

# Influence of Guidance and Counselling Interventions in Enhancing Retention of Teenage Mothers in Public Secondary Schools in Samburu and Nairobi Counties, Kenya

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**ABSTRACT:** In Kenya, the Re-Entry Policy recommends Guidance and Counselling as the means to retain and successfully integrate girls into the school system after giving birth. However, over 13,000 teenage girls have been reported to drop out of school every year mostly due to teenage pregnancy and early marriages. This is an alarming dropout rate that deserves attention considering that it is not clear the number of teenage girls who resume schooling after birth. The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of guidance and counselling interventions in enhancing the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Samburu and Nairobi Counties, Kenya. This study was guided by Erikson's theory of Psychosocial development. The study employed ex post facto survey design. The target population was 32597 girls, 79 teacher counsellors, 79 principals from Nairobi County and 7396 girls, 16 teacher counsellors and 16 principals from Samburu County. According to Krecjie and Morgan (1970), sampling tables; a population of 39,993 should have a sample of 380 respondents, therefore, 380 girls constituted the sample. The sample for teacher counselors and principals was obtained according to Gay (2001), who observed that a sample of 10-40 percent is adequate representation. Thus, the researcher took the upper limit of 40% of 95 hence a sample of 38 teacher counselors and 38 principals were selected. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. A pilot study was conducted in four schools and Cronbach's alpha coefficient with a threshold of 0.7 was used to test the reliability. The instruments yielded 0.801, hence were considered reliable. Qualitative data was analysed thematically and presented in form of quotations and narrations while quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS version 21.0. The study revealed that guidance and counseling interventions have a positive and significant relationship in enhancing the retention of teenage mothers in secondary schools. However, the retention rate of teenage mothers was low in both counties. The study recommended that there is need to strengthen the guidance and counselling departments in secondary schools, conduct public awareness and closely monitor the implementation of the re-entry policy to enhance retention of pregnant and teenage mothers in secondary schools in Kenya.

**KEYWORDS:** Teenage mothers, retention, guidance and counselling interventions, re-entry policy

## I. Introduction

Retaining teenage mothers who have left secondary schools because of pregnancy involves ardently reintegrating these young mothers back into the formal education (Morgan, Ibrahim, Owusu, Awafo, Quartey, Aziire, Katsekor, Owusu & Katey, 2023). Thwala, Okeke, Matse and Ugwuanyi (2022) posits that it involves providing a welcoming, non-judgmental environment, tailored programmes and providing psychosocial support to empower them to continue their studies and pursue their educational goals. More so, it entails creating effective interventions to encourage teenage mothers' return and completion of formal education. To inspire teenage mothers' successful return to and completion of formal education, secondary schools' re-entry initiatives often entails outreach programmes, guidance and counselling programmes, academic support and

other interventions customized to the specific needs of the individual teenage mother (Imbosa, Majanga&Ouda 2022). These initiatives are designed to empower teenage mothers by addressing the challenges they face and enabling them to overcome barriers, enhance their educational attainment, and contribute to reducing gender inequality in education.

Retention is crucial to teenage mothers' human capital development as it provides them with the opportunity to continue their education, acquire knowledge and skills, and enhance their prospects (Morgan et al.,2023). By promoting re-entry, gender inequality in education can be reduced by ensuring that girls have equal access to educational opportunities and empowering them to overcome the barriers that may have led to their drop-out in the first place. When a girl becomes a teenage mother, her life changes radically. It often spells, the end of a girl's education and hence her job prospects diminish according to World Health Organization (2023). She becomes more vulnerable to poverty, exclusion and her health suffers.

The overarching goal of education systems is to ensure equal education outcomes and academic achievement for all learners. However, there is a challenge to extend equal educational outcomes and academic achievement among vulnerable, disadvantaged and hard to reach groups (Dowden & Gray 2017, MoE, 2019); like pregnant and teenage mothers. Dowden and Gray (2017) in their study reported that school systems struggle to understand, prevent and intervene on the psychosocial, social-cultural, material and financial factors that parenting teenage girls experience. Very often pregnant and teenage mothers experience low education attainment as a result of the inability of the education systems to adequately meet their needs.

