

**TEENAGE MOTHERS' RE-ENTRY EXPERIENCES INTO SECONDARY
SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF KAKIRI SUB COUNTY-WAKISO
DISTRICT, UGANDA**

**BY
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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
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AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN
RESEARCH**

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DECLARATION

Declaration by Candidate

This thesis is my original work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged utilizing complete references and has not been presented for a degree award in any other educational institution of learning for certification. No portion of this thesis may be reproduced without prior permission of the author and or Moi University.

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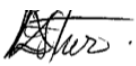
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DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to my heroic mother Regina Nakajumba and my father Joseph Walusimbi who laid my foundation in education. My godfather Bishop Anthony Ruriisa for holding my hand throughout this journey. My sisters and brothers for their moral support. My daughters Generous Thatcher Nabulya and Genius Merkel Namaganda and my husband Lawrence Kasozi Matovu for both moral and financial support during this journey, you have encouraged me throughout this period of study. You are honestly the wind beneath my wings.

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ABSTRACT

Despite there being Teenage Mothers Re-entry Guidelines in Uganda, teenage mothers' re-entry has been a major social, economic, and health challenge in the country. Their experiences of re-entry and retention in mainstream secondary schools in Uganda's rural set-up have not been explored. Thus, this study sought to explore teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools in Kakiri, Sub-County, Wakiso District Uganda. The research objectives were; to examine the factors that influence teenage mothers' decision to return to school; to explore the social experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry; and to identify the support systems teenage mothers have upon re-entry into schools. The study was guided by the Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979) which looks at a child's development within the context of the systems of relationships and employed an Interpretivists paradigm and phenomenological research design within the qualitative approach. Using the purposive sampling technique, three schools were selected with five teenage mothers from each school. Qualitative data was generated using focus group discussions and drawings from teenage mothers, which were analyzed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that among the factors that influence teenage mothers' re-entry into formal education included the stable financial position of their families, parental support for childcare responsibilities, and positive attitude of teenage mother towards education. From the drawings and discussion thereof, it was revealed that teenage mothers experienced stigma, extremely hard times during parenting and being a student, and were largely treated negatively by some unsympathetic teachers, schoolmates, and other community members. However, with these challenges teenage mothers gained support from their mothers, some teachers, siblings, and close friends than the fathers of their babies. The study, therefore, concluded that although teenage mothers experienced challenges during re-entry they received good support from school than that at the community level. The study, therefore, recommended that the schools should strengthen the guidance and counselling department to create a conducive school environment for teenage mothers to be retained in school and integrate life skills programs into the curriculum, and the government should sensitize stakeholders about re-entry guidelines for teenage mothers, promote sexuality education to enable adolescent girls to understand their cycle and the community should embrace the importance of educating the girl child by disregarding social-cultural values about teenage mothers.

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against all Women
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
DEO	District Education Officers
EFA	Education for All
FAWE	Forum for women educationalists
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
HIV	Human Immune Virus
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STEP-UP	Strengthening Evidence for Programming on Unintended Pregnancy
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCE	Uganda Certificate of Education
UDHS	Uganda Demographic Health Survey
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Overview of the Chapter

According to the World Health Organization (2018), teenage pregnancy is a social concern around the world due to its diverse effects on the realization of the full potential of the girl child concerning educational attainment and future career prospects. Motherhood is a substantial and vital aspect of life for many women around the globe (WHO, 2017). For women in societies where motherhood is highly preferred, motherhood is considered fundamental to the woman's identity. Teenage motherhood, happening at a critical developmental stage of teenagers' lives, has been recognized as having adverse social and health significances. Several challenges have been reported affecting their academic performance and class participation. This current study sought to explore the teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools.

This chapter presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. This chapter also describes the scope, limitations, the theoretical and conceptual framework and finally definition of operational terms used in the research.

1.2 Background of the Study

Teenage pregnancies is one of the major social challenges facing the world in the 21st century (Jelly & Sharma, 2018). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines teenage pregnancy as the occurrence of pregnancy in girls aged 10–19. According to SDG 4, quality education is a basic human right for all children and this was acknowledged by many governments including the Ugandan government through the Convention on the Rights of the Children (CRC, 1989). The African Charter

appreciates that education is meant for all despite one's financial status, race, or background (Ndopu et al., 2020). The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2018) stressed that girls under 15 years make up 27.4 percent of the 7.3million teenagers who become mothers each year and if the marvel goes un-addressed by 2030, an extra million girls will become mothers before their 15 birthdays. Despite this acknowledgement, millions of children in Africa, especially girls, do not have access to education which provides the capabilities necessary to take an empowered and equal role in society. UNESCO (2017) indicated that the dominance of school-girl pregnancy remains one of the main challenges to girls' educational accomplishment.

Education is completely recognized as a fundamental factor for human development. The right to education is constitutionally guaranteed for every person in Uganda regardless of sex or other economic and social standings (Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, Article 20). Education widens opportunities, choices, and incomes, and therefore plays a key role in lifting communities out of poverty. For women and girls, education contributes to the lowering of fertility rates, delay the age of marriage, lead to smaller family sizes and a significant reduction in infant and maternal mortality rates which eventually increases their mobility and productivity (Mugarura, 2019). Consequently, in addition to being a right and entitlement for each citizen, education is one of the catalysts for economic growth and development of any country.

Muthoni (2017) highlights that education is a right, irrespective of a girl's status in motherhood. In realizing this idea, schools are mandated to create an environment that meets the needs of pregnant learners and adolescent mothers. Since school

administrators are permitted to regulate the learning environment, they can help ensure that it is protective and supportive of girl child education (Ndopu et al., 2020).

In several countries like Tanzania, re-entry into the school system has been difficult and teenage mothers had to change schools and even their names to re-enter (Johns, 2021). The over-all perception is that girls who became pregnant in school are immoral, sinful and irresponsible and they are usually expelled from school so as not to contaminate others with bad ideas or wrong examples (Masereka, 2021). In Zanzibar, members of parliament had approved an Act of Parliament prohibiting girls who got pregnant from being admitted back to school. This Act was however revoked in January 2006 (Okungu, 2017).

The problem of teenage pregnancy and the actions to address it, however, were not isolated. Malawi, for instance, was reported to have enacted one of the most realistic re-entry programmes for teenage mothers (UNICEF, 2017).

In Kenya, the matter of re-entry changed when the MOE recognized that the dropouts due to teenage pregnancy contributed to the very discrepancies it sought to eradicate and was also a major cause of wastage in the education of girls.

In Kenya, however, the Ministry of Education recommended the adoption of a mechanism to authorize teenage mothers re-enter school after delivery. The mechanism required the pregnant girl to leave school and return one year after delivery. This initiative was intended at enlightening access to education for those girls who became pregnant while in school. These mechanisms, however, are acting as statements and they do not evidently state the objectives to be met or the implementation approaches to be employed. Furthermore, although the re-entry mechanism of the ministry of education was well intended, many challenges and

predicaments experienced by both the girls and parents or guardians of the girls who fell pregnant while in school have received a lot of criticism in recent years (Mwangi, 2021). Heated debates in the media, public forums, and social media among other platforms have been conducted about the implementation of the Re-Entry strategy for girls who fall pregnant and are readmitted to schools. Some sections of society have fervently called for its abolition. Uganda's population is chiefly young; with approximately 37% of the total population being of school-going age (6 to 19 years) while 32% are teenagers (13 to 19 years) (UNPHC, 2017). Schooling children and teenagers dedicate over 80% of their time at education institutions, thus schools have an unusual opportunity to support millions of young people to attain health-supportive knowledge, values and behavior patterns that are valuable to themselves, other children, their families and community members. Schools can help young people to obtain positive sexual and reproductive knowledge so as to manage contradictory cultural norms and practices.

Pregnancy among adolescent girls is a significant challenge globally and is often considered a major impediment to the elimination of gender disparities in education and the attainment of every child's basic human right to education (Somani, 2017).

Kelly, (2012) supported the concurrence of the effectiveness and need of a policy to re-admit girls that fall pregnant into schools have pointed out the significance of educating girls to reduce infant mortality and morbidity, improve family nutrition and health, lowering fertility rates, increase chances of children's education, and increasing opportunities for income earning in both wage and non-wage sectors.

Secondary education is a significant sector in national and individual growth since it prepares students for vocational and professional training. This motivated the

government of Uganda to make secondary education part of elementary education and introduced Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2007. USE has opened doors to thousands of secondary school children countrywide to acquire education (Barrera et al., 2018).

Following significant gains in access to primary education since 1997 when universal primary education (UPE) was introduced, Uganda in 2007 became the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to introduce universal secondary education (USE) (Barrera et al., 2016). This bold step by the Government of Uganda led to an increase in lower secondary enrolment by nearly 25% between 2007 and 2012 (Barrera et al., 2016). However, the challenge to expand secondary school enrolment remains immense. Net enrolment in secondary education estimated by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) to be 25 percent in 2015 (UBOS, 2017) is among the lowest in East Africa. Meanwhile, the secondary school age population is rapidly increasing, finances are constrained, and there is a growing need to improve quality along with access. Since USE was launched in 2007, the number of schools grew from 363 schools in 2007 to more than 800 in 2016, covering nearly a third of all students enrolled in secondary school in Uganda.

Despite the advancement made, studies still discovered that girls' involvement, retention and accomplishment rates specifically at the secondary school education level are still inferior compared to that of the boys. Girls make up two-thirds of the population that do not have access to basic education leading to lower literacy rates to that of the boys. The studies also revealed that one major cause of this difference was the high dropout rate among girls due to teenage pregnancy (Barrera et al., 2018). The dropout rate among teenage girls in secondary school was estimated at 45% compared to 27% of boys (UBOS, 2017).

In countries like Uganda and Kenya where adolescent childbearing is common, it was estimated that between 10,000 and 13,000 girls left school each year due to pregnancy alone. According to a survey conducted by CSA (2018), among secondary school students, 13% had gotten pregnant by the time they were 14 years old. The survey also revealed that three in ten adolescents began childbearing by age 18.

Despite the enabling legal and policy structure on gender equality in education in Uganda, current data shows increasing cases of teenage pregnancy among adolescent girls aged 10-19 years in educational institutions in Uganda (UDHS, 2017). Several factors responsible for this worrying situation include increase in sexual abuse of children, poor parenting styles, lack of life skills, and negative social and cultural norms among others (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (2016) indicated that 1 in 5 women in Uganda begins sexual activity before age 15, while 64% have sex before age 18. 1 in 4 adolescent girls aged 15-19 are already mothers or pregnant with their first child. Teenage childbearing is higher in rural areas (27%) compared to 19% in urban areas.

The increase and subsequent dropout of schoolgirls who are becoming teenage mothers is an issue of great concern because once a pregnant girl leaves school she seldom goes back and as a result, her education is cut short. This affects her economically making her future and that of her child unwelcoming. In Uganda like any other African country, there are limited employment opportunities that can pay remunerations and benefits for those who neither completed high school nor acquired the 'necessary papers' like UCE Certificate. This limits teenage mothers' chances of getting a job or furthering their education unless she completes their secondary education. The statistics on teenage pregnancies and the subsequent dropout of girls in

Ugandan secondary schools reveal that the problem requires urgent attention from the government and society at large (UBOS, 2017).

The onset of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 resulted in total lockdown and closure of all education institutions which affected social protection systems for adolescent girls leading to increase in cases of defilement, child marriages and teenage pregnancies, (UNICEF, 2021). More than 73,000 learning institutions closed, and consequently, 15 million learners and 600,000 refugee learners are out of school (Ssebwami, 2020). There is overwhelming evidence that the longer children are out of school, the greater the risk of violence, rape, child marriages, child labour, prostitution and other life-threatening often criminal activities (Muwagga et al., 2015).

A UNFPA (2021) study found that a total of 354,736 teenage pregnancies were registered in 2020 and a total of 290,219 registered between January and September 2021 implying an average of over 32,000 teenage pregnancies recorded per month. Projections show that families of all teenage mothers in Uganda in 2020 will spend 194M USD on children born in 2020 to complete secondary education in 2038, (World Vision Report, 2022)

Analysis of data from District Health Information System, 2021 shows a 17% spike in teenage pregnancies in Uganda between the onset of COVID-19 related lockdown in March 2020 and June 2021. The high rate of teenage pregnancy was ascribed to poverty which led to some parents marry off their daughters in order to get money to survive and disruptions of education and health services which made it hard to find innovative ways of supporting school girls to make informed decisions regarding sexual relationships and protecting them from sexual abuse, (Human Rights Watch,

2021). Save the children international re-purposed an existing curriculum to deliver sexuality education to young people forced out of school due to the pandemic.

According to UNICEF, 2022, adolescent girls have been deprived of the social protection offered by the school and have been exposed to risk of sexual violence, child marriages and teenage pregnancies. However, at the ICPD25 Summit in Nairobi, Uganda made a commitment to eliminate obstacles that stand in the way of girls' empowerment including teenage pregnancy. Various organizations like UNFPA, Twaweza Sauti za Wanainchi, Save the Children and Human Rights Watch are working with Ministry of Education to provide policy guidance to support safe re-entry of girls after pregnancy given the gaps identified in the current re-entry guidelines that keeps a teenage mother out of school for almost a year.

Uganda has acknowledged education as an influential tool for social, and economic development and revolution since the early years of political independence. It is stressed that education had been considered critical for the realization of national unity, democracy and social justice for all citizens (Higgins et al., 2016). Likewise, Uganda's vision 2040 recognizes education as a key end, strong driver of economic growth, providing human capital development required to strengthen and to hasten the country's transformation and harness the demographic dividend (Uganda Vision 2040).

A study with children in focus groups in Sierra Leone reported a direct link between school closures and increases in child labour and exploitation, exposure to violence in the home and community, and teenage pregnancy (Risso and Finnegan, 2015). Moreover, children described taking on new roles and responsibilities to supplement

household income, with concerns expressed by girls about risks of assault or rape when they went to collect water, or travelled long distances to trade in other villages.

The study by Ministry of Education and Sports, 2015 about Linkages between Teenage Pregnancy and School Dropout in Uganda established that school dropouts due to pregnancy among girls 14 to 18 years of age are 22.3 %.

Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (2018) in the Violence against Children Survey established that sexual violence among girls is still high at 35% and closely half of these girls experienced sexual violence before the age of 16 years. Early teenage pregnancy has far-reaching repercussions not only for the girl herself but also for their children, their families and society at large (MoES, 2015).

In Uganda, the M.o.E.S, 2015 developed guidelines for the prevention and management of HIV/AIDs and unintended pregnancy in school settings in Uganda which were later revised to incorporate the re-entry aspect. Though schools have been recording cases of teenage pregnancy, there has not been an organized way of managing these cases to conclusions.

Presently, teenage pregnancy remains an inordinate challenge in Uganda. In 2011, over 24% of teenagers reported having commenced childbearing (UDHS, 2016). In addition to the related health challenges, teenage pregnancy repeatedly leads to school dropout causing loss of potential productivity which in the long run accelerates poverty (MoES 2015). However, in the study by Naidoo et al, 2019 on the re-entry of teenage mothers to school, it was revealed that majority of teachers and students were in contradiction of retaining pregnant girls in school but upheld the option of re-entry of girls into school after giving birth.

This study aims at exploring teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools as it has been reported by several studies that they encounter “mockery and discriminatory language” from the school community when they re-enter. Furthermore, the mode in which schools manage teenage pregnancy varies from school to school with little (if any) oversight. It is characterized by expulsion; however, this is on the moralistic ground and not supported by any government directive. Nevertheless, many affected adolescents are enthusiastic to endure with schooling till they complete the school cycle and attain their expected academic qualifications. Given the right to education, the schools have to support these adolescents optimally till they complete the school cycles. It is against this background, therefore, that this study focused on examining the factors that influence the decision of teenage mothers to re-enter school, exploring the social experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry into secondary schools and identifying support systems teenage mothers have upon re-entry into secondary schools to advocate for a second chance in education for the girl child and realize the Dakar Declaration of Education for All and access to quality basic education.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Considerable effort has been directed towards the promotion of girls' education in Uganda through the introduction of re-entry guidelines in December 2020. According to Naidoo et al, 2019, educating a girl-child is a long-term investment that yields an extraordinarily great return. One of the most substantial challenges that seriously affects the education attainment of girls is teenage pregnancy and subsequent dropouts. When teenage mothers fail to return to school, they lose their already low chance of continuing their education and ultimately be gainfully employed. Uganda

Demography Health Survey, 2016 indicates that adolescent childbearing is more common in rural areas at 27% than in urban areas at 19%.

Despite the introduction of the re-entry guidelines in Uganda, it is established that a significant majority (6in10) of teenage mothers are still not attending school, (UNFPA Report, 2021). Nevertheless, the dynamics that influence the decision and capability of teenage mothers to re-enter or return to school have not been satisfactorily explored. There is limited experiential literature and a complete study that explores the experiences and factors that enlighten their decision to re-enter or totally drop out of school. Past studies have focused largely on the causes and effects of teenage pregnancies but not particularly on teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into formal education. This pointed to a gap between the postulated policy guidelines and the actual practice on the ground.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused additional, unexpected disruption, and the likelihood of vulnerable children being able to carry on their education has plummeted. Before the COVID-19 crisis, 258 million children of primary and secondary school age were already failing to acquire education. United Nations (2021) estimated that approximately 11 million primary and secondary school learners globally – 5.2 million of whom are girls – are at risk of not returning to education as a result of school closures due to COVID-19. Upon re-entry, teenage mothers face challenges that affect their concentration in class, reporting to class and general performance. Unless something is done to find solutions to these challenges, the goals of re-entry into secondary schools by teenage mothers may not be realized and thus dropout rates may continue. This inspired the researcher to carry out this study.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County-Wakiso District, Uganda.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The study intends:

- i. To examine the factors that influence teenage mothers' decision to return to school in Kakiri Sub County Wakiso district Uganda.
- ii. To explore social experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County Wakiso district Uganda.
- iii. To identify the support systems teenage mothers have upon re-entry into secondary schools in Kakiri sub-county, Wakiso District Uganda.

1.6 Research Questions

In order to achieve the above objectives this study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the factors that influence teenage mothers' decision to return to school in Kakiri Sub-county Wakiso District Uganda?
- ii. What are the social experiences of teenage mothers upon reentry into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County Wakiso District, Uganda?
- iii. What support systems do teenage mothers have upon reentry into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County, Wakiso District, Uganda?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of this research would provide an important empirical basis (document of reference) to the ongoing discussion by education policymakers, curriculum developers and funding agencies on re-entry policy and teen mothers' education and.

M.o.E.S will identify areas which need attention as far as the financing of education to address the challenges faced by teenage mothers upon re-admission to schools.

The study would be important in influencing the guidance and counselling department to intervene and enhance school mechanisms crucial in the socialization of teenage mothers to retain them in school and help them to achieve their academic dreams by providing a conducive, supportive and socially friendly school environment for them.

The study would help inform the school administrators to ensure the availability of both material and human resources that fit the needs of teenage mothers. This can only be filled if the girl child is accepted as part of inevitable change.

Teen mothers would directly benefit from the proposed study as it will inform practice at the school level, home and community concerning admission and retention of teen mothers into secondary schools such that the girl child achieves their full right to education.

This research would be useful in addressing limitations to policy execution and inform future programs geared towards increasing girls' participation in education. The re-entry of the teenage mothers will help reduce wastage and the nation will obtain the benefits of educating girls.

The research would contribute to the pool of knowledge in research which may lead to further creative and interesting research in various fields in education hence attracting readership and study of the discipline.

1.8 Justification of the Study

Education is a basic human right, not a privilege and should be accessed by all including teenage mothers (UNESCO, 2013). SDG 4 & 5 target promoting gender equality and empowering women hence eliminating gender disparities at all levels of

education, however, the idea of universal education remains unfulfilled and gender gaps persist until today. This makes the study of teenage mothers' re-entry experiences justifiable if the out-of-school population in which the greater percentage is the girls is to be minimized. With the increasing numbers of teenage pregnancy rates and its high degree of sensitivity, this study on the exploration of re-entry experiences into secondary schools among teenage mothers would help to influence policymakers, especially towards the provision of access and retention of teenage mothers in schools through the strengthening of the intervention strategies on re-entry by all stakeholders. In addition, it would promote girls' education by reducing stereotypes and prejudices that bedevil them in school, the researcher explored social re-entry experiences because teenage mothers' level of socialization determines her retention in school given practical solutions prescribed in supporting them satisfactorily to cope with schooling and parenting.

1.9 Scope of the Study

This research study was carried out in Kakiri Sub County-Wakiso District, Central Uganda from September 2021 to April 2022. Wakiso district is located on the outskirts of Kampala city the capital of Uganda. This district is located in central Uganda bordered by Kalangala Islands (In Lake Victoria) to the south, Mpigi and Mubende districts to the west, Luwero to the North, and Mukono district to the East. Wakiso has 3 counties, 17 sub-counties and 131 parishes.

This study concentrated on rural mixed secondary schools (government aided) because more girls drop out of school at the secondary level (form two and form three) rather than the primary level. The study covered schooling teenage mothers in selected schools, particularly engaging girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy and subsequently re-entered school after childbirth.

The study examined the factors that influence teenage mothers' decision to re-enter into secondary schools, explored the social experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry and identified the support systems teenage mothers have upon re-entry into secondary schools.

Theoretically, the study adopted the Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner developed in 1979. This theory focuses on the layers of the environment identified as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem, and the interaction between the individual (teenage mother) and her environment. It looks at an individual's development within the framework of the system of relationships.

Methodologically, the study used drawings and focus group discussions to generate data.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The study required the researcher to reconnaissance the policy documents on the re-entry of teenage mothers, records performance and general school participation of teenage mothers through content analysis. This was limited by the availability and accessibility of the documents to the researcher.

Stigma, shame and quietness cover issues of teenage pregnancy, school dropout and re-entry issues.

This was a weakness for the participants to give truthful information and open up. In each case, secrecy and confidentiality was guaranteed to the participants by the investigator. The researcher also omitted all the names (anonymity) of the respondents in the final report.

