SCHOOLING CHALLENGES AND COPING MECHANISMS ADAPTED
BY STUDENT-MOTHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYANDO
DISTRICT, KENYA

BY

LINNAH APONDI OKEYO
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
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SEPTEMBER 2011.
DECLARATION

This research thesis is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other University.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: 11th Oct. 2011.

Name: LINNAH APONDI OKEYO.

Supervisors:

This research thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the appointed university supervisors.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: 12/05/2011.

Name: DR.KIMEMIA JOHN N.
Department of Educational Communication and Technology

Signature: ___________________________ Date: 26th Sept 2011

Name: DR.RYANGA CHARLOTTE W.
Department of Kiswahili and other African languages
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the family of Justus Okeyo Agutu, my grandma Priscah Were Wadeya and to the respondents under study.
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CG&C- Career guidance and counselling teacher
CSA – Centre for the Study of Adolescence
EFA - Education for All
FAWE- Forum for African Women Educationists
FGD- Focus Group Discussion
FGD LN- Focus Group Discussion in Lower Nyakach division
FGD N- Focus Group Discussion in Nyando division
FPE - Free Primary Education
FSE- Free Secondary Education
KMO- Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
MOE - Ministry of Education
P- Parent
PR- Principal
RoK- Republic of Kenya
SM- Student mother
SSA - Sub-Saharan Africa
ABSTRACT

Teenage pregnancy is a global challenge as it is a major contributor to school drop-out among girls. Permanent expulsion was initially used to help curb teenage pregnancy, but this proved ineffective and also unfair to the girls. The return to school policy introduced gives a second chance to girls who temporarily drop-out due to teenage pregnancy to further pursue their education. However, such girls go through numerous challenges as they try to fit back into the school system. This study was intended to look into the challenges faced by student-mothers, their coping mechanisms and the support they got on resuming studies at secondary school level in Nyando District. The purpose of this study was to identify the schooling challenges, coping mechanisms and the support accorded to student-mothers by their parents, fellow students, teachers, administrators and other stakeholders on resuming studies. The study had the following objectives: to identify factors that influence the school completion for girls who resume studies after delivery; to identify the kind of institutional and parental support student-mothers receive on resuming studies and to find out how student-mothers cope with the role of being a mother and a student on resuming studies. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A complete enumeration of mixed day secondary schools in the two randomly selected divisions was considered for the study. In collecting the data, 83 student-mothers, 19 principals, 14 guidance and counselling teachers, 9 parents/guardians and 28 other students participated in the study. Data was collected using Questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions, and interview schedules. This study used descriptive statistics to analyse data. The data were presented in tables and figures using percentages and frequencies. The findings of this study were categorized into three areas namely: student-mothers' schooling challenges, their coping mechanisms and the support they received upon resuming studies. The student-mothers' schooling challenges included: lack of concentration, lack of professional counselling, stigma and discrimination (lack of acceptance by some teachers and peers), fear and loneliness at school, low self-esteem and guilt, lack of skills to handle student-mothers situation by teachers, lack of finances to adequately meet the demands of their babies and themselves, lack of basic resources for study and reluctance in fees payment. Their coping mechanisms included: problem-focused, avoidance and emotion-focused strategies and the support they received upon resuming studies were spiritual and social support. Teachers admitted their inadequacy in supporting student-mothers. Student-mothers therefore adapted some coping mechanisms. However, majority were not well adjusted as very few had a positive self concept and set realistic goals. In conclusion, student-mothers go through a number of challenges as they double up as mothers and students. Support accorded to them was not adequate due to other factors like lack of finances and time being limited. The student-mothers need adequate support to enable them complete secondary education and get access to higher education. There is need to advise them to adopt effective strategies rather than use reactive and defensive methods. The thesis argues that social problems cannot be dealt with solely by the school or the teacher. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education, the community, parents, as well as other social service organizations, should jointly create preventive and intervention strategies to assist learners with social problems like student-mothers. Such a holistic approach could assist schools and teachers to deal with learners’ social problems more effectively. This study also recommends that teachers need guidance and training on how to encourage and support teen-mothers and that there is a great need to sensitize stakeholders on the policy.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the background to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, justification of the study, assumptions, theoretical framework, the scope and limitations of study and operational definition of terms.

1.1 Background to the study

Teenage pregnancy is a global problem with U.S.A., UK and Australia leading in rates of teenage pregnancies in the developed world (Quinlivan, 2006). In 2005, Pennsylvania had 26,047 teenage girls who faced the challenges of being young mothers. In the United States nearly one million female adolescents become pregnant each year (Popenoe, 1998). This is twice the rate found in Great Britain and nearly ten times the rate in Japan. The rate of adolescent children bearing in the United States has fallen since the late 1950s from 96 births per 1000 women aged between 15 to 19 in 1957 to 49 births in 2000 (Mangino, 2008).

In Kenya, national figures on teenage pregnancy stand at 23% with an estimated 5.5 million girls between the ages of 15 to 19 giving birth annually. In Kenya as in other African countries, childbearing trends vary based on regional and socio-economic status. Teenage pregnancy is highest in Nyanza Province where it stands at 29% compared to all provinces (CSA Report, 2008). At least 10,000 girls aged between 15 and 19 drop-out of school every year due to pregnancy in Suba and Kisumu Districts within Nyanza Province (Daily Nation, 7-5-2008).
There are also variations based on residence with 22% of adolescents in rural areas having begun childbearing as opposed to 18% of their urban counterparts. Also, girls from poor families are more likely to experience teenage pregnancy than those from rich families. According to 2004 data by Kenya Demographic Health Survey as reported by CSA Report 2008, 29% of girls from poor households are likely to have begun childbearing compared to 21% from wealthier ones.

The period of adolescence is lengthening as puberty is reached earlier while social and economic independence is reached later. This has a significant impact on female education. According to CSA Report (2008), in Kenya sexual activity among adolescents, both boys and girls is high and starts early. Eight out of ten adolescents have had sex before they reach twenty years, the age of majority of school going youths. About 33% of girls in secondary school have had sexual intercourse, often unprotected. By region, sexual activity begins earliest in Nyanza at 16 years and latest in Nairobi at 19 years. With early sexual debut and low contraceptives use, the incidence of early and unwanted pregnancies among young people is bound to be high with profound consequences including unsafe abortion and school drop-out (CSA Report, 2008).

In Kenya, just like it is in most Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries, teenage pregnancy is a major contributor to school drop-out among girls (Bunyi, 2008). Pregnancy at a young age is likely to curtail a young woman’s schooling and thus her economic potential (Okoth, 2005). Mpesha (2000) says that the Kenyan issue of school drop-out because of pregnancy is as old as the school system itself. For several decades now, school girls’ pregnancy has been a matter of critical concern among, not only those directly concerned with education, but also families, religious organizations, donors and the wider community. Despite the introduction of free
primary education, fewer girls are joining secondary school due to teenage pregnancy. Adolescent girls have higher levels of unwanted pregnancy with more than one million unsafe abortions experienced in this age group (Standard, 7-5-2008).

For many years, permanent expulsion from school seemed to have been the only practical solution available for school girls' pregnancy in many Kenyan schools. Today this measure has been proved ineffective in stopping or reducing the rate of pregnancy among school girls. It has also proved to be unfair, on the pregnant school girl and also on her family and society at large, majority of whom are now able to weigh the economic cost of neglecting girls' education against the economic benefits that accrue from educating them (CSA Report, 2008).

At a time when more money and time is being spent on education than ever before, students' drop-out due to pregnancy becomes an issue of great concern to the nation. When a girl drops out of secondary school, the cost is often higher than when she drops out in primary school due to the cumulative expenditure over the years, and the fact that the student leaves without a certificate, unless they return to complete school after delivery. Based on the per capita expenditure of Ksh. 10,265 in secondary school, the government stands to lose up to 40 million annually due to pregnancy related drop-out in secondary schools. This is because the recurrent expenditure once invested cannot be recovered if a girl leaves school half way through the school year (CSA Report, 2008).

The Ministry of Education, on recognizing the negative impact of teenage pregnancy on girl child education, put in place the return to school policy guidelines in the mid 1990s to ensure that
girls who become pregnant while still in school get a second chance (MOE, 1994; Mpesha, 2000; CSA Report, 2008). This has been emphasized because education is considered a basic right in our society and world-wide to enhance productivity across sectors, increase economic growth and to provide citizens with basic life skills. However, these students may be going through a lot of challenges in combining responsibility of being mothers and students at the same time.

Researches have been done on gender issues with regard to education. For instance, researches on abortion: its causes and effect on female students and how it affects girls’ performance at school (Mensch & Lloyd, 1999; Kombo, 2005). Other studies have been done on adolescent pregnancy and secondary school (Wamahiu, 1996), adolescent pregnancy and school drop-out (FAWE, 1995; Wamahiu, 1998; Wadende, 2002; Maeke, 2003; Okoth, 2005; Pichi, 2005).

A recent research done by Centre for the Study of Adolescence (CSA) on teenage pregnancy revealed that despite the existence of the return to school policy at least 10,000 girls drop-out of school every year due to pregnancy and only a few resume studies. The research indicated that many young mothers dropped out of school irrespective of the government’s return to school policy due to stigmatization and that their fate is left to school heads who can either allow them back or force them out altogether due to lack of sensitization about the new programme (Onyando & Omondi, 2008).

Where the policy is implemented, it has had positive effects, with some girls proceeding to universities and other institutions of higher learning (CSA Report, 2008). However, student-mothers face various challenges on resuming studies, one of which is to be a mother and a
student at the same time. Fulfilling the challenging and sometimes demanding roles of being a mother and student concurrently can contribute to role overload and conflict, which can have a negative impact on her schooling as well as her overall wellbeing.

Stress arises when the goal structures that an individual holds have the potential for conflict, especially when an individual is committed to two or more goals that cannot be easily attained at the same time. Thus, devoting efforts to attaining one goal can impede the attainment of another goal. This role conflict contributes to stress being experienced by the individual (Carver & Scheier, 1999). Stress thus occurs when student-mothers encounter impediments to attain desired and meaningful goals or when they try to avoid anti-goals. Stress is a particular class of experience and coping is the response that follows from these experiences (Carver, Scheier & Pozo, 1992). Coping is an effort to create conditions that permit the individual to continue moving towards a desired goal (or away from anti-goals) or an effort to disengage oneself from goals that are no longer seen as attainable (Carver & Scheier, 1999).

Although literature exists on gender disparity in education attainment and how to improve on girls' education in Kenya, research on the coping mechanisms adapted by student-mothers when they resume studies and the support they receive remain limited. This study aimed at addressing the coping mechanisms student-mothers adapt on resuming studies, the support they receive and how these affect their general schooling.
2. To identify the kind of institutional and parental support student-mothers receive on resuming studies.

3. To find out how student-mothers cope with the role of a mother and student on resuming studies.

1.5 Research questions

1. What are the socio-economic and psychological factors that influence the schooling of student-mothers upon resuming studies in Nyando District?

2. What kind of institutional and parental support do student-mothers receive on resuming studies in Nyando District?

3. What are the major coping mechanisms student-mothers adapt on resuming studies in Nyando District?

1.6 Assumptions of the study

1. That teachers and parents work together to help student-mothers to continue staying at school on resuming studies.

2. Literacy is also important for the economic development of an individual hence all should become literate to boost their economic status.

3. On resuming studies, student-mothers face different schooling challenges compared with female students who are not mothers.
1.7 Scope and Limitations of the study

The study was concerned with schooling challenges of student-mothers in Nyando District. The study specifically sought to determine the prevailing challenges and coping mechanisms adapted by teenage mothers. Only the student-mothers who were in school during the study period were involved in the study and not those in the community. Since the study was targeting students who attend to their young ones and are at the same time in school, only mixed day secondary schools were included in the study and not all secondary schools. The data were limited to mixed day secondary schools and thus could not be generalized to all Kenyan schools. The study population was confined to only two divisions in Nyando District and it is also unknown whether the results would be applicable to other divisions within the district, other schools in Kenya or to other countries. The researcher was also aware that various schools covering a range of mixed day and boarding schools and pure girls’ boarding schools both public and private could have yielded different results. The study did not look into student-mothers’ performance in examinations thereby making the study not reveal and give substantiated data on student-mothers’ academic achievements in examinations.

1.8 Justification of the study

Information gathered in this study was aimed at exposing the challenges student-mothers experience while in school. It was hoped that it could help the career guidance and counselling teachers to have a clear picture of what student-mothers go through and know how to address their case by sensitizing teachers, students and community members on return to school policy and how to handle and support them. It was also hoped that it could help policy makers and other stakeholders to identify the challenges posed by the implementation of this policy and restructure
it to help promote student-mothers’ retention in the education system. The findings were hoped to be useful to student-mothers who may be going through the same difficulties to borrow ideas on how to cope with their challenges from their studied counterparts.

This research was to bridge the missing link with regard to coping mechanism in the research on student-mothers and form a basis for further research on intervention programs to promote student-mother’s education, leading to new ideas, better and more efficient interventions.

1.9 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on organization theory or social systems analysis theory developed by Getzels and Guba. This theory is based on analysis of human behaviours in the context of a social system such as a school. Any organization can be seen as a social system (Barasa, 2007). Organization has become an important part of human life. We are born in organizations, educated by organizations, spend most of our time working for organizations and die in organizations.

Getzels and Guba’s organization theory uses a model that describes a social organization such as the school into two conceptual perspectives comprising of institutional and individual dimensions. Institutional dimension consists of defined aims and goals of an organization, processes and procedures for carrying out the work and its achievements. The individual dimension consists of personal needs and expectations which are conceptually independent of institutional requirements, but which in practice, affect and influence their performance and effectiveness. The interaction between the two constitutes social behaviour (Barasa, 2007).
The individual dimension has its unique elements, since the individual has personal factors which are interpreted into needs and expectations that each individual holds about the organization. Although these personal factors may be similar among the individuals, there are often differences in their priorities and propensities. For effective performance of organizational functions, there should be close interaction between the institutional and individual dimensions. The fact that either the institutional requirements or the personal needs and expectations are not satisfied implies that, there are constraints and conflicts emanating from this mismatch (Kimemia, 1989).

Since the human resource is the most important part of the organization, everything possible must be done by the administration to make him/her comfortable in his/her endeavours. Individuals are endowed with a lot of talent and capabilities which educational managers should be able to detect and exploit for the betterment of their organizations. In order to detect individual talents, the educational managers should provide an enabling environment which assures the students, teachers and other workers that their ideas and contributions are important for the overall organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Mbiti, 1978).

The institutional dimension defines roles and expectations of behaviour for individuals while the personal dimensions comprise the personality and need dispositions of the particular individual. For example, a student-mother has the role of learning and parenting. The school, parents, community and other stakeholders expect her to learn and perform well academically. On the other hand, the student might have needs which the school and other stakeholders have to fulfil to enable her perform well and achieve academically.
It is the duty of the school administrator and other stakeholders to understand the personal aspects of the student-mothers’ needs and try to work towards helping them satisfy these needs. The school administrator and other stakeholders have to integrate the demands of the school and those of student-mothers in such a way that those demands are organizationally productive and individually fulfilling. They should ensure that the student-mother is adjusted to schooling and integrated in her personality. It is believed that increased productivity on the part of the student occurs when her basic human needs are given due consideration by the stakeholders in education as it appears in Maslows’ hierarchy of needs theory (Barasa, 2007).

Student-mothers need to be assisted in meeting their very basic necessities in life as individuals, mothers, and learners before they can aspire for success in education. Students whose needs are well met become integrated and efficient in their output. This finally leads to the students being efficient, effective and satisfied as their self-esteem is also raised.

The Getzels-Guba’s model was appropriate for this study because the social systems analysis is the most widely recognized and most useful framework for studying and understanding administrative and supervisory behaviour (Sergiovanni, 1983) in Kimemia (1989). The two theories (organizational and Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory) are complementary in analyzing the institutional and individual demands of academic pursuit as well as the role-expectations in respect to institutional and individual dimensions.
A school as an organization can be divided into two conceptual perspectives comprising of institutional and individual dimensions. Institutional dimension consists of defined aims and goals of an organization, processes and procedures for carrying out the work and its achievements. The individual dimension consists of personal needs and expectations which are conceptually independent of institutional requirements, but which in practice affect and influence their performance and effectiveness. For effective performance of organizational functions, there should be close interaction between the institutional and individual dimensions. The school administrator and other stakeholders have to integrate the demands of the school and those of student-mothers in such a way that those demands are
organizationally productive and individually fulfilling. It is clear that increased productivity on the part of the student occurs when her basic human needs are given due consideration by the stakeholders in education.
1.10 Operational definition of terms

Adolescence refers to the transitional stage of physical and mental human development that occurs between childhood and adulthood.

Adolescent parenthood is being a parent at a tender age before 18 years, the legally accepted adult age in Kenya.

Coping refers to the effort to create conditions that permit an individual to continue moving towards desired goals (or away from anti-goals), or an effort to disengage from goals that are no longer seen as attainable.

Coping mechanism refers to the different strategies student-mothers apply in the management of their circumstances on resuming studies. It can also be considered or regarded as survival strategies.

Drop-out is the premature school leaving before accomplishing the educational requirements at a given level, for example, secondary school education.

Educational curriculum refers to the content of an educational programme and all the experiences that a learner takes under the guidance of the school.
Education wastage is immature completion of schooling, repetition and poor performance making one not to compete favourably with others in the training at higher levels and within the job market.

Gender equality is the equal or comparable learning opportunity given to boys and girls in school.

Gender parity in education is generally understood to mean equal numbers of girls and boys being present in schools at equal ratios of 1:1.

Gross Enrolment Rate refers to the number of learners enrolled in a given level of education regardless of age expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for the same level of education (RoK, MOE Strategic plan 2006-2011).

Net Enrolment Rate is the number of learners in the theoretical age group for a given level of education enrolled in that level expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group (RoK, MOE Strategic plan 2006-2011).

Participation refers to the active involvement in enrolment, retention, progression, performance and transition.

Repetition is remaining in the same class in the subsequent year when one is expected to get promoted to the next class/level.
Sexual harassment refers to the unwelcome acts of sexual nature that cause discomfort to the targeted person. These include words, persistent request for sexual favours, gestures, touch, suggestions, coerced sexual intercourse and rape (RoK, MOE Strategic plan 2006-2011).

Student-mother is a female student who has a child (irrespective of her age) while in school, making her to become a mother as well as a student on resuming studies. She can also be considered as a schooling young mother.

Student pregnancy is whereby a girl becomes pregnant while still at school.

Teenage mother refers to a female aged 13 to 19 years who has a child (irrespective of her being in school or not). In this study teenage mother was used interchangeably with student mother to mean the same thing.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of review of related literature. Literature was reviewed under the following sections: female education, definition of student-mothers, pregnancy among school girls, return to school policy in Kenya, student-mothers’ challenges, coping mechanisms and support accorded to them on resuming studies.

2.1 Female Education

Female education has been disadvantaged not only in Africa but also in the whole world, though with different intensities. Africa has the lowest level of secondary school female participation (45%) compared to other regions (Europe, South America 100%, East Asia and Oceania 90%) because at this level of education other problems like puberty, early marriage and pregnancy have a strong influence on gender disparity in school participation and retention (Kirk, 2003). Cape Verde, Seychelles, South Africa, Botswana and Namibia are the only Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries with ratios above 70%. Secondary school enrolment rates are below 40% for females in half of the African countries. In Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Niger and Rwanda, ratios are between 10% and 20% which is a fifth of the global average of 79% for gross secondary school-age population (Kirk, 2003).

In independent African countries, education is seen as the key to modernity and national development (Pichi, 2005). Many countries maintain that education is for democracy and a
prerequisite for economic growth because education is seen and accepted as a powerful tool for economic development and an investment in human capital (Orodho & Njeru, 2003). According to the latest Demographic and Health Survey (DHS: 2004) data as reported in CSA Report (2008), 40% of Kenyan adolescent girls without education are either pregnant or have already become mothers. To address the problem of low girl participation in education, some SSA countries like Botswana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, and Kenya have focused their efforts to improve girls’ access to education and thereby increase their enrolment rates. The determination to provide universal education has led to increase in enrolment of girls in most countries over the recent years (FAWE, 1997).

In Kenya, except for pockets of resistance, the role of formal education as a tool for individual and societal development was recognized by parents, right from independence. This is manifested by the tremendous expansion in school enrolments, the availability of physical facilities and the number of teachers during the first two post-independence decades (Mondoh & Mujidi, 2006). The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in Kenya contributed to a significant increase in enrolment levels for both boys and girls. It increased from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.5 million children. Net Enrolment Rate increased from 77% registered in 2002 to 84% in 2005 (RoK, MOE, 2006). The only challenge Kenya is now facing is the sustainability of this great enrolment to completion level, especially with the existing problem of school girls’ pregnancy which cuts across all educational levels.
2.2 Definition of Student-mothers

Student-mothers are girls that have babies before completing their education and return to learning institutions after the birth of their babies, that is, if they temporarily dropped out from school due to pregnancy. A student-mother is therefore any female who is not a high school graduate who has given birth and is back at school (irrespective of her age) to continue with her schooling (Chigona & Chetty, 2007).

In this study a student-mother was considered to be a female student (irrespective of her age) who has a child while in secondary school, making her to become a mother as well as a student on resuming studies. The term student-mother was used interchangeably with teenage mother to mean the same thing.

2.3 Pregnancy among school girls

Female education in particular, with its multiplier effects, has been shown to be crucial for the advancement of nations (Beijing Declaration, September 1995). A cost benefit analysis of educating girls gives a clear insight into the advantages that can accrue from education both for the household and the economy (CSA Report, 2008). There is a prolific literature on gender and education indicating that the socio-economic benefits accruing from formal education are clear, and when educational opportunities are opened to girls and women, such benefits are greater (Orodho & Njeru, 2003:3). It is worthy to note that a society with enlightened women is a developed society. Educating girls increases a country’s economic growth, improves participation in wage employment and in-home and non-market production, and contributes to
reduced fertility rates and decreased mortality (Rowe et al., 2000). Education also empowers women to bring about necessary changes such as smaller and healthier families.

However, female education in Kenya is faced with many challenges. At individual level, girls have internalized many negative values that hamper their aspirations for education. According to Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWE), societal and cultural attitudes make girls have a negative impression about themselves (Sunday Standard 23-2-1997:20 col 1). The low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence, negatively affects the participation of girls and contributes to class repetition, poor performance and eventually to drop-out. One of the most significant factors contributing to girls’ drop-out and consequently affecting education attainment of girls is teenage pregnancy and related consequences (CSA Report, 2008).

Bennaars (1997:22) summarizes the major explanations given for the increased teenage pregnancy in Africa as: traditional values and strict social taboos that once regulated sexual behaviour among unmarried youth have broken down; early marriages and child bearing among adolescent females continue to be quite common throughout the African continent; problems in parent-child relationship, which may encourage the adolescent to seek comfort, acceptance and consolation through sexual activity; poverty and material deprivation that may push young people into survival sex in exchange for money and food; exposure to suggestive or explicit media films, magazines that may influence adolescent sexual behaviour; failure to comply with religious principles and commandments, as prescribed by religious ethics, may lead to sexual permissiveness and early pregnancy may be seen as a normal occurrence, the outcome of adolescent fertility and an indication of one’s manhood.
Other reasons for increased pregnancies among teenage girls are: lack of knowledge of, and access to conventional methods of preventing pregnancy as they may be embarrassed or frightened to seek information, or they may even use them incorrectly; relating with older boys and adult men making them more likely to become pregnant than when involved with men of their own age and sexual harassment such as rape.

