

An Assessment On The Strategies Employed By County Government In Pregnancy Prevention Among Secondary School Girls In Transmara West Sub-County, Kenya.

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Abstract

In Sub-Sahara Africa and many other developing countries, girls and women are losing the battle for equal access to secondary education. Among the factors attributed to this scenario is teenage pregnancy. It is in line with this state of affairs that this study sought establish the strategies employed by county government in pregnancy prevention among secondary school girls in Transmara west sub-county. This study was guided by the social theory of feminism which involves a range or a continuum of political and theoretical feminist positions. The study utilized the mixed methodology approach and concurrent triangulation research design. The study targeted 337 respondents. For the purpose of getting a representative sample, the researcher stratified the schools into school types. All the four girls schools were purposively selected while five (50%) mixed secondary schools were selected using simple random sampling. Piloting was carried out in Transmara East Sub- County in order to establish reliability, validity, dependability and credibility. Reliability of research instruments were ensured through a test-re-test method. The research instruments were given to experts in the field of educational management in Mount Kenya University in order to ensure validity of the instruments. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques while inferential statistics were presented using the Coefficient Correlation. It was expected that the study unraveled the redress mechanisms in prevention of early teenage pregnancies among secondary school girls in Transmara west sub-county. Strategies employed by the students, County government strategies, national government strategies and community strategies positively and significantly influence pregnancy prevention.

Key Words; *early pregnancies, strategies, social theory, feminism*

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I. Introduction

Education is a fundamental right for all children of school-going age, irrespective of their gender. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) views education as a basic human right essential for the realization of other human rights. Education fosters individual freedom, empowerment, and yields significant developmental benefits (UNESCO, 2014). According to Adebola, Anyachebelu, and Madu (2012), nations with higher levels of girls' education tend to be more developed. This understanding has led the Kenyan government to invest significantly in the education sector to achieve gender equality in basic education (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Governments around the world have made efforts to enhance women's education (Kipkulei, Chepchieng, & Boit, 2012).

However, despite the government's efforts, including the introduction of Free Primary Education and Free Secondary Education, student dropout rates remain a concern. The Koech Report (1999) identifies the primary challenge for Kenya as ensuring equitable access to education by eliminating disparities, especially for girls, women, and children in disadvantaged regions. According to a World Bank report (1995), cited by Adetunde and Akampae (2008), two-thirds of illiterate individuals are women, and 60% of out-of-school children are girls. Despite the crucial role of female education in society, Kenya continues to experience gender disparities at all levels of education.

Adolescents aged 10-19 make up 16% of the global population, totaling 1.2 billion individuals (UNICEF, 2016). The majority of these adolescents, about 86%, reside in developing countries. By the age of 19, half of adolescent girls in these regions are sexually active, approximately 40% are married, and nearly 20% have children (Darroch, Woog, Bankole, & Ashford, 2016). In 2016, there were 21 million pregnancies among adolescent girls aged 15-19 in developing countries, with nearly half (49%) being unintended. The rates of unintended pregnancies were 43% in Asia, 45% in Africa, and 74% in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Additionally, around 23 million adolescent girls have an unmet need for modern contraceptives, putting them at risk of unintended pregnancies. Furthermore, 777,000 girls under the age of 15 gave birth in the same year (Woog & Kagesten, 2017).

Early and unintended pregnancies among adolescent girls are influenced by various factors at the individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels. These pregnancies are linked to negative health, educational, social, and economic outcomes, which can place significant burdens on the economies and health systems of developing countries (Woog, Singh, Browne, & Philbin, 2015).

As educational aspirations increase worldwide, early childbearing among schoolgirls has emerged as a significant social issue, often resulting in the premature termination of young women's educational pursuits. In the 28 OECD countries, approximately 1.25 million teenage schoolgirls become pregnant annually, with 60% of these pregnancies leading to motherhood and disrupting their educational goals (UNICEF, 2001). For instance, in the United States, 9% of adolescents aged 15 to 19 become pregnant each year, and about half of these pregnancies impact their schooling, forcing them to defer or abandon their education (Darroch, 2001). In India, adolescent pregnancies account for 19% of total fertility rates, often leading to early marriages and the cessation of educational efforts (Mehra, 2004). Similarly, a study in Israel estimated the incidence of teenage pregnancy to be 32 per 1,000 schoolgirls (Sikron, 2003).

Adolescent mothers tend to perform poorly in school, come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and grow up in less advantageous environments. They are often the children of mothers with limited education and a history of unintended teenage pregnancies (Elfebein, 2003). Adolescents facing unintended pregnancies encounter numerous challenges, such as an inability to complete their education, which limits their future social and economic opportunities, and an increase in adverse pregnancy outcomes (Kosunen, 2002; Phipps, 2002; Koniak-Griffin, 2001; Henshaw, 2000; Moore, 1993; Upchurch, 1990). This issue contributes significantly to gender inequity in education globally. It is important to note that early pregnancy affects only girls, despite being a result of actions by both sexes.