The study was limited to Kakiri sub-county rural mixed secondary schools only and to teenage mothers who were at the age of nineteen and below at the time of getting

babies and are in schools during the period of research. This locked out the contribution from those probably at home which may limit the generalizability of the research findings.

1.11 Assumptions of the Study

This research study relied on the following assumptions;

All government-aided secondary schools are inclusive by re-admitting teenage mothers. This meant that all government schools allowed teenage mothers to enter school with ease and that such schools provided inclusive education that made the teenage mother comfortable while at school.

Teenage mothers are profound to re-enter the mainstream schools after delivery either in their former schools or in other schools. This meant that teenage mothers are supposed to re-enter secondary schools after keeping other factors constant.

Sample identified as the population availed valuable and honest insights on the topic. Given the sensitivity of the phenomenon under investigation, it was assumed that participants may shy away from telling the truth about what is needed to address the research objectives.

1.12 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks are structures that hold a theory or set of theories of a research study which explains why the research problem under study exists (Labaree, 2013). A theory provides a lens for the study focus and research questions asked (Creswell, 2013).

This study was guided by the Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner developed in 1979. This theory focuses on the layers of the environment identified as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem, and the

interaction between the individual (teenage mother) and her environment based on the processes that occur in each of these systems (Johnson, 2005). It looks at an individual's development within the framework of the system of relationships that form complex layers of her environment. This postulates that human development and experiences would be explored, understood, and construed through the constant interactions between the environmental components (Von Bertalanffy, 1972). According to Jack Leonard (2011), the theory suggests that human development and experiences are immersed in a set of interconnected systems which influences the interactions between the individual and the social environment.

Teenage motherhood is a significant social issue that can impact the education and future opportunities of young women. Re-entering secondary school after becoming a teenage mother presents unique challenges and experiences for these young women. The theory that can be applied to understand teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools is the ecological system theory. It's further discussed below;

The microsystem (first layer) is the immediate environment that the individual interact with. This includes the teenage mothers' immediate family, peers, and school environment which can affect her decision to re-enter school and her experiences in the classroom. This is where the teenage mother has a link with parents (family), peers and teachers (school) which influences her experiences and attitudes in regard to their age, gender, sex etc. Data collected from teenage mothers at this level focused on the interactions the teen mothers have with their immediate context and how this influenced their re-entry into secondary school. The Re-entry guidelines necessitate that teenage mothers should be given support so as to continue with schooling. Any breakdown on the relationship between the school and the home would have negative impact on the teenage mothers who need a lot of support.

The mesosystem represents the interactions between different microsystems such as the relationship between the teenage mother's family and the school which can influence her access to resources and support and interactions between the teachers and the teenage mothers. This recognizes the fact that the microsystem does not work in unison but stresses the interconnected nature of the sub systems and their influences on the teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools. School counselors, teachers and school administrators need to encourage vigorous participation of parents in school retention of their daughters by informing them about Re-entry guidelines and its importance. According to Bronfenbrenner, schools should work to support and create an environment that welcomes and nurtures families (Berk, 2000).

The exosystem represents the largest social system and external environmental settings which comprises of indirect influences on the individual such as government policies and social norms that impact teenage mothers' experiences upon re-entry in school. Bronfenbrenner presents this as a link between two settings; the immediate setting and the other is where the teenage mother may not play an active role. This includes the school policies on pregnancy and parenting, societal attitude towards teenage motherhood, legal services, rules and regulations within the school policies where teenage mothers would not have an active role to play but directly interfaces with decisions made at that level. For example, parents' decision to take their daughters back to school after birth may be influenced by the views of relatives, religious authorities or even the media.

The macrosystems refers to the broader cultural and social values that shape the individual's (teenage mother) experiences. This system contains all of the various beliefs and values of the culture, and is made up of written and unwritten principles

that regulate behavior. These included the cultural attitudes towards teenage motherhood, cultural values of the communities (value of virginity), customs and laws, ethnicity of the teenage mother and political and economic ideologies. These can affect all the other layers either directly or indirectly. For instance, community's cultural values can determine whether parents take their daughters back to school or not after delivery. Economic constraints can also inhibit their efforts to educate them and also, gender roles and societal expectations which influenced gender norms and the value placed on education of the girl child and the ethnicity of teenage mothers endows individual life with meaning and value, and regulates the nature and scope of the connections between the numerous levels of the social system. In this current study, it is clearly understood that culture and beliefs shape the experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry.

Lastly, Bronfenbrenner presents the issue of time in the last layer referred to as the chronosystem. It consists of change or consistency over time in the characteristics of the individual and the environment and the time when events happened. It accounts for the temporal changes in the individual's environment and socio-historical events that occur over time and their influence on the interactions between developing individuals and the ecological systems in which they are embedded (Johnson, 2005). In line with the current study, the issue of time was eminent in terms of age at which the girl got pregnant. This further highlights the need for understanding teen mothers' life transitions over the life course and its influence on their experiences regarding the re-entry into secondary school.

Overall, the ecological systems theory can provide a framework for understanding the multiple levels of influence that impact teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools. This framework includes multi-dimensional social contexts and it

provides a multi-perspective analysis of the research findings. It recognizes that the experiences of teenage mothers are shaped at many levels by their immediate environments, interactions between different systems and broader cultural and social values. By understanding these influences, schools and policy makers can develop interventions and support systems to improve the educational outcomes and future opportunities of teenage mothers.

The Ecological Systems Theory was pertinent to this study because people around the teenage mothers have a crucial role to play in meeting her needs of continuation with education after delivery. They need to work in collaboration in order to enable the teenage mother re-enter school. It was anticipated that if all these people (family and school) willingly participate in playing their roles in the re-entry process by providing the required necessitates/ support, teenage mothers would be retained in school so as to achieve their educational goals.

The ecological systems theory speaks to the current study because of the way the matter of teenage motherhood and re-entry is perceived in society and gather perspectives on various levels of the **model**. In this study, teenage mothers should be supported by the policy framework and school setting to enhance their access to equitable education through continuation, re-entry retention and completion levels.

Rafferty, 2013 noted that Ecological systems theory emphasized that no child developed in a vacuity and the environment played a vital role in their daily life, beliefs, and sociological perspectives. The study contributed to the literature on teenage mothers' re-entry experiences and government policies. He further stresses that teenage mothers be given a second chance in education as provided for in the

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) for all children regardless of their gender, age, tribe, color and social origin.

Basing on the tenets of the theory, the study was positioned to explore experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry regarding the interrelated ecological systems theory which provided a phenomenological research design where data was generated through an interactive process between the researcher and the participants (Nowell, Norris, White and Moules, 2017).

According to Tucket (2005), data analysis would reflect the relationship patterns of change in the individual and their environment. Basing on the current study, the theory offered a systematic framework that assisted in pointing out the interrelated patterns within the experiences of the teenage mothers regarding re-entry policy guidelines hence providing lens for interpretation of the data generated and the findings.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

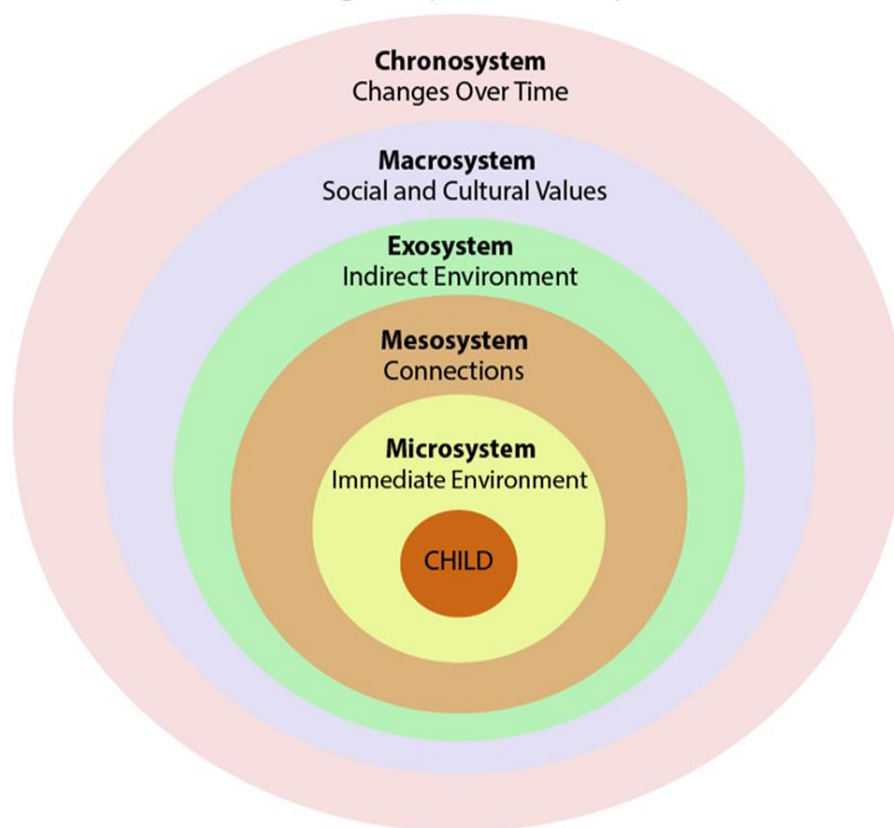


Figure 1.1: Theoretical Framework

Source: The psychology notes headquarters <https://www.PsychologyNotesHQ.com>

1.13 Conceptual Framework

Mugenda and Mugenda (2006), define a conceptual framework as a graphical or diagrammatic representation of the relationship between variables in the study. It's a set of ideas used to structure the research and guide an inquiry.

In order to provide understanding of experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry and support systems they have upon re-entry, these concepts are interlinked directly to the research aims and objectives. From the theoretical framework, it was noted that the interaction and interdependence of various layers influenced the teenage mother to remain in school hence increased chances of educational attainment by moving from the zone of exclusion from education to that of inclusion.

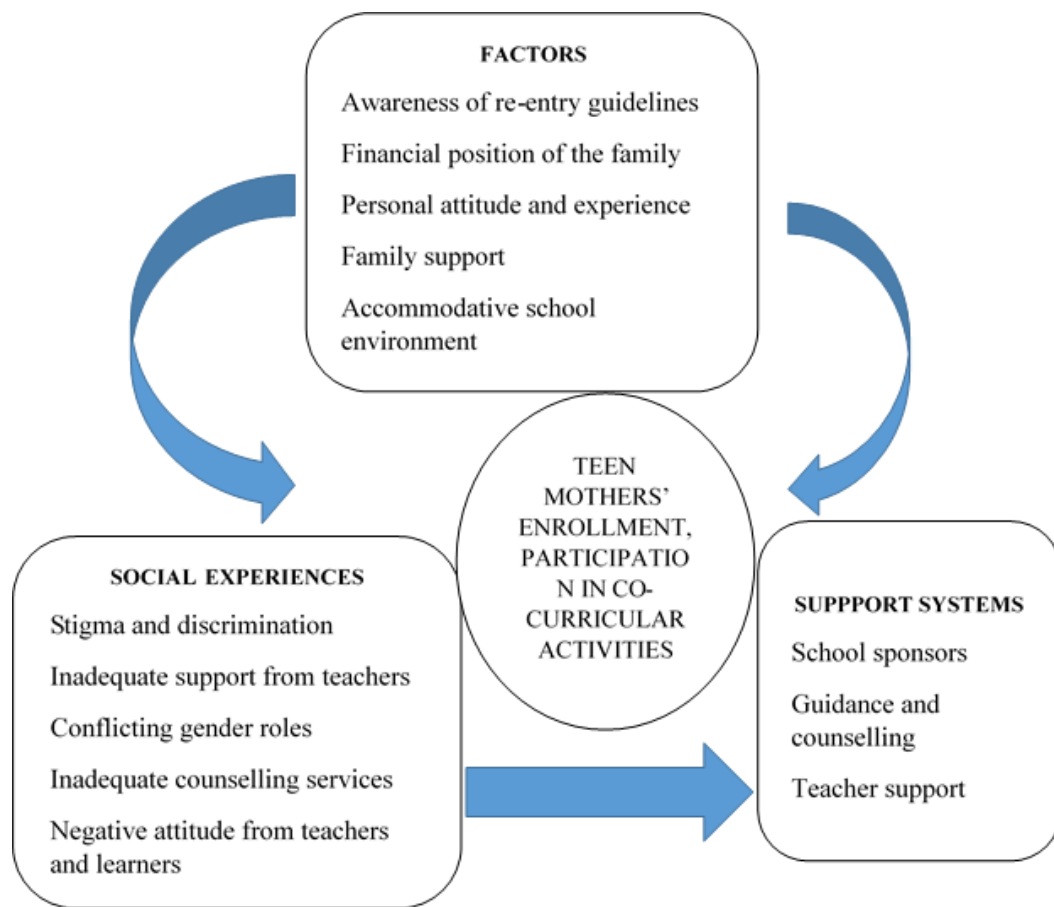


Figure 1.2: Conceptual Framework (Source, Researcher)

1.14 Operational Definition of Terms

Teenage mothers: school-going girls or young girls between 13-19 years, who become pregnant, give birth and choose to raise the child (WHO, 2022).

Re-entry: The process where a teenage mother is permitted to re-enroll into a secondary school after delivery and she is set to continue with her education. Re-admission may be used interchangeably with re-entry (Johnson, 2022).

Experiences: The Oxford English dictionary defines experiences as an event or occurrence which leaves an impression on someone that is a particular instance of personally encountering or undergoing something. (Druke, 2011).

In the current study, experiences meant difficulties or challenges that teenage mothers face as a result of motherhood and upon re-entry into mainstream schools.

- ❖ **Social experiences** in this research refer to all those difficulties teenage mothers experience in relations of joint interactions and collaborations with other people living in an ordered community. For example those relationships that teenage mothers have with the community, their peers, parents, offsprings and social organizations such as the school (teachers and fellow learners), the church and health care facilities.

Support systems are a network of people or facilities who interact to provide an individual with practical and emotional assistance that enables them to live a certain style for example home/family, school and government. In this research, support systems are a set of joining parts which work together to assist teenage mother with necessities which she requires as a result of being a teenage mother.

- ❖ **Home Support;** is supportive care provided by the caregiver or parent in the individual home where the teenage mother lives.
- ❖ **School Support;** refers to a wide variety of instructional methods, educational services and school resources provided to teenage mothers in the effort to help them accelerate their learning progress, catch up with their peers and succeed in school.
- ❖ **Government Support:** refers to assistance given by the government to enable the school to accommodate teenage mothers in education for example financial support, expert advice, information and services.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presented a review of literature related to the study drawn from various sources. It discussed Girl-Child education. Teenage pregnancy menace, the fate of COVID- 19. It also looked at the three major areas of this study that is factors that influence teenage mothers' decision to re-enter secondary school, experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry into secondary schools and support services teenage mothers have upon re-entry into secondary schools.

2.2 Girl-Child Education and its benefits

Education is everybody's human right. This simple fact is UNICEF's commitment to girls' education (UNICEF, 2018). This means that no girl however poor or desperate her country's situation is, should not be excluded from school to develop to her fullest potential. This is full support of the convention on the rights of children that give every child a right to education irrespective of their social, ethnic and economic background. Policies that support girl child education include; The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1976), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), all recognize education as a human right and point out that each child has a right to education and proper measures should be taken to encourage regular attendance at schools and reduce drop-out rates. In terms of girl child education, Uganda has registered some achievements. Enrolment of girls and boys at the primary school level has almost reached the 50/50 mark. Since the introduction of UPE, Uganda has registered an unprecedented increase in enrolment in primary

schools. Secondary school enrolment for girls has also increased. At the tertiary level, the affirmative action policy that accords 1.5 extra points to every qualifying female has seen a substantial increase of female students from a mere 20% in the 1980s to 47-48 % in the current period (FAWE, 2015).

However, at the primary and secondary school level, most of the children who enroll do not realize their right to full basic education as most of them drop out, today 54 out of 100 children who enroll in primary one complete primary seven (2009/10). This when further disaggregated by gender indicates that only 51 girls out of 100 complete primary education as opposed to 56 boys. The magnitude of dropouts due to early pregnancy has been documented. According to the 2006 Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS), 12% of girls aged 15-19 years were pregnant, while 19% had ever given birth to a child. Almost 20% of girls compared to 2% of boys aged 15 -19 were married or living together in marital unions with the median age at first marriage below 18.5 years. All these girls are within the school-going age (primary and secondary) and are very likely to have failed to realize their right to education.

Maluwa Banda (2016), argues that girls' education is an investment that serves as a way to achieve education for all for self-advancement and fulfilment of development outcomes for present and future generations. Chege and Sifuna (2010) noted that keeping girls in school lowers their vulnerability to HIV and equips them to make decisions about their lives and provides them with higher income earning activities. SDG Report (2016), reveals that more educated mothers have skills to compete for highly paid jobs, and are in a position to feed, care and educate their children at all levels. It also empowers them to be involved in decision-making from the household to the national level and even influence the allocation of resources to gender-related issues. SDG 3 emphasizes good health and well-being for all at all ages, it addresses

all major health priorities like reproductive, maternal child and adolescent health. World Bank (2018) argues that gross inequalities and high rates of poverty today are directly related to under-investment in children, especially in terms of health and education. It further stresses that teenage pregnancy is the third main reason why young women drop out of school which eventually reduce their income in the long-term. Countries that invest in promoting the social-economic status of women tend to have lower poverty rates due to increased participation of women in various activities.

2.3 Teenage Pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy is a prevalent phenomenon in both the developed and developing world that poses a global challenge due to its impact on the health, education and productivity of young girls, their children and the entire society (UNFPA, 2015). Teenage pregnancy and motherhood affect all communities all over the world. Out of the 16million children born to women under the age of 20 worldwide, more than 7.3 million of these births are from developing countries. The USA still has the highest rates of teenage pregnancies among the developed countries in the World including Germany, France, Italy, Canada and Japan (Kost & Henshaw, 2015).

The situation of teenage pregnancy in schools cuts across the African continent - East, West and South Africa. For instance, Eloundou-Enyégué (2014) found that although pregnancy was not the source of all dropouts among girls in Cameroon, it was the greatest contributor to the gender gap in educational attainment, particularly at the secondary level. In South Africa, it is noted that although girls advance more quickly than boys through primary school, they begin to falter at the secondary level, (J. Naidoo et al, 2020). Most school delays were attributed to economic constraints; however, among 20–22-year-old females who experienced a school delay, more than one-fourth attributed their delay to a pregnancy (Hallman and Grant 2006). Although

there are creative measures put in place, there is no clear strategy in Uganda to deal with issues of school pregnancies which account for the majority of cases of school dropouts for girls, apart from allowing a pregnant girl already registered in a candidate class to sit for exams. At the school level, many practices exist regarding how to address cases of girls who get pregnant. These include; automatic expulsion, suspension, periodic checkups of girls for pregnancy, pregnant girls running out of school especially when school authorities have not yet noticed her, aborting and reappearing in school as well as giving birth and re-joining the same school or a different school altogether thus teenage pregnancies have continued to disrupt and affect girls' education thereby blocking the celebrated achievement of increasing female enrolment in school.

2.4 Teenage Pregnancy in Africa

In developing countries, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest number of teenage mothers whereby 53% of the girls are already teenage mothers by the age of 18 years making them poorer and having their children in impoverished circumstances making them liable to repeated pregnancies and subsequent childbirth are likely to occur (Gyesaw and Ankomah, 2013).

In 2018, the estimated global adolescent birth rate was 42 births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19. In sub-Saharan Africa, the regional adolescent birth rate is more than double the global average, with 101 births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19.

Teenage pregnancy in many African countries has been associated with a legacy of forced sex, poverty and violence. It has been noted that an information gap among female students concerning sexuality education and contraceptives use is one of the factors resulting in premarital sex among adolescents.

In Nigeria, the situation is affecting many girls coupled with gender exclusion. Much has not been done to socialize the teenage mother and allow them equal opportunities for education like special teenage mothers programs are hardly in a place to sensitize the communities to the plight of teen mothers (Mulama, 2012). In Botswana, similar trends were observed which led to the establishment of special schools for teen mothers with special units for babies and the provision of financial supplements. However, giving support without adequate counselling and guidance, made many teenage mothers to still drop out of school after re-admission or failed academically (Pillai & Gupta, 2000).

Malawi is another country that has attempted for teen mothers to return to school (re-enrollment) which succeeded with the help of NGOs and USAID whose campaign has led to the acceptance of teen mothers in schools. Also, community sensitization by the village chiefs and elders has been instrumental in counselling teachers, and parents have also helped to enhance and support in and out of school teen mothers. (Maria, 2019). In Namibia, a policy on learner pregnancy was introduced in 2008, seeking to address teenage pregnancy among school girls, which was seen as a barrier to the elimination of gender disparities in education and SDG 5 regarding gender equality in education by 2015. If a girl child becomes pregnant by a schoolboy child, both of them are entitled to leave, when the time of delivery comes. They are supposed to go for counselling to develop their sense of responsibility and accountability in the emotional, moral and financial spheres. Both the girl child and the boy child are allowed to return to school after the delivery of their child after twelve months of absence from school (Ministry of Education in Namibia, 2008). The Re-entry Policy Statement in the 2011 Education and Training Sector Policy in Swaziland states that

all children, irrespective of their life circumstances, have the right to be re-integrated into the educational institution they previously attended.

Simelane, Thwala, & Mamba (2013) further indicate that most pregnant learners disappear without questioning the stigmatization associated with their pregnancy. School principals and teachers are skeptical about tagging the student mothers, suggesting that it may constitute stigmatization, (Qand'elinhle et al., 2014). The Department of Education has initiated an awareness to capacitate teachers, principals and government officials to enable them to understand and accommodate learners who gave birth, to assist and build them into better parents.

2.5 COVID-19 around the World in Relation to Education

The COVID-19 pandemic is currently posing a significant threat to the world's public health and social-economic growth, especially in the education sector. On 30th January 2020, this outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International concern and on 11th February 2020, WHO named it COVID-19. Subsequently on 11th March 2020, WHO declared this to be a pandemic. Teenage pregnancies, among other risk factors, are adding to the number of girls who are not in school. Even before Covid-19, there were 98 million adolescent girls worldwide who were not in school and research suggests the pandemic could add 20 million. Since March 2020, attempts to avert the global health crisis have seen nationwide school closures in 194 countries, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners – over 90 per cent of the world's school-going population. For the most vulnerable children, especially girls, accessing education and staying in school is hard enough.

