policy is not well implemented, more and more girls will continue to drop out of school. This will greatly affect the livelihood and that of their children. They will also not be in a position to reap the economic benefits that come with education.

1.14 Operation Definition of Terms

Adolescent mothers: Adolescent mothers refer to young girls who are still in their adolescent years. Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally starts when the girls are between 11-18 years (WHO, 2015). In this study, it is used interchangeably with young mothers referring to young girls below the age of 18 with babies.

Awareness: The state of being conscious; cognizant or informed alert of something (Gafoor, 2012). In this study, it refers to being conscious and knowledgeable about the MoE re-admission policy.

Experiences: Refers to the state, act or process of directly perceiving events or reality Glaveanu and Beghetto (2021). In this study, it refers to how the adolescent mothers have lived through the re-admission policy.

Exploring: Refers to discussing a subject in detail (Boyd, 2000). In this study, exploring refers to investigating out how the re-admission policy is implemented in the urban slum areas.

Re-admission Policy: This is a policy by the MoE to ensure that girls who get pregnant in school continue with their studies. Such students are allowed to break their studies temporarily to give birth (Mbugua, 2013). In this study, it refers to a policy that allows adolescent mothers to return to school after delivery to complete their education despite their status.

School support: Refers to a wide variety of instructional methods, educational services, or school resources provided to students in the effort to help them fast-track their learning progress (Education Reform, 2013). In this study it refers to the resources provided to the adolescent mothers by the school administration in an effort to enable them fit in the school environment and complete their education.

Slums: Is a highly populated urban residential area consisting of many closely packed housing units which are in a deteriorating situation or incomplete infrastructure primarily inhabited by impoverished persons (UN-Habitat, 2007). In this study, it is used interchangeably with an informal settlement to refer to an urban settlement that is characterized by many packed houses that have poor housing conditions, poor sanitation and insufficient access to safe water.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter covers literature review on the implementation of the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers. Emphasis has been put on the areas that have been considered significant to an accurate exploration of the problem of the study. This section deals with general literature about status of girls' education in slums across the world, re-admission policy in secondary schools, how support from the school environment affect the re-admission policy implementation, effects of COVID 19 pandemic on adolescent pregnancy, influence of parental support on the implementation of the re-admission policy, guidance and counselling in secondary schools and lastly, challenges of the re-admission policy.

2.2 Situation of Girls' Education in Slum Areas

Education is key in the development of any country as it leads to the social and economic emancipation of its citizens (UNESCO, 2010). Research evidence shows that countries that have invested in the education of its citizens are much further developed as compared to countries that have not done much in investing in education. This is because education enables people to make informed choices and it also provides them with greater opportunities, in turn, it alleviates poverty and diseases and gives people the strength to voice their respective positions (World Bank, 2004). Education is therefore key for developments to take place in any nation or country around the globe. As far as education is important, educating girls has an additional benefit in fast-tracking the development of any country. Girls' education is portrayed as a venture in human capital and that it leads to even greater economic growth and increases human development (King and Withrop, 2015). This is in agreement with Maluwa-Banda

(2004) who said that girls' education is an investment that serves as a way to achieve education for all children. This is to mean that once a woman is educated, the benefits of education not only benefits the woman but society as a whole. However, as much as girls continue to be critical in demographics for social change and global development agendas, they still represent a large and underserved population in developing countries (Warner et al., 2012).

Research conducted by UNICEF (2012) found out that more than half of the world's population reside in towns and cities, more than one billion of whom are children. Cities and towns have been portrayed to be a place of freedom and emancipation for women away from the male-dominated rural settings but it is a very difficult place for women to live and more especially those who reside in informal areas (UNICEF, 2012). The same research also exposed that getting an education is the greatest challenge faced by women and girls in the informal settlements. In the same vein, studies by Abuya, Onsomu and Moore (2018) established that girls from marginalized areas such as the informal settlements still suffer when trying to get an education. This is attributed to the challenges that these girls face which are unique as compared to their counterparts in the formal settlements. These girls in the informal settlements are more likely to be initiated in pre-mature sexual relations three years earlier as compared to their non-slum counterparts (Kabiru et al., 2012). This greatly interferes with their schooling as most of them end up dropping out of school as a result of getting pregnant due to early initiation to sexual activities. This plays a role in hindering access to education for girls.

A qualitative study conducted in Manila, the capital city of the Philippines by Unwin, Mel and Kat (2007) found out girls who live in the Smokey Mountain slums face difficulties in accessing education. Many girls dropped out of school so as not to burden their families. They were not able to afford educational materials such as pens and

accessing schooling facilities was also a challenge to them. They opted to drop out of school and get married off when they are still young. This poverty challenge translated to low academic achievements among the girls which consequently leads to a circle of poverty as most of the young mothers did not have the financial ability to support their children in school.

Other studies conducted by Nayak et al. (2016) in 15 slums in India, showed that in the slum areas, most families preferred educating boys as compared to girls. The majority of the girls in the Indian slums lacked any schooling as they felt the urge to forego schooling to be able to help a round in taking care of the family. This makes the gender imbalance quite pronounced in the informal settlements because of the belief that it is beneficial to have boys being educated because the family may reap the benefits in future as compared to girls who will later be married off and result in another family benefiting from the girls' education. This indicates that in informal settlements, girls are required to go the extra mile to be able to get an education which in most cases it will be at the mercy of their parents. The gender imbalance forces girls to drop out of school in large numbers as compared to boys who are given a higher priority in getting an education.

In sub-Saharan Africa, according to a study conducted by FAWA Uganda (2011) girls in informal settlements lack necessities such as sanitary towels. This exposes the girls to the risk of adolescent pregnancy as the girls sometimes end up exchanging sex for money to be able to buy such items. This transactional sexual behavior is often inter-generational where the men are way older compared to the young girls. These kinds of relationships often don't progress once the girls get pregnant, making most of them end up as single mothers while still very young and their education comes to a halt. This corresponds to a study by Gyan (2013) in Chorkor, an informal settlement in Accra, the

capital city of Ghana who postulates that most girls have their education curtailed due to lack of basic necessities needed by girls such as women hygiene products. If the concerned institutions would take up the task of providing for the needs of these young girls, the rate of girls dropping out of school due to adolescent pregnancy might decrease.

On top of that, poor parenting is also a major hindrance to accessing education for girls in the informal settlements. A study conducted in Chorkor by Gyan (2013) alludes that most parents are absent from their daughters' lives. They are more inclined to making ends meet and as a result, they are hardly interested in their daughters' education. This makes many girls not look up to their parents to support their education and therefore seek advice from their peers who are undergoing the same situation as them. As a result, most of the girls get introduced to perilous behaviors such as prostitution and drug abuse. This impacts heavily on their education which is abandoned altogether.

In Kenya, the enrollment of pupils in primary schools has increased due to the introduction of free primary education. The number of girls enrolled in primary school rose but notwithstanding these achievements, girls who live in the slums continue to face several obstacles in terms of education (Lloyd, 2005). Of the many students who sit for their KCPE only 48% of them make it to secondary schools and even few who graduate from secondary schools are girls. These girls who drop out of school are often married off. This was established by studies which were conducted by Mugisha (2006) which discovered that school enrollment in the slum areas decline as the girls get older. This is attributed to the many challenges that they face in the slums as compared to other girls who do not live in the slum areas. Children who live in the slums are introduced to work at a very tender age and are seen as adults and have to contribute in providing income for the family. Quantitative studies that were carried out in

Korogocho slums in Nairobi by Jones et al. (2015) revealed that most girls had to drop out of school because once they reached puberty they were seen as adults who were capable of providing for the family. The girls were forced to balance between their school work and doing manual labor in order to be able to bring something to the table. As a result, most of them drop out of school as they get overwhelmed balancing the two. Due to the fact that most of them drop out of school before they complete their secondary school education, they end up as manual laborers who get very little income. This not only affects them but their next generations.

Also, most of the girls in the slum areas come from violent homes which are characterized by domestic and gender based violence (Abuya, 2010). He further explains that as the girls grow older and reach their adolescent years, they face more challenges as compared to when they were younger. Majority of the girls in the slums are sexually harassed when going to or from schools and as a measure to counter the challenge, most of them walk in groups when going to the bus stops. This violence projected towards the school going girls make them lose interest in learning and education attainment (Abuya, 2010). This is line with studies conducted by Brouder and Sweetman (2015) that shows that girls who live in the deprived conditions of the informal settlements are at a greater risk of gender-based violence. This plays a role in hindering access to education for girls as most of them become discouraged and seek solace from other places which in many instances makes them stray from getting an education.

It is prudent to note that girls' education in the slum continues to be a challenge due to the high level of poverty witnessed in the slum areas (Gender and Adolescence Global Evidence, 2017). In most cases the girls end up as victims of early pregnancy. The re-admission policy is a mechanism of addressing the high rate of school dropout due to

pregnancy related issues seems not to be yielding much fruits especially this context. It is therefore essential to focus on how the policy is implemented in order to find out where the challenges are and how they can be addressed.

2.3 Re-admission Policy in Secondary Schools

For any policy to be fully implemented, people who are mandated to implement the policy must be fully aware of the policy and its provisions as lack of full comprehension of the policy by the implementers may lead to a sloppy implementation of the policy. This concept of implementation helps to draw the attention of policy makers and implementers to study the processes that influence and establish the outcome of public policy (Bempah, 2012). The re-admission to school policy is not different. The education stakeholders' right from the ministry of education officials, principals and the board of management members, teachers, students, and their parents have to be aware of the policy for it to be effectively implemented. Byahan et al. (2010) articulates that any policy that results in new programs, services or operational guidelines have to be circulated so that it is well understood by the people who are implementing them.

In Canada, the Sexual Discrimination Act was established in 1984 and there are legal obligations attached to it. Guidelines on how to handle the affected girls are spelt out and the school principals and teachers are required to clearly understand the policy, failure to which they may be prosecuted in a court of law (Boulden, 2001). This has positively influenced the implementation of the policy as seen by the number of girls who go back to school after having their babies as school principals who may refuse to readmit the young mothers may find themselves on the wrong side of the law. In Australia, the responsibilities of all education stakeholders are stipulated by the law. All main stakeholders from the principals, teachers, students, counsellors, pregnant, and parenting students know what is required of them. In this case, the implementation of

the re-admission to school policy is smooth as each one knows which role to play. This, in turn, leads to increased number retention and readmission hence the girls can continue with their education to the highest level possible.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the re-admission to school policy received a variety of reactions both from the education stakeholders and the community at large. The community members looked down upon pregnant school girls as they seemed to have defied the society's norm and got pregnant while still in school. This is because pregnancy was viewed as a female job and in most cases the fathers of the babies were hardly held accountable (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, cited in Mutua et al., 2019). The community advocated for the girls to be severely punished so as other students should not emulate them. This conservative nature of the Africans considered it a taboo to allow girls to get pregnant and worse introducing policies that promote it (Chiweshe, cited in Sithole et al., 2013). This in turn made many parents shun away from taking their children back to school after getting pregnant and instead married them off. Research conducted by Abuya and Benta (2010) indicate that pregnancy among adolescents is a product of many factors, chief among them being poverty. They explain that many girls engage in transactional sex to be able to afford basic items. This makes them victims of adolescent pregnancy. The community however, seem to "forget" that these girls engaged in premature sexual activities not because they wanted to but circumstances forced them to engage in it.

A study conducted in Zambia by Mwanza (2018) found out that few parents and students were aware of the re-admission policy. The majority of the interviewed students said that they have never heard about the policy and those whose parents knew about the policy, they were not familiar with the procedures required to re-enter schooling. There was also finger-pointing between the school and the parents on

sensitization about the policy that was to be done. This shows that there are still information gaps yet to be filled for the adolescent mothers to fully utilize the re-admission policy. In Zambia however, after a lot of campaigns on the re-admission policy, there was a change in attitude toward the policy that resulted in increased enrolment of the teenage mothers (Ochieng, 2014). These increased awareness levels of the re-admission policy saw reduced education wastage by total withdrawal from the school system. In Botswana, ECAW influenced how the government policy related to teenage pregnancy. They made efforts to create awareness to the public about the re-admission policy and discussed the welfare of affected girls (FAWE, 2005). This creation of awareness helps the education officers, parents, students and the community at large to understand and better implement the readmission policy. In Uganda, majority of the girls' education was curtailed due to adolescent pregnancy. However, due to unclear national policy on the re-admission to school policy, most students were not aware of the policy and did not return to school after giving birth. As the discretion of the readmission procedure was solely left to the school principals, most students who were expelled never went back to school and could not legally do anything about it as the law was unclear.

Concerning Kenya, it was established by a study conducted by Macharia and Kessio (2015) that the majority of the students who were surveyed in the study were not aware of the re-admission policy. This is because most principals did not openly talk about the re-admission policy and preferred to admit the affected students privately. Talking openly about the policy was seen as a means of promoting pre-mature sexual relations among the students. This means few girls in secondary schools are aware of the re-admission policy and only a few of them make use of the policy. Mutua et al. (2019) report that in selected schools in Narok County, few education stakeholders had heard

about the re-admission policy and none of the sampled schools had a copy of the re-admission policy. This creates a divide in the implementation of the policy leading to inconsistencies in terms of accountability and its implementation. The government, therefore, cannot hold the principals accountable if they fail to implement the re-admission policy as they have not been provided with the policy and the policy guidelines.

A study by Mbugua (2013) found out that most of the teachers had heard about the re-admission policy. All the principals had heard about the re-admission policy but none of them had seen the circular with the guidelines. Research has established that the actual level of teachers' awareness and attitude towards the adolescent mothers and re-admission did influence the implementation of the policy (FAWE, 2004).

From the above discussion, it is evident that the policy awareness is a great challenge that hinders the implementation of the re-admission policy. Mwenje and Kessio (2015) report that many adolescent mothers who are out are not aware of the policy. Sensitization of the re-admission policy should be done using various strategies such as media campaigns, chief *baraza's* and also by the schools administration. This will enable the affected students, parents and the larger community understand issues of premature sexual activities, adolescent pregnancy and school re-entry.

2.4 Support from the School Administration on the Re-admission of Adolescent Mothers

The re-admission policy in most countries around the world advocates that adolescent mothers should return to school after giving birth or after the completion of their maternity leave. However, this is not the case as there are some factors such as support in the school environment that hinders them from being comfortable with continuing

with their studies in school (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). In this study, school support mechanisms refer to the resources provided to the adolescent mothers by the school administration in an effort to enable them fit in the school environment and complete their education. The re-admission policy in Kenya suggests several school support mechanisms that should be put in place to ensure that the adolescent mothers fit in school when they get re-admitted. According to Centre for the Study of Adolescence (cited in Mutua et al., 2019), the policy provides that the adolescent mothers be re-admitted to school unconditionally regardless of their social or ethnic background. This is to ensure that the adolescent mothers are not discriminated against as they seek re-admission. The policy also suggests that adolescent mothers and their parents be counseled once the school finds out that the girl is pregnant. The adolescent mothers are to be sensitized on the dangers of premature sexual intercourse and the parents are to be advised on how to handle their daughters now that they are expectant.

A report from the Ministry of Education in Canada (1998) revealed that school administrators were not comfortable with the idea of having mothers in school. They felt they were setting a bad example to other students who might follow their path. Similarly, a study conducted in Australia by Boulden (2001) exposed that some teachers championed for the pregnant girls to be expelled from school as they thought that they were giving the school a negative image and as such failed to encourage the adolescent mothers who came back to school after giving birth. The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (2004) established that in the USA, adolescent mothers opted to drop out of school as they were seen as a bad influence on other students. This confirms that there is little support given to pregnant mothers still in school and the adolescent mothers who are keen on going back to continue with their education.

In sub-Saharan Africa, most of the girls who re-enter schooling have reported that they do not feel welcomed in the school environment. Research conducted by Ncube and Mudau (2016) reported that school principals in Zambia felt that the policy was not important to the school as it only favors the adolescent mothers, besides, they felt that when the girls who were pregnant returned to school, they negatively influenced other girls. This is in agreement with studies conducted by Olunike (2012) which found out that lack of support from their teachers and the school administration, often hindered young mothers from continuing with their studies as some educators considered pregnant and mothering adolescents as private problems which did not concern them as alluded by Chigona and Chetty (2008). The girls interviewed in the study reported that they were treated differently once they returned to school after delivery. They were often viewed as aliens, odd figures and are ostracized, despised and ill-treated by other students. This perception of the girls by the teacher and students negatively impacted other students who are pregnant and are waiting to go for their maternity leaves. This openly discriminates against them and being adolescents whose esteem is very fragile, they may decide to drop out of school altogether. In the same study, teachers who were interviewed explained that they could not focus on the emotional well-being of the young mothers since the training that they got in their pre-service did not equip them in handling the new responsibilities of taking care of the nursing mothers and the pregnant school girls. These new responsibilities to the teachers and the school administration strain them and since it was not well documented in the policy guidelines it hinders the implementation of the policy.

A study by Shefer, Bhana and Morrell (2013), found out that most girls lack individual support. The school principals and the teachers who were interviewed in the qualitative study described the young mothers as women who have no morals. They believed that

these girls lacked morals and that the re-admission policy is just a government policy that is diffusing the shame and making it acceptable to society, hence undermining morals. With such perceptions from teachers who are supposed to be the guardians of the adolescent mothers in school then it makes it difficult for the young mothers to approach them for help. In the same studies, adolescent mothers explained that sometimes the teachers use them as examples by making shameful comments which end up with them being the laughing stock in class. Chigona and Chetty (2007) in a study that was conducted in South Africa, found out that adolescent mothers often encountered hurtful comments from their fellow students and the comments make them feel isolated and affected their self-esteem.

Besides, most of the teen mothers return to school without going through any counselling on how they can be prepared to deal with the stigma and issues around parenting and meeting the demands of the new roles as students who are parents (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). This is because most schools lack professional counselors who can act as advocates of the teenage mothers and negotiate with the school administration on their behalf (Pillow, 2004). The outcome is that the adolescent mothers drop out of school as they fail to cope with the situation in school. This shows that there is an evident disagreement, between national policy script and how the policy is being implemented in the schools.

Regarding Nigeria, adolescent mothers often faced prejudice in the school environment and most of them opted out of school as they could not endure the humiliation that came with being a mother in class (Onyeka et al., 2011). They allude that pregnant students and adolescent mothers were mocked and bullied by their fellow students. This made the adolescent mothers and pregnant learners keep to themselves and shy off from participating in class activities such as group discussions (Chigona and Chetty, 2007).