According to WHO (2023) statistics, adolescents aged 15-19 years in low and middle-income countries had an estimated 21 million pregnancies each year. Consequently, this resulted to an estimated 12 million births among the teenagers, of which 50 percent were unintended. Globally, the adolescents birth rate has declined according to WHO (2023) but Latin America and Caribbean and Sub-Saharan African regions, the declines are slower. Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest adolescent birth rates globally at 99.4 per 1000 women in 2022. The corresponding teenagers give birth at the time they should be in secondary schools learning. Kenya is among the countries in the Sub-Sahara Africa whose teenage pregnancies is high. According to data from the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2022), fifteen percent of women age 15-19 years have ever been pregnant. The survey further indicates that about four in ten women age 15-19 years who have no education have ever been pregnant as compared to only five percent of women who have more than secondary education. Imbosa, Majanga and Ouda (2022) reported that adolescents who have early and unintended pregnancies face many psychosocial, social-cultural and financial barriers to continuing with formal education. The National Guidelines for School Re-entry in Early Learning and Basic Education (MoE, 2020) has stipulated that guidance and counselling departments in secondary schools should ensure that counselling is offered to expectant and teenage mothers at school to ensure their retention in schools.

Pregnancy and child bearing are significant life changing events, especially for teenage mothers. Sandler and Schulkind (2016) affirmed that the first-order effect of teenage pregnancy is the disruption of education. For, instance, teenage mothers are more likely to drop-out of school and miss the opportunity to continue with their education (Obwako,2023). This contributes to adverse economic effects that perpetuates the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Shuger (2012) asserts that the number of women who make the transition to motherhood during adolescence and complete a college degree by the time they are 30 years old is minimal -less than three percent (United Nations Population Fund, 2018). The high rate of teenage pregnancies if not addressed threatens to reverse the gains made for enhancing retention and completion by teenage mothers. The same threaten the achievement of sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 4, which calls for promotion of inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The KDHS (2022) results indicated that the percentage of women aged 15-19 years who have been pregnant are highest in Samburu county; at 50 % followed by West Pokot with 36 % and Marsabit 29% these are all predominantly rural counties compared to Nairobi which is an urban county with 8.4%. It is therefore worth noting that Samburu County has also been cited as a region where only 15.4 % of the residents have attained secondary level of education and above according to Kenya National Adolescents and Youth Survey (NAYS, 2017). Teenage pregnancy, cultural practices like Female genital mutilation (FGM), moranism and early marriages have been cited as denying many girls and boys the chance of getting education in Samburu County according to NAYS (2017). First, the pregnancy rates are relatively high as compared to other areas like Nyeri (4.5%), Mombasa (10.8%), Vihiga (7.7 %) and Laikipia (9.1%) (KDHS, 2022). Notably, 15-19 years are the ages of girls in secondary schools.

Retention of teenage mothers in secondary schools' demands attention to ensure that these girls remain in school and complete their studies. Those who return to school suffer from stigmatisation, abuse from other learners' ridicule and pressure from their parents and teachers (Obwaka,2023). Obwaka (2023) posits that teenage mothers are at a higher risk of mental health problems due to the hurdles they face in the school for instance involuntary repetition of classes, rejection by their families and feelings of unworthiness imposed by the society. This study sought to investigate the impact of guidance and counselling interventions in enhancing retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Samburu and Nairobi Counties in Kenya.

## **II. Methodology**

The study was guided by the following objective;

- i. Determine the influence of guidance and counselling interventions in enhancing the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Samburu and Nairobi Counties, Kenya.

The study was a descriptive survey that adopted the *ex post facto* design. This design is the most appropriate in a study where the independent variable cannot be directly manipulated since its manifestations have already occurred (Kerlinger, 2000). Further, this design is appropriate in factor analysis of an outcome on the dependent variable, as well as in comparative studies (Kathuri&Pals, 1993; Mugenda&Mugenda, 2009). The objective of the study was to investigate the influence of guidance and counselling interventions in enhancing retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Samburu and Nairobi Counties in Kenya.

The study was carried out in two counties Samburu and Nairobi Counties. Samburu County is inhabited mostly by Samburu people, who are known for their rich cultural heritage and pastoralist way of life. Nairobi County on the other hand, as the capital city of Kenya, boasts of diverse people with wide range of economic activities. The target population comprised of students, principals and teacher counsellors in public secondary schools. Thirty-eight (38) schools were sampled and proportionately distributed in the two counties as follows: in Nairobi County 17 girls' schools and 14 mixed secondary schools were selected while in Samburu County, five girls' schools and two mixed girls' secondary schools. A total of 380 form three students were selected using simple random Sampling which ensured that every student in the population had an equal chance to participate. An interview schedule and a questionnaire were used for data collection.

