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## **Enhancing Teenage Mothers' Retention: The Role of Principals in Providing Guidance and Counseling Services in Public Secondary Schools in Kajiado North Sub-County**

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# Enhancing Teenage Mothers' Retention: The Role of Principals in Providing Guidance and Counseling Services in Public Secondary Schools in Kajiado North Sub-County

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## Abstract

The research investigated the role of principals in providing guidance and counseling services to enhance the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-County. The research was anchored on Durkheim's Social Integration Theory. The study utilized convergent design under mixed method research approach which was supported by cross-sectional survey design and phenomenological design. The research question of the study was on the influence of guidance and counselling services on the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools. The target population for the study was 302 with a sample size of 172 participants made up of teenage mothers, principals, guidance and counseling teachers and board of management chair persons. The study used both probability and non-probability sampling. This research used content validity and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, while the trustworthiness of the interview guides was assessed during a pilot study to ascertain credibility. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression). Whereas qualitative data was analyzed using thematic approach. The research complied with ethical norms and guidelines established by the appropriate local and international organizations. The study found that principals' guidance and counselling explained explained 20.1% of the variation in the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-County ( $R^2 = 0.201$ ). The model was statistically significant ( $F(1, 150) = 37.686, p = 0.000$ ). Regression analysis revealed a positive and significant effect of these services on retention ( $\beta = 0.397, p = 0.000$ ). The study concludes that principal's guidance and counseling services play an important role in supporting the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools. In view of the findings, the study recommends that Kajiado North sub-County Secondary schools invest in comprehensive

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training programs for guidance and counselors, specifically tailored to address the unique needs of teenage mothers.

**Keywords:** *Teenage Mothers' Retention, Guidance and Counseling Services, Principals' Role, Public Secondary Schools, Kajiado North sub-County*

## 1.0 Introduction

Growing awareness of the value of education as a potent vehicle for both social and economic transformation has been recognized in recent years (Chandra & Babita, 2023). Public schools have a critical role in providing students with access to quality education, and this function is essential for the advancement of society as a whole. However, public schools hosts a variety of vulnerable groups of students whose right to access quality education is endangered. Among these vulnerable groups are teenage mothers. Researchers, educators, and legislators have payed great attention to the problem of adolescent pregnancy, teenage motherhood and their repercussions. Consequently, several governments and educational authorities have established policies directing and regulating the educational pursuit of teenage mothers. One such Policy is the Return to School Policy for Teenage Mothers. The Return to School Policy for Teenage Mothers was established by the Kenyan government in 1994 to guarantee unconditional re-admission of teenage mothers to school (Mutua et.al. 2019). Nevertheless, without effective educational support programs for teenage mothers, their educational journey is confronted with threats that pose a potential to perpetuate the cycle of poverty from one generation to the next(Thwala 2021).

A study done in Melbourne, Australia by Subban (2022) found that educational centers exist to promote continued learning for pregnant and young mothers. Educational managers of such centers develop, monitor, and coordinate young parents' supportive programs which act as rafts. The programs engage young parents back into education, after withdrawal due to pregnancy and increase their likelihood of a life without social disadvantage. The programs in these centers provide an alternative curriculum for teenage mothers created a conducive atmosphere for teenage mothers to comfortably learn with their peers facing same challenge of being mothers at tender ages. The curriculum was minimized and flexible to enable teenage mothers learn at their pace. The findings also showed that a Victorian Certificate of applied Learning (VCAL) course was incorporated in the teenage mothers' studies as an alternative pathway offering them opportunity to tertiary study. This motivated teenage mothers to continue with education in a strategy that moved them to the next level of their careers.

In Africa, studies carried out in both Malawi and Burkina Faso (Kabiru, Munthali, Sawadogo, et al (2023) affirmed some effective academic programs developed by principals to draw and retain teenage mothers in school during pregnancy and after childbirth. Collaboration with the community health workers instilled confidence in the good health of teenage mothers and encouraged the young mothers to access educational services. Community health workers equipped teenage mothers with knowledge and life skills which empowered them to face the challenges of motherhood and education. This contributed to building the young mothers' self-esteem hence addressing the stigma issues. The study also highlighted community based children centre, cash transfers for only those who returned and stayed in school, guidance and counseling services, school management committee, parent-teacher associations and mother groups in retaining teenage mothers in schools.