To a greater extent, this affects their studies as the interaction between the young mothers and their colleagues is essential (Mcambi, 2008). This means that once the girls have decided to go back to school, they have to endure the humiliation that comes with being a mother and a student. A learning environment which accommodates both pregnant and young mothers is essential for the continuation of schooling by the affected girls. There is a need for the teachers to sensitize other learners in the school on the importance of accepting and accommodating young mothers in school.

The situation in Kenya is not different as reported by Omondi et al. (2008) who found out that some of the secondary school principals are reported to fear admitting young mothers in their schools because of the stigma associated with having mothers in the learning environment. This is because the schools that enrolled young mothers were often referred to as maternity schools. The young mothers could only be admitted if they were good in academics or extracurricular activities. Those who were neither good in academics or extracurricular activities were deprived the right to education (Mutua et al., 2019). This causes embarrassment to adolescent mothers and openly discriminates against them. This is in line with a study conducted by Barmao et al. (2015) which argues that the willingness of the school administrators to accommodate young mothers is a primary consideration for support. They argue that if the school environment prioritizes the needs of adolescent mothers then the young mothers will have an opportunity to pursue their studies. Discrimination makes them feel unaccepted in the school environment and influences the implementation of the re-admission policy. A study conducted by Shaningwa (cited in Karimi, 2015) revealed that teachers in secondary schools in the Coastal regions often view the young mothers as adults who are not supposed to be in the classrooms. Instead of being part of their support system, they are the ones who despise them. They consider the young mothers' situation as none

of their responsibilities. The same study also revealed that when the adolescent mothers returned to school they were intimidated by other learners who called them names and made humiliating comments about them. This made the adolescent mothers stop attending school or look for an alternative school where little is known about them.

Since the young mothers are at a very critical point in their lives as they try to balance school and motherhood, a good support system will go a long way in helping them achieve their educational goals while discrimination and lack of support within the school environment can be detrimental to their education (Maluli and Bali, 2004) which in turn poses a danger in their education attainments due to the shortfalls in the implementation of the re-admission policy.

2.5 Effects of COVID-19 pandemic on Adolescent pregnancy

Corona virus (COVID 19) is a disease that affects the human respiratory system. It was first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan city in China. Due to the spread of corona virus infection across the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a pandemic in March 11, 2020. Data from Worldometer (2020) on July 8th 2020, indicated that approximately 12 million people had contracted COVID 19 and of those who were infected, 6,953,556 had recovered while approximately 548,207 had succumbed to COVID-19 related complications. Currently, the *Corona Virus* is present in all African countries (UN, 2020). In Kenya, the Ministry of Health reported the first case of COVID 19 in 13th March 2020. The numbers of infections have been rising steadily and more especially in the month of November (MoH, 2020).

As a result of the rising numbers of infections and deaths as a result of COVID 19 complications, governments around the world have put up measures to curb the disease. Such measures include lock down of cities, schools, places of worship and none

essential industries. In sub-Saharan Africa, as much as the rate of COVID-19 infections is low as compared to other parts of the world, governments in sub-Saharan Africa have imposed lockdowns and restricted gathering of people in a bid curb the spread of COVID 19 (Mahuku et al., 2020).

According to UNESCO approximately 89% of the students around the world have been forced to be out of school due to the pandemic. UNESCO further estimates that about 90% of students all over the world affected by the closure of schools due to the pandemic. 191 nations have closed schools and approximately 740 million girls were out of school by the end of March 2020 (Plan International, 2020). Based on data from the Ebola Pandemic, it is estimated that 10 million secondary school-aged girls will be out of school as a result of the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (Malala Fund, 2020). A study by Plan International found out that in times of crisis, women and girls often find themselves in great risk due to the closure of schools. They are exposed to gender based violence, adolescent pregnancies and early marriages (Plan International, 2019). This can be seen in Sierra Leone where the rate of teenage pregnancies increased to 65% during the Ebola pandemic (Naylor and Gorgen, 2020). The adolescent pregnancies were attributed to transactional sex, sexual violence and sexual exploitation. According to the United Nations (2020) there is evidence that COVID19 will have a similar effect as Ebola pandemic had on women and girls.

In Kenya, as the numbers of COVID 19 cases continue to soar and the schools remaining closed, girls face myriad challenges such as sexual violence related to family confinement, isolation which has resulted to poverty (Kiptoo- Tarus, 2020). She further alludes that this will lead to an increase in gender gaps in education and lead to sexual exploitations, defilement, early pregnancy and forced marriages. Statistics from the Kenya Health Information System Survey, (2020) revealed that approximately 3,964

adolescent girls were reported to be pregnant that the number of pregnant adolescents in Machakos County in period of 4 months has ballooned after the schools were closed in order to curb the virus (Opali, 2020). During the curfew hours, there have been reports of increased sexual violence among adolescent girls especially those living in informal settlements and many of these girls reported to have been sexually abused when going to the toilets as the toilets are mostly located outside their houses and many of them suffer in silence (Kiptoo- Tarus, 2020).

While the government of Kenya deliberates to re-opening schools in January 2021, measures have to be put in place to ensure those girls who got pregnant as a result of being confined at home are given a chance to go back to school. This means that the public should be informed of the re-admission policy so as to enable the affected girls able to go back to school

2.6 Influence of parental support in the implementation of the re-admission policy

One of the main reasons why adolescent mothers drop out of school is due to lack of parental support. Once the parents find out that their daughter is pregnant they tend to detach themselves from her as a means of punishing her (Omwancha, 2012). Parents wield more power than any education stakeholder in the implementation of the re-admission policy (Mutua et al., 2019). This is in line with earlier studies conducted by Muganda and Omondi (2005) which established that if the parents do not push the adolescent mothers to resume their studies, they were not likely to go back to school and continue with their studies.

Research conducted by Mimmie et al. (2015) in Australia found out that adolescent mothers found the task of motherhood being demanding. Most of the adolescent mothers who were interviewed said that they got little or no support from home. This

made most of them torn between going back to school and being full time mothers to be able to provide for their children. The situation was even worse when the adolescent mothers were orphans as they were left to take care of the children on their own. When girls get support from their parents, they are more likely to go back to school as compared to those who do not get any support from their parents.

Stigmatization of the adolescent mothers by their parents often leads to them dropping out of school. Twenge (2002) says that close members are often the first people to stigmatize young mothers. They are seen as outcasts and some of the girls who get pregnant have also been compelled to leave their maternal homes to preserve the reputation of the family (Center of Reproductive Rights, 2003). Similarly, studies conducted by Olunike (2012) in Nigeria found out that stigma from parents hinders adolescent mothers from continuing with their education. Once the girls are discriminated against, they are less likely to continue with their education and more likely to lead a poor life. This not only affects them but also their children.

The re-admission policy in Kenya advocates that the parents should be counseled once they find out that their daughter is expectant. However, this is not the case on the ground as reported by Mutua et al. (2019), it was found out that the parents were summoned to school to be informed about the pregnancy but were never given any psychological support yet it is provided for in the policy. This hinders the parents from forgiving their daughters and creates a barrier between the parents and the adolescent mothers which in turn hinders the implementation of the re-admission policy as the adolescent mothers will most likely drop out of school.

Also, African societies are largely patriarchal. This means that the father makes most of the decisions in the household. This, at a large percentage, hinders the

implementation of the policy when it comes to deciding if the young mothers will return to school after giving birth. Research by Karimi (2015) posit that the education of adolescent mothers depended on the parents and more especially the father. If the father wants to marry off the daughter he may use the pregnancy to justify his motives.

Poverty is also a major obstacle when it comes to the parental support that adolescent mothers get from home for them to return to school. For an adolescent mother to return to school, someone has to take care of the baby. This means that the parents have to employ a house help to help take care of the baby or one of the parents has to stay at home to mind the baby when the young mother is in school. This translates to more money and resources have to be used to ensure that the young mother can continue with her education. According to Birungi et al. (2015) education attainments of the adolescent mothers are greatly affected by limited financial resources and overwhelming childcare, this is an area where parents play a very crucial role. In the same vein, studies by Sulo et al. (2014) posit that parents' socioeconomic status was reportedly inclined towards marrying off their daughters. Therefore, parental support is key in the implementation of the re-admission policy.

2.7 Guidance and Counselling Provision in Secondary Schools

Guidance and counselling teachers play a great role in the implementation of the re-admission policy as they act as a unifying factor that brings together the adolescent mothers and the rest of the school (Mwenje and Kessio, 2015). Therefore it is prudent to establish, strengthen and empower the guidance and counseling departments in the schools and to staff them adequately. Chigona and Chetty (2008) allude that it is very important for school principals and teachers to be taken for in-service training during their duration as teachers and heads of schools. It is vital for them to be constantly informed about the problems that the teenagers are facing and how the teachers can

handle these problems. In the implementation of the re-admission policy, the knowledge of these problems that the teenagers are facing is key in the implementation of the re-admission policy as the teachers will be more equipped on what to anticipate and how to handle what comes on their way.

Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) assert that for a policy to be implemented effectively, there should be enough resources to implement it. Lack of enough resources leads to improper implementation of a policy. One of the recommendations of the 1994 re-admission policy is that both the parents and the adolescent mothers should be counseled once the school administration knows about the pregnancy. Muthshaeni et al. (2015) argue that pregnant learners should be made aware that not everyone in the school environment will react positively to their situation hence a dire need to counsel the pregnant students and the adolescent mothers.

Research findings by Mwenje and Kessio (2015) disclose that the ministry of education does not employ teachers who are specifically meant for guidance and counselling. The teachers are overburdened by other responsibilities in their teaching subjects leaving them with very little time to guide and counsel other students. This results in parents and adolescent mothers not receiving any help from the teachers. In the same vein Earle, cited in Barmao (2020), stated that pregnant and adolescent mothers are still invisible in schools and that the school administration encourages these students to quietly exit from school. She further alludes that it is very important to have someone within the school who will be an advocate of the student-mothers and will ensure that the school policies do not hinder the educational attainments of the adolescent mothers.

There is need of making the policy more inclusive by including the views of the guidance and counselling teachers, adolescent mothers and their parents so as to come up with policies that caters for the needs of everyone. The ministry of education is then required to employ guidance and counselling professionals who will be tasked with the responsibility of helping the adolescent mothers fit in the school environment.

2.8 Challenges with the Re-Admission Policy and its Implementation

The re-admission policy has aided in making strides in the education attainment for girls. Many girls who got pregnant while still in school have had their education salvaged due to the presence of the re-admission policy. However, even with the re-admission policy being in place in many countries in Africa, there are many challenges that come with the implementation of the re-admission policy (Onyango et al., 2015). There are still some sections of the re-admission policy that needs to be polished for the re-admission policy to be fully implemented (Omwancha, 2012).

Poverty and financial constraints have also been seen as a major hindrance towards educational attainment by the adolescent mothers (Mutua et al., 2019). He found out that as much as many young mothers were willing to go back to school, they did not have the financial means to do that. This is in agreement with studies by Omwancha (2012) who explained that there are serious financial constraints of being a parent and a student at the same time. Mwenje and Kessio (2015) asserts that as much as the government shows its support through budget allocation, the principals who were interviewed in the studies exposed that there were no budgetary allocations to support the young mothers who re-entered school. The free secondary school education funds did not also fully cover the fees that the students were required to pay hence many adolescent mothers still dropped out of school. This means that for the re-admission policy to be fully implemented, the government should set aside funds that will assist

the young mothers to advance with their education. This will help in ensuring the young mothers do not drop out of school due to financial constraints.

In addition, there should also be mechanisms put in place to monitor the re-admission policy. Muganda-Onyando and Omondi (2008) exposed that there are no monitoring mechanisms on the re-admission policy in Kenya. Monitoring acts as a blue-print upon which the success or failure of the policy will be measured. This shows that there is no clear way that the government knows if the policy is a success or a failure. The lack of monitoring mechanisms promotes gender imbalance in attaining education as the adolescent mothers will be forced to silently drop out of school without the government noticing. This will consequently lead to girls having low academic achievements as compared to boys. The government is required to come up with ways in which the policy will be monitored to ensure that it is fully implemented.

Lastly, the re-admission policy is required to benefit the adolescent mothers, they are the main beneficiaries of the policy. However, research by Omwancha (2012) found out that during the formulation and implementation of the re-admission policy, their opinions were not sought. The adolescent mothers' voices are key in successful implementation of the policy. It is vital for the government to include the opinions of the adolescent mothers when coming up with policies that affect them. When the young mothers and their parents are involved in the policy making process it will be easier to implement the policy as the public will be aware of the policy.

2.9 Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter has provided a base upon which the study was anchored. Studies on the challenges that young girls experience is an attempt to find out how education in the slum areas contribute to understanding why most girls in the slum areas drop out of

school due to adolescent pregnancies. From the literature, it is also evident that these girls encounter a myriad of challenges as they attempt to re-enter school despite having the re-admission policy in place for several decades (Karimi, 2015). The school administration handles school re-entry silently. There are deliberate efforts to silence the policy which in turn leave the sole mandate of re-admitting the affected girls with the school heads (Mutua et al., 2019). Lack of legal structure that spells out measures to be put in place once a school principals fails to admit and adolescent mother as lead to increased impunity making many adolescent mothers to be locked out of school (Mwenje and Kessio, 2015).

In addition, from the literature, most guidance and counselling departments in schools are understaffed due to the fact that government does not employ teachers who are specifically for guidance and counselling hence overburdening the existing teachers. The policy advocates for counselling for adolescent mothers and their parents, without it, some parents may not consider taking their daughters back to school. Adolescent mothers in school may also succumb to pressure and eventually drop out of school.

Lastly, many adolescent mother are seen to be willing to go back to school, however, many of them are forced to drop out of school due to the financial baggage that come with being a student-mother. The government does not offer any financial reprieve to them and the policy itself is silent on the same. There is need to empower adolescent mothers financially to enhance their stay in school.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the study research design and methodology. The first section deals with the research approach, second section deals with the philosophical paradigm on which the study will be anchored, third section deals with the methodology, fourth section deals with data generation tools, processes and data analysis and lastly, the fifth section deals with trustworthiness of the qualitative study and ethical considerations.

3.2 The Research Approach

This study used a qualitative approach. According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative approach occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of a certain phenomenon being described by the participants. This means that a qualitative approach is a holistic approach that involves discovery. Thus this approach was best seen to fit this study as the study sought to explore and understand the re-admission policy implementation in an urban slum area. It sought to understand in-depth, the support mechanisms that have been put in place by the secondary school principals in order to ensure that the adolescent mothers fit comfortably in the school environment once they are re-admitted, to find out the experiences of the adolescent mothers regarding re-admission and the re-admission policy in secondary schools in Langas Slums and to suggest ways in which the re-admission policy and its implementation can be improved in order to benefit the adolescent mothers better. Qualitative research is a social and behavioral approach in which the researcher does not interfere nor manipulates the research participants. The researcher tells the experiences of the research participants in the participants' own words.

Data collected in qualitative research is analyzed without the use of any numbers or statistics (Creswell, 2014). This is in agreement with Punch (2013) who articulates that qualitative research is non-numerical and similarly, Zohrabi (2013) concludes that qualitative research uses ‘how and why’ questions to explore a social phenomenon in a particular context. This aspect will be applicable in the study as it seeks to explore how the re-admission policy is implemented in the slum areas.

Most studies on the re-admission policy have been conducted using mixed methods such as by Barmao (2015) and by Mwenje and Kessio (2015). This study adopted a qualitative approach as it enabled the researcher to go deeper into the world of adolescent mothers and secondary school principals and formed the basis of how data will be treated from the point of collection to reporting and conclusions.

3.3 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs as to how the world is perceived which then serves as a thinking framework that guides the behavior of the researcher (Jonkes & Pennik, 2010). Creswell (2009) posits that it is important for a researcher to be clear on which research paradigm he or she will use as it will influence the research from the way of framing and understanding the social phenomenon. Dan and Dietz (2008) state that there are two major ways in which the research paradigms are distinguished, these are ontology and epistemology. They further allude to the fact that ontology refers to how one perceives reality while epistemology refers to beliefs on the way knowledge is generated, understood and used which are seen as those that are accepted and are valid.

This study is based on the interpretivist paradigm which believes that reality is socially constructed through lived experiences, it is subjective and it is also multiple as

established by Hennik, Hutter and Bailey (2011). They also indicate that interpretivist recognizes that individuals with their different backgrounds, assumptions and experiences contribute to the ongoing construction of reality. In the study, it is the anchor upon which the researcher tried to find answers to the research questions. According to Neuman (2011), in order to understand the social world and subjective meanings which are attached to it, interpretivists favor to interact with people and have a dialogue with the research participants, in this research, in-depth interviews and drawings were the preferred methods of data collection as they involve interacting with people and listening to their narratives when collecting data. In this study, the researcher used the interpretivist paradigm to uncover the insider perspective of how the re-admission policy is implemented in the slum areas.

3.4 Research Design

According to Creswell (2014) a phenomenological study is aimed at understanding human experiences and it requires the researcher to penetrate the individual's thoughts through interviews or extensive discussions. Interpretivists believe in multiple realities of their world and that reality is socially constructed and individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences with things and situations (Creswell, 2016) Due to the nature of the study, the researcher adopted a phenomenological research design. Phenomenological design describe how human beings experience a certain phenomenon. It attempts to set aside biases and preconceived assumptions about human experiences about a particular situation. The research design was considered best to inform the research methodology and in answering the research questions.

In-depth interviews and drawings were used to generate data. These data generation methods were used as they were in line with the phenomenological design.

3.5 Study Area

The study was conducted in the months of January and February 2021 in Langas slum in Eldoret. Langas slum is located in the outskirts of Eldoret town along Eldoret-Kisumu road. Eldoret town is in Uasin Gishu County which borders Trans Nzoia, Elgeyo Marakwet, Kericho, Baringo, Nandi and Bungoma (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

Langas slum falls under high density-low income areas. The slum is home to approximately 300,000 people by 2009 (KNBS, 2009) and the majority of Eldoret town residents live in Langas slum. It is characterized by poor housing which range from squatting to informal rental housing. Most families' living conditions often consist of many family members sharing single roomed houses. The neighborhood is often cut off from basic services and infrastructure such as clean water, sewerage systems, electricity and access roads. Langas slum is also a home to many urban residents who earn comparatively low income and have limited assets. Most residents earn their living by working in the informal sectors such as the *juakali* (cottage) industries, recycling solid wastes, domestic servants and security guards among others. The slum is also infamous due to the high rates of insecurity.