The United Nations (2021) estimated that nearly 11 million primary and secondary school learners worldwide – 5.2 million of whom are girls – are at risk of not

returning to education following school closures due to COVID-19 leading to a high vulnerability that is known to be intensified by school closures in times of crisis and risks the continued education of vulnerable children.

A study done by World Vision, (2021) indicated that as many as one million girls may be blocked from returning to school due to teenage pregnancy during COVID-19 school closures. Sub-Saharan Africa especially Uganda is poised for a further crisis in girls' education unless governments urgently develop plans for the continued education of pregnant girls and re-entry of adolescent mothers into schools. The study further reveals that if countries across Sub-Saharan Africa fail to ensure the continued education of adolescent mothers, the region could see its economy suffer from a further US\$10 billion loss in GDP above and beyond the immediate, crippling effects of COVID-19.

2.6 Extracts of the guidelines on the management of re-entry in Uganda

Given the scattered practices that threaten gender equality in education, the Ministry of Education and Sports and other education stakeholders in Uganda came up with guidelines and implementation frameworks to address pregnancies in schools. The revised guidelines, therefore, stipulate the measures and steps that should be taken in the school setting to prevent and manage pregnancy and re-entry of child mothers and these include the following;

- i. Once the adolescent mother's baby is at least six months, she shall be allowed to be admitted back to school unconditionally.
- ii. The parents shall seek re-admission of their daughter to school when the baby is at least six months.

- iii. All schools shall prioritize the admission of young mothers/girls after pregnancy and parents/caregivers shall report the school that has refused to admit their daughter to the district education officer.
- iv. Headteachers and District and Municipal Educations Officers shall assist such girls to be re-admitted to other schools to avoid stigma.
- v. Other girls in the school shall be counselled on the consequences of early sexual behaviour, adolescent sexuality, negative peer influences, and building self-confidence and self-esteem.
- vi. Ridicule or scorn or discrimination against adolescent mothers is considered a form of psychological and emotional violence.
- vii. Both the learner and her parents shall be counselled on the importance of attending post-natal care and child health clinics.
- viii. Remedial classes shall be arranged when the adolescent mother asks for them or when the teachers deem them necessary.
- ix. As far as possible, the school administration shall allow the adolescent mother to rejoin school at the level where she left.
- x. The school administration and the senior woman shall avail counselling services including psycho-social support and life skills coaching to reduce the likelihood of similar circumstances happening again.
- xi. The adolescent mothers shall be told about their roles and responsibilities as students/pupils and as mothers, and the school rules against indiscipline and irresponsible sexual behaviour among others.

2.7 Factors that Influence Teenage Mothers' Decision to Re-Enter Secondary Schools

The teenage pregnancy rate is highest in Africa than in its surrounding continents; it is a fact that of the 20 countries in the world having the highest teenage pregnancy rates, 18 countries are from Africa. Uganda has one of the highest levels of teenage pregnancy ranked 14th out of 54 countries in Africa with 24% of adolescents (13-19 years) in 2011; who were already mothers or pregnant with their first child. Currently, the average prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Uganda is as high as 25%, with 27% in rural areas and 19% in urban areas (UBOS, 2014).

In Uganda, there's a high prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Wakiso District because young people become sexually active before marriage and lack adequate knowledge on sexual and reproductive health; yet consider themselves grown up and mature enough to have sex. (UNFPA, 2020). One challenge is girls getting pregnant while still in school and failing to re-enter school after delivering. In a survey conducted in 20 districts of Uganda, it was established that; the leading cause for girls to drop out of school is pregnancy (34%), followed by poverty (28%) and engagement in early sex/marriage (11%) (UBOS, 2016).

In Uganda, the challenge of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancies has to be explained by a mix of socio-cultural views, perceptions and practices surrounding early pregnancy. Although Uganda has made deliberate efforts to promote gender equality at the national and school levels, there are significant gaps in addressing issues of pregnancies in schools, (Atuyambe & Mandada, 2017). Challenges of high dropouts and teenage pregnancies have continued to disrupt and affect girls' education thereby blocking the celebrated achievement of increasing female enrolment in school. At the national level, no clear policies exist on how pregnancy in

schools can be handled or assisting girls who would want to rejoin school after giving birth. Re-entry of pregnant girls continues to be a salient issue (Mwesigwa, 2015).

Several countries across Africa are grappling with the question of re-entry. A few such as Zambia, Botswana and South Africa have policies in place to ensure the re-entry of pregnant girls. Within Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports, there exists a 'silent re-entry guidelines' that allows pregnant girls to return to school, but its enforcement by schools is questionable as, by its silence, it is neither known to the girls, parents, or community leadership. As a result, the girls are left with the notions of society-the parents, teachers and school managers. Uganda currently has no official policy on school re-entry for adolescent mothers in place. The common education sector response to early or unintended pregnancy has been the suspension or expulsion of pregnant girls (Halton, 2018). Those with supportive parents can return to school after delivery but typically seek admission into a different school.

Walgwe et al (2016) suggest that governments should assist teenage mothers to re-enter school by providing financial subsidies to sustain girls in school hence enabling them to complete their studies. Teenage mothers' experiences with the re-admission policy in some African countries like Kenya, Botswana, and Zambia support them to continue with and be re-admitted to school after birth (Singh and Hamid 2016). However, disapproval from teachers and parents makes it difficult for them to manage both parenting and schooling responsibilities. Stigma is one of the factors that prevent teenage mothers from re-entering school (Mwanza, 2010). The school environment for the teenage mother is quite unfriendly because both teachers and fellow students stigmatize them, referring to them as 'adults' or mothers. This makes most of them fail to return to school despite the re-entry guidelines in place.

Mudau et al (2017) stress that teenage motherhood affects school attendance and academic performance due to numerous responsibilities that hinder concentration on schooling and parenting. This calls for a need for institutional support and changes in societal attitudes to reduce the stigmatization of teenage mothers hence facilitating re-entry (Singh and Hamid (2016).

The Centre for Reproductive Rights (2014) reports that most girls are forced to abandon school and leave their parental homes to preserve the reputation of their families making them homeless and hence increasing their vulnerability.

2.8 Experiences of Teenage Mothers upon Re-Entry to Secondary Schools

2.8.1 Teenage mothers' stigma in secondary schools

Stigmatization and discrimination against pregnant girls and teen mothers are an unescapable barrier to resuming education for the affected girls in many secondary schools, particularly in Uganda. Girls who re-enter school after pregnancy are considered miniature mothers, (Wanyama & Simatwa, 2012). This makes them not seek re-admission due to fear of being frowned at by schoolmates, feeling of shame, fear of stigma and ridicule.

A study by Omwancha (2012), on the implementation of an education re-entry policy for girls after a teenage pregnancy, noted that several head teachers reported that some of the challenges pregnant girls faced included being bullied and stigmatized by their fellow students and teachers which pointed non-acceptance of the pregnant girls by their fellow students and teachers which affects their continued stay in schools hence need to be sensitized on the matters concerning how to deal with pregnant school girls. According to Okungu (2013), the social stigma attached to teenage pregnancy plays a major role in the ability of girls to resume classes after birth due to humiliation

and isolation whenever they attempt to go back to school. This required special attention and rehabilitation which cannot be provided by a hectic school routine. It is inconceivable in most parts of Uganda that a girl can give birth and get back to school. The fate of the girls is presumed sealed the moment they conceive. Other children would not freely interact with them, partly at the instigation of teachers who view the teenage mothers as bad influences on the students and are stereotyped as bad learners. Socialization with the norms and values of society is important to become responsible adults in society. It is just as important for teenagers to become part of their peer group, however, the limitations imposed on them by motherhood make interpersonal relationships and socialization with their peer group problematic.

2.8.2 Negative attitude of Teachers and Learners towards Teenage Mothers

In some cases where teenage mothers continue schooling, they are often “described and assumed to be poor or incapable students” (Pillow, 2004). In addition, Shultz (2011) asserts that, too often, pregnancy during high school is a signal for school personnel and families to abandon young women, designating them as school failures hence educators and parents often give up on them. It’s unfortunate as stated by Meena (2013), that most governments of the sub-Saharan countries (with Uganda inclusive) are making little effort to eliminate the discrepancies in the area of access to secondary education for girls and are denied access to education when they fall pregnant or when they become teenage mothers. This negative attitude of teachers towards pregnant girls (stigma and discrimination) makes them abandon their education. According to CSA, (2008), teachers fear their school to be ostracized as a maternity school which gives bad publicity to schools. Getting pregnant and resuming school after birth is interpreted as allowing too much permissiveness in society.

Teachers advance a pessimistic view that teenage pregnancy could be a social trend as other girls would argue that after all, one can always resume school after giving birth.

Teenage mothers confront negative reactions from their fellow learners and teachers by using disapproving glances or unkind remarks and rejections which pushes them away from school. Mitchell & Halpern (2013) revealed that teachers and learners have different feelings towards pregnant girls and that some believe that they should be expelled from school which demonstrates that teenage mothers are not given support due to little understanding of their needs and situation.

2.8.3 Gender roles of parenting and studentship (time for parenting and schooling)

Pregnancy interrupts a girl's education hence interfering with her potential. Society frowns at and views them as immoral and outcasts (Nyassy, 2017). Re-entry offers some hope to gain education and ultimately reap some benefits of schooling. According to Arlington public school (2004) as cited by Chigona and Chetty (2008), managing to care for an infant and devoting time to school work is a great challenge for teenage mothers. Parental and peer pressures are far more common than support. Lack of counselling to combat the stigma attached to teenage pregnancy and parenthood and schooling simultaneously get teenage mothers overwhelmed by their situation in school and some fail to cope resulting in school dropouts. The decision of the teenage mother to continue schooling after birth depends on the ability to manage logistics and finance associated with mothering and school concurrently. On the other hand, they usually receive little support from schools and their homes and they are usually misunderstood. Teenage mothers face unique challenges in ensuring that their new mothering roles and identities do not translate into a premature exit from formal education. According to CSA, (2008), teenage mothers who have been able to re-enter

school have had to contend with the hostile school environment characterized by isolation, humiliation and stigmatization by fellow students with hardly any intervention from teachers. Teenage mothers often fall behind with school work and have to catch up during holidays or weekends due to the double responsibilities they carry which reduce their freedom compared to their peers, (Birungi et al, 2016). According to Kaufman et al (2014), the rigidity of some school administrators concerning school attendance policies, and the inability to provide adequate time for teen mothers to complete their general childcare responsibilities makes it hard for teen mothers to strike balance between school work and parenting and as a result they are unable to finish their school tasks in time due to physical and emotional strain leading to declining in academic accomplishment.

2.9 Support Systems Teenage Mothers Have Upon Re-Entry into Secondary Schools

Bonny et al (2015) state that school environments that foster student engagement in their studies are more likely to graduate their students as they feel connected to at least one adult in the school. The school culture and environment remain fundamental aspects in the schooling life of teen mothers. Teen mothers become more vulnerable in a school environment which is not supported and are consequently at risk of not completing their school, (Shaningwa, 2017)

There seems to be a disconnection between teen mothers and their schools which may result in a feeling of being alienated. This not only has negative implications on the schooling life of teenage mothers, but it also leaves them feeling out of place with low self-esteem which without quick intervention may lead to teen mothers dropping out of school prematurely.

School programs have the potential to give teen mothers a platform to share their experiences and come up with a solution to their problems. Jennifer (2018), in her study about 'keeping teenage mothers in school' in the USA, affirms that school programs and support groups provide support and guidance that helps teenage mothers in completing school. Geysaw and Ankomah (2015) recommend that special programs should be initiated in schools to address ignorance concerning sexual matters, challenges and risks associated with teenage mothers. In addition, parenting techniques should also be taught, assertive interpersonal skills development like negotiating and refusal skills and also allow teen mothers to practice skills acquired.

Grant and Hallman (2019) reported that teen mothers often experience a lack of resources and support both at home and school before the pregnancy and more so afterwards. Schools are expected to provide textbooks, learning materials and bursaries to those girls who return to school. According to Wanyama & Simatwa, (2014), school sponsors run pastoral programs in their schools, for example, religious sponsors may not directly give finances to the schools but they engage in fundraising programs, donates resources and sometimes pays fees for poor students. According to Magino (2012), both school-related support and personal support are needed for teenage mothers in their academic journey toward high school graduation.

Through guidance and counselling departments, schools receive teen mothers and help girls cope after birth by offering psychosocial support systems like changing teachers' and learners' attitudes) and change the perception of viewing them as mothers and offer support and acceptance (Birungi et al, 2016). This enables them to accept what has happened and therefore change their attitude towards academics hence performing very well. Guidance and counselling teachers should provide counselling to the affected girls, parents and teachers who are dealing with these

teenage mothers in the process of teaching and other school activities like co-curricular activities. Nyambutora (2018), found that schools have in place programmes which involve the invitation of guest speakers to address the plight of teenage mothers and also peer counselling programmes exist that help teenage mothers cope with the situation.

However, Omulako et al. (2014) found out that head teachers rarely invite speakers to talk about the dangers of unsafe sex. Furthermore, he also found out that head teachers don't allow re-admitted girls to counseling others on the dangers of unsafe sex. Teen mothers should be shown love, and given hope and assistance in academic pursuit.

Teachers' attitude toward re-admitted girls is varied. Referring to Nyambutoro's study on teachers' and students' attitudes towards the teenage mothers' re-admission policy, it was found that the majority of teachers have a positive attitude towards teenage mothers resuming school. He also found out that most of the students show a positive attitude towards teenage mothers upon resumption to school. Only a few of them felt that teenage mothers have low self-esteem and that they are learners with difficulty.

Parents serve as referents for formulating personal philosophy, personal values, goals or coping with difficulties. Unfortunately, parents often find it difficult to communicate with teenagers as a result of the generation gap between the parent and the adolescent. Parents find it particularly difficult to convey to their children their values about sexuality and cannot always help develop their children into sexually responsible individuals, (Niboye, 2016). The lack of communication between parents and children and a subsequent lack of information about sexual matters invariably result in sexual ignorance and teenage pregnancy, (Baa-Poku, 2016). Where early

sexuality knowledge exposure is practiced low figures of pregnancy are reported. Parents are therefore an important source of sexual knowledge as opposed to peer influences. Parental factors include the attitude of parents towards the education of the girl child, parental level of education and parental income. Masese (2017) found out that those teenage mothers whose parents favored the education of both male and female children were more likely to resume formal education because of their positive attitude to the education of girls, and they are more likely to accept the continuation of education after pregnancy. He further noted that teen mothers from families whose parents have attained secondary education have high resumption rates followed by those whose parents have obtained primary education however resumption of school by teenage mothers is lowest for those whose parents had no formal education.

Nabugoomu et al, 2020 revealed general trends of higher proportions among girls who go back to school with an increase in parental income and low proportions with low parental income. This is because high-income levels enable parents to adequately pay for the teenage mother's school fees and provide for the needs of the child. On the other hand, teenage mothers from low-income families lack the resources to take care of their children hence not being able to go back to school.

Most parents condemn pregnant school girls because they feel they have been let down by wasting their minger resources, (Wanyama & Simatwa, 2014). It is noted further that those with the will to continue have noted and learned from their mistakes, some are repentant and want to be educated to improve their future and have realized where they strayed policy responses on teenage pregnancy appear to have been unsuccessful, Vlachou (2015) reports that different countries have come up with stated intentions and written policies that are meant to achieve inclusion. There are various policies designed to delay and protect young women from becoming

pregnant during adolescence. These policies include the National Health Policy, the National Adolescent Health Policy, the National Policy on Young People and HIV/AIDS, the Sexual Reproductive Health Minimum Package, the Minimum Age of Sexual Consent Policy (set at 18 years of age), the defilement law and a Universal Primary Education – (UPE) policy (Darabi L et al 2018). These policies also serve the purpose of fostering a supportive environment to encourage adolescent reproductive health. Notable among these policies is the National Adolescent Health Policy, introduced in 2004 to address the specific needs of teenagers, including pregnant girls. The policy's objective is to streamline teenage health needs to national health and development policies. Additionally, Uganda released the National Policy Guidelines and Service Standards for Reproductive Health Services to provide direction for reproductive health service provision and set national rules and regulations (Ministry of Health 2011). The guideline calls for increased access to contraception, teenage-friendly services and post-abortion services, as well as support for unwanted pregnancies and services for single teenage mothers. The Uganda government has also enacted laws to protect teenagers from pregnancy and sexual coercion. The minimum age of sexual consent was raised from 14 to 18 in the 1990s to help curb the spread of HIV/AIDS (MacKian S.C 2008). Further, a law governing defilement makes it a criminal offence to impregnate a girl under the age of 18 (Atuyambe. L 2015). The Uganda National Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy (2004) pledges commitment to advocate for the review of existing legal, medical and social barriers to teenagers' access to information and health services. In addition to ensuring the protection of the rights of adolescents to health, provision of legal and social protection against all forms of abuse and harmful traditional practices, promotion of gender equality and provision of quality care for adolescent sexual and reproductive

health issues (Ministry of Health 2014). The Uganda National Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy (2004) pledges commitment to advocate for the review of existing legal, medical and social barriers to teenagers' access to information and health services. However, as much as there is growing concern over the rights of inclusion, exclusionary practices and hindrances in a social context are still evident, (STEP-UP report, 2015). It is therefore paramount to understand why these policies meant to achieve inclusive education are unsuccessful by using a consultative approach, incorporating and sensitization of all stakeholders on the issue of education, (Runhare et al, 2016). This could lead to the support of education practices and policies which allows the marginalized, who are always the minority to be heard hence eliminating exclusion and discrimination practices in education systems. In the policy guidelines, no timeline is given for re-admission such that parents take their daughters back to school after delivery to curb wastage in terms of repetition and fees that had been paid

2.10 Summary of the Reviewed Literature

Teen motherhood in all its complexities is a global issue and a social catastrophe that threatens the very foundations of youthfulness and shatters their hope of realizing their potential in both developing and developed countries. In Uganda currently, there is a large number of adolescents that shapes humanity's present and future. With the right skills and opportunities, they can invest in themselves and in their families and communities hence their right to education must be protected, (UNFPA, 2021). The opportunities and choices for these girls concern their ability to access basic education and transit successfully with re-admission in place for those who drop out due to pregnancy so that they can adequately be maintained in school, (Chemutai, 2020). Ngugi Chi Watts et al, 2015 assert that community campaigns on girl education should

handle teen mothers as an emerging social phenomenon that needs affirmative action at the village level without traumatizing the parents, and guardians of teen mothers.

Barmao, et al, (2015) points out many challenges faced by teenage mothers such as difficulties in re-admission, discrimination in school activities, depression, trauma, rejection, anxiety, regret, absenteeism and loss of friends together with physical and health challenges associated with premature birth. These are substantial obstacles to the education of teenage mothers even when they are willing to stay in school hence there is a need to examine how school factors can boost the adjustment of teenage mothers in school and look at the support systems in place to help them upon re-entry. Very little is known about the school factors that are crucial in helping teenage mothers to fit and adjust to their schooling despite being overwhelmed with parenthood and academics. Furthermore, teenage mothers who remain in school have to tolerate an unfriendly environment which compromises their academic outcomes hence need to scale up their socialization through social support, encouragement, mentoring and counselling are given to them in schools. This necessitates the study on teen mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools. Litany of literature on teenage pregnancy and subsequent motherhood highlighting causes for teen pregnancies and subsequent effects on the teen's academic performance and development exist, but there is a dearth of literature that reveals the experiences of teenage mothers when they are re-admitted back to school after giving birth.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the research design of the study. The research design is important to the study as it provides detailed procedures to guide the study (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012, p.112). It also includes a brief description of the research design to be employed in the study and the paradigm on which the design of the study was anchored. It outlines the study area, the target population, the sample size and the procedure for determining the sample size. It further discusses the data generation procedures, trustworthiness, data analysis and ethical considerations that were upheld.

3.2 The Location of the Study

The study was carried out in mixed rural secondary schools (government aided) in Kakiri sub-county, Wakiso District in Central Uganda. The District is located in the Central region of Uganda and it is made up of two sub- counties and two municipalities that is Kyadondo and Busiro county and Entebbe and Nansana municipality. It lies between 00, 24'N and 32 29'E of the Equator bordering Nakaseke and Luweero to the North, Mubende and Mpigi in the West, Mukono in the East and Kalangala District in Lake Victoria in the South. Wakiso District has got a total area of 1,906.7 km² of which 76.62 per cent (3584.66 km²) is water and 23.38 per cent (1093.56 km²) is land. It lies approximately 20 kilometres by road, northwest of Kampala, the capital of Uganda on the highway to Hoima. In 2020, the population agency estimated the mid-year population at 562,609 people largely composed of Baganda and many other tribes. Of these, 53% were female and 47% were males. The common languages are Luganda and English on a small scale. The district is rapidly becoming urbanized with the main economic activities changing from agriculture to

industry. It is estimated that 72% of the households engage in subsistence farming with women more involved at about 90% compared to men. Kakiri sub-county has 10 parishes and 105 villages with 23 secondary schools.

The researcher chose this area because teenage pregnancies were high and teenage mothers rarely returned to the formal education system for re-admission, the researcher could easily access it hence the researcher wanted to explore re-entry experiences among teenage mothers into secondary schools. The choice of the study area was informed by evidence from interactions with the statistics from the Education statistics office which pointed escalations in girls' school dropouts due to teenage pregnancy and subsequent teenage motherhood. In 2020, the number of teenage pregnancies was highest in Wakiso District at 10,439 pregnancies (UNFPA Fact sheet, 2020). Therefore, it was vital to explore how the education of girls in the area is being affected by the phenomenon and how they can return to school as well as achieving their educational goals.