Before data collection, permission to visit the sampled schools and access information was sought from the relevant authorities. Thereafter principals from the sampled schools were contacted to plan for data collection. Questionnaires were then distributed to the teacher counsellors and students in the sampled schools and collected later. During the entire period of the study, the researcher adhered to the ethical considerations. The researcher ensured information obtained from the respondents remained confidential and was only used for the study. Participants voluntarily agreed to participate and their identity remained anonymous. Their rights, dignity, privacy and well-being were respected and protected. Confidentiality, integrity and honesty were highly maintained throughout the study.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of guidance and counselling interventions in enhancing the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Samburu and Nairobi Counties, Kenya. There were items in the teacher counsellors' and the students' questionnaires as well as in the principal's interview schedule, that was used to collect data pertaining to the respondent's demographic information and views on influence of guidance and counselling interventions in enhancing the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Samburu and Nairobi Counties, Kenya.

#### 3.1 Demographic Information

The demographic data collected from the respondents was related to their pregnancy, age, re-admission of teenage mothers, school category and training level of teacher counsellors'. Analysis of the results indicated that majority of the students 92.10% said that girls got pregnant while still in secondary schools only 7.60% said "No". This implied that girls do get pregnant while still in secondary schools. A study by Undie, Birungi, Odwe and Obere (2020) conducted in Homa Bay county, reported that 66% of out-of-school teenage mothers reported that pregnancy was the main reason why they had left school. This was verified too by a similar proportion of their household heads (69%) who were mainly parents/guardians. Similarly, a study by Okumu (2020) reported that three to five girls in secondary schools in ukwala ward, Siaya County in Kenya were expectant and that the girls were mostly in form two and three.

The researcher sought to establish whether teenage mothers are readmitted in schools after delivery, from the findings 324(87.80%) said **No** whereas 44(11.90%) said **Yes**. The results indicated that higher number of teenage mothers do not return to formal school system, subsequent to the birth of their babies. This finding implied that re-admission of pregnant and teenage mothers is still clouded with a lot of challenges in majority of schools. Teenage mothers need to be supported to return to school. To collaborate the information, the principals were asked to state their views concerning the re-admission of pregnant girls. One Principal said during the interview,

“...the management does not allow pregnant girls to continue with school, they ask them to go home and return after the baby is born. If they attend when they are pregnant, they could be ridiculed by other students and they could be a bad influence.” (principal 6)

Some school principals subscribe to the view that teenage mothers do not belong in the school system, since they have lost focus and will only inveigle other school girls to come to a similar end. These findings are in tandem with, Imbosa, Majanga and Ouda (2022) who conducted a study across several counties in Kenya including Nakuru, Migori, Kiambu, Bungoma, and Homa Bay. According to their study, education stakeholders such as principals are unaware of the re-entry policy and its provisions. The researchers cited Homa Bay County arguing that teenage mothers in the county were locked out from pursuing their education. This could explain why the percentage of teenage mothers going back to school to continue with their education is still low, but it is in contrasts with a study by Maluli and Bali (2014) who argued that the policy of Tanzania (2012) denies the access to education for learners who become pregnant while in school. The learners are not allowed to stay at school when they are pregnant and there is no access after delivery. These scholars argued that girls' pregnancy-related school dropout remains high irrespective of the commitments governments have made to protect children rights to education and promote gender equality as detailed in SDGs at the world level. The study by Maluli and Bali (2014) elaborated that teenage mothers struggle to balance school and parenting roles as well as face discrimination from their peers.

The study also sought to establish the training level of the teacher counsellors and its influence on the provision of guidance and counselling services to teenage mothers. Teachers' training is a crucial aspect that helps to enhance teachers' skills in the provision of guidance and counselling services. The information provided by the teachers is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Teacher Counsellors by Training in Guidance and Counselling

Level of training	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Workshop and seminar only	4	10
Certificate	7	20
Diploma	11	30
Degree	8	20
Post-graduate	8	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>

According to this study, ten percent of the teacher counsellors had only participated in seminars and workshops. The data also indicated that twenty percent and thirty percent had a certificate and diploma level training respectively. Further the data showed that only 40% of the respondents had a degree and post-graduate qualification in guidance and counselling. This implies that there was a significant shortage of teachers with adequate professional skills in guidance and counselling. Professionally trained guidance and counselling teachers play a critical role in the implementation of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. The training and professional qualifications of the guidance and counselling teachers affect the implementation process and effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme Chemwei and Cheruiyot (2022), which could negatively affect provision of psychosocial support to the teenage mothers.