In Langas, just like many other slums in Kenya, the majority of the households are headed by women (CMI Report, 2015). Single parenting is a norm as most fathers are absent parents and those who still live with their families are alcoholics and are into drugs and substance abuse. This makes the mothers sole providers of their families. This means that it is challenging for mothers to provide for their families hence most families can barely have meals making poverty a norm.

Availability of proper housing is a major challenge in Langas slum. According to Ombati and Ombati (2016) most houses in Langas slums are predominantly single roomed and are built using mud and iron sheets. Families living in the houses are usually in cramped conditions. There are different types of families living in a household as some are nuclear families consisting of a father, mother and children. Some families are polygamous making wives and all the children have to share the living spaces. In other cases, the households consist of members of extended families living together which is as a result of rural-urban migration in which other family members travel to towns to look for employment and end up being hosted by their families in the slums. Living in such tiny and crowded rooms poses a challenge to adolescent girls (Kabiru et al., 2013). Due to the living conditions, girls are exposed to sexual abuse by family members (CMI Report, 2015).

Girls who live in the urban slum often find themselves constricted by the boundaries of urban poverty (Kabiru et al., 2013). Growing up in such an environment, most of these girls find themselves at a higher risk of negative social, behavioral and psychological outcomes such as engagement in pre-mature sexual activities. In most cases, due to the extreme poverty in the slums, parents often find themselves not able to provide food for their children. Similarly, a study by Ombati and Ombati (2016) in Langas slum, once the children get to the age of five they start fending for themselves. These children go to the streets of Eldoret town where they become street children and spend their days begging and rummaging the dustbins for food. By the time the girls become adolescents, they are seen as adults who can fend for themselves. This greatly affects the relationship between the adolescents and their parents and in most times the parents have no say when the girls engage in illicit behaviors.

Adolescent pregnancy is a key societal problem in urban slums such as Langas (Beguy et al., 2014). Girls in the slums often find themselves on the receiving end when it comes to dealing with the consequences of adolescent pregnancies. These pregnancies are a result of various factors such as poor living conditions that forces families to share small living spaces making it difficult for adolescent girls to have their privacy leading to early sexual initiations (Kabiru et al., 2013). Dysfunctional families have also been seen as a cause of adolescent pregnancies, most families in Langas are headed by a single mother making it difficult for them to provide fully for the families (Ombati and Ombati 2016). Girls in such families are often forced to find other survival means such as transactional sex which in most cases end up with the girls getting pregnant (Nyariri, 2018). In addition, sexual violence is a major cause of pregnancy in the slum. Adolescent girls are often exposed to sexual violence due to the high rate of crimes and drug abuse in the slum areas (CMI Report, 2015). Peer influence and exposure to explicit content is also a cause of pregnancy among adolescent girls in the slums. In order to be considered to be on par with their peers, many girls are pushed to experiment with sex at early ages and since most of them are not well informed about contraceptives, they end up with unplanned pregnancies.

Girls in Langas slums, just like others slums in Kenya face a myriad challenges when it comes to accessing education (King and Withrop, 2015). This is because decisions made in households concerning education are often gender-related as reported by Chege and Sifuna (2006) and the girls are often left out when it comes to receiving education. They also report that most parents often prefer educating boys as their education is seen as an investment to the family as compared to educating a girl who once they get married, another family benefits from the acquired education. African communities are highly patriarchal and once the father makes a decision concerning girls' education, no

one in the family can contest it (Karimi, 2015). This makes many girls miss out on education opportunities. The high rates of poverty force girls from the informal settlements to leave school and work as domestic workers for richer families so that their parents can receive payments for their services. These girls are drawn out of schools against their wishes. This creates gender imbalance where boys are seen to be favored in getting an education compared to girls.

This area was selected for this study because the students in this area encounter unique challenges in a bid to find education as compared to their counterparts in more formal settlements. The setting also deemed ideal for the study since it is the largest informal settlement in Eldoret hence there is a significant population of adolescent mothers living in the area. The participants in this study are secondary schools principals and adolescent mothers.

3.6 Target Population

The target population is the total group of individuals from which the sample might be drawn who have similar characteristics that the study demands (McLeod, 2019). The target population for this study were secondary schools principals in Langas slum and adolescent mothers attending secondary schools in Langas slum.

3.7 Sampling Techniques and Study Sample

In qualitative research, sampling is designed to either gain in-depth knowledge about a situation and to know in-depth about different aspects of an individual on the assumption that the individual will provide insight into the phenomenon (Kumar, 2011). The study employed purposive and snowball sampling.

In qualitative research, the researcher does not have a pre-determined sample size, however, during data collection the researcher has to wait until he or she reaches the

point of data saturation (Walker, 2012). The research participants chosen for the research must be rich in information so that they can provide the researcher with the information that will be useful to the researcher (Patton, 2015).

Purposive sampling allows the researchers to use cases that have the required information concerning the study's objectives. In this case, the researcher specified the criteria for selecting a particular sampling case. The researcher's judgment is a key element required in selecting the research participants. Secondary school principals were selected on the basis that they are principals in schools that are located in Langas and are accessible to students from Langas slum with the assumptions that they are aware of the re-admission policy and how it was being implemented in their schools.

This study focused on 5 sub-county schools that were accessible to students from Langas slum. To get this population, the researcher visited the County Director of Education offices in Uasin Gishu County and requested for a list of schools in Wareng sub-County from which the researcher purposively selected schools that are located in Langas Ward and had the highest number of adolescent mothers who were back in school.

Snowball sampling refers to a sampling technique in which the researcher purposively selects initial research participants, the selected participant will then lead the researcher to others who they know and have the required characteristics (Creswell, 2012) which in this case will be adolescent mothers who have returned to school. In this study, snowball sampling was used in identifying adolescent mothers who have returned to school after giving birth. Snow ball technique was used due to the stigma associated with being an adolescent mother hence the population was hidden.

3.8 Data Generation Techniques

Kabir (2018) defined data collection as the process of collecting information from the research participants. The process of data collection should be systematic, in a way that will enable the researcher to provide answers for the stated research questions and also be able to evaluate the outcomes. In this study, the researcher used a variety of data generation tools such as individual open-ended interviews and drawings. The researcher used English language when conducting the interviews. However, she also used Swahili when collecting data from the adolescent mothers.

3.8.1 Interviews

An interview is a form of data collection method in which the researcher asks the research participants questions related to the study and in turn, gets answers from the research participants (Kabir, 2018). Qualitative studies majorly employ interviews as a method of data collection. According to Bevan (2014), phenomenological research relies on interviews that are open ended and semi-structured in nature. These types of interviews are used so as to give room for the research participants to explain themselves extensively and at their own pace making the researcher to be able to delve into the phenomenon deeply. Barbour and Schostak (cited in Dejonckheere and Vaugh, 2019) indicate that the researcher should use a language and vocabulary that is well understood by the research participants, he or she should also be a keen listener to ask for clarification where necessary and also probe to get more information.

This study employed individual open-ended interviews to find in-depth the support mechanisms put in place by the secondary school principals to ensure that the adolescent mothers fit comfortably in school once they are re-admitted. The researcher asked one main questions which was then be followed by probing and clarification questions. In this case, the researcher asked the secondary school principals about the

support structures in place in the school to support adolescent mothers. This was then followed by probing and clarification questions. The type of interviews that was used allowed the research participants to express themselves freely and at their own pace, it also gave room for the researcher to ask probing questions and also ask for clarification from the participants.

The interviews took approximately thirty minutes to one hour. The researcher first introduced herself to the research participant and inform him or her about the research. The researcher then asked for participant consent to be interviewed. Data that was collected through the interviews was safely stored and was transcribed as soon as possible in preparation for analysis.

3.8.2 Drawings

Drawings as methods of data collection have been used in various studies (Wood and Mayaba, 2015; Chege, Maina, Mitchell and Rothman; De Lange, Olivier, Geldenhuys and Mitchell, 2012). They are vital in contexts where research participants have difficulty in expressing themselves owing to language barrier or the nature of the research topic (Theron, Mitchell, Smith and Stuart, 2011). Using drawings to collect data has been seen to add value to existing methods by bringing another dimension (Balmer, Griffiths and Dunn, 2015). They enhance the richness of the data and is significant in enhancing the relationship between the researcher and the participants as it enhances rapport and enables the research participants to express their tacit knowledge (Pain, 2012).

In this study, drawings were used to go into the world of the adolescent mothers. The adolescent mothers were asked to make drawings of how going back to school was for them and how they would like the re-admission policy and its implementation be

improved in order to benefit them. They were required to give the drawing a caption and also elaborate on their drawings using few words. The researcher then asked the adolescent mothers to clarify the meaning of the pictures to the researcher and other adolescent mothers. All the drawings were scanned and explanations transcribed in readiness for transcription and analysis.

3.9 Measures of Trustworthiness

In quantitative research, we use the validity and reliability terms while in qualitative research, validity and reliability are measured in terms of trustworthiness and four criteria i.e., credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

3.9.1 Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings (Moon et al., 2016). They explain that the research procedure and findings should be well documented in order to allow someone from outside the research to be able to follow, audit and critique the research process. Dependability is an important measure of trustworthiness in qualitative research as it establishes the research findings as consistent and repeatable. In this study, the researcher used the external audit technique which Bowen (2009), explains that involves an external researcher examining the data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation to ensure that they are accurate and that the research findings are supported by the data collected. This is crucial to make sure that if another researcher looks over the data, their findings, interpretation, and conclusions would be similar to the researcher.

3.9.2 Transferability

According to Polit and Beck (2012), transferability relies on the reasoning that the findings can be generalized or transferred to other groups in a similar setting. Li (2004) asserts that transferability in qualitative research involves not just describing the research participants' behavior and experiences but also giving a rich description of their contexts so that their behavior and experiences become meaningful to a person reading the research work. In the same vein, Creswell (2009) posit that giving a detailed description makes the research results more realistic. This means that the readers are transported to the research setting and enable them to share an experience with the research participant and it also enables the readers to make transferability judgments themselves. Bitch (2005) emphasizes that transferability in research done by thick description. In this study, the context, participants and the research process are described in detail.

3.9.3 Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability refers to the level of confidence that the research findings are based on the participants' narratives and are not based on the researcher biases (Tobin & Begley 2004). It also refers to the objectivity of the research during data collection and analysis (Polit and Beck, 2012). They argue that there is need to be congruence between two or more independent persons about the accuracy, relevance and meaning of data. Confirmability can be achieved through a reflexive journal, audit trail and triangulation. In this study, the researcher adopted an audit trail as a means of ensuring confirmability. Audit trials are an in-depth approach that the researcher uses to illustrate the collected data is based on the participants' narratives (Polit and Beck, 2012). The researcher has described how the data was collected and analyzed in a transparent manner in order to make the research audience understand why the

researcher arrived at the made decisions and to show that the analysis follows a logical path.

3.9.4 Credibility

According to Polit and Beck (2014), credibility of the study refers to the confidence in the truth of the study and therefore the findings, and it is the most important criterion for establishing quality in qualitative research (Polit and Beck, 2014). There are various techniques that a researcher can use to establish credibility, these are; extended engagement with participants, persistent observation, triangulation, peer examination, member check, audit trial and reflective journaling (Connelly, 2016). In this study, the researcher used member checking which Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe as a technique that a researcher continually tests with the research participants the researcher's data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions. In this study, to test for the final interpretation, the researchers did a final member check with the key participants of the study to ensure that the report and conclusions of the results reflect on the research participants' experiences accurately.

3.10 Piloting of the Study

Junyong' (2017) defines a pilot study as a small scale preliminary study which is conducted to investigate whether the most important components of the main study will be feasible. Piloting is important as it will enable the researcher to estimate the cost of the research and also have a glimpse of some of the challenges that may come up when conducting the actual research. It also assists the researcher to know more about what procedures will be involved in the main study hence assisting in refining the research methods that will be most suitable in answering the research question in the main study (Thabane et al., 2010).

Piloting of this study was done in January 2021 in a school located in the same location but which was not involved in the final study. This assisted the researcher to be conversant with the geography of the place and was also useful in estimating the cost of the research. The data was then collected, analyzed to check on the feasibility of the study. The data collection instruments were corrected as the researcher prepared for the main study.

3.11 Data collection Procedure

The research study was first approved by the Moi University School of Education departmental committee after which the researcher sought a research permit from the National Council of Science and Technology (NACOSTI). After getting the permit, the researcher then sought for permission to conduct the research at the county level. This involved seeking permission from the MoE at the county level and also the Teachers Service Commission at the county level.

The researcher then went to the field to collect data after getting all the required approval. In the field, the researcher ensured that the research participants are in a relaxed environment which was free from distractions. She informed the research participants about the research made them aware of the consequences and benefits of participating in the research. Thereafter, the research participants were provided with the consent forms for them to append their signatures.

The researcher first de-briefed the adolescent mothers before commencement of data collection. This is because some of the adolescent mothers might have had a perception about the researcher's role to be more than just research. They may have thought that the researcher may help them financially in a bid to enable them to be more comfortable in school. To address this, the researcher clarified her role, the research objectives and

also the significance of the research. The adolescent mothers were informed that the findings of the research will likely influence the policy implementation and they may have a chance to benefit from the improvement of the policy.

Data generation commenced with individual in-depth interviews with the secondary school principals as the researcher sought to find out the support mechanisms that the school has put in place to ensure that the adolescent mothers fit in the school environment once they are re-admitted.

Secondly, the researcher focused on drawings. Adolescent mothers were asked to make drawings that will capture their experiences regarding readmission and the re-admission policy. Adolescent mothers gave a brief discussion of their drawings and the researcher recorded the discussions as she prepared for transcription and analysis.

Lastly, the researcher asked the adolescent mothers to make drawing of how they would like the re-admission policy and its implementation to be improved in order to benefit the adolescent mothers better. Data that was collected was safely stored then transcribed in readiness for analysis.

3.12 Data Analysis Procedure

The nature of the study required the researcher to collect data using a variety of data collection instruments. The researcher used different methods of data collection such as in-depth interviews, and drawings. In this section, the researcher used thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke. Braun and Clarke (2006) explain that thematic data analysis is a technique in which a researcher identifies, examines and records patterns within the data. The researcher followed the 6 steps of thematic data analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006).

The researcher first familiarized herself with the data, this meant that she transcribed the data and read it while making note of the main ideas. Secondly, the researcher generated codes, she then developed a coding system, this means organizing the individual interviews data in an organized manner while collating data that is relevant to each code. The names of the research participants were replaced by pseudonyms. Thirdly, the researcher then sought for themes. In this step, the codes were used to generate the potential themes by collating all data that is relevant to each potential theme. Fourthly, the researcher then reviewed the themes to be sure that the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set hence generating thematic map analysis. Fifth, the themes were then defined and named. The particulars of each theme were refined generating a clear definition for each theme. Lastly, the researcher produced a report. This final step involved selecting compelling extracts examples and final analysis of the selected extracts relating back to the analysis of the research question in order to produce a report (Braun and Clarke 2006).

3.13 Ethical Considerations

In research, ethical consideration is very important as it upholds the dignity of the research participants and the information that the researcher is going to publish (Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011). Issues concerning adolescent pregnancy is a very sensitive issue that will touch on the private lives of adolescent mothers. The researcher was aware that ethical considerations must be upheld to ensure that the research will be done in a manner that will not compromise the research participants. The following are some of the ethical considerations that were upheld by the researcher;

3.13.1 Informed Consent

According to Kumar (2011), informed consent implies that research participants should be made adequately aware of the nature of information that the researcher wants from

them and the reason why the researcher wants that information, what purpose it will be put to, how they are expected to participate in the study, and how it will directly or indirectly affect them. In this study, before undertaking data collection, the researcher informed the research participants about the benefits and harm of participating in the research for them to make clear decisions on whether they will participate in the research or not. The participants were required to sign consent forms before commencement of data collection.

3.13.2 No Harm to Participants

The participants should not face any harm as a result of taking part in the research (Baines et al., 2013). This means that the research participants should also not be exposed to any pain or danger whether physically or psychologically in the course of the research. In this study, the researcher ensured that the participants were not harmed in any way whether physically or psychologically. The researcher liaised with the guidance and counselling teachers to ensure that participants were counseled and the researcher made a follow up to ensure that the participants recovered from the distress if any. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the researcher ensured that the research participants washed their hands and sanitized before commencement of data collection, they were also advised to have their masks on and observe social distance of 1.5 meters.

3.13.3 Confidentiality

According to Surmiak (2018), researchers should ensure that they protect information or views disclosed to them by research participants and the researcher should also make judgments on what to be included in the research and what should remain private. In this study, the researcher ensured that information that was disclosed to her by the participants was treated privately.

3.13.4 Preservation of anonymity

The research participants participated in research with the assumption that they will remain anonymous unless they have consented that they should be exposed (Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger, 2015). In this study, the researcher did not disclose names of the research participants and used pseudonyms to hide their identities and their schools.

3.13.5 Voluntary Participation

Marshall et al. (2014) postulate that research participants should only participate in research voluntarily. They should not be bribed or forced to participate in the research. In this study, the participants were not subjected to any coercion for them to take part in the research. Their participation was voluntary.

3.14 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, the researcher discussed research design and methodology that was used in investigating how the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers was implemented in an urban slum context. The chapter describes the approach used and why the approach was viewed suitable for the research. This chapter also covered data generation and analysis techniques. The research ethical considerations was also covered as well as the trustworthiness of the research. The following diagram shows the summary of the methodology used in the study.

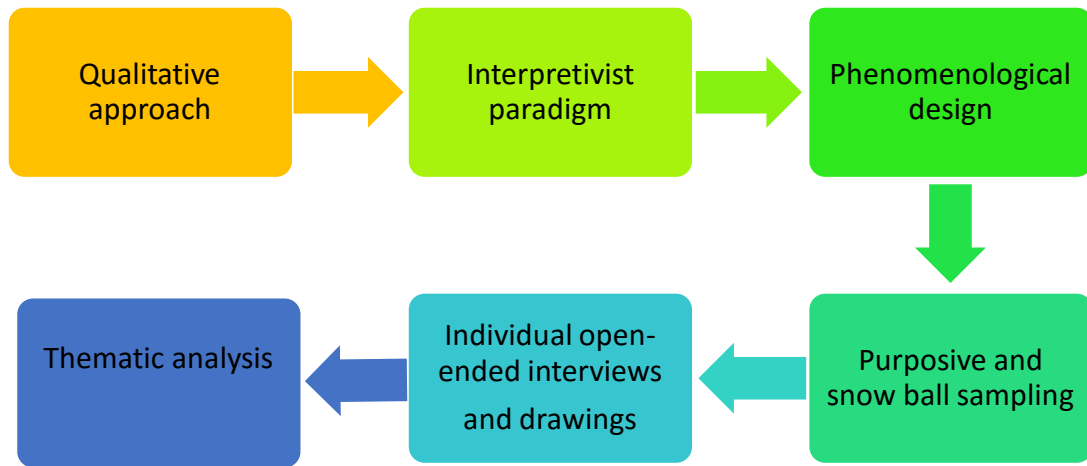


Figure 2: Summary of the research methodology

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore how the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers was being implemented in Langas slum in Eldoret. In this chapter, I present and discuss findings from the research questions as generated by the collected data and recontextualise the discussion within literature.