In Africa, education has been instrumental in the social and economic development of countries, significantly enhancing the quality of life for its citizens. Recognizing the crucial role of education in development and its ability to amplify other rights (Tomasevski, 2003) has spurred both international and national efforts to achieve global educational goals. A particular emphasis has been placed on girls' education in developing countries as a critical pathway to gender equity (Unterhalter, 2007). This importance is reflected in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2 and 3, as well as the Education for All (EFA) Goals, specifically MDG 3 and EFA Goal 5, which highlight educational access as fundamental for all. Despite considerable progress during the post-Dakar period (2000-2009), girls continue to be disproportionately represented among out-of-school children.

Various prevention strategies, including health education, skills-building, and improving access to contraceptives, have been implemented by countries worldwide to tackle this issue (Oringanje, 2010). Many technical and political agencies at the global, regional, national and local levels have been implementing a variety of interventions. The diverse approaches tend to address a wide range of factors related to unintended pregnancies among adolescents. The goals of these agencies include, among others: helping adolescents to change psychosocial risk and protective factors involving sexuality; increasing teens' knowledge about risks and consistent safe use of contraceptives; and skills training to support their social inclusion and personal development. While single interventions were not found to be effective, combinations of interventions to improve education and contraceptive access were found to reduce unintended pregnancies among adolescents (Scher, Maynard & Stagner, 2006). Despite all these efforts, many girls still cannot complete school due to early pregnancies, hence the need to conduct a study and analyze the strategic interventions of early pregnancies in Kenya, a case of Tansmara Sub-County.

Many secondary school girls are faced with predicaments where they are unable to continue pursuing their education as a result of early unplanned and unwanted pregnancies. This has plunged many of these girls who are in their teen years into despair and many have opted to settle and make peace with situations. Kenyan statistics indicate that approximately 1300 girls drop out of school every year due to pregnancy (Sifuma, 2014). Further statistics indicate that 26 in every 100 girls in Kenya are married before they reach 18 years most profoundly due to early pregnancy. Although gender disparity has reduced in Kenya, pregnancy still poses a challenge on the advancement towards gender parity (Okeyo, 2015). Unless this trend is dramatically reversed 10,000 girls will leave school every year and the government loses an estimate of 750, 000 dollars annually.

Narok is leading among counties with the highest burden of teenage pregnancies followed by Homa Bay at 33 per cent, West Pokot 29 per cent, Tana River 28 per cent, Nyamira 28 per cent, Samburu 26 per cent, while Migori and Kwale both stand at 24 per cent. For example in the year 2017, some 233 school girls from eight secondary and primary schools in Narok County aged between 10 and 19 years were impregnated within a period of 6 months and forced to discontinue with their learning. According to a report by Narok County Commissioner, Transmara West Sub-County is leading with 157 pregnancies followed by Narok East with 30 pregnancies cases reported to the police and respective authorities. This is an indication that the cases of early pregnancies are high

in Transmara west sub-county. Some studies have been done on pregnancy of school girls but a majority of the interventions identified have yielded short lived results and therefore there is need to establish county government redress mechanisms in prevention of early pregnancies among secondary school girls in Transmara West Sub-County, Kenya.

II. Literature Review

Theoretical Literature

The study was guided by the social theory of feminism which involves a range or a continuum of political and theoretical feminist positions. Feminism is both a political statement and a theory of women's position in society focused on gaining equal rights and opportunities for women and changing power relations between women and men. Feminism means social action and the roots of feminist thinking date back centuries to individual and groups of men and women who worked to free women from the oppressive conditions of patriarchy. How people understand feminism depends on their view of the larger society. For instance a socialist feminist position views family as historically constructed and believes social class, race, and gender oppression to be intertwining consequences of a capitalist, patriarchal system. Social feminists desire a total transformation of the patriarchal social system found at home, work, and in schools. They want a total transformation of the school systems concerning the structures, practices, and policies, for both men and women.

Feminist theories have a common goal of being concerned about the equal rights of women and to transform the ways both men and women experience and live their lives. These major social transformative theories differ in their emphasis, but they accept the premise that reality is comprised of the sum of the individual realities interacting in a given place. Great importance is given to the voices of all participants, especially women, members of minority groups, and students. Feminist philosophy, sometimes known as feminism, is committed to promoting equality between men and women. There is a great deal of disagreement among those who identify as feminists, including both male and female individuals. On the other hand, the majority of feminists are in agreement about the following five fundamental principles: The belief of feminists is that they should seek to improve equality. Moreover, feminists believe in widening human choice, which is the concept that both men and women should be allowed to develop their human features, even if they go against the existing quo. Feminist philosophy relates ideas to action, arguing that we should try to bring about change toward gender parity (and not simply speak about it). A further principle of feminism is the elimination of gender stratification, which proposes that laws and cultural norms that limit the income, educational, and job opportunities for women should be opposed. The final two principles are fairly straightforward: ending sexual violence and promoting sexual freedom, which means that women should have control over their sexuality and reproduction. If a woman wants to be a mechanic, she should have every right and opportunity to practice that profession.