In Kenya, pregnancy before marriage is not acceptable. Strong social pressure may lead to a forced marriage or illegal abortion and may provoke the woman to commit suicide. Her child too may suffer since the very young mother is likely to be less able to take care of it and may be driven to killing it either actively or by neglect. Illegitimate child may face social and legal discrimination as well as economic hardship; such children are likely to be less well nourished and cared for than those of more mature women. This is particularly true if the family of a pregnant girl is unwilling to give economic and emotional support (CSA Report, 2008). This worsens the situation when the student-mother returns to school. For student-mothers to attain acceptable academic performance as their counterparts who may have not conceived, they need to be fully supported socially, materially and academically.

The psychological impact of pregnancy on a young unmarried woman is clear. She may be disturbed by the strain of adjusting to parenthood and by her rejection or the possibility of it by the rest of the community. The psycho-social effects of early pregnancy on women and children are great and this imposes a great challenge to student-mothers as they try to fit back into the school system.
The most salient social consequences of student pregnancy are: school drop-out or interrupted education, abortion, school adjustment difficulties, lack of social security, poverty and negative effect on domestic life (CSA Report, 2008). A school is a social unit and if student-mothers are not able to adjust and cope with their current situation of parenting and being a learner, they are more likely to be affected academically in terms of participation, retention and achievement.

2.4 Return to School Policy in Kenya

Pregnancy has led to many girls dropping out of school in Kenya. A number of studies suggest that student pregnancy is associated with disruption of schooling, social disadvantage and an ongoing cycle of poverty (Wadende, 2002; Maeke, 2003 and Okoth, 2005). Despite world-wide acknowledgement of the value of female education, a large number of girls in SSA continue to have their school careers cut short by unwanted pregnancies and as a result suffer the negative social and psychological consequences that are derived from this situation (Bayona, 1996). Those mothers who deliver their children before the age of 18 are twice as likely to drop-out before finishing high school as compared to women who postpone child bearing until their 20s (Zellman, 1982) in Mangino (2008).

The Kenyan government therefore, put in place a strategy to help curb this situation by giving the young mothers a second chance to pursue their education through the inception and implementation of return to school policy. The government introduced the re-entry policy because schools are not able to give new teenage mothers appropriate facilities to care for their children while they continue with their studies. The policy permits girls to go home to deliver
and nurse their children and thereafter they are free to rejoin their former schools without hindrance from school administration, parents or society (Oyaro, 2008).

Until 1990s the trend in Kenyan schools was to carry out clinical check-up on school girls and eliminate pregnant ones. Things have since changed and the practice now is to allow the victim maternity leave and then allow her back to continue with school (Okoth, 2005). "The ministry's policy guideline is to ensure access to quality education of our children without any form of discrimination," Mbarak said (Oyaro, 2008). According to Mbarak, social and cultural standards are the contributory factors to the girls' failure to resume their education after pregnancy. It has been held over the years by various communities and individuals that continuity in education for a girl terminates at the altar of pregnancy (Oyaro, 2008). Today, there is hope that such girls can continue with education after delivering. However, their dreams may be cut short if they fail to receive care and support to enable them handle their new situation with ease.

Further, where ad hoc policies such as re-entry policy to enable girls who become pregnant while still in school to re-enter the system upon delivery are articulated, they have not been followed by strict implementation. More often than not, the implementation of such policies is not monitored. This view is supported by CSA Report (Standard 7-5-2008 pg 13 col 1) "it is clear that, for the policy to have positive impact on the lives of girls, the MOE will have to put in place better mechanisms of monitoring its progress. The lack of monitoring and follow-up procedures is making implementation of return to school policy difficult. The situation is made worse by the absence of penalties for non compliances" (Onyando & Omondi, 2008). Consequently, the policies have not addressed the relevant issues effectively (Bunyi, 2008).
Mpesha (2000) says that the issue of school drop-out because of pregnancy in Kenya is as old as the school system itself, but it is recently (1996) that the ministry made a significant progress in readmitting girls who drop-out because of pregnancy. Tremendous effort has been put to address the root causes of girls’ drop-out from school. The major events that have facilitated the discussion of the problem include the National Symposium on Education of Girls (1994) in which the ministries addressed various issues including re-entry of the teenage mothers into school. At this event, three recommendations were spelt out in favour of the continuing education of the teenage mothers. The ministry saw the need to:

a) Adopt a policy of re-entry to permit pregnant girls back into the school system after delivery.

b) Set up special bridging centres for young mothers where they could continue with their formal education and/or specialized training while breast feeding their babies.

c) Create out of school opportunities for out of school girls and exploit informal sector apprenticeship for them. In addition, introduce flexible model of attendance so that institutions operate at full capacity during the day and evening throughout the week, month and year to allow for full attendance and completion of courses (MOE/UNICEF/KAACR, 1994:12-13).

After the Machakos Conference on girl-child education in 1994, the ministry openly declared support for the girl mothers and officially started working on the process of re-entry. By the time of the Mauritius Consultation organized by FAWE in the same year, Kenya was already readmitting teenage mothers. By 1996 the ministry had formulated guidelines on the re-entry which were finally circulated to the education authorities. These are:
1. Girls who become pregnant should be admitted back to school unconditionally.

2. Head Teachers, District and Municipal Education officers should be involved in assisting such girls to join other schools to avoid psychological and emotional suffering.

3. Intensive guidance and counselling should be provided to affected girls’ parents, teachers and other girls in school.

4. Once a girl is sent home, the parents should be summoned to the school to receive some counselling after which they should take their daughter home. Head teachers and other teachers should be humane and show understanding and patience while handling cases of this nature.

5. The school should keep in touch with such girls and their parents so as to monitor what is happening and provide the necessary moral, emotional and spiritual support. Counselling for both the parent and the girl should not be discontinued.

6. The parents should seek readmission of their daughter to school after the baby is weaned. Head teachers should provide the necessary help in this regard. In case of any problem, the Provincial, District and Municipal Education officers should assist.

7. Other girls in the school should be counselled on the consequences of irresponsible sexual behaviour, adolescent sexuality, boy/girl relationship, negative peer influences, building self confidence and self-esteem.

8. Those who make girls pregnant should be exposed. For example, teachers and other adults in the community should face legal action. Boys should be given counselling so that they can take responsibility for their action (MOE December, 1998).
Wanjiru (2005) observed that despite the efforts made by the government and other stakeholders to promote gender equity and equality in education, girls still drop-out of school making the problem of gender disparity in education far from being solved. Efforts to promote gender equity in education are confronted by challenges like poverty, misconception regarding education as well as the predictive approach to issues of gender equity in education (Pichi, 2005).

The re-entry programme does not seem to be yielding the desired results even after being put into practice. In some situations the re-entry into school policy is considered a reactive rather than a preventive strategy for it does not spell out any measure or programmes for preventing school girls’ pregnancies. It has therefore not helped the government’s intention of providing equal opportunity for girls and boys. In fact, arguments have been advanced that the practice may be indirectly encouraging rather than discouraging school girls’ pregnancies because assured that they can have a second chance after discontinuing due to pregnancies, girls may be inclined to undermine the consequences of irresponsible behaviours like sexual activities (Bayona & Murangi, 1996 and CSA Report, 2008). This view is true especially if the student-mother herself, her peers and the rest of the school community is not guided on the benefits of implementing such a policy through sensitization.

In Kenya the return to school policy is facing challenges as the guidelines are not being utilized by many schools. They prefer to expel pregnant girls instead. These girls are viewed as bad influence to other girls in the school (CSA Report, 2008). In 1983, a Kenyan parliamentarian in a parliamentary debate maintained that allowing pregnant girl to remain in school was like contaminating good potatoes with rotten ones (Okoth, 2005).
Many school principals, parents, teachers and students are unaware of the existence of the policy guidelines. The implementation of the policy is challenged as there is opposition from those who believe that allowing girls to return to school would trigger a multiplier effect among other girls, and have a negative impact. In addition, stigma both self and from the school prevent most girls from going back to school. The situation is made worse by the absence of penalties for non-compliance if schools refuse to implement the policies, and lack of legal backing or any official communication on how these guidelines are to be implemented. Further, the poor linkage between government and community is one of the factors contributing to the lack of knowledge and weak implementation. Also, the deep entrenched cultural practices contribute significantly to the weak implementation and monitoring of policy and legislation. The MOE is not having monitoring mechanisms, making it difficult for it to know how successful the initiative is in promoting the right to education (CSA Report, 2008).

Despite the existence of the policy, girls who become pregnant while still in school are often expelled or don’t resume studies due to lack of persons to care for the child, stigma, poverty, poor performance or lack of interest in school or cultural context and lack of specialized training for teachers (CSA Report, 2008). Access to counselling for girls on resuming studies is usually marginal and whether a teen mother would be able to return to school or not depends on the resources available in the girl’s family (Kaufman, 2001; Hallman & Grant, 2006).

FAWE (1985) research on girl child school drop-out gave various reasons why guardians and school authorities were not allowing girl mothers to re-enter school. Some of them are: (1) premarital pregnancy is caused by the school girls themselves and thus they must be punished;
(2) retention of pregnant girls will set a bad example for the rest and they must therefore be removed to prevent contamination of the others; (3) pregnant girls waste scarce resources by staying in school and (4) pregnant school girls are viewed as adults who have no business being in school, which is meant for children (Wadende, 2002).

CSA (2008) Report states that the notion that the girl will be married off and another community or clan will enjoy the economic gain with no direct return to the real investors, the family has made girls who become pregnant while in school not to receive the necessary support. Thus, they are always married off or are left to sit at home and wait for some old men to marry them because their bride price has greatly reduced. Taking girls who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy back to school is viewed as increasing the risk of the girl getting pregnant again which will erode the bride price further in the event that the girl will be married.

2.5 Student- mothers' Schooling Challenges

A girl has to work ten times harder to put her life back on the rails after becoming a mother before the recommended time. She has to fight stigma from her community and if she goes back to school, she faces even more discrimination from peers who have survived student pregnancy. They face rejection and are forced to abandon school. Life becomes a virtual struggle and putting up with the hostile environment at school is an uphill battle. Upon dropping from school, the young mothers add to the number of illiterate people facing a bleak future. Meanwhile, their "suitors" are busy pursuing school and doing everything to secure their future (Banda, 2005).
Despite the school re-entry policy for teenage mothers, most of them find it difficult to fit into school after delivery. Mothering, peer pressure and school environment negatively affect teen mothers in coping with schooling. Research by Kaufman, 2001 shows that both pregnancy and parenting are the leading reasons girls give for dropping out of school (Chigona & Chetty, 2007). According to Theron & Dunn, 2006 adolescent child bearing is especially disruptive to the educational process of girls and as a result, many teenage mothers leave school and never return due to their inability to manage logistics and finances associated with mothering and schooling simultaneously (Kaufman, 2001). This view is supported by Okoth (2005) who states that other girls opt to drop-out due to domestic problems and stigma.

However, those who resume too face a lot of challenges that make them have difficulties to fit back into the schooling environment (Okoth, 2005). Teenage mothers face many challenges in raising their young ones because they are often immature to properly nurture their children. Adolescent’s typical self-absorption makes it difficult to distinguish the child’s needs from their own. They are usually still emotionally dependent on their own mother. They may also be so stressed by the challenges of motherhood that they become depressed, develop poor self-esteem and are not able to provide their children with emotional stability (UNESCO, 1991). In the USA, Arlington Public School (2004) further reinforces the predicament of the girls: “Teen parents face an overwhelming number of difficulties. Parental and peer pressures are far more common than support and understanding. Mature, adult decisions are required of emotionally pressured adolescents. Managing to care for an infant and devoting adequate time to school work is a great challenge to these parenting teens” (Arlington Public School, 2004).
According to Chigona and Chetty in the 2000 commission on gender equity to the South African MOE, it was stated that a number of complaints have been received from pregnant learners concerning the manner in which their schools have been treating them. Some form of discrimination which included suspension from class were reported (SAMOE, 2000). Wolpe et al., 1997 lamented that some school committees in South Africa are often unwilling to allow the girls to continue attending classes for fear that they may “contaminate” other girls and encourage them to become pregnant. The unwillingness is practised in many public schools in South Africa, as is the case in Kenya.

In 1983, a Kenyan parliamentarian in a parliamentary debate maintained that allowing pregnant girls to remain in school was like contaminating good potatoes with rotten ones (Okoth, 2005). School heads fear allowing girls who have given birth back to school because of the stigma associated with having mothers in a student environment. They also believe that allowing such girls back to school is likely to send signals to the other girls that it is alright to give birth in school thereby triggering a multiplier effect among them. Some communities also regard girls who become pregnant early (while in school) as social misfits making such girls be discriminated. Further, where girls return to school, they face stigma from other students, teachers and the community (Wadende, 2002; Okoth, 2005 and CSA Report, 2008).

Some of the commonly faced challenges by teenage mothers upon resuming studies in grades between 8 and 12 in South Africa were:
2.5.1 Lack of time to study and do homework at home

When they return from school, their relatives who take care of the children are freed of the child-care chores. The babies too want the attention from their mothers when they return from school. Kaufman 2001 observes that it is not easy for teen mothers, because of the hardship in organizing time for both studying and parenthood. A similar sentiment was echoed in the United States, where it was argued that managing to take care of a child and devoting adequate time to school work is not an easy task for student-mothers (Arlington Public Schools, 2004).

2.5.2 Missing classes due to motherhood

In most cases when the child falls sick the teenage mother has to take the baby to hospital for a period of time, the teen mother has to miss classes and teachers are not willing to go through the missed lessons with just one or two students.

2.5.3 Lack of professional counselling

Most teenage mothers return to school without going through any counselling on how they can be prepared to deal with the stigma, issues around parenting and meeting the demands of the school. The consequence is that teenage mothers get overwhelmed with their situation in school and many fail to cope resulting in school drop-out.

2.5.4 Fear and loneliness at school

Sometimes teenage mothers have fear participating in class discussions, for instance, during “Life orientation” programmes. For example, when topics like ‘teenage pregnancy’ arise, the teenage mothers become particularly uncomfortable that everybody is talking about their
situation. Researchers explain that fear and loneliness can lead to social isolation from others and this may lead to regression to an earlier phase of life where the teenager would feel secure (Taylor, 1997).

2.5.5 Lack of acceptance by some teachers and students

Kaufman (2001) observes that lack of educational support is a regular source of tension for teenage mothers because they are teased by fellow students and teachers making many of them fall behind in school. Lees (1987) states that pregnant students are at best ignored or at worst ridiculed. Boys and girls often verbally abuse these girls, making their participation in class to seem unwelcome. Peer pressure is believed to be more common than support and understanding. Some teenage mothers feel teachers do not understand their situation and they are expected to perform and behave just like any other student in their respective classes. Teenage mothers are sometimes ridiculed in front of classmates whenever they have not satisfied the class requirements. And when they quarrel with another student, the other students usually pick on the teen mother’s situation.

2.5.6 Lack of skills to handle teen mothers’ situation

Teenage mothers may be disadvantaged at school because their teachers do not know how to handle them and their situation when they are at school. Jones (1998) in Chigona & Chetty (2007) indicated that by giving less attention to some girls in class, the teacher ultimately penalizes these girls in that it contributes to their failing to master curriculum knowledge.
2.5.7 Poverty

Many teenage mothers cannot afford to take their babies to crèche or to hire a babysitter so that they can have time to study and do their homework. Sometimes, as girls they have to do household chores when they return from school and the only time they can do their homework is at night. Unfortunately, some come from families where the house is just too small making it hard for the girls to study or do their homework at night, as they cannot have the lights on whilst other people are sleeping.

The problem of teenage pregnancy contributes to the feminisation of poverty. If a girl becomes a mother at 15 years and drops out of school, the likelihood is that she will be a poor 30-year-old woman 15 years later. Unless she has the determination to pursue school and higher education, she faces the risk of ending up as a poor woman. Higher rates of pregnancy are observed among young women, indicating that poverty inhibits the schooling of the girls both directly and indirectly (Chigona & Chetty, 2007).

2.5.8 Low self-esteem

Because these girls have become mothers whilst young and still in school they are stigmatized and tend to have low self-esteem. According to Kenway (1990), low self-esteem is a problem for certain individuals, as it prevents them from making the best of their schooling and their lives. Psychologists like Lerner (1985) perceive low self-esteem as a significant cause of low academic performance (Chigona & Chetty, 2007). Hence, school programs that promote self-efficacy, self-confidence, and high expectations are as important as programmes that provide opportunities for academic and career success.
2.6 Coping Mechanisms

A problem exists anytime a person is in one situation and wants to be in another, but does not know how to get there. Coping is a problem solving process that reflects the positive adaptive aspect of behaviour as the person not only appreciates his/her problem but actively engages in doing something about it (Jahoda, 1958) in Di Vesta & Thompson, 1970. Coping is the attitude and behaviour that one uses to maintain emotional well being and to adjust to the stresses caused by a new state in life (Carver et al., 1989). Different people cope in different ways. To cope, an individual adjusts to maintain psychological equilibrium and propel him/her towards self enhancement. The individual gradually learns certain behaviour patterns through which he or she attempts to cope with situational demands. Some ways of coping are more successful in promoting a person's emotional well being and psychological adjustment than others.

All human beings will experience problems at one time or another or have needs that require them to rely on coping mechanisms (Mouly, 1973). Student-mothers are no exception; they are faced with problems that are unique. Because of their transition in roles, they are forced to grow suddenly from childhood into parenthood. Some student-mothers may find it hard to cope with their double role and lag behind academically, while others may see the pressure as a challenge to make them work harder. It is therefore important that they adapt some coping mechanisms to help them overcome such problems. Coping mechanism is a mentally healthy behaviour even if it does not result in success for sometimes the environment does not permit success. Nevertheless, striving maximizes the possibility of arriving at a solution (Jahoda, 1958) in Di Vesta et al., 1970.
Adjustment is the result of two sets of forces in dynamic interaction: forces within the individual and forces from the environment. The individual must maintain his/her equilibrium while at the same time growing toward greater adequacy and greater complexity. It is not a simple matter of integrating ones purpose and needs with those of the social order. It also implies choosing ones coping strategies, not simply to meet obligations but rather to gain the highest return from ones investment in terms of long term self-actualization (Mouly, 1973).

Coping styles can be defined in terms of problem-focused, emotion-focused or avoidance coping. Problem-focused coping consists of active attempts to remove an obstacle or to minimize its impacts. Emotion-focused consists of attempts to reduce emotions of distress caused by obstacles, which can entail either reappraising the obstacle or managing the emotion. Avoidance coping cuts the problem emotion distinction. It entails responses that appear to be aimed either at avoiding any acknowledgement that the problem exists or at giving up the attempts to do anything about the problem (Carver & Scheier, 1999).

Students-mothers differ in all components of their psychological adjustment processes and vary in the way they respond to challenges. Each individual adapts a unique pattern of behaviour for satisfying their needs in socially acceptable ways. They may revert to different coping strategies, harmful as well as constructive. The various adjustment mechanisms used by people who are thwarted in reaching their goals include; aggression both direct and indirect, compensation, sublimation, identification, rationalization, projection, repression, reaction formation, egocentrism, negativism, and withdrawal, regression, developing physical and expiation or
atonement. The process of adjustment may involve compromises, self denial and self deception along with attaining some of the desired satisfaction (Blair et al., 1968).

While motherhood was seen as inevitable destiny for women, when a lady falls pregnant prematurely, she becomes a victim of conflicts and frustration. For school going mothers, adjustment to school system is usually a challenge. The effectiveness of adjustment into the school system is considered in terms of how well the student-mother copes with changing circumstances like being a mother and learner at the same time. Proper adjustment of individuals indicate a kind of inner harmony in the sense that they are satisfied with themselves and have harmonious relationship with people with whom they are associated.

A maladjusted individual, who sets goals beyond his/her capacities, automatically assigns him or herself to a lifetime of failure and self inflicted unhappiness (Mouly, 1973). Such individuals are disturbed, tend to become frustrated and show problem behaviour as they suffer from social and emotional problems. In educational institutions students who are not properly adjusted at times lose interest in education and become confused about their abilities. They may adapt reaction formation as a coping mechanism which involves substituting an opposite reaction for one which is frustrating or anxiety inducing. For example, a student-mother who originally wished very much not to have a baby may dislike the baby and reject it. This rejection however, arouses a serious feeling of guilt for mothers are not supposed to dislike their babies. She may repress this emotion of hatred towards her baby and substitute it with extreme overprotective attitude.
A well adjusted person has positive self concept, knows and accepts oneself, displays social sensitivity, has confidence, conforms to social expectations, not because it is the thing to do, but because it promotes his/her self-realization and that of others and above all he or she sets realistic goals (Mouly, 1973). To achieve this some students may resort to prayer, meditation and use of counselling facilities. This is usually common during post natal depression which is associated with young women who deliver prematurely against their wish due to their inadequacy in child caring and coping with motherhood.

Psychologists identify coping mechanism as a compulsory strategy in dealing with challenges and difficulties in our daily life experiences. Out of the already identified coping mechanisms, student-mothers in one way or the other adapt and use them on resuming studies. This study was interested in finding out the mostly adapted coping mechanisms by student-mothers in secondary schools in Nyando District in dealing with their new and unique circumstances like being a mother and learner at the same time.

2.7 Accorded Support

A teenage mother’s response to pregnancy and the consequences of pregnancy is related to; her early childhood experiences, coping mechanisms, personality style, psychological function, life situation including social support network and physical status. The complex interplay of these factors may be particularly challenging for the transition into parenthood (Wahn, 2007). Regardless of their circumstances student-mothers should be encouraged to stay on at school. It should be the interest of all to promote girl child education to help young girls to brighten their future. They cannot do this on their own. They can take the lead but the environment in which
most of our girls live is not so permissive. We must do something more to keep girls in school. Student-mothers need not someone to make decisions for them, but require help and support in their tricky process of learning to cope successfully with their new situation.

The availability of support from family, friends, peers, partners, education and medical professionals is important for the teenage mother (Dallas et al., 2000; Logsdon et al., 2002; Bunting, 2004). Social support is described as an interpersonal transaction containing four attributes; emotional support or affect, information or advice, instrumental or physical aid, and appraisal support or affirmation (House, 1981; Barrera, 1986). Social support aims at empowering the individual to manage her own resources to overcome various strains and difficulties (Oakley, 1994).

Emotional support reflects the individual’s experience of receiving care, encouragement of the sense of personal value and the perception of confidence and trust from family, friends, neighbours and colleagues. Informative support refers to appropriate advice and assistance in coping and solving problems. Instrumental support refers to the individual’s access to practical service and/or financial assistance (Cutrona, 1990). Social support can be viewed from two perspectives: the first is the perception that there is a sufficient number of available significant others to whom one can turn to in times of need, and the second is the satisfaction with available support (Sarason et al., 1990) in Wahn (2007). Receiving adequate social support has been associated with positive outcomes for both the teenage mother and her baby (Logsdon et al., 2002).
Appraisal support involves the communication of information that is relevant to self evaluation rather than problem solving. Appraisal support boosts a person's self-esteem and its usefulness depends not only on individual needs but also on the nature of the current problem (House, 1981). Furthermore, the social support from friends and teachers can also encourage a student to maintain their grades and aim for higher educational goals (Gonzalez & Padilla, 1997) in Wahn (2007). However, a lack of social support from friends, family, and teachers can have the opposite effect. For example, teachers who may lack a sense of multiculturalism in the classroom may hinder some students' level of adjustment in school (Banks & Banks, 2001) in Logsdon (2006).