4.2 Description of participants

The research took place in five public secondary schools located in Langas slums in Eldoret. The participants were five secondary school principals of the five secondary schools that were involved in the study. Adolescent mothers who participated in the study were ten and they cut across from form one to form four and their ages ranged from fifteen years to twenty years. One of them was pregnant at the time this study took place while the rest had given birth. The researcher used personal in-depth interviews to gather data from the secondary schools principals and used drawings to collect data from adolescent mothers who participated in the study. The tables (see Table 1 and Table 2) show the biographic information of the research participants.

Table 1: Secondary school principals

Name of participants (pseudonym)	Name of school (pseudonym)	Sex	Duration of teaching experience
Divina	Longonot	Female	20 years
Mwilu	Shimba	Male	35 years
Kahindi	Sergoit	Female	15 years
Loise	Cherangany	Female	17 years
Triza	Menengai	Female	21 years

Table 2: Adolescent mothers

Name of participants (pseudonym)	Name of school (pseudonym)	Years	Class (form)
Mary	Longonot	18	3
Jane	Longonot	17	3
Ann	Longonot	15	1
Mercy	Shimba	20	4
Lucy	Shimba	18	4
Doreen	Shimba	19	4
Ruth	Sergoit	16	2
Joy	Sergoit	16	2
Brenda	Cherangany	18	4
Diana	Menengai	19	3

Table 3: Summary of the Research Findings

Exploring the implementation of the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers in an urban slum context in Eldoret, Kenya	
Support mechanisms put in place by the secondary school principals to support adolescent mothers to fit comfortably in the school environment once re-admitted.	Theme 1: Provision of guidance and counselling
	Categories Inadequate guidance and counselling personnel Lack of in-service training for guidance and counselling teachers
	Theme 2: Financial assistance
	Categories Lack of direct support by the government Provision of meals by the school
	Theme 3: Creating awareness to students about the re-admission policy
	Categories Obligation to sensitize the adolescent girls about the re-admission policy Flexible school policies
Experiences of the adolescent mothers regarding re-admission and the re-admission policy in secondary schools in Langas slums.	Theme 4: Stigma and discrimination
	Categories Expulsion from school Mistreatment by teachers Intimidation and exclusion by other students
	Theme 5: Financial constraints
	Categories Difficulty in accessing childcare services Lack of school fees
	Theme 6: Support from the school administration
	Categories Permitted to stay in school while pregnant Acceptance when they re-entered schooling
How can the re-admission policy and its implementation be improved in order to benefit the adolescent mothers.	Theme 7: Financial assistance by the government
	Categories Provision of bursaries by the ministry of education Provision of meal cards and better nutrition
	Theme 8: Provision of guidance and counselling services in school
	Categories Sensitization of other students Sensitization of teachers Sensitization of adolescent mothers in and out of school
	Theme 9: Flexible school policies
	Categories Provision of day care services Adjustable school reporting and leaving time

4.2.1 Support mechanisms put in place by secondary school principals

The first objective of this study was to find out the support mechanisms put in place by the secondary school principals to ensure that the adolescent mothers fit comfortably in school environments once re-admitted. An individual semi-structured interview was used to collect data from five secondary school principals. The research question that provided answers for this objective is; *what are the support mechanisms put in place*

by the secondary school principals to support adolescent mothers to fit comfortably in the school environment once re-admitted? From the data collected during the interview with secondary school principals, three themes emerged (See Figure 4.1); provision of guidance and counselling, financial assistance and sensitization about the re- admission policy.

4.2.1.1 Theme 1 Provision of Guidance and Counselling

Guidance and counselling refers to the process of helping an individual to make informed choices and also change their perspectives by people who have professional training in the said area. In this study, the secondary school principals were expected to have put in place some support mechanism that would ensure that adolescent mothers fit comfortably in the school environment once they are re-admitted. According to the principals, the schools had a guidance and counselling department and selected teachers who provided guidance and counselling to the adolescent mothers to enable them to blend well with other students and other members of the school community once they are re-admitted. The participants expressed their views of provision of guidance and counselling which are represented in the following two categories namely; inadequate guidance and counselling personnel and lack of in-service training of the guidance and counselling personnel.

4.2.1.1.1 Inadequate Guidance and Counselling Personnel

In this study, most of the principals admitted to having guidance and counselling departments in their schools which assist the adolescent mothers to be able to fit comfortably back in school once they are re-admitted. However most of them explained that they have an acute shortage of guidance and counselling personnel in their schools. This is evident from the following quotations:

“We have a department that comprises of two teachers which is a very small number as compared to the number of pupils we have in this school. They are selected by the principal through interactions and some are naturally gifted.” Divina (17/02/2021)

“I tend to imagine these days it becomes overwhelming for teachers. The teacher is employed just to teach and G&C is an added responsibility. If it is an added responsibility then the teacher should feel more empowered by it, the government can employ a teacher in that capacity as a G&C person. These are two professions being put together in one person.” Kahindi 19/02/2021

“Mostly we rely on the class teachers as we are a fairly new school and we do not have enough teachers employed by the government. Teachers employed by the board are not reliable as they can leave at any time.” Cherangany 20/02/2021

“Being a private school, we face some challenges as once the teachers are offered employment by the government, they leave. Sometime we are left with no one to head the department.” Mwilu 18/02/2021

The above quotations explain that as much as the principals have put in place guidance and counselling as a support mechanism, they however face a challenge as they have inadequate personnel to assist in guiding and counselling the adolescent mothers. The re-admission policy in Kenya suggests several school support mechanisms that should be put in place to ensure that the adolescent mothers fit in school when they get re-admitted. According to Centre for the Study of Adolescence (cited in Mutua et al., 2019), the policy suggests that adolescent mothers and their parents be counselled once the school finds out that the girl is pregnant.

According to Mwenje and Kessio (2015) the MoE does not employ teachers who are specifically meant for guidance and counselling. The teachers are overburdened by other responsibilities in their teaching subjects leaving them with very little time to guide and counsel other students. This results in parents and adolescent mothers not receiving guidance and counselling from the teachers. According to Pressman and Wildavsky, (cited in Immamura 2015), for a policy implementation to be successful, there must be resources that have been put in place in order to ensure that the policy is

well implemented. In this case, the re-admission policy is facing challenges in its implementation due to inadequate guidance and counselling personnel. The readmission policy states that adolescent mothers should be counseled as they leave school to give birth and when they come back after giving birth. However, from the findings above it is evident that due to inadequate personnel for guidance and counselling, many adolescent mothers are likely to be left out and never get adequate guidance and counselling. This greatly affects the purpose of the implementation of the re-admission policy as adolescent mothers are likely to drop out of school due to the challenges associated with balancing motherhood and being a student at the same time if they are not provided with guidance and counselling on how to cope with their current situation.

4.2.1.1.2 Lack of In-service Training for Guidance and Counselling Teachers

Participants in this study explicated that the government does not provide in-service training for guidance and counselling teachers. The teachers in charge of guidance and counselling only work with knowledge gained from their undergraduate teacher training. This is evident in the following quotations:

*“Mmmh, No as the government does not offer any in-service training.”
Divina 17/02/2021*

*“The government should also offer in-service training for guidance and counselling teachers or also employ guidance and counselling personnel to take up the job as the regular teachers are often overwhelmed.”
Divina 17/02/2021*

*“The government however has not offered in service training.” Kahindi
19/02/202*

“We have a guidance and counselling department. They have a normal training of a teacher but the government has not offered any training to them.” Mwilu 18/02/2020

“The teachers should be given more in-service training. I tend to imagine these days it becomes overwhelming for teachers.” Loise 20/02/2021

The above quotations confirm that as much as guidance and counselling is being provided for the adolescent mothers, the teachers in charge of guidance and counselling are not taken for in-service training that is needed to equip them to become better counsellors. According to Chigona and Chetty (2008) teachers who were interviewed in their study, explained that they could not focus on the emotional well-being of the young mothers since the training that they got in their pre-service teacher training did not equip them in handling adolescent mothers and pregnant school girls and the government does not provide for in service training.

4.2.1.2 Theme 2 Financial Assistance

Financial assistance, refers to support in terms of school fees payment, meal payments and provision of other items equated to money. The principals who were interviewed in this study explained that as much as the government does not offer financial support to the adolescent mothers, the school administration tries to help them mitigate their situation by offering them access to meal cards even when they have not completed paying their school fees. The participants expressed their views about financial assistance which are represented in the following two categories namely; lack of direct support from the government and provision of meals by the school.

4.2.1.2.1 Lack of Direct Support by the Government

The interview participants said that there is no direct financial support from the government. Apart from the government providing free secondary school education to all students in the country, there is no financial support that is specifically channeled to the teenage mothers. While the government pay part of the fees, there are still other fees which the adolescent mothers are required to pay.

“Well, there is no direct financial support from the government but the government communicated to the school to ensure that the students are brought back to school. “Divina 17/02/2021

“The government does not offer any direct support to the adolescent mother. No financial support to the teenage mothers. Some students do not come back to school.” Mwilu 18/02/2021

“The government does not offer any financials for them. Well, there are two ways. Finances from the government may encourage them to have second or third babies as they already know the finance is guaranteed. Maybe on the positive side, if they are given support, it may put them in school longer and more consistently.” Kahindi 19/02/2021

“The government should also set aside bursaries that are specifically for teenage mothers.” Loise 20/02/2021

Research conducted by Mutua et al. (2019) alluded that the major hindrances towards education attainment by adolescent mothers are poverty and financial constraints. As much as the young mothers are willing to go back to school, most of them do not have means to get an education. This is in agreement with studies by Omwancha (2012) who explained that there are serious financial constraints of being a parent and a student at the same time. In the same vein, Mwenje and Kessio (2015) assert that as much as the government shows its support through budget allocation, the principals who were interviewed in the studies exposed that there were no budgetary allocations to support the young mothers who re-entered school. The free secondary school education funds did not fully cover the fees that the students were required to pay hence many adolescent mothers still dropped out of school.

4.2.1.2.2 Provision of Meals by the School

This study took place in schools that are situated in Langas slums in Eldoret. It is characterized by a high level of poverty. The participants in this study explained that since most of the adolescent mothers in their schools come from families with a low social economic background and most of them do not get adequate food from home, they allow them to have their meals despite them not paying for the meals. This is evident from the following quotations;

“Maybe the government should put aside some money to take care of the adolescent mothers’ nutrition as some of them come to school hungry and the food in school is not enough and when they go back they have to breastfeed their babies. Some do not want to come back to school as they do not have enough food and they are nursing mothers so we try to give them a balanced diet when they are in school.” Divina 17/02/2021

“We allow adolescent mothers to feed even if they have no meal cards. If they have not completed fees they are allowed to eat. However, we do not offer any special meal for them.” Kahindi 19/02/2021

“Mmmh, we also give adequate and balanced food to our students so the adolescent mothers are assured of food when they are in school. They have tea at 10.30 am, lunch and tea at 4.00pm.” Loice 20/02/2021

A study by Gyan (2013) alludes that many girls living in the slums do not complete their education due to poverty. Since the girls come from poor families, they do not have access to adequate food and if the concerned institutions would take up the task of providing for the needs of these young girls, the rate of girls dropping out of school due to adolescent pregnancy might decrease.

4.2.1.3 Theme 3 Creating Awareness among Students about the Re-admission Policy

Creating awareness about the re-admission policy refers to informing and educating students about the re-admission policy with the intention of influencing their attitudes and beliefs towards the re-admission policy and also towards adolescent mothers. The participants expressed their views of creating awareness about the re-admission policy which are presented by the following two categories; Obligation to sensitize the adolescent girls about the re-admission policy and flexible school policies.

4.2.1.3.1 Obligation to Sensitize the Adolescent Girls about the Re-admission Policy

For the re-admission policy to be properly implemented the adolescent mothers should be encouraged to go back to school after giving birth. Participants in this study

explained that the adolescent mothers are not being sensitized about the re-admission policy. This is evident from the following;

“We do not tell the girls about the policy, they actually do not understand why we go so much after them and bring them back to school. If they know about the policy they will be encouraged to get pregnant.” Divina 17/02/2021

“Yes they are aware but we do not tell them about in school.” Kahindi 19/02/2021

“I am not sure but if they come back it means that they are aware.” Loice 20/02/2021

“I think the government should be more vocal and more community based so that the parents become more enlighten and give the students a second chance. Some parents believe that once you become a parent you can take care of your child and have a family. So they should start with the community.” Loice 20/02/2021

The quotations above provide evidence that secondary school principals do not sensitize adolescent mothers about the re-admission policy. According to Bhayan et al. (2010) any policy that results in new programs, services or operational guidelines have to be circulated so that it is well understood by the people who are implementing them. In this light, for the re-admission policy to be implemented, secondary school principals should ensure that adolescent mothers are made aware of the re-admission policy and its provisions. This will enable them to make informed decisions after giving birth. Lack of awareness on the policy greatly inhibits how the policy is implemented. Mwanza (2018) concurs that very few parents and adolescent mothers are aware of the policy and they few who know about the policy are not aware of the procedures required to re-enter schooling. This in turn leads to finger pointing between the parents and the school administration. In the same vein, a study by Macharia and Kessio (2015) exposed that the majority of the students who were surveyed in the study were not aware of the re-admission policy. This was due to the fact that most principals did not openly talk about the re-admission policy and preferred to admit the affected students privately.

This is because talking openly about the policy was seen as a means of promoting premature sexual relations among the students. This in turn ensured that only few girls in secondary schools are aware of the re-admission policy and only a few of them make use of the policy. Creating awareness about the policy may yield an increase in enrollment among adolescent mothers and reduce education wastage by total withdrawal from the school system (Ochieng, 2014). From the discussion, secondary school principals are obliged to sensitize adolescent mothers and other students about the re-admission policy to ensure that those who become pregnant come back to school after giving birth.

4.2.1.3.2 Flexible School Policies

Participants in this study described that as much as they do not openly sensitize the adolescent mothers on the re-admission policy, they have put in place some flexible policies albeit quietly to assist the adolescent mothers present in their school. The above was highlighted when the participants responded as follows:

“When they come back to school we usually support them, like the nursing mothers we allow them time to go to breastfeed the child or the person taking care of the kid can bring them to breastfeed at the school gate.” Divina 17/02/2021

“We normally allow them to go and breastfeed during breaks and lunch time and also leave early at 4.00 pm as compared to 5.40pm. We give them homework on what others have learnt in remedial classes, we make and assist in areas of difficulty.” Mwilu 19/02/2021

“Like one [adolescent mother] is not in today as she had to take the kid to the hospital. We give them breaks to take care of their children when the need arises. That is a challenge as they have no one to take care of the kid at home. The one who takes care of the baby cannot take the child to the clinic as it is her responsibility.” Kahindi 19/02/2021

“Some we tell them to look after the child and come back after one year after which we readmit them without any conditions so that they cannot get intimidated.” Divina 17/02/2021

For the re-admission policy to be fully implemented, secondary school principals must put up some support mechanisms that will ensure that adolescent mothers fit comfortably in the school environment once they are re-admitted. In this study, the participants explained that they have put up some flexible school policies that cushion adolescent mothers in school. This is in line with the top-down system approach theory of policy implementation which states that for a policy to be implemented effectively, there must be resources put in place to implement it. In this case, introducing flexible school policies, is one of the ways that the secondary school principals can ensure that adolescent mothers are comfortable in school. Nyambura, (cited in Barmao 2020) advocates for several re-admissions interventions which include; setting up special bridging centers for young mothers where they could continue with their formal education and/or specialized training while breastfeeding their babies, creating opportunities for out-of-school girls and to exploit informal sector apprenticeships for them, and lastly to introduce flexible models of attendance so that institutions operate at full capacity during the day and evening, throughout the week, month and year to allow for full attendance and completion of courses (Nyambura, cited in Barmao, 2020) These interventions ensure that adolescent mothers attend more classes and those who may not be able to attend some classes can catch up with other students through private coaching or extra classes.

4.2.2 Experiences of Adolescent Mothers Regarding Re-admission and the Re-admission's Policy

The second objective of this study is to find out about the experiences of adolescent mothers regarding re-admission and the re-admission policy Langas Slum. The research question that provided answers for this objective is; *what are the experiences of the adolescent mothers regarding re-admission and the re-admission policy in secondary*

schools in Langas slum? Participants in this study used drawings to answer the research question. Below are some of the drawings that were presented by the participants, their captions typed exactly as they were written by the participants. The findings and the discussions in respect to the question will also be provided.