The expansion of feminism into theoretical or philosophical discourse is what we mean when we talk about feminist theory. The purpose of this study is to get an understanding of the nature of gender inequality by analyzing the social roles, experiences, and interests of women. According to Chodorow (1991), a significant portion of feminist theory is centered on the analysis of gender inequality and the promotion of women's interests. This is in addition to the fact that it typically offers a criticism of social interactions.

Therefore strategies should be applied that can promote gender equity in education through eliminating factors that disadvantage women and girls such as unintended and unwanted pregnancies. Feminist theory is primarily concerned with providing women with a voice and bringing attention to the myriad of ways in which women have contributed to society, as well as the obstacles that they confront. Additionally, it seeks to provide women with an equal opportunity to achieve success in a variety of fields, including education, politics, business, and other sectors.

In the educational sector women can be given a voice by addressing the challenges they face such as pregnancies and coming up with ways which this can be avoided or the obvious outcomes and pitfalls such as discontinuation of educational goals reversed and given a second chance to attain their dreams and gain self-actualization and economic liberation power through education.

The gender difference viewpoint investigates the ways in which women's experiences of social circumstances and their placement in such contexts are different from those of males. For instance, cultural feminists believe that the varied predicaments that are linked with womanhood and femininity, such as pregnancy, are the reason why men and women experience the social world in different ways. A number of other feminist theorists are of the opinion that the specific duties that are allocated to women and men inside institutions provide a more adequate explanation for gender differences, including the sexual division of labor within the family. Existential and phenomenological feminists are concerned with the ways in which women have been marginalized and identified as the "other" in cultures that are dominated by patriarchy. (Crossman, 2010) Women are thus assigned certain roles, and they are not given the chance to realize their full potential that they possess. This therefore explains why a girl's pregnancy becomes a hindrance for her to attain her educational goals since it's her role to nurture while the boy responsible for pregnancy can keep on pursuing their educational goals. Men

experience life differently and have challenges which are male oriented and can be studied in depth just as this study dealt with the female gender.

Not only do gender-inequity theories acknowledge that women's experiences and locations in social circumstances are distinct from those of males, but they also acknowledge that these differences are not equal. Liberal feminists contend that women have the same potential as men for moral reasoning and agency, but that patriarchy, especially the sexist patterning of the division of labor, has traditionally denied women the chance to express and exercise this reasoning. They say that this privilege has been a problem for women throughout history. In light of this, it is important that every woman be provided with the opportunity to articulate their rationale and achieve their objectives, regardless of the societal circumstances they encounter, such as being pregnant (Crossman, 2010). Girls should therefore be given a chance despite the pitfalls they fall in to pursue their education and complete their educational process. Measures should be taken to ensure that they do not fall in these pitfalls but rather they are equipped with every skill they need to come out unscratched in every situation. They should be able to go through basic education without being interrupted by early pregnancies.

National and County Government Strategies for Early Pregnancy Prevention

Since gaining independence, the government of Kenya has tackled educational challenges through various commissions, committees, and task forces. These include the Kenyan Education Commission (Ominde Report, 1964), the National Committee on Education Objectives and Policies (Gachati Report, 1976), the Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya (Mackay Report, 1981), the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond (Kamunge Report, 1988), and the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (Koech Report, 2000). Each sought to reform the colonial education system to better meet the needs of an independent Kenya. Despite these efforts, issues such as lack of access, high dropout rates, and exclusion from schooling persist, particularly affecting adolescent girls.

Recent policy initiatives have emphasized the achievement of Education for All (EFA) and Universal Primary Education (UPE), focusing on access, retention, equity, quality, and relevance, along with the internal and external efficiencies of the education system. Policies supporting continued education for girls who drop out due to pregnancy are crucial for the Kenyan government and are a significant global concern. International conventions and treaties, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1976), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), affirm the right to education and advocate for measures to ensure regular school attendance and reduce dropout rates. Therefore, pregnancy prevention must be embraced globally. Each country, especially in the developing world, needs to develop strategies to prevent early pregnancies in compliance with these conventions.

The World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) emphasized the need of adopting a child-centered approach with the goal of ensuring that all children are able to achieve academic achievement. Similarly, Ainscow et al. (2006) argued that inclusion included the presence, involvement, and accomplishment of all children who were subject to exclusionary pressures. This meant that inclusion did not merely relate to students who had impairments or those who were classified as having special educational needs. They went on to say that inclusion is concerned with all children and young people who are enrolled in schools, and that inclusion and exclusion are connected together in such a way that inclusion entails the active battling of exclusion, and that inclusion is considered as a process that never comes to an end.