3.3 Research Approach Underpinning the Study

This study applied the interpretivism paradigm because it advocates that knowledge is socially constructed rather than objectively determined (Rahi, 2017). Weaver & Olson (2006) asserts that a paradigm is a pattern of belief or opposing worldview that regulates inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses and processes through which investigation is accomplished. Interpretivists believe that reality is multiple and relative (Goldkuhl, 2012). Thanh and Thanh (2015) explain that these multiple realities also depend on other systems for meanings which makes them even more difficult to interpret in terms of fixed realities. The Interpretivism paradigm provides a set of assumptions about knowledge and inquiry that underpins the qualitative approach. The qualitative research approach is suitable for exploring the deeper

meaning of people's experiences and providing rich justifications of a phenomenon (Rubin and Babbie, 1989). Creswell (2009) described qualitative research as how an investigator comprehends the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. The qualitative approach explores the attitudes, behaviour and experiences of participants to better understand the meaning individuals attribute to social phenomena since the study is conducted in their natural setting (Creswell, 2009).

This approach was suitable for the current study as it is intended to explore teenage mothers' experiences upon re-entry into secondary schools. This assisted the researcher to gain an understanding of the experiences of the participants as it provokes people to talk about their perceptions and experiences about sensitive issues like teenage pregnancy and motherhood.

3.4 Research Design

Creswell, (2009), defines research design as the plans and procedures within which research is conducted. It constitutes the blueprint for data collection, measurement and analysis. It is the philosophy, procedure of inquiry or general principles which guide the research (Creswell, 2009, p.3). Given the nature of the research objectives, this study was best approached using a phenomenological design. Johnson and Christensen (2008), define phenomenology as a form of qualitative research in which the researcher attempts to understand how one or more individuals experience a phenomenon. This design was adopted for this study as it intends to explore the experiences of teenage mothers who re-entered to school after childbirth as well as the support systems they have upon re-entry. Phenomenology describes the meaning of lived experiences for several individuals that are it describes what the participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon. Researcher engages in epoche in

which they set aside their own experiences to take a fresh perspective on the phenomenon under study. Phenomenology design helped the researcher to give a better understanding of real-life situations and experiences by surfacing deep issues and making voices heard.

3.5 Target Population

A target population is defined as the group of individuals bearing the same characteristics which the researcher is interested in investigating or obtaining information to answer her/his research questions and also draw conclusions (Ader, Mellenbergh and Hand (2008).

In the current study, the target population consisted of seven government aided schools and all teenage mothers who have returned back to school. The sample selected had the greatest possible variety of schools making it more of a representative. Three rural secondary schools (government aided) in Kakiri sub-county with the highest student population were selected. Therefore, the study participants were in-school teenage mothers to enable the researcher to gain insight into the study phenomena.

3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Burns and Grove (2003), define sampling as a process of selecting a group of people, events or behavior with which to conduct a study by obtaining information about an entire population by examining only part of it. Polit and Becker (2012) assert that in sampling a portion that represents the whole population is selected and the researcher would ensure a high degree of correspondence between the sampling frame and the population to ensure accuracy.

According to Creswell (2013), for qualitative data, participants are often selected purposively to assist the researcher in understanding the phenomenon under study and best answer the research questions. Purposive sampling is extremely versatile which made it easy for the researcher to better match the sample to the aims and objectives of the research.

Participants are sampled based on the knowledge they possess about the phenomenon under study or when they are the only ones in their respective categories. (Odiya, 2012). Schutt (2018) claims that purposive sampling is suitable when the research questions of a specific study seek an in-depth exploration of a small population. Purposive sampling involves the choice of individuals who are mainly knowledgeable about a phenomenon of interest, (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2012). In-school teenage mothers were purposively selected to elicit reliable and meaningful information that assisted in answering the research questions. The list of the participants was obtained from the Head teacher's office given the fact that they are the ones admitting teenage mothers in schools.

Table 3.1: Sample size table

Target population	Sampling technique	Sample size
Teenage mothers	Purposive	15 (five from each school)
Schools	Purposive	3 (government-aided)

Source, Researcher

3.7 Data Generation Methods

Data generation methods are techniques for physically obtaining data to be analyzed in a research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The paradigm and the design of the study determine the methods of data generation. The data generation methods that were used in this study comprised drawings and focus group discussions. These were

used to gain insight into the factors that influence teenage mothers' decision to re-enter and support systems regarding the teen mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub-County, Wakiso District. The methods that were used to generate data to meet the objectives of this study are briefly discussed below:

3.7.1 Drawings

A drawing is defined as a form of communication through image (Pepin-Wakefield, 2009). Drawing as a data generation method is viewed appropriately, especially when conducting a study on sensitive topics (Mitchell, Chege, Maina, & Rothman, 2016). It is the simplest method of data generation in social science research (Mitchell, De Lange, & Moletsane, 2017). The method also allows active engagement between the researcher and participants (De Lange et al., 2011). Through drawings, individuals in society who might have difficulties in expressing themselves due to language difficulties or other constraints that encompass the topic of discussion find it easy to express their views, (Mitchell, Theron, Stuart, Smith, & Campbell, 2011). Drawings were suitable for this study because they gave participants aesthetic pleasure to produce artefacts that could be drawn on to tease them into the discussion. Martin (1998), argues that drawings can offer an entry point and provide insight into the experiences, perceptions and conscious and unconscious issues of the people producing the drawing. As such drawing has the capacity to bring out concealed or indefinite views not previously known or articulated (De Lange, 2011). In the current study, participants drew two diagrams as per the drawing prompt. The following questions guided the drawing session; 1. Draw a picture that portrays how you were seen or positioned by parents and the school community when you become pregnant, 2. Draw a picture of how you see your future self as a mother and your career. After drawing, the participants were allowed to write a caption detailing the reasons as to

why they think so after participants shared their views about the drawings made. A caption is a brief explanation provided by the participant in writing to describe the meaning embedded in the drawing (De Lange, 2011).

3.7.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

According to Kumar (2005) cited in (Odiya, 2009), focus group discussions are instrumental when the researcher is interested in the exploration of group perceptions, experiences and understanding regarding factors influencing teen mothers' re-entry decisions, social experiences and support systems that can be adopted to enhance their completion of secondary school education for the girl child. FGD is useful when participants are knowledgeable about the phenomenon and can express themselves to generate multiple angles and perspectives on the topic. This method of data generation was subjected to teenage mothers from 3 secondary schools intended to enable them to open up about their experiences when they re-enter mainstream schools.

FGDs provide the research participants with topics of discussion and interaction of participants due to their open-ended nature that offers the benefit of allowing insight into the world of participants (Frith, 2000). The participants were involved in setting ground rules that guided the discussions for smooth interaction. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information given. The researcher and the research assistant took on the role of a facilitator who provided for the democratic and smooth running of the interaction within the group (Kitzinger, 1995).

The focus group discussion guide was used during the course of the discussion to enable the research achieve the prescribed objectives of the study. The main question was **tell me your experiences while you got pregnant and upon re-entry into**

secondary school. There were other sub questions which were used to probe the teenage mother as they discuss so that the researcher persuades them to talk more about the subject matter.

The site to hold the FGDs is important and should be accessible, quiet, private, and far from distractions. In the current study, the first focus group discussion consisted of eight teenage mothers and it was held in the nearby church which seemed convenient for the teenage mothers as their fellow students could not hear what they are discussing. This made them feel free and comfortable to say their heart during the discussion and sharing views about their drawings. The second discussion consisted of seven girls and it was held in the school main hall since it seemed convenient for the teenage mothers and it was suitable for our private issues to be discussed. Focus group research pays much attention to interactions and explores the negotiations of meaning the sharing and building up of collective memories to answer the research questions (Kitzinger, 2004).

Focus Group Discussion Management

During the FGD session, dealing with emotion was the biggest challenge. Most of the teenage mothers were very young, had unintended pregnancies and had reported bad experiences especially with their baby's father. These unpleasant recollections were still fresh, though some had tried to suppress them and move on with their lives. Requesting them to think about it again meant reinterpreting painful memories and many were astonished. This made the researcher to be very sensitive to the participants' feelings and be careful not to push them too much. If one started to cry, the researcher would take about 5 to 10 minute break until she felt better before continuing the discussion. One teenage mother wept during most of the discussion. However, when the researcher asked if she would like to withdraw, she said no. Being

a woman enhanced the researcher's chances to ask participants about very private matters especially the emotional feelings that cannot easily be identified and their future plans. During the FGD session, the respondents choose pseudonyms throughout the research basing on their favorite fruits.

3.8 Procedure for Data Generation

Data generation involved identification and choosing individuals to be studied, obtaining permission to be studied gathering information through interviews, observation and documents (Creswell, 2009).

Conducting qualitative research requires the researcher to gain access to the study sites and individuals which involves seeking permission from institutions, and individuals and approval from the university review board (Creswell, 2012). The researcher began by seeking permission to conduct research from the School of Education, Moi University, District Education Officer (Wakiso District), and research permit from research ethical committee (Uganda Christian University Ethics Committee and the schools. This assisted the researcher to gain access to study sites (schools) and participants.

The researcher familiarized herself with the data generation instruments for instance the drawing prompt guide and focus group discussion topics of questions. The researcher made prior visits to selected schools (study sites) to gain permission from gatekeepers, seek appointments with the school administration and also to start creating a relationship that enabled a smooth data generation process. The researcher proceeded to acquire a research permit from Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST). The researcher further sought participants' consent and agreement by requesting them to sign consent forms. The participants made informed

consent by first showing them the purpose of the study, how beneficial the study was, assuring confidentiality of the information and the limits of confidentiality, possible risks, the procedures and the voluntary nature of participation. Focus group discussions were moderated by the researcher with the help of research assistant in an accessible place (nearby church and the school main hall) to the participants within the community not in the schools to ensure privacy and confidentiality during data gathering. The researcher took field notes of what she observed and heard and other non-verbal responses made by the participants.

3.9 Ensuring Trustworthiness

Guba (1981) majorly identifies four aspects of trustworthiness relevant to qualitative inquiry. These include credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability.

3.9.1 Credibility

This is concerned with the plausibility of the research findings. It centers on steps taken during the whole process of data generation and analysis. Triangulation was employed to check the credibility of the study interpretations and findings. It required the use of different data sources and data generation methods for example drawings and focus group discussions to achieve internal validity. Triangulation regarding sources of data and data generation methods were employed to achieve trustworthiness. This enabled the researcher to ensure that investigations are attempting to demonstrate that a true impression of the study phenomenon is being presented (Taylor, 2014). Credibility was also established through member check that is I gave my fellow researchers the chance to go through the findings and assess the extent to which they were acceptable. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe member checks as “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility in a study” This gave the findings a multifaceted analytical perspective.

3.9.2 Transferability

Involves showing that the findings of the inquiry have applicability in other contexts which can be realized by providing a thick description of the phenomenon under study (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2012). This is referred to as generalizability in qualitative studies. Sufficient details of the context of the fieldwork enable a reader to decide whether the existing environment is similar to another situation in which he/she is familiar and results can be applied to other settings with no doubt. In this study, the researcher used a thick description of the whole process of data generation to show that the researcher's findings can be applied to other contexts with a similar phenomenon. This provided a variety of sources that the readers can use to arrive at their judgments and assess whether they can apply to other contexts (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2012).

3.9.3 Dependability

Refers to the extent to which the data generated and the findings would be similar if the study was replicated (Shenton, 2004). It requires researchers to ensure the process of inquiry is traceable, logical and documented to enable readers to judge how reliable the interpretations and findings are (Tobin & Begley, 2004, Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). Gunawan (2015) relates this to the reliability of the findings. In this study, dependability was achieved through keeping records of raw data to ensure all data is traceable for verification, field notes and a reflexive journal as means of keeping an audit trail to ensure consistency of the research process.

3.9.4 Conformability

Gunawan, (2015) notes that this concerns establishing that the researcher's interpretations and findings are derived from the data. It is the degree to which the study findings reflect the characteristics of the participants and the context, not the

researchers' own biases and perceptions (Guba, 1981, Baskerville, Kaul & Storey, 2015). Triangulation of data sources and methods of inquiry were applied in this study to ensure that data supports analysis and interpretations (Krefting, 1991). A reflexive journal was kept by the researcher to trail a critical account of the research process as the researcher is aware of her influence on the study.

3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is a process of examining, cleaning, converting and modelling data to discover useful information, suggesting conclusions and support decision-making. (Hand & Mellenbergh, 2008).

According to Gay et al (2012, p.465), “data analysis in qualitative studies involves summarizing data dependably and accurately which leads to the presentation of study findings in a way that has an air of undeniability”. Lodico et al (2010, p.180) explain that “analysis of data in qualitative inquiries occurs throughout the process of data collection. Data is reviewed and recorded during the data generation process as well as written feelings make the first stages of analysis”. Generated data in this study were analyzed through thematic analysis. Cruzes and Dyba, (2011) explain that thematic analysis involves identifying recurring themes from collected data, explaining, interpreting the themes and drawing conclusions. This involved categorizing data which requires grouping and naming of data in small segments of text that provide meaning (Odiya, 2009). Creswell (2014) asserts that the transcripts are used to generate the units of meaning by putting some texts in brackets and writing a word (unit of meaning) in the margins which signify the texts in the bracket and these units of meaning are convened into categories which are then used to generate the themes. Data from focus group discussions and drawings were correlated with the observations of interactions which were derived from the observer records

and field notes. The researcher analyzed data thematically following the three stages namely:

Open coding; is the analytical process by which concepts to the observed and phenomenon are attached during data analysis, (Goulding, 1999). It includes labelling concepts based on their properties and dimensions that are breaking the data into discrete parts and creating codes which open up new theoretical possibilities. This made it easy for the researcher to continuously compare and contrast similar events in the data. The researcher manually transcribed the data from focus group discussions and oral presentations from drawings to get key ideas and phrases. Through this, the researcher was able to sort data for each respondent based on the uniqueness of the information.

Axial coding; is the breaking down of core themes during qualitative analysis. The researcher drew connections between codes by organizing the codes developed in open coding. By reading over the codes and underlying data, a category could be created based on an existing code, or a new abstract category that encompasses several different codes. After reading the memos made in opening coding, the researcher checked for similarities between the data as a basis to create themes.

Selective coding; is when the researcher selects one central category that connects all the codes from the analysis that is you define one unified theory around the research topic (Strauss &Corbin, 1990). It involves further linking of categories into one core category hence forming a theory explaining the subject of investigation. This was achieved by reviewing the codes to identify those which are overlapping and redundant, they were reduced to form one theme which were presented cohesively.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics refers to a multifaceted set of principles, standards and institutional arrangements that help establish and control scientific activity to ensure that the findings are trustworthy and valid, (Rukwaru, 2015). According to Neuman (2000), a researcher has a moral obligation to uphold ethical standards in research. Research ethics are categorized into three groups; relating to the research process, individual researchers and the research subjects, (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009).

In this study therefore ethical approval was sought first from Moi University (appendix E) after presenting the research proposal followed by seeking a permit from Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) to ensure compliance with applicable national standards and guidelines for conducting research are adhered to. Then I sought permission from the district, county (authorizing me to carry out this study in Kakiri Sub County schools) and schools (Head teacher' consent) to gain access to the study sites and participants including detailed modalities of conducting the research such as the dates and times of visits.

Informed consent; Mouton, 2011 indicates that obtaining informed consent involves providing satisfactory information on the purpose of the study, the voluntariness of the client and the nature of confidentiality. The researcher made sure that participants were given necessary information before getting involved in the study for instance informing them what the study is about, its purpose, possible dangers, procedures and benefits. As the study involved minors who may be vulnerable to being influenced by others, teenage mothers signed informed consent and acceptance form so that they could benefit from the research but with protection. Also, the right to decline participation was explained that is right to participate or not to participate. See appendix D in the appendices section.

The researcher ensured the **anonymity** of the participants by use of pseudonyms to safeguard their **identity**, there were no names or personal identification numbers to reflect on the drawings except the numbering for identification of data during data editing for example using Flower, Getty, Bills etc among others to represent participant's names. It is fundamental as it influences participants to give honest information by ensuring that respondents are protected from legal pursuits who may have an interest in tracking them. (Jwan & Ong'ondo, 2013). In the current study, I guided my participants into using pseudonyms in the focus group discussion session and oral sharing of the drawing captions. They agreed to be identified by the names of their favorite fruits. However, this study later recognized the participants with human names (not real ones) that were gender specific. Information shared by the participants was kept confidential, especially about their experiences. However, there were limits of confidentiality in case a probable risk is sensed for instance one of the respondents wanted to run away from home because of increased gossiping about her in the community, so the researcher had to share with the senior woman teacher so that they take action immediately.

Confidentiality and Privacy; is the liberty given to an individual to decide the time, extent and general conditions under which private data will be shared with or withheld from others. Rukwaru (2015) suggests that confidentiality is the protection of a participant's private information. The culture of the group during focus group discussion was held in esteem to avoid infringement into their private lives. Also during the FGDs, the language was carefully selected to avoid being offensive and embarrassing, this was achieved through consultations with professional counsellors to enhance communication skills by respecting the respondents, being patient and enthusiastic with them. Parry and Mauthner (2004) argue that participants'

information may be exposed to more danger after collection, especially in during analysis and publication. For this reason therefore, there is need to protect participants' information during these stages.

Rights to protection from discomfort and harm, these are based on the ethical principle of beneficence. The research project should benefit the participants and society in general. It specifies that the society should take an active role in averting discomfort and harm and upholding good in the world around them (Burns & Grove 1993:345). In the current study, the participants were not exposed to any physical, emotional or psychological stress by using pseudonyms making them safe even after giving information.

3.12 Summary

This chapter began with a brief introduction and discussion of the qualitative research approach and the philosophical guidelines of this approach. The chapter further discusses the sample and how it was selected, data collection methods, data analysis, ensuring trustworthiness and the ethical considerations that were upheld.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County-Wakiso District, Uganda. The specific objectives of the study were; to examine the factors that influence teenage mothers' decision to return to school in Kakiri Sub County Wakiso district Uganda, to explore the social experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry to secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County Wakiso district Uganda and to identify the support systems teenage mothers have upon re-entry into secondary schools in Kakiri sub-county, Wakiso District Uganda. To achieve this purpose three research questions were formulated as indicated in chapter one. In this chapter, therefore, I present the data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the findings. The data has been analyzed using thematic analysis, interpreted and discussed in the light of the literature review.

The study employed an Interpretivists paradigm and phenomenological research design within the qualitative approach. Using the purposive sampling technique, three schools were selected with five teenage mothers from each school. Qualitative data was generated using focus group discussions and drawings from 15 teenage mothers.

4.2 Data Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data according to the three research questions drew on all the data generated from the two methods to answer the three research questions. In analyzing the qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed to describe and categorize responses elicited from the drawings and focus group discussions in line with the research objectives. Recurring themes and

categories were generated and interpreted. Three broad themes emerged from the various data sources namely: factors that influence re-entry decisions, social experiences upon re-entry and support systems they have upon re-entry. Below is the summary of the findings (See Table 4.1) in response to the research questions and then continue to discuss the findings by recontextualising them within the literature reviewed.

Table 4.1: Summary of the Findings

OBJECTIVES	THEMES
To examine the factors that influence teenage mother's decision to return to school in Kakiri Sub County, Wakiso district Uganda	• Awareness of re-entry guidelines • Financial position of their families • Personal attitude towards education • Support for the teenage mother from the family, friends and wider community • Accommodative school environment
To explore social experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County, Wakiso district Uganda	• Stigma and discrimination • Inadequate academic support from teachers • Negative attitude from teachers and learners • Inadequate counselling services • Conflicting gender roles of parenting and studentship
To identify the support systems teenage mothers have upon re-entry into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County, Wakiso district Uganda	• School sponsors • Provision of counselling and guidance services • Teacher support

4.2.1 Factors that influence teenage mothers' decision to return to school in

Kakiri Sub Wakiso district Uganda

This was the first objective of the study. From the data, five themes emerged among the factors that influenced teenage mothers' decision to return to school. These included; awareness of re-entry guidelines, financial position of their families, personal attitude towards education, support for the teenage mother from the family, community and an accommodative school environment. These factors are elaborated below;

4.2.1.1 Awareness of re-entry guidelines

This section presents the perspectives of teenage mothers on the existing re-entry guidelines. Policy responses toward pregnant girls' education have been employed in several Sub-Saharan African countries (Birungi et al., 2015). These policies include the exclusion, re-entry and continuation policies. However, in Uganda, there is no substantive policy on pregnant girls' education nevertheless there is a government directive (Revised re-entry guidelines) that allows pregnant students to continue or re-enter school after delivery or childbirth. While many teenage mothers acknowledged the important role and useful benefits of the provisions of the guidelines after talking about it, the responses and views of the teenage mothers generally revealed varying levels of awareness and sensitization about the guidelines. From the focus group discussions, it was revealed that few teenage mothers knew the essence of the guidelines and their views were colored by their own particular experiences. 6 out of 15 teenage mothers indicated that they have ever heard about the re-entry guidelines over different media like community radios, televisions, newspapers and some Non-Government Organizations like Teenage Mothers Outreach (TEMO), Save the Children, Life Rescue- Uganda, CRANE (Children at Risk Action Network) and Nurture A Mother Uganda. Therefore, it can be concluded among other factors that the reason why teenage mothers returned to school after delivery was that they have ever heard on various media about the purpose and benefits of the provisions of the re-entry guidelines.

.....during the lockdown, whenever the president was giving a state of the nation address, he used to mention that all pregnant girls and those who have produced should be allowed to go back to school after the lockdown and be treated like any other children in school.
FGD 2, Mario, 11/04/2022

My mother was aware that there is a chance given to those girls who get pregnant and produce after which they are allowed to go back to

school. When we went to the hospital for antenatal, the nurse told us about it. Even on the radios and televisions, they used to talk about that because they said that during the lockdown many girls got pregnant and so if they are not allowed to go back to class, the country will be affected. FGD 2, Walah, 11/04/2022

I heard about it during the lockdown on the radio and even some ladies from Save the Children used to talk about it. Even Janet (Minister of Education and Sports) talked about allowing all girls in class whether they are pregnant or they have given birth so that the girls are not left behind in the development of the country. FGD 1, Shan, 28/03/2022

This is consistent with a study by Mwenje, 2015 which indicated that the level of awareness about teenage mothers influences their rate of re-entry given the fact that they know the purpose and the benefits of the re-entry guidelines to them. From the research findings, therefore, it can be concluded that given the fact that teenage mothers were aware of the provision that they are allowed to re-enter school after birth, they were able to do so much that they achieve their educational goals.