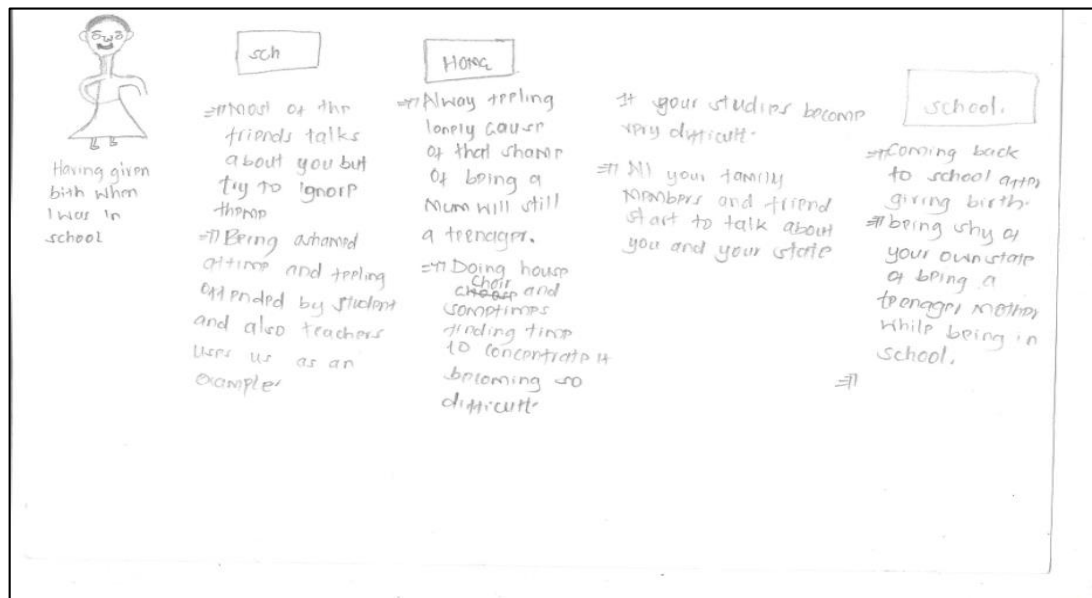


Figure 3: Drawing by Ann
Caption: The Overwhelmed Student

Having given birth when I was in school, most of the friends talked about me but I tried to ignore them. I felt ashamed and felt offended by students and also teachers using me as an example. I am always feeling lonely as I am a teenage mum. I have to do a lot of chores and sometimes finding time to concentrate becomes so difficult. My studies also become difficult. All my family members and friends started talking about me and my state. On coming back to school after giving birth I was shy of my status as a teenage mother.

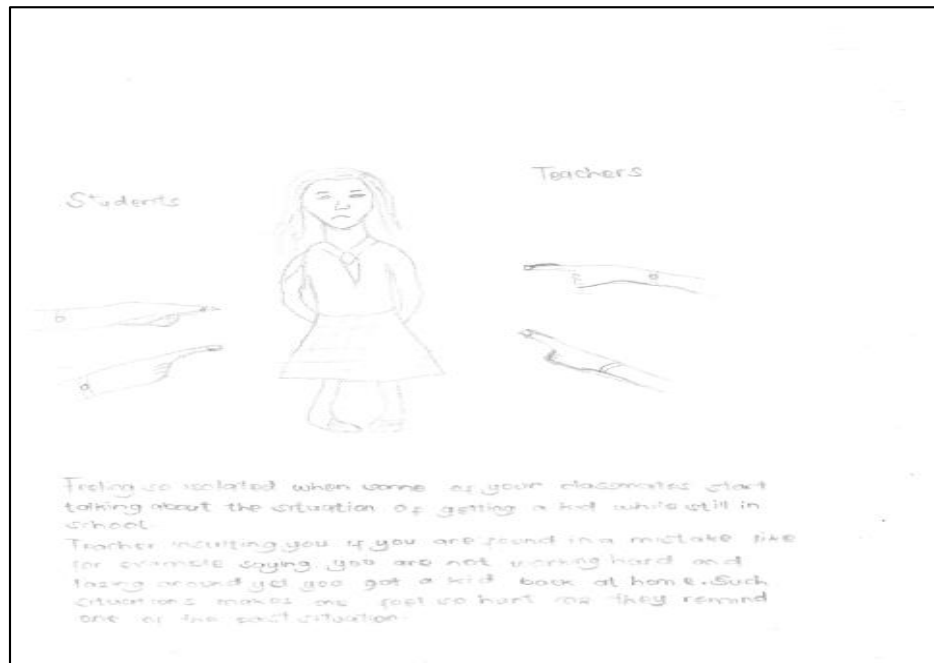


Figure 4: Drawing by Lucy
Caption: The Guilty Girl

I feeling so isolated when some of my classmates start talking about my situation of getting a child while still in school. Teachers insult me if I am found in a mistake, like for example, saying that I am not working hard and am just lazing around yet I have a child at home. Such situations makes me feel as hurt as they remind one of my past mistake.

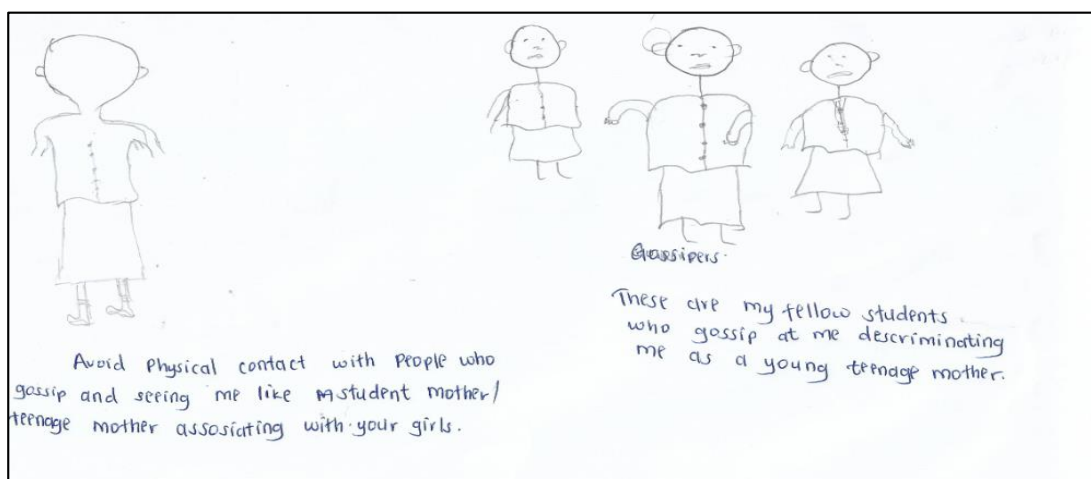


Figure 5: Drawing by Joy
Caption: Shy girl

I avoid physical contact with people who gossip and who see me as a teenage mother associating with girls. These are my fellow students who gossip about and discriminate me as a young mother.



Figure 6: Drawing by Doreen

Caption: Left Behind

I felt dissappointed when I went back to school and found that my classmates were ahead of me. The school should provide daycare of us and someone to encourage us.

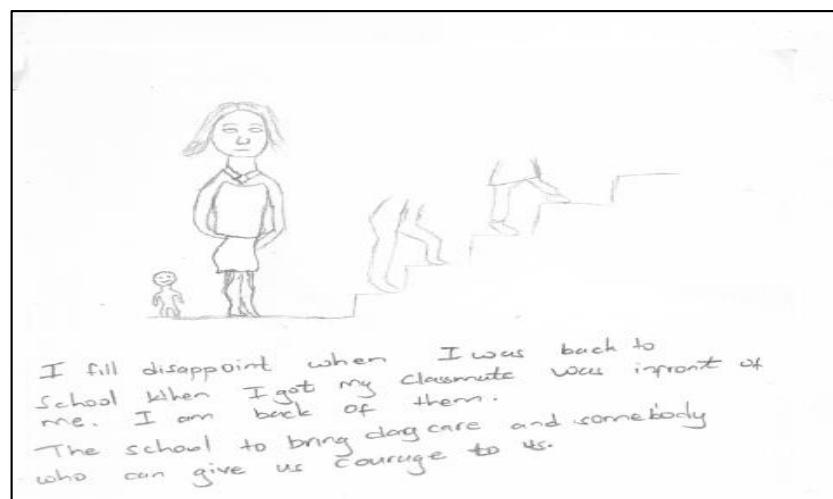


Figure 7: Drawing by Brenda

Caption: Disappointed and Embarrassed

I felt disappointed and embarrassed but after sometime things turned normal. I faced insult and mockery from fellow students when they realized that I was a teenage mother.

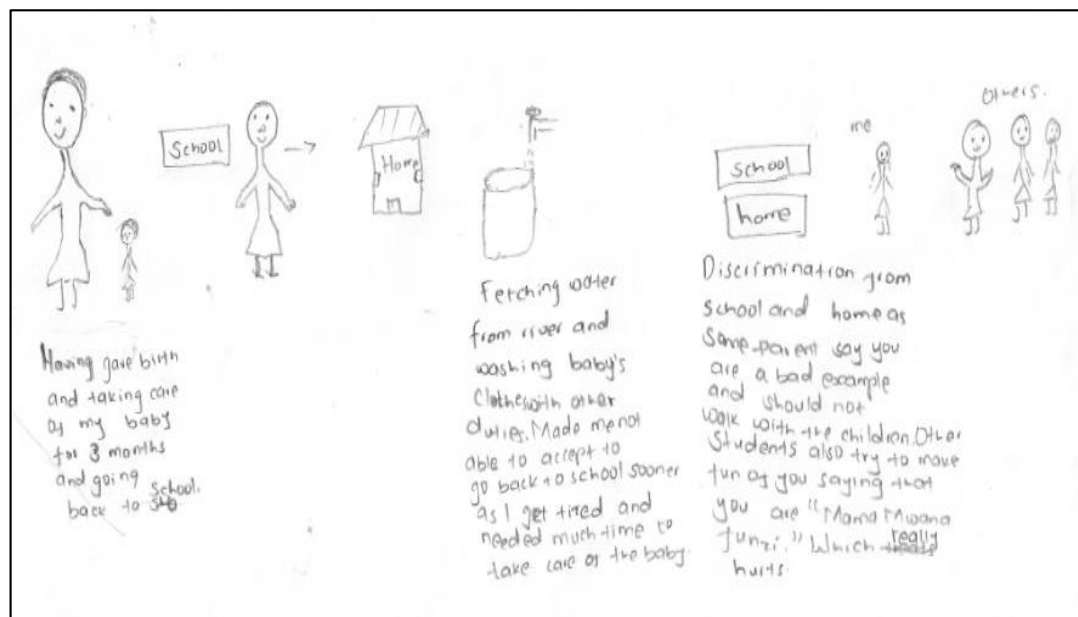


Figure 8: Drawing by Ruth

Caption: Tired!

Having given birth and taking care of my baby for three months I went back to school. After school I go back home to do some house chores such as fetching water from the river. Washing baby's clothes and other duties made me refuse to go to school as I get tired and also need much time taking care of the baby. Discrimination in school and back at home as sometimes my parents said that I am a bad example and should not walk with my friends. Other students also try to make fun of you saying that you are *mama mwanafunzi* [teenage mother] which really hurts.

From the data (drawings, captions, and the explanations of the drawings), three themes were identified (See Figure 4.9); stigma and discrimination, financial constraints and support from the school community.

4.2.2.1 Theme 4 Stigma and Discrimination

Discrimination refers to the prejudicial treatment of an individual based on groups, classes or other categories that they are assumed to belong to. In this study, the research participants who in this case were adolescent mothers expressed that they felt discriminated against when they returned to school. Three categories namely; expulsion from school, mistreatment by teachers, intimidation and seclusion by other students.

4.2.2.1.1 Expulsion from School

In this context, expulsion is the act of forcing a student to leave the school due to pregnancy. While describing their experiences some of the students said that once the school administration found out that they were pregnant, they were immediately expelled from school. This can be seen from the following quotations;

“I dropped out of school when I was one month pregnant. I was in a children’s home when I was schooling. I was chased away by the director, he said that I will be a bad example to other students.” Ruth 19/02/2021

“When I got pregnant, I stopped going to school due to the shame associated with being a teenage mother I was also advised by the director to stay at home till I deliver. I stayed at home for two years.” Mercy 18/02/2021

“I was in a boarding school. I had to drop out when I was 3 months as I was scared as the school could not take care of a pregnant student. I stayed at home for 3 months after giving birth and came to this school without anyone knowing that I am a mother.” Lucy 18/02/2012

“The school was okay as they did not know about my pregnancy as I was in a new school. I had to transfer from my school as it was a boarding school and it was far from home. It was a private school and I could not go to school when pregnant. They accepted me even after knowing later.” Brenda 20/02/2021

“I stayed at home for one year. The school administration allowed be to come back to school without any problem. I felt bad when I came back since my peers were ahead of me.” Doreen 18/02/2021

“The administration had decided that I should look for another school but my mother refused. They were forced to re-admit me I this school.” Diana 20/02/2021

From the above quotations, it is evident the adolescent mothers' education was almost curtailed due to pregnancy. They were chased away from their former schools, none of them left voluntarily. According to the Ministry of Education (2007) no girl is supposed to be expelled from school due to pregnancy. The policy also stipulates that once a girl gets pregnant, she should be allowed to stay in school till she gives birth and come back to school within three months after delivery. In the same vein, research by Ncube and Mudau (2016) reported that many school principals felt that pregnant school girls should not be in school as they tainted the school image and negatively affected other school girls. This attitude from the school principals often hindered the young mothers from continuing with their studies as pregnancy was viewed as a private problem which did not concern them (Ncube and Mudau). Expulsion from school is such an unfair practice which is seen as discriminating against the adolescent mothers which in turn may lead to some of them dropping out of school. According to Berman, (cited in Imamura 2015), professionals play a great role in the implementation of a policy, as they have control of a service and they make decisions on possible courses of action and inaction. Secondary school principals have been given the mandate to implement the policy by re-admitting adolescent mothers, however as can be seen in Mutua et al. (2019) re-admission of adolescent mothers is not a transparent process as it is left to the discretion of the secondary school principals who most of the time do not re-admit adolescent mothers except those who were perceived to be bright in class or those who were exceptional in extracurricular activities. This shows that there is need for transparency in the implementation of the re-admission policy and principals who do not follow the policy guidelines to be held accountable as per the top-down system theory which states that legal implementation structures are supposed to be in place to enhance the compliance of those charged with the implementation of the policy.

4.2.2.1.2 Mistreatment by Teachers

In this context, mistreatment refers to unwelcome and offensive conduct from the teachers towards the adolescent mothers. When discussing their experiences as adolescent mothers in schools, some participants pointed out that some teachers and verbally mistreat them. This was by use of foul language towards them and using them as examples in class. This can be seen in the following quotations;

“When I get into trouble my punishment is more severe as compared to those of other students. There are teachers you cannot be free with. The principal sometimes abuses me when I get into trouble just because I am a mother.” Lucy 18/02/2021

“There is teacher told me that my job is getting pregnant and I won’t go far. I felt really bad for myself. Ladies teachers also seem to have an attitude towards teen moms. I think they should be told not to discriminate us. Sometimes I feel like dropping out of school.” Brenda 20/02/ 2021

“Discrimination from both student and teachers. Some students won’t want to talk to you and some teachers see as bad examples to the rest.” Diana 20/02/2021

*“Some teachers are good but some are not. Some use me as an example in class and are not understanding when I miss some classes
“Brenda 20/02/2021*

“Some teachers also use me as an examples to other students and embarrass us.” Doreen 18/02/2021

The quotations above show that some teachers are not in support of adolescent mothers in school. Some treat them unfairly as can be seen from the adolescent mothers’ quotations. A study by Shefer, Bhana and Morrell (2013) found that most girls lacked support from their teachers. Teachers who were interviewed in the study had the assumption that adolescent mothers were pregnant because they lacked morals and that the re-admission policy was put in place to diffuse the shame making being an adolescent mother acceptable by the society. In the same studies, adolescent mothers explained that sometimes the teachers use them as examples by making derogatory comments which end up with them being the laughing stock in class. In agreement with

that, a study by Chigona and Chetty (2007) found that adolescent mothers often encountered hurtful comments from their fellow students and the comments make them feel isolated and affected their self-esteem. According to Pressman and Wildavsky, (cited in Immamura 2015) to enhance the compliance of those charged with the implementation of the re-admission policy, the top-down approach advocates for legal structures such as laws and punishments to be put in place. However, the re-admission policy does not have any legal structure in place to ensure that teachers and principals who treat adolescent mothers unfairly are dealt with appropriately. This mistreatment may make the adolescent mothers have an attitude towards going to school which may lead to them dropping out. In addition, with such treatment from the teachers, it makes difficult for the adolescent mothers approach them for help.

4.2.2.1.3 Intimidation and Exclusion by Other Students

Intimidation refers to the act of making someone timid while seclusion refers to the state of being away and private from other people. Participants in this study explained that other students in school secluded themselves from the adolescent mothers. They are viewed as people who have defied the society's norms and got pregnant while still young. This can be seen in the following quotations;

“When we opened in January, I was very uncomfortable. My classmates and the rest of the pupils in school gossiped about me. I felt bad and stayed alone most of the time. I guess they got used to me and now they don't talk too much about me being pregnant.” Ann 17/02/2021

“Many people gossiped about me, I feel bad. I don't have friends and I spend most of the time in class.” Joy 19/02/2021

“My classmates gossiped about me once they found out that I have a baby. Even when we get a new teacher, she or he is told about it by other teachers. It hurts a lot.” Lucy 18/02/2021

“My body changed when I gave birth. I gained a lot of weight. My classmates make fun of me and sometimes I dread coming to school.” Doreen 18/02/2021

From the above quotations, it is clear that the adolescent mothers face difficulties in school. This can be seen from how other students treat them. This is in agreement with a study that was conducted by Chigona and Chetty (2007) in which the interviewed girls reported that once they returned to school after giving birth, they were treated differently. They were often viewed as aliens, odd figures and are ostracized, despised and ill-treated by other students. This negative attitude towards the adolescent mothers by other students has a negative impact on adolescent mothers and those who are pregnant and are waiting to go for their maternity leave. In the same vein, a study conducted by Karimi (2015) revealed that adolescent mothers who returned to school faced intimidation by other learners who called them names and made humiliating comments about them and this made some adolescent mothers to drop out of school. In addition, Onyeka et al. (2011) found that adolescent mothers often faced prejudice in school and most of them could not withstand the humiliation that comes with being a mother and a student. This open discrimination against them, and being adolescents whose esteem is very fragile, may make them decide to drop out of school altogether. This shows that there is a need for sensitizing other students about the policy for them to be able to accommodate adolescent mothers in school.

4.2.2.2 Theme 5 Financial Constraints

Financial constraints in this study refers to monetary limits for adolescent mothers. As most of them come from low income families and therefore face a lot of finance related difficulties. From the data three categories were developed, these are; difficulty in accessing child care services, lack of bursaries and school fees challenges.