2.7.1 Support from family members and friends

The teenage mothers enjoy the support from their family networks especially the practical support from their own mothers. Parental involvement in education, as well as support, can greatly influence a student's motivation to continue in education (Wahn, 2007). Mothers are known to play active roles in their children's education, especially their daughters as they maintain higher expectations for them as well as other children (Romo & Falbo, 1996) in Logsdon et al. (2006).

Support from family members and friends tend to provide a complementary combination of support for the student-mother. In most cases student-mothers get accommodated away from home by friends and other relatives. While in such homes they enjoy care, protection and support with regard to child care and re-entry to schools where their past situation may not be well
known. This saves them the agony of being subjected to psychological and emotional suffering while at school (Wahn, 2007).

2.7.2 Support from their partners

The father of the baby was not frequently mentioned as a source of support in the study carried out by Wahn in Sweden in 2007. However, the student-mothers who experienced pregnancy as both a physiological and psychological demand described a situation in which they were financially dependent on partners, because age is the criterion for the social security system to provide social allowances. Good support from the baby’s father has a positive impact on the health of the student-mother and her child, as well as on her life circumstances (Logsdon et al., 2002).

Teenage mothers normally experience a flood of contradictory feelings during the initial shock after discovering that they are pregnant, during pregnancy and after delivery (Wahn, 2007). Hence the perception that student-mothers have about themselves as well as that of others about them often can complicate efforts to help them adjust on resuming studies.

Pro-active strategies are required to build self-esteem in children and young teenagers by strengthening their problem-solving and coping skills (Mouly, 1973). These require a more holistic approach, one that involves governments, organizations, communities, health and social service boards, education committees and schools as well as youths, elders and parents. In fact, a range of holistic strategies is required.
2.7.3 Support from teachers

A number of school factors promote student-mothers’ success. The most critical is a school staff that believes that all students can succeed. Other key factors include valuing and holding high expectations, making education a priority, providing sound counselling, and involving parents to help teachers serve student-mothers more effectively. Most teachers always want to support young people who are trying to cope with difficult situations. They are actively involved in encouraging the young learners to access wealth of opportunities within the school environment (Blair et al., 1968). When student-mothers are taken seriously, a sense of trust in the teacher is developed, and the student-mother expresses her feelings and needs with much ease (Wahn, 2007).

Teachers provide practical support and enable young learners to attain their highest level. They empower the learners with information on a wide range of issues; enabling them to make informed choices about the future and providing opportunities that enable them to develop and maintain self confidence. With the implementation of return to school policy, the government stands to save the money that would have otherwise been lost with the girls getting pregnant and dropping out of school. This gives teachers a lee-way to strive to support such girls upon resuming studies to avoid seeing them vanish from the education system so that the already invested effort in them is not wasted. Using the knowledge they received from their teacher training institutions, teachers stand a better chance to assist student-mothers adjust into the school system (Di Vesta & Thompson, 1970).
Teachers can connect with student-mothers by making physical or eye contact, allowing them ample time to answer questions, creating a sense of community and participation in the classroom, using examples in the classroom that are inclusive of them, listening carefully and respectfully to students' questions and comments, and coaching students who seem reticent to speak. The level of support from individual teachers and school management is very considerable and necessary at this critical period in the life of such student-mothers. This will ensure that student-mothers get the appropriate support they need to enable them adjust well to the school system thereby making them progress academically (Mouly, 1973).

2.7.4 Guidance and counselling

Guidance and counselling is the most critical form of support a student-mother is accorded. It enables her to have a changed attitude towards oneself making her adjust fully into her new situation and position. This support is usually provided by her family especially her mother or any other person who happens to be closer to her like friends, relatives or even her teachers.

Guidance is that assistance which the school gives to students to help them solve their special problems and aid them in fulfilling their potential. It enables them to discover their inner needs, to overcome their weakness and recognize their abilities and interest so that they may understand themselves better and thereby intelligently formulate and plan both immediate and lifetime goals (Miller, 1972) in Wanjiru (2005). The idea of education without guidance is unthinkable. Whenever we teach anyone to do anything, or to change the way they behave, we are directing their activities towards some end, whether defined or not (Vaughan, 1975) in Wanjiru (2005).
Counselling implies a teacher’s careful assessment of the child’s needs and the way in which the school can meet those needs (Galloway, 1981) in Wanjiru (2005). It is an interactive process conjoining the counselee, who is vulnerable and needs assistance, and the counsellor who is trained and educated to give assistance, the goal of which is to help the counselee learn to deal more effectively with him/herself and the reality of his/her environment (Perez: 1965 in Miller, 1972) as reported by Wanjiru (2005).

There is some evidence that peer counselling is effective for teenagers (Jasinski & Williams, 1998) in Carver & Scheier (1999), because teenagers are more likely to take notice of age peers than of adults, finding them more credible. Some authors also suggest that young women and abused victims are more likely to accept guidance from counsellors or facilitators who are their “peers” in terms of age, culture, socioeconomics, and/or having been the victims of abuse themselves (Jasinski & Williams, 1998) in Carver & Scheier (1999). The principle is that people who are vulnerable will have greater rapport with and trust in people whom they see as similar to themselves and having shared some of their experiences.

Guidance and counselling requires proper skills in communication to make the whole process adequate and successful. The teenage mother’s ability to communicate her need for support requires skills (Klein, 2005). Often, young people complain about not knowing how to communicate their needs and emotions to others. They also find it difficult to express how they feel in different situations and teenage mothers are no exception. Communication skills and negotiation skills vary by age and have the potential to affect how much support the teenage mother receives (Flanagan et al. 1995; Peterson et al. 1995). Through communication and
negotiation skills student-mothers learn the difference between good communication and poor communication.

However, in some cases, the teenage mothers’ needs are not sufficiently addressed. Some may be uncertain about their own needs or even may not know how to express them. At times they may expect and want people around them to understand them and support them in their new role even without them saying or requesting for such support (Logsdon & Usui, 2006).

2.8 Conclusion

From the literature review, female education was viewed as a key factor in ensuring that EFA goals are attained. Factors like teenage pregnancy which adversely affect the attainment of such goals were highlighted. Remedies that could avert such conditions were put in place by the Kenyan government through implementation of the return to school policy. However, student-mothers upon resuming studies faced numerous challenges which made them seek for support and assistance from various stakeholders to counter their adapted coping mechanisms so as to cope with their double roles.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the procedures that were used to collect and analyse data. It focuses on research design, study location, study population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures and analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design

This study used a descriptive survey design. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research framework. This is because qualitative research helps the educational researcher to obtain in-depth data on the study problem. Qualitative research enables one to study things in their natural settings by attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Human behaviour is also explained best using this approach (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Research surveys are also an efficient method of collecting descriptive data regarding the characteristics of the population and the current practices, conditions and needs. Any study that deals with how people feel or how they behave is considered a survey study. It is one type of descriptive research in which researchers commonly use questionnaires and interviews to gather information about characteristics of some phenomena. It also allows for generalization (Ogula, 1998).
3.2 Study locale
The location for this study was Nyando District in Nyanza Province. This area was considered suitable for the study because researches that have been done reveal that girls' education in this area is greatly affected by early pregnancies and related consequences (Okoth, 2005; Pichi, 2005; Centre for the Study of Adolescence (CSA) Report 2008). According to the CSA (2008) Report the national level of teenage pregnancy stands at 23% while for Nyanza province it is 29% with Kisumu and Suba Districts being the leading in the province. Nyando District was considered since it had some similar characteristics with the highly hit areas with regard to teenage pregnancies, making it to have a significant number of student-mothers who had returned to school. Also, from the reviewed literature, there was no documented evidence on a study on schooling challenges of student-mothers and their coping mechanisms in the district. Further, the district was chosen because the choice of location is supported by assertion by Singleton (1993) the ideal setting for any study is one that is directly related to the researcher's interest. For these reasons, the district was considered appropriate for this study.

3.3 Population
This is the entire group of people, objects or events that have a common observable characteristic (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The population for this study were female students who were attending to their young ones and were at the same time continuing with their education at high school level (student-mothers).

3.3.1 Target population
This is the population to which a researcher wants to generalize the results of a study. The
student-mothers in mixed secondary schools in Nyando District during the period of data collection were eligible for sampling. Such students care for their babies in addition to attending school hence they were in a better position to give first hand information about what they go through and how they manage on resuming studies.

3.4 Sampling Technique and sample size

The study targeted students who attend to their young ones and were at the same time in school, only mixed day secondary schools were included in the study and not all secondary schools. Such students are found in day schools, and in Nyando District there exists only mixed day schools.

Nyando District in Nyanza Province was purposively sampled because researches that have been done reveal that girls' education in Nyanza is greatly affected by early pregnancies and related consequences (Okoth, 2005; Pichi, 2005; CSA Report, 2008). In the province Nyanza, Kisumu and Suba Districts are highly affected by teenage pregnancies (CSA Report, 2008).

Nyando District has 83 secondary schools (Appendix A). 80 of the schools are public while 3 are privately owned. 71 of the 83 schools are mixed, and of the remaining 12, 3 are boys' schools while 9 are girls' schools. Out of the 71 mixed secondary schools in the District, 57 are mixed day. Nyando District is divided into six divisions as shown below.
Table 3.1 Sampling Grid for Secondary Schools in Nyando District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divisions in the District</th>
<th>Selected divisions</th>
<th>No. of MDS</th>
<th>No. of SMDS</th>
<th>Actual no. of G&amp;CTs</th>
<th>Actual no. of HTs</th>
<th>Actual no. of SMs</th>
<th>Actual no. of OS</th>
<th>Actual no. of Ps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Miwani</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Muhoroni</td>
<td>Lower Nyakach</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nyando</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Upper Nyakach</td>
<td>Nyando</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lower Nyakach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>6. West Nyakach</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>83</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
<td><strong>276</strong></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>33.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>35.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>95</strong></td>
<td><strong>97.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A sampling frame consisting of alphabetically ordered division names was prepared, the names of the divisions were written on pieces of paper which were later folded and placed in an enclosed container. The container was shaken to mix up the papers, and then the researcher picked two papers bearing the names of two divisions. With these two divisions randomly selected, all the mixed day schools in the divisions were visited and all student-mothers recruited in the study.
Parents carry the burden of ensuring that student-mothers’ school needs are met and are responsible for the general upkeep of the child. Parents are able to tell the challenges their daughters currently underwent and how they strived/planned to help them manage such challenges for their sustainability in school. An 11% random sample of the student-mothers were selected and asked to introduce the researcher to one of their parents/guardians. The study involved 9 parents of the 83 student-mothers within the selected schools. According to Ary et. al. (1972:72) ten to twenty per cent (10-20%) of the accessible population is considered adequate in descriptive research.

Other students were purposively sampled in terms of gender to give equal chances to gender coverage on students’ views of student-mothers and their experiences at school. Other students stated their views with regard to student-mothers and the threatening challenges they face that affect their survival at school.

Head teachers and guidance and counselling teachers of the sampled schools were key informants in the study. Of the 20 schools 19 head-teachers and 14 careers guidance and counselling teachers participated in the study. Information got from them was useful in this study given their administrative and mentorship role in the schools.

3.5 Data collection instruments

Data collection tools that were used in this study were questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions and interview schedules administered to various respondents.
3.5.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires is a tool that gathers data over a large sample. It enables the researcher to preserve respondent's anonymity and also make it possible to elicit candid responses. It also saves time and allows greater uniformity in the way questions are asked and thus greater compatibility in the responses (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Student-mothers responded to questionnaires which contained closed and open-ended questions (Appendix C). The student-mothers questionnaire was used to determine the students' schooling challenges, coping mechanisms and support accorded to them on resuming studies. It was also used to find out whether teachers, parents and the school administration were supportive to them and how this affected their stay at school, participation and general academic performance.

3.5.2. Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Discussions consisted of seven members who were interviewed collectively. The interview was more like a guided discussion among participating members, with the researcher acting as the facilitator. The purpose of keeping the number of discussants small was to ensure that all members participated actively in the discussions. Focus Group Discussions are best suited for obtaining data on group attitudes and perceptions (Mwiria and Wamahiu, 1995). It is used to assess needs, develop interventions, test new ideas or programmes or improve existing programmes as it produces a lot of information quickly (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

A group of selected boys and non-mothering girls from the selected schools took part in the FGD separately (see Appendix G). This was done to supplement the interview and questionnaire data and to find out how other students related with, supported student-mothers and generally
observed their encounters upon resuming studies. They also sat with the student-mothers in the same classes and went through school activities together in a more similar way. This made them be in a better position to explain what they observed and shared with student-mothers.

3.5.3. Key informant interview guides

Reliability of the information gathered is high when a researcher uses interview guides to collect data since they provide in-depth information about particular cases of interest to the researcher, and data collected is quantifiable (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). School administrators, guidance & counselling teachers of the selected schools and parents/guardians to the selected student-mothers responded to interview guides (Appendix D, E & F).

Interview guides were mainly used to counter-check the information collected through questionnaires and FGDs. It was further used in assessing the role of school administrators, guidance & counselling teachers and parents in supporting student-mothers on resuming studies. In this study the researcher sought to identify how frequent student-mothers received support from various members of the family, friends, teachers and the school administrators.

3.6 Pilot study

One mixed day school was used for the pilot study as the main study was to focus on mixed day public secondary schools. This was to ensure that the environment and conditions of the students in the schools were almost similar with the ones in the schools in which the research was carried out. The questionnaires and interview guides were administered and FGDs facilitated by the researcher. The purpose of the pilot study was to enhance validity and reliability of the
instruments (Struwig and Stead 2007). The researcher visited the selected school and obtained permission from the school administrator to visit the institution. The researcher also endeavoured to cultivate a working relationship and a good rapport with the selected participants (the administrator, counselling teacher, student-mothers, their parents and other students). The data collected was analysed after which suitability of the instruments was confirmed. The key purpose was to check whether or not the instruments would be able to provide the researcher with the data required for the study. The instruments were later modified for data collection as was found necessary. The school that participated in the piloting of the instruments did not form part of the sample for the main study as it was excluded from the final study.

3.7 Reliability and validity of data

3.7.1 Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. The reliability of a measurement is defined by how closely the ratings will be identical when the measurement is retaken at different times. Reliability and validity of research instruments was carried out before use during actual data collection. Reliability test was confirmed during the piloting stage. The instruments were administered to the subjects involved in the pilot study at different times in close succession using test-retest method since this was the only feasible approach to the establishment of the reliability of a research instrument like questionnaire. Another way in which reliability was ensured was by verifying the transcribed audio-recordings to confirm accuracy of the transcriptions.
3.7.2 Validity

Validity is the accuracy meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Cesur and Fer (2009) define validity as the extent to which the instrument measures what it purports to measure. There are four main different types of validity, including: content validity, face validity, criterion-related validity (or predictive validity) and construct validity. With reference to this study three types of validity were used namely construct, content and face validity.

Content validity pertains to the degree to which the instrument fully assesses or measures the domain of interest. It is based on the extent to which a measurement reflects the specific intended domain (Carmines & Zeller, 1991, p.20). Face validity is a component of content validity, it is established when an individual reviewing the instrument concludes that, it measures the characteristic or trait of interest. Face validity is concerned with how a measure or procedure appears. It deals with questions such as: is this the reasonable way to gain the information the researchers are attempting to obtain? Is the research well designed? Will it work reliably? Where as content validity, face validity does not depend on established theories for support (Fink, 1995).

Construct validity seeks agreement between a theoretical concept and a specific measuring device or procedure. In order to examine construct validity, factor analysis was carried out. Factor analysis was used to identify underlying variables, or factors, that explain the pattern of correlations within a set of observed variables.
Content and face validity of the instruments was also initiated at the design stage. Opinion of experts, including the researcher’s supervisors was sought regarding whether the research questions fully represented the domain of challenges, support and coping of student-mothers. It was unanimously agreed that the instruments were valid in content. Further, the pilot phase also helped in validation and it was confirmed that the methodology and instruments used would provide the data required. It also targeted getting vivid expressions from the respondents, in a form that made the instruments more suitable and to explore the viability of the study. The researcher also enhanced validity of the research by recording each interview session which provided an accurate account of the interviews.

3.8 Data collection procedures

The researcher got research authorization from the office of the DEO Nyando District. With permission from the DEO the researcher then proceeded to consult school administrators, guidance & counselling teachers of the selected schools, selected student-mothers and their parents/guardians and discussed details of the research. Convenient days were agreed upon during which data was collected. The researcher visited the schools physically and dealt with the targeted groups individually. The questionnaires and interview guides were administered solely to the respondents who were assured that their information was to be handled confidentially as their identity was not revealed. Students were reminded that it was not a test or an examination. Four FGDs were conducted separately with boys and non-mothering girls in the selected mixed schools as the main discussants. Each FGD consisted of seven discussants of the same gender. A digital voice recorder was used to record the interviews and FGDs. All FGDs, interviews with counselling teachers, school administrators and some parents were conducted in English while
some parents were interviewed in Dholuo and their interviews transcribed. Since it was not possible to visit all the schools in one day the exercise was done within a period of nine weeks.

The following tools (instruments) were used:

3.8.1 The Student-mothers' questionnaire

This instrument was administered by the researcher herself. A total of twenty secondary schools in Nyando District were involved in the study. Eighty five student-mothers were talked to after having been identified by their teachers and asked to seek permission from their parents to take part in the study for those who were willing. Those who were interested to take part in the study gave a verbal consent and were then given questionnaires to fill. At the end of the research only 83 student-mothers consented and were given questionnaires which they filled and all the 83 questionnaires were collected and data analysed.

3.8.2 The School Administrators' interview schedule

The instrument was administered to nineteen school administrators by the researcher herself. The interviews were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder with the permission of the participants. The questions were rephrased and the respondents were probed when it was necessary. At the end of the research, 19 of the interview schedules were collected and analysed.

3.8.3 The Career Guidance and Counselling Teachers' interview schedule

The instrument was administered to fourteen career guidance and counselling teachers by the researcher individually. The interviews were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder with the permission of the participants. The questions were rephrased and the respondents were
probed when it was necessary. At the end of the research, 14 of the interview schedules were collected and analysed.

3.8.4 The Student-mothers’ Parents’ interview schedule

The instrument was administered to nine parents of student-mothers who were willing to take part in the study. The interviews were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder with the permission of the participants. The questions were rephrased and the respondents were probed when it was necessary. At the end of the research, 9 of the interview schedules were collected and analysed.

3.8.5 Other Students’ Focus Group Discussion

The instrument was used to gather information from other students who were not student-mothers. Two FGDs were conducted in each region/division with randomly selected school and students of different sexes (one with non-mothering girls and the other with boys). Each FGD comprised of seven participants of the same sex. This was done to supplement the interview and questionnaire data and to find out how other students related with, supported student-mothers and generally observed their encounters upon resuming studies. They also sat with the student-mothers in the same classes and went through school activities together in a more similar way. This made them be in a better position to explain what they observed and shared with student-mothers. The researcher facilitated the discussion and recorded the proceedings of the discussions using a digital voice recorder after having sought permission from the participants. The questions were rephrased and the respondents were probed when it was necessary. The length of the discussion was dependant on the respondents of each FGD. At the start of the
discussion, the researcher gave some introductory remarks and explanations of the procedure to
be followed and also provided the participants with an overview of the interview schedule in
order to indicate the areas to be explored during the course of the discussion. At the end of the
research, the views of the 28 participants were collected and analysed.

The researcher however encountered certain challenges during the process of data collection.
Once the researcher had visited the sampled schools to explain the research study and seek
permission to conduct the research at the schools, the schools had to identify student-mothers at
their schools who fitted the sample criteria as discussed above. However, this was not a simple
task as some principals, due to their busy schedules referred the matter to the career guidance
and counselling teacher. In such cases the researcher had to wait even for a week or more and
had to make follow-up phone calls to the principals to inquire if data on teen-mothers were
ready. Once the principals or the career guidance and counselling teacher had prepared the list,
the researcher had to meet with them (student-mothers) to ask if they would agree to participate
in the study. Once they had given their consent, the researcher made arrangements with them and
the school administration on when and how the data was to be collected. This meant that the
researcher had to travel several times back and forth to the same school, an exercise that was
time consuming and costly.

The researcher had to visit the parents of the teen-mothers at home and conduct the study from
there since the two invitations that had been sent to them to meet the researcher at their
daughters’ school had yielded no fruit. In addition, student-mothers were more comfortable to
introduce the researcher to their mothers and not fathers. This therefore meant that their parents
who were ready and willing to take part in the study were mothers. One father was present during the interview process but he never commented or responded to the interview questions claiming that the topic was mainly female issues related and then walked out of the process midway. This left the researcher with no option but to interview and report the views of mothers of the teen-mothers only.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

The data analysis procedure started with the coding of the questionnaires. The codes used were mutually exclusive. A code sheet was prepared in the SPSS computer package. Then the data was entered into the computer directly from the questionnaires and analysed using SPSS. On the open-ended questions the responses were extracted and assigned to categories. Challenges were categorized as the economic and socio-psychological problems facing teenage mothers during schooling. The numbers representing the various categories were then entered into the computer and were then analysed qualitatively.

Word for word transcription of the recorded interviews was done by a transcriptionist and verified by the researcher to confirm if the recorded interviews were accurately transcribed. After transcribing the interviews, a coding framework was designed and the texts dissected line by line to identify basic themes which were later categorized into three themes (student-mothers’ challenges, support and coping mechanisms). The data collected was analysed thematically and reported in a descriptive format as the study was a descriptive study. The closed-ended items in the student-mother questionnaire were analysed using simple statistics. Cross tabulation and frequencies was done, and then all data was presented by use of graphs, tables and pie chart.
Factor analysis was used to determine how and to what extent the observed variables (support) are linked to their underlying factors (those who accorded the support). It is important in exploratory factor analysis to identify the minimal number of factors that underlie co-variation among the observed variables. In other words, exploratory factor analysis is used to determine the extent to which the observed variables were related to latent ones. In factor analysis, these relations are represented by factor loadings (Cesur & Fer, 2009).

In addition to examining construct validity, factor analysis was used to identify underlying variables, or factors, that explain the pattern of correlations within a set of observed variables. Factor analysis findings were also used to generate assumption regarding causal mechanisms and to check possibility of screening variables for subsequent analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity were used to determine whether factor analysis was suitable for data studied. KMO measure of sampling adequacy, a popular diagnostic measure, tests whether the partial correlations among variables are small. It is a measure of homogeneity of variables (Cesur & Fer, 2009). When determining number of factors, the items with the eigenvalues of 1 or more are considered as significant ones (Cesur & Fer, 2009).