According to Ainscow and Miles (2009), inclusion necessitates a shift toward a study of the obstacles that students encounter inside the educational system that prevent them from participating and learning. They propose that it should engage all of the many stakeholders that are present within the local community, such as families, political and religious leaders, and other members of the media. They also mention that the presence, involvement, and level of performance of particular learners might be hindered by specific obstacles. It is important that the promotion of inclusive education encourages the development of school conditions in ways that would be beneficial to all of the kids who attend those kinds of schools.

As a result of the fact that girls as a group are subjected to exclusion and prejudice, several developing nations have implemented certain intervention measures in an attempt to overcome the obstacles that impede girls from gaining access to educational opportunities. There is a widespread belief that these initiatives have the potential to bring about social justice, equality, and the inclusion of all individuals, particularly females, into educational facilities. The re-entry policy for females who have given birth to a child during their teenage years is one of these intervention approaches. Mluma (2004) showed that the Ministry of Education has sent circulars to all PDEs, DEOs, and heads of schools. These circulars codified the re-admission policy and called on the other officials to follow it without delay. Mluma (2004) also established that the re-entry circulars were issued. It was further proven by Mluma that if girls were permitted to continue their studies after giving birth, it would bring about a reduction in the percentage of women who are illiterate; it would enable women to take care of their

children; it would close the gender gap in education; and it would provide women with the opportunity to contribute to the development of the country.

Despite the fact that this strategy has been adopted into legislation in a number of developing nations, its execution has not yet been evaluated in terms of whether or not it will assist a greater number of girls and encourage them to return to school. According to Grant and Hallman (2008), there have been very few studies that have concentrated on the incidence of school girl pregnancy and its link to previous school experiences and eventual educational achievement in parts of the globe that are still developing. They argue that the possibly simultaneous variables that impact pregnancy and dropping out of school are seldom investigated, with the exception of qualitative research when they are conducted. In addition, they state that while an increasing number of nations are now legally permitting girls to continue attending school or return to school after becoming pregnant, these policy changes have had little impact on the behaviors of girls in many situations. This may be due to the fact that the regulations are not implemented in the same manner everywhere. Their recommendation is that educational objectives that have the potential to decrease the conception of school-aged girls should be encouraged.

Stromquist (2001) contends that girls and women continue to be subjected to prejudice inside the educational systems of their various nations, and that studies that have focused on access have failed to capture these data. Regarding this matter, there is an immediate need for more study that is based on qualitative research methodologies. In addition, she says that there are still difficulties around education for females since certain targets of access, completion, and quality have not been met. In spite of the fact that compensating policies make perfect sense, there is a risk involved in limiting them to low-income girls as the population that is most in need of them. It seems that there has been a change in the focus that is placed on policy throughout the globe, moving away from seeing adolescent pregnancy as a problem and toward viewing it as a result of existing inequalities. On the other hand, there is currently a dearth of research that investigates the experiences of young moms (Arai, 2009; Pillow, 2006).

There are a great number of obstacles and hurdles that prohibit a great number of girls from gaining access to school all over the globe. Because of this, they have been prevented from having chances to improve their life, and as a result, they have been denied the opportunity to enjoy their individual liberties. This particular sort of marginalization might be seen as putting the girls in a position where they are subjected to social injustices, which in turn prevents them from exercising a number of their human rights. The availability of education is considered to be liberation from those constraints that are restricting females into disadvantaged and excluded groups. This is because of the reasons stated above.

In the process of the nation's search for comprehensive reforms, which has resulted in the implementation of legislation that are in accordance with the attainment of gender equality in practically all sectors of the country, the proclamation of the new constitution of the country may be regarded as one of the most significant accomplishments. There are several gender equality benefits that are included in the constitution, which provides the necessary legal underpinning to guarantee that Kenyan women and men have equal access to resources, opportunities, rewards, and social services (Kariuki, 2011). The many efforts that are aimed at resolving the gender problems of the nation are expressed in the new constitution of the country. These initiatives are also asserted in the economic development plan Vision 2030 of the country, as well as in the policies of the Government of Kenya and Presidential regulations. On the other hand, the nation continues to struggle with a number of obstacles that prevent it from achieving gender equality in education development as envisioned in the strategic plan. One example of such obstacles is the gender gap in schooling, which puts girls at a disadvantage compared to boys.

A framework for rights-based, child-friendly educational system schools has been established by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). These schools are defined as being "inclusive, healthy, and protective for all children, effective with children, and involved with families and communities-and children" (Shaffer, 1999). Within the context of this paradigm, the school is an important and personal setting that guarantees the child's physical protection, emotional security, psychological enablement, and child-friendly atmosphere. It is necessary for a school to have a direct connection to the support, involvement, and cooperation of parents in order for the school to be able to call itself kid friendly. In order to achieve its goal of creating learning settings in which children are eager to study, the staff members are kind and attentive to the children being taught. There would be an increase in the number of females who attend school and their desire to study if all schools were more welcoming.

