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THE LEVEL OF AWARENESSOF RE–ENTRY POLICY OF TEENAGE MOTHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT: Re-entry to school policy guidelines advocated that girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy be readmitted after giving birth and that awareness on the same must be intensified so that more people know about it so as to enhance its implementability. However low level of awareness about re entry policy especially among parents and other community members hinders its implementation and in an effort to reduce the socio- economic impact of this phenomenon in young women who find themselves in this predicament, the Kenyan government introduced the re-entry policy that made it possible for such girls to re-enter school and start their education from where they stopped prior to pregnancy. It is in the light of this that, the study sought to assess the level of awareness re–entry policy in public secondary schools and was guided by the social integration theory on student retention in schools.

The study adopted pragmatic world view, a mixed method research design utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approach and employed stratified sampling, simple random and purposive sampling as its sampling techniques. The research instruments for the study were questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and was summarized using frequencies, percentages and tables. The findings revealed that, the re-entry policy has not been clearly defined, clarified and re-enforced in schools. Further tracer system is not in place to help follow up girls who do not return after child birth and that, stakeholders were not educated about the re-entry policy, the rights and their responsibilities. However, the implementation of re-entry policy in public secondary school in Eldoret West Sub County was partially successful since there were presence of teenage mothers back in school though in small numbers as compared to those who dropped out due to pregnancy. The study recommended that, re-entry policy to be clearly defined, clarified and re-enforced in schools and that, there should be a tracer system established in schools so that the girls who do not return after child birth are followed up from the school levels to the national levels.
KEYWORDS: *Level of Awareness, Re–Entry Policy, Teenage Mothers, Motherhood*

1.1 INTRODUCTION
Globally, the girl child is discriminated against from the earliest stages of her childhood right into her adulthood and are often treated as inferior socialised to put themselves last undermining their self-esteem (Kelly, 1998; Gwaba&Namalambo, 2005). This is compounded by customary law, which considers the girl child as an adult once they have attained puberty. The lack of a clear definition of a child within the legal system also works to the disadvantage of girls and makes it possible for a girl who has attained puberty to be married off before she is ready (Gwaba&Namalambo, 2005). According to UNESCO (2003), countries have evaluated, revised and reformed their policies and practices for pregnant school girls to return to school after delivery. The trend in most countries is to move towards policies which make it easier for teenage mothers to continue with their education. For instance, Botswana instituted an innovative pilot project to support teenage mothers to continue with education. UNESCO (2003) further notes that, in Madagascar, teenage mothers could return to school immediately after delivery if they wished. In Cameroon, girls have the right to negotiate the duration of their maternity leave with their school management, and can arrange for extra classes so that they do not lag behind in their school work during the agreed period of absence from school. UNESCO (2003) also noted that, in Malawi, the government reviewed the policy that allows re-entry of pregnant school girls after delivery and guaranteed childcare. In South Africa, the 1996 policy allows logistical and financial support to pregnant and mothering teens to continue with schooling. In Namibia, a pregnant girl is allowed to be in school until she is about to deliver, after which the baby is cared for by a responsible adult and the girl has the right of readmission in the same school within twelve months from the date she left school (Namibia, MBESC, 2001).

According to Muganda-Onyando and Omondi (2008), awareness on the return to school policy must be intensified so that more people know about it so as to enhance its implementability, however low level of awareness especially among parents and other community members hinders implementation. According to Mitchell and Halpern (2003) school environment contributes to the school drop-out of teenage mothers because of harassment, indicating that about 48% of pregnant girls undergo harassment at school. Further McCauley-Brown (2005) posits that, teenage mothers are vulnerable in school environments which are not supportive and are consequently at risk of not completing their school because they are assaulted on the school grounds and do not feel safe hence suffered depression consequently, their education suffered also. In addition Mitchell and Halpern (2003) postulate that, students complained about living in a world where young people were left to discover things for themselves and as a consequence, many teenage mothers ended up with misinformation, learning important lessons far too late. Even though teenage mothers face enormous challenges, the report showed that they wish to continue with their education. The literature above revealed that, lack of awareness on the return to school policy made it hard for the re-entry policy to be implemented in schools.

A survey by Ahikireand Madanda (2011) on re-entry of pregnant girls in primary and secondary schools in Uganda noted that, the leading cause for girls to drop out of school is pregnancy, poverty and engagement in early sex/marriage. The study found out that in Uganda the challenge of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancies has be explained by a mix of socio-cultural views, perceptions and practices surrounding early pregnancy. The study further found out that in most cultural settings, pre-marital pregnancy among girls is stigmatized both in school and in communities mainly on moralistic grounds, without addressing factors that lead to pregnancy among school girls. Most times school careers of many girls are cut short because of pregnancy either by the girls withdrawing themselves from school or through expulsion with little or no chance of re-entry after delivery. The situation is worsened by an absence of a coherent national policy on pregnancy in school and on re-entry after delivery. This in many situations schools almost all expel pregnant girls and as teenage mothers, they often fail to return and complete their education (Ahikire&Madanda, 2011).

According to UNESCO (2003), in many countries, pregnant girls face expulsion from formal education. The study conducted on educating girls illustrates that in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, unmarried girls are increasingly dropping out of school due to pregnancy, because school policies often require their expulsion. A man's value lies in his being perceived as the future potential breadwinner while the woman's value lies in her being perceived as a caregiver. Culturally, the girl as a caregiver-in-training is expected to undertake activities that contribute to the productive needs of a family much earlier compared to the boy. This early cultural role assignment significantly affects all other activities that a girl may be engaged in including the quantity and quality of time a girl spends in doing schoolwork and if a girl falls pregnant, she is no longer perceived as schoolgirl but as a wife (Kelly, 1998; Chilangwa, 1994).

According to Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez (1997), there are some schools that do not allow pregnant girls and teenage mothers to attend classes. In some cases where teenage mothers continue schooling, they are often described and assumed to be poor or incapable students (Pillow, 2004). In addition, Shultz (2001) posits that, pregnancy during high school is a signal for school personnel and families to abandon teenage mothers, designating them as school failures thus, educators and parents often give up on them. Nonetheless, teenage mothers and their children are two particularly vulnerable groups in our society whose long term life chances are interconnected. They are both at critical points in their lives, where their courses may be shaped towards healthy development, stability and productivity or towards poverty and dependency. Without support for teenage mothers to complete their education, many would struggle with poverty and its effects (Stephens, Wolf, & Batten, 1999; Kunio &Sono, 1996; Mogotlane, 1993). According to Muganda-Onyando andOmondi (2008), girls who become pregnant while still in school are often expelled despite the existence of the re-entry policy guidelines where such girls should be allowed to return to school after delivery. Re-entry is therefore not always automatic or straightforward because of the moral stigma often associated with teenage pregnancy. Some head teachers are not sympathetic enough to give the teenage mothers space in school and are viewed as mixing bad potatoes with good ones and is viewed as likely to have a negative impact on the other girls. This view is still held by some teachers as well as parents who are opposed to the move to allow girls to go back to school. Further Muganda-Onyando and Omondi (2008) assert that, a hostile school environment makes students seek re-entry in different school. In some cases head teachers were willing to arrange for the girls to attend other schools. This is not always in the best interest of the student as the new school may be far from home and the student would have to travel longer distances to reach school hence joining a different school is usually no guarantee that people will not find out however the most negative and costly outcomes of teenage motherhood are intergenerational (Kirby, 2007). Children of teenage mothers are more likely to drop out of school, obtain lower grade point averages and report poorer school attendance records (Cassell, 2002; Kirby, 2007) in the same vein Pearton (1999) posits that, adolescents are mostly too young and emotionally immature when they first fall pregnant therefore, if these girls were to succeed academically it was important to provide adequate support. McCullough (1998) reports that, adolescent parents are less likely to finish high school, attend college, find stable employment, marry, or be self-supporting than those who have children later and are faced with the