Counselling training is needed for the teacher counsellors to enable them acquire the skills of counselling to make them become competent counsellors (Nyutu, 2020). Also, according to Mcleod (2013), counsellors should have knowledge of when and how to carry out specific interventions, ability to assess effectiveness of intervention, understanding rationale behind the techniques used and professionally being able to handle all types of interventions. The school counsellor should have the ability to understand and assess the student problem, to anticipate future consequences of the action taken and be able to remember the information of the student at all times. This concurs with Chemwei and Cheruiyot (2022) study which found out that very few teacher counsellors had been fully trained on the interpersonal skills necessary to undertake guidance and counselling within secondary schools. This was bound to negatively affect the implementation of guidance and counselling services in the schools.

### 3.2 Guidance and Counselling Interventions

The objective of this study sought to determine the guidance and counselling interventions that enhance retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Samburu and Nairobi Counties, Kenya. Data was collected from students, teacher counsellors' and the principals in public secondary schools. They were asked to respond to several statements regarding the influence of guidance and counselling interventions in retention of teenage mothers. It had been hypothesized that there was no statistically significant relationship between guidance and counselling interventions and retention of teenage mothers in Samburu and Nairobi Counties. To establish this, the Pearson Correlation was computed for the mean scores of the guidance and counselling interventions in the two counties.

Guidance and counselling interventions were rated by means of 14 items in a dichotomous Yes (2) and No (1) scale, that were administered to the students. The responses obtained were used to compute mean score ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation (s) for each statement and a global rating of all the 14 statements combined. The scores ranged from 1 to 2, of which were interpreted as follows; scores below 1.5 were assumed to indicate a low level of implementation of the attribute being measured and scores above 1.6 indicated a high level of the attribute. The findings are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Guidance and Counselling interventions

S/No	Statement	n	$\bar{x}$	s
	Creating awareness of re-entry policy	367	1.31	.12
	Tracking and monitoring expectant and teenage mothers	367	1.07	.26
	Counselling room for individual and group sessions	368	1.14	.35
	Teenage mothers attend individual counselling sessions	368	1.37	.48
	There are group counselling sessions organized for expectant and teenage mothers.	368	1.07	.26
	Teenage mothers are guided and counselled on how to delay Subsequent pregnancy.	365	1.61	.49
	There are remedial classes for expectant and teenage mothers to catch up with class work.	362	1.28	.45
	Teenage mothers are given financial and educational requirements	365	1.30	.46
	Guest speakers are invited to give talks on teenage pregnancy, adolescent sexuality boy/ girl relationships a negative peer influences.	365	1.14	.35
	De-stigmatization campaign in the school community	368	1.01	.46
	Psychosocial support services/interventions are offered to pregnant and teenage mothers for promoting positive mental health and preventing mental health problems and risky behaviours e.g. resilience, problem solving.	368	1.44	.50
	There are teenage mother support groups and welfare clubs	368	1.83	.38
	There are referrals and linkage to gateway agencies that provide pregnant and teenage mothers with mental health services such as access to a social worker, health service providers, school chaplain, and community- based organizations.	368	1.55	.50
	Parents and guardians are involved in guidance and counselling programmes in school, especially if a student get pregnant	367	1.40	.49
<b>Aggregate mean(<math>\bar{x}</math>)= 1.32, Standard deviation (s)=.17</b>				

Data presented in Table 2 show the 14 items used in the study to measure guidance and counselling interventions on a scale of 1-2. The results indicate that guidance and counselling interventions significantly influence the likelihood of teenage mothers' re-entry and remaining in school till completion. Analysed data showed that awareness of the re-turn to school policy for the girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy had a mean  $\bar{x}$  of 1.31 for students from both Samburu and Nairobi counties this was considered low. Similarly, tracking and monitoring of teenage mothers was also low with a mean of 1.07, in addition, career guidance and career choice talks had a mean of 1.14.

Individual counselling sessions were also found to have a low mean score of 1.37, similarly group counselling sessions with a mean of 1.07. However, teenage mothers were counselled on how to delay subsequent pregnancy, with a mean of 1.61. Additionally, psychosocial support services had a higher mean of 1.83 and also referral and linkage to gateway agencies that support teenage mothers had a mean of 1.55. Parents and guardians 'involvement in guidance and counselling had a mean score of 1.40. These findings highlight the importance of guidance and counselling interventions in influencing the decision of teenage mothers' in re-entry and subsequently remaining in school till completion.