For countries to be successful in their efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals, it is imperative that females get an education. There is a significant gender gap in enrollment and transition from one level to the next, particularly in rural Africa (UNICEF, 2006). This is despite the fact that the majority of African nations do not discriminate against girls and women in their educational policies. A significant number of young women do not get the appropriate or pertinent kind of education that would enable them to triumph over the social, cultural, and health obstacles they face.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the female educator is an excellent role model of a success story whose experiences the girl child may learn from. There is a need to incorporate female teachers in training and capacity development, as stated by UNICEF (2006). This is necessary in order to establish patterns of support and knowledge of the issues that girl children confront both within and outside of the school environment. According to UNICEF (2006), women teachers are seen as especially useful, and if they have the appropriate training and are motivated, they have the potential to act as good mentors from within the community.

Education on sexuality is an essential component of the curriculum for health education. For the purpose of assisting parents and teachers, as well as children and teenagers, in avoiding issues linked to sexuality, it gives accurate information. In addition, the information include methods that may assist children in the development of self-respect, sexual comprehension, the definition of the values of interpersonal relationships, and the strengthening of communication skills in the areas of education and sexuality. This encourages a sexual life that is both healthy and consistent. In order to develop a scientific, social, and psychological knowledge of the need of sexuality education, it is required for parents and instructors to acquire this understanding. Sex education is recommended as an essential component for teenagers, who should be shielded from the potentially damaging impacts of engaging in sexually deviant activities, according to the sexual revolutions that are taking place among today's young. In 2011, the World Health Organization (WHO) published guidelines for the prevention of early pregnancy and poor reproductive outcomes in adolescents from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). These guidelines focused on four major pregnancy prevention outcomes: increasing access to and use of contraception; preventing marriage before the age of 18; increasing knowledge and understanding of the importance of early pregnancy prevention; and preventing coerced sex (WHO, 2011). A significant number of adolescents do not have access to knowledge on these topics; thus, the choices they make about sexuality are either not informed or are erroneous.

In the opinion of Orji and Anikweze (1998), the term "sex education" refers to the teaching of information about sexuality and other topics associated with it, such as the sexual organs and the roles they perform, the process of reproduction, equality between the sexes, sanitation during menstruation, and the risks associated with engaging in sexual activities that are not healthy. Hershel (1976) asserts that sexuality education is a powerful force, and that its actual meaning must be disclosed to adolescents in order to empower them to make logical decisions that are founded on self-control and a personal code of behavior. A further observation that they have made is that "teenagers appear to know enough to get into bed but not enough to stay out of trouble." It is for this reason that sex education is wanted in order to replace ignorance, fear, secrecy, and shame with information, understanding, openness, and reasoning. According to Jorgensen (1972), modern adolescents who are enrolled in secondary schools have access to official sex education; nevertheless, this instruction is delivered in a roundabout way via their biology, home economics, and social studies classes. It is also via reading, watching movies, and reading books that they get a significant amount of information about love and sexuality. As a result, it would be naive for adults to refuse to acknowledge the need of providing sexuality education to teenagers in educational institutions. In the opinion of Hilgard et al. (1971), teenagers need sex education in order to acquire the knowledge necessary to understand the appropriate ways of expressing their sexual urge without putting themselves in risk of experiencing unanticipated negative consequences. Both the reduction of the risks of potentially negative outcomes from sexual conduct, such as unwanted or unexpected births and infection with sexually transmitted diseases, and the improvement of the quality of relationships are the goals of sexual education. It is also about growing young people's capacity to make decisions throughout their whole lives, the need for sex education that works, by which we mean that it is effective, and the need for sex education that contribute all the way to this overarching goal.

Skills in negotiating, decision-making, assertiveness, and listening are developed in young people via the implementation of effective sexuality education. It is primarily due to a lack of knowledge, social stigma, laws and policies that prevent the provision of contraception and abortion to unmarried adolescents (or any adolescents), and judgmental attitudes among service providers that adolescents continue to have special sexual and reproductive health needs that are not being met (Salam, Das, Lassi, & Bhutta, 2016). With the goal of preserving their sexual and reproductive health, teenagers want access to correct information as well as the contraceptive method of their choice that is not only safe and effective but also inexpensive and acceptable. They will be able to reduce the number of HIV infections and prevent a significant number of unintended births among adolescents (Guttmacher Institute, 2008).

The focus has been placed on imparting moral lessons and social value to secondary school students ever since sex education was introduced into the Kenyan educational system. However, there have been some individuals who have expressed their belief that sex education leads to an increase in sexual behavior (Encarta, 2007). Since its inclusion into the curriculum of secondary schools in Kenya, sexuality education has not been very successful. This is due to the fact that an increasing number of teenagers are becoming pregnant and dropping out of school. Sex education programs that are successful, on the other hand, have the potential to reduce sexual activity while simultaneously increasing awareness and self-control among those who are currently sexually

active. According to Amazigo et al. (2003), they retain a tight emphasis on lowering particular sexual risk-taking behaviors; they offer factual knowledge about sexuality; they strengthen interpersonal and communication skills to resist sexual pressures; and they target both social and media impacts on sexual behaviors.