challenge of providing for their own children when they are barely out of childhood themselves. In fact, two-thirds of the children of teenage mothers live in poverty (Trad, 1999). Because of their lack of maturity and development, teenage mothers often lack proper parenting skills to provide proper nurturing and support for their children (March of Dimes, 2002). In Kenya, researchers such as Nyambura (2000) recommended three re-entry programmes and this includes: setting up special bridging centres for young mothers where they could continue with their formal education and/or specialised training while breastfeeding their babies, creating opportunities for out-of-school girls and to exploit informal sector apprenticeships for them, and lastly to introduce flexible models 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, 1994 as cited in Nyambura, 2000). From the literature above, there is low level of awareness especially among parents and other community members hinder its implementability.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Re-entry policy in the Sub-region has been instituted to avert the discriminatory policy of expulsion of girls who fall pregnant as they progress through the school system with such risks as drop-outs before reaching recognised terminal points.The positive and substantial relationship between education and earnings is a well-established empirical fact, and the fundamental goal of re-entry policy was meant to be a key step towards the attainment of basic education for teenage mothers and to improve the education of the girl child. The re-entry to school policy guidelines introduced in 1994, advocated that girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy should be readmitted after giving birth. However, despite the re-entry policy guidelines in place, the grim reality in public secondary schools in Eldoret West Sub County revealed that, there were fewer girls who had re-entered the schooling system after child birth at 387 while those who dropped out due to pregnancy were more with the total number of 1531(T.S.C, County Director,2019) as such the study sought to assess the level of awareness re–entry policy in public secondary schools and was guided by the social integration theory on student retention in schools.

1.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
Teenage pregnancy is a widespread phenomenon in the society and affects young women in all sectors of life but in the current study investigated secondary school students in public secondary schools and questionnaires were confined to the affected teenage mothers and guidance and counselling teachers only. The questionnaire were administered to teenage mothers back in school and this technique of data collection had some limitation in that, it evoked anxiety related to examination and the sensitive nature of this topic hence the researcher assured the participants that the questionnaire were not test but instruments of investigation about a certain phenomenon and assured the respondents of confidentiality and anonymity. The participants were made to understand that the questionnaire only required honest responses that were not graded as right or wrong. However, the researcher could not rule out such a possibility in some participants. Since the researcher administered interview schedules to head teachers, some were hesitant to give information on facts about teenage mothers and the re-entry policy in their schools for fear of releasing their secrets and weakness. To counter this, the researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality and anonymity as the study findings would be used for academic purpose and to improve on the implementation re-entry policy of teenage mothers in schools. Further, in the current study, not all stakeholders were reached for comments on this sensitive issue especially the parents of the affected teenager

1.4 MATERIALS AND METHODS
The study was conducted in Uasin Gishu County. It comprises three Sub Counties namely Eldoret West, Wareng and Eldoret East. Eldoret town 330 km North West of Kenya's capital city of Nairobi. The area has a cool and temperate climate that favors agriculture which explains why the Sub County is a major food basket for the country and it enjoys two rainy seasons with an annual rainfall ranging between 900 to 1200 mm and annual temperatures ranging between 8.4 °C and 27 °C. The study was guided by the social integration theory on student retention in schools. The study adopted pragmatic world view, a mixed method research design utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approach and employed stratified sampling, simple random and purposive sampling as its sampling techniques. The sample in the study constituted, 59 head teachers, 59 guidance and counselling teachers and 196 teenage mothers back in school in public secondary schools in Eldoret West Sub County. The research instruments for the study were questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis. The questionnaire was administered to the teenage mothers and guidance and counselling teachers while the interview schedule was administered to head teachers. Document analysis was used to establish the number of teenage mothers back in schools. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and was summarized using frequencies, percentages and tables. Content validity of the instruments was determined by seeking guidance and authentic approval from supervisors and other researchers so as to make necessary changes while reliability of the instruments ensured consistency of results or data after repeated trials. Ethical issues were considered in the study in order to protect the rights of the participants.

1.5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents were asked whether they were aware of the existence of re-entry policy in their school
and were required to respond to the statements below;