### 3.3 DISCUSSION.

The study findings indicate a significant relationship between guidance and counselling interventions and the likelihood of teenage mothers' remaining in school after child birth. Awareness of re-entry policy is a significant factor, that enhance re-entry, of teenage mothers in the formal education system. The findings suggest that a significant number of students are not aware of the re-entry policy, this could possibly hinder many teenage mothers from re-entering secondary school. This is in agreement with a study conducted in Vihiga Sub- County, Kenya: Re-entry Policy and Retention of expectant students and Teen Mothers in Public Schools by Imbosa et al (2022) they found that re-entry policy was a major progressive step towards achieving retention of expectant and parenting students. However, lack of copies of the policy in schools in Vihiga sub- county substantially affected implementation for optimal retention of teenage mothers in schools. It's prudent for the guidance and counselling departments to sensitize students on re-entry policy for pregnant and teenage mothers to enjoy their right to education.

Analysed data showed tracking and monitoring expectant and teenage mothers in public schools in Samburu and Nairobi Counties was low  $\bar{x}$  is 1.07 and also in both counties career guidance and career choices talks were few at  $\bar{x}$  is 1.14. This finding have implications on enhancing retention of teenage mothers in secondary schools. Teenage mothers need to be tracked and reintegrated in formal schools. Without proper support, teenage mothers are at a higher risk of dropping out of school altogether. Regular tracking and monitoring can help identify challenges they face and provide timely interventions to prevent dropout. This is in agreement with a study by Imbosa, Majanga and Ouda (2022) who investigated the re-entry policy and retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Vihiga sub-county, Kenya. Their study recommended tracking the re-integrated learners for appropriate psychosocial, material and financial support both at school and community levels.

Guidance and Counselling office or room is key in provision of counselling services to the students. Majority of public secondary schools in both counties had no guidance and counselling rooms as shown with a mean of  $\bar{x}$  is 1.14. There should be a counselling office/room, Wango (2015) notes that counselling requires a safe and comfortable environment with lighting, furniture, chairs/or couch, lockable cabinets to store records to assure confidentiality. This is in agreement with Salgong, Ngumi and Chege (2016) whose finding indicated students' response as to whether location of guidance and counselling office does influence their visit to this office. 32% were of the opinion that location of guidance and counselling office does influence student's visit to it. Guidance and counselling office should be situated in a place where every student should be comfortable to visit it. There are some students who are shy and would not like to be seen by others when they are visiting guidance and counselling offices. In addition, some students might be having problems which they would not like others to know.

From the findings in Table 2 it's evident that the mean for teenage mothers attending individual and group counselling was  $\bar{x}$  was 1.37 and  $\bar{x}$  was 1.07 respectively. This indicate low implementation of the attribute. It can be inferred from the results that majority of teenage mothers are not receiving individual and group counselling in both Samburu and Nairobi Counties which may impede their retention. Teenage mothers experience many physical, psychological, mental and social challenges according to Opondo (2020). Similarly, Mukuna and Aloka (2021) highlight factors contributing to the pregnancies and the challenges participants

experience during pregnancy and parenting such as poverty, stigma, loss, and lack of parenting skills. If the teenage mothers are not guided and counselled there is likelihood of them dropping out before completion of their studies, this is in agreement with a study by Sparks (2010) found that both experimental and control groups showed evidence that providing programmes that support adolescent mothers in the school setting increases their chances of remaining at school.

On whether resource persons are invited like guest speakers to guide on teenage pregnancy, adolescent sexuality, boy/ girl relationships and influence of negative peer influences the mean  $\bar{x}$  was 1.14 which was considered low for both counties. According to Mureithi, Otieno and Njoroge (2021) adolescents face many questions regarding their sexuality, pubertal sexual changes, reproductive health issues, contraception and teenage pregnancy. In the study it was found that knowledge of school going teenagers both boys and girls was poor about reproductive health issues and HIV. Opportunities to access correct and reliable information about these are limited, to add on, the reservation against sexuality education in schools have further limited the available resources. It's important to have resource persons invited to schools who could be source of information to mitigate on teenage pregnancies and other reproductive challenges.