The study on Malawi above, contradicted a study done in South Africa which found that no special educational programs were made to retain teenage mothers in schools but teenage

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mothers were expected to function ordinarily as the rest of the students irrespective of their pregnancy or early motherhood roles and conditions (Malatji, Dube, Nkala, and Shumba, 2023). The study focused on programs which involved collaboration between the school and other stakeholders outside the school: health care workers, parent-teacher association, mother groups. The current study was to explore the academic support, financial and material support, and flexible management support activities initiated by principals to retain teenage mothers in schools. Research carried out in Rwanda found that financial support through cash transfers to teenage mothers reduced the stress of the young mothers' and enabled them to take care of their needs and those of their babies.

In Kenya, a study in Gatundu South Sub-County, Kiambu County (Muli, Piliyesi, & Koros, 2023) found that 75% of principals were actively involved in the lives of teenage mothers by offering guidance and counseling services to them. Such principals addressed the value of education and encouraged teenage mothers to remain focused on completing their education even after childbirth. On the other hand, only 25% of principals initiated and monitored academic supportive programs aimed at helping teenage mothers improve academically. The study found follow up on the well-being of teenage mothers by constantly listening to their challenges and helping them on how to navigate those challenges was a powerful tool that motivated teenage mothers to reduce stress and anxiety freeing them to concentrate on their studies. The study focused on guidance and counseling services offered to teenage mothers but the current study was in addition to explore other programs that principals initiated to retain teenage mothers in schools. A study done in Bondo Sub-county by Okondo (2022), showed a great record of support from relatives, and non-government organizations. This was meant to free teenage mothers from the parent role to return to school. The study reported collaboration between the schools and the organizations to empower teenage mothers. Principals insisted on extra lessons and supplied revision books, and homework which promoted a conducive environment for learning for teenage mothers.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The Ministry of Education in Kenya provided a policy framework on which teenage mothers should be readmitted in schools but the success of the policy lies on the strategies and programs instituted by principals to enable teenage mothers achieve their educational goals (Maslowsky et al. (2022), Amo-Adjei et al, 2023). Whereas the guidelines for teenage mothers return to school were in existence, implementation remained a challenge resulting to a low return rate to school or a dropout after return (Ajayi, Athero, Muga, et al, 2023). Thus, the guidelines for teenage mothers return to school were well documented (Ministry of Education 2020) but effective programs for implementing the guidelines were less specified and understood. This left the intervention programs at the discretion of principals.

Therefore, there were concerns among stakeholders that principal's educational programs to retain teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-county were ineffective. They lacked resources and as result were not helpful in retaining teenage mothers in schools thus resulting in their dropout. Research also confirmed these claims by stakeholders. Most studies confirmed that these educational programs were not adequately catering for the needs of teenage mothers resulting to dropouts (Ngumo & Muasa 2022, Mungana 2021, FAWE Report, 2021). These studies however did not touch on problems the educational programs faced in public secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-County. However, previous studies identifying the influence of principals' educational programs on retention of teenage mothers in secondary schools was limited. Consequently, the current study aimed at identifying gaps in the principals' educational programs for teenage mothers in Kajiado North sub-County and proposing new interventions that would have more



influence on retaining teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-County.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

What is the influence of principals' guidance and counselling services on retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-county?

## **1.3 Research Hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant influence of principals' guidance and counselling services on the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-County.

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The study was anchored on Durkheim's Social Integration Theory. Durkheim's idea of social integration served as the study's foundation (1897). The extent to which people engage in a variety of social roles and connections is known as their social integration (Brissette, Cohen, & Seeman, 2000). The foundation of Durkheim's Social Integration theory is the notion that an individual's behavior is influenced by their level of social integration. According to Durkheim, a healthy society was one in which the individual and the community were in balance, and social integration was essential to preserving this equilibrium. According to Durkheim, there are several ways for people and communities to relate. According to Durkheim, moral principles that are instilled by religion are what promote social cohesion. On the other hand, division of labor fosters social solidarity by fostering interdependence among various units, which in turn fosters social solidarity (Pope 1975). Additionally, according to Durkheim, education is essential for fostering interdependence and solidarity among people, disseminating a society's norms and common ideals, and giving shared ideas and values.