In the context of education, guidance refers to the experiences that help each student improve their understanding of themselves, their acceptance of themselves, and their ability to function successfully within their current society. Therefore, guidance is not a singular occurrence but rather a process that contributes to the development of a human character. In their definition of guidance, Watts and Kidd (2000:489) state that it is comprised of "a range of processes designed to enable individuals to make informed choices and transitions related to their educational, vocational, and personal development." This is a confirmation of the aforementioned statement. According to Hornby (2003:4), advising "involves helping students individually or in small groups with making personal, educational, or vocational choices." This is the conclusion that can be drawn from the information presented. The young people have a need for direction and counseling, but they often do not take it when it is presented in a style that is authoritative and dominant. What the young people want is to know where they can get assistance, but they do not want to be told that they need it. The youth counselor must thus be able to demand respect without resorting to compulsion.

The government of Kenya acknowledges the importance of providing Guidance and Counselling services to every student in the country. The Ministry of Education's policy paper on Guidance and counselling (2002) outlines the primary objectives of these services in schools as follows:

i. Equip students with skills, attitudes, and knowledge to help them navigate the challenges of socio-cultural, socio-economic, and technological changes in society. This support can help students resist influences that threaten their education, such as early pregnancy.

ii. Assist school-aged youth in making informed decisions from a wide range of career options, thereby helping them avoid early pregnancy.

iii. Promote positive changes and attitudes in the community towards traditional practices such as early marriages and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Students can advocate for better practices.

iv. Provide girls with life skills to address challenges like pregnancy and early marriages, which can lead to school dropout, sexual abuse, and harassment.

v. Rehabilitate individuals involved in wrongdoing, substance abuse, and maladjustment, enabling re-admitted students to successfully reintegrate into the school environment.

vi. Offer guidance and counselling to those infected with HIV/AIDS to help them manage the disease. This support can also help teenage mothers cope with their new experiences.

vii. Provide adolescents with healthy living information

Guidance and counseling instructors, school counselors, teacher counselors, and counselors in the school are all considered to be members of the educational staff and collaborate with one another to ensure the academic and personal success of children and girls, as stated by Hatch (2014). In addition, in order to provide assistance to a wide variety of people who are in need of assistance, counselors are required to adhere to the professional ethics established by the American Counseling Association (2014) and be familiar with international standards such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association (2013).

A research was carried out by Gicheru (2011) at Mwea secondary schools located in the Kirinyaga District of Kenya to investigate the challenges faced by pregnant adolescent pupils and the guidance and counseling requirements they have. The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges faced by pregnant adolescents attending secondary schools in the Mwea district of Kirinyaga, as well as the guidance and counseling requirements of these students. In this research, the psychological, educational, and health issues, as well as the participants' requirements for guidance and counseling, as well as the intervention strategies, were investigated. The research sample included of two hundred pupils, including ninety males and one hundred and ten girls, and five schools from the Mwea Division that were chosen at random. In addition, the sample included seventeen pregnant students who had graduated from Mwea Division but had left school because of their pregnancy.

Based on the results of the research, it was discovered that: - Pregnancies among adolescents often take place between the ages of 16 and 17 years old. A lack of advice from parents and instructors, as well as the influence of peers, are the primary factors that contribute to pregnancies among adolescents. Counseling from peers may be an effective way to combat peer pressure. One of the psychological challenges that students who became pregnant as teenagers faced was being rejected by their parents and friends. This may easily result in their not being brought back to school, and even if they are taken, it reduces their ability to concentrate on what they are doing. This resulted in the formulation of requirements for guidance and counseling, which included issues such as low self-esteem, anxiety, loneliness, perplexity, and conflict. The inability of pregnant adolescent pupils to concentrate on their studies was identified as the primary educational challenge they faced. The manifestation of this was a need for guidance and counseling, which presented itself in a variety of ways, including a lack of attention in class, poor motivation, inability to finish assignments, neglect of academics, and dropping out of

school. Complications associated to pregnancy, such as morning sickness, exhaustion, and a poor nutritious diet, were shown to be the primary causes of maternal health issues among pregnant adolescents who were college students. It was determined that the guidance needs were for the provision of prenatal care. A low percentage of females returned to school after giving birth, according to the findings. Gicheru (2011) discovered that teacher counselors lacked the necessary abilities for counseling, which is a requirement for the profession.

With regard to the prevention of pregnancy, it was determined that preventive counseling was a suitable method. It was suggested that, in light of these results, teacher counselors should commence training for peer counselors in order to enhance their ability to assist in the prevention of pregnancy. Teacher counselors are responsible for initiating crisis counseling programs in schools; they are also responsible for intensifying preventive counseling in relation to the prevention of pregnancy in schools; they are responsible for involving parents in the enhancement of developmental and preventive counseling at home; they are responsible for providing guidance and counseling curriculum; and they are trained as professionals. According to Gicheru (2011), the overall conclusion was that adolescent pregnant students deserve love, support, hope, and guidance from their parents, instructors, and society as a whole when they are pregnant.