Factor loadings which show the relations between the observed variables and latent should be 0.5 or more. For several items a value of 0.30 can also be accepted. However, the difference between two loadings should be at least 0.10 because these items are considered as cross-loadings and therefore should be omitted. A higher value of KMO is desired with KMO value greater than 0.80. Second, Bartlett’s test of sphericity tests whether the correlation matrix is an identity
matrix, which would indicate that the factor model is inappropriate (Cesur & Fer, 2009). Factor loading showing the relations between the observed variables and latent in this study was 0.5. The three factors (parental, partners and teachers’ concern about the student-mothers education) were found to be significant with regard to factor analysis.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The sensitive nature of the study raised salient ethical issues which had to be carefully considered during the research process. Struwig and Stead (2007: 66) propose that research ethics provide researchers with a code of moral guidelines on how to conduct research in a morally accepted way. Consideration was taken to adhere strictly to ethical measures as outlined in the university ethics regulations. In order to ensure the safety and rights of the participants, they were informed about the prevailing ethical consideration (Berg, 1995). For instance, written permission was thus obtained from Kenyatta University Graduate School (Appendix I) and thereafter written and verbal permission were sought from the DEO Nyando District and school principals (Appendices C, D & I) before conducting the study. The researcher respected the rights and dignity of the respondents by explaining that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could refuse or withdraw from taking part at any time. All participants were assured of complete confidentiality and that their names and institutions would remain anonymous. Permission was also obtained from all key informants before recording them.

3.11 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher explained the research design and the process used to collect the data. The method of data collection employed was described in detail. The reasons and how the
data gathering techniques were used were discussed in relation to the aims of the research problem. Concepts such as ethical considerations and reliability and validity were explained in the context of this research study. The researcher also highlighted some of the constraints that were faced during data collection process.
4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the research objectives. These include: a) to identify socio-economic and psychological factors that influence the school completion for girls who resume studies after their delivery, b) to identify the kind of institutional and parental support student-mothers receive on resuming studies, and c) to find out how student-mothers cope with the role of a mother and student on resuming studies.

4.1 Research findings based on Socio-economic and psychological factors

Socio-economic and psychological factors are those characteristics that uniquely identify an individual and their environment. These characteristics can help explain the behaviour of an individual and includes among others the education level and demographic characteristics.

4.1.1 Demographic data

Of the 83 student-mothers interviewed 3 declined to indicate their ages. The mean age of the 80 student-mothers who indicated their age was 16.7 years with standard deviation of 1.33 years and the modal age being 17 years. The youngest student-mother was 15 years old with the eldest being 20 years old (Fig 4.1). Out of the 80 who stated their ages two did not state the birth date of their young ones. The approximated mean age of the mothers at delivery was 15 years, a median of 15 years and a standard deviation of 1.49 years.
According to Fig 4.1, most student-mothers (23 and 21), that is, 28.8% and 26.2% who had returned to school after delivery were 17 and 16 years old respectively. The ages of other student-mothers who had returned to school after delivery were given as per the above figure. From this data it is clear that seventy-eight out of the eighty student-mothers who indicated their ages were within the teenage bracket and only two were above that age bracket.
Majority of the student-mothers (22 and 18), that is, 28.2% and 23.1% delivered at age 14 and 16 years old respectively as indicated in Fig 4.2. The exceptional age of 11-13 at which other student-mothers had their babies was given as shown in Fig 4.2. This data reveals that very few student-mothers deliver at age 17 and 18, an indication that teenage pregnancy is rampant at age 14-16 years and steadily drops at age 17 and 18.
4.1.2 Education

Fig 4.3 Distribution of Student-mothers' Parental Education

Most student-mothers (40.3%) had fathers with secondary education level whereas most (30.3%) student-mothers had mothers with secondary education level. Majority of the student-mothers (55.3%) were children of mothers with primary education level and only 28.6% had fathers with primary education level. The other levels of parental education are indicated in Fig. 4.3 with the percentage of the respondents shown. The distribution seems to show that an increase in the education level of the mother had a downward trend in student motherhood whereas an increase in the fathers' education was associated with an increase in student motherhood. This finding was supported by Hunt (2008) who concluded that children of poorly educated parents were more likely to drop-out.
According to Fig. 4.4 most student-mothers (67%) were from families with no elder siblings in post secondary training. The other percentages represent various numbers of student-mothers' siblings in post secondary training. The above distribution indicated that the trend of student motherhood declined with an increase in the number of siblings with post secondary schooling. This finding was supported by Hunt (2008) and Mangino (2008) who concluded that children with fewer role models in higher education were more likely to drop-out.
4.1.3 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical data reduction technique used to explain variability among observed random variables in terms of fewer unobserved random variables called factors. It is useful to reduce the number of variables, by combining two or more variables into a single factor, thus "simplifying" the original data set. It does this by seeking underlying unobservable (latent) variables that are reflected in the observed variables (manifest variables) (Cesur & Fer, 2009).

Factor analysis is a statistical approach used to examine the internal reliability of a measure, to investigate the theoretical constructs, or factors, that might be represented by a set of items and to assess the quality of individual items. The most common approach to deciding the number of factors is to generate a scree plot. The scree plot is a two dimensional graph with factors on the x-axis and eigenvalues on the y-axis. Eigenvalues are produced by a process called principal components analysis (PCA) and represent the variance accounted for by each underlying factor. They are not represented by percentages but scores that total to the number of items (http://www.improvedoutcomes.com).

A Scree Plot is a simple line segment plot that shows the fraction of total variance in the data as explained or represented by each PC. The PCs are ordered, and by definition are therefore assigned a number label, by decreasing order of contribution to total variance. The PC with the largest fraction contribution is labelled with the label name from the preferences file. Such a plot when read left-to-right across the abscissa can often show a clear separation in fraction of total variance where the 'most important' components cease and the 'least important' components
begin. In the context of factor analysis or principal components analysis, a scree plot helps the analyst to visualize the relative importance of the factors — a sharp drop in the plot signals that subsequent factors are ignorable (Cesur & Fer, 2009).

### Table 4.1 Factor Analysis Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Component(a)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/guardian value my efforts to get a high school education</td>
<td>0.777</td>
<td>-0.274</td>
<td>-0.079</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/guardian talk with me about my high school course work</td>
<td>0.607</td>
<td>-0.262</td>
<td>-0.172</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/guardians believe I will complete my high school education</td>
<td>0.786</td>
<td>-0.252</td>
<td>-0.191</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/guardian are interested in my general high school experiences</td>
<td>0.511</td>
<td>-0.309</td>
<td>-0.536</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers value my efforts to get a high school education</td>
<td>0.570</td>
<td>-0.411</td>
<td>0.489</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers talk with me about my high school course work</td>
<td>0.397</td>
<td>-0.295</td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers believe I will complete my high school education</td>
<td>0.534</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers are interested in my general high school experiences</td>
<td>0.516</td>
<td>-0.330</td>
<td>-0.311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner/boy friend value my efforts to get a high school education</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>0.551</td>
<td>-0.151</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner/boy friend talks to me about my high school course work</td>
<td>0.533</td>
<td>0.681</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner/boy friend believes I will complete my high school education</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td>0.539</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner/boy friend is interested in my general high school experiences</td>
<td>0.492</td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

3 components were extracted.

The sample was highly adequate as measured by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy. The value of KMO was 0.782 indicating the patterns of correlations are relatively...
compact so the factor analysis yields distinct and reliable factors. On the other hand, Bartlett’s test of sphericity was highly significant (p<0.001) hence factor analysis was appropriate for this data. Considering factor extraction, the exploratory factor analysis resulted in 3 principal components (PC) which together explained 62.83% of the variance. The first component explained 23.19% of the variance the second PC added 22.92% while the third added 16.72% to the explained variance.

**Fig 4.5: Scree Plot of Supportive Factors as per the Student-mothers**

![Scree Plot](image-url)

From this simple line segment plot (scree plot) the fractions of the total variances in the data as expressed or explained by each PC are shown. Pertaining to the retention of factors, the
questions that loaded highly on factor 1 (one) seem to be those relating to parental concerns with regards to the girls' education. The theme here was that parents are interested in their academic achievements despite having delivered. The questions that loaded highly on factor 2 are those that seem related to how the boy friends or partners regarded them (student-mothers) with respect to their academics, hence the theme here was that their boy friends/partner are positive about their academics. Finally the question loading on factor 3 was that relating to the teachers' concern in student-mothers' academic work. The academic support of student-mothers by their teachers is very significant to them. This is because the roles of teachers are to provide guidance to learners, to counsel and tutor them if they have any social problems, to support and care for them, to act as a mentor, and to be able to identify and assist them with any learning or social difficulties. Jansen, 2001: 244 also specifies that all teachers have to assist learners who are encountering any social problems. Being able to implement these roles is important for teachers.

Of the 83 student-mothers who participated in the study, 82 gave their opinion on the effect of motherhood on their academic performance. Approximately (32) 39% of the student-mothers considered their performance to have improved while (29) 35.4% acknowledged a drop in their performance. Of the remaining (21) 25.7%, (13) 15.9% said their performance remained constant while (8) 9.8% admitted that their performance was unpredictable. This implied that teachers must therefore be adequately prepared to guide, mentor and counsel learners, especially when they encounter social problems in the classroom. This is because learners who were supported by their teachers showed some improvement in their academic performance, a view that concurs with the finding of (Theron and Dunn, 2006). However, even though teachers supported and motivated learners, some of them still declined in their academic performance and this could be
explained that their poor academic performance was linked to the numerous challenges they faced upon resuming studies and the kind of coping strategies they employed.

Table 4.2 Student-mothers’ Opinion on Support upon Returning to School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA-Strongly Agree</th>
<th>A-Agree</th>
<th>UD-Undecided</th>
<th>D-Disagree</th>
<th>SD-Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have developed close personal relationship with other students upon returning to school</td>
<td>33.7 (28)</td>
<td>39.8 (33)</td>
<td>8.4 (7)</td>
<td>15.7 (13)</td>
<td>2.4 (2)</td>
<td>100(83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends have been very satisfying</td>
<td>22.9 (19)</td>
<td>48.2 (40)</td>
<td>8.4 (7)</td>
<td>12.0 (10)</td>
<td>8.4 (7)</td>
<td>100(83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in making friendship with other students</td>
<td>9.6 (8)</td>
<td>21.7 (18)</td>
<td>12.0 (10)</td>
<td>37.3 (31)</td>
<td>19.3 (16)</td>
<td>100(83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few students listen and assist with my personal problems</td>
<td>25.3 (21)</td>
<td>44.6 (37)</td>
<td>3.6 (3)</td>
<td>15.7 (13)</td>
<td>10.8 (9)</td>
<td>100(83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with teachers during Pregnancy had a positive influence on my return, values and attitude</td>
<td>34.9 (29)</td>
<td>38.6 (32)</td>
<td>4.8 (4)</td>
<td>13.3 (11)</td>
<td>8.4 (7)</td>
<td>100(83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class interaction &amp; participation had positive influence on my academic achievements</td>
<td>39.8 (33)</td>
<td>41.0 (34)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>15.7 (13)</td>
<td>3.6 (3)</td>
<td>100(83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most teachers are interested in assisting students in more than just academic areas</td>
<td>32.5 (27)</td>
<td>51.8 (43)</td>
<td>4.8 (4)</td>
<td>6.0 (5)</td>
<td>4.8 (4)</td>
<td>100(83)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 4.2 the respondents were student-mothers who were 83 in number and gave their opinions on support that they received upon resuming studies. Most student-mothers (84.3%) expressed that most of their teachers were interested in assisting students not only in academic matters but also in other areas of life, like supporting needy students like the student-mothers. In addition, 80.8% of the student-mothers felt that their classroom interaction and participation had a positive influence on their academic achievements. Teachers must therefore be adequately prepared to guide, mentor and counsel learners, especially when they encounter social problems in the classroom to boost the student-mothers’ classroom interaction and participation. The other aspects of support accorded to student-mothers are also indicated in the above table and the percentage of the respondents are shown.

4.2 Student-mothers’ schooling challenges

There were a number of challenges that student-mothers faced within the school environment and sometimes at home when they resumed studies. These challenges were divided into two main categories namely: socio-psychological and economic challenges.

4.2.1 Socio-psychological challenges

These were challenges that mainly touched on the student-mothers’ social and psychological life making their attempts to pursue secondary education to completion challenging. This challenge was further divided into the following sub-headings:
4.2.1.1 Lack of concentration

Student-mothers were normally not fully settled while at school and this adversely affected their social and academic life. There were several reasons that made them be in these state, some of the reasons identified were that it was quite difficult to meet the demands of motherhood and schooling concurrently, they got worried over their baby’s care and health and they lacked enough sleep at night especially when the baby was sick. Based on observations on the student-mothers at school, one of the boys said:

i. “It becomes very difficult because they cannot manage to serve two masters at a time. Maybe at home her child was very sick so even when she comes to school she will just sit in class studying but her mind is not in class” (FGD boys N: R2).

A parent commented on her experience with her daughter who returned to school after the birth of her baby:

ii. “Kata ayie tero ne nyathi ka two osuptal to ok oyie okona ni mama kata itere to an a mingi monyuole awinjo malit awe kata ni ka two moro odiye matek to onyalo tho gi bang’a koro adwaro ni sama otwo to abet kode ma ane kaka odhi. Chande ga adier, chande kabisa” [Even when I offer to take her sick baby to the hospital she never accepts, she tells me that mother even if you take him/her I feel pain as the mother. I imagine that if the sickness gets worse s/he may die in my absence, so I prefer that when s/he is sick I be around and see how s/he is fairing on. This truly affects her] (P9).

Furthermore, guidance and counselling teacher and a school head commented on their observations in school:

iii. “They are not able to concentrate in their class work maybe because they assume that the baby is not doing so well at home or maybe the baby is sick. Maybe assuming that the child was sick throughout the night so they are not able to sleep well at night so when they come to school they are not able to concentrate in their work. This also interferes with their performance; they don’t really do well as they were doing before they got their babies” (CG&C 8).
iv. "Sometime the mother spent the whole night nursing the baby, so when she comes to school concentrating in class can become a problem because she is too sleepy" (PR16).

4.2.1.2 Worries over marriage

The society does not appreciate teenage pregnancy and children born out of wedlock. Considering that these students are already in that state, most of them look worried over their future life for they are not sure about their fate in marriage. These worries were expressed by a parent and a guidance and counselling teacher in the following quotes:

v. "Sometimes she looks worried maybe because next to my home there is a home where a girl was sent back home because she had a baby boy and she too has a baby boy. I know in her mind she is also expecting that when she will be married maybe she will be sent back or the husband will not love her son. She looked worried when I took her to form two, she wanted to go to form three because she felt that the boy would be older before she gets married and maybe I think she wanted to go when the boy is still young" (P2).

vi. "Some of them are also worried after they have come back whether they will get married or not" (CG&C 5).

4.2.1.3 Lack of Professional Counselling

It was noted that some teachers found themselves in a situation where they felt inadequate to offer counselling services to the student-mothers. They admitted that on resuming studies student-mothers were counselled though they did not get counselling services from experts (trained counsellors) in counselling. This can clearly be explained by the following quote by a guidance and counselling teacher:

vii. "We talk to the students but we are also not experts in counselling, sometimes we try and we fail" (CG&C 3).

Such a challenge was captured during an interview with a school head:
viii. "I want to admit here that if you have not done counselling as a course, you will find it really difficult helping these girls. We have allowed our guidance and counselling teacher to attend several courses on the same so that she knows how to handle the students. She has come and admitted that certain things that she was doing she has realized that she was doing them the wrong way but now she has a good background through which she can handle these issues" (PR5).

A student mother commented on her experience upon returning to school as follows:

i. "I talked to my teachers about my social and emotional problems and they advised me on how to overcome them but I have not gained so much from their pieces of advice" (SM45).

The student-mothers in most cases opted to seek assistance from their parents, teachers and at times from their peers and other relatives in terms of advice on how to manage their situations. Some student-mothers expressed their views in the following quotes:

ii. "My parents help me a lot with counselling" (SM21).

iii. "I go to friends, relatives and counsellors to advice me on what to do" (SM8).

Even though some teachers felt inadequate to offer counselling services to the student-mothers because of not being experts in counselling services, their efforts were appreciated by some student-mothers who approached them for assistance. They expressed their views as follows:

iv. "I seek guidance from the teachers and sometimes they also call my guardian to talk to" (SM15).

v. "I approached one of my teachers and told him my problems; he counselled me and gave me helpful pieces of advice" (SM45).
According to Fig 4.6, of all the student-mothers who participated in the study 60.2% received counselling services from the parents and 28.9% admitted being counselled by their teachers. The other sources of counselling are also indicated in the figure with the percentage of the respondents shown. This show that parents were the most recognized and effective counsellors in the lives of student-mothers followed by teachers. This finding was supported by Romo and Falbo (1996) and Wahn (2007) who concluded that parental involvement in education can influence a student’s motivation to continue in education.

4.2.1.4 Stigma and discrimination

Student-mothers experienced stigma from various sources. They stigmatized themselves, and they were teased by fellow students, some parents and some teachers. Boys and girls often verbally abused these girls, making their participation in class to seem unwelcome. Teenage mothers were sometimes ridiculed in front of classmates by both teachers and fellow students whenever they did not satisfy or meet the class requirements.
Student-mothers stigmatized themselves and this condition made most of them not feel comfortable to disclose their motherhood status to others including teachers. They felt that they were more mature than others and this made them look down upon themselves and they also felt that people discriminated them even when the people in question loved them. One of the guidance and counselling teacher and one Principal had the following to say respectively:

i. "It is true stigmatization is there. In fact in most cases they try to hide the reality that maybe they have given birth. Even as teachers when they realize that you know, it is a problem. So stigmatization is there one of the indicators is that they don't open up on these issues. That is a sign that they perceive it negatively" (CG&C 3).

ii. "Most of our students are people who come from the same area and given the fact that the students who have delivered are looked down upon; so this is passed on to the students who sometimes carry this to school, they look down upon themselves" (PR19).

In addition, other students, one girl and one boy commented as follows:

iii. "Some girls just feel that they are discriminated even when others love them" (FGD girls LN: R5).

iv. "Some feel that they are much mature in that they cannot mix freely with the other students who have not yet conceived" (FGD boys N: R7).

Other students also contributed to the stigma the student-mothers experienced by them not wanting to socialise freely with them, they ridiculed, abused and called them mothers. One of the guidance and counselling teacher and two Principals had the following to say respectively:

v. "--- at times they are intimidated in one way or the other. The other ladies who have not passed through delivery process feel that they are different and they try to avoid the student-mothers in one way or another. Other students do not look at them the way they look at other colleagues who have not gone through the same experiences" (CG&C 2).

vi. "---when the student-mothers beat them in class the others will think 'oh she is not our age mate' and when they fail to perform the others will say 'mmh
she only knows how to give birth'. ---when students are choosing their leaders you find none of them is chosen as a leader and the reason is; this one had already given birth, what kind of leadership skills will she have? But could be that is a very good leader" (PR5).

vii. "The boys will ridicule them and others (some student-mothers) because of being females; the way they are they cannot take the ridicule. They had been traumatised during pregnancy that when you mention it again they cannot even concentrate. In fact some now just run away. They will not even want to identify with the girls who might not have gone through the same problems like them. When they come back since it is a mixed school you know the boys will always refer to them as mothers, so they don't just fit in so well. They will be told, you join the 'mothers union', go back and breastfeed your baby, that kind of thing. You know the boys will always tell them that" (PR17).

Teachers too contributed to the stigmatization that the student-mothers experienced at school by insulting them and using abusive words to describe them as explained by some school principals in the following quotes:

viii. "A student mother once reported that her class teacher was giving insulting remarks to her would more often than not utter abusive words to her" (PR6).

ix. "--- some teachers are very abusive, they use very bad language against them when they cannot answer questions in the classroom" (PR4).

The community and some parents also stigmatized student-mothers; they made the girls feel so low and scared. Some of them could not imagine that the girls could go back to school and so when they (student-mothers) did they laughed at and made fun of them. Regarding this view, a parent, fellow student and a Principal had the following to say:

x. "By the time she started going to school some people even laughed. They thought that she could not make it. They said, yaani even this one can go back to school. And you know when people laugh at you, you feel so embarrassed" (P3).
"Sometimes they are also discriminated by their own parents" (FGD girls LN: R6).

"I have a girl who is so much stigmatized, she is always scared and this emanates from home" (PR5).

In contrast, some participants felt that there were no forms of stigma and discrimination that the student-mothers experienced when they returned to school. The Principals commented as follows:

"I don't think it is a problem; it (student motherhood) is something that is now not very strange it is very normal. They are very free, they act very freely. We thought it would be a problem but the opposite has taken place, the students comfortably welcome them back" (PR13).

"It is not there and that is why you could see them open up and come forward, if it would have been a problem you could not have found them" (PR3).

In addition, such views were captured during FGDs with other students, one girl and one boy commented as follows:

"It is not there, they are treated equally, there is none of them who is discriminated" (FGD girls N: R2).

"There is no stigma because the students are very supportive to them, they help them copy notes and also encourage them not to loose hope, and they should start a new life and forget their past" (FGD boys LN: R7).

The stigma and discrimination that student-mothers experienced when they returned to school had an impact on their social and schooling encounters. It made them suffer from low self-esteem which made them also develop fear and this too resulted into the state of loneliness that they suffered while at school.
4.2.1.5 Fear and loneliness at school

Most students were shy to approach teachers for consultation, the reason was not well known, it was not clear if they feared going to teachers in the staffroom or not. Sometimes teenage mothers had fear participating in class discussions. For example, whenever topics like 'teenage pregnancy' and other socially related subjects were being taught the teenage mothers became particularly not interested and uncomfortable that everybody was talking about their situation.

The following is what one of the girls who regularly interacted with student-mothers had to say regarding this:

i. "Some of them fear teachers, so when they miss lessons or they fail to understand a concept they fear going to the teachers for clarification" (FGD girls N: R4).

One Principal and one guidance and counselling teacher commented on their observations in school:

ii. "---she might start keeping to herself and stop talking to the others. ---some of them may be withdrawn from school activities more so when they have problems at home like the baby is sick and so on" (PR14).

iii. "They just have a feeling that everybody is talking about them, so that makes them not feel comfortable at school. When you are discussing something related to pregnancy, they become guilty and think that you are talking about them, even if you are giving some facts. Some of them come with some formed opinion because they are now mothers and they feel everybody is talking about it even if you don't know that they had given birth. This contributes to the fact that some of them are not so obedient while in school" (CG&C 5).

Whereas other students and some teachers felt that the student-mothers were shy to approach teachers for consultation, the student-mothers had a different view. They expressed that they consulted their teachers, peers and parents in order to be at per with their counterparts in terms of syllabus and content coverage. Some student-mothers had the following to say:
iv. "I normally consult teachers, classmates and sometimes parents on academic matters" (SM9).

v. "I normally consult the teachers" (SM54).

4.2.1.6 Low self-esteem and guilt

Since these girls had become mothers whilst young and still in school, they were stigmatized and so they tended to have low self-esteem. Low self-esteem made them feel out of place especially when other students felt that they were not fit to be within the school system. They suffered from inferiority complex; they kept to themselves and tended to be withdrawn and got themselves in their own cocoons. The following are what some guidance and counselling teachers had to say:

i. "They feel inferior, they suffer from inferiority complex. This is a major problem and I think that is why when they come back they tend to be in their cocoon, they no longer fully feel part of the system" (CG&C 3).

ii. "The main thing is that the other students like to discriminate against them (student-mothers); they actually do not accept them back much. That then lowers their self-esteem and being girls they feel they are not fit to be within the system" (CG&C 2).