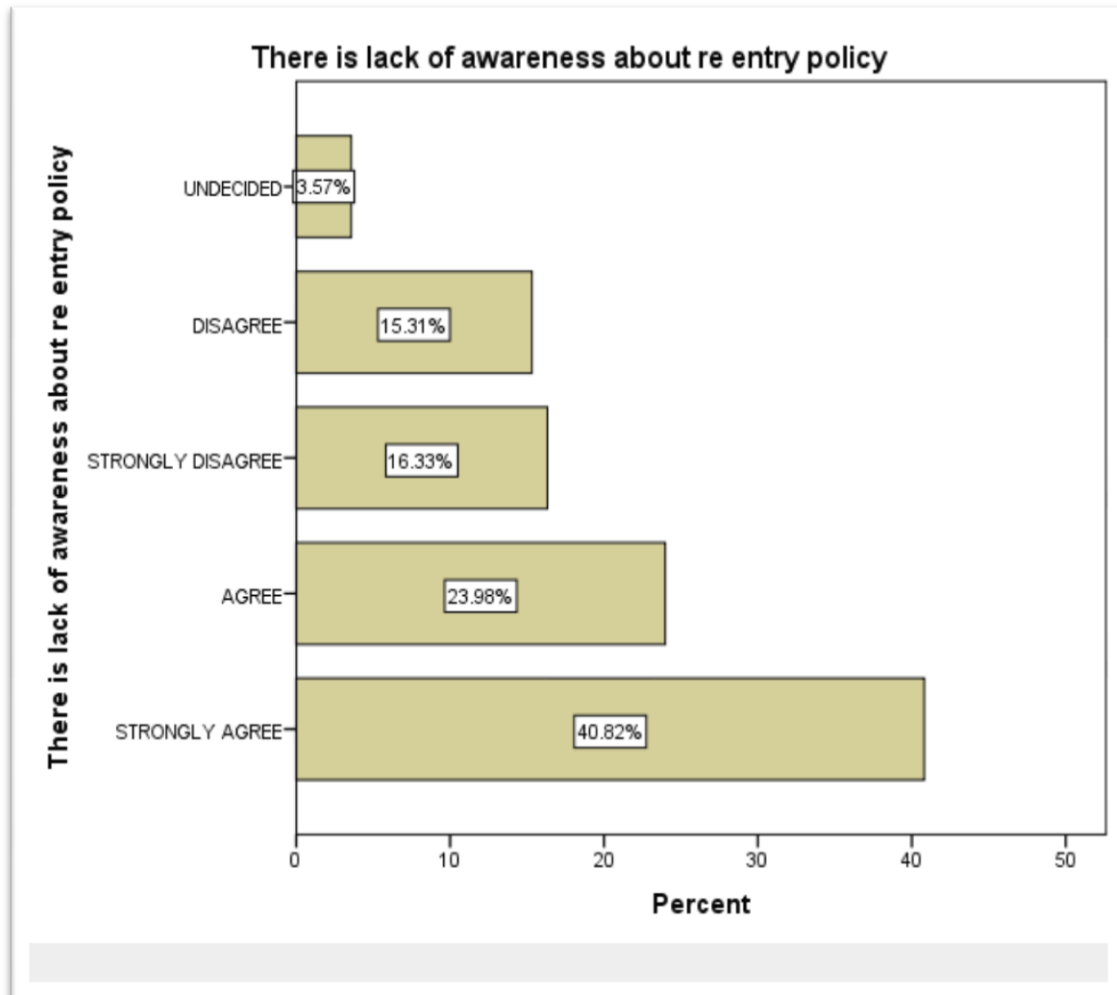**1.5.1: Awareness about re-entry policy**

Figure 1.5.1: Awareness about re-entry policy

The respondents were asked whether there is lack of information about re-entry policy and it revealed that
80(40.8%) strongly agreed, 47(23.98%) agreed, (16.33%) strongly disagreed, (15.31%) disagreed while (3.57%)
were undecided. The head teachers interviewed claimed that they were not aware of the policy and underscored
that, puberty stage gets most of the teenagers unaware and by the time they knew about the changes in their
bodies they are already pregnant. The head teachers attributed this to early maturing of girls and exposure to
phonography in the internet, films, TV and absence of parents in the home due to demand at work leaving
teenagers to explore on their own. Head teachers recommended that mothers should have open communication
about sexuality with their daughters.The current study revealed that, lack of information about reproductive
health leads to teenage pregnancy at 80(40.8%).This is further supported by Brooks and Goldstein (2001) that,
lack of information is a situation when one is uninformed on how to cope with anything that can come one's
way in life. It is crucial for teenagers to be informed about issues such as sex, sexuality and pregnancy for them
to be aware of reality. In the same vein Nemutanzhela (2007) asserts that, teenagers are not informed about
sexuality and consequently, they involve themselves in sexual relationships with married men and because of
ignorance regarding the traumatic experience and consequences of falling pregnant. In some of these cultures
sex is a subject that is never discussed with teenagers. Teenagers encountering physiological and other changes
in their bodies find it difficult to discuss such issues with their parents, so they turn to their peers for advice and
this increases the chances of teenagers experimenting with sex, the outcome of which is sometimes an unwanted
pregnancy (Sethosa, 2007).

According to Nicholas as cited by Macleod (1999), claim that, parents play a very small role in transferring
information to their teenage children and are reluctant to discuss sex with their teenage children, including

shyness, parents not receiving sexuality education at school themselves, religious reasons or fear that this may encourage early sexual engagement. Teenage pregnancy is a deeply embedded social phenomenon and while teenage motherhood contribute to shaping it, their attitudes and actions are critically shaped by the environment in which they are socialised and the relationships that they develop in reducing teenage pregnancy requires paying more attention to the gendered features of sexuality and the terms and conditions under which they have sex (Jewkes, Morrell &Christofides, 2009).Sexual activity among teenagers is a common and normal bridge to adulthood and it should not bestigmatized nor condemned but rather, teenagers should be recognized as moving into a period of sexual discovery and be supported to ensure they are informed (Flanagan et al., 2013).

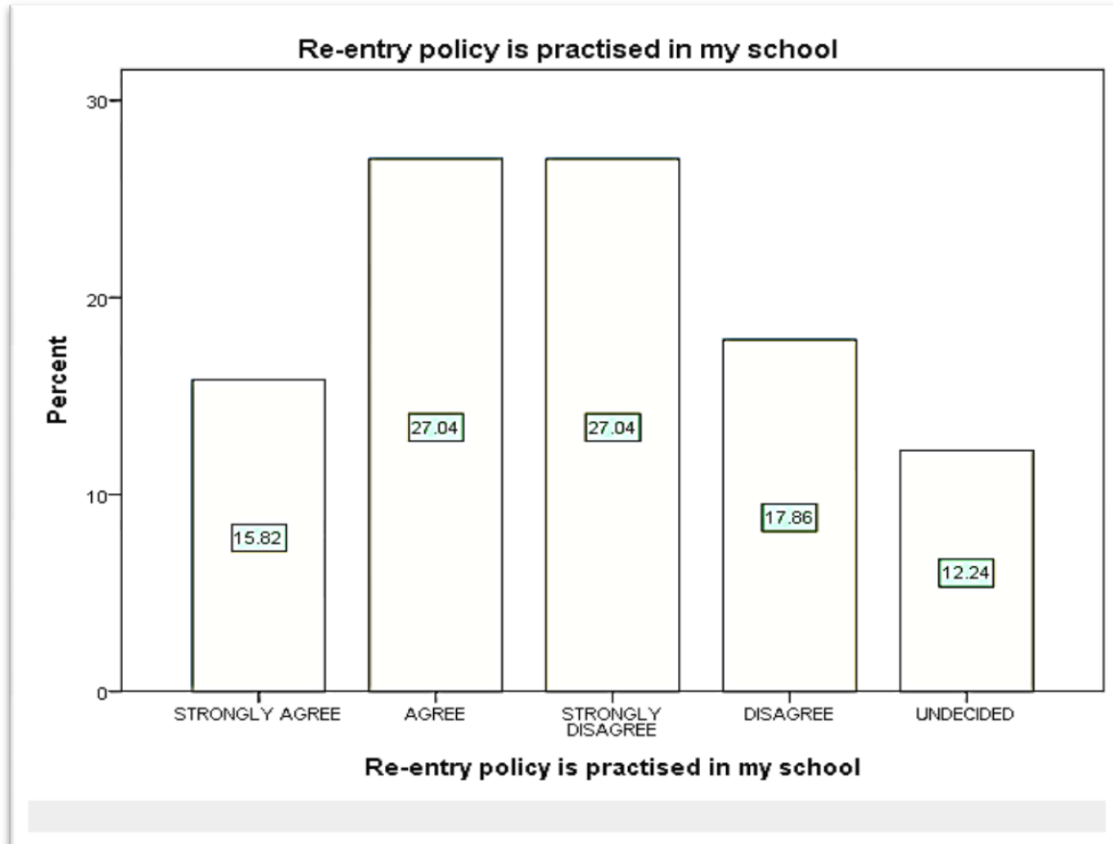### 1.5.2. Re-Entry Policy is practiced in the School