According to the findings of a campaign conducted by the University of Illinois at Urbana in 2004, it was determined that adolescent moms need improved assistance. This support should include assisting them in continuing their education by providing advisory services, providing better child care, and expanding the availability of support via housing. According to a report published by the Canadian Ministry of Education in 1998, appropriate guidance and counseling services have been of assistance to pregnant mothers and teenage mothers. These services have assisted these individuals in developing their education plan and evaluating the various options that are available to assist them in continuing their education. In addition, Roye and Balk (1996) highlighted the fact that teenagers who participated in guidance and counseling programs had much improved self-esteem and were significantly less likely to drop out of school.

FAWE has invited African women achievers to address the girls on issues of pregnancies and self-development, according to studies conducted by Hallam (1994). These studies indicate that FAWE has established a number of empowerment programs for girls in collaboration with her national chapters in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Chad, Gambia, Rwanda, and Burkina Faso. These programs have been implemented in order to empower girls. It has been determined by FAWE (2004) that a much larger focus has to be made on the successful prevention of both dropouts and pregnancies via the provision of counseling and additional assistance for those who are at risk of dropping out of school. It was also established that as a result of the Mauritius Ministerial Consultation, there are a wide variety of activities that are currently being carried out in various countries in Africa with the intention of reducing the number of students who drop out of school due to pregnancy. These activities include, for example, the provision of guidance and counseling services in schools, clubs of various types such as Christian unions, whose mission is to instill good morals in young people and teach them about reproductive health, and peer education groups, which have proven to be very effective in counseling the youth in many African nations. In addition, Nyambura (2000) demonstrated that FAWE in Kenya has underlined the need of providing advice and counseling in schools in order to reduce the number of situations involving pregnancy.

III. Materials And Methods

The materials

A mixed methodology approach was employed in this study. This approach has emerged from the paradigm debates between qualitative and quantitative research methods, becoming a widely used mode of inquiry. Depending on choices made across four dimensions, mixed-methods can provide researchers with various design options, incorporating a range of sequential and concurrent procedures. Key features of these designs are outlined, along with quality control methods and ethical considerations (Terrell, 2012). The mixed-methods design was appropriate for this study as it utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The target population refers to a specific group of individuals selected from the general population who share common characteristics such as age and sex. The actual group surveyed, known as the study population, was described by Mugenda & Mugenda (1999). In Transmara West Sub-County, there are 27 public secondary schools, including 18 day schools and 9 boarding schools. Among these, 17 are mixed day schools and only one is a girls' day school. For this study, data were collected exclusively from the mixed and girls' public day secondary schools. Consequently, the target population consisted of 2,056 students enrolled in the 18 public day secondary schools. The accessible population included all 300 students in these schools. Additionally, data were gathered from the directors of study at the 18 schools, the sub-county director of education, and the 18 school principals, who participated in the study due to their roles as overall supervisors and their awareness of pregnancy cases within their schools.

Methods

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) describe data analysis as the process of organizing, structuring, and making sense of the vast amount of information gathered. In analyzing the collected data, quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were used. The survey collected both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were analyzed using concurrent and inferential statistical method while qualitative data were categorized, coded and analyzed using thematic method. Concurrent statistics were in terms of frequencies, percentages and means. Quantitative data were analyzed with the aid of SPSS computer software, version 22.0 and the results produced will be presented in form of tables and figures.

IV. Results And Discussion

Response Rate

Table 1: Questionnaire response rate

Divisions	Sampled principals	Return rate of principals	Sampled teachers	Return rate of teachers	Number of AEO's
Keyian	4	4	53	52	1
Kilgoris	6	6	77	74	1
Pirrar	4	4	48	46	1
Totals sample size	14	14(100%)	178	172(96.6%)	3(100%)

Source: 2019 research data

The results in Table 1 indicate a 100% return rate for questionnaires from principals (14 out of 14), a 96.6% return rate from teachers (172 out of 178), and a 100% return rate from AEOs (3 out of 3).

Promotion Practices and Employee Performance

The study adopted descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency, percentage and mean distribution. This helped to determine the strategies employed by county government on girls' pregnancy prevention among secondary school girls in Transmara West Sub County.

Table 2: Strategies employed by county government

Statements		SD	D	U	A	SA	MEAN
County government provides financial support to the girls in schools.	F	23	17	41	73	82	3.74
	%	9.7	7.2	17.4	30.9	34.7	
County government organizes for meetings where teenagers are advised on how to avoid early pregnancies.	F	16	29	24	77	90	3.83
	%	6.8	12.3	10.2	32.6	38.1	
County government provides guidance and counseling services to students in schools.	F	5	11	23	81	116	4.24
	%	2.1	4.7	9.7	34.3	49.2	
County government distributes contraceptives to teenage students in schools and places others in strategic places to be easily accessed by sexually active teenagers.	F	8	13	8	104	103	4.19
	%	3.4	5.5	3.4	44.1	43.6	

Source (Researcher, 2018)

Table 2 provides insights into respondents' views on the support provided by the County government to prevent early pregnancies among schoolgirls.