The psychosocial support services offered to pregnant and teenage mothers for promoting positive their mental health and preventing mental health problems and risky behaviours e.g. resilience, problem solving, had a mean score of  $\bar{x} = 1.44$  this was considered low. Pregnancy and motherhood brings a myriad of challenges which could be psychological, physiological and social-economical. If the teenage mothers are not supported to navigate through these challenges their likelihood to drop-out of school is very high. Teacher counsellors need to coordinate interactions with various staff members and services to offer teenage mothers psychosocial support to complete their secondary education. Kurgat (2016) posited that psychosocial support interventions provide opportunities for social and emotional support, helping teenage mothers feel connected and valued within the school community. Ultimately empowering them to accept what has happened, change their attitude and be positive in life thus, work hard to perform well in their academics.

After analysing the mean of guidance and counselling interventions, it was necessary to establish the retention of teenage mothers. Retention was measured by six items in a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), undecided (3), Agree (4) and strongly agree (5). All the five items were positively worded such that a high score indicated a high inclination towards retention of teenage mothers in the school. Frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations were computed for each statement and a global mean score and standard deviation was computed for all the six items. The means scores obtained ranged from 1 to 5 and were interpreted according to Welch (2010) as follows, a mean score below 3.0 was interpreted to indicate low level of the predisposition to retain teenage mothers in schools, 3.0 and above indicated a high likelihood for retention of teenage mothers. A summary of the findings is provided on Table 3.

Table 3: Retention of Teenage Mothers in Schools

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	n	$\bar{x}$	s
1.	Students feel free to return to school	85(23.1%)	71(19.3%)	44(12.0%)	87(23.6%)	81(22.0%)	368	3.02	1.50
2.	Girls who are pregnant are encouraged to resume	188(51.1%)	107(29.1%)	27(7.3%)	27(7.3%)	19(5.2%)	368	1.86	1.15
3.	Girls who give birth are tracked to return to school	85(23.1%)	113(30.7%)	82(22.3%)	44(12.0%)	44(12.0%)	368	2.59	1.29



4.	More girls resume to school after giving birth	57(15.5%)	61(16.6%)	55(14.9%)	93(25.3%)	102(27.7%)	368	3.33	1.43
5.	Teenage mothers from other schools are given opportunity to resume school	105(28.5%)	98(26.6%)	82(22.3%)	36(9.8%)	47(12.8%)	368	2.52	1.34
6.	Teenage mothers who are readmitted complete schooling	109(29.6%)	95(25.8%)	93(25.3%)	41(11.1%)	29(7.9%)	367	2.42	1.24

**Aggregate mean score of retention of teenage mothers in school ( $\bar{x} = 2.6240$ ,  $s = .79645$ )**

Analyzed data presented in Table 3 shows that the retention rate of teenage mothers in both Nairobi and Samburu County had an aggregate mean score of  $\bar{x} = 2.6240$ . The findings indicated a moderate level of retention for teenage mothers to continue with their secondary education. This implied that a number of expectant learners were retained to continue with their secondary education and that the re-entry policy by Ministry of education (MoE) had a positive significant role in retention of expectant students. During the interview, one of the principals observed:

“The Board of Management (BoM) has agreed that teenage mothers should not be allowed to return to school. I allow them to return because there is a re-entry policy by the government to follow” (principal 3)

In another school during the interview the principal stated:

“The teacher counsellor and lady teachers walk the journey with the expectant Girl, until she delivers, we call the parents to school and discuss the issue of return to school after the baby is born”. (principal 1)

The findings affirm a study by Imbosa et al (2022) that schools use varied approaches and personnel to enhance retention of teenage mothers in school. One of them being guiding and counselling the expectant and teenage mothers in order to mitigate the negative effects of teenage motherhood like stigma from peers and teachers, rejection by parents, abandonment by boyfriend and additional burden of motherhood that contribute to them dropping out of school. This however, diverges from a study by HRW (2018) that reported that countries like Morocco, Tanzania and Sudan where pregnant girls are accused of adultery, indecency and extra marital sex and expelled from school.

Similarly, the finding on whether or not girls who are pregnant are encouraged to resume schooling has a low mean score of  $\bar{x} 1.86$ . This implies girls who are expectant still face a lot of blocks to their continuing with their education as one principal observed,

“The board of management (BOM) and the sponsors of the school do not want pregnant girls in school. They recorded that the expectant girls should stay at home until they deliver because they can be bad influence to the rest of the students.” (principal 7).