In addition, based on observations on teen mothers at school, one boy commented as follows:

iii. "When they return they feel much degraded because of what had happened to them. The fact that others know that they had given birth make them feel embarrassed thereby making them not feel okay while in school. They always just feel guilty" (FGD boys LN: R1).

4.2.1.7 Lack of skills to handle student-mothers’ situation by teachers

Teenage mothers were disadvantaged at school because their teachers did not know how to handle them and their situation when they were at school. Teachers had difficult time handling the student-mothers because they did not know how to treat such students. How to realistically tell the student-mothers to take care of themselves was not effective as they were already
sexually active and their reproductive systems were already very active. On this point, some of the guidance and counselling teachers expressed their views in the following quotes:

i. "Teachers have a difficult time because how are they to treat this kind of students. I mean where do you place them? And so how to treat them is really a problem. How much understanding do you need to give; what correction do you need to give to enable them fit into the system?" (CG&C 1).

ii. "At times we have to advice them to go for family planning which is also another challenge because she can have another mentality that you are encouraging her to continue. But she forgets that these days it is not only pregnancy we also have diseases. So we want to protect them from the same, but the challenge is that we don't know how. We cannot tell them to take care of themselves by abstaining because now she is already a mother and that system (reproductive) is active. So it is a big challenge when we have to advice them to go for family planning" (CG&C 7).

Such challenges were also captured during interviews with some principals who commented as follows:

iii. "Sometimes it becomes difficult when you want to give an example about disadvantages of engaging in premarital sex and the student mother is in class. Like I was giving an example in Form two the other day and the students turned to look at them and that is an element of stigma" (PR10).

iv. "---there are parents who when they have found out that their daughters have conceived they throw them out of the family and the children come to school stigmatized and threatened, for you to remove this from the child is complex. ---they need a lot of careful handling and sometimes as you teach humanities, sciences like Biology in class you may mention certain things that happen in life and when you look at their faces you realize they are not interested in what you are saying since you know their problem and you are talking about it openly before the others.---to make others accept them fully you need to encourage attitudinal change and I want to say that attitudinal change does not take place within a flank of a finger, it is a process" (PR5).
4.2.2 Economic challenges

These were challenges that mainly touched on the student-mothers’ financial difficulties that had an impact on their schooling directly or even indirectly. Sometimes student-mothers had to do household chores when they returned from school, and the only time they could do their homework was at night. Unfortunately, most of them came from families where the lighting system in the house was just hurricane lamps making it difficult for the girls to study or do their homework at night, as they could not have the lamps on due to inadequate supply of paraffin. Apart from this the students themselves had difficulties because of lack of money to adequately take care of their children and themselves. One guidance and counselling teacher commented as follows:

i. “She has a lot to cater for and yet she has no money. She has a baby to take care of at home and the school also requires her to buy a few things like learning materials. This may make her end up not having the learning tools required at school because maybe her limited resources are also diverted to other things. They are stressed up due to financial constraint and too much demand” (CG&C5).

According to FGD observations one girl commented as follows:

ii. “In my view these student-mothers sometimes lack money maybe to take care of their children. So if they lack money you know they will stop coming to school to go and look for money” (FGD girls LN: R6).

In addition, based on economic challenges a parent had the following to say:

iii. “---kendo kama pek nitiere ma ok dang' ariambi to somo mar otieno chandowa e yor mafuta, mafuta nyalo tamore koro wachiemo achiema to wanindo” [Again where there is a problem that I cannot deny or tell a lie is night study with regard to lack of paraffin. There may be no paraffin so we just eat and then go to bed] (P9).
According to Fig. 4.7 the highest proportion of student-mothers (45.3%) were daughters to farming fathers and 34.2% were daughters to self employed mothers. The other economic activities that the parents of student-mothers got involved in are indicated in percentage form in the figure above. This finding is supported by Hunt (2008) who concluded that household income is linked to a range of factors like when children start school, how often they attend, when they have to temporarily withdraw and also when and if they drop-out.

4.2.2.1 Cost of managing and maintaining student-mothers

Some schools acknowledged the fact that the girls were costly to manage and maintain as they required skilful guidance from experts in counselling as resource people at times, and this was
challenging and expensive to them as there were no funds allocated for this purpose. Some of the
guidance and counselling teachers expressed their feelings in the following quotes:

i. "They require more in terms of resources and facilities to cater for their
needs. You have to involve resource persons at times and that is even
expensive to the school" (CG&C 2).

ii. "When you look at the financial structure of schools, they are on vote heads
and this vote heads are fixed. Sometimes we want to ask how do we support
them, it is from which vote head? When you talk of a counsellor, from which
vote head, when you talk of maybe this student is having a child at home how
can we also participate in contributing for this student?" (CG&C8).

4.2.2.2 Fees payment

After their delivery most parents of the student-mothers become reluctant to pay their daughters'
school fees compared to the period before they conceived and resumed studies. The following is
what some principals had to say regarding this:

i. "When she comes back to learn the commitment of parents in terms of fee
payment compared to when she was a regular student is slightly low" (PR 8).

ii. "---as far as fee payment is concerned the parent may not be as forthcoming
as before" (PR16).

iii. "---the parents are reluctant now to pay school fees for the students and it
(the experience of student motherhood) actually discourages other parents
not to educate girls" (PR11).

4.3 Support student-mothers receive

Student-mothers had the dual responsibility of being a mother and student simultaneously, for
them to succeed academically, they need adequate support. The finding of this study indicates
that they were supported in different ways by their parents, peers, teachers and the school
administrators. Support from family members and friends tended to provide a complementary combination to the support student-mother received at school (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). Student-mothers who were the recipients of support clearly revealed the three strong support sources to them as parents, partners and teachers. They considered their support as a factor that enabled them to cope up with their situations when they returned to school. Most peers felt that they were very supportive to the student-mothers, whereas, to the student-mothers, most of the peers were not very much ready to assist them when they had personal problems (see Table 4.2). The student-mothers were supported in two main ways namely; spiritual and social support.

4.3.1 Spiritual support
This is the kind of support that is concerned with sacred or religious matters like prayer and meditation. At home, parents provided spiritual needs to their daughters to help them manage some of their challenges. Within the school there were also pastoral programmes that were put in place to make the students get nourished spiritually and be able to get a way forward on how to go about their difficulties. One of the interviewed parents commented as follows:

i. “She needs spiritual support which I do provide. I take her to church and we pray together everyday before we retire to bed” (P2).

Furthermore, guidance and counselling teachers commented as follows:

ii. “We provide them with pastoral services. Chaplains and pastors are invited and they do come to school to talk, encourage and pray with them” (CG&C 2).

iii. “The students have also become organized, they have groups where they try to meet on their own to discuss these issues, like now we have few students who are Christians and I personally did appoint one or two who are going round to teach these other young people on the issue of following Christ’s
foot steps as a way of dealing with some of these issues. We have Christian Union club (C.U.) in our school which normally holds its meetings on Fridays where we try to give them spiritual support as a way of containing this issue of students' pregnancy and we encourage them not to involve themselves in premarital sex” (CG&C16).

4.3.2 Social support

This kind of support entails student-mothers getting financial support, encouragements and pieces of advice alongside appreciation of their abilities.

4.3.2.1. Instrumental support

Instrumental support refers to the individual’s access to practical service and/or financial assistance. Parents often provided the basic needs to both the student mother and her baby (their grand child) and took full responsibility of bringing up the child and also supported the girl in school. Wanting the best for their children the parents always did for them all that they could to enable these children attain their set goals. This included meeting their personal material needs and making them comfortable. Some Principals gave their comments as illustrated by the following quotes:

i. “---they (parents) are involved where they can help; they help the student and also the child” (PR4).

ii. “They (parents) pay the fees and they give all sorts of provisions that they may need after we have talked to them and counselled them” (PR7).

In addition, one parent expressed herself with regard to this as follows:

iii. “I always give her ten shillings everyday to buy mandazi and porridge at 10.00a.m. while at school. When there is an outing I get her the amount for the outing and some pocket money to use .I also give her money for her own use while at home so that she can buy whatever she wants” (P2).
Teachers on the other hand played a significant role in the provision of material support to the student-mothers. Considering the needs and situation of student-mothers, teachers were sometimes obliged to support them in various ways to help them cope with their situation. The following are some typical examples as illustrated by one guidance and counselling teacher and one Principal respectively:

iv. "When they lack some of the things they need, at times they would come to female teachers to ask for some items. So if we can afford we provide to them but if we cannot we normally ask our colleagues who have anything to support if in case we realize one of them is in serious need as per what she has expressed to us" (CG&C 6).

v. "---generally for girls we buy them those sanitary pads. They are kept by the guidance and counselling teacher and we believe that this keeps them in school when they are going through their monthly periods" (PR12).

Practical support is support that is inclined to action rather than speculation. It involved individuals taking action to ensure that the expected is done by taking steps and beginning to act without much ado. It is usually very necessary that individuals be acknowledged and appreciated in one way or the other when they have achieved something in life. The school administration and teachers took note of this by accepting and appreciating the abilities, strengths of student-mothers within the school setup and also trying not to embarrass them at all cost. Teachers also assisted them in their academic work to enable them catch up with ease. Such views were captured during interviews with principals and guidance and counselling teachers respectively:

i. "We don't discriminate them. In fact those who are well behaved we make them officials, we made one our head girl because her character was good, she was mature though academically she was not very good. The other students after being talked to stopped calling her names and they were looking at her now as a role model. We also give them tokens for good performance. ---for those who try and the teachers are able to see that they are doing well in class they give them support by encouraging them and give
them exercise books or even recognizing them at the school assembly" (PR12).

ii. “---so we talk to teachers on how to pass information in class ‘we should not actually give examples which will demean the student mother” (PR11).

iii. “Sometimes once in a while you can get time and maybe have time with the girl and teach her for about an hour and you make sure that she is copying the notes. Then you can also call a few of the girls who are her close friends to assist her write the notes because the notes may be so many” (CG&C 7).

Parents and other students were also not left behind in supporting student-mothers especially in their academic endeavours. On this point, some parents said:

iv. “I give her enough time; we have a duty roster if you cook today tomorrow you will not cook, the other time you will cook like that like that. So she plans her time, by 8.00p.m. we have eaten and then she studies up to 10.00p.m.” (P2).

v. “Abiro ga e skul penjo jopuonj kaka nyako dhi gi somo to gikona ga ni koro gineno pogruok gi kaka ne odonjo en piny to akono gi ni meduru mana konye” [I always come to find out from teachers how the girl is progressing with her studies and they tell me that they are noticing some difference since she returned, she is below the standards and I urge them to continue assisting her] (P7).

Furthermore, other students, one boy and one girl respectively commented as follows:

vi. “We (students) give them our notebooks to copy notes and sometimes help them in copying them. Considering that we have many subjects, so she will have many notes to copy so I must just help her copy the notes” (FGD girls LN: R2).

vii. “Like in Maths you cannot give somebody notes to copy, you have to sit down with her (the student mother) and explain to her” (FGD boys N: R5).

Some of the school administrators indicated the contribution of fathers in the support of student-mothers as illustrated in these quotes:
viii. "The fathers do, in fact there are two cases I have seen the fathers taking the initiative to ask for a second chance for their daughters" (PR8).

ix. "When I had the first student mother I was surprised that the person who was concerned about her coming back to school was her father, she had just delivered and one week had elapsed the person who brought her to school was the father" (PR10).

In contrast, some school administrators indicated that some fathers were less concerned and required the schools' intervention to act supportively to their daughters who had delivered and returned to school. They expressed their views as illustrated in these quotes:

x. "I usually counsel the parents to accept the child, like the fathers are usually resistant to bring their daughters to school. So I usually insist that I must see the father also and create a good environment for the girl at home" (PR2).

xi. "Like if a child is coming from a different school to here you will always find that it is the mother who is striving to bring the girl back to school. But if the father is alive we always call for him too and we talk to them together so that when it comes to provisions they just have to give the girl everything because if it the mother all alone this child is still going to fall by the roadside again" (PR7).

In as much as the parents, teachers and peers tried to support the student-mothers they too faced various challenges that hindered their full support. Parents tried to provide their daughters with school requirements but at times it was a challenge. Teachers, on the other hand, lacked proper skills to handle student-mothers' situations and they found it difficult to make up for the missed lessons by the student-mothers. Other students too had their challenges with regard to assisting their colleagues to cope with their situation. Some parents commented as follows:

xii. "Kokwayo to imiye mana kotama kende to ka angi pesa to ang'iewone to kotama to ok ang'iewne enbe oneno ni ong'e otama" [When she requests for the items, she gets when I have the funds but when funds are lacking I don't buy and she also understands] (P8).
“Ing’e ni pek to nyaka bedi nikech seche ma abet ka arito ne nyathi ka odhi skul nyaka oduogi ing’e ni koro yuto pek nikech kawavuok eka konyruok nyalo bedo to koro ka abet chakre okinyi nyaka odhiambo yuto bedo matek” [You know it is a challenge economically because when I stay around to baby sit the whole day as she goes to school I cannot get money which I could have got if I went out in search of it] (P6).

In addition, based on the observations on student-mothers at school, guidance and counselling teacher and other students commented respectively as follows:

xiv. “Classes that are missed at times being a day school it is difficult to compensate or make up for them. Like if a student misses a class for a week it is not very easy for a teacher to get another week to try and fill in that time that was lost” (CG&C 7).

xv. “You will have a lot of work to do since you have to read on your own and help her maybe copying notes and also teaching her” (FGD girls N: R4).

xvi. “It is time consuming, the one who is assisting is wasting more time because he/she also needs to do some revision and do some personal studies too but they cannot do that adequately because you will also be assisting the other one (student-mothers) in need” (FGD boys LN: R2).

4.3.2.2 Emotional support

Emotional support reflects the individual’s experience of receiving care, encouragement of the sense of personal value and the perception of confidence and trust from family, friends, neighbours and colleagues. Parents were very supportive in assisting student-mothers to make them feel cared for by taking care of their young ones as the girls go to school. The following is what one Principal and one parent had to say:

i. “They provide support at home because mostly they come back almost immediately in which case some people are taking care of the children and that is already a big support” (PR6).
ii. "Nyathine nitiere mama mahuong machulo 600 e dwe ma sama adhi kamoro to rite nitech samoro adhiga e yore mag uso. Sama an dala to an ema asiko abet gi nyathi kendo anindo kode kendo an ema ate e klinic mingi pok onyono osuptal gi nyathino an ema akavo ting’ne" [There is an elderly lady who I pay Kshs. 600 per month to look after her baby as I go doing business but when I am at home mostly it is me who looks after the baby. I even sleep with the baby and take him/her for clinic visits the mother has never gone to hospital with the baby and I also provide for the baby] (P7).

Teachers and other students also provided care and encouragement to the student-mothers making them have confidence and trust as this encouraged their sense of personal value. The following is what one principal and some students had to say regarding this:

iii. "Well, sometimes like, during that period they are still breast feeding, we don’t keep them in school up to may be 5p.m. when other students are leaving. At least we can release them to go home early also to attend to the young ones. Sometimes the baby is sick so may be the student mother has taken the baby to the clinic and therefore misses some lessons when they return, we understand. We don’t treat them negatively or punish them because of such, but we talk to them that in case of such at least they need to send some one to school to ask for permission if they have to be away to attend to issues that pertain to their mother-hood" (PR18).

iv. "Sometimes for example when she is my sister I can encourage her by cooperating with her on how we can finish the work early and concentrate on class work" (FGD boys LN: R6).

v. "I encourage them not to give up even when she is talked about by the others. I also urge them (student-mothers) not to feel shy about their status" (FGD girls N: R4).

4.3.2.3. Informative support

Informative support refers to appropriate advice and assistance in coping and solving problems.

Guidance and counselling was the most critical form of support student-mothers were accorded by teachers, peers, parents and other relatives both at school and at home to help them cope with
their situations. Student-mothers got appropriate advice and assistance from their parents, teachers and peers. The following is what some parents had to say:

i. “I tell her go to school and she will be stable in future; for she will be able to take care of the boy comfortably. I do normally counsel her, guide her and advice her. I try to open up her eyes so that she can see and focus on her future life that she can make it even with the boy. I encourage her to work harder so that she can be somebody in future. I just urge her to study and work hard for she can get an A or even a B” (P2).

ii. “—samoro ka wakoso mafuta to ajiwe ni ket aketa kwe matintin wandong’o mar siling’ abich kata apar no kiketo chunyi to Nyasaye ong’eyo kama obiro ketie” [At times when we lack paraffin I encourage her to have peace the little paraffin we buy worth five or even ten shillings if she dedicates herself to her studies the Almighty knows how He will handle and bless her] (P9).

iii. “Owacho naga ni mama jopuonje wa to beyo ndi gitemo puonje kaka onyalo tiyo gi thuolone maber e weche mag skul kata ka en gi nyathi dala.Kendo givuoyo gi jowetegi mondo okawe kaka achiel kuom gi” [She tells me that mother our teachers are very good they try to educate her on how to make good use of her time to study even when she has a baby at home and that they also speak to the other students to accept her as one of them] (P6).

School administrators and guidance and counselling teachers had the following to say with regard to guiding student-mothers:

iv. “We have got a group called KEFEADO which tells them so much about their sex identity and their rights. Most of the girls who joined that club are so outstanding in their reasoning and the way they handle themselves. They have come out seeing. If anything, even those mothers themselves today they are so outstanding” (PR7).

v. “In most cases we put them in counselling groups, we have peer groups. So like the student-mothers we put them together and talk to them during lunch time because we don’t actually want to expose their state and experiences to the rest of the student population to some extent. In the groups, they normally discuss about issues affecting them in school” (PR11).

vi. “We realize that they are going through difficult times because you find that one is a student and also has a baby at home so when given assignment to go
and do, you find that when they reach home they want to take care of the baby and also do assignments and this can be very difficult. So at times we call them and advice them on how to share their time between their studies and taking care of their children. We also speak to their parents and advise them to try to understand them and offer them with enough time and resources to enable them to study and do homework comfortably and with ease when they are at home” (CG&C 2).

In addition, girls had the following to say regarding guiding student-mothers on resuming studies:

vii. “I advise them so that they can talk to their mothers so that they can take care of their babies” (FGD girls LN: R1).

viii. “I share with her how we can control ourselves not to get pregnant again” (FGD girls N: R3).

ix. “We encourage them to read at school because at home maybe they cannot read so I tell them to try and stay awake in class and learn with the others” (FGD girls LN: R1).

When giving pieces of advice teachers ensured that they not only dealt with the affected (student-mothers) but also with those around them like other students. This was done by addressing the two parties (student-mothers and other students) together and also the other students separately on their own. School administrators had the following to say:

x. “---I talk to the girl as she returns, her classmates, then to the whole school asking them to welcome her back and not to ridicule her. We help them fit back easily by applauding their coming back at the assembly by clapping for them to make them feel valued and appreciated” (PR5).

xi. “We normally talk to our students to avoid situations that would lead to motherhood while they are still in school. We talk to them at the assembly and even as we teach and tell them that if they are in a compromising situation then they should use condoms but better still avoid sex” (PR4).
xii. "---the students also have what they call the ladies club where they discuss issues affecting them and I believe they are encouraged and other students are again advised and told to accept them back in the school family" (PR14).

xiii. "We tell them (other students) to have general love of God as all are pursuing the same future and looking towards a certain common goal---a mother cannot become a mother by herself; we tell the boys. Somebody was involved, why do you castigate this girl and yet you even do not know the father. I always refer them to John 4: where a Samaritan woman was taken to Jesus because of being an adulteress. This shows that we castigate the girls against this hostility but sometimes it might not be their problem. Where are the boys? So they feel challenged" (PR7).

One guidance and counselling teacher expressed the following:

xiv. "We discourage the students who tease them (student-mothers) on returning especially by referring to their pregnancy period and their children. We advice and encourage other students to give them peace and also ask fellow students to cooperate with them by maybe not discriminating against them but give them any support that they can accord to them" (CG&C 2).

In addition, one parent and one boy expressed themselves respectively in the following quotes:

xv. "Owachonaga ni jopuonje orwake kaka nyithindo mamoko, gijiwe ga kendo gituuyo gi nyithindo mamoko mondo orwake e skul kendo gikonye" [She tells me that the teachers accept her, they encourage her and urge other students to accept and support her in school] (P4).

xvi. "Other students are encouraged to help them in their academic work" (FGD boys N: R2).

4.3.2.4. Appraisal support

Student-mothers were motivated to carry on with their studies by using examples of successful student-mothers. At times they were advised to repeat a class because of time wastage due to pregnancy and its consequences to help them catch up with the syllabus coverage. These views
can be illustrated by the following quotes by some principals and one guidance and counselling teacher respectively:

i. "---we always give examples of those who have gone through it and have coped very well and succeeded. We also advise them on how to cope and even the mothers who have joined us or who have dropped out and come back because of this encouragements they become positive in life at last" (PR4).

ii. "---if they have taken too long and have missed a lot, we ask them to make choices with regard to the class they are to join, whether to repeat or to proceed to the next form depending on their content coverage. They are then given some interview not to discriminate them but to confirm how up to date they are as per content coverage" (PR5).

iii. "We also give them very special attention by talking to them. We want to know the progress of the baby this is done majorly by the madam teachers. This is done to make them feel that even if you have given birth there are people who are concerned and would like to know the baby's status" (CG&C 9).

4.4 How student-mothers cope

Student-mothers got actively involved in trying to cope with their double role of being a mother and a student concurrently so as to meet the demands of both responsibilities and pursue their secondary education successfully.

4.4.1 Problem focused coping strategies

Student-mothers used this strategy in order to try and overcome some of their many challenges. Student-mothers asked for support and assistance from parents and other family members to help them manage some of their responsibilities to enable them maximize their schooling opportunities.
4.4.1.1 Financial matters

To make them overcome their financial difficulties student-mothers were forced to look for finances to cater for their needs (personal and school) alongside the needs of their babies by getting involved in various activities and ways. Student-mothers expressed their views as stated in the following quotes:

i. “To financially support myself I sometimes work for people over the holidays” (SM8).

ii. “I normally participate in ordinary jobs like fetching firewood and then I sell them or even prepare baskets and also do farm work to get money” (SM48).

iii. “I normally ask my mother to wash the baby’s clothes and take the baby for clinic visits when I’m away.—ask my parent to talk to the principal and agree on when they will pay my school fees to enable me learn without interferences even before my fees is paid” (SM 10).

iv. “I ask my sister who is still in primary school class 7 to help me take the child to the hospital if I have no chance to do so” (SM40).

v. “I ask my parents and other relatives to aid me in whatever is needed in school or even for my personal needs and those of my baby” (SM64).

4.4.1.2 Time management

Student-mothers try their level best to fully utilize any free time that they could find to catch up with other learners in terms of syllabus coverage, and also do their personal study while at home or even in school. Sometimes the student-mothers went to school very early and stayed behind in the evening as others left for home to fully utilize their time at school to enable them get enough time to finish assignments and also study. They expressed their views in the following quotes:
1. "I usually make a timetable for my personal studies and I follow it strictly. I also squeeze my routine work at home to get more time to study; I minimize my sleeping time so as to have enough time to study" (SM5).

ii. "I just go home running and do all the required chores very fast so as to finish them early and get ample time to study" (SM44).

iii. "I spend most of my time studying in school before going back home" (SM48).