However, findings from the study indicated that 8 out of 15 teenage mothers were somehow aware and sensitized about the re-entry guidelines but they didn't deeply understand what it was all about and how they could benefit from it. They further narrated that they have even never heard their parents talking about the guidelines. A call for increased and continuous sensitization for teenage mothers and their parents as well is needed.

.....in the lockdown, we didn't go to school, so there was no pressure from books and assignments like homework, and there was a lot of time for leisure, I could listen to different radio stations and sometimes hear the presenters talking about allowing pregnant girls and those who have produced to return to school that headteachers should not stop them from joining again. FGD1, Jasmine, 28/03/2022

I used to hear about it over the community radios when they are telling teenage mothers not to lose hope about education since the government has allowed them to return to school, FGD1, Dovie, 28/03/2022

.....those ladies from TEMO used to talk about it but they could not tell everything about it, all they could say was don't be worried that you will not go back to school, nobody will stop you, and the president has already protected you. FGD2, Bills, 11/04/2022

This conforms to the study in Kenya by Barmao, 2020 that a low level of awareness about re-entry policy especially among teenage mothers, their parents and other community members hinders its impact on young mothers who find themselves in this predicament. The situation is exacerbated by absence of an articulate national policy on pregnancy in school and re-entry after delivery. Also according to Omwancha (2012), lack of awareness and understanding of both the re-entry policy and the guidelines among teenage mothers meant that they were unable to utilize that opportunity fully regarding their rights upon re-entry.

4.2.1.2 Financial position of their families

Families largely influenced the re-entry of teenage mothers into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County. Most of the parents were more interested in sending back their children and were not much concerned about whether the children wanted or not. The mothers reported that they had undergone informal counselling sessions to make them know that the world was not at its end because of their child's birth and that the world would be more difficult for them if they were not educated. From the drawings, the following were recorded;

... I am thinking like this because my parents thought that I can refuse to go back to school that's why they sat me down to advise me and they told me the reason for going back to school... my mother is the one paying for my fees, she gets money from farming, poultry as well as rearing some other animals, she wanted me to complete senior four, Drawings, Gladys, 28/03/2022

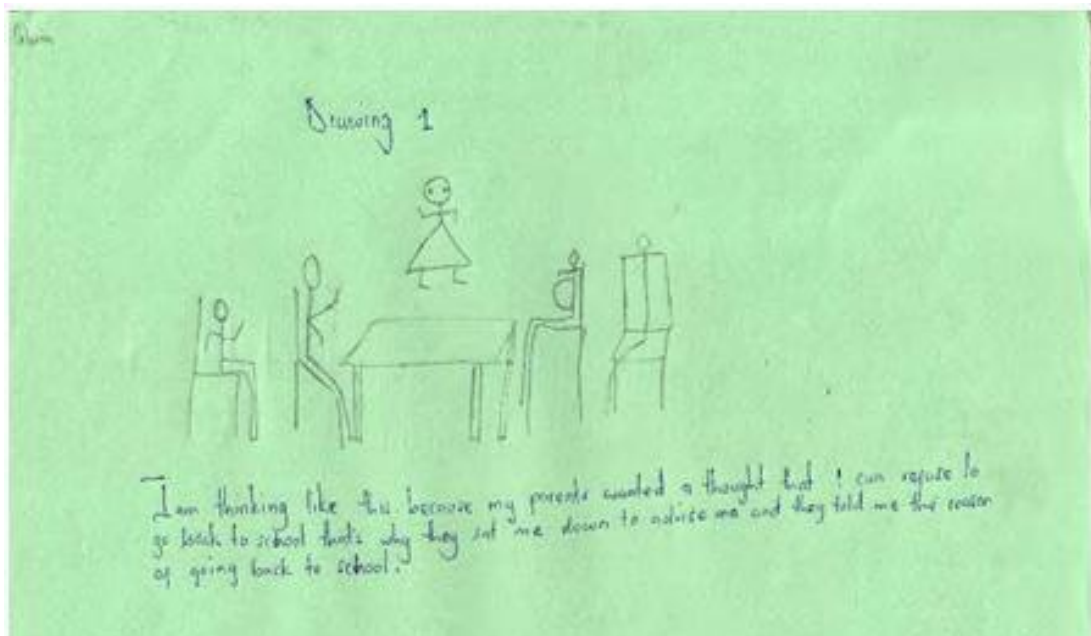


Figure 4.1: Drawing 1 by Gladys

The drawing shows a meeting between the parents and Gladys, after Gladys became pregnant, she was so scared and even attempted to run away from home given the fact that her father is tougher than the mother. Later her parents had to counsel her by telling her that she is not the first one to become pregnant and that it was not the end of her life. Her mother comforted her that when she produces, she will remain with the baby and Gladys will go back to school. The parents' support encouraged her to return to school by telling her the benefits of education and accepting them to take care of her baby boy (Gift). Gladys also says that after giving birth, Madam Rose, the deputy head teacher visited her and encouraged her to go back to school so that she can at least complete senior four.

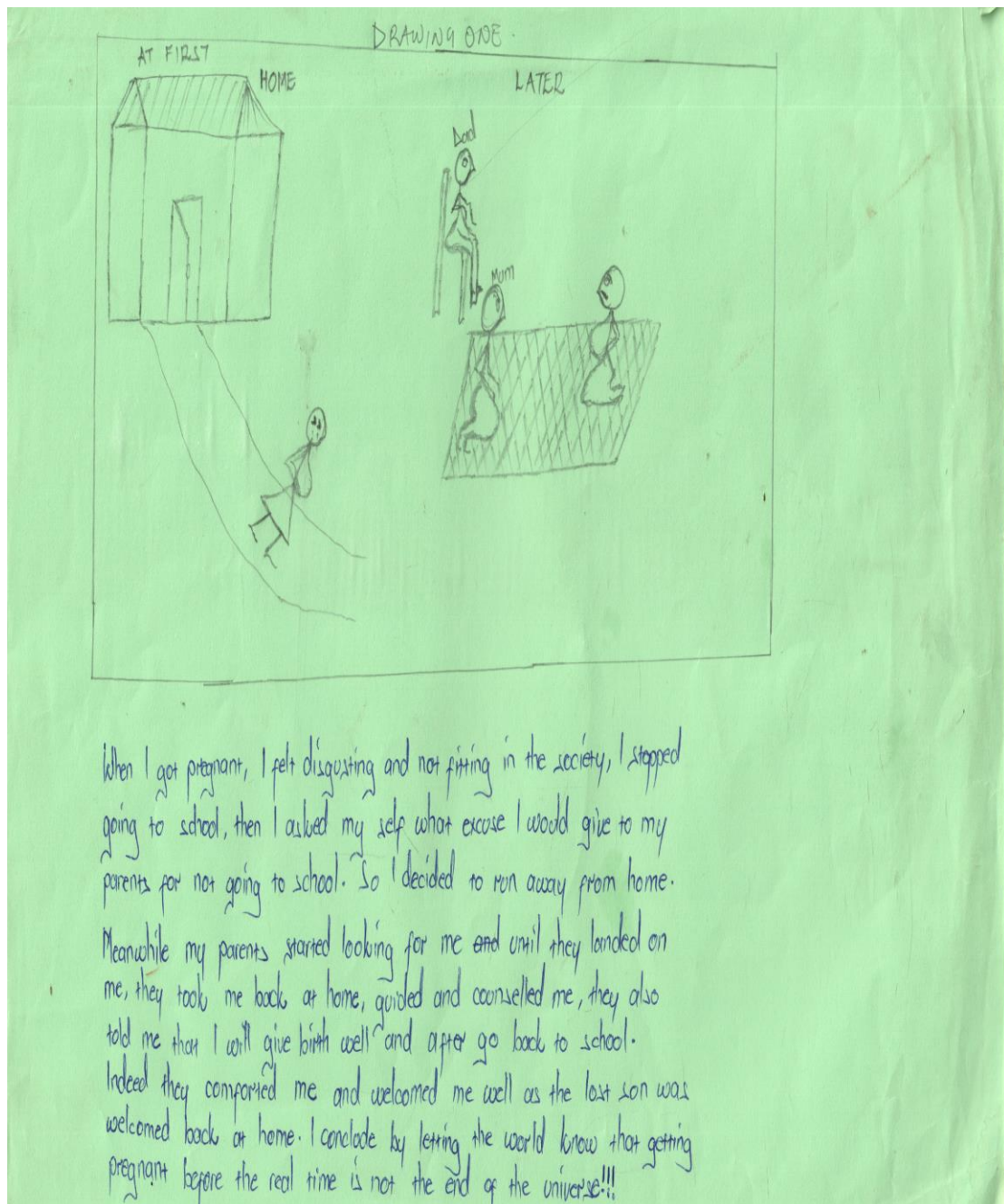


Figure 4.2: Drawing 1 by Jasmin

From the above drawing Jasmin narrates that;

When I pregnant, I ran away from home but the parents looked for her until they got her and encouraged her to go back to school thus they gave her hope that getting pregnant was not the end of this world, FGD 1, Jasmin, 28/03/2022

These findings are in agreement with Gregory (2015) whose study indicated that re-entry into school requires parental involvement where the parents have to buy school

requirements to support their children in case their husbands do not show up. In a recent study by WHO (2020), most of the girls who became pregnant were school-going between the age of 13-19 years. Some of the men who impregnated them were their relatives, family friends and bosses for those children who had engaged in business in the villages or places of stay.

My mother is also educated and she has ever been in the same years as me. So when I become pregnant, she first becomes upset with me but later settled down and talked to me and she also promised me to go back to school when I give birth. There was even a family that wanted to adopt my baby because they did not have a child but my mum said no to them. We all love her very much because a baby is a gift from God. So my mother is the one paying my school fees and buying all the requirements that I need. FGD2, Walah, 11/04/2022.

My elder sister is the one who is paying money for my education and she loves and cares about me. She hoped I could have a higher education than her and have a good job and she would work harder to see that I don't lack anything in my study. She said that I have to read hard and make my parents happy, whatever I want for my studies she makes sure I got it and in time without making me wait like the way I see some students. This has made my life easy while at school, FGD1, Jasmine, 28/03/2022

Therefore, from the experiences shared with the teenage mothers in the FGDs, there is high re-entry rate for teenage mothers coming from well-to-do families that provide financial and childcare support from parents and other relatives. Thus, parents make sure their children's mothers return to school to complete their education and preserve their societal status.

However, the low economic status of teenage mothers' families as they interrelate with the insufficient financial backing of the re-entry guidelines makes the life of teenage mothers hard upon re-entry. As poverty has been discovered as a substantial source of young girls' early pregnancy (Ahorlu, Pfeiffer, & Obrist, 2015), participants (2 teenage mothers) for this study appeal to the government to provide financial assistance to teenage mothers to motivate and support their school re-entry as

sometimes life becomes hard for them upon re-entry due to lack of requirements needed at school.

Though I came back to school life has not been easy for me because being a teenage mother from a poor family, I cannot afford my daily needs and those of the baby due to limited budgets. This makes me worried most of the time which I think will even affect my class performance because when you are lacking the most basic needs you cannot even concentrate in class, FGD 1, Shan, 28/03/2022

Several studies (Zuilkowski et al., 2019; Nyariro, 2018; Omwancha, 2012) have indicated that poverty is a vital accelerator to early pregnancies and an inhibitor to school re-entry for teenage mothers. The findings, therefore, prove financial constraint as an inhibiting factor to some teenage mothers' school re-entry originating from poverty in the household, inadequate financial support from their parents and child's father and motivational packages. These conditions, when they overlap contribute significantly to the later dropout of teenage mothers hence affecting their school re-entry process.

A schoolgirl who becomes pregnant coupled with her low-income family background is left with no or limited monetary assistance towards school re-entry. This is one of the most disastrous gender discriminations that can distress generations of not only the teenage mother but also the country at large because you educate a girl, you educate the nation. Despite the high poverty rates in the household, the idea of teenage mother's re-entry to school is surpassed by the provision of basic needs for their babies. Therefore, some teenage mothers are then forced to hunt for employment opportunities to earn income and cater for the needs of their babies at the expense of their education hence leading to poor academic progress which demotivates them to continue.

I don't have enough money with me and I need a lot of things in my life and my baby, sometimes on weekends, I try to look for some tasks like washing clothes in the neighborhood to do so that I get

money to support me in various things. Though some people laugh at me, I have nothing to do because my parents cannot provide for me everything, sometimes my father says that am even mature so he should not provide for me but my young siblings. FGD2, Bills, 11/04/2022

My aunt cannot provide for me everything that I need with my baby, so sometimes I work in the maize milling machine especially the night shifts which pays a lot so that I can get some necessitates in my life. FGD 2, Lorraine, 11/04/2022.

The findings from the current study conquer with a study by Baafi, 2020 which indicated that all the young mothers interviewed in that study admitted to coming from a poor economic background, with no financial support from the father of their babies to fend for themselves and their children which automatically made their schooling life hard.

4.2.1.3 Personal attitude towards education

Teenage mothers choose to endure with their schooling because they consider academic qualifications as a ticket to participating in the labour market. All of the participants in the current study were aware that when one is not educated, it was so hard for such a person to get any employment opportunity and compete favorably in the labor market unless she becomes self-employed which seemed hard for them due to shortage of initial capital to start their own businesses. The participants also narrated that though there is high rate of discrimination (technical know-who) in the labor market today but they insisted that they needed to prepare in advance for any chance ahead of them. Though most teenage mothers reported that they would join vocational training colleges after senior four but still they valued education mentioning that it would be put them in a better position when carrying out their jobs, for instance being a tailor with certain level of educational qualification widens their customer base. Teenage mothers who were reported to be academically strong are ambitious to join varied careers that attract at least post-secondary education

accomplishments. The majority of the mothers indicated that they loved to be responsible and the only gateway to that was attaining education. The study findings also revealed that all teenage mothers had their dream careers before becoming pregnant so they wanted to fulfil them which could be achieved through returning to school. The vision, goals, and desires of teenage mothers determined their resilience towards achieving their dreams regardless of the challenges induced by gender roles' intersections. They recognized the essentiality of education in generating opportunities for their future. From the Drawings, the following was narrated;

....I would like to do this career because it would be the easiest on my side and it would not take a lot of time when I am on vacation. It can take me to high levels whereby I can earn a lot of income when am supporting my child. Drawings, Gladys, 28/03/2022

This is further described in figure 4.3 below;



Figure 4.3: Drawing 2 by Gladys

The drawing shows a fashion shop, Gladys narrates that her role model is Coco Chanel at the international level and Sylvia Awori in Uganda. When the baby makes five years, I want to go for a fashion-related course where I will also learn how to tailor bridal gowns. This course will give me enough time to first take care of my

baby in the morning and come back in the evening earlier so that I can also help my mother. I also like this career because, in my area, all tailors are not good at what they are doing. I believe that this job will give me enough money to cater for myself and the baby as well as my parents. I think becoming a mother at a young age will not hinder me from achieving my dream of becoming one of the greatest fashion designers in the world.



Figure 4.4: Drawing 2 by Chantel

Chantel was also narrated as follows;

"...I have drawn the above picture because it's my dream job to be a designer in future. Whenever I go to town and different markets places, I look at how different clothes are made, some of them look good while others are not well tailored, this made me start developing an interest in that career. However, in my community, people think that when you go for a tailoring course, it means that you were not good in class but me I don't care because that is what I want. For me, I see different fashions like Nigerian Bitengi, Miss World competitions, Gucci, Dior, and clothes worn by musicians and other celebrities in Uganda and the world makes me feel that being a fashion designer is a great career for me. I believe that giving birth at this age will not stop me from achieving my dream career since this job doesn't even need a lot of education. That's why I came back to school to finish senior four and join the technical college so that I can acquire good tailoring skills. The researcher probes "which

other factors enabled you to return to school” Chantel replied that my mother is supportive and she accepted to remain with my baby when I come to school, even though she provides some of the things I use at school...”

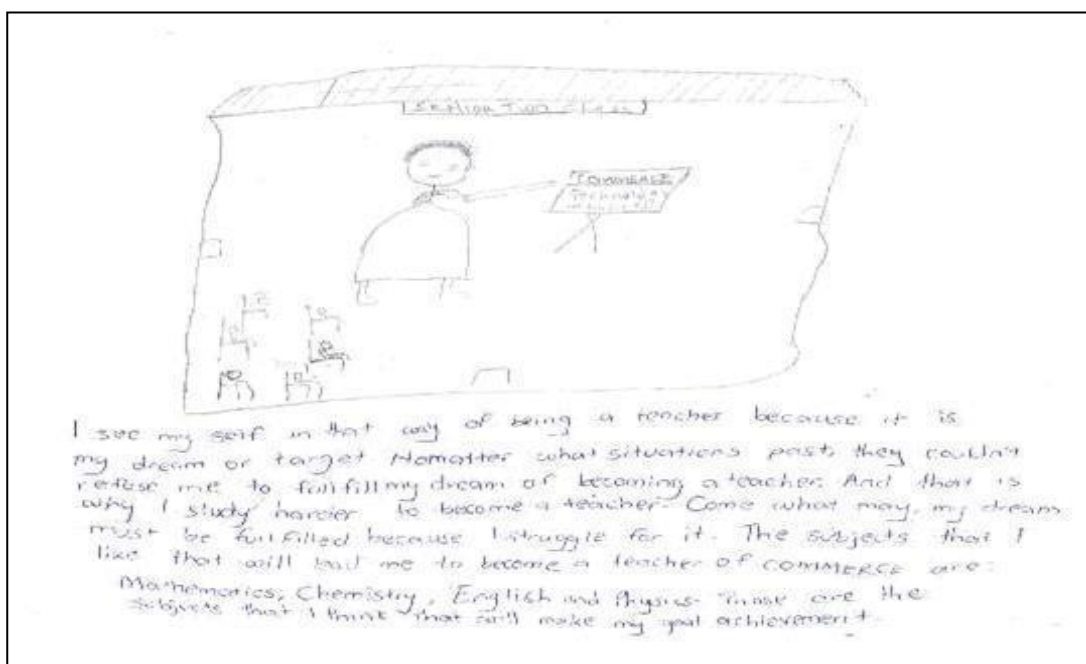


Figure 4.5: Drawing 2 by Marla

Marla was also narrated as follows;

“...I see my future self in that way of being a teacher because it is my dream or target. No matter what situations passed through, they couldn't refuse me to fulfil my dream of becoming a teacher. And that is why I study harder to become a teacher come what may. I want to become a teacher in the future because when I was in primary school, I used to admire Madam Carol so much because she was always smart and she told us teachers are respected by everyone in society, teachers have some free time. So even if am a mother now, I still work hard so that I achieve my dream of becoming a teacher, I want to teach commerce so that I teach students how to make money and become rich...”



Figure 4.6: Drawing 2 by Shan

Shan was also recorded as follows;

I see my future self as a mother and a career as a doctor. I want to be a doctor in government hospitals. I see my future self as a doctor because whenever my baby fell sick, I suffer with treating her since I don't have enough money and my aunt is also not so rich, even sometimes the father of my baby says he doesn't have money and I suffer seriously. I know being a doctor you must be good in biology and chemistry (feeling shy) though now they are not easy for me but am working hard such that I pass them and achieve my dream. I always feel happy when I go to the hospitals and people are calling doctors and nurses for help (she mentions it when she is laughing), even at home some of my sisters are nurses and they get a lot of money. That is why I came back to school so that I can read hard and become a doctor.

From figure 4.7 below, Lorraine narrates that despite the fact that she is a teenage mother, she still holds her dream of becoming an engineer and that she is working

hard regardless of the conditions she is experiencing both at school and home so that she achieves her dream.



Figure 4.7: Drawing 2 by Lorraine

From the observations above, it can be seen that teenage mothers choose to continue with their schooling because they consider academic qualifications as the only way to gain employment in the labour market and have a better standard of living. All teenage mothers in the current study indicated that they loved to be responsible and the only doorway to that was accomplishing a given level of education. In the same vein, according to UNESCO Report, 2021, indicated that many teenage mothers who returned to school wanted to live a respectable and flourishing lifestyle in their societies. According to the World Vision report, 2021, it indicated that once educated, girls and women will realize the global dream of freedom for all. They will annihilate poverty, increase the health of society, control family size, create harmonious societies where all are equal, be represented in the workforce in direct ratio to their numbers, take their rightful place in governing the state, eliminate child marriage and female genital mutilation, and prevent violence, conflict and wars. ‘The closest to a

silver bullet in human development is educating women, and particularly mothers' (Malik, 2014).

This highlight the need to consider including the teenage mothers' voices in the re-entry process since their visions, desires, and aspirations is a motivation for them in returning to school.

Also most teenage mothers in the current study narrated that, they returned to school because before getting pregnant, they were performing better in class and they looked at themselves as people who can still maintain their performance upon re-entry despite becoming pregnant during the lockdown. They felt that they could still be superiors or academic giants given their prior academic progress in school

...Yes I can still make it even if I don't get the first grade but I still believe in myself that I can even win over those who didn't become pregnant. I used to perform well in history, geography and entrepreneurship and if I concentrate more on my books, it means I can again pass them. FGD1, Chantel, 21/04/2022

In the lockdown, we used to study on radios and televisions, though I could not attend to them daily because of different problems like low mood and doing other activities at home, but am not so behind, even the chairman used to bring to us the work from the government, Sarah (child in the neighbourhood) used to also give me some work that she always got from her school. FGD2, Catrinah, 11/04/2022

Madam let me tell you, I was always among the best students in English and Fine art, and even now in this short period we have studied, am still performing well though I produced a baby, and am better than those who are not mothers, I used to do some reading during the lockdown though not daily because I knew after producing, I will go back to school. FGD 2, Alicia, 02/04/2022.

This is also highlighted in the study by Baa-Poku, 2016 which asserted that teenage mothers whose academic performance was good before becoming pregnant preferred re-entry to achieve their educational goals in life and have better standards of living with their children.