In a related study Human Right Watch (2018) established that in Namibia, expectant students continue to attend school until four weeks to the expected delivery date. All girls have a right to education regardless of their pregnancy, marital status or parenthood. In a similar study in the united states to determine factors that influence students' retention rate, Lau (2003) found that administrators, staff, and students' characteristics determine

student retention in schools. They provide students with funding by linking needy students to sponsors, scholarships, and foundations that support education, providing enough academic support through counselling. The comparative analysis of retention of teenage mothers in secondary schools in Nairobi and Samburu Counties was computed. The mean scores of each county and the overall mean scores are provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Comparison of Retention of Mean Scores of Teenage Mothers by County

	County	n	Mean( $\bar{x}$ )	Std. Dev(s)	Std. Error Mean
Retention of Teenage Mothers	Samburu	105	2.2587	.83780	.08176
	Nairobi	262	2.7704	.73120	.04517

Table 4 is a representation of the comparison of retention of teenage mothers in Samburu and Nairobi counties. It indicated that mean score for Samburu which was ( $\bar{x}$ ) = 2.2587 was lower than for Nairobi County which was ( $\bar{x}$ ) = 2.7704. This implied that there was more retention of teenage mothers in Nairobi County than Samburu County. The findings concurred with the study by Chepkorom(2016) on the impact of cultural practices on enrolment and retention of girl-child in public schools in Samburu county. The study revealed that majority of girls drop-out from schools due to early pregnancies and early marriages, therefore, the low retention in secondary schools. Similarly, Kinyanjui (2022) observed that retention rate in marginalized Counties like Samburu has the worst indicators with regards to access and retention. The researcher attributed this among other things to poverty- Samburu has 75.8% of residents living below poverty line (KNBS, 2018). Poverty contributes to education marginalization in terms of parents, not able to meet costs associated to schooling. Education at secondary level is free in Kenya, but there are still associated cost such as school uniform which may hinder retention of teenage mothers in schools. On the other hand, Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya and thus well developed with good learning facilities and has many job opportunities for parents, thus reducing economic problems. Therefore, teenage mothers in Nairobi County are likely to complete their secondary education than those in Samburu County. This could explain why the retention rate is higher in Nairobi than Samburu County.

Further the study sought to find out if there was statistically significant relationship between the guidance and counselling interventions and retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Samburu and Nairobi Counties. To show the relationship the Pearson Moment Correlation coefficient was computed. Moriya (2008) asserts that serious violations in homoscedasticity may result in overestimating the goodness of fit as measured by the Pearson coefficient. In this study, homoscedasticity was checked by use of a scatter diagram that was plotted prior to undertaking correlation analysis to counter check violations of homoscedasticity. The findings were presented on “fig 1”