4.4.1.3 Make ups for the missed lessons

At times student-mothers also explore the field of education by consulting teachers for remedial services, and also other students to know what was covered in their absence, and to borrow notes from them to enable them be at per with their counterparts who were regular at school. They expressed their views in the following quotes:

i. "I normally consult teachers, classmates and sometimes parents" (SM9).

ii. "Whenever I have missed a lesson, I ask my fellow students what they did and then I copy notes and ask for explanations" (SM45).

One guidance and counselling teacher commented as follows:

iii. "To some, those whom are very free with their teachers they see them individually and they are helped in those areas that they are lagging behind" (CG&C13).

4.4.1.4 Self drive

Student-mothers had their own initiated drive to make them cope with their situations to better their academic abilities, and had some role models whom they strived to emulate. They also read story books to keep their minds occupied and sometimes went through articles that talked about
the challenges they were going through to guide them on how to deal with their situation. They expressed their views in the following quotes:

i. "I work hard in my academics and I also take my studies seriously so that if an exam is done, I perform better making my class members to respect me" (SM20).

ii. "I read books to guide and counsel myself" (SM56).

iii. "When I feel lonely and shy at school I normally read story books to keep my mind busy and also participate in school activities especially during games time" (SM48).

iv. "I contact my close friends who have experienced the same to learn from them" (SM48).

v. "I have some people around me who are learned and I look at them as my role models to make me succeed" (SM 8).

4.4.1.5 Spiritual support

When situations become tough people turn to God for support by seeking God’s intervention to deal with their social and emotional challenges. Student-mothers too used this strategy to help them go through some of their life challenges. Some student-mothers and one parent respectively commented as follows:

i. "I just pray to God to help me manage my situations" (SM 51).

ii. "I always pray and ask God to help me" (SM50).

iii. "---she has joined C.U. club and I hear her sing spiritual songs so she is getting spiritual support" (P2).
4.4.2 Avoidance coping strategies

In some cases student-mothers felt overwhelmed by their situations to the point of lacking what to do to improve on their condition, they therefore accepted whatever came their way. These views can be illustrated by the following quotes:

i. "My mother quarrels me a lot but I just keep quiet because there is nobody I can share my problems with" (SM11).

ii. "I just assume and ignore what people say about me" (SM50).

iii. "I just do nothing because I know God is great all will finally come to an end" (SM49).

iv. "I am unhappy missing lessons but I can do nothing about it" (SM22).

4.4.3 Emotion focused coping strategies

To help them manage their emotions student-mothers chose to stay away from those who intimidated them in one way or the other. Sometimes they just became very bold and faced their situations head on without minding what others made them go through as illustrated below:

i. "While in school my friends laugh at me all the time so I always stay away from them and I become lonely" (SM4).

ii. "I just stand firm whether they are ignoring me or not so that I can achieve my goals" (SM48).

In addition, based on observations on student-mothers, one principal and a parent said:

iii. "---when they return they face a lot of stigma, however, some just decide to be strong. We have a case in Form two who just decided to really build her psychological and social shock absorbers that she is there to stay and she wants to learn and she does well, she is in the units" (PR 7).
iv. "Sani to aneno ni en gi bidii mar somo moloyo kaka ne en ga chon" [Currently I see that she has more interest and much dedication to her studies than she was before] (P6).

One guidance and counselling teacher gave the following comment:

v. "---those who come back some of them recover so fast and fit into the system comfortably, though for many it is a tough and long process that they have to go through" (CG&C8).

Student-mothers tried their best to make full use of the three identified coping mechanisms to help them cope with their situations. However, they (student-mothers) did not succeed fully in overcoming their challenges to make them more comfortable as they doubled up as mothers and students. Some of the student-mothers were least satisfied with their attempts to solve their problems and they expressed their feelings and views in the following quotes:

vi. "I try to squeeze my time and do all that is required but sometimes I become stranded" (SM41).

vii. "Sometimes I spare my time to read but sometimes it is difficult and quite challenging" (SM15).

viii. "I talked to my teachers about my social and emotional problems and they advised me on how to overcome them, but I have not gained so much from their pieces of advice" (SM45).

4.5 Discussion

The discussion presented in this section is based on the findings of the study with regard to the objectives of the study. The first of which was to identify socio-economic and psychological factors that influence the school completion for girls who resume studies after their delivery.
4.5.1 Demographic data

Most of the student-mothers (23), that is, 28.2% were 14 years old when they gave birth to their babies (Table 4.2). This is an indication that young girls of age 14 are vulnerable to pregnancy since they engage in unprotected sexual activities early. Teenage pregnancy is rampant among girls aged 14-17 years when they are in the peak of adolescence but it steadily drops as they turn 18 and beyond. This finding was supported by the research findings by Centre for the Study of Adolescence (CSA) in 2003 as reported by Onyando and Omondi (2008) that a survey conducted among Secondary school students indicated that 13% had become pregnant by age 14 years. The present findings that teenage pregnancy steadily dropped at age 18 years and above contradicts the findings reported by Onyando and Omondi (2008) that 1 out of 5 adolescents have begun childbearing by age 17 and by 18 years 3 out of 10 will have began child bearing. However, there were some exceptional cases where girls at the age between 11 and 13 had also delivered (Table 4.2). This is an indication that sexual activity among the youth begins very early when they are still quite young making them be at great risk of not going through their education successfully without interruptions. This finding is consistent with the finding by CSA (2008) that in Kenya sexual activity among adolescents for, both boys and girls is high and starts early. Eight out of ten adolescents have sex before they reach twenty years. This clearly shows that girls need a lot of guidance and counselling at upper primary and lower secondary level to help curb the problem of teenage pregnancy which is a great contributor to girls dropping out of school.

Objective one of the study was to identify socio-economic and psychological factors that influence the school completion for girls who resume studies after their delivery. The study established that the retention and completion rate of student-mothers in school after returning
greatly had a link on the resources available in the girls’ families. Most of the girls came from families that relied on farming and self employment to sustain themselves. 30.4% and 45.3% of the student-mothers were daughters of mothers and fathers who relied on farming as a source of livelihood while 34.2% and 20.0% had self employed parents (Fig 4.7). This two income generating activities were not very reliable since they depended a great deal on climatic factors and the state of the market in terms of supply and demand. This made most of the student-mothers go through a lot of financial difficulties, a reason that may make some of them not complete their education. This finding concurs with the findings by Hunt (2008) that household income is found to be an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially incurs a range of costs, both upfront and hidden. Household income is linked to a range of factors: when children start school, how often they attend, whether they have to temporarily withdraw and also when and if they drop-out. Hunt (2008) found that the working contexts of families (and their income group) can influence the probability of access, with children from households involved in trade more likely to be in school than farming households, but this not having a significant effect on the probability of completion.

The study achieved objective one as it established that very few student-mothers came from families with parents and siblings with post secondary education. 22.1% and 10.5% were children of parents with post secondary education while 67% came from families with no siblings in post secondary institution (Fig 4.3 and Fig 4.4). This is an indication that the student-mothers lacked role models and mentors in higher levels of education. The education level of the family members has a great influence on children’s access, retention and success in education. The educational background of the mother contributed to the downward trend in student
motherhood, while the education of the father had no influence in reducing student motherhood. This however, did not mean that the fathers' education had no influence on the student-mothers' education. The fathers who had a higher education were better placed to educate their daughters even after they had delivered. The fathers gave the girls a second chance to make their dreams come true and attain their ambitions. Over 50% student-mothers were at risk of not doing well at school or even drop-out of school because they lacked elder siblings with higher educational level to act as their role models and mentors. This finding is consistent with the findings of Hunt (2008) that those individuals who make up the household seem to have an influence over educational access and retention, particularly in poorer communities. Children of poorly educated parents and children with fewer role models in higher education were more likely to drop-out.

Girls need mentorship and role models to enable them stay focused in their education. Most of the student-mothers were from families with no siblings in post secondary education institutions. This is the reason as to why the girls may have got into motherhood at a tender age as they lacked individuals to emulate. They also lacked proper mentorship services from elder siblings as they went through their education. Mangino (2008) states that the mentor-like relationship with teachers and other family members satisfied various needs of the teen parents who return to school to pursue their education.

4.5.2 Student-mothers' challenges

Objective one of the study was to identify socio-economic and psychological factors that influence the school completion for girls who resume studies after their delivery. The study
established that student-mothers doubled up as mothers and students and this was a big responsibility for young mothers who were still developing psychologically. This demanding role contributed to the challenges that student-mothers faced within the school environment and sometimes at home, or even in the general society. This finding concurs with the findings of Okoth (2005) that student-mothers who resume studies face a lot of challenges that make them have difficulties to fit back into the school environment.

4.5.2.1 Socio-Psychological Challenges

These are challenges that mainly touched on the student-mothers' social and psychological life. Socio-economic and psychological challenges are those characteristics that uniquely identify an individual and their environment. These characteristics can help explain the experiences of an individual and indicate what they actually go through. This finding is supported by Bayona (1996) who concluded that a number of girls have their school careers cut short by unwanted pregnancies and as a result, suffer the negative social and psychological consequences derived from this situation. The study established various socio-psychological challenges faced by student-mothers as categorized below.

4.5.2.1.1 Lack of professional counselling

According to objective one, the study established that student-mothers were counselled as they returned to school and even when they were in school to prepare them on how to deal with their challenges like stigma, balancing their time to attend to schooling and parenting demands. However, the counselling services that they received were not very adequate since the counsellors lacked proper training in counselling. The consequence is that the student-mothers
got overwhelmed with their situation making many of them not cope, resulting in their poor performance. This finding does not concur with the findings of the study conducted by Chigona and Chetty (2007) that found that most teenage mothers return to school without going through any counselling on how they can be prepared to deal with the issues of parenting and how to meet the demands of the school. However, the finding of this study is consistent with the findings of Wamahiu (1996) that many of the teachers involved in guidance and counselling are often not well trained to offer this specialized service and that counsellors are sometimes not well informed on the subject they are teaching and as a result, are not able to give the needed guidance.

4.5.2.1.2 Stigma and discrimination

According to objective one, the study established that in most cases student-mothers faced a lot of stigma and discrimination within the school environment, at home and in the community. They experienced stigma from various sources, they stigmatized themselves, were teased by fellow students, some parents and some teachers. Boys and girls often verbally abused these student-mothers, making their participation in class seem unwelcome. Teenage mothers were sometimes ridiculed in front of classmates by both teachers and fellow students whenever they failed to satisfy the class requirements, making them suffer from low self-esteem, fear and loneliness at school. This finding concurs with that of Lees (1987) that student-mothers are at best ignored or at worst ridiculed. Low self-esteem made them feel out of place especially when others felt that they were not fit to be within the school system. They suffered from inferiority complex, this made most of them fear approaching their teachers for assistance, an aspect that negatively affected their performance, they felt isolated and withdrawn and whenever there were
discussions on teenage pregnancy they felt that people were only talking about their situation. This finding concurs with the findings of Chigona and Chetty (2007) that found that sometimes teenage mothers have fear participating in class discussions for instance when topics like 'teenage pregnancy' arose they became particularly uncomfortable that everybody was talking about their situation. This finding is also consistent with the views of Lerner (1985), Kenway (1990) and UNESCO (1991) who argued that low self-esteem is a problem for certain individuals, as it prevents them from making the best of their schooling and their lives, and that it is a significant cause of low academic performance.

4.5.2.1.3 Lack of concentration

According to objective one, the study established that most student-mothers were normally not fully settled while at school. They lacked a great level of concentration in their academic work due to lack of ability to adequately manage parenting and schooling successfully at the same time. In addition, they were always worried about the babies they left back at home in respect to their care and health status, and lacked enough sleep at night due to motherhood demands making them sleepy during the day, hence their lack of concentration. This state made most of them be absent minded always while in class and therefore resulted into their poor performance, majority of them no longer performed as they used to before they got their babies. This finding concurs with the findings of Abbas (2009) that learners with social problems did not pay attention in the classroom and that they found it hard to concentrate on their work.
4.5.2.1.4 Worries over marriage

According to objective one, the study established that the society does not appreciate teenage pregnancy and children born out of wedlock. Considering that these students were already in this state, most of them looked worried over their future life as they wondered whether they were going to get married or not after completing their education. This finding is consistent with the finding of (Theron & Dunn 2006) that the majority of the birth-mothers held negative future expectations. They expected the future to be a continuation of bleakness. Such negative anticipation cannot fuel motivation and must therefore have impacted negatively on school performance.

4.5.2.1.5 Lack of skills to handle teen mothers’ situation

According to objective one, the study established that teenage mothers were disadvantaged at school because their teachers did not know how to handle them and their situation when they were at school. Teachers had a difficult time handling the student-mothers because they did not know how to treat such students. How to realistically tell the student-mothers to take care of themselves was considered a big challenge and as not being effective since the student-mothers were already sexually active. They were left in a state of dilemma, to advocate for or not advocate for the use of contraceptives by such girls. Teachers had challenges addressing emerging issues or even teaching certain subjects like Biology and C.R.E. that deal with aspects that the student-mothers had or were going through to have the others informed and at the same time keep the image of the student-mothers in their midst. This finally interfered with the performance of most student-mothers who had developed a negative attitude and lacked interest in some subjects that touched on issues that they were facing in life. This finding concurs with
other researches by Jones (1998) and Chigona and Chetty (2007) that found that teenage mothers may be disadvantaged at school because their teachers do not know how to handle them and their situation when they are at school and that by giving less attention to some student-mothers in class, the teachers ultimately penalize these student-mothers in that it contributes to their failing to master curriculum knowledge. This finding is in contrast with the finding of (East, 1998: 169) who suggests that schools usually have staff that have the knowledge and experience to deal with teenagers and that they are more ‘teen-sensitive’.

4.5.2.2 Economic challenges

According to objective one, the study established that the retention and completion rate of student-mothers in school after returning greatly have a link on the resources available in the student-mothers’ families. Most of the student-mothers came from families that relied on farming and self employment to sustain themselves. However, these are sectors that have got several challenges like weather conditions and the nature of the market that greatly determine their success or failure making such families be at great risk of loosing out in case of prolonged drought. A greater percentage of student-mothers were daughters of mothers who had nothing at all to do to fend for their lives and fully depended on their husbands for their sustenance. This great level of dependency may make the girls be at risk of dropping out of school due to lack of finances to see them through their education. This finding is consistent with the findings of Kaufman, 2001; Hallman & Grant, 2006 and Theron & Dunn, 2006 that poverty limits the range of experience learners bring to learning, thereby curbing success in school activities. Furthermore, low socio-economic status is often associated with inadequate support for learners' education. Even if parents want their children to have an education, from a young age poor
children often need to contribute to family responsibilities. They work relatively long hours to contribute to the family income during adolescence, reducing the time available for them to study and succeed in school.

As girls, when student-mothers return from school, they had to do household chores and the only time they could do their homework was at night. Unfortunately, most of them came from families where the lighting system in the house was just hurricane lamps making it a bit difficult for the girls to study or even do their homework at night due to limited fuel (paraffin). There was financial constraint to the girls, their families, relatives and teachers since those who tried to assist them too were not always able to cope with the challenge due to the large number of individuals to be supported and lack of funds making sustainability of such assistance almost impossible. Apart from this, the students themselves had difficulties because of lack of money to adequately take care of their children and themselves. This finding concurs with the findings of Chigona and Chetty (2007) that many teenage mothers as girls had to do household chores when they return from school and the only time they could do their homework was at night. Unfortunately, some of them came from families where the house was just too small making it hard for the girls to study or do their homework at night. This is because they could not have the lights on whilst other people were sleeping. Additionally, higher rates of pregnancy are observed among young women, indicating that poverty inhibits the schooling of the girls both directly and indirectly.
4.5.3 Support accorded to student-mothers

Objective two of the study was to identify the kind of institutional and parental support student-mothers received on resuming studies. The study established that, only allowing student-mothers back to school could/did not help them succeed in their secondary education. It was evident that student-mothers needed much support if they were to complete schooling successfully. Human beings are social beings who coexist and none of them can sustain oneself without getting support from those around them. This concurs with Mbiti’s renowned statement, ‘I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am’ (Mbiti, 1989). The success of a student mother was contingent upon active contributions of all stakeholders in supporting them through their education process alongside motherhood demands. This finding is consistent with the finding of Chigona and Chetty (2007) who found that there is need for adequate support to be accorded to teen mothers to enable them go through their schooling and mothering responsibilities comfortably when they return to school and finally succeed academically.

The study found that the kind of support that student-mothers received upon returning to studies was social and spiritual support. This support was further divided into various sub-categories as illustrated below:

4.5.3.1 Spiritual support

According to objective two, the study established that student-mothers were supported by their parents and schools to get access to spiritual support that was also very necessary and important to them in handling their situations. At home, parents provided spiritual interventions to them to help them manage some of their challenges. Within the school, there were pastoral programmes
that were put in place to make the students get nourished spiritually and be able to get a way forward on how to go about their difficulties. This finding concurs with the view expressed by Abbas (2009) that the educational guidelines place the demands of pastoral care on all teachers. Teachers are expected to fulfil the various roles that deal with learners' social problems and pastoral care role.

4.5.3.2 Social support

According to objective two, the study established that student-mothers were accorded social support. This kind of support was greatly accorded to student-mothers in various ways. Social support was categorized into four major sub-headings as indicated below:

4.5.3.2.1 Instrumental Support

Student-mothers were financially supported by their parents, other relatives, teachers and school administrators to meet their school requirements and fees, their babies' requirements and their personal needs when they were in positions to do so. However, at times they could not satisfy all their financial demands and needs. This finding concurs with the view of Mpesha (2000) who argues that the homes and societies that try to assist these rejected girls like the Jamaa Home in Kenya are not always able to cope with large numbers because of lack of funds. The finding is consistent with the findings of Abbas (2009) indicating that while some parents were co-operative and supportive when teachers contacted them and suggested that they should come to the school for further assistance, some of the parents were un-co-operative when the teachers contacted them to inform them that their child had a social problem and due to their financial circumstances, they did not have the time to deal with their children's problems.
The findings of this study showed that the fathers of the babies made some impact in supporting the student-mothers' education since they were positive about their academics (Table 4.1) but were not involved in provision of financial support. They were only mentioned by the student-mothers as being supportive in academic matters as they encouraged the girls to continue with their education and showed interest in their schooling experiences. This finding tends to be consistent and to some extent contradictory to the findings of Logsdon et al. (2002) that good support from the baby's father has a positive impact on the health of the student-mother and her child, as well as on her life circumstances and that the student-mothers who experienced pregnancy as both a physiological and psychological demand described a situation in which they were financially dependent on partners, because age is the criterion for the social security system to provide social allowances. This is also contradictory to the findings of Wahn (2007) that the father of the baby was not frequently mentioned as a source of support to the teen mothers.

It is usually very necessary that individuals be acknowledged and appreciated in one way or the other when they have achieved something in life. The school administration and teachers took note of the importance of acknowledgement and appreciation of one's efforts by accepting and appreciating the abilities, strengths of student-mothers within the school setup. This they did by making some of them student leaders; a sign that they too were appreciated as students within the school system. This is consistent with the view of Schultz (2001) that once teachers and policy makers change their perceptions of teenage pregnancies from being a problem to viewing it as a reality, they can begin to perceive it as a motivating factor and assist young mothers to plan their future accordingly by appreciating them fully.
Most teachers were very supportive and ready to support the learners in their academic work to enable them catch up with the content coverage with much ease by making follow-ups on their performance and offering remedial services when they could (Table 4.3 and Fig 4.5). This finding concurs with the findings of Theron and Dunn (2006) that in terms of educator impact, all the teen-mothers reported that they felt supported by their teachers to varying degrees after the adoption. All teen-mothers reported being motivated by teacher-interaction when they returned to school.

Teachers were willing and ready to assist the girls make up for the lost hours, however, this was also not very easy due to time limit because the schools were fully day and that there were no set up programmes in schools to that effect, and so it was all an individuals’ initiative to support the student when they came forth for assistance. This finding concurs with the view of Blair et al. (1968) who observed that most teachers always want to support young people who are trying to cope with difficult situations. They are involved in actively encouraging the young learners to access wealth of opportunities within the school environment. This finding is consistent with the finding of Dellinger (2004) that even a young woman who is mature, bright, and competent for her age will find it hard to negotiate pregnancy, and then care for a child, perhaps hold a job too, and keep up with school. By recognizing educational needs and showing sympathy and flexibility in addressing them, schools offer crucial assistance to this vulnerable group. However, such findings contradict the findings of Chigona and Chetty (2007) that found that teachers were not willing to go through the missed lessons with just one or two students.
Support from family members, partners, teachers and school administrators tended to provide a complementary combination of support for the student-mother (Table 4.2). Other organizations were also not left out in the support of student-mothers. They actively took part in empowering the girls and also supporting them financially by paying their fees through the intervention of school principals in most cases. Some of such organizations that were identified were the Tuungane Youth programme, Kenya Female Advisory Organization (KEFEADO), World Vision and the Constituency Development Fund office. This finding concurs with the views of Abbas (2009) that social problems cannot be dealt with solely by the school or the teacher. The Education sector, the community and the parents as well as other social service organizations should jointly create preventive and intervention strategies to assist learners with social problems. Such a holistic approach can assist schools and teachers to deal with learners’ social problems more effectively. In some cases school administrators encouraged parents to have the girls transferred to other schools after delivery. While in such schools it was hoped and believed that they would enjoy care, protection and support with regard to their schooling and be treated like any other student since their past situation may not be well known. This was to save them the agony of being subjected to stigma and discrimination which was highly experienced by student-mothers in schools. This finding is consistent with the view of Wahn (2007) who argues that when in places where your past situations with regard to teenage pregnancy and motherhood are not well known you are saved the agony of being subjected to psychological and emotional suffering while at school.
4.5.3.2.2 Informative Support

Parents, teachers, peers and other relatives gave appropriate advice and assistance in coping and solving problems to student-mothers to help them manage their challenges by having a changed attitude towards oneself and adjusting fully into their new situation and position. Most student-mothers received counselling services from their parents as compared to other sources (Fig 4.5). This is an indication that in as much as the students spent more time with teachers at school than being with their parents, teachers did not actively offer them with the counselling services that they needed. This also illustrated that the counselling services that the student-mothers got from their parents were not very adequate considering the time shared together making the students’ access to counselling services marginal. This finding is consistent with the findings of other researches done by Romo and Falbo (1996) and Wahn (2007) who found that parental involvement in education, as well as support, can greatly influence a student’s motivation to continue in education; mothers are known to play active roles in their children’s education, especially their daughters as they maintain higher expectations for them as well as other children.