Figure 1.5.2: Re-Entry Policy is practiced in the School

The respondents were asked whether re-entry policy is practised in the school and revealed that there was divided opinion on agreed and strongly disagreed at 53(27%) respectively,(15.82%) strongly agreed,(17.86%) disagreed while 12.24%) were undecided. The head teachers interviewed on this issue claimed that re-entry policy is in paper and not practised in most schools because of many logistical problems facing teenage mothers in the schools. The study findings revealed that there was a divided opinion on those who agreed and strongly disagreed at 53(27%) with the statement. Policy-making tends to become the mystique of elites and these elites are separated from [local] people, these mysteries and separations put policy-making processes in rural areas into a privileged position (Atkinson & Coleman, 1992). When policy makers think about alternative policy approaches they are observed to simplify issues in order to understand a situation better in an attempt to develop some order out of chaos and to weed out some threads of causation from very complex situations (Roe, 1991).According to Pillow (2004), allowing teenage mothers to continue with education is seen as a chance for teenage mothers to redress their irresponsibility and make a contribution to society. Therefore, discourses on education as a responsibility have influenced what should be included in such an education, among others, avoidance of a repeat pregnancy and the re-education of morals and responsibilities. In Kenya, policies often change as they move through bureaucracies to the local level where they are implemented. Implementation always makes or changes policy to some degree (Hayer, 1995).Perspectives about teenage pregnancy have influenced policy through the decades however studies referenced in Zachry (2005) found that there are documented instances of teenage pregnancy being called an epidemic or out of control by the media, when birth rates for this population were actually at their lowest in decades. Adolescents who do not receive needed intervention and supportive services to help them achieve may experience increased feelings of isolation and lower educational aspirations (Valaitis& Sword, 2005) that may contribute to chemical dependency, multiple

pregnancies, and crime involvement (Johnson & Perkins, 2009).According to Muganda-Onyando and Omondi (2008), there is need to sensitize teachers and school administration to implement the re-entry policy guidelines, even where the teachers are aware of its existence, most of them are not sure on how it should be implemented.
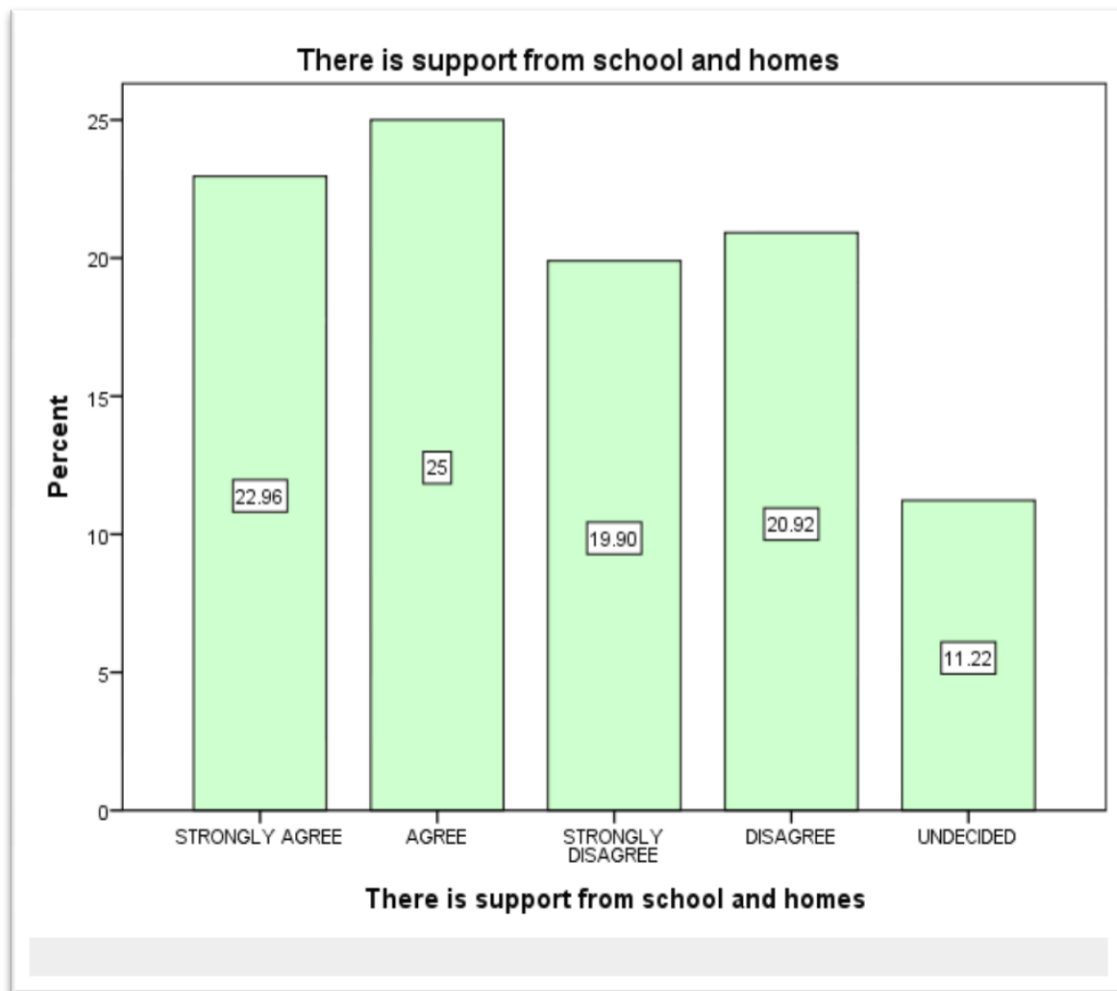
1.5.3Support from School and Homes

Figure 1.5.3: Support from school and homes

The respondents were asked whether there is support from school and homes and it revealed that 49 (25%) agreed, 45(23%) strongly agreed (20.92%) disagreed, (19.90%) strongly disagreed while (11.22%) were undecided with the statement. The head teachers interviewed concerning this issue claimed that they   supported teenage mothers to some extent especially on the school work. The study finding revealed that there was support from school and homes at 49 (25%) and this is further supported by Morrell, Bhana and Shefer (2012) that, school support is a crucial factor in determining whether a teenage mother is able to continue her education. The willingness of school principals to accommodate and support teenage mothers is a primary consideration for support.