4.2.2.2.1 Difficulty in Accessing Child Care Services

The study participants are girls from an urban slum setting. The majority of them come from low income families and their parents have to work to be able to survive leaving

no one to take care of the babies when the adolescent mothers are in school. The participants pointed out that they face difficulties when going to school as they do not have anyone to leave their babies with. This can be seen in the following quotations;

“Getting someone to care for the baby when I am in school is hard. Sometimes I am forced to stay in at home and take care of the baby. My mom is a casual laborer and if she stays at home we won’t get money for school and other needs for my siblings and me.” Mary 17/02/2021

“Taking care of the child is hard. My mum works on other people garden in order to feed us, so being at home taking care of my child is quite hard.” Ruth 19/02/2021

“Getting someone to take care of my baby when I am in school is very hard. My mom tried to help but she is also very busy and it is expensive to hire a house help. My mum goes with her to town to look seek informal employment and I get her after school.” Lucy 18/02/2021

“It is really stressing. Sometimes I gave a lot of school work and I cannot get it done as I go home since I transition to be a mother. My teachers don’t seem to understand and my mother also does not understand that I am a candidate and I have to focus on my studies. She expects me to do all the work at home and take care of my baby.” Lucy 18/02/2021

When the adolescent mothers lack someone to help them take care of the baby when they are in school it becomes a challenge since they cannot actively participate in school activities. This is in agreement with a study conducted by Birungi et al. (2015), which states that education attainments of the adolescent mothers are greatly affected by limited financial resources and overwhelming childcare, this is an area where the adolescents’ parents play a very crucial role. This means that for them to be productive in school, they have to have a relaxed mind which in this case will be impossible if they constantly think about their children.

4.2.2.2.2 Lack of School Fees

Research participants in this study explained that their main hindrance towards attaining their education is lack of school fees. This is attributed to the low social-economic

background that majority of them come from. This can be seen from the following quotations;

“I looked at my home status and saw that it is wise for me to go back to school. My parents are poor and school is the only hope for me to have a better life.” Jane 17/02/2021

“After giving birth, my mum chased me from home. I had to go live with my grandmother and she stays with my baby when am in school. It is hard to borrow money from my mum for fees and other expenses relate to me or the baby.” Mercy 18/02/2021

“Sometimes I have to skip school when my mom cannot afford to pay school fees. I have to look for some work so that I can afford to pay fees.” Doreen 18/02/2021

These quotations show that school fees challenge is a serious factor which if not addressed might severely affect the education prospects of the adolescent mothers. Most of their parents struggle to make ends meet hence making school fees a secondary need. Without the assurance of having their school fees paid, most adolescent mothers may not really be able to concentrate in class. From literature, Mutua et al. (2019) explains that many adolescent mothers are willing to go back to school, however, many of them do not have the financial means to do so. This is in agreement with a study by Omwancha (2012) that found that there are serious financial challenges of being a student and a mother. A study by Mwenje and Kessio (2015) explains that due to lack of budgetary allowances to support adolescent mothers when they re-enter schooling many of them still drop out of school. For participants in this study to be able to continue with their studies, they should be able to afford school fees.

4.2.3.1 Theme 6 Support from School Administration

In this context, support refers to the assistance given to adolescent mothers by the school community. Participants in this study explained in their captions and discussions that there is some positivity in the implementation of the re-admission policy in their school. This is through support by school administration. From the data three categories

were developed; permitted to stay in school while pregnant, acceptance when they re-entered schooling and through flexible school policies.

4.2.3.1.1 Permitted to Stay in School While Pregnant

Some participants of this study explained they were allowed to stay in school while pregnant. Some of them explained that they stayed in school in the first few months of their pregnancy, however, as all learning institutions were closed due to the COVID 19 pandemic, they had to stay at home. This is in line with the re-admission policy that says that adolescent mothers are to stay in school until they give birth. This is evident from the following quotations;

“I was in school for three months when pregnant. We went home due to the pandemic hence, I was home and delivered before coming back to school.” Jane 17/02/2021

“I got pregnant during the pandemic and I am now 9 months pregnant. I will deliver in two weeks’ time and I plan to be in school till I deliver.” Ann17/02/2021

“I was pregnant in school for 7 months but no one noticed. Even though some teachers suspected it, they did not do a follow up.” Diana 20/02/2021

Allowing the adolescent mothers to stay in school when they are pregnant is a great step towards the full implementation of the re-admission policy. This in line with a study by Barmao (2015) which argues that the willingness of school administrators to accommodate young mothers is primary consideration for support. She further explains that if the school environment prioritizes the needs of the young mothers, then they will have an opportunity to pursue their studies. In contrast, according to Karimi (2015) secondary schools in Kilifi, the coastal part of Kenya, most secondary school principals often despised the adolescent mothers and they viewed them as adults who were not supposed to be in school. Omondi et al. (2008) also established that secondary school principals fear having pregnant students in their schools since it had a negative impact

on the schools' image. The result is that when the girls got pregnant while still in school, they stopped going to school and dropped out altogether.

4.2.3.1.2 Acceptance When They Re-entered Schooling

In this study, participants, through their discussions explained that as much as most of them changed schools when they gave birth, those who did not were allowed to re-enter without difficulties. This can be seen in the quotations below;

"The teachers accepted me when I returned to school after delivery."
Mary 17/02/2021

"They accepted me, no one tried to hinder me." Ann 17/02/2021

"They didn't know that I have a baby. Once they found out, the school administration was okay with it." Ruth 19/02/2021

"On coming back, the school was receptive. No one asked me about the pregnancy. I told one teacher who encouraged me." Mercy 18/02/2021

"I stayed at home for one year. The school administration allowed me to come back to school without any problem." Doreen 18/02/2021

"The school was okay as they did not know about my pregnancy as I was in a new school. I had to transfer from my school as it was a boarding school and it was far from home." Brenda 20/02/2021

"They had no problem with it." Joy 19/02/2021

In the implementation of the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers, allowing them to re-enter school is paramount in the implementation of the re-admission policy. This is because in their discussions, the girls noted that once the schools' administration allowed them to go back to school, they felt accepted and this increased their urge to go back to school. This was also established in a study conducted by Center for the Study of Adolescence, (cited in Mutua et al. 2019), which states that the re-admission policy allows adolescent mothers to be re-admitted unconditionally in order to ensure that adolescent mothers do not face any discrimination when they seek re-admission. In the same vein, Ncube and Mudau (2012) recommends that teachers and the school administration should support adolescent mothers who re-enter schooling as lack of

support often hindered young mothers from continuing with their studies. In addition, they also felt that adolescent mothers negatively influenced other girls when they returned to school, this in turn made many adolescent mothers shun going back to school.

4.2.3 How the Re-admission Policy and its Implementation can be Improved in Order to Benefit Adolescent Mothers Better.

The third objective of this study was to find ways in which the re-admission policy and its implementation can be improved in order to benefit adolescent mothers better. The research question that was used to generate answers from the participants was “*How can the re-admission policy and its implementation be improved in order to benefit the adolescent mothers better?*” The participants used drawings to generate data. Below I present drawings and captions that the adolescent mothers came up with.

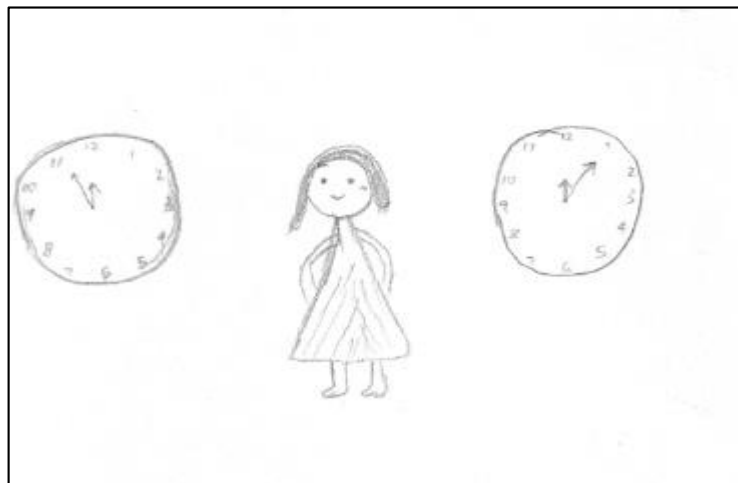


Figure 9: Drawing by Diana
Caption: Time Management

I think as an adolescent mother, I should be allowed to come to school later than usual. This is because I need to take my baby to a day care which opens at 8.00 am. I should also be allowed to leave earlier to pick her and take her home before the day care closes at 5.00 pm.

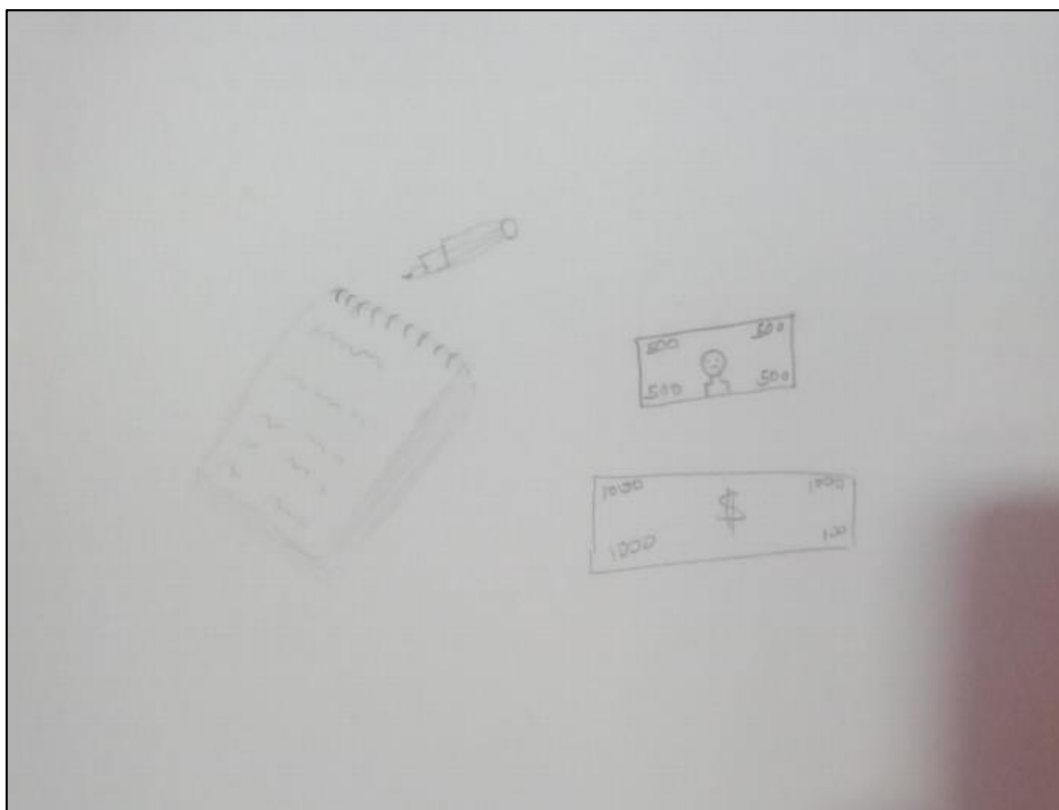


Figure 10: Drawing by Mary

Caption: Bursaries

Bursaries will enable me to be able to attend school without school fees issues. I come from a poor background and I require support to improve my education.

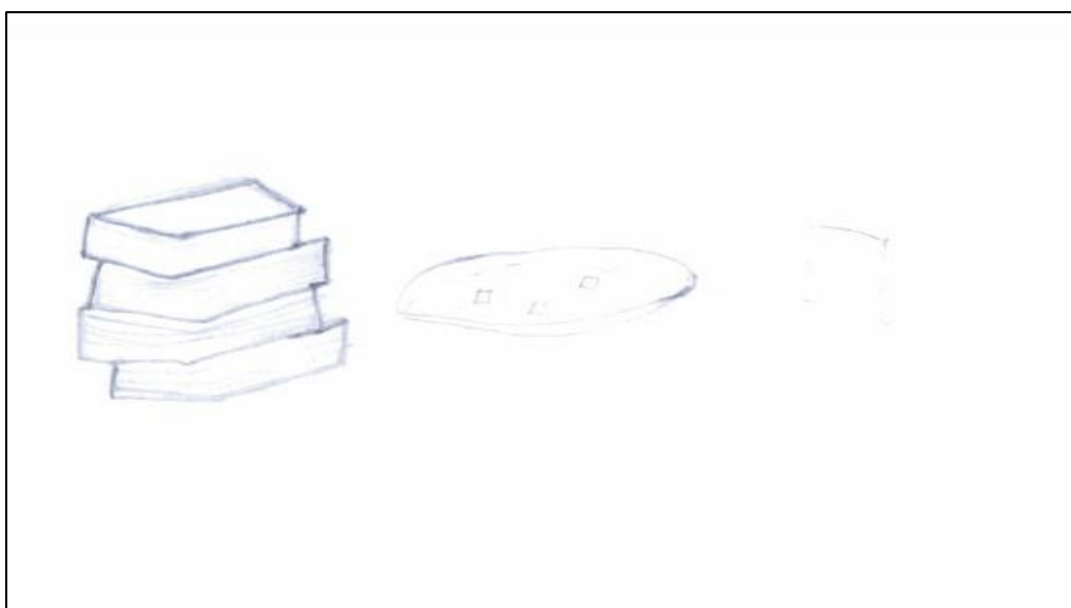


Figure 11: Drawing by Mercy

Caption: Better food

The school should at least provide us with a balanced diet as we are also breastfeeding. The government and also well wishers should provide funds for us as at times we lack basic needs. Most of our parents think that it is better for us to stay at home and care of our young ones. We need to stay in school as we want to learn and be responsible people in future.



Figure 12: Drawing by Doreen
Caption: Daycare

We want a day care in school so that it can be easy to see how the baby is doing. The government should construct daycare for us in school. This will help adolescent mothers to stop worrying about their children when they are in school.

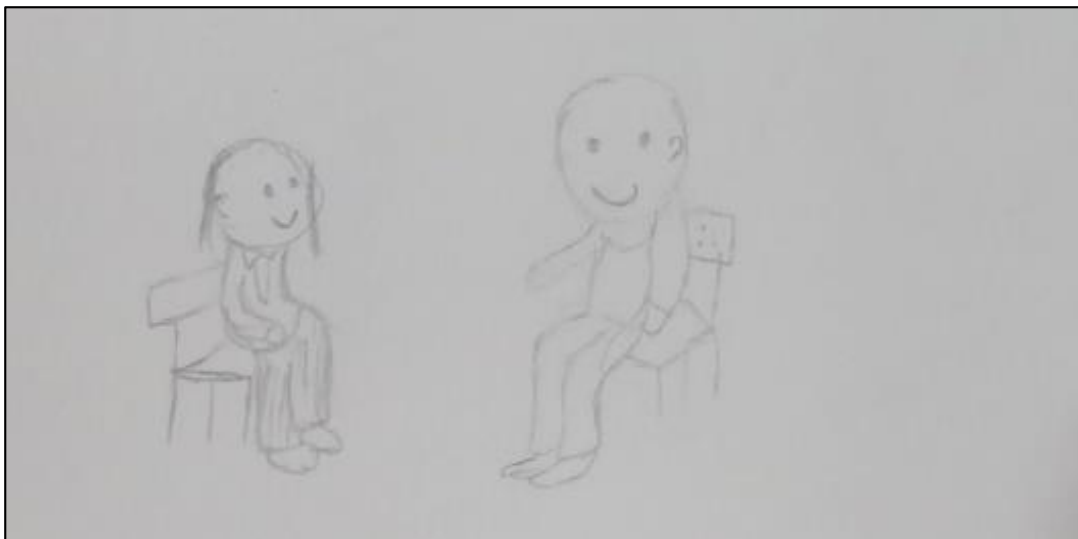


Figure 13: Drawing by Lucy
Caption: Guidance and Counselling

Someone should be trying to talk to students about this situation of getting a kid while in school because it is something that can happen to anyone. Adolescent mothers should be motivated in order to prosper in their education.



Figure 14: Drawing by Ann
Caption: Pregnant school girl

I think adolescent girls who are pregnant should be told that they can stay in school even if they are pregnant. Most of them leave school and not all of them come back. Teachers should also tell them not to worry about the pregnancy and encourage them to come to school just as they are.

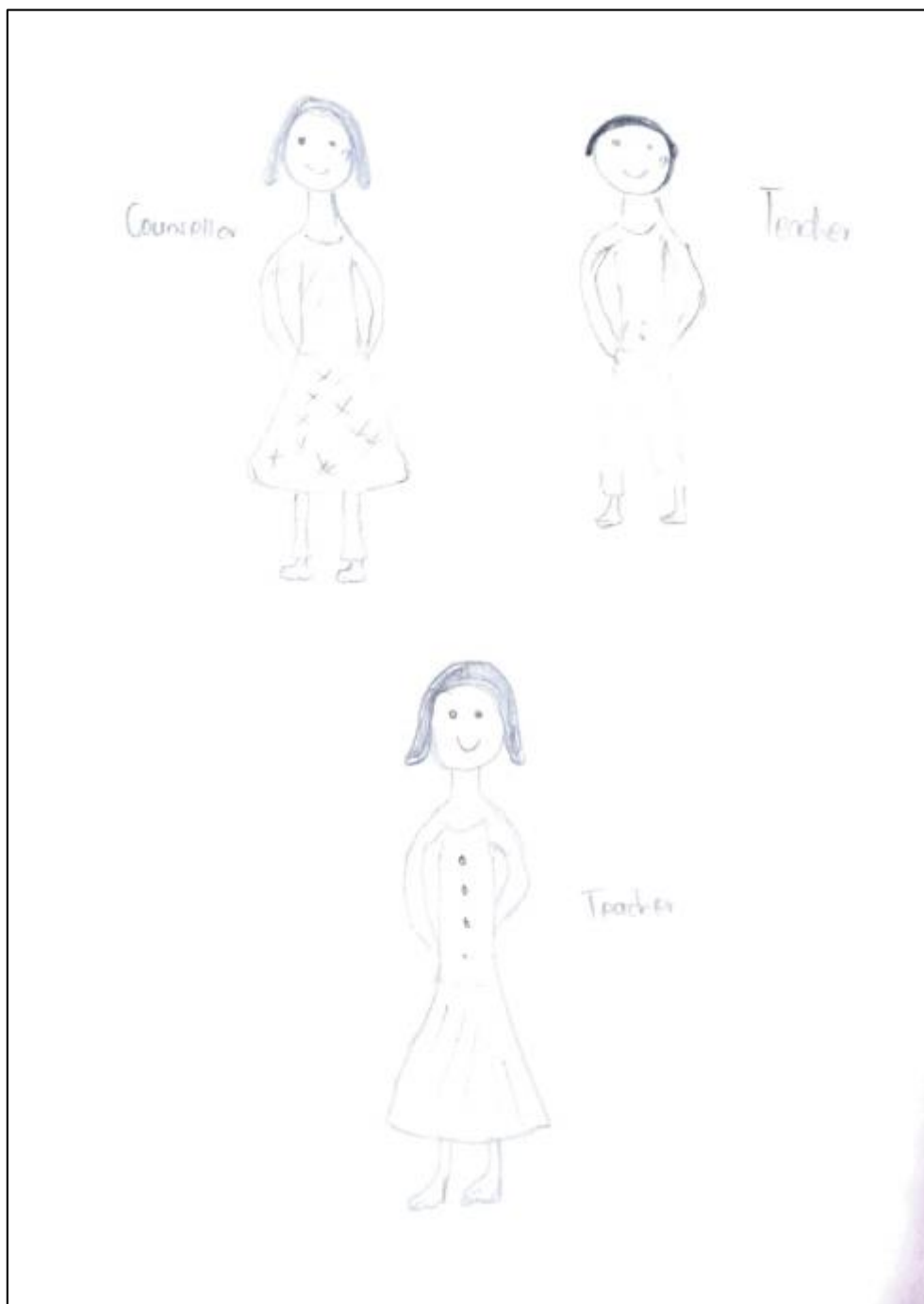


Figure 15: Drawing by Brenda

Caption: Guidance and Counselling for Teachers

Teachers should be educated on how to handle and talk to teenage mums because they are discouraging at times. Well trained teachers should be talking to us and giving us advices about life and being an adolescent mother about twice in a week. They should give us hope. Students should also be informed so that they become aware that it is normal and even they too can be parents. From the data (drawings, captions and explanations) three themes were developed, i.e. financial assistance from the government, provision of guidance and counselling services in school and flexible school policies.