In as much as the teachers felt that they were doing a good job counselling the students, it came out that they were not doing well in counselling as per their recipients’ expectation an indication that teachers need to improve on the delivery of such services to the affected students to help them better their coping abilities upon returning to school (Fig 4.5). This finding concurs with the findings of Mpesha (2000) that counsellors are sometimes not well informed on the subject they are teaching and as a result not able to give the needed guidance.
4.5.3.2.3 Appraisal Support

The schools tried their best to make student-mothers comfortable upon returning to school by communicating to them information that was relevant to self-evaluation rather than problem solving with the intention of boosting their self-esteem. Student-mothers were at times motivated to carry on with their studies as they were given examples of successful student-mothers. At times they were asked about their babies' welfare to make them feel cared for despite what they had gone through. They were also asked to make a choice whether to repeat their former classes or not considering the time they had lost while out of school. This finding is consistent with the view of Theron and Dunn (2006) who suggest that upon resuming student-mothers be counselled to empower them to come to terms with their experience and grief, encouraged to become an active part of the school community to find a new focus for living and get assertiveness training so that they are empowered to stand up for themselves to ask for necessary support.

4.5.3.2.4 Emotional Support

In most cases student-mothers got much help from their families especially their mothers who took care of their babies or even employed other people who did it as the girls went to school. This made the girls feel cared for because the care of their young ones is care directed to them indirectly. Teachers and peers also took part in providing encouragement and ensuring that student-mothers' learning environment was conducive. This finding is consistent with the findings of Theron and Dunn (2006) that the birth-mothers indicated the presence of parental support pre- and post-pregnancy, as well as once they had returned to school. This finding also concurs with the findings of CSA Report (2008) and Chigona and Chetty (2007) that parents and relatives supported teen mothers by taking care of their young ones as they went to school. If
there is no one to look after the baby, the girl cannot return to school even if she wants to and the family can afford to take her back to school.

Parental education is a strong contributor to female student’s education. The education level of the student-mothers’ parents had a great impact on the girls and their education (Fig 4.3). Mothers with higher education background seemed to be better placed to guide their daughters against early pregnancies, thereby making the number of those who became pregnant to such mothers fewer compared to girls from families where mothers had a lower education background. This finding is consistent with the findings of Rowe et al. (2000) and CSA Report (2008) that an educated woman is more likely to appreciate the education of girls thereby encouraging the education of girls and breaking the vicious circle on poor girls’ education. Educating girls has been shown to increase the education of succeeding generations; educated mothers are more likely to send both boys and girls to school and keep them in school longer. This present finding is also consistent with the findings of Hunt (2008) that there is evidence that the gender and education level of the parent can influence which child is more likely to access and remain in school longer. Often it is the mother’s educational level in particular which is seen to have an effect on access. Young women who live with an adult female were more likely to return to school following a pregnancy-related drop-out.

The educational background of the fathers also determined the ability of the girls getting a second chance to pursue their education even after delivering. Student-mothers from families where fathers had a higher education background got a greater percentage for a second opportunity to get educated compared to those from families where fathers had a lower level of
education (Fig 4.3). This finding concurs with the findings of Hunt (2008) that the educational level of household members is particularly influential in determining whether and for how long children access schooling. Higher parental/household head level of education is associated with increased access to education, higher attendance rates and lower drop-out rates. A number of reasons are put forward for the link between parental education and retention in school. Some researchers indicate that non-educated parents cannot provide the support or often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling.

The training that teachers got from higher institutions of learning did not enable them to comfortably support and encourage the student-mothers to deal with their situation which made them ‘learners with specials needs’. Most teachers considered student-mothers as any other student within the school, and treated them just like other students without much consideration that made them feel special. As a result, most student-mothers were left behind in terms of syllabus coverage and this finally affected their academic performance, most of them were performing below their initial academic standards before their delivery. This finding is consistent with the finding of Abbas (2009) that teachers unanimously agreed that learners’ academic performance decreased when such learners experienced social problems. This finding is also consistent with the findings of Chigona and Chetty (2007) and CSA Report (2008) that found that it was unfortunate that teachers who were assumed to be in a better position to support and encourage teen mothers deal with their unique situation were, not sure how to handle such students at school as they were often not well trained to offer the specialized services that a pregnant teenager or a mother returning to school may need. In addition, some teachers saw teenage motherhood as a private issue and conceded that they should treat them like any other
student. However, this finding contradicted the view of Di Vesta and Thompson (1970) who felt that using the knowledge they received from their teacher training institutions, teachers stand a better chance to assist student-mothers adjust into the school system.

In most cases student-mothers were not able to match up to or even improve on their academic standards as they did before getting their babies. However, there were some who were motivated to work even harder because of their experiences making them perform better academically. Schultz (2001) in a study revealed that there were teen mothers who revealed that their academic successes were partly due to their persistence to continue studying because they wanted a better future for their children. The teen mothers at her school, who returned after giving birth on noticing that they now had a baby, it made them work harder in class and therefore performed better academically.

The research revealed that school support was an essential component to the student-mothers' success in the classroom and ultimate graduation from secondary school. School related factors were found to be one of the major factors contributing to student-mothers dropping out of school; it was also determined to be a key component in keeping at risk student-mothers in school. This finding concurs with the findings of Mangino (2008) that schools that failed to stimulate at risk students often failed keeping those students in school.

There were certain times when the needs of teen-mothers were not adequately met due to financial difficulties or even not knowing that the students were in specific needs. Some student-mothers were also never free to express some of their needs, they were so reserved and this
meant that their parents and guardians were to guess what they required and provide them with it. This finding is consistent to the findings of Logsdon and Usui (2006) that in some cases, the teenage mothers' needs are not sufficiently addressed. Some may be uncertain about their own needs or even may not know how to express them. At times they may expect and want people around them to understand them and support them in their new role even without them saying or requesting for such support. This finding is also consistent with the research findings of Theron and Dunn (2006) that all birth-mothers reported receiving support from their educators, but the birth-mothers who showed the greatest scholastic regression indicated that they had not always received the kind of support they needed. This could not be attributed to the educators as the birth-mothers referred to personal inability to convey the exact nature of their support needs. This finding is also supported by the findings of Flanagan et al. (1995), Peterson et al. (1995) and Klein (2005) that the teenage mother's ability to communicate her need for support requires skills. Often, young people complain about not knowing how to communicate their needs and emotions to others. They also find it difficult to express how they feel in different situations. Communication skills and negotiation skills vary by age and have the potential to affect how much support the teenage mother receives.

4.5.4 Student-mothers' Coping Mechanisms

Objective three of the study was to find out how student-mothers coped with the role of being a mother and student on resuming studies. The study established that student-mothers were different and distinct in all components of psychological adjustment processes and varied in the way they responded to challenges. Psychologists like Di Vesta (1970) and Mouly (1973) identify coping mechanism as a compulsory strategy in dealing with challenges and difficulties in our
daily life experiences. Each individual student mother therefore adapted a unique pattern of behaviour for satisfying their needs in socially acceptable ways. They reverted to coping strategies, harmful (such as avoidance and emotion focused) as well as constructive (problem focused).

4.5.4.1 Problem Focused Coping Mechanism

According to objective three, the study established that student-mothers got actively involved in having their challenges addressed if not solved. To have this done, they got involved in some economic activities like selling firewood, sugarcane or even working for others at home or in their farms at their free time over the weekend and holidays. Sometimes they requested for financial assistance from parents, teachers and other relatives. They worked out all means to catch up with the syllabus coverage by staying up late, waking up early or even staying longer at school to study. When they missed lessons they took it upon themselves to consult teachers and fellow students for assistance. Mostly they also struggled to meet some of their domestic demands in time by going home running to get enough time to clear these chores and get extra time to study before retiring to bed. Additionally, they developed self drive to work hard and compete with their colleagues. This finding concurs with the findings of previous researches by Di Vesta & Thompson (1970) and Schultz (2001) that revealed that there were teen mothers who revealed that their academic successes were partly due to their persistence to continue studying because they wanted a better future for their children. The teen mothers at her school, who returned after giving birth on noticing that they now had a baby, it made them work harder in class and therefore performed better academically.
They also appreciated the importance of prayer in all that they did and went through it as a strategy to deal with some of their difficulties. This is consistent with the view of Mouly (1973) who stated that a well adjusted person has positive self concept, knows and accepts oneself, displays social sensitivity, has confidence, conforms to social expectations, not because it is the thing to do, but because it promotes his self-realization and that of others and above all, he or she sets realistic goals. To achieve this, some students may resort to prayer, meditation and use of counselling facilities.

In some of the schools, there were some organized groups and general forums for girls with the intention of making student-mothers feel better as they had a forum to share their painful experiences, since a problem shared is a problem half solved. In the groups the student-mothers described their experiences freely, offered each other the much needed psychosocial support and advised each other on how to deal with schooling challenges and motherhood demands. They saw the group as a coping mechanism and a place where they could relieve their emotions and feelings. This finding concurs with the findings of Kyakuwa (2009) that stigmatized individuals preferred secretive and sporadic 'open-up' meetings where they usually expressed very painful experiences in their lives and advised each other on how to deal with challenges related to work, school and their daily lives.

4.5.4.2. Emotion Focused Coping Mechanism

According to objective three, the study established that student-mothers were at times forced to keep off from those who teased and intimidated them at school as a solution to some of their challenges. This finding is consistent with the findings of Kyakuwa (2009) that individuals kept
off from situations, circumstances, places and individuals who were frustrating to them or even had the ability to do so and sought for assistance elsewhere. Some of them just decided to be bold enough to take the insults from their surrounding and just develop their own psychological shock absorbers, but for those who were not able to be strong and forge ahead shied away from school because of too much pressure piling on them.

4.5.4.3. Avoidance Coping Mechanism

Normally, it is stated and believed that a problem shared is a problem solved, but this phrase was at some points disregarded by some student-mothers who felt that it was better off for them to keep some of their challenges to themselves and assume that the problems were non-existent. This strategy was able to work for those who used it to cope with their new situations as they also went ahead to ignore and assume all that others said about them. There were other occasions that they decided just to do nothing about some of their difficulties. This finding is consistent with the findings of Kyakuwa (2009) that for fear of stigmatization individuals may choose not to disclose their experiences to others. They weigh the benefits versus costs, and if they did not see benefits that outweighed the cost of disclosing, then they simply did not disclose their experiences. The present finding is also consistent with previous research by Abbas (2009) which show that some individuals denied that they had a problem, and the reason for this denial could point to the fact that they did not want other people to know that they had problems. So it was easier for them to deny the fact. Denial is a defence mechanism proposed by Sigmund Freud, in which a person faced with a fact that is too uncomfortable to accept rejects it, insisting that it is not true even though there might be overwhelming evidence. This could possibly explain the reason why teen parents who are faced with serious social problems deny it. They
might possibly admit the fact but deny its seriousness, or admit both the fact and the seriousness but not want to take responsibility for their social problems. The present finding is also consistent with the view of Blair et al. (1968) that the process of adjustment may involve compromises, self denial and self deception along with attaining some of the desired satisfaction.

Some of the problems that student-mothers faced were as a result of the strategies they put in place to help them adjust and cope with their double role of being a mother and a student. Strategies like avoidance and emotion focused coping styles were in several occasions used by some student-mothers. In as much as this strategy served them well at times, it negatively impacted on them psychologically. This finding is consistent with the finding of Link et al. (2002) stating that copying strategy that a stigmatized person chooses impacts on behavioural and psychological outcomes. They found that using coping strategies that were reactive and defensive (such as avoidance and emotion focused) harmed individuals' psychological wellbeing as well as employment status. Student-mothers however also made use of problem focused coping strategy which was very instrumental to having their difficulties addressed, since they could share them out thereby managing to deal with their situation in a much better way. This finding is consistent with the view of Kyakuwa (2009) suggesting that proactive (problem focused) approach to coping with stigma are more effective than reactive approaches in terms of reducing the negative effects of the perceptions of stigma and improving one’s wellbeing.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the findings have been presented and related to the research objectives. The schooling challenges of student-mothers were categorized into two namely socio-economic and
psychological challenges. The support that they received upon resuming studies were social and
spiritual in nature as accorded to them by their family members, career guidance and counselling
teachers, school administrators, peers and partners/boy-friends. Student-mothers made use of the
three coping strategies namely avoidance, emotion and problem focused.
CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction
This chapter provides a general summary of the main findings and conclusions of the study on schooling challenges and coping mechanisms adapted by student-mothers in secondary schools in Nyando District. It also makes recommendations which would be useful in improving the support accorded to teen-mothers to retain them in school to completion and enable them get access to other institutions of higher learning. Suggestions for further research are also made.

5.1 Findings
This study focused on finding out the schooling challenges, accorded support and coping mechanisms that student-mothers adapt when they resume studies at secondary school level. Considering the objectives and assumptions of this study, the findings fully achieved the set objectives and confirmed and approved its assumptions. The study came up with several findings, which are summarized below.

5.2 Findings concerning Demographic data
Most of the student-mothers (23), that is, 28.2% were 14 years old when they gave birth to their babies (Table 4.2). This is an indication that young girls of age 14 are vulnerable to pregnancy since they engage in unprotected sexual activities early. Teenage pregnancy is rampant among girls aged 14-17 years when they are in the peak of adolescence but it steadily drops as they turn 18 and beyond. This is an indication that sexual activity among the youth begins very early when
they are still quite young making them be at great risk of not going through their education successfully without interruptions. This clearly shows that girls need a lot of guidance and counselling at upper primary and lower secondary level to help curb the problem of teenage pregnancy which is a great contributor to girls dropping out of school.

The study established that the retention and completion rate of student-mothers in school after returning greatly had a link on the resources available in the girls’ families. Most of the girls came from families that relied on farming and self employment to sustain themselves. 30.4% and 45.3% of the student-mothers were daughters of mothers and fathers who relied on farming as a source of livelihood while 34.2% and 20.0% had self employed parents (Fig 4.7). This two income generating activities were not very reliable since they depended a great deal on climatic factors and the state of the market in terms of supply and demand. This made most of the student-mothers go through a lot of financial difficulties, a reason that may make some of them not complete their education.

Very few student-mothers came from families with parents and siblings with post secondary education.22.1% and 10.5% were children of parents with post secondary education while 67% came from families with no siblings in post secondary institution (Fig 4.3 and Fig 4.4). This is an indication that the student-mothers lacked role models and mentors in higher levels of education. Girls need mentorship and role models to enable them stay focused in their education. Most of the student-mothers were from families with no siblings in post secondary education institutions. This is the reason as to why the girls may have got into motherhood at a tender age as they lacked individuals to emulate.
5.3 Findings concerning Student-mothers’ challenges

The study established that student-mothers doubled up as mothers and students and this was a big responsibility for young mothers who were still developing psychologically. This demanding role contributed to the challenges that student-mothers faced within the school environment and sometimes at home or even in the general society.

5.3.1 Socio-Psychological Challenges

These are challenges that mainly touch on the student-mothers’ social and psychological life. The study established various socio-psychological challenges faced by student-mothers as categorized below.

5.3.1.1 Lack of professional counselling

The study established that student-mothers were counselled as they returned to school and even when they were in school to prepare them on how to deal with their challenges like stigma, balancing their time to attend to schooling and parenting demands. However, the counselling services that they received were not very adequate since the counsellors lacked proper training in counselling. The consequence is that they got overwhelmed with their situation making many of them not cope resulting in their poor performance.

5.3.1.2 Stigma and discrimination

The study established that in most cases teen-mothers faced a lot of stigma and discrimination within the school environment, at home and in the community. They experienced stigma from various sources, they stigmatized themselves, were teased by fellow students, some parents and
some teachers. Boys and girls often verbally abused them, making their participation in class seem unwelcome. Teenage mothers were sometimes ridiculed in front of classmates by both teachers and fellow students whenever they failed to satisfy the class requirements making them suffer from low self-esteem, fear and loneliness at school.

5.3.1.3 Lack of concentration

Most student-mothers were normally not fully settled while at school. They lacked a great level of concentration in their academic work due to lack of ability to adequately manage parenting and schooling successfully at the same time. This state made most of them be absent minded always while in class and therefore resulted into their poor performance, majority of them no longer performed as they used to before they got their babies.

5.3.1.4 Worries over marriage

The society does not appreciate teenage pregnancy and children born out of wedlock. Considering that these students were already in this state, most of them looked worried over their future life. Majority of the birth-mothers held negative future expectations. They expected the future to be a continuation of bleakness. Such negative anticipation cannot fuel motivation and must therefore have impacted negatively on school performance of student-mothers.

5.3.1.5 Lack of skills to handle teen mothers’ situation

Teachers had a difficult time handling the student-mothers because they did not know how to treat such students. This finally interfered with the performance of most student-mothers who had developed a negative attitude and lacked interest in some subjects that touched on issues
they were facing in life. There is need to have school staffs that have the knowledge and experience to deal with teenagers and be more ‘teen-sensitive’ especially to student-mothers.

5.3.2 Economic challenges

Most of the student-mothers came from families that relied on farming and self employment to sustain themselves. A greater percentage of teen-mothers were daughters of mothers who were doing nothing to fend for their lives. They fully depended on their husbands for their sustenance. This great level of dependency may make the girls be at risk of dropping out of school due to lack of finances to see them through their education.

As girls, when student-mothers return from school they had to do household chores and the only time they could do their homework was at night. Unfortunately, most of them came from families where the lighting system in the house was just hurricane lamps making it a bit difficult for the girls to study or do their homework at night.

5.4 Findings concerning Support accorded to student-mothers

The study established that, only allowing student-mothers back to school could/did not help them succeed in their secondary education. It was evident that student-mothers needed much support if they were to complete schooling successfully. The study found out that the kind of support that teen-mothers received upon returning to studies was social and spiritual support. This support was further divided into various sub-categories as illustrated below:
5.4.1 Spiritual support
The study established that student-mothers were supported by their parents and schools to get access to spiritual support that was also very necessary and important to them in handling their situations as they got a way forward on how to go about their difficulties.

5.4.2 Social support
This kind of support was greatly accorded to student-mothers in various ways. Social support was categorized into four major sub-headings as indicated below:

5.4.2.1 Instrumental Support
Student-mothers were financially supported by their parents, other relatives, teachers and school administrators to meet their school requirements and fees, their babies' requirements and their personal needs when they were in positions to do so. However, at times they could not satisfy the needs of these student-mothers. The fathers of the babies made some impact in supporting the student-mothers' education since they were positive about their academics (Table 4.1) but were not involved in provision of financial support.

Most teachers were very supportive and ready to support the learners in their academic work to enable them catch up with the content coverage with much ease by making follow-ups on their performance and offering remedial services when they could (Table 4.3 and Fig 4.5). Other organizations were also not left out in the support of student-mothers. They actively took part in empowering the girls and also supporting them financially by paying their fees through the intervention of school principals in most cases. Some of such organizations that were identified
were the Tuungane Youth programme, Kenya Female Advisory Organization (KEFEADO), World Vision and the Constituency Development Fund office.

5.4.2.2 Informative Support

Parents, teachers, peers and other relatives gave appropriate advice and assistance in coping and solving problems to student-mothers to help them manage their challenges by having a changed attitude towards oneself and adjusting fully into their new situation and position. Most student-mothers received counselling services from their parents as compared to other sources (Fig 4.5). This illustrated that the counselling services that the teen-mothers got from their parents were not very adequate considering the time shared together making the students' access to counselling services marginal. In as much as the teachers felt that they were doing a good job counselling the students, it came out that they were not doing well in counselling as per their recipients' expectation, an indication that teachers need to improve on the delivery of such services to the affected students to help them better their coping abilities upon returning to school (Fig 4.5).

5.4.2.3 Appraisal Support

Student-mothers were made comfortable by their schools upon returning to school by communicating to them information that was relevant to self evaluation rather than problem solving, with the intention of boosting their self-esteem. The girls were at times motivated to carry on with their studies as they were given examples of successful student-mothers.
5.4.2.4 Emotional Support

In most cases, student-mothers got much help from their families especially their mothers who took care of their babies themselves or even employed other people who did it as the girls went to school. This made the girls feel cared for because the care of their young ones is care directed to them indirectly. Teachers and peers also took part in providing encouragement and a learning environment that is conducive.

Parental education is a strong contributor to female student’s education. The education level of the girls’ parents had a great impact on the girls and their education (Fig 4.3). Mothers with higher education background seemed to be better placed to guide their daughters against early pregnancies, thereby making the number of those who became pregnant to such mothers fewer compared to girls from families where their mothers had a lower education background. Further, the educational background of the fathers also determined the ability of the girls getting a second chance to pursue their education even after delivering. Student-mothers from families where fathers had a higher education background got a greater percentage for a second opportunity to get educated compared to those from families where fathers had a lower level of education (Fig 4.3).

The training that teachers got from higher institutions of learning did not enable them to comfortably support and encourage the student-mothers to deal with their situation which made them ‘learners with specials needs’. Most teachers considered them as any other student within the school and treated them just like other students without much consideration that made them feel special. As a result, most of them were left behind in terms of syllabus coverage and this
finally affected their academic performance, most of them were performing below their initial academic standards before their delivery. However, there were some who were motivated to work even harder because of their experiences making them perform better academically.

The research revealed that school support was an essential component to the student-mothers’ success in the classroom and ultimate graduation from secondary school. However, there were certain times when their needs were not adequately met due to financial difficulties or even not knowing that the students were in specific needs. Some student-mothers were never free to express some of their needs, they were so reserved and this meant that their parents and guardians were to guess what they required and provide to them.

5.5 Findings concerning Student-mothers’ Coping Mechanisms

The study established that student-mothers were different and distinct in all components of psychological adjustment processes and varied in the way they responded to challenges. Student-mothers reverted to harmful coping strategies (such as avoidance and emotion focused) as well as constructive (problem focused) to counter their challenges.

5.5.1 Problem Focused Coping Mechanism

The study established that student-mothers got actively involved in having their challenges addressed if not solved. They got involved in some economic activities like selling firewood, sugarcane or even working for others at home or in their farms at their free time over the weekend and holidays. Sometimes they requested for financial assistance from parents, teachers and other relatives. They worked out all means to catch up with the syllabus coverage by staying
up late, waking up early or even staying longer at school to study. When they missed lessons they took it upon themselves to consult teachers and fellow students for assistance. Additionally, they developed self drive to work hard and compete with their colleagues.

Student-mothers also appreciated the importance of prayer in all that they did and went through it as a strategy to deal with some of their difficulties. In some of the schools there were some organized groups and general forums for girls with the intention of making student-mothers feel better as they had a forum to share their painful experiences in their lives. They saw the group as a coping mechanism and a place where they could relieve their emotions and feelings.

5.5.2. Emotion Focused Coping Mechanism
The study established that student-mothers were at times forced to keep off those who teased and intimidated them at school as a solution to some of their challenges. Some of them just decided to be bold enough to take the insults from their surrounding and just develop their own psychological shock absorbers, but for those who were not able to be strong and forge ahead shied away from school because of too much pressure piling up on them at school.

5.5.3. Avoidance Coping Mechanism
There were other occasions when teen-mothers decided just to do nothing about some of their difficulties. Denial is a defence mechanism proposed by Sigmund Freud, in which a person faced with a fact that is too uncomfortable to accept rejects it, insisting that it is not true even though there might be overwhelming evidence. This could possibly explain the reason why teen parents who are faced with serious social problems deny it. They might possibly admit the fact but deny
its seriousness, or admit both the fact and the seriousness but not want to take responsibility for their social problems.

The assumptions of the study were approved as follows:

a) Teachers and parents actually worked together to help student-mothers be retained in school after returning to completion.

b) Student-mothers faced very different schooling challenges compared with non mothering girls.

c) Literacy and economic development are closely related as shown by the student-mothers’ parental education level and their economic activities. This also had an impact on the student-mothers’ life since they had parents who had great understanding on the importance of being educated. This made them get a second chance to education.