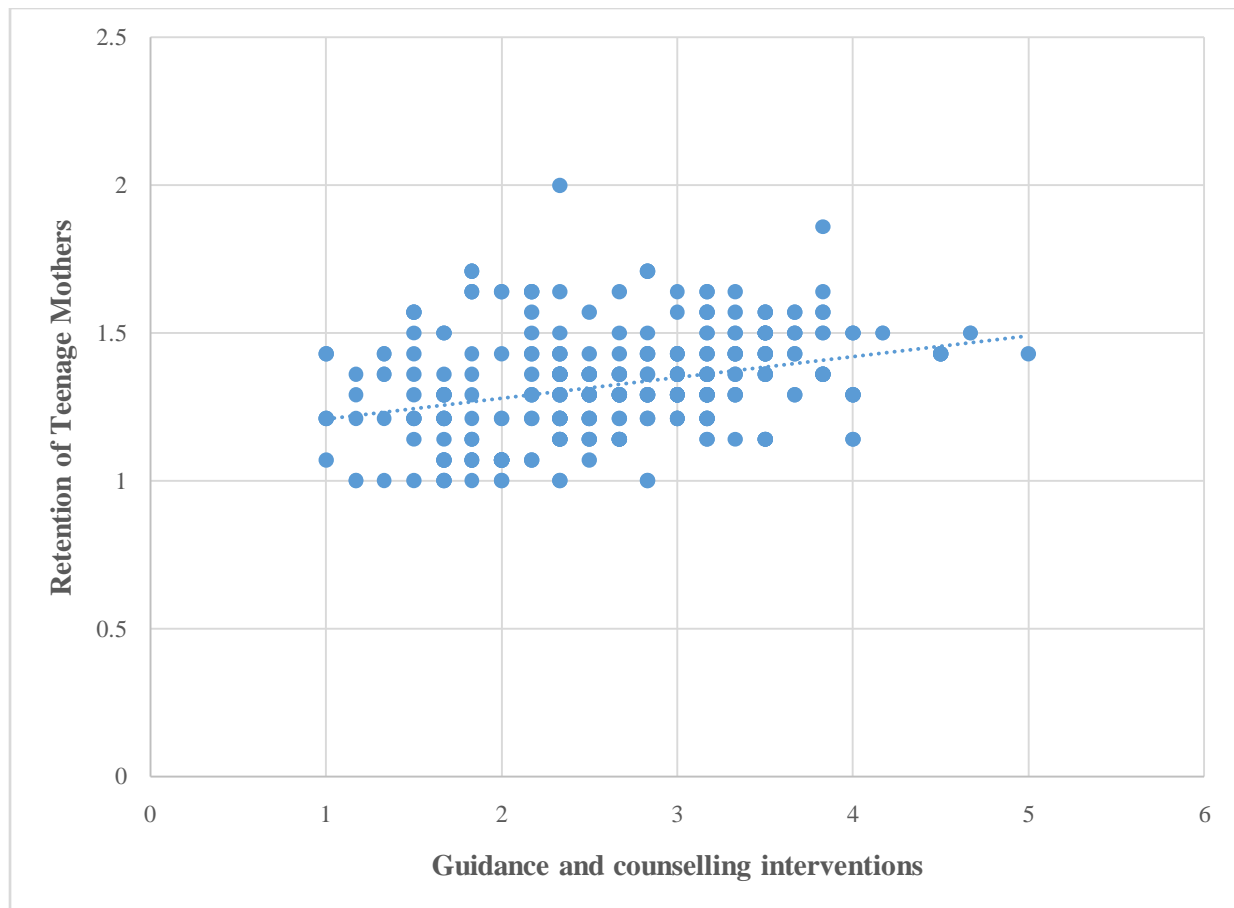


Figure 1: Scatter plots of counselling interventions and retention of teenage mothers

The scatter plots in “fig 1” shows a linear trend relationship existed between guidance and counselling interventions and retention of teenage mothers. Consequently, no serious violations in homoscedasticity occurred and the use of Pearson moment correlation coefficient to estimate the relationship between guidance and counselling activities and retention of teenage mothers was appropriate. The study thus computed the Pearson moment correlation coefficient and the findings presented on Table5.

Table 5: Correlation between guidance and counselling interventions and retention

		Retention of Teenage Mothers	G and C activities
Retention of Teenage Mothers	Pearson Correlation	1	.326**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	367	355
G and C activities	Pearson Correlation	.326**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	355	356

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

The findings on Table 5 shows that the computed value for Pearson correlation coefficient was  $r = .326$ . According to Schober, Boer and Schwarte (2018) if the coefficient value lies between  $\pm 0.50$  and  $\pm 1$ , then it is said to be a strong correlation. If the value of  $r$  lies between  $\pm 0.30$  and  $\pm 0.49$ , then it is said to be a medium

correlation and when the value lies below +. 29, then it is said to be a small correlation. Thus, this study established that there was a moderate, positive correlation between the two variables ( $r = .326$ ,  $n = 367$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The positive correlation indicates that guidance and counselling interventions enhances the retention of teenage mothers. This implies that guidance and counselling interventions have a significant role in the retention of teenage mothers. The findings collaborate the study by Opondo and Aloka (2020) that reported that provision of comprehensive guidance and counselling programme enhance holistic adjustment of teenage mothers in secondary schools.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study concluded that there was a moderate, positive correlation between the two variables ( $r = .326$ ,  $n = 367$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This is because the computed value for Pearson correlation coefficient was  $r = .336$ . The positive correlation indicates that guidance and counselling interventions enhances the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Samburu and Nairobi Counties. The study found that teenage mothers who are aware of the re-entry policy, receive individual counselling among other interventions their likelihood of completing their studies and not dropping out was higher.

Guidance and counselling interventions enabled teenage mothers to acquire knowledge, skills and positive attitudes invaluable in resolving personal issues that otherwise would affect their studies resulting to them feeling isolated, rejected, judged and frustrated over the multiple roles, eventually dropping out. In a nutshell, guidance and counselling interventions can equip teenage mothers with skills and knowledge that would help improve retention rate at the same time help in improving academic performance.

Notably, however, guidance and counselling interventions for teenage mothers at public secondary schools are challenged by many factors that hinder retention. The lack of proper implementation of the re-entry policy, coupled with limited psychosocial and material support that facilitate retention acts as a barrier towards retention outcome. Therefore, there is a need to address these challenges to increase retention rate of teenage mothers in public secondary schools. Addressing the challenges will enable the public secondary schools in Samburu and Nairobi counties to address the retention rates and academic performance of the teenage mothers.

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