According to Lamb & Rice (2008), effective strategies to increase school completion rate of teenage mothers were characterized by strong leadership, a clear focus on achievement, supportive and positive school culture or climate, including supportive relationships among students and teachers.Further good communications with parents, guidance and counselling and targeted programs that address the needs of different groups of teenage mothers from disadvantaged backgrounds was very important. Supporting teenage mothers in academically challenging work may be the step that will help them gain the education and skills they need to build a successful future for themselves and their children (Zachry, 2005).Teenage mothers who return to school after the birth of their children, experience intimidation and marginalization and lack of support from by educators (Chigona&Chetty, 2008).

According to Lee Smith-Battle (2011), there is a lack of consistent support for teenage mothers from their families. The fact that teenage mothers has to jump lessons in order to look after her baby is of less concern to

her parents because she had a baby while still very young and has to face the consequences. Teenage mothers who experience difficulty with the nurturing role of mother hood may depend highly on an older and significant caregiver to guide them in parenting (Paschal, Lewis-Moss, & Hsiao, 2011). According Chigona and Chetty (2007), only allowing teenage mothers back to school does not help them succeed in their secondary education but there is a need for support to prepare teenage mothers for schooling and mothering before they return to school. As teenage mothers, they are expected to be mother and student simultaneously which is further supported by (Theron & Dunn, 2006; Nathanson, 1990) that, this was a big responsibility for a teenager who is still developing psychologically, in the same vein Pearton (1999) argues that, adolescents are mostly too young and emotionally immature when they first fall pregnant hence if these girls are to succeed academically it is important to provide adequate support.

According to Breheny and Stephens (2007), motherhood is a challenge requiring support and community involvement regardless of the mother's age and socio-economic position and further proposes that different social structures could be used to support motherhood occurring at any point in the life course so that motherhood could be successfully combined with education and employment in any order. According to Wheal, (2005) and Chase. et al (2006), holistic and ongoing programs of parent support should be available to assist care leavers who become teenage mothers. They will need help with both emotional and practical issues, including finances to purchase clothes and equipment for a new baby, pre-natal classes, birth information, parenting skills, housing, social inclusion, advice on breastfeeding, and access to formal or informal support networks. Teenage mothers face an overwhelming number of difficulties starting from parents and peer pressures that are far more common than supporting and understanding them. 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 for these parenting teens (Arlington Public School, 2004). According Nyambura (2000), three re-entry programmes include; setting up special bridging centres for young mothers where they could continue with their formal education and/or specialised training while breastfeeding their babies, creating opportunities for out-of-school girls and to exploit informal sector apprenticeships for them, and lastly to introduce flexible models 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, 1994 as cited in Nyambura, 2000).

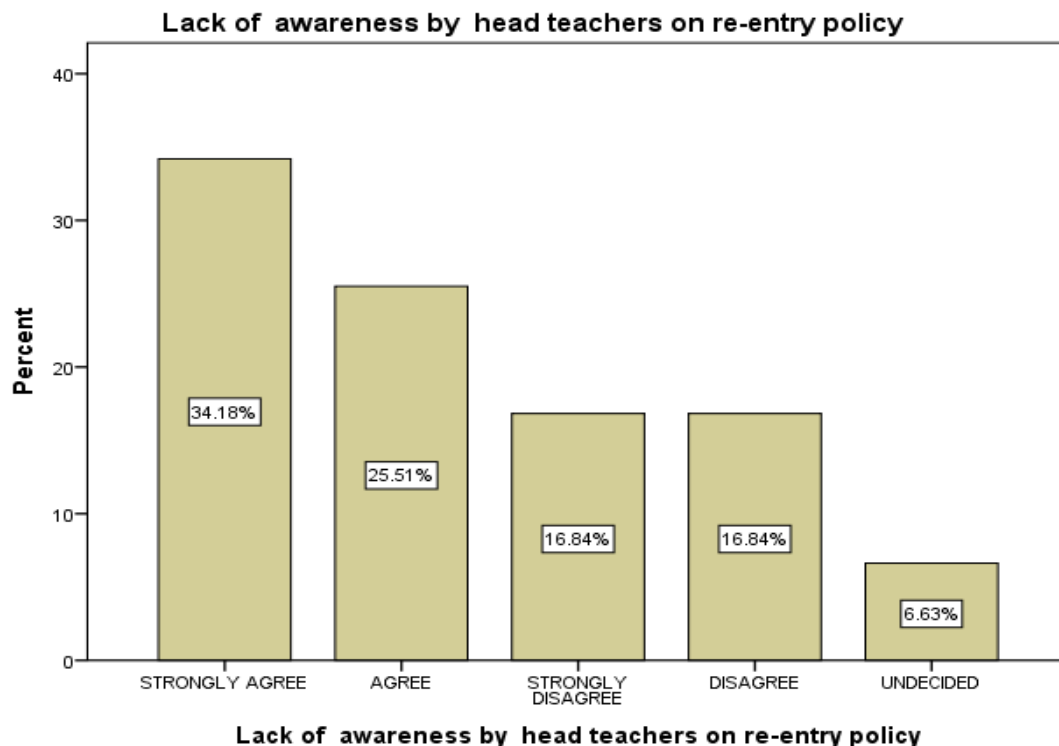**1.5.3 Head teachers' awareness about the re-entry policy**

Figure 1.5.3 Head teachers' awareness about the re-entry policy
The respondents were asked whether school head teachers are not aware of or are ignorant of the re-entry policy and it revealed that 67(34.18%) strongly agreed, 50(25.51%) agreed,(16.84%) strongly disagreed and disagreed

respectively while (6.63%) were undecided about this statement. The head teachers interviewed acknowledged that indeed some were not aware of or were ignorant of the re-entry policy. Most of the head teachers claimed that the policy was in the ministry and had not been brought to their county and that there had been no official communication on how it should be implemented revealing gaps on its implementability. The study findings revealed that school head teachers were not aware of or are ignorant of the re-entry policy at 67(34.2%).

According to Omwancha (2012), lack of awareness and understanding of both the re-entry policy and the guidelines among the Ministry of Education (MOE) officials meant that the officials were unable to offer advice and guidance to the principals, head teachers, teachers and parents. The lack of knowledge among the officials about the policy was likely to spill over to the head teachers whom they are meant to give professional advice and guidance since they acknowledged the fact that most stakeholders are unaware of the policy. However, school authorities could use the absence of guidelines to discreetly or openly discourage pregnant school girls from continuing in school, particularly during pregnancy. According to Crosby (1996), the whole life of policy is a chaos of purposes and accidents. It is not at all a matter of the rational implementation of the decisions through selected strategies. Policy formulation and implementation is a complex messy business which is not tied up in neat theoretical packages and as such, one of the way forward in reducing the dichotomy is by involving all the stakeholders at all levels in the policy process. This is crucial because it will affect the success of the attainment of the Millennium development goals (MDGs). The current study and literature above revealed that Ministry of Education (MOE) officials and school head teachers were unaware of the re-entry policy and that the whole life of policy is a chaos of purposes and accidents.