Firstly, regarding financial support, 82 respondents (34.7%) strongly agreed that the County government provides financial support to girls in schools, 73 respondents (30.9%) agreed, 41 respondents (17.4%) were undecided, 23 respondents (9.7%) strongly disagreed, and 17 respondents (7.2%) disagreed. The overall mean score of 3.74 suggests that respondents generally agreed that financial support from the County government helps prevent unnecessary pregnancies. This finding aligns with Milanowski (2004), who noted that government interventions can prevent early pregnancies.

Secondly, concerning meetings organized by the County government to advise teenagers on avoiding early pregnancies, 90 respondents (38.1%) strongly agreed, 77 respondents (32.6%) agreed, 29 respondents (12.3%) disagreed, 24 respondents (10.2%) were undecided, and 16 respondents (6.8%) strongly disagreed. With a mean score of 3.83, the respondents tended to agree that these meetings are effective. This implies that parental or guardian monitoring of activities during evenings, weekends, and holidays can help prevent early pregnancies.

Thirdly, 116 respondents (49.2%) strongly agreed that the County government provides guidance and counseling services to students in schools, 81 respondents (34.3%) agreed, 23 respondents (9.7%) were

undecided, 11 respondents (4.7%) disagreed, and 5 respondents (2.1%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 4.24 indicates a strong agreement that these services are beneficial in preventing early pregnancies.

Lastly, regarding the County government's policy against Disco Matanga or social meetings at night, 104 respondents (44.1%) agreed, 103 respondents (43.6%) strongly agreed, 13 respondents (5.5%) disagreed, 8 respondents (3.4%) strongly disagreed, and 8 respondents (3.4%) were undecided. The mean score of 4.19 reflects strong agreement that such policies help avert early pregnancies. This finding is consistent with Odhiambo (2005), who highlighted the effectiveness of prohibiting night-time social gatherings in preventing early pregnancies.

Overall, the findings suggest that County government initiatives, including financial support, advisory meetings, guidance and counseling services, and restrictions on night-time social events, are perceived as effective strategies for preventing early pregnancies among schoolgirls.

Inferential Statistics

The study thereafter determined whether there was correlation between County government strategies and pregnancy prevention.

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests for County government strategies and pregnancy prevention

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	291.521 ^a	27	.000
Likelihood Ratio	263.818	27	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	51.384	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	195		

a. 23 cells (57.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

In this case, the significance value is so low that it is displayed as .000, which means that it would appear that the two variables; County government strategies and pregnancy prevention are, indeed, related. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Table 4: Correlation between County government strategies and pregnancy prevention of students

County government strategies		Pregnancy prevention
	Spearman correlation coefficient	.281**
	Significance	.050
	N	195

The table 4 above show that County government strategies positively and significantly influence pregnancy prevention of learners/schools at $r=.281^{**}$, $p=.05$ significant level. Calculating the coefficient of determinant, county government strategies contributes 7.9% variability to pregnancy prevention of the learners/schools.

Thematic Analysis

The quantitative findings were supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

...Relevant county government strategies influences girls' pregnancy prevention. In a perfect environment, teachers' basic qualification, influences learners' pregnancy prevention ...Female Participant, 43 years, Head teacher.

This implies that when the strategies are applied, the pregnancy prevention of girls' improve.

Mixing and Interpretation of Data

The descriptive statistics shows county government strategies influences girls' pregnancy prevention among secondary school girls. The inferential statistics (Correlation) test were significant correlations between county government strategies and pregnancy prevention of girls among secondary school girls. The significance level was below 0.05 thus indicating statistical significant difference in county government strategies and pregnancy prevention among secondary school girls. The differences between means are therefore likely due to likelihood that the county government strategies play a great role in preventing pregnancies.

V. Conclusion

The analysis results revealed that national government strategies positively and significantly influence pregnancy prevention at $r=.281^{**}$, $p=.05$ significant level contributing 7.9% variability to pregnancy prevention of the students/schools. Strategies employed by the County government positively and significantly influence pregnancy prevention.

VI. Recommendations

- Policymakers should ensure the equitable distribution of experienced teachers, as they often seek positions in sub-counties, schools, and classrooms with more privileged student bodies and better resources.
- Policy investments should focus on improving teacher quality, as national government strategies that enhance teacher effectiveness are linked to better student performance.
- The Ministry of Education should promote community-based strategies that enable practicing teachers to update their content knowledge and teaching skills. This will help them meet the requirements of new curricula, incorporate new research findings on teaching and learning, and adapt to the changing needs of the student population.