4.2.3.1 Theme 7 Financial Assistance by the Government

Financial assistance refers to the monetary aid given to students by the government. In Kenya the government introduced free primary and secondary school education, however, adolescent mothers especially from urban slum contexts often face financial difficulties especially due to their added responsibilities. The participants expressed that the re-admission policy can be improved through financial assistance as seen in the two categories; provision of bursaries and provision of meal cards by the school administration.

4.2.3.1.1 Provision of Bursaries by the Ministry of Education.

In this study, all the participants came from families with low economic backgrounds. Most of their parents and guardians do not have stable incomes and relied on daily wages. When this already difficult situation is combined with additional responsibilities such as caring for a newborn, this causes a strain in the family's' finances. Participants in this study expressed their need for financial support from the government. This is evident in the following quotations;

“For me it’s mainly financial. My mother cannot afford to employ someone to take care of my baby when she goes to work. Her daily wages is also too little to cater for mine and my siblings’ school expenses. I try to apply for bursaries but you know...sometimes to get you have to ‘know’ someone.” Mary 17/02/2021

“Sometimes we do not have food in the house and the school is our only hope.” Mercy 18/02/2021

“Finances, we should be allocated bursaries.” Brenda 20/02/2021

“They should also give us bursaries since it is them who said that they should go back to school. I leave my baby with my mother and she can’t look for food with the baby.” Joy 19/02/2021

From the above quotations it is clear that the implementation of the re-admission policy can be improved through provision of bursaries. The government of Kenya provides bursaries to secondary school students but there are no bursaries specifically set aside for adolescent mothers. Mutua et al. (2019) argue that as much as the adolescent mothers are willing to go back to school, they do not have the financial capacity to do so. This is due to financial constraints caused by being students and parents at the same time. In this light, Mwenje and Kessio (2015) found that there are no budgetary allocation for adolescent mothers who re-entered schooling. This means that adolescent mothers still dropped out of school. This is in agreement with a study by Birungi et al.(2015) which states that educational attainments by adolescent mothers is greatly influenced by limited resources and overwhelming childcare. From the discussion above, it is clear that provision of bursaries will go a long way in salvaging adolescent mothers’ education.

4.2.3.1.2 Provision of Meal Cards and Better Nutrition

In this study, the participants expressed their need for better nutrition and provision of meal cards even when they have not fully paid their school fees. This is because some of them were breastfeeding mothers and they live far from the school. In most cases, the food that they get from school is not enough and also not as nutritious as is required

for breastfeeding mothers. On top of that, since most of them come from poor families, they are not able to complete their school fees on time and are sometimes made to stay hungry when they are in school. This is quite dangerous for a breastfeeding mother.

The following quotations highlight the above:

“Nutrition too. Sometimes the baby breastfeeds a lot at night and when I am in school I feel tired and hungry. We also don’t have enough food at home and breastfeeding without enough food is a challenge.” Jane 17/02/2021

“Sometimes we do not have food in the house and the school is our only hope. If it is possible they should give us an extra meal especially for breastfeeding mothers.” Mercy 18/02/2021

“Some of us come from far. Most of the time I am hungry due to breastfeeding. They should feed us more even if it is an extra cup of tea it will go a long way. Or give us meal cards even when we have not paid fees.” Ruth 19/02/2021

From the above quotations, it is evident that provision of meal cards is important in the attainment of education by adolescent mothers.

4.2.3.2 Theme 8 Provision of Guidance and Counselling Services in School

In this study, the participants expected that there will be more effort put into guidance and counselling services in school. The guidance and counselling services provided are expected to encompass the following as the categories show; sensitization of other students about the re-admission policy, sensitization of adolescent mothers in and out of school and also sensitization of teachers.

4.2.3.2.1 Sensitization of Other Students

Guidance and counselling is key in secondary schools in Kenya. In this study, the participants expected that other students in school should be made aware of the re-admission policy in their guidance and counselling sessions. This will not only assist in its implementation but also eradicate stigma and discrimination towards the adolescent mothers by other students. The following quotations highlight the above:

“They should sensitize our classmates about teenage motherhood so as to enable them to accept us into the school system.” Mary 17/02/2021

“Getting accepted by my classmates is difficult. I look more of a mother than a student so they mock me. They also exclude me since am bigger. I don’t have friends in school.” Doreen 18/02/2021

“Other pupils also talk a lot about me since I am a mother.” Lucy 18/02/2021

“I think guidance and counselling is the best. Other students should be told not to discriminate against us and should treat us well” Mercy 18/02/2021

“The school should provide guidance and counselling to adolescent mothers. Other students should also be told about the re-admission policy and also about teenage mothers for them to embrace us and treat us with dignity. They should be told that we didn’t choose to be adolescent mothers, it is something that can happen to anyone.” Lucy 18/02/2021

“Discrimination from classmates they see me as if I am not a person. They gossip about me a lot and it is heartbreaking.” Mercy 18/02/2021

“Discrimination from both student and teachers. Some students won’t want to talk to you and some teachers you see as bad examples to the rest.” Diana 20/02/2021

The quotations above explain that adolescent mothers face a lot of stigma from their peers and one of the ways in which this situation can be reversed is through guidance and counselling. The students should be sensitized about the re-admission policy for them to be aware that the adolescent mothers have a right to be in school just like other students.

Research conducted by Mwenje and Kessio (2015) found that many secondary school students were not aware of the re-admission policy. This is because no one told them about it in school. Secondary school principals who were involved in the study said that they do not openly talk about it since it was seen as a way of promoting teenage pregnancy. This factor leads to stigmatization of adolescent mothers by other students since they are ignorant about the policy. In agreement, Onyeka et al. (2011) uncovered that when adolescent mothers go back to school, they face mockery from other students. This make them withdraw from school activities and keep to themselves. Karimi (2015)

also states that adolescent mothers are often called names and humiliating comments are made about them by other learners.

4.2.3.2.2 Sensitization of Teachers

Participants in this study explained that teachers should also be enrolled for guidance and counselling sessions. In these sessions, they should be made aware of the re-admission policy and its provisions. This is because sensitization of the teachers about the policy is key in its implementation. The above is shown by the following quotations;

“More sensitization. Some teachers also seem not to be aware that a pregnant girl can stay in school. Some treat me differently from my classmates and seem not to be understanding of my condition.” Ann 17/02/2021

“My teachers treat me differently, I think that they are influenced by other teachers. When I get into trouble my punishment is more severe as compared to those of other students.” Lucy 18/02/2021

“Discrimination from teachers, they tell other students to stop rushing things like us. You are mother, you are a student. Sometimes it feels like I am the one being told indirectly. They should be cautious with their language.” Ruth 19/02/ 2021

“Sometime the teachers tell other people that your stomach is not big to give birth like some of you in this class. They should not use as example in class.” Joy 19/02/2021

“There is teacher told me that my job is getting pregnant and I won’t go far. I felt really bad for myself. Ladies teachers also seem to have an attitude towards teen moms. I think they should be told not to discriminate against us. Sometimes I feel like dropping out of school.” Brenda 20/02/2021

From the quotations above, there is need to sensitize teachers about the re-admission policy. There are teachers who seem not to understand that there is a policy that allows adolescent mothers to be in school. This attitude from those who are supposed to act as guardians in school is quite uncalled for. Karimi (2015) alludes to the point that teachers despise adolescent mothers who re-enter schooling. They consider these mothers as none of their responsibilities. In addition, research conducted earlier by FAWA (2004) established that there is a link between teachers’ level of awareness about the re-

admission policy and their attitude towards the re-admission of adolescent mothers. It is therefore important for the MoE to sensitize teachers about the re-admission policy through offering them guidance and counselling in order to improve the implementation of the re-admission policy.

4.2.3.2.3 Sensitization of Adolescent Mothers in and out of School

In order for the adolescent mothers to be able to benefit from the re-admission policy they must be aware of the policy. Participants in this study argued that one of the ways in which the re-entry policy can be improved is through sensitization to adolescent mothers who are in school and those who are out of school. Those who are out of school, the government can use community service workers, local authorities such as chiefs and members of the clergy. Those who are in school can be made aware of the policy by their guidance and counselling teachers. The above can be seen from the following responses;

“This begins with the affected girls. They should accept themselves and take responsibility for their actions. They should be informed about this policy for them to come back to school.” Ruth 19/02/2021

“They should be informed about the policy. I was also not aware about the policy despite confiding on my teacher about the pregnancy before dropping out of school. Many girls don’t know about it.” Mercy 18/02/2021

“Well, they should be told about this policy. Many girls don’t know about the policy and hence fail to come back to school.” Mary 17/02/2021

“They should be told about the policy.” Jane 17/02/2021

From the above quotations, it is evident that there is a need to inform adolescent mothers who are in and out of school about the re-admission policy. This concurs with a study conducted by Mwanza (2018) which alludes that few students are aware about the re-admission policy and the procedures to be followed to re-enter schooling. In agreement, a study conducted in Uganda by FAWE (2011), most girls whose education was curtailed with pregnancy were not aware of the re-admission policy. Hence, creation of

awareness to adolescent mothers who are in school and those who are still out of school will help in the improvement of the re-admission policy and its implementation. In the top-down theory of policy implementation, only the top management is in charge of policy making and the policy executors are not involved in policy making process (Immamura, 2015). The adolescent mothers were not involved when the re-admission policy was being formulated hence they do not have a voice in it while they are considered to be the beneficiaries of the policy. This shows that there is need to amend the policy and incorporate the voices of adolescent mothers especially those who are out of school. This will help in better understanding of their needs and improve how the policy is being implemented.

4.2.3.3 Theme 9 Flexible School Policies

Flexible school policies in this context refers to the adjustment of some school policies to accommodate adolescent mothers. Participants in this study explained that if the school policies would be adjusted to accommodate adolescent mothers, it would improve the implementation of the re-admission policy. The participants suggested that the school policies could be adjusted as expressed in the following categories; provision of day care services and adjusted school reporting and leaving times.

4.2.3.3.1 Provision of Day Care Services

Day care services in this context refer to supervision and care for children. Participants in this study come from low social-economic backgrounds. Most of their parents cannot afford to stay at home and take care of the babies as they have to work in order to be able to provide for the family. If the school could provide daycare services it will salvage the education of many adolescent mothers. This can be seen in the quotations below;

“If it is possible, we can have a daycare in school so that one can have somewhere to keep the baby and also concentrate on her studies. It is stressing to be here and your mind is at home thinking about your baby.” Doreen 18/02/2021

“Day care. As much as my parents take care of my child, she cannot breastfeed as needed. If there was a daycare, I could breastfeed her during break time.” Jane 17/02/2021

“Someone to take care of my child. I can’t afford a house help.” Lucy 18/02/2021

From the above quotations it is clear that inclusion of provision of daycare services will enhance the implementation of the re-admission policy as it enable adolescent mothers stay in school without worrying about who will take care of the children. Pillow, cited in Barmao (2020) opines that the main reason that makes adolescent mothers to go back to school is their babies as they are determined to get an education in order to improve their lives and those of their children. However, adolescent mothers are also unable to cope in school because of their babies. It is therefore prudent for them to get help in taking care of their babies as taking care of babies and dedicating time to school work is a challenge to adolescent mothers.

4.2.3.3.2 Adjustable School Reporting and Leaving Time

Participants in this study expressed their desire for the school administration to adjust the time that they report for and leave school. All the participants who were interviewed were from day school, this means that they had to leave home early to be in school on time and at times they were needed to leave school late especially when they had to attend tuition classes. This is evident from the statements below;

“I think as an adolescent mother, I should be allowed to come to school a bit later usual since I need to take my baby to a day care which is not opened at 6 am. I should also be allowed to leave earlier to take her home before the day care closes at 5.00pm.” Diana 20/02/2021

“They should also understand us when we come late as sometime we have to look for someone to take care of the baby.” Lucy 18/02/2021

“Even after coming back, they should be allowed to go and breastfeed during break time.” Mary 17/02/2021

As from the above quotations, adolescent mothers find it difficult to balance motherhood and school work and introducing flexible rules that will see them come to school when they can and leave when they need to will ease the implementation of the re-admission policy. Lloyd and Mesh, cited in Nanyama (2018), established that adolescent mothers often skip classes to attend to their ailing children for a considerable period. She further states that nursing and studying proved to be a great challenge and in most cases they had no other option but to skip classes. This is in agreement with a study conducted by Zachry (2005) who found that most teenage mothers are forced to discontinue their education due to intolerable rules and regulations regarding to school attendance laid out by school authorities. Therefore, having an adjustable reporting and leaving time in the re-admission policy will be an improvement of the policy.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore how the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers was being implemented in an urban slum context in Eldoret, Kenya. The study was positioned in the field of Education Management and Policy Studies, focusing on the area of girls' education. It was anchored on the phenomenological design which is based on the qualitative approach. The research participants were ten adolescent mothers and five school principals. Data was collected using in-depth interviews and drawings and thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data.

In this chapter, therefore, I summarize the findings of this study, draw conclusions from the themes and propose recommendations. More so, I provide suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This section provides a summary of all the themes generated through thematic analysis. The themes answered three research questions; *“What are the support mechanisms put in place by the secondary school principals to support adolescent mothers to fit comfortably in the school environment once re-admitted?, What are the experiences of the adolescent mothers regarding re-admission and the re-admission policy in secondary schools in Langas slums?, How can the re-admission policy and its implementation be improved in order to benefit the adolescent mothers?”*

5.2.1 What are the support mechanisms put in place by the secondary school principals to support adolescent mothers to fit comfortably in the school environment once re-admitted?

Three themes emerged from the analysis for the first research question on the support mechanisms put in place by secondary school principals to ensure that adolescent mothers fit comfortably in the school environment once they are re-admitted. It is evident from the analyzed data that there are various ways in which the principals support the adolescent mothers. They provide guidance and counselling services once the girls are re-admitted. This is a measure that they put in place in order to assist the adolescent mothers in their new roles as mothers who are still students. It also helps them overcome trauma that is associated with being an adolescent mother. Participants also recognized that as much as they offer guidance and counselling services to the adolescent mothers, they face a myriad of challenges such as inadequate personnel for guidance and counselling as ordinary teachers, many of whom are not trained as counsellors, are the ones who take up the role of guidance and counselling personnel. This double work makes some of them shy from being appointed as guidance and counselling teachers. In addition, the government does not offer in- service training for guidance and counselling teachers hence most of them are not equipped to handle guidance and counselling. Participants also revealed that there is no financial support that they receive from the government hence they have no financial kitty for adolescent mothers, however they help them by providing them with meals even when they have not paid school fees. Lastly, the participants pointed out that they are afraid of sensitizing adolescent mothers and other students about the re-admission policy as they think that it may encourage them to get pregnant while still in school. However, they

have made some of the school policies flexible, such as allowing them to leave earlier than the rest of the students in order for them to have time to take care of their children.

5.2.2 Experiences of adolescent mothers regarding re-admission and the re-admission policy

The participating adolescent mothers revealed their experiences in relation to the re-admission policy and its implementation. From the thematic analysis three themes emerged. The findings express that adolescent mothers faced stigma and discrimination in school from teachers and other students. Some adolescent mothers reported that they were expelled from their previous schools once the school administration got wind of the pregnancy. It was found out that teachers and other learners openly discriminated the adolescent mothers, a factor that made them feel unwelcome in school. In addition, all the adolescent mothers reported to be facing serious financial constraints owing to the fact that they come from low social-economic backgrounds. As much as the government provide bursaries to secondary school students, the bursaries are few in number and very competitive and there are none that have been specifically set aside for adolescent mothers. It was also evident from the findings that some of them have had positive experiences with the re-admission policy and its implementation. The participants said that some of them were allowed to stay in school while pregnant and also even after changing schools, the administration in the new school allowed them to be in school as much as they were adolescent mothers.

5.2.3 How the re-admission policy and its implementation can be improved in order to benefit adolescent mothers better.

In answering the third research question, three themes emerged. Participating adolescent mothers revealed that there are some strategies that should be put in place in order to improve the re-admission policy and its implementation. One strategy would

be to provide financial assistance to the adolescent mothers. This will enhance their stay in school as most of them drop out of school as they cannot afford to take care of their children and provide for them and also pay their school fees. This assistance can be through provision of bursaries and also through provision of meal cards even when they have not completed paying schools fees. Secondly, the re-admission policy and its implementation can be improved through provision of appropriate guidance and counselling services to the adolescent mothers, their teachers and other students. This will enable the whole school to be aware of the challenges adolescent mothers face and it will be helpful in providing a supportive environment for them. Lastly, schools' principals should be encouraged to introduce policies that favour adolescent mothers as they at times get overwhelmed in trying to balance motherhood and being a student. These policies can be through the introduction of adjustable school reporting and leaving time and also through the introduction of daycare services to enable adolescent mothers to be close to their children especially those who are breastfeeding and those who do not have anyone to take care of their children when they are in school. This ought to enhance the participation of adolescent mothers in schools and reduce education wastage that is brought about by being an adolescent mother.