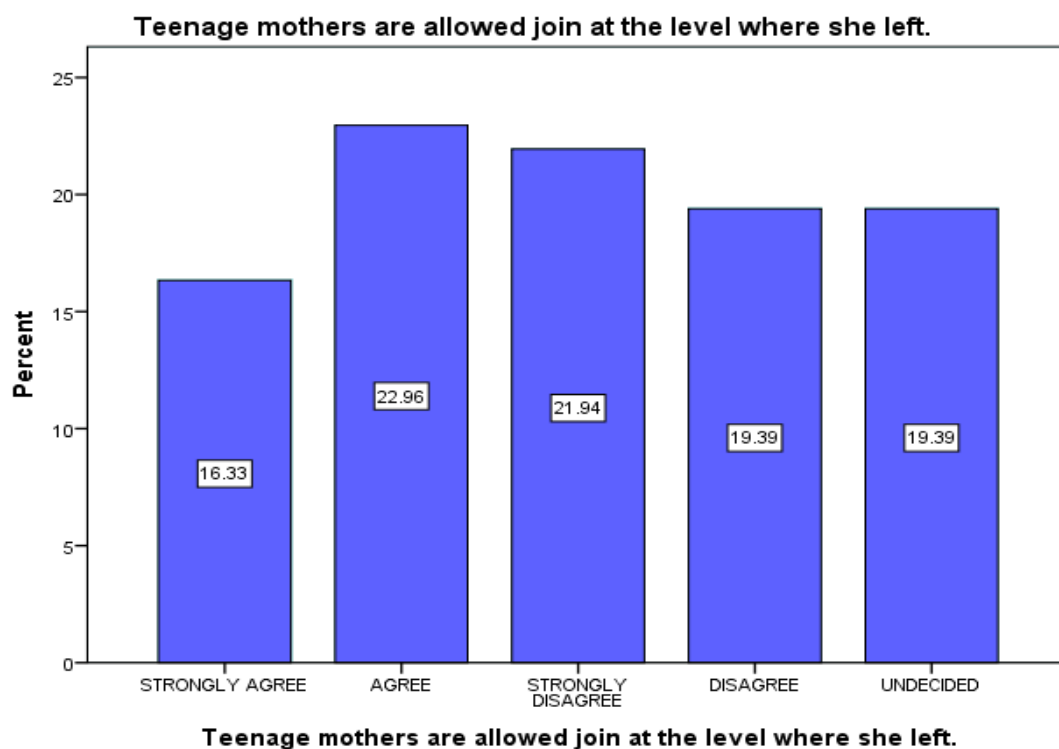**1.5.4 Teenage Mothers be allowed join at the level they left**

Figure 1.5.4 Teenage Mothers be Allowed Join at the Level they Left
The respondents were asked whether teenage mothers should be allowed join at the level where she left and it revealed that 45(22.96%) agreed, 43(21.94%) strongly disagreed,(19.39%) disagreed and undecided respectively while (16.33%) strongly agreed with the statement. The head teachers disagreed with the statement due to the fact that teenage mothers were often absent from school and to be re admitted back to school would be determined by the entry mark from exam done after child birth for placement in a particular form. The head teachers further stated that teenage mothers have to adhered to the school rules/regulation of not being absent from school for a certain period of time to determine their stay in the school or face expulsion from the schools completely. The current study revealed that teenage mothers should be allowed join at the level where she left at 45(23%) despite objections from some head teachers.

There are schools who view pregnant and young motherhood as a barrier for learners. Such learners find themselves with the double load of being a learner and becoming or being a parent. In addition, the role of the teachers is, amongst others, to respond to the changing needs of these learners. They also need to address

perceptions of the wider public concerning the symbolic meaning of teenage mothers in the school (Morrell, Bhana&Shefer, 2012). As such it is argued that teachers may need professional assistance in supporting teenage mothers in their school experience. In-service training for teachers is important to keep track of the changes that society is facing (Bloem as cited in Chigona& Chetty, 2008). This means that the absence of support personnel could be constructed as a critical problem when it comes to addressing the needs of teenage mothers (Clowes, D'Amant&Nkani, 2012).

According to Chilisa, (2002) a pregnant schoolgirl meets with one of three outcomes; expulsion from school, re-entry, and continuation. Each of the three options that face the pregnant schoolgirl has both principled and practical difficulties. The expulsion policy violates the human rights of the girl and robs the country of a possible resource. The expulsion policy has further been specifically criticized as one that is insensitive to the needs of the girls and that it tends to bracket the reasons for teenage pregnancy as a girl's problem and fail to look at factors that lead to her getting pregnant before completing her education. The re-entry policy on the other hand has been criticized for being discriminatory; for example, schoolboys who are fathers or fathers to be are not asked to leave school until the child is born. While the continuation policy meets the educational human rights of the girl, it may well be that it overlooks other rights such as those of having support and comfort during the pregnancy and after delivery.

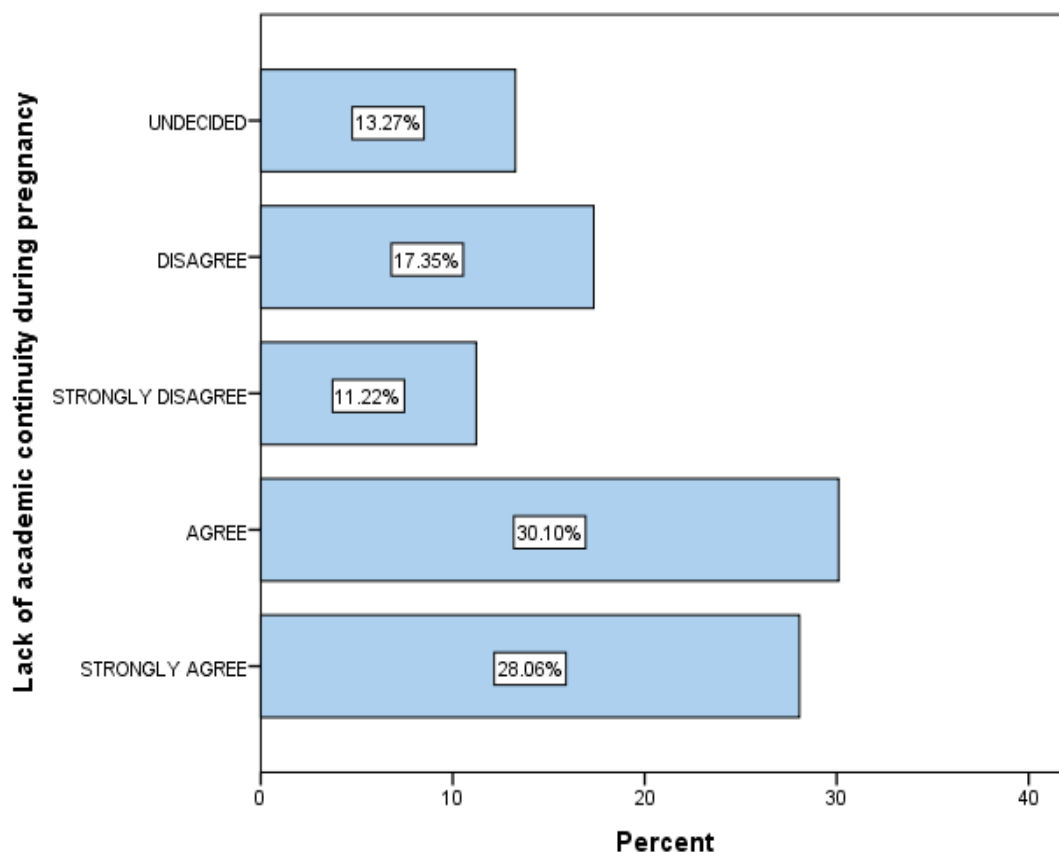**1.5.5Lack of academic continuity during pregnancy**