4.2.1.4 Support for the teenage mother from family, friends and community

The willingness and abilities of parents to provide childcare support for teenage mothers are directly linked with re-entry choices (Baa-Poku, 2016). However, mothers of pregnant girls carry a heavy load of offering support in comparison to the fathers of the same girls. Teen mothers may be unable to find and pay for adequate care for their children while they are at school hence affecting their ability to receive uninterrupted education. The study by Chemutai et al, (2019), indicated that free or easily-accessible childcare services have promise in ensuring girls can stay in school. The study established that the decision of teenage mothers to re-enter mainstream schools was influenced by their parents' or guardians' positive attitude towards their education. This attitude of the parents encouraged them to return to school after birth. Most teenage mothers received support from their parents and guardians that are people who sponsored the teenage mothers before becoming pregnant, or who were caring for them when the pregnancy occurred. The extent of support that teenage mothers received from these people depended on the relationship they had before the pregnancy and the birth of the baby. Where the relationship between parents or guardians and teens had been good, they received support. Teenagers who lived with at least one biological parent or a first-degree relative received the most help and support with the baby as compared to those who did not live with their parents or relatives. The teenage mothers who lived with guardians said they would have had better support if their biological mothers were present;

...Is not a good thing to be pregnant out of wedlock but my brother's wife has not been good since I get pregnant. She kicked me out of the house. I had to go to my granny's place of residence. So it's better to have your mum because even if your mum is very angry with you, with time she calms down because she is the one who produced you and so she cannot send you away, FGD2, Getty, 11/04/2022

Mothers were reportedly at the forefront when it came to supporting teen mothers more than the fathers, even if they had been unhappy or disappointed about their daughter's pregnancies. Those participants who had the support of their mothers indicated that their mothers had a sense of responsibility towards them to rejoin school. Their own mothers' acts of love towards the teenage mothers and their babies were highly valued and acknowledged. The support of participants' mothers and families was evident in the focus group discussions.

From the FGDs, it was recorded that

I did not suffer during my pregnancy, childbirth, and going back to school because I received much support from my mum I. She always encouraged me with hopeful words that this is not the end of my life, and I can still become a great woman in life. She helped me to return to school soon after delivery so that my classmates don't leave me behind, FGD 2, Alicia, 11/04/2022

In the discussion still, Liana narrated that,

My aunt had the baby on her back (as is the practice for African mothers) while Liana went to school and other duties. When the baby cried, my sister who is about 12 years old at the time, carried the baby and cuddled her. She once told me that stopping a child's education because she is pregnant is like destroying her life and the future of that child which gave me the energy to read hard upon coming back to school. FGD1, Liana, 28/03/2022

It was evident that Liana had support from both her aunt and sibling while Liana did her homework. Liana said her sister had learnt from her not to have a baby while still at school or out of wedlock, although she continued to help her with the baby. In other discussions, female siblings were helpful and supportive of their sister and her baby to enable her to go back to school. Several teenage mothers received help from their sisters, aunties and grannies in taking care of the baby so they could attend school work or go out and socialize.

The level of support received by teenage mothers substantially influenced their intentions and capacity to re-engage with education and work. Teenage mothers who received more support from their families, especially from their mothers, were more likely to return or want to return to school. Alicia, for example, had the support of her mother and went back to school when her baby was aged four months:

Mum asked me 'Are you going to keep the baby?' and I answered, 'Yes.' My mum was upset because of what I had done to become pregnant while at school yet she holds a big position in the church (she is the treasurer). After some time she started talking to me... so she says I have to go to school and she agreed to take care of my baby. As soon as February, when school started I went back to school because I wanted to achieve my future dreams. I wanted to become a lawyer. FGD2, Mario, 11/04/2022

However, contrasting attitudes do exist in many families and cannot be underestimated. It is pertinent to note that certain factors like marital status of the parent, educational background and parenting style are influential in the re-entry process of teenage mothers. Some family traditions required the males to pay for the girl's impregnated upkeep by taking full responsibility for the girls and babies delivered.

My father told me that I had missed my chances so I should deal with the problem myself and he was so furious with me when he got to know that am pregnant. He wanted me to be married off to the boy but my mother refused because I was a bright student in the class and getting pregnant happened accidentally. FGD 2, Flower, 11/04/2022

I was so stressed. My father was not well with me and I knew what happened to me upset him a lot. He used to love me so much before pregnancy and it is painful to see his daughter in such a condition. Ever since my daddy got to know about it, he hated and could not provide for me like before in that even if I fell sick, he couldn't give me money for treatment but only told me to go to my mother. FGD2, Catrinah, 11/04/2022

Support was not only lacking from absent biological fathers; stepfathers who were present were said to provide limited support for the step-daughters and their children.

Gloria narrated she felt unsupported and unloved by the 'fathers' in her life, including her step-father and biological father. Indeed, she attributed some of the struggles in her own life (and those of her mother) to the inadequate support of her father. I may not have become pregnant but because of lacking almost everything in life, I had to get a boyfriend and unfortunately, he impregnated me, FGD1, Gladys, 28/03/2022

While there was no evidence that the young mothers involved in my research were being compelled into marriage, however, some revealed having a cordial relationship with the persons behind the pregnancies that welcomed the situation. This study found that parental support and perspectives are fundamental to re-entry, as either facilitators or inhibitors. The teenage mothers' re-entry to school is mainly their mothers' responsibility especially when they accept to take care of their babies. In the current study, the majority of teenage mothers (13 out of 15) acknowledged receiving more support from their mothers than fathers apart from two mothers who lived with their grannies. This is consistent with a study by Onyango, Kiolis & Nyambedha (2015) which emphasized the impact of attitudes and perceptions of parents among others on the re-entry of teenage mothers into mainstream schools.

4.2.1.4.1 Support from friends

Participants received mixed levels of support from friends, and the level of support largely depended on the type of friendship before the pregnancy. Loyal friends were said to support the mothers during the pregnancy and after the baby's birth:

Some friends are very close, like those who stay in the same village as me, they often visit me. Even before I had the baby some encouraged me to be strong and that I should not abort. Even when I don't come to school for some days, some girls check on me, sometimes they help me copy the notes that I missed, FGD 1, Marla, 28/03/2022

My close friends are just the same as they were. They are very supportive. They still visit me and talk to me sometimes. One of my closest friends said she feels sympathy for me. She has never thought that I could be in this situation, actually, sometimes, she helps me

with classwork and she wants to see me pass as well. FGD2, Marioh, 11/04/2022

During the discussion, Marla commented that becoming pregnant strengthened the relationship between the two friends. This supportive scenario between friends was not the same for others, who felt isolated, sometimes because their friends were young mothers themselves:

The other friends are now very distant from me because I am a mother at this age and they think that when they socialise with me, they will also become pregnant or people will not see them as good girls in the community. I have one best friend and she has a baby as well, she has to look after her baby so she didn't have time to support me. So I decided to keep to myself. (FGD1, Dovie, 21/03/2022)

Some friends used to talk behind my back and gossip about me that I have a baby at such a very young age and how would I be able to look after the baby at the same time when am studying. And when I came back to live with my granny they said who will look after whom because we didn't have enough money, the granny was also not working and the baby's father was not sending us money FGD2, Favour, 11/04/2022

For some teenage mothers, long travel distances and the inability to commute easily were a barrier to getting support from friends given the fact that some friends were studying at another school.

....my best friend Ritah lives very far like two villages after mine and also studies at a different school. So it's very hard to get there in case I need something from her or when I feel like talking to her. I don't even have a phone that I can call her in case of moving there with my baby. FGD 1, Jasmin, 28/03/2022

Many of my friends disappeared when they heard that I am pregnant, I feel a lot of shame, loneliness and despair because I cannot talk to my friends freely like before since they think that am a bad girl, and even their parents don't want to see them with me. But this was a mistake that I also didn't want. FGD 2, Getty, 11/04/2022

The findings of the study agree with the study by Dlamini, 2016 which also asserted that the support received by teenage mothers mostly came from their mothers, particularly in providing for child care responsibilities, financial support, caring for

pregnant teenagers, and encouraging the teenage mother to return to school. Other relatives like the sisters, grandmothers and aunts of the teenage mothers also provided practical support to the mother, such as information when it was clear that she was expecting a baby and caring for her offspring in case the mother was not able or willing to help. It was revealed that most of the friends of the teenage mothers ignored them when they became pregnant, but some supported and assured of continued friendship despite their current condition.

4.2.1.4.2 Support from the wider community

Members of the wider African community generally frown upon unmarried teenage mothers, leaving the teenagers with feelings of shame and embarrassment. Teenage mothers are perceived to set bad examples for other teenagers and give a bad reputation to the community and their families. Hence, teenage mothers were perceived to be bad role models for other younger girls. Following this perception, the lack of support given to these mothers by members of their community was evident. None of the participants in this research said they had received support for the baby via their community. Community attitudes toward them left with feelings of embarrassment, humiliation and isolation.

I was embarrassed by everyone in my village. My mother was angry with me because I could not go to school. She felt bad because I become pregnant while at her home which gave a bad image in the community where we stay. I was so stressed and depressed because I did not know what to do with my life. I thought about suicide so I could get out of this circumstance but I knew suicide is a big sin before God. Later, I thought like although I die, nothing would have changed but to continue hurting my parents so much. So I had to keep on till I gave birth and came back to school, FGD2. Mario, 11/04/2022

I think people saw me like a ball. This is because everyone pushes it away. They saw me like a ball because I was too younger to get pregnant which made me feel like killing myself because of the rejections from my parents. FGD1, Shan, 28/03/2022

According to the participants, an African family is situated within the wider community, and they share in their children's feelings of shame and embarrassment that emerge through wider community disapproval. A daughter's teen pregnancy out of marriage reflects badly on the parents and places their parental responsibilities/duties in question by the wider community. Thus any community perceptions and attitudes towards individuals were taken seriously. Those teenage mothers without significant social bonds expressed feelings of exclusion and rejection.

...Because this is a new area to me, I haven't got many friends that connect with me, like really best friends you can share with your problems, even those that I have, I can't just talk to all of them about my situation because I don't know their hearts, some people pretend to feel sorry for you yet they are laughing inside, FGD1, Chantel, 28/03/2022

The research findings are in the same vein as the study by Baafi, 2020 and Chemutai et al, (2019) which revealed that issues of stigma and discrimination targeted at teenage mothers are rooted in the cultural system of their societies. Furthermore, the study revealed that such pregnancy carries moral weights that are unfavorable to the teenage mother (Shaw, 2010; Bhana et al., 2010). It is noted that stigmatization and discriminatory discourses from their community and peers are among the primary reasons mentioned by all the participants that hinder them to receive the required support of re-entry because they are not well accommodated in the societies they live in as accorded in Britwum et al. (2017),

4.2.1.5 Accommodative school environment

While it is no longer common to bar teenage mothers from continuing with their education, those who go back to school after the birth of their babies are influenced by an accommodative and conducive school environment. Teenage mothers who had returned to the school indicated that they were welcomed by their friends very well

upon rejoining school and some indicated that some of the friends helped them with notes, doing discussions and carrying on their books.

My teachers are very good, especially madam Rose the deputy head teacher, she always talks to me in case she sees that you are not fine. Even when I miss school, she calls home to see what is happening with me, even when I gave birth, she visited me and checked on me, she encouraged me to rejoin school when the baby grows, FGD1, Gladys, 28/03/2022

When it is lunchtime, madam Magret permits me to present at the gate so that they allow me to go and breastfeed my baby, even when I come late sometimes I just explain my issues to her so that I don't get punishments like other students. We mothers, when we have problems, we always talk to her and she handles our issues very well. Nowadays, fellow students also call us children of Magret, FGD2, Favour, 11/04/2022

When teacher Joy comes to class, she first tells us encouraging words but not pinpointing us directly, she gives us hope that we can change our life chapters and make it good again, she tells us proverbs that give us strength to work hard and have a good life. For her even if you fail her work, she doesn't expose you in class but just calls you in the staffroom or under a tree and talks to you separately while comforting you and I feel free to share my problems with her more than any other teacher because she is understanding, FGD2, Catrina, 11/04/2022

The research findings agree with the study by Paa-Baku, 2016 which stated that the school environment is an important determinant and a critical factor to success in the educational attainment of teenage mothers. It is further noted that structural and functional factors within the schools can influence how teenage mothers' educational needs are responded to. From the current study, it was found that teenage mothers felt comfortable in schools where they are listened to and their problems attended to because it makes them feel at home and not worried about situation that may arise.

In conclusion, financial position of teenage mothers' families, personal attitude towards education and support for the teenage mother from their families and friends greatly (major contributors) influenced teenage mothers' decision to re-enter into

school. However, there were other factors (minor contributors) that also influenced their decision to re-enter, for instance awareness of re-entry guidelines and accommodative school environment were not put on greater weight though they played a role.

4.2.2 Social experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County Wakiso district Uganda

This was the second objective of the study. From the data, five themes emerged and these included; stigma and discrimination, inadequate academic support from the teachers, negative attitude from teachers and fellow learners, insufficient counselling services to combat stigma attached to teenage motherhood and conflicting gender roles of parenting and studentship. With this objective, the researcher was interested in knowing how the teenage mothers were treated upon re-entry and how their life was in the school environment. These experiences are elaborated below;

4.2.2.1 Stigma and discrimination

Stigma and discrimination came from several sources towards teenage mothers. This came from the school, home among fellow siblings and the community. While it is no longer common to refuse teen mothers from continuing with their education, those who go back to school after the birth of their babies face many challenges as learners and that makes it hard for them to succeed with their schooling. All participants mentioned stigma as one major social experience upon re-entry into mainstream schools. Stigma can be internal (self-stigma) or external resulting from stigma from the environment. Stigma in the school environment is characterized by bullying from other students and some teachers identifying them as a point of reference in various scenarios. Most teenage mothers view these actions as inevitable given the fact that

they decided to re-enter mainstream schools which consists of students who have never been mothers.

...I think people saw me like a ball. This is because everyone pushes it away. Some saw me like a ball because I was too younger to get pregnant. Everybody hated me, my parents told me to leave home and go to the owner of my pregnancy. My parents rejected me and went back with my aunt, that's where I stayed until giving birth and coming back to school...even here at school, some students call me mother/ mature, not by name which makes me feel bad, Drawings, Shan, 21/03/2022

Figure 4.8 below shows her insights on where she views her experience as a ball;



Figure 4.8: Drawing 1 by Shan

From the discussion with Martha, the following were recorded;

“... I think most of the people in the community saw me like a rotten tomato. This is because when you put or mix a rotten tomato in those that are fresh, they will also turn rotten. So the people in the community saw me when I am young and yet they also have young children in their homes. That is to say, those children are fresh tomatoes and I am the rotten tomato...”

Figure 4.9 below shows her expression;



Figure 4.9: Drawing 1 by Marla

From her experiences, she further added that;

“...I can compare myself to the drawing showing a rotten tomato; when I become pregnant, I was so annoyed because I didn’t want it and it happened by mistake. I had gone to visit my aunt in Entebbe. Reaching home my aunt explained everything which made my parents annoyed, after a few days home people in the village started

While presenting different forms of discrimination from parents by Liana, the following was quoted;

...I was chased away from home by my parents. I tried to ask for forgiveness but they refused to hear my reasons. They regarded me as a total embarrassment to the community and at home. For sure I was suffering from emotional blackmail and I end by saying mistakes happen but no one plans for them. When I become pregnant, my parents didn’t want to look at me, especially my father. Now am staying with my aunt to avoid the shame in the village where I was staying but my mother comes to check on me. I am planning to go back and apologize to my parents especially my father because he is annoyed with me...

Figure 4.10 shows her expression;



Figure 4.10: Drawing by Liana

The above drawing portrays that Liana was made uncomfortable at school because some friends used to talk about her back especially those who knew that she has a baby. This made her feel like a social misfit in the school community.

Dovie also presented experiences concerning discrimination as indicated below which further shows what teenage mothers go through. She presented a drawing shown in figure 4.11 below;

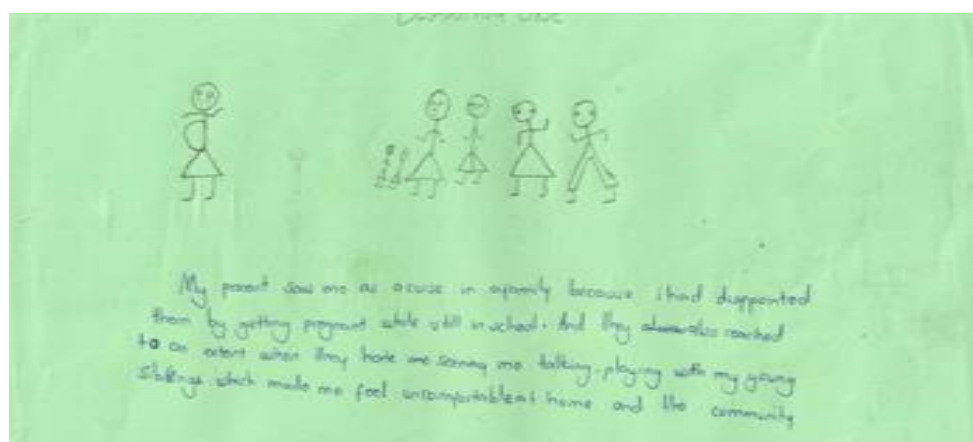


Figure 4.11: Drawing 1 by Dovie

From her elaboration, she indicated that;

“...My parents saw me as a curse in the family because I had disappointed them by getting pregnant while still in school. And they also reached an extent where they hate seeing me talking and playing with my young siblings which made me feel uncomfortable at home and in the community. My parents couldn't treat me the way before that now since I become pregnant. Though I managed to return to school life has never been the same again because I lack money to get what we want for me and my baby like what to use at school...”

Similar, a Focus Group Discussion with Chantel gave similar results. She was able to draw the following while;



Figure 4.12: Focus Group Discussion result

“...when I become pregnant, people in the village started pinpointing and laughing at me whenever am passing by. Also, some of my family members rejected me apart from my mother and one sister who still loved me. When I joined school again, some students started talking to me and like after a week, I was used to the school environment however some teachers complained about my declining performance. But the mathematics teacher (Madam Agnes) is so good to me because sometimes she talks to me in a good way and even gives me her food on some days when I tell her that am hungry or if she sees me unhappy...” Drawing, Chantel, 28/03/202



Figure 4.13: Drawing one by Lorraine

She narrates that;

As I she returned to school, students who had known about my condition of producing a baby keep pointing fingers at me whenever I pass by them and they laugh at me, this makes me feel like a misfit in the school and start wondering why I returned to school, FGD 2, Lorraine, 11/04/2022

From the results above, it can be seen that discrimination is among the key experiences faced by teenage mothers upon re-entry into secondary schools. They are discriminated against by their fellow students and parents always first cater for those termed as the “Well behaved girls” those who kept themselves safe during the long covid-19 holidays due to school closures. The findings of the study are in agreement with the STEP-UP Report, 2015 which indicated the existence of stigma not only at the school level but also at home and in the wider community. The concerns led to suggestions that special schools be established solely for teenage mothers so that such learners with the same background can be in one school. Mokgalabone, 2019 maintains that pregnancy is among the most serious causes of school disruption, particularly at the secondary-school level. Research shows that there are factors that

influence whether or not a teen mother can continue schooling after the birth of the baby depending on the girls' ability to manage logistics and finances associated with mothering and schooling simultaneously (Kaufman, Wet & Stadler, 2014). According to UNICEF Report, 2021, it is indicated that stigma should be controlled in school to create a conducive study environment for teenage mothers who may manage to return to school such that they don't drop out hence enabling them to achieve their educational goals. While these statements of disapproval exist and subject teenage mothers to discrimination and stigma, Chigona and Chetty, (2007) argue that teenage mothers often regard education as an essential component of their lives. Many teenage mothers want to accomplish their education goals to raise their chances of getting into the job market and moving out of the vicious circles of poverty.

4.2.2.2 Inadequate academic support from the teachers

Teachers are supposed to make a difference in the school environment. They should not only share formal information but also be more involved in the holistic education of teenage mothers to facilitate their development into well-balanced responsible citizens. Most teachers in most cases were not willing to go through the lessons the girls had missed due to motherhood. For instance, a teenage mother could be absent from school for days because she had to be with her baby in hospital or even when they have personal problems. When she came back to class, teachers would not help her make up the missed lessons by organizing remedial work or having individual education plans for them.

.....if you miss out on lessons, then the teacher will only tell you to consult your friends about what they have been learning when absent and most teachers do not feel sorry for us when we miss lessons because we were busy with our babies. After all, they think we are facing the consequences of our behaviour...FGD 2, Flower, 11/04/2022

Sometimes I cannot concentrate very well when in class because am thinking about my baby, or am worried about the requirements for school and myself and sometimes when I slept late and wake up early to start the journey because I come from a faraway place. So I can dose when the teacher is teaching and get lost especially in sciences and the teacher cannot repeat for you but just say it seems you only understand breasting and cooking but classwork zero, imagine in the class, FGD 1, Dovie, 28/03/2022

Sometimes I don't go to school especially when I have not finished exercises because some teachers cannot listen to you but they just remind you of your past mistakes that if you didn't produce a baby, you could get time to do the work, FGD 2, Getty, 11/04/2022

One day I took some questions to a teacher to help because I was struggling with the topic of the mole concept, but you know what happened to me, the teacher called me that you mother, how can I help you? Don't you see that its break time and teachers are taking tea, go and consult your friend who didn't produce when young and remained with a sense of understanding when the teacher is teaching, FGD 1, Chantel, 28/03/2022

The above findings agree with the study by Naidoo et al, 2020 which revealed that teenage mothers were not fully cared for upon re-entry which affected their retention in school. Because there is anecdotal information that normal learners who miss school are assisted with the lessons they miss especially the bright students, the researcher can conclude that teenage mothers are in this case marginalized. The assumption is that teachers should also help teenage mothers under such circumstances given their special nature of being a student and a mother as well. Unfortunately, some teachers consider the teenage mothers' situation a private matter and none of their concern. Similarly, Bloem (2000) argues that teachers may need professional training or refresher courses to inform them about handling teenage mothers and their situations so that they can enable them to be retained in school. From the above findings, it can be concluded that unless that attitude is changed to being supportive and considerate, teenage mothers may still fail to complete a given level of education.