5.6 Conclusions

According to objective one, the study established that there were a number of challenges student-mothers went through within the school environment and sometimes when at home. Because of these challenges they go through, student-mothers opted to use various coping mechanisms to complement the support they received from their parents, relatives, friends, teachers, and school administrators to manage their conflicting roles with the support from different individuals like parents, peers and teachers.

As per objective two, this research reveals that teen-mothers go through a lot of difficulties on returning to school after delivery as they are expected to meet both motherhood and schooling
challenges, a task that proved to be very demanding on these young mothers who were still developing psychologically. In as much as parents, relatives, peers, teachers and school administrators tried their best to support these needy students, their efforts were also curtailed by other factors like financial constraint, time limit, lack of set up programmes and means to be followed and individual desire to set aside more time for personal and private study.

This therefore left the student-mothers to come up with their own ways to come out of their difficulties. According to objective three, the study established that student-mothers thereby resorted to make use of coping mechanisms that could be of benefit to them as per the situation at hand and their general capability. The strategies used clearly showed that most of them were not well adjusted since they were disturbed, tended to become frustrated and they suffered from social and emotional problems. Some in most cases had also lost interest in education, and were confused about their abilities, the reason as to why a majority of them did not do well academically on resuming studies. It also revealed that very few of them had a positive self concept, knew and accepted oneself, displayed social sensitivity, had confidence, conformed to social expectations to promote self-realization and that of others and above all they set realistic goals. These are the few who were able to compete comfortably with their counterparts and bettered their academic performance.

The return to school policy is a noble idea to help girls who would have otherwise dropped out of school because of pregnancy get a second chance to education. These girls need adequate support if they are to complete their secondary education and get access to higher education. This should be done jointly by all stakeholders to ensure their retention to completion upon returning
to school. There is also need to advise the teen-mothers on effective (problem focused) strategies of coping with their challenges to enable them adapt to them more than using other strategies (such as avoidance and emotion focused) that may finally affect them socially and psychologically.

5.7 Recommendations

With regard to the research findings, the researcher gave suggestions and recommendations for future action and further research. The following recommendations could be considered for adoption and put into practice so as to support student-mothers go through their secondary school education successfully:

1. Teachers need guidance with respect to how student-mothers can be encouraged and supported academically so that they do not make these students’ lives worse because of insensitivity. This is necessary because the study found out that most teachers did not know how to handle and offer advice to student-mothers. This was as a result of lack of elaborate training conducted for all teachers in most secondary schools.

2. There is need to carry out an evaluation of the return to school policy since its implementation to identify its strengths and weaknesses. There is need for this since the study focused on teen-mothers’ coping strategies and it was clear that some students were making it through schooling. This will help in giving the figures of those who have fully benefited and had their lives made better because of the re-entry policy.

3. There is need for schools to motivate guidance and counselling teachers by sending them for seminars and workshops to help them sharpen their skills. This in turn will make them more confident thus bring about a remarkable improvement in guidance and counselling
work at secondary school level; this would also help the student-mothers learn how to cope on resuming studies.

4. There is great need to have the student-mothers transferred to other schools to avoid stigmatization. This should however be done only after conducting a series of counselling services to them both at the current school before exit and the new school on readmission. This strategy is to help the student-mothers embrace the idea and understand the psychological precautions being taken when asked to transfer to another school.

5. Encourage parents who can afford to take their daughters to boarding schools to enable the students have ample time to study while at school without much difficulty. However, for parents who may not afford boarding fees, they should have their daughters readmitted in preferably different day schools from their previous schools. As they do this the parents also need to be sensitized and encouraged to provide ample time to enable their daughters study while at home.

6. Professional counselling preferably by trained counsellors to both boys and girls through mentorship should be instituted and given greater priority. This is necessary as most guidance and counselling teachers lacked training as counsellors as indicated in this study. Schools were financially challenged to manage and maintain professional counselling by hiring services from trained counsellors (resource persons). There is need to have these issues addressed urgently by training all counselling teachers in our schools and institutions of higher learning. Such a step will save schools and the entire nation the consequences of lack of professional counselling in schools. But before we get there, schools should use the limited resources they have to hire qualified services for the benefit of the students than save money at the expense of the students' bright future.
7. There is need to have other organizations give donations directly to secondary schools to cater for the needs of poor and needy students like student-mothers. Such donations should be used fully in supporting students who sincerely deserve support and boost the support offered by FAWE, CDF offices in form of bursaries. FAWE has done much to this effect but they too face some limitations since they cannot serve and reach every needy student.

8. Schools, communities and individuals need to be sensitized on the return to school policy to make them aware about its existence and thereby appreciate it and its implementation. This needs to be addressed soonest possible since some parents, students and community members were not aware that there was a policy allowing student-mothers to return to school after delivering. According to some of them, it was the principals’ good will to accept student-mothers in school not knowing that it is a government policy.

9. How to sustain the girls (student-mothers) upon return should be the key issue of concern since the government has no setup plan currently to do this. This is necessary to promote retention and hence improve completion rate of the student-mothers upon resuming studies. The study showed that some student-mothers still dropped out even after being accepted back because they could not just cope with their unique situations. Consider putting in place:

- Formulating a uniform strategy to assist student-mothers make up for the missed lessons by offering remedial teaching for those students in the evenings and weekends.
• A way in which schools can keep in touch with the girls outside the school. For example; making follow-ups on how they handle themselves and make use of their time while at home.

10. Student-mothers’ parents should take it upon themselves to take their grandchildren to hospital for clinic visits or even for medication.

5.8 Suggestions for Further Research

1. The study was carried out in one District only; similar studies could be carried out in other parts of the country. The results of the study have limited generalizability to student-mothers’ challenges, support and coping mechanisms they adapted upon resuming studies at other secondary schools in those parts. There is need for a comprehensive study that will come up with comparative data on the policy. This is to enable other researchers be able to compare and contrast the findings of this study and also gather adequate information on the subject. With their findings it may be easy to reinforce generalization of the gathered information.

2. Identification of some of the most effective working strategies that are put in place to help curb the problem of teenage pregnancies.

3. Find out the nutrition status, health conditions and challenges that student-mothers and their young ones face.

4. A study to compare the student-mothers’ academic performance before motherhood and after motherhood to know the effect of motherhood on girls’ performance needs to be undertaken.
References:


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## Appendix A: Nyando District Secondary Schools Establishment as at Term one 2009

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<td>41. Olwalo Mixed Day</td>
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<td>Lisana</td>
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<td>42. Kandaria Mixed Day</td>
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<td>43. Moro Mixed Day</td>
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<td>44. Lisana Mixed Day</td>
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<td>45. St. Charles Lwanga- Ndori Mixed Day</td>
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<td>Katito</td>
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<td>46. St. Aloys Gem Mixed Day</td>
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<td>47. Cherwa Mixed Day</td>
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<td>48. Magunga Mixed Day/Boarding</td>
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<td>49. Rae Girls Boarding</td>
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<td>50. Thurgem Mixed Day/Boarding</td>
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<td>51. Urudi Mixed Day</td>
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<td>Upper Nyakach</td>
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<td>Nyabondo</td>
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<td>52. Agai Mixed Day</td>
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<td>53. Bodi Mixed Day</td>
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<td>54. Dirubi Mixed Day</td>
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<td>55. Nyabondo Boys Boarding</td>
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<td>56. St. Hilarius Nyabondo Mixed Day</td>
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<td>57. Siany Mixed Day</td>
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<td>58. St. Antony Kajiimbo Mixed Day</td>
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<td>59. Nyakach Girls Boarding</td>
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<td>60. Bishop N.K. Ngala Mixed Day</td>
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<td>61. Rakwaro Mixed Day/Boarding</td>
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<td>62. Miriu Mixed Day</td>
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<td>63. Bishop Okumu Mixed Day</td>
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<td>64. St. Mary's Nyamarimba Girls Boarding</td>
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<td>65. Holo Mixed Day</td>
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<td>66. Naki Secondary Mixed Day/Boarding</td>
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<td>67. Ndori B.C. Mixed Day</td>
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<td>68. Sigoti Complex Girls Boarding</td>
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<td>69. Guu Mixed Day/Boarding</td>
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<td>70. Kabondo Mixed Day</td>
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<td>West Nyakach</td>
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<td>Kodingo</td>
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<td>71. Nyadina Mixed Day</td>
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<td>72. Nyong'ong'a Mixed Day</td>
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<td>73. Sang'oro Mixed Day/Boarding</td>
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<td>74. Thurdibuoro Mixed Day/Boarding</td>
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<td>75. Mbora Mixed Day</td>
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<td>76. Sango Buru Mixed Day</td>
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<td>77. Abwao Mixed Day</td>
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<td>78. Anding'o Opanga Mixed Day</td>
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<td>79. Mbugra Mixed Day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>80. Our Lady of Lourdes Bolo Girls Boarding</td>
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<td>Private schools</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ahero</td>
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<td></td>
<td>81. Ebenezer Christian Mixed Day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chemelil</td>
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<td></td>
<td>82. Chemelil Sugar Academy Mixed Boarding</td>
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<td>Ahero</td>
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</table>

**Source:** District Education Office Nyando (2009)
Appendix B: List of the Selected Secondary Schools

1. Ayucha Mixed Day
2. Oren Mixed Day
3. Pala Mixed Day
4. Wang’anga Mixed Day
5. St. Christopher Ayweyo Mixed Day
6. Bunde Mixed Day
7. Kochogo Mixed Day
8. St. Cumulus Ogwedhi Mixed Day
9. Konim Mixed Day
10. Okanja Mixed Day
11. Ragen A.I.C. Mixed Day
12. Nyabola Mixed Day
13. Olwalo Mixed Day
14. Kandaria Mixed Day
15. Moro Mixed Day
16. Lisana Mixed Day
17. St. Charles Lwanga Ndori Mixed Day
18. St. Aloys Gem Mixed Day
19. Cherwa Mixed Day
20. Urudi Mixed Day
Appendix C: Letter to the District Education Officer

OKEYO LINNAH APONDI,
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY,
COM-TECH DEPARTMENT,
P.O.BOX 448344,
NAIROBI.

THE DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER,
NYANDO DISTRICT,
P.O.BOX 3,
AWASI.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

RE: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH.

I am pleased to inform you that your District has been selected for an educational research on schooling challenges and coping mechanisms adapted by student-mothers in secondary schools. For this study, only mixed day schools will be selected as the key focus and participants. The participation of the schools will not interrupt classes or any other school activities at all. It will only take a little of the selected principals, guidance and counselling teachers and students to fill in a questionnaire and respond to interview schedules or focus group discussions.

Information obtained will be used purely for research and will be treated strictly as confidential. Your assistance will be highly appreciated.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Okeyo Linnah Apondi.
Appendix D: Letter to the School Principals

OKEYO LINNAH APONDI,
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY,
COM-TECH DEPARTMENT,
P.O.BOX 448344,
NAIROBI.

THE PRINCIPAL,

----------------------------------
P.O.BOX

Dear Sir/ Madam,

RE: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH.

I am pleased to inform you that your school has been randomly sampled along with other schools for an educational research on schooling challenges and coping mechanisms adapted by student-mothers on resuming studies.

The research study is conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of master of education degree of Kenyatta University with permission from the ministry of education and the DEO, Nyando District. Any information obtained through questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions shall be used for the purpose of this study only and shall be treated with confidentiality.

I am pleased to inform you that taking part in this research study will entail no risk and the benefit is that the gathered information will be useful to policy makers, school administrators, guidance and counselling teachers, parents, teachers, students and student-mothers themselves.

I greatly value your cooperation and would appreciate if you allow me carry out this research study at your school with your involvement and that of other selected persons. Your assistance will be highly appreciated.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Okeyo Linnah Apondi.
Appendix E: Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Student-mothers
The following questionnaire has been prepared to help the researcher gather information from student-mothers for the study “schooling challenges and coping mechanisms adapted by student-mothers in secondary schools in Nyando District, Kenya.” Please respond to all questions by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate box or by filling the correct information in the spaces provided.

SECTION 1: IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

1.1 DIVISION NAME...........................................................................................................
1.2 ZONE NAME............................................................................................................... 
1.3 SCHOOL NAME......................................................................................................... 
1.4 RESPONDENT CODE ............................................................................................... 
1.5 INTERVIEW DATE......................................................................................................

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 How old were you during your immediate last birth day? ___ years.

2.2 What is your current marital status?
1=Single
2=Married
3=Others (specify)

2.3 Family information

| 2.3.1最高水平的教育 | 2.3.2父母状况 | 2.3.3主要收入来源 | 2.3.4你父母给你关于教育的建议是？1=是
2=否 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1=父亲活着</td>
<td>2=母亲活着</td>
<td>3=父亲去世</td>
<td>4=母亲去世</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1=父亲</td>
<td>2=母亲</td>
<td>3=父亲</td>
<td>4=母亲</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | 父亲 | 母亲 |
|----------------|--------|
| 父亲活着 | 父亲活着 |
| 父亲去世 | 母亲去世 |
| 母亲活着 | 父亲活着 |
| 母亲去世 | 父亲去世 |

1=父亲
2=母亲
3=父亲
4=母亲
5=其他
6=其他
2.4 Do you have any siblings? (If No skip to student-mother’s information else If yes proceed to question 4)

1=Yes
2=No

2.5 How many of your siblings are currently enrolled in college?
1= None
2= One
3=Two
4=More than two

2.6. Have any of them completed college study?
1=Yes
2=No

2.7 How often do they talk to you about education?
1= Very often
2= Often
3=Rarely
4=Not at all

SECTION 3: INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENT-MOTHERS

3.1. What is your current form/class of study?
1=Form 1
2=Form 2
3=Form 3
4=Form 4

3.2. For how many terms did you stop/break out of school since you began? _______ terms.

3.3. In your opinion how is your academic performance currently (after breaking from studies for some time)?
1=Dropped
2=Improved
3=Remained constant
4=Unpredictable

3.4. What is the Date of birth for your young baby?(DD/MM/YY) ______/____/____
3.10. What are some of the major challenges you are facing with regard to schooling and mothering?

1=Lack of time to study and do homework at home
2=Lack of professional counselling
3=Fear and loneliness at school
4=Lack of self-esteem
5=Lack of acceptance by some teachers and peers
6=Missing classes due to motherhood requirements
7=Others (specify) ________________

How do you deal with the challenge(s)?

3.11. What is the highest level of education you aspire to attain?

1=High school
2=Some college (no degree)
3=Bachelors degree
4=Post-graduate degree (PGDip, Masters, PhD)

3.12. With whom do you most freely share your feelings and experiences as a student mother?

1=Mother
2=Father
3=Teachers
4=Peers
5=Others (specify) ________________

3.13. How do you make up for lost lessons?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
3.14. What is the major difficulty you encounter as a student mother after resuming studies?

1=Economic
2=Academics and school related problems
3=Social and emotional
4=Home-based
5=Others (specify) ____________________________

How do you handle the problem(s)?

SECTION 4: STUDENT-MOTHERS' SELF ADMINISTERED SECTION

Using the following five-point scale, circle the most accurate response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1=Strongly Agree</th>
<th>2=Agree</th>
<th>3=Not decided</th>
<th>4=Disagree</th>
<th>5=Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Since delivering and returning to school I have developed close personal relationship with other students</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 The friendship I developed at this school prior to delivering have been personally satisfying</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 It has been difficult for me to relate and/or make friends with other students</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Few of the students would be willing to listen to me and help if I had a personal problem</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 My interaction with teachers during pregnancy had a positive influence on my return, values and attitudes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 My classroom interaction and participation have had a positive influence on my academic achievement (intellectual growth, interest in ideas, career goals and aspirations)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Most of the teachers are interested in helping students grow in more than just academic areas (especially those with special needs such as student-mothers)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Using the following scale, circle your most accurate response:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1=Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2=Disagree</th>
<th>3=Agree</th>
<th>4=Strongly Agree</th>
<th>5=Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 My parents/guardian value my efforts to get a high school education</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 My parents/guardian talk with me about my high school course work</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 My parents/guardians believe I will complete my high school education</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 My parents/guardian are interested in my general high school experiences</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 My teachers value my efforts to get a high school education</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 My teachers talk with me about my high school course work</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 My teachers believe I will complete my high school education</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8 My teachers are interested in my general high school experiences</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 My partner/boy friend value my efforts to get a high school education</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10 My partner/boy friend talks to me about my high school course work</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11 My partner/boy friend believes I will complete my high school education</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12 My partner/boy friend is interested in my general high school experiences</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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Appendix F: Interview Guide for Career Guidance and Counselling Teachers

Interview schedules for guidance and counselling teachers

The following interview schedule has been prepared to help the researcher gather information from guidance and counselling teachers for the study "Schooling challenges and coping mechanisms adapted by student-mothers in secondary schools in Nyando District, Kenya." Please respond to all questions.

SECTION 1: IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

DIVISION NAME ____________________________________________
ZONE NAME ____________________________________________
SCHOOL NAME __________________________________________
RESPONDENT CODE ______________________________________
INTERVIEW DATE _________________________________________

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Sex: Male ______ Female ______

2.2 Age of the respondent Years ______

2.3 Has any female student dropped out of your school due to pregnancy in the past one year?

1=Yes
2=No

SECTION 3: GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How do you deal with cases of teenage pregnancies at your school?
   Probes:
   a) Please describe how your school environment supports the female students who return to school after delivery?
   b) What are the supportive services offered
      
      Probe: What on/off -school social supports, groups, clubs, or offices do you have to help students succeed academically?

2. Do you feel stigma and discrimination is a problem for student-mothers in your school? Please describe;
   Probes:
   a) How is your school administration addressing the problem?
   b) How is the student body addressing the problem?
   What strategies are used by the student body in addressing the problem?
3. What happens when a student mother has a problem at school?
   Probes:
   a) With friends?
   b) With teachers?

4. Do you feel it was a good idea to have such girls back to school?
   Probe: Please explain
   Probe:
   a) What is the opinion of the student body in your school?
   b) What is the opinion of teachers in your school?

5. What challenges does the student body experience with the return of student-mothers?
   Probe:
   a) How is the student body addressing the challenges?

6. What challenges do teachers experience with the return of student-mothers?
   Probe:
   a) How are the teachers addressing the challenges?

7. What difficulties are student-mothers going through as they attempt to fit back into the school system?
   Probe: Please explain

8. What do you do to assist student-mothers overcome some of their complications?
   Probe: How else

9. What does your school do to ensure that such students compete favourably with their counterparts who may not be going through their unique experiences?
   a) Dealing with missed lessons
   b) Classroom involvement during lessons

10. What are your final comments or thoughts with regard to this study topic?
Appendix G: Interview Guide for Parents/Guardians

Interview schedule for parents/guardians

The following interview schedule has been prepared to help the researcher gather information from parents/guardians for the study “schooling challenges and coping mechanisms adapted by student-mothers in secondary schools in Nyando District, Kenya.” Please respond to all questions appropriately.

SECTION 1: IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

1.1 DIVISION NAME
1.2 LOCATION NAME
1.3 SUB LOCATION NAME
1.4 VILLAGE
1.5 RESPONDENT CODE
1.6 INTERVIEW DATE

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Sex: Male Female
2.2 Age of the respondent Years

2.3 What is your highest educational level? (Write the number of your response in the box).
   a) Primary
   b) Secondary
   c) Tertiary
   d) None

SECTION 3: GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How did you get to know that your daughter was pregnant?

2. What plans did you have for her when she was pregnant and thereafter?

3. a) What challenges do you experience with the return to school of your daughter? b) How do you address such challenges?
4. What a difficulty is your daughter going through as she attempts to fit into her new shoes of parenting and learning co-currently?

5. What happens when a student mother has a problem at home?
   a) With siblings
   b) With other family members

6. Comment on your daughters’ current performance at school.
   a) Please describe how it has been in the past and currently;

7. What supportive services do you give your daughter to help her manage her current situation?
   a) Guidance and counselling
   b) Ample time to study and do homework at home
   c) Baby sitting
   d) Provision of school requirements
   e) Sensitizing other family members to accept and support her

8. How are teachers helping your daughter to cope with school and motherhood demands?
   a) Accepting her as other students
   b) Guidance and counselling
   c) Sensitizing other student to accept and support her

9. How are you working with the school to promote your daughters’ sustainability at school?

10. What measures if taken can make your daughter more comfortable at school hence her sustainability?

11. What are your final comments or thoughts with regard to this study topic?
Appendix H: FGD with Students

Focused Group Discussion with other students

The following FGD questions have been prepared to help the researcher gather information from other students for the study “schooling challenges and coping mechanisms adapted by student-mothers in secondary schools in Nyando District, Kenya.” We are only interested in your experiences and opinion, so there is no right or wrong answers. The benefit of being in this study is that you are helping us to understand the challenges, experiences and coping mechanisms adapted by student-mothers in Nyando District.

SECTION 1: IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

1.1 DIVISION NAME

1.2 LOCATION NAME

1.3 SUB LOCATION NAME

1.4 CENTRE OF DISCUSSION

1.5 INTERVIEW DATE

SECTION 2: GUIDING QUESTIONS

2.1. How does your school environment support the return to school policy for the female students?
Probes:
   a) What are the supportive services offered?
   b) What are the requirements on the part of the student mother if any?

2.2. Do you feel stigma and discrimination is a problem for student-mothers in your school? Please describe;
Probes:
   a) How is your school administration addressing the problem?
   b) How is the student body addressing the problem?
   c) What strategies are used by the student body in addressing the problem?
2.3. What challenges does the student body experience with the return of student-mothers?  
**Probe:**  
a) How is the student body addressing the Challenges?

2.4. What difficulties are student-mothers going through as they attempt to fit back into the school system?  
**Probe:** Please explain

2.5. What happens when a student mother has a problem at school?  
a) With friends?  
b) With teachers?

2.6. What do you do to assist them overcome some of their complications?  
**Probe:** How else

2.7. Do you feel it is a good idea to have such girls back to school?  
**Probe:** Please explain  
**Probe:**  
a) What is the opinion of the student body in your school?

2.8. What are your final comments or thoughts with regard to this study topic?
Appendix I: Letters of Approval
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL
INTERNAL MEMO

FROM: Dean, Graduate School
TO: Okeyo Linnah Apondi
     C/o Dept. of Educational Communication & Technology
REF: E55/CE/11081/06
DATE: 7th December, 2009
RE: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This is to inform you that your M.Ed. research proposal was approved on 20th November, 2009.

Thank you.

GEOFFREY K. KORIR
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

cc. Chairman, Educational Communication & Technology Dept.
    Supervisors Dr. Kimemia J. N, Dept. of Educational Communication & Technology
    Dr. Ryanga C. W, Dept. of Kiswahili & African Languages

SKK/cww

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
ALL PRINCIPALS/HEADTEACHERS
NYANDO DISTRICT

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION - OKEYO LINNAH APONDI

The above named is a student of KENYATTA University, who has been given research authorization to carry out research on "SCHOOLING CHALLENGES AND COPING MECHANISMS ADAPTED BY STUDENT-MOTHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS" in the District.

You are therefore asked to give her the necessary assistance.

Thank you.

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER
NYANDO DISTRICT