Figure 1.5.5: Lack of academic continuity during pregnancy
The respondents were asked whether lack of academic continuity during pregnancy and the year of waiting, leave the teenage mothers unprepared for the placement exams and it revealed that 59(30.1%) strongly agreed, 55(28.06%) agreed, (17.35%) disagreed,(13.27%) were undecided while (11.22%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The head teachers interviewed on this statement strongly agreed that complications that arises due to pregnancy and motherhood limit teenagers from being in school daily hence miss out on effective syllabus coverage in schools thus leaving them unprepared for the placement exams. The head teacher further claimed that teenage mothers miss school frequently due the issues of sickness of the babies or lack of caretaker at home

leading them miss out on school work. The study finding revealed that, lack of academic continuity during pregnancy and the year of waiting, leave the teenage mothers unprepared for the placement exams at 59(30.1%). According to Stephens.et al(2003), teenage mothers and their children were both at critical points in their lives, when their life courses can be shaped toward healthy development, stability, and productivity, or toward life-long poverty and dependency. Efforts to improve outcomes for these young families must take advantage of every opportunity to connect them with the services and support that would help them move toward positive growth. According to Grant and Hallman (2008) pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood transform the context in which adolescents live and make decisions, particularly with regard to household and individual time allocation, including care-giving responsibilities. Pillow (2004) describes the discourse of contamination that develops from the perception that, the immorality of the teenage mother would set a bad example to the student body at school, hence contaminating fellow innocent girls. Pillow (2004) argue that, many teenage mothers return to school because of their babies and   were determined to complete schooling for the sake of their babies. However, the girls' difficulty in coping with schooling was attributable to their babies, and also to the fact that educators and parents often give up on them and fail to take their plans seriously once the girls had children (Schultz, 2001).

1.5.6 Re-enforcement of re-entry policy in schools
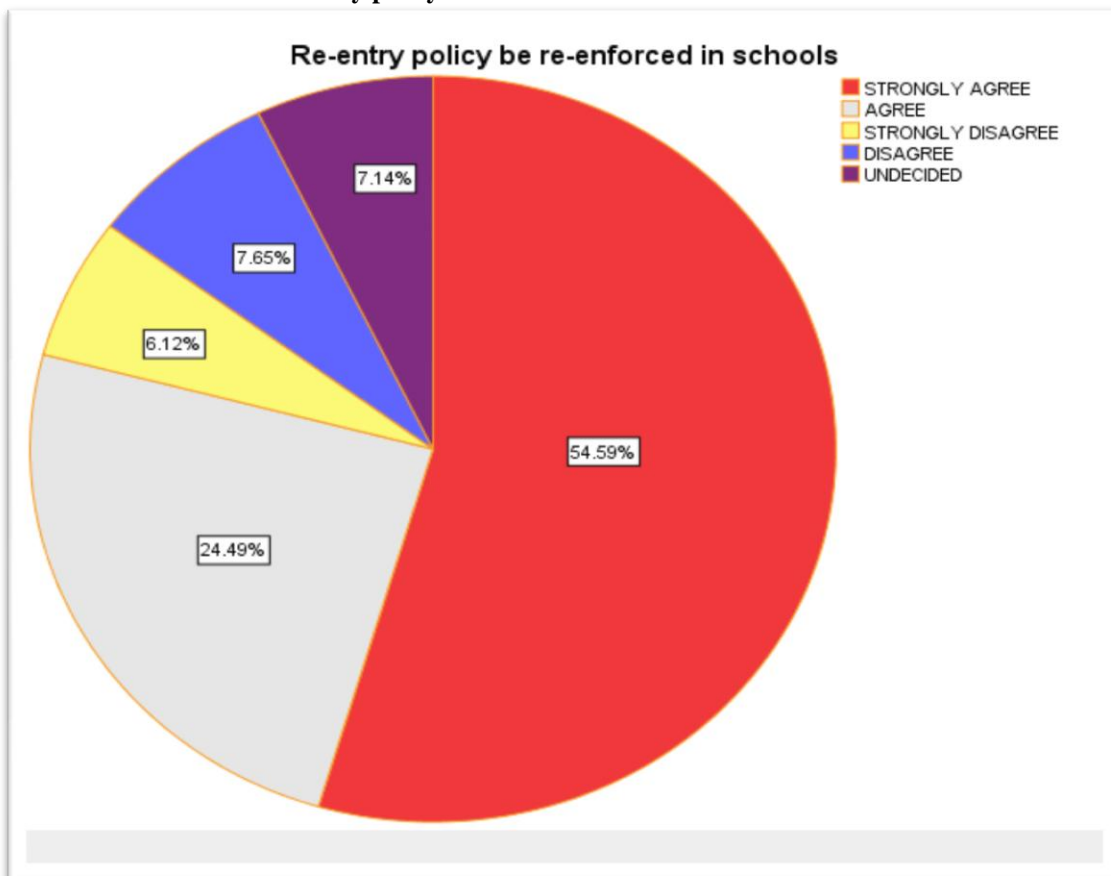

Figure 1.5.6 Re-enforcement of re-entry policy in schools
The respondents were asked whether re-entry policy should be re-enforced in schools and it revealed that 107(54.6%) strongly agreed, 48(24.5%) agreed, (7.65%) disagreed, (7.14%) were undecided while (6.12%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The head teachers interviewed on this statement supported that indeed re-entry policy should be re-enforced in schools and that the roles of each stakeholder be stipulated so that the head teacher know what is required of him /her as pertaining to teenage mothers in the school nonetheless re-entry is the best way to retain teenage mothers in schools. The study findings revealed that re-entry policy should be re-enforced in schools at 107(54.6%). According to Omwancha (2012), there is need to constantly and consistently incorporate the views of all stakeholders in the policy, especially the views of the teenage mothers and their experiences of motherhood. Those involved in the implementation of the policy need to hear what the young mothers are saying if they really want to encourage them to come back to school.