4.2.2.3 Conflicting gender roles of studentship and motherhood

Teenage motherhood is still conceptualized as a major social problem since teenage pregnancy rates are still high, especially in Sub-Saharan countries, (Ardington, Menendez, and Mutevedzi 2015; Neill-Weston and Morgan 2017; Mjwara and Maharaj 2018). Childbearing among teenagers is viewed as an issue of great concern globally as it impedes school progress, results in early dropout and constrains opportunities to succeed educationally and economically (Reddy, Sewpaul, and Jonas 2016). Based on the findings of the current study, it was revealed that teenage mothers living under the authority of their parents are supposed to fulfil their socially prescribed roles of girls within the gendered division of labour which makes it difficult for them to be punctual in school, attend discussions with classmates, do the assignments in the time leading to under-performance due to increased household roles.

.....my parents don't have mercy on me regarding doing daily activities at home, even now that I have a baby, I have to do the work like before I produced a child, I have to wake up very early to wash my baby's clothes, fetch water and wash dishes before going to school which sometimes makes me reach late at school and find when the morning lesson is finished, FGD 2, Marioh, 11/04/2022

....In the evening, am the one to cook supper for the family, which sometimes is hectic and consumes most of the study time because I don't attend extra lessons and even at night after doing all the activities, I cannot concentrate on my books because am so tired and exhausted. Sometimes my sister helps me on weekdays especially if she is not busy too and I have to give something to motivate her, FGD 2, Catrina, 11/04/2022

Sometimes I dose in class because of the overwhelming work done at home in the evening plus caring for my baby, when students see you dosing, they instead laugh at you. FGD 1, Dovie, 28/03/2022

I come to school looking tired and sleepy so I cannot concentrate on my studies in class for a long time. Sometimes, I fall asleep in the middle of a lesson because some days the baby does not sleep well at night or when she is sick, so I have to nurse her for many hours before sleeping, FGD 1, Shan, 28/03/2022

From the above findings, it means that some parents chose not to help teenage mothers as a punitive measure for falling pregnant. The findings of the study rhythm well with the study by Chigona and Chetty (2008) which indicated that distancing was a strategy used by parents to show the community that the family does not sanction deviant behaviour. It should be noted that teenage mothers continued with household chores coupled with the childcare responsibility and schooling that sometimes becomes unbearable for them hence leading to low academic achievements. 10 out of 15 teenage mothers narrated that they had no help with learning skills of mothering for their child. There were times when they were in dire need of guidance on how to care for the baby since most of them become pregnant when they were still young.

I didn't even know how to bathe my baby, I used to fear her because she seemed so soft and delicate, I feared touching the cord because I thought I was hurting her, even at the health centre, they didn't provide antenatal classes for us, FGD 2, Getty, 11/04/2022

It was not easy to work for me to care for my baby especially at a young stage because I didn't get a chance to be taught how to do so, FGD 1, Chantel, 28/03/2022

I don't have a permanent caretaker for my baby because sometimes my mother is busy with other work at home, so I end up missing some school sessions, especially those when the baby is sick and I have to attend clinic appointments. This affects my performance because when I miss class, I may not get anyone to repeat for me, FGD 2 Alicia, 11/04/2022

According to Ngulube (2017), children are exposed to multiple factors that influence their behaviour and attitudes concerning gender roles as they develop into adolescence with parents' guidance being most influential. However, the findings contradict the study by Sarfo, Yendork, & Naidoo et al, 2019 which indicated that girls are socialized in the mothering and caregiving roles from a young age through observation and training in the various household chores by their mothers. It was revealed that nowadays mothers are more involved in income-generating activities to

feed their families and they spare little or no time for their children. This was attributed to the fact that fathers are no longer fulfilling their roles of caring for their families leaving all the responsibilities to the mothers. It was further revealed that a teenage mother's triple identity becomes intolerable and a challenge to her retention in school when there is little support from her family that makes schooling unfavourable which agrees with the study by Dawson and Hosie 2005; Chigona 2007; Wekesa, 2010; Pricilah et al., 2014.

4.2.2.4 Insufficient counselling services upon re-entry

The identity of teenage motherhood is experienced as shameful and dishonorable. Hargreaves (2011) explains that the emotional experiences of individuals influence their identities as well as their relationships with others. The research findings revealed that teenage mothers and their families have no access to formal counselling facilities in any form neither in their school nor community, to help them deal with the multiple and complex emotions they experience. The findings further discovered the experiences of constant anxiety and fear among teenage mothers about the adequate material resources for their babies to enable them to give quality care and to pay for a caregiver to assist them when they were in school.

I feel ashamed when breastfeeding before my young siblings, I know it shows them a bad picture of me since am the big sister in the family, sometimes you need someone to talk to and give you courage about some situations but finding a trustworthy person who will keep your secrets is hard, so you die alone, FGD 2, Bills, 11/04/2022

It's always paining to see that am lacking the basic needs for myself and my baby!!! Imagine you go for immunization but when your baby doesn't have good clothes, baby shawls and playable like others, It's more worrying when you don't even have hopes of getting them because am not working and to make matters worse even some people you share with your problems just talk about in case of helping you or giving you comfort that things will be alright, FGD 1 Shan, 28/03/2022

You have problems but no one you can share them with especially emotional problems not related to eating food but the heart and the soul, people around you can't understand the pain you are going through, sometimes I cry whenever I think of the life I was living in with my parents and this one with my Granny, she is not working, she does not have money so in most cases we lack what to use in daily life. FGD 2, Flower, 11/04/2022

Sometimes when the baby cries a lot, I also cry, the boy denied impregnating me and runaway, all the pain and depression is on me alone, and the mother starts reminding me of the shame you brought to the family, so I always feel trauma for what I did because I cannot fit in the family like before, FGD 1, Dovie, 28/03/2022

The research findings agree with studies by J. Naidoo et al, 2019 and Kumar, 2017, which highlighted complex emotions that teenage mothers experienced like fear, shame, remorse, trauma, humiliation and sadness which required continuous counselling to enable them to cope with the dominant oppressive discourses from family, community and school members. As such if this issue is not attended to, teenage mothers may get overwhelmed by their situation in school which may subsequently lead to school dropout. All the teenage mothers in the FGDs expressed concern that they had never been offered professional counselling on how they could get themselves ready to face their new situation of studentship and parenting.

... Nobody offered serious counselling to me and even the teachers did not counsel me when I came back to school, it's always done generally in a group as a whole school or class but not individually because as teenage mothers our problems are not the same like those of other students... FGD 1, Liana, 28/03/2022

... There was no counselling to me before returning to school and I don't know anybody who could do that. No not even from the community or the school but just some friends always talk to me though not this serious talk, FGD 1, Gladys, 28/03/2022)

...sometimes on the radio, they would be talking about teenage mothers and counselling them but it could take little time but they most blame us for becoming pregnant at a young age, just once in a while teachers talk to us as a class but not separating us as teenage mothers, even sometime back certain counsellors from some organization visited our school but still, they talked to as when we are mixed. When I have a problem, I can talk to my close friends and

they give me advice on how to best do it, but you find they don't know some things, FGD 1, Marla, 28/03/2022

It would be great if I have someone to talk to about how my daily life is and can seriously understand what am going through. The government should put up some support programs on social media to help us teenage mothers be prepared for the future, FGD 2, Marioh, 11/04/2022.

From the quotations above, it can be seen that teen mothers came back to school without going through thorough counselling to prepare them to deal with the stigma, parenthood, and schooling simultaneously. A study by Piyanart, 2016 indicated that teenage mothers require psychological support that is having someone they can talk with and ask the advice from and who will listen to them and understand their circumstances without judgment. All participants reported that they don't have that person they feel open to talking to, 10 out of 15 teenage mothers further mentioned that they can talk to their mothers, sisters, friends and counsellors who seldom visit their school but they fear telling them everything as they think that they would also gossip about them. However, according to the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) policy of 2013 on managing learner pregnancy in public schools, "the teenager mother must be considered as a learner with special needs with access to counselling by professionals of the Specialized Learner and Educator Support (SLES). Education personnel especially the head teachers remained ambivalent about organizing professional counselling services for the teen mothers that is they seemed to be too busy to co-ordination the counselling to the teenage mothers because there are very few professional counsellors hence becoming expensive to hire them.

4.2.2.5 Negative attitude from teachers and fellow learners

According to the findings of this study, teenage mothers felt some teachers did not empathize with them and they were expected to perform and behave just like any other learner in their respective classes. The teachers and fellow learners put a good

deal of pressure on them without really understanding what the teenage mothers were going through. For instance, teenage mothers were sometimes ridiculed in front of classmates whenever they hadn't satisfied the class requirements like not giving correct answer during the lesson.

... because my baby is crying all the time she doesn't want to go to anybody when am around, I don't have time to do my homework, teachers are nagging all the time in class, I come to school the next morning sleepy, I wake up at night because she is crying constantly, ... sometimes you feel like you have got all the world on your shoulders, FGD 1, Dovie, 28/03/2022

I wake up very early in the morning to prepare breakfast for my baby and do some other work at home before going to school. School starts early, so I am normally late whereby in most cases I miss morning studies because some teachers on duty are strict and they don't listen to your explanation, they give you punishments. In the evening, I must wash my baby's clothes and sometimes I prepare supper which sometimes is hectic and leaves me with no time to revise my books and so you cannot contribute in class which makes some teachers and learners to look at you with bad eye, FGD 2, Alicia, 11/04/2022

....while in the compound, at the canteen and the kitchen, you hear learners especially girls talking behind your back. Even when you look behind, sometimes they continue talking about you as well as laughing. This makes me feel bad and uncomfortable at school, FGD 2, Getty, 11/04/2022

...some teachers are really unfriendly to me like they cannot really listen to my problems especially when I don't perform well in class like in science subjects instead they keep reminding you of the mistake you did, yet it was a mistake and now that I decided to come back to school, teachers should not always tell me such words. They take you as other normal students yet there are other challenges you are facing as a teenage mother, FGD 1, Gladys, 28/03/2022

From the study findings, it was also revealed that teachers often refer to teenage mothers as examples to chaste other students to abstain from illegal sexual affairs.

From the focus group discussions, one of the teenage mothers remarked as follows:

"Sometimes teachers would caution disobedient girls in a class by telling them that if they do not change their unbecoming behaviour then they will end up being like so-so (teacher mentions names of teenage mothers who are in the same class or school) who got

pregnant while in school because of her bad manners, FGD 2, Caroline, 11/04/2022

The above findings agree with the study by Niboye, 2018 which indicated that teenage mothers who managed to re-enter secondary schools in Zanzibar were isolated by their fellow students and some teachers which lowered their self-esteem hence leading to low academic performance. In addition, Lees (2018) reported that boys and girls verbally abuse teenage mothers by nicknaming them ‘mothers’ and their class participation are equally unwelcome, and they are at best ignored or at worst ridiculed or put down when in school.

Pillow (2014:111) argues that “teen mothers are often described as and assumed to be ‘poor students or ‘incapable students’. Some media have portrayed the teenage mother as “a failure — the ‘bad’ girl, who behaved uncontrollably, irresponsibly, and immorally”.

It was also found that when a teen mother quarrels with other learners, they usually picked on the teen mother’s situation as a mother. Sometimes this behaviour resulted in their discomfort when they are in the school environment and this affected their learning and collaboration with fellow learners. Teen mothers commented on gossiping and saying unkind things about them:

... some students would be talking to one another laughing and looking at me but when I come close to them they would stop talking so I knew they were talking about me because I have a baby ... so sometimes I feel left out and isolated, but there is nothing I can do to them but I just have to ignore them because I know what I want...”
FGD 2 Favour, 11/04/2022

... sometimes it is like a fashion show when you walk down the corridors everyone is looking at you, you appear like a tourist attraction because of the attention which makes me feel out of place and a misfit at school, but I can’t stop coming to school because I need to be educated so that I could support myself and my baby and we have a good life, FDG 1, Chantel, 28/03/2022

...Some students do tease me because I have a baby while at school, others say that I become pregnant out of wedlock which is considered a very shameful act to me and my family. So they take me as someone who lacks vital good manners in young children. FGD 1, Jasmin, 28/03/2022.

The above study findings concur with Coinco (2010), who found that teenage mothers who manage to re-enter school in Sierra Leone faced mistreatment and isolation from their fellow students and some teachers because they perceived that becoming pregnant before while in school or being married is immoral and hence those who become pregnant are deemed of bad etiquettes. Similarly, from this study, the findings showed that teenage mothers are less respected by their fellow students and some teachers. Most of these teenage mothers are perceived as immoral, lacking proper upbringing and that they are disobedient. The current study findings are in the same vein as what was found in Zambia (Wedekind and Milingo, 2015) that most teenage mothers who returned to school after delivery faced harassment from teachers and stigma from fellow students which made them struggle to concentrate in class.

In conclusion, stigma and discrimination, conflicting gender roles of parenting and studentship and insufficient counselling services greatly affected the school life of teenage mothers making them uncomfortable leading to low academic performance due to poor concentration while in class. This also limited teenage mothers' collaboration and socialization with other students in both academic and co-curricular activities.

However, inadequate academic support from teachers and negative attitude from teachers and learners also affected teenage mothers' stay in school as they felt isolated and a misfit in the school community. Despite the above experiences, all teenage mothers in the current study were much determined to persevere all the circumstances

they pass through so as to achieve their educational goals and others wanted to please their parents as they had made a mistake of becoming pregnant while at school.

4.2.3 Support systems teenage mothers have upon re-entry into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County

This was the third objective of the study. The researcher was interested in identifying the support systems teenage mothers have upon re-entry into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County. It should be noted that the school learning environment should be supportive and good for teenage mothers in the way that teachers and students should purposely extend collaboration to the re-admitted teenage mothers as they recommence to pursue their studies. This will grant confidence and self-esteem to the teenage mothers thus concentrating on their studies given the comfort they have from the people around them. From the research findings, responses regarding their schools, teachers and other students were mixed (some supportive and some unsupportive). From the data, three themes emerged and these included; school sponsors, provision of counselling and guidance and teacher support.

4.2.3.1 School sponsors

Several studies in Sub-Saharan Africa have indicated that teenage mothers are less likely to complete their education due to childbearing and its responsibilities. However, Madhavan and Thomas (2005) have suggested that childbearing does not certainly prevent a teenage mother from achieving her educational aspirations. Given the poor economic background of some teenage mothers yet before becoming pregnant, they were very brilliant in class, their school decided to subsidize school fees for them with the help of support from some Non-Government Organizations like Save the Children, Plan International, Brac Uganda, Raising Voices and Children at Risk Action Network (CRANE). This motivated some of the teenage mothers to re-

enter school as they were sure of the provision of school requirements to supplement what their parents and guardians were providing. From the focus group discussions, it was noted that teenage mothers were provided scholastic materials like books, pens, pencils, paid school fees and many others from their parents and the above mentioned Non-Government Organizations. Parental involvement cannot be separated from the education of teenage mothers hence they play a vital role in their re-entry process. The teenage mothers indicated that they got more support from their parents than the fathers of the children. From a focus drawing by Jasmin, the following was recorded;

When I got pregnant, my parents guided and counselled me, they also told me that I will give birth well and after go back to school. My parents have been so supportive to see me go back to school and have provided me with school fees and many other school requirements. Thank you, mummy and daddy... FGD 1, Gladys, 28/03/2022

...Mentor Babirye from CRANE called us for the meeting where they told us encouraging words, they asked those who wanted to go back to school, those who raised their hands were given scholastic materials to use and others were promised to be taken to vocational schools for hairdressing and tailoring, FGD 1, Marla, 28/03/2022

.....Save the Children gave us pens and books to use when I came back to school and madam Stellah from Save always come and checked on me to see how my studies are, one time she even brought some clothes for my baby, FGD 1, Shan, 28/03/2022.

I am a baseline girl, so CRANE is providing everything for me including paying part of the school fees and even taking me for camps at Taibah, FGD 2, Bills, 11/04/2022.

Madam Aisha from Brac Uganda gave me books, pens, a set and a bag when I was preparing to come back to school, this made me happy as it reduced on the money needed for my school requirements, FGD 2, Getty, 11/04/2022

Mentor Richard from CRANE promised me that when I reach senior four, the organization will pay for my registration and also take me to the boarding section when my baby grows up, he also gave me some things to use when I was coming back to school, FGD 1, Marla, 28/03/2022

From the quotation above, it is evident that parents and various NGOs provided school requirements, and paid school fees for the teenage mothers to see that they

return to school amidst their giving birth and the financial constraints in their families. The current research findings concur with the study by Chigona and Chetty (2007) which argued that the key to retaining teenage mothers in schools and empowering them is the provision of support, which proves to allow many teenage mothers to stay in school.

However, the findings of the current study are contrasted with the results of a study by Pricilah et al (2014) which discovered that student mothers discouraged their parents from supporting them in the school re-entry process. The study which examined the barriers to effective parental participation in teenage mothers' education in Kenya pointed to the unwillingness of student mothers to return to school as one of the major barriers that discouraged and prevented parental involvement in the education of their daughters.

Similarly, from the research findings, it was noted that teenage mothers who were brilliant in class before becoming pregnant were heavily supported by the school upon re-entry because they expected better grades from them. This enabled some of the teenage mothers to continue schooling given supplementary financial help from the school.

....I used to perform well in class and teachers indeed loved me because of my performance, even now am not badly off apart from some subjects, I think even in UNEB exams in October, I will get a first grade, FGD 1, Gladys, 28/03/2022

Though am a mother now but I can still win over those who are not mothers, I believe with time I will even perform better because I have to work hard and get good grades so that I achieve my future dreams, FGD 1, Chantel, 28/03/2022

These findings conform to the study by Baa-Poku (2016) which indicated that there are some exceptional cases among teenage mothers who re-entered school and continued to perform better than their peers in class occurred. All that is attributed to

the confidence and self-esteem teenage mothers get given the conducive class environment provided by some teachers which allows them to even ask questions while in class.

4.2.3.2 Provision of counselling and guidance from the school

Schools are supposed to provide counselling and guidance services to enable teenage mothers to accept and cope better with their current situation of motherhood and studentship. Parents and other students are also supposed to be counselled to inform them on how to deal with teenage mothers. Traditional views of teenage mothers maintain negative stereotypes and fail to acknowledge many who seem to cope adequately and provide care for their children despite the challenges. The study findings discovered that all teenage mothers at least got guidance and counselling services (formal or informal) whether from teachers, classmates or visiting counsellors once in a while. From the focus group discussions, participants indicated similar responses regarding accessing guidance and counselling sessions upon re-entry into secondary schools.

I was assisted by teacher Sandra by counselling me on what to do, and how to cope with my fellow students during school and she also told me that life does not stop for a girl after producing. She told me that mistakes do happen in life but I shouldn't let the mistakes define my future. This is something that has for long defined my stay in school and I have been so confident in what I am doing. FGD 2, Catrina, 11/04/2022.

Teachers sometimes talk to us especially before starting the lessons about how we can keep ourselves safe but it's always for a short period because they have to teach too. FGD 2, Walah, 11/04/2022

Mentors and counsellors from CRANE often visit our school for counselling sessions but it's done in a group as a whole school. Though we get some information but it's not easy to get them one on one since they come after lunch, FGD 1, Bills, 11/04/2022

Teacher Cissy can talk to you after the lesson especially if she sees you not happy in her lesson but she gives you little time because she

has to go to another class but it's not this serious counselling where you have to tell all your challenges, FGD 1, Liana, 28/03/2022

Sometimes when I have a simple problem, I talk to my trusted friends whom I know that they will not share with other people so that I get solution on how to solve it, this makes me feel ok when I talk to other people about the challenges am facing, FGD 2, Catrina, 11/04/2022

My granny has been there for me. In case of any problem, I tell her though she does not have money to give me but her words gives me hope that life will one day be better and she always tells me not to repeat the mistake again because my parents were annoyed of me, FGD 2, Getty, 11/04/2022

Sometimes you can talk to the senior woman teacher but she doesn't have enough time for you, so I always keep most problems for myself and God helps me go out of them, FGD 1, Chantel, 28/03/2022

I share my problems with my mother and she always gives me solution to them. I feel free to talk to her in case of a challenge, FGD 2, Alicia, 11/04/2022

Similarly, the study by Nabugoomu et al, (2021) indicated that counselling services should be made available to teen mothers in and out of school and should involve teen fathers and parents where possible. The National School Re-Entry Guidelines recommend counselling for teen mothers, however, this counselling is sole with regards to their new responsibilities as parents and students as well. It's evident that teenage mothers experience negative mental health effects as a result of the physical, emotional and social changes they experience by becoming mothers. Receiving counselling support can help them to address difficult thoughts and feelings that emerge from stigmatization by their peers and teachers in school, or disappointment from their parents. Support from senior counsellors in schools can help to rekindle career goals for teenage mothers and chart pathways for them to achieve their educational goals. From the focus group discussions, teenage mothers suggested that teen fathers and parents should also receive counselling support to help them cope with the changes occurring in their lives and guidance on how best to support these new mothers.

However, from the research findings, it was revealed that the counselling departments were greatly understaffed because the senior woman teacher or the metron is the one who volunteers as a counsellor as well. At times, the senior woman teacher has a big teaching load which leaves her with limited time for counselling. It should be noted that teenage mothers need assistance to deal with the frustrations, embarrassments and shame they face upon re-entry.

Our teacher of Christian Religious Education is also the counsellor of the school but she is a part timer that she comes a few days to school, when she comes, she is moving from class to class teaching, she doesn't have time to sit down with us and tell her our problems. FGD 2, Getty, 11/04/2022

Metron is the counsellor of our school but she also has other businesses she is doing to earn income, she sells eats and drinks at the school canteen, so she doesn't have time for us to listen to our problems, she always says that she is tired. Sometimes, when you share with her your challenges, she tells the teachers and some students who are her friends, FGD 1, Gladys, 21/03/2022

The absence of ready counsellors meant that teenage mothers and their parents did not receive enough help regarding their new roles of parenting and studentship. Without this professional help and support teenage mothers become overwhelmed by the pressures and helplessness of their situation making them uncomfortable as they re-enter formal education.

