

**The Influence of Principals' Characteristics on the Implementation of Re-Admission Policy of Girls after Teenage Pregnancy in Public Secondary Schools in Kitui County, Kenya**

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**Abstract**

This study sought to investigate the influence of principals' characteristics on implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya. The study objectives sought to determine the influence of; principals' age, gender, experience and professional qualifications on the implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy. The target population was 275 principals, 275 guidance and counseling teachers and 275 head girls in the 120 girls' schools and 155 co-education schools in Kitui County, Kenya. The study also targeted the County Director of Education and all the 16 sub county directors of education in Kitui County. Using stratified and simple random sampling, a sample of 83 principals, 83 guidance and counseling, and 83 head girls were selected for the study. The County Director of Education was purposively selected while four sub-county directors of Education were selected using simple random sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The study established that; there was statistically significant association between principals' characteristics and re-admission policy. The principals' age, gender, experience and professional qualification significantly determined the implementation of the re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy. The study recommends that; principals should get the right

professional training and experience before they could be appointed to take up roles of heading public schools. This would enhance the implementation of the re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya.

**Key words:** *Sub county director of education, Girls' and Co-education schools, Teenage pregnancies, Re-admission policy, and principals' characteristics.*

## **1.0 Introduction:**

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

As girls transit the turbulent stage of adolescent, they increasingly seek to be free from their parents and gain more autonomy (Njagi & Mwania, 2017). Further, Njagi, Mwania, Manyasi and Mwaura (2017) point out that secondary school students are faced with challenges of navigating safely through their adolescence in a world where the culture of sexual immorality is growing fast. In order to prevent girls from dropping out of school because of pregnancy, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) committee recommends measures to ensure that pregnant teenagers are given the chance to complete their education by not excluding them and by developing special programs (Mieke, 2006).

Studies have established that parents' personal characteristics such as level of education and socio-economic status determine girl child retention in school (Nzina, Mulwa & Kimiti, 2019). Principals' characteristics are equally important and they influence retention of students in school. In Kenya, Kindiki (2009) noted that the principals' personal characteristic which includes; academic, age and gender had an impact in the effectiveness of secondary schools' management. The Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 emphasizes the need for regular training for principals on the management of school affairs, as well as their roles and responsibilities to enhance professionalism in fulfilling their oversight mandate (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The school principals are the central implementers of the government's education policies including the girls' re-admission policy.

In an effort to develop capacities for Management bodies among other school leaders, the government established the 'Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI) to provide in-service training to serving leaders and potential school leaders. Principals with Bachelor's Degree, Masters' Degree and PhD Degree are likely to ensure that, better implementation of the curriculum was achieved than those with diploma education levels of education. The Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 emphasizes the need for regular training for principals on the management of school affairs, as well as their roles and responsibilities to enhance professionalism in fulfilling their oversight mandate (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

### **1.1 Statement of the problem.**

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

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

### **1.2 Purpose of the study.**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which principal's characteristics has influenced implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in Kitui County, Kenya. Specifically, the study was to establish the extent to which principals' age, gender, experience and professional qualifications has influenced implementation of re-admission policy after teenage pregnancy.

### **1.3 Research Hypothesis.**

This study was guided by the following hypothesis:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant association between principals' age and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant association between principals' gender and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between principals' experience and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools.

H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant association between principals' professional qualifications and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools.

## **2.0 Research Methodology**

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

## **3.0 Research findings and Discussions**

In order to establish the extent to which implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County, questionnaires were administered to 65 principals, 65 counselling teachers and 65 head girls. In order to determine the extent to which implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kitui County has been done, the respondents were required to indicate the principals' characteristics and the level of implementation.

**Table 1: Correlations for principals' age and implementation of re- admission policy**

		Principal's age	Implementation of re-admission policy
Principal's age	Pearson Correlation	1	.762(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	65	65
Implementation of re-admission policy	Pearson Correlation	.762(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	65	65

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

Table 1 shows that there is a strong positive relationship  $r(65) = 0.762$ ,  $p < 0.05$  between principal's age and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools. This means that the more the years of age of principals the higher the re-admission of girls after teenage pregnancy.

**Table 2: Principals' gender and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	79.920(a)	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	79.658	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	34.055	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	65		

a 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .10.

Table 2 shows that the Pearson Chi-Square is  $\chi^2_{(1,4)} = 79.920$ ,  $p = .000$ . This tells us that there is a statistically significant association between principal's gender and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy. We do therefore reject  $H_{02}$ .

These results agree with Omwancha (2012) who observed that female principals understand girls' problems more than male principals. This is because girls are disadvantaged in education and therefore deserves special attention as they drop out more easily than boys because of various reasons, including early marriage, teenage pregnancy, traditions, domestic violence and sexual harassment in the school setting. These problems can only be understood better by female principals.

**Table 3: Principals' experience and implementation of re-admission policy**

		Principal's experience	Implementation of re-admission policy
Principal's experience	Pearson Correlation	1	.826(**)
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.000
	N	65	65
Implementation of re- admission policy	Pearson Correlation	.826(**)	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	
	N	65	65

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

Table 3 shows that there was a strong positive relationship  $r(65) = 0.826$ ,  $p < 0.05$  between principal's experience and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools. This meant that the more the experience of principals the higher the re-admission of girls after teenage pregnancy. We do therefore reject  $H_{03}$ .

**Table 4: Principals' professional qualifications and implementation of re-admission policy**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	65.120(a)	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	48.221	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	30.102	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	65		

a 25 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .10.

Table 4 shows that the Pearson Chi-Square is  $\chi^2_{(1,4)} = 65.120$ ,  $p = .000$ . This tells us that there is a statistically significant association between principal's professional qualifications and implementation of re-admission policy of girls after teenage pregnancy. We do therefore reject  $H_{04}$ .

#### 4.0 Conclusions and recommendations.

The principals' characteristics influence the implementation of the policy on re-admission of girls after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools. These factors include principals' age, gender, experience and professional qualifications. The government should ensure that principals are trained and vetted to ensure they have the required professional qualifications before appointment to take up their leadership roles.



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