According to Panday. et al2009), focusing on teenage mothers only as welfare recipients or students with low academic achievement limits the broader ways one can think about educational attainment. Only about a third of

teenage mothers return to school. This may be related to uneven implementation of the school policy, poor academic performance prior to pregnancy, few child-caring alternatives in the home, poor support from families, peers and the school environment and the social stigma of being a teenage mother however   the likelihood of re-entering the education system decreases when childcare support is not available in the home and for every year that teenage mothers remain outside of the education system. According to Omwancha (2012), the community and all other stakeholders should be involved in designing, developing and implementing the re-entry policy. This would be done by taking the conversation into the local community in order to help the implementing agents to understand the difficulties of implementing a national policy in a local context. The shift would enhance the community's participation in the policy process.

According to Boulden (2001), some schools still fear that pregnant girls and teenage mothers give the school a bad image and teachers fail to encourage teenage mothers to remain at schools, while others actively encourage them to leave the school. In the same vein, Mitchell and Halpern (2003) revealed that, teachers and learners have different feelings towards pregnant girls and that some of them believe that schools should expel pregnant girls. Studies suggest that some school personnel believe that being a teenage mother will limit the student's educational attainment and this is contrasted to studies cited by SmithBattle (2007) showing a belief by teenage mothers and their parents that the effects of pregnancy were short term and limited. Teenagers did not expect being a mother to interfere substantially with their education or employment. A recommendation to policy makers includes working with an understanding of how teenage mothers see themselves and how they see their own role in their school success.

5.7 Lobbying for the education rights of girls who do become pregnant
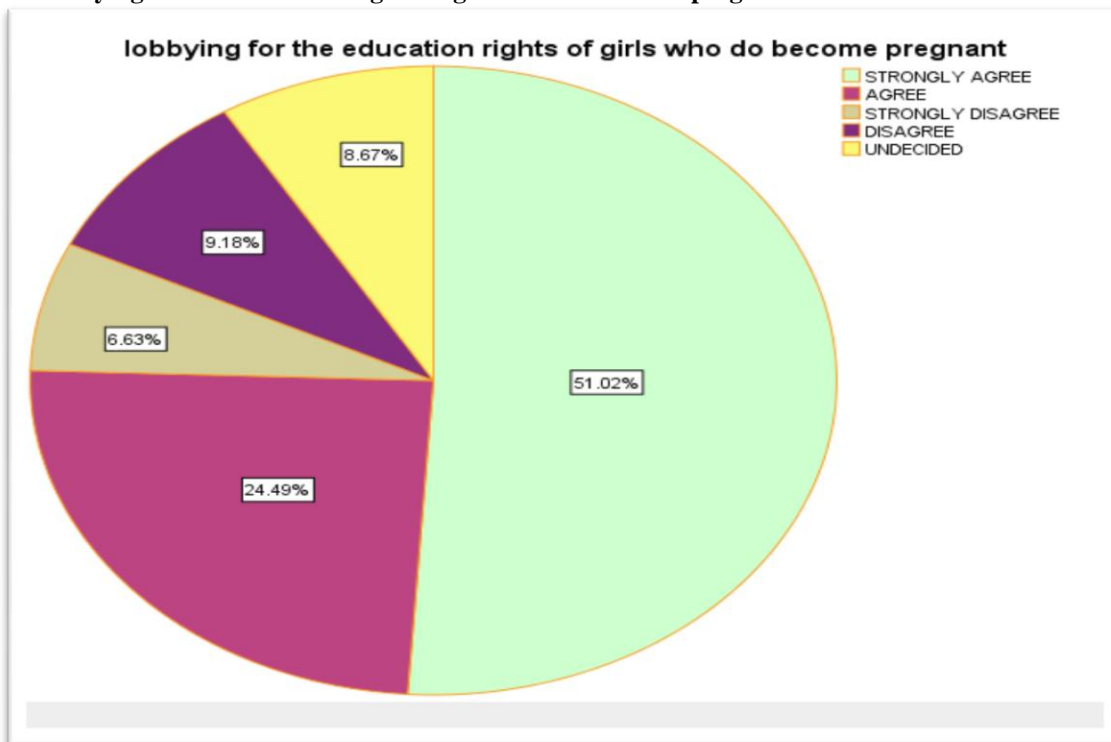

Figure 1.5.7 Lobbying for the education rights of girls
 The respondents were asked whether lobbying for the education rights of girls who do become pregnant it revealed that most of the teenage mothers strongly agreed at 100 (51.02%), 48(24.5%) agreed,(9.18%) disagreed, (8.67%) were undecided while (6.63%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The head teachers interviewed supported this statement citing that the benefits of educating girls were many hence a healthy nation. The study findings revealed that there should be lobbying for the education rights of girls who do become pregnant and this is further supported by Herz and Sperling (2004) that,educating girls was the key to ensuring improved mother and child health, community development and economic growth and enables them to access better and safer employment, in the same vein Psacharaopoulos and Patrinos (2002) assert that, one extra year of primary school boosts a girl's eventual wages by 10–20% and the impact of this increased earning potential is multiplied because women and girls make good use of the money they earn, reinvesting 90% into their families compared to just 30–40% for men (Fortson,2003).The economic impact is also felt on a macro-scale as increasing women's education leads to increased national growth for example only a 1% increase in the

number of women with secondary education can increase a country's annual per capita income growth by 0.3% (PLAN, 2008).

According to Sen (1999), education is central to developing a girl's capabilities, empowering her, promoting awareness and critical thinking, enabling her to claim all other human rights and make more informed decisions. When a girl gets the opportunity to learn by accessing and remaining in good quality schooling it has a transformative effect not only on her own life chances and the realization of her human rights, but also on the wider social and economic environment and the governments of the Sub-Saharan countries are making little effort to eliminate the discrepancies in the area of access to secondary education for girls where they are denied access to education when they fall pregnant or when they become teen mothers(Barro & Lee,2010; Schultz, 2001). The gap between teenage mothers' aspirations and the support they receive suggests that educators are missing an opportunity to facilitate teenage mothers' school progress and their long-term educational attainment (Smith Battle, 2007). However highly motivated teenage mothers with good grades prior to pregnancy are those most likely to return (Grant &Hallman, 2008). According to Marteleto& Lam, (2008), educational achievements is an indicator for likely school dropout across the board, not only in relation to pregnancy however girls and boys with higher numeracy and literacy were significantly less likely to drop out of school, for any reason, including pregnancy

1.6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found out that the re-entry policy of teenage mothers has not been clearly defined and clarified hence the study recommended that the policy be clearly defined and clarified in all school so that the roles of all those involved be known and the voices of the teenager mothers be known and heard.

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