4.2.3.3 Teacher support

Teachers play a significant role in the re-entry and retention of teenage mothers into mainstream schools because they spend most of the time with them in class. A teacher is supposed to provide a holistic education for teen mothers, including personal, emotional, and academic integrity, parental support, and post/secondary preparation. It is believed that a positive and supportive relationship with school staff is key to enabling the retention of teenage mothers in school because they feel at home away from home in such a reliable environment that supports their needs. It depends on

how a teenage mother is treated in class and whether she will be motivated to come back the following day. From the focus group discussions, it was revealed that teenage mothers loved to attend lessons for those teachers who understood their situations and treated them well before and after the lessons. From the study findings, it is noted that some teachers offered tremendous support to the teenage mothers upon their re-entry which made them enjoy school more than they had expected.

....Some teachers gave me some food, especially Madam Margret. She allowed me to continue with my studies because I was a very good student. I never missed a class before this situation happened to me. I always helped the teachers and participated in school activities. Everybody supports me through my classwork. My teachers said I should not worry too much about my baby because they even allow me to go back home a bit earlier in case the baby is not fine. This school is very good, unlike other schools that always expel their students if they know they are teenage mothers. FGD 1, Marla, 28/03/2022.

Though my performance is not as good as it was before, some teachers madam Jackie have been helping and they want to see me getting back to my previous grade, FGD 1, Chantel, 28/03/2022

Sometimes teachers can repeat for you when you ask a question in class but you also have to be attentive when the teacher is teaching so that you don't just ask FGD 2, Catrinah, 11/04/2022

You have to be careful when asking the question so that you don't appear careless and like someone who was not paying attention. FGD 2, Marioh, 11/04/2022

Our maths teacher (teacher Joseph), can spare some time for you and he will explain you in a simple way so that you understand very well and even if you go to him many times, he does not get tired of you, FGD 1, Dovie, 28/03/2022

Consulting a teacher is ok but you also go when you at least know something, I first ask my friends, when I don't get it well then I can ask the teacher, FGD 2, Bills, 11/04/2022.

The above findings agree with the study by Jenifer, 2014 about keeping teen mothers in school which indicated that academic support services and career preparations are useful to enable teenage mothers to be retained in school and complete their education. From the discussions, teenage mothers showed resilience in how they navigate various problems faced and commit to completing secondary education. The

study further indicates the need to have successful school-based programs for teenage mothers to be involved so that they don't drop out again. However, as cited in J. Naidoo et al, 2019, the findings of the current study contradict the study by Chigona and Chetty (2008) which reported that teachers often embarrassed teenage mothers, stereotyped them and held prejudices against them. It further points out that in many schools in South Africa teachers can't help teenage mothers to make up for missed lessons and other academic needs. In addition, the study by Bhana et al. (2010) revealed that many teachers regard the presence of teenage mothers in their classrooms as a threat to the collective academic performance of the class.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County-Wakiso District, Uganda. The specific objectives of the study were; to examine the factors that influence teenage mothers' decision to return to school in Kakiri Sub County Wakiso district Uganda, to explore the social experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County Wakiso district Uganda and to identify the support systems teenage mothers have upon re-entry into secondary schools in Kakiri sub-county, Wakiso District Uganda. To achieve this purpose three research questions were formulated as indicated in chapter one. As teenage mothers are the centre of their social context, their feelings and opinions reflect their attitudes, perceptions, circumstances and personality which invariably differ. In this chapter, therefore, I present the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Factors that influence teenage mothers' decision to return to school in Kakiri Sub County

On the first objective, it was found that the stable financial position of teenage mothers' families, positive personal attitude towards education and family support for the teenage mother were the major influential factors towards the re-entry into schools by the teenage mothers. Families largely influenced the re-entry of teenage mothers into schools in Kakiri Sub County because they accepted to take on childcare responsibilities and payment of school dues. Most of the parents were more interested in sending back their children and were not much concerned about whether the

children wanted or not given the value they attached to education. The teenage mothers reported that they are encouraged to study because they don't want to shame their families again and they want people to know that the world was not at its end because of their childbirth.

5.2.2 Social experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry into secondary schools in Kakiri Sub County

The second objective about social experiences of teenage mothers upon re-entry into secondary school included; stigma and discrimination, inadequate academic support from the teachers, negative attitude from some teachers and fellow learners and conflicting gender roles in parenting and studentship. Stigma and discrimination came from several dimensions toward teenage mothers. This came from the home among fellow siblings, from the community, among parents and at school. Teachers in most cases were not willing to go through the lessons the girls had missed due to motherhood. The study also revealed that student mothers who re-entered school after childbirth were constrained in many ways particularly in the pursuit of their education, especially in terms of school attendance which was attributed to the demands of academic work and the burden of childcare responsibilities.

5.2 Support Systems Teenage Mothers Have Upon Re-Entry into Secondary Schools in Kakiri Sub County

Findings from this study showed that the schools had guidance and counselling units that provided counselling services for all students but not handling issues of teenage mothers separately. Most of the teenage mothers also indicated that deliberate plans and systems have not been put in place to address their challenges. This is also highlighted by a study by Mutombo and Mwenda (2010) in which they asserted that the needed support that teenage mothers require has not been adequately considered

and provided for by the school system. The study also found that challenges associated with teenage mothers were addressed on an ad-hoc basis, a situation that was attributed to the absence of specific and documented guidelines for the implementation of the re-entry guidelines.

5.3 Conclusions

The findings of the current study established that the decisions of teenage mothers to re-enter formal education and accomplish their educational goals were influenced largely by the stable financial position of their families, positive personal attitude towards education and family support for the teenage mother. The findings also concluded based on the results about social experiences upon re-entry that most teenage mothers were stigmatized and discriminated against, received limited academic support from the teachers coupled with a negative attitude from teachers and fellow learners and had conflicting roles of motherhood and studentship which affected their consistency in classes, academic performance and general involvement in school activities. The study further noted and concluded that a conducive school environment motivated and encouraged teenage mothers to remain in school despite other challenges they were facing. It is evident from the research findings that education plays a key role in the way most teenage mothers see their future. They continue to reflect on the worth of education in guaranteeing that they receive a bright future for themselves and their children. However, based on the results of this study, it is claimed that teenage mothers received mixed levels of support from their homes, schools and community for them to be able to complete their schooling successfully. Unfortunately, some teachers do not understand the teen mothers' situation as learners and they are expected to perform and behave just like any other student in their respective classes.

While it may be assumed that the teachers would support and encourage teenage mothers to deal with their situation, the teachers themselves might require guidance sessions or sensitization concerning how they can encourage and support teenage mothers wholly. That is, teachers need refresher courses and continuous training on how to handle teenage mothers so that they do not make these students' lives worse because of their sensitive nature. The researcher also argues that there is a lack of clear sanctions for parents and teachers who make teenage mothers' school re-entry difficult and unrealistic. This study highlights that there is a need for accelerated action on these underlying factors for proper compliance with the re-entry guidelines.

5.4 Recommendations

The following are the proposed recommendations from the current study;

- i. School administrators should make the learning environment for teenage mothers socially welcoming. That is, the Ministry of Education and sports through the Education department should introduce separate schools for these teenage mothers, however, making sure that this does not exclude them from any right to acquiring education as is the case with normal learners in all schools.
- ii. School administrators should make sure that professional counselling and guidance services are readily available in school (on-site counselling services) to enable teenage mothers to withstand the ridicule and prejudice from other learners and teachers in regular schools.
- iii. Ministry of Education and Sports and the National Curriculum Development Center should integrate life skills programs in the curriculum for example promoting sex education to enable adolescent girls to understand their cycle.

- iv. The Ministry of Education and Sports should create awareness of the re-entry guidelines through media campaigns, policy dialogues, storytelling/edutainment and parents' meetings. Additionally, monitoring systems should be strengthened to enhance the effective implementation of the re-entry guidelines among the concerned stakeholders.
- v. This research is a one-time measure of re-entry experiences; therefore, longitudinal studies be carried out to follow up and investigate changes of these teenage mothers upon re-entry

5.5 Areas for Further Research

Further research should be conducted on the copying mechanisms of teenage mothers re-admitted into secondary school education.

Also, to mention is that a quantitative study is carried out to determine the rate of re-entry into secondary schools among teenage mothers to establish consistent, accurate and reliable statistics on the incidence of teenage mothers' school re-entry as this current study only sought to examine the factors that influence teenage mothers' decision to return to school as well as their social experiences upon re-entry.

The role of stakeholders in the re-entry of teenage mothers into secondary schools considering the parents as the major stakeholders.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent for Teenage Mothers

Dear Respondents,

My name is PROSSY NASSUNA, a Master's student from Moi University, carrying out a research study on teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools in Kakiri sub-county- Wakiso District, Uganda. The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that influence the decision of teenage mothers to return to school, explore their re-entry experiences as well as identify the support systems they have upon re-entry. This discussion is intended to elicit information purely for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality.

You can choose whether to take part in the FGD or the audio recording and drawings and stop whenever you feel like it. Even though the FGD will be sound recorded, your reactions will stay unknown and no names will be referenced in the report.

You are assured that you will suffer no harm as a result of participating in the exercise. You are free to ask for any clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform the researcher if you feel uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

I have read and fully understood the contents of this document or the contents that have been explained to me. I, therefore, consent to participate in the exercise under the conditions expressed above.

Signed: Date.....

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Teenage Mothers

TOPIC: TEENAGE MOTHERS' RE-ENTRY EXPERIENCES INTO SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAKIRI SUB COUNTY, WAKISO DISTRICT UGANDA.

MAIN QUESTION: TELL ME YOUR EXPERIENCES WHILE YOU GOT PREGNANT AND UPON RE-ENTRY INTO SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

FOLLOW-UP/ PROBING QUESTIONS

1. What is your age? _____ Form _____
2. How many children do you have? _____ Their ages _____
3. How old were you when you got your first child?
4. What class were you in?
5. Before you got pregnant, what had been your future ambitions in terms of education and career?
6. How did you feel when you discovered you were pregnant?
7. What happened after you discovered you were pregnant?
8. When did you go back to school?
9. Did you go back to the same school or a different school?
10. Have you heard of the re-entry guidelines?
11. If yes, how did you hear about it?
12. How did you manage to go back to school?
13. Why did you go back to school?
14. How has your social and educational life changed from pregnancy up to motherhood?
15. How do you cope with being both a mother and a student at the same time?
16. Who takes care of your child while you are away?
17. What could be deterring other girls from returning to school after delivery?

18. In what ways has the school and your family assisted or supported you upon re-entry to school after delivery?
19. What were the reactions of the following people to the pregnancy and your return to school?
- a) Father of the baby
 - b) The school community
 - c) Your family members,
 - d) Wider community

THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix C: Drawing Prompt

Dear Respondents,

My name is PROSSY NASSUNA, a Master student from Moi University, Kenya carrying out a research study on Teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools in Kakiri sub-County- Wakiso District, Uganda. The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that influence the decision and ability of student mothers in Kakiri sub-county Wakiso District to return to school, explore their re-entry experiences as well as identify the support systems they have upon re-entry. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time you feel like.

Facilities: Audio/video recorder to be used with permission from the teenage mothers, pens, pencils, colours and paper taking notes.

Drawing Prompt 1

- ❖ Draw a picture that portrays how you were seen or positioned by your parents and the school community when you become pregnant.
- ❖ Please note that there are no wrong or poor drawings.
- ❖ Below each drawing, write an explanation of why you are thinking like that.
- ❖ Be prepared to share an oral explanation of what you have drawn.

Drawing Prompt 2

- ❖ Draw a picture of how you see your future self as a mother and your career.
- ❖ Below the drawing, write an explanation of why you would like to do that career.
- ❖ Be ready to share an oral explanation of what you have drawn and why you would like to do that.

THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix D: Copy of Teenage Mothers Consent Form

TEENAGE MOTHERS CONSENT FORM

Dear Respondents,

My name is PROSSY NASSUNA, a Master student from Moi University, carrying out a research study on **Teenage mothers' re-entry experiences into secondary schools during COVID-19 period in Kakiri subcounty- Wakiso District, Uganda.**

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that influence the decision and ability of student mothers in Kakiri sub county Wakiso District to return or not to return, explore their experiences upon re-entry as well as identifying the support systems they have upon re-entry.

This discussion is intended to elicit information purely for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality.

You can choose whether to take part in the FGD or the audio recording and drawings and stop whenever you feel like. Despite the fact that the FGD will be sound recorded, your reactions will stay unknown and no names will be referenced in the report.

You are assured that you will suffer no harm as a result of participating in the exercise. You are free to ask for any clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform the researcher if you feel uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

I have read and fully understood contents of this document or the contents have been explained to me. I therefore consent to participate in the exercise under the conditions expressed above.

Name: NABACWA GLORIA Signed by: 

Date: 21st/03/2022

Appendix E: Copy of DEO Permit Letter



MOI UNIVERSITY

Office of the Dean School of Education

Tel: (053) 43001-8

(053) 43555

Fax: (053) 43555

P.O. Box 3900
Eldoret, Kenya

REF: MS/R/5260/21

DATE: 17th January, 2022THE DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER,
WAKISO DISTRICT

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH PERMIT IN RESPECT OF NASSUNA PROSSY -
(MS/R/5260/21)

The above named is a 2nd year Master of Education (M.Ed) student at Moi University, School of Education, Department of Educational Management and Policy Studies, School of Education.

It is a requirement of her M.Ed Studies that she conducts research and produces a thesis. Her research is entitled:

"Exploring Teenage Mothers' Re-Entry Experiences into Secondary Schools During Covid-19 Period: A Case Study of Kakiri Sub County-Wakiso District, Uganda."

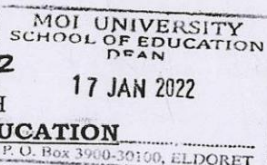
Any assistance given to enable her conduct research successfully will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

17.01.2022

PROF. J. K. CHANG'ACH

DEAN, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



(ISO 9001 - 2015 Certified Institution)

Appendix F: Copy of Head Teachers' Consent Form

HEADTEACHER CONSENT FORM

I give consent for you to approach teenage mothers to participate in the research study: **Teenage mothers re-entry experiences into secondary schools during COVID-19 period in Kakiri subcounty, Wakiso District Uganda.**

I have read the Project Information Statement explaining the purpose of the research project and understand that:

- ❖ The role of the school is voluntary.
- ❖ I may decide to withdraw the school's participation at any time without penalty
- ❖ All information obtained will be treated in strictest confidence.
- ❖ The school will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.
- ❖ Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
- ❖ A report of the findings will be made available to the school.
- ❖ I may seek further information on the project from Nassuna Prossy +256779148164

Haji Lutale Mudathir

Head teacher Name

22/3/2022

Date

[Signature]
HEADTEACHER
NAGGULU SEED SEC. SCHOOL
 Tel: 0772420715
 Head teacher Signature *22/3/22*

Appendix G: Copy of Participant Signed Consent Form

Participant name:

Signature of participant: Date:

Statement of Consent

The researcher, **Nassuna Prossy** has described to me the research study under progress, what is going to be done, the risks, the benefits involved, and my rights as a participant in this study. Therefore, I understand that my decision to participate and involvement in this study will not affect me in any way. In the process of using the information generated, my identity will be concealed. I am informed and aware that I may withdraw at any time without getting penalized. I understand that by signing this consent form, I do not waive any of my legal rights but merely indicate that I have been informed about the research study in which I am voluntarily agreeing and freely willing to participate in.

Participant name: Haji Lutale Mudathir

Signature of participant: [Signature] Date: 28/3/2022

HEADTEACHER
NASSUNA SEED SEC. SCHOOL
 TEL: 0772420715
 Date:

Appendix H: Research Permit



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**
A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

07/03/2022

To: PROSSY NASSUNA

MOI UNIVERSITY
+256779148164

Type: Initial Review

Re: UCUREC-2022-274: TEENAGE MOTHERS' RE-ENTRY EXPERIENCES INTO SECONDARY SCHOOLS DURING COVID-19 PERIOD A CASE OF KAKIRI SUBCOUNTY, WAKISO DISTRICT UGANDA, ENGLISH, 2022-02-

I am pleased to inform you that the Uganda Christian University REC, through expedited review held on **03/03/2022** approved the above referenced study.
Approval of the research is for the period of **07/03/2022** to **07/03/2023**.

As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and addenda to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes.
3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or any new information which could change the risk benefit: ratio must be submitted to the REC.
4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by participants and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Continuing review application must be submitted to the REC **eight weeks** prior to the expiration date of **07/03/2023** in order to continue the study beyond the approved period. Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study.
6. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence with the REC of record.
7. You are required to register the research protocol with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) for final clearance to undertake the study in Uganda.

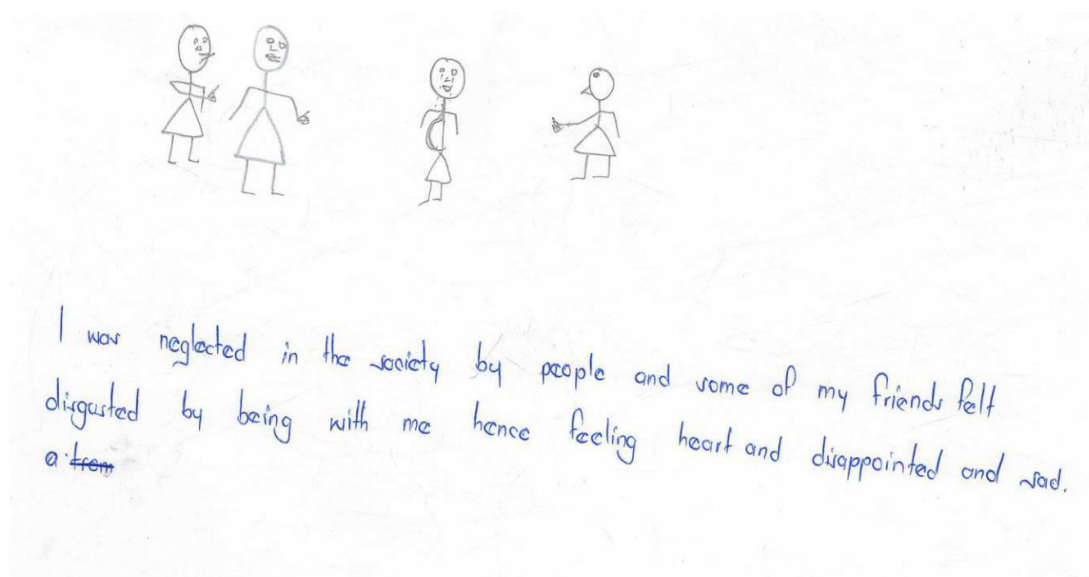
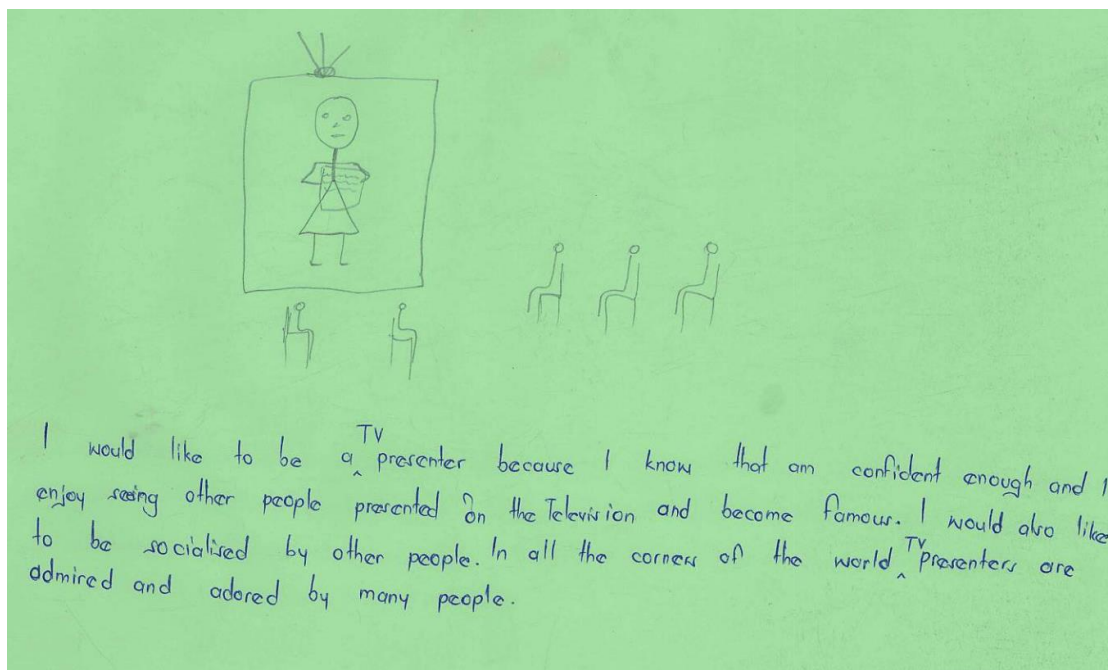
The following is the list of all documents approved in this application by Uganda Christian University REC:

No.	Document Title	Language	Version Number	Version Date
1	Protocol	English	ENGLISH	2022-02-
2	Data collection tools	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	2022-02-12
3	Informed Consent forms	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	2022-02-12

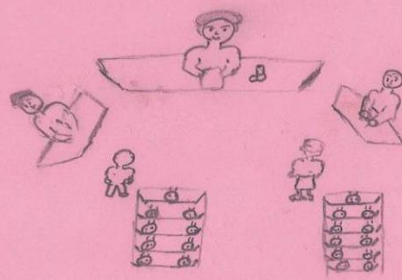
Yours Sincerely

Peter Waiswa
For: Uganda Christian University REC

Appendix L: Some Other Drawings by Participants



DRAWING 1 : CAREER



I wish to take a law course and graduate as a lawyer. I like this job because I feel like there I can be able to express all my feelings and argue for something that I think is right. Another thing why I like being a lawyer is that there are a lot of people who are innocent but because they can not explain their innocence very well to the public they end up being sentenced to prison for some crimes they did not do so I want to help those innocent people and they gain a honest judgement.



I was seen as a toilet paper. This is because once a toilet is used it can't be used again. That's why some parents show me example to their children.