5.3 Conclusions

The aim of this research was to find out how the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers was being implemented in an urban slum context in Eldoret, Kenya. The analysis of data collected from in-depth interviews and drawings provided rich insights of how the re-admission policy was being implemented in schools located in Langas slum in Eldoret. As a researcher and a participant in this study, I present several conclusions in the order of the objectives of the study.

Regarding support mechanisms that have been put in place by secondary school principals in order to ensure that adolescent mothers fit comfortably in the school environment once they are re-admitted. It was concluded that as much as the secondary schools principals have put in some measures to support the adolescent mothers when they re-enter school, there is still much that needs to be done as the adolescent mothers still face some challenges in school. There is also a deliberate move to conceal information about the re-admission policy by the secondary school principals as they perceive that it will prevent the girls from deliberately getting pregnant. In addition, they are not adequately trained. It is therefore logical to conclude that as much secondary school principals have put in place some support mechanisms to assist adolescent mothers once they are re-admitted, it is still not enough and there is still more to be done to cushion adolescent mothers as they are re-admitted to school.

In relation to the experiences of adolescent mothers about the re-admission policy and its implementation: The study revealed that many adolescent mothers have negative experiences regarding the re-admission policy. This heavily impacted on their will to stay in school as some of them could not handle the pressure that comes with being a student-mother. This study thus came to the conclusion that a conducive school environment is key in ensuring re-admission for adolescent mothers. Thus the school administration should strive to provide a conducive environment for the adolescent mothers in order to ensure that they are able to stay in school are subsequently reduce the dropout rate.

In light of the third objective, considering circumstances surrounding the re-admission policy, it was concluded that there is still more that can be done to ensure that there is improvement in re-admission policy and its implementation. The participants specifically pin pointed that through provision of guidance and counselling to

adolescent mothers, teachers and other students, financial assistance, adequate nutrition and provision of day care services by the school will greatly assist in implementing the re-admission policy. They strongly felt that these measures, once in place will greatly enhance the implementation of the re-admission policy.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested.

First, this study revealed the need of having capacity building for the secondary school principals for them to have an understanding of emerging issues surrounding the re-admission policy and also the rationale of the policy so that they could ensure their teachers understand it and can ensure the implementation thereof.

Secondly, it would be necessary to incorporate the views of the adolescent mothers. Therefore, there is need to provide space for adolescent mothers to inform/advise the MoE and the principal and teachers on how the policy can be better implemented, should be offered regularly. In this way a top down approach can be changed to a bottom up approach, as the adolescent mothers know best what they need.

Thirdly, the government through the relevant organs should employ qualified guidance and counselling teachers. This will ensure that adolescent mothers are being handled by qualified professionals. In an event where it will take time in employing counselors, the number of teachers in charge of guidance and counseling should be increased by employing more teachers who are qualified to offer guidance and counselling so as they are able to provide services to the growing number of adolescent mothers in school especially after the COVID19 pandemic.

In addition, teachers in charge of guidance and counselling should be taken for in-service training in order to refresh their skills in guidance and counselling and also be

sensitized to emerging issues concerning adolescent mothers. These teachers' workload should also be reduced in order for them to be able to concentrate on provide guidance and counselling to adolescent mothers.

On top of that, the policy should make provision for financial assistance for the adolescent mothers especially those in marginalized contexts such as slums. The government should set aside some funds to be channeled to schools with adolescent mothers to help in paying their school fees and also come up with bursaries specifically for adolescent mothers.

Also, the schools should develop some policies that are flexible to accommodate adolescent mothers. Such policies should include; different school reporting and leaving time for adolescent mothers so as they can also take care of their children, provision of daycare services for adolescent mothers who do not have anyone to leave their babies with, provision of adequate and nutritious meals for the adolescent mothers.

Lastly, sensitization about the re-admission policy should also be done in schools and in the communities. School principals should ensure that their students are aware of the policy and its provisions. The community should be sensitized through mass media and chiefs' *barazas* so that adolescent mothers who are not in school and are not aware of the re-admission policy can be informed about the policy. This will also make parents informed about the re-admission policy and it will enable them to support their daughters as they go back to school.

5.5 Theoretical Contribution

This study was anchored on a top-down system approach model of policy implementation which was founded by Pressman and Wildavsky in 1973. The top-down model of policy implementation has four key features that define it. These are;

availability of structures and resources to assist in policy implementation, transparency in the policy making and implementation process, knowledge of factors and conditions that influence implementation and clear and consistent goals articulated at the top of the hierarchy of authority.

In this study, this theory was helpful in answering the research questions. In relation to the first objective, the top down approach as explained by Pressman and Wildavsky ((Hood, cited in Imamura, 2015) explain that for a policy to be successfully implemented, the goals set must be in harmony with the actions that are directed towards achieving the set goals. Therefore, policy implementation is key to the policymaking process. The main goal of the re-admission policy is to ensure that adolescent mothers are able to go back to school after giving birth. This theory then proved useful in gaining an understanding of the support mechanisms that the secondary school principals have put in place to ensure that adolescent mothers fit comfortably in school once they are re-admitted. This is because for the re-admission policy to be implemented, there has to be some actions that have to be put in place in order to achieve the goals of the re-admission policy. Based on this theory, the researcher established that secondary school principals who participated in this study ensured that the adolescent mothers were able to access guidance and counselling services and they were also offered some financial aid in form of meal cards by the school administration. However, this was not adequate to cushion them as the guidance and counselling teachers were not adequate compared to the ballooning number of adolescent mothers and also the government did not provide in service training for guidance and counselling teachers.

Regarding the second objective, the top-down theory of policy implementation provided answers on the experiences of adolescent mothers regarding the re-admission

policy and its implementation. One of the features of the theory is that there should be transparency in the policy making and implementation process. According to Shimanda (2010) the top-down approach to policy implementation is a process that begins with a clear statement from the policymaker who states his or her intentions and it proceeds downwards and becomes more specific and defines what is expected from each implementer (Shimanda, 2010). Transparency in the policy making and implementation process. Based on this feature, the researcher sought to explore the experiences of the adolescent mothers in order to understand in in-depth how this policy is being implemented. The researcher was interested to know if the adolescent mothers were aware of the re- entry policy as they were the beneficiaries of the policy. The study found out most of the adolescent mothers who participated in this study were not aware of the policy. In addition, adolescent mothers faced stigma and discrimination in school and financials constraints. Some adolescent mothers also felt welcomed in school as they were allowed to be in school while pregnant and also those who had transferred from other schools were welcomed in their new schools.

Lastly, the top-down theory of policy implementation enabled the researcher to seek ways in which the re-admission policy and its implementation can be improved in order to benefit adolescent mothers. The top- down theory of policy implementation advocates that there should be knowledge of factors and conditions that influence implementation and clear and consistent goals articulated at the top of the hierarchy of authority. This feature enabled the researcher to find out how the policy can be improved as the researcher sought which conditions influenced the implementation of the re-admission policy and how these conditions can be improved. The study found out that introduction of flexible school policies, provision of guidance and counselling services in school and financial assistance by the government were ways in which the

re-admission policy and its implementation can be improved in order to benefit adolescent mothers.

5.6 Recommendation For Further Research

I recommend the following for further research:

In order to get a wider understanding of the implementation of the re-admission policy, I recommend that the same study should be conducted using a community- based participatory approach, where the stakeholders in the community produce knowledge about adolescent mothers' experiences.

This study was carried out in Eldoret town which is a relatively big town. It is therefore a recommendation that a similar study should be carried out in other slums in other smaller towns in the country to establish how the re-admission policy is being implemented.

While this study focused on the slum parts of Eldoret town, I recommend that a similar study should be carried out in non-slum parts of Eldoret town and with a view of making comparison and inferences on how the re-admission policy is being implemented.

It is a recommendation that research should be carried out on the principals' views on adolescent mothers returning to school.

In addition, a study should be conducted on secondary school boys' views on teenage mothers returning to school.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Guide For Secondary School Principals

School..... Date: Time:

I am Sing'oei Cheruto Mercy, a postgraduate student at Moi University. I am conducting a study on the Implementation of the Re-admission Policy for Adolescent Mothers in an Urban Slum Context in Eldoret, Kenya.

Your willingness to take part in this study is much appreciated. Your responses will be treated in utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only. Please respond to the questions freely and honestly.

The MoE has put a re-admission policy in place for adolescent mothers to return to school. The policy should be implemented in schools.

1. Could you tell me about how you implement the policy and which support mechanisms you put in place to support adolescent mothers.

a) What challenges do you face with implementing the policy?

b) What could be done to make the policy and its implementation more effective?

Thank you for your responses, I request that you allow me to come back and seek clarification if need be. Thank you.

Appendix 2: Drawing Prompt For Adolescent Mothers

School: Date: Time:

I am Sing'oei Cheruto Mercy, a postgraduate student at Moi University. I am conducting a study on the Implementation of the Re-admission policy for Adolescent Mothers in an Urban Slum Context in Eldoret, Kenya.

Your willingness to take part in this study is much appreciated. Your responses will be treated in utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only. Please respond to the questions freely and honestly.

Drawing prompt:

Make a drawing of what the school could do to improve your returning to and fitting into school.

Write a caption to explain the drawing.

Tell us about your drawing.

The researcher will listen carefully and ask clarifying and probing questions.

1. What are some of the challenges you face after being re-admitted?
2. How can the challenges be addressed by the school?
3. What are some of the resources needed to enable you to fit comfortably into school?
4. What is hindering you from going back to school?
5. How can other adolescent mothers be assisted to go back to school after delivery.

Thank you for your responses, I request that you allow me to come back and seek clarification if need be. Thank you.

Appendix 3: Drawing Prompt For Adolescent Mothers

School: Date: Time:

I am Sing'oei Cheruto Mercy, a postgraduate student at Moi University. I am conducting a study on the Implementation of the Re-admission policy for Adolescent Mothers in an Urban Slum Context in Eldoret, Kenya.

Your willingness to take part in this study is much appreciated. Your responses will be treated in utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only. Please respond to the questions freely and honestly.

Make a drawing about your pregnancy and being an adolescent mother at school."

Write a caption to explain the drawing.

Tell us about your drawing.

Researcher listens carefully and asks clarifying and probing questions, e.g.

About the policy and their awareness:

1. How was the school's acceptance of your getting back into school?
2. Did you know about the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers?
If yes, how did you get to know about it?

About adolescent girls being pregnant and being a mother in school:

3. Did you stay in school during pregnancy? If yes, for how long? If no, why not?
4. How was it for you to be a pregnant adolescent in school?
5. What enabled you to get back into school?
6. What made it difficult for you to get back into school?
7. How was it for you to be an adolescent mother in school?

Appendix 4: Moi University Information Consent Form

Researcher's Personal Information

TITLE OF PROJECT	Exploring the Implementation of the Re-Admission Policy for Adolescent Mothers in an Urban Slum Context in Eldoret, Kenya.
ADDRESS	P.o.Box 1100 Nyahururu
POSTAL CODE	20300
CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER (Day & Night)	0717006014

DECLARATION BY THE PARTICIPANT

I, the participant and undersigned	
ADDRESS (of participant)	

I HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS

I, the participant, was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research project that is being undertaken by Sing'oei Cheruto Mercy from the school of education of Moi University Eldoret.

THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME, THE PARTICIPANT

2.1	Aim	The investigator is studying about the implementation of the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers in an urban slum context in Eldoret, Kenya. The information obtained will be used in writing the thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education Research
2.2	Procedures	I understand that I will be making drawings and participate in interviews.
2.3	Risks	I understand that there may be certain discomforts since the topic pertains to teenage motherhood and sexuality, and that I will be allowed to only share and discuss the information that I feel free to share.

2.4	Possible benefits	As a result of my participation in this study, I will get a deep insight about the re-admission policy for adolescent mothers and what the policy says about adolescent mothers going back to school.
2.5	Confidentiality	My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigators since pseudonyms will be used.
2.6	Access to findings	Any new information or benefit that develops during the course of the study will be shared to me orally by the researcher
2.7	Voluntary participation Refusal/ Discontinuation	My participation is voluntary YES..... NO..... My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my present or future care or lifestyle

Name of participant.....

Signature..... Date.....

3. THE ABOVE INFORMATION WAS EXPLAINED TO ME BY;

Sing'oei Cheruto Mercy		
In	SWAHILI	ENGLISH
And I am in command of this language		
I was also accorded an opportunity to ask questions and		
These questions were answered satisfactorily		

4. I.....agree that no pressure was exerted to me to consent to participation and I do understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalization.

5. Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to myself.

A2 I HEREBY VOLUNTARILY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED RESEARCH PROJECT:

Name of Participant.....

Signature/ right thumb print..... Date.....

Name of witness.....

Signature..... Date.....

A3 IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO THE PARTICIPANT

Dear participant, thank you for your participation in this study. Should at any time during this study;

- An emergency arises as a result of the research
- You require any further information with regard to the study

Kindly contact

Sing'oei Cheruto Mercy Telephone number

0717006014

P.O.BOX 3900

MOI UNIVERSITY

08/02/2020

Appendix 5: Permission Request

THE SUB-COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

KAPSERET SUB-COUNTY

P.O.BOX PRIVATE BAG

ELDORET.

3/04/2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

I am Sing'oei Cheruto Mercy, a Master of Education student of Moi University. I am requesting permission to conduct research in schools in Kapseret sub-county involving teenage mothers and secondary school principals. The research I wish to undertake for my Master's thesis involves "Exploring the Implementation of the Re-admission Policy for Adolescent Mothers in an Urban Slum Context in Eldoret, Kenya. This project will be conducted under close supervision of Prof. Catherine Kiprop of Moi University and Prof. Naydene de Lange of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa.

I hereby seek your consent to approach a number of rural secondary schools in Kapseret Sub-County, to provide participants for this study.

Attached are copies of the consent and assent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of approval letter which I received from Moi University. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on: mercycheruto01@gmail.com or 0717006014.

Yours sincerely,

Mercy Cheruto Sing'oei

Appendix 6: Research Permit

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Ref No: **234350**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Miss. Sing'oi Cheruto Mercy Cheruto of Moi University, has been licensed to conduct research in Usisi-Gishu on the topic: EXPLORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RE-ADMISSION POLICY FOR ADOLESCENT MOTHERS IN AN URBAN SLUM CONTEXT IN ELDORET, KENYA for the period ending : 10/February/2022.

License No: **NACOSTEP/21/8933**

234350
Applicant Identification Number

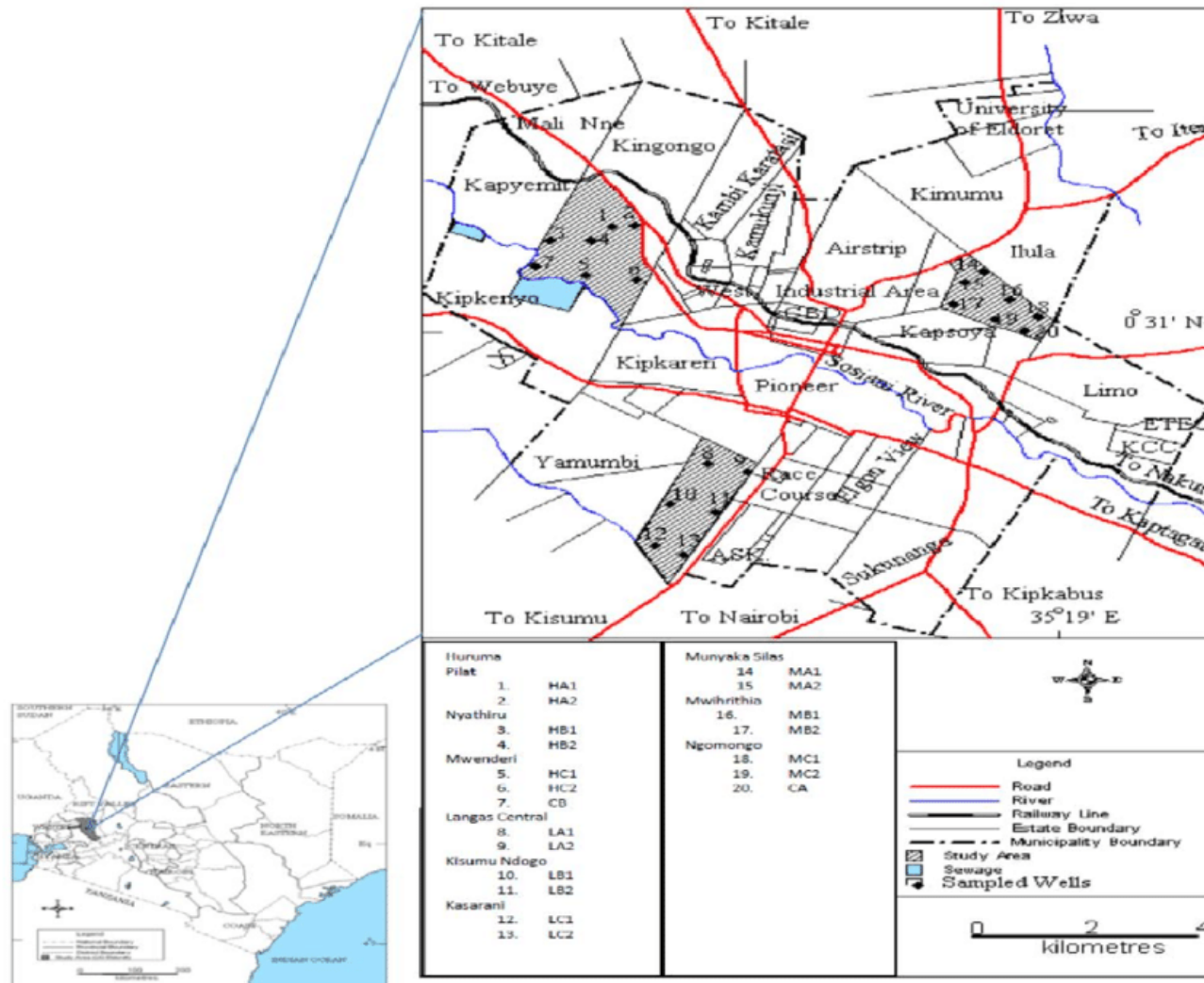
Walter Ombui
Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code



NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

Appendix 7: Langas Slum Map



Courtesy of L. Kanda, School of Arts and Social Sciences; Moi University, 2015