In addition, Durkheim thought that social integration strengthened a society's feeling of identity and belonging by fostering a collective consciousness (Luck, S. J. (2022). Durkheim's theory of social integration affirmed interconnections and collaboration among people at different levels of the society to achieve cohesion. Thus the theory upholds the need for interdependence among different people in order to utilize the wisdom, creativity and intelligence from various people resulting to maximized outcomes as opposed to limitations of individuals given that no one individual can accomplish everything. Social integration theory is geared towards creating a more stable, safe and just society. This is a theory that upholds human dignity and aims at protection of human rights. The theory also recognizes the importance of the responsibilities and roles played by each individual to contribute to the development of the society.

## **2.2 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework was developed from the theoretical framework chosen for the investigation, as seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

Source: Researcher (2024)

### 2.3 Empirical Review

Lourdes (2023) sought to investigate principals-initiated ways of handling teenage mothers' cases at Pagadian City in the Philippines. The study ascertained that school administrators implemented psychological support programs and extended academic support to help adolescent mothers in their education through guidance and counseling resource programs at different levels, especially through the orientation extended to the teachers to handle teenage mothers. The study used a qualitative single case to examine the experiences of secondary school teachers in handling pregnant learners and teenage mothers for school years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. The study involved eight secondary school teachers with teenage pregnant learners and teenage mothers, in five public secondary schools, and class advisors. The findings of Lourdes showed that principals scheduled teachers to have in-depth conversations with teenage mothers used ICT in reaching out to teenage mothers, extended financial and kind support to them, and provided arrangements for supplemental academic activities to them. Further findings showed that teachers gave school supplies to students, shifted to a blended learning modality, and conducted home visits /future home visits. The goal of the support extended to teenage mothers was found to be the need to maintain and keep the academic interest of teenage mothers retaining them in school.

The study done by Ashley (2023) in Alabama examined teenage mothers and the challenges of high school graduation: a counter narrative approach to exploring outcomes. The study recognized that although the numbers of teenage mothers were decelerating, less than half of the teenage mothers completed their education. The study used qualitative, phenomenological study. It explored lived experiences of women in Alabama who were teenage mothers and graduated high school. The study utilized the theoretical framework of Bandura's Social Cognitive theory and Duckworth's grit theory. Participants were recruited for this study using a recruitment social media post on Facebook and LinkedIn. The study collected data using an online survey and a one on one zoom interview. The study analyzed the data manually by coding each participant's interview transcript. A thematic analysis was also conducted which included identifying emergent themes from the data. The study findings identified these themes: barriers impacting teenage mothers, internal factors influencing academic success, external factors influencing academic success, and educational attainment. The study posited that academic success was possible for teenage mothers. The findings supported the importance of reinforcing the long-term value of psychological support to help teenage mother's complete high school and improve high school graduation rates.

In Africa, a study done by Kumwenda (2023) explored school structures in the provision of support mechanisms to the readmitted teenage mothers in selected secondary schools in Muzuzu, Malawi. The study using qualitative and exploratory research design investigated the supporting mechanisms structures for the readmitted teenage mothers. The study utilized

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the path-goal leadership theory by Roberthouse (1971). The target population for the study was six public secondary school. The study used purposive sampling and the participants in the study were: school committee leaders, mother group leaders, Parent-Teacher Association leaders, school counsellor and a teacher. The sample size was 60 respondents. The study used structured questionnaires and interview guides to collect data. The study failed to involve teenage mothers in the study yet teenage mothers were key to the study. It was crucial to involve teenage mothers in the study in order to get first-hand information that would enrich the study. The study limited the data collection instruments to two: structured questionnaires and interview guides. The current study involved teenage mothers and principals in the study to enrich the outcome. The study also used document analysis in addition to structured questionnaires and interview guides.

Malatji et al (2022) explored ways to reduce factors that may increase the likelihood of poor academic performance and school dropout among teenage mother's school girls in Nigeria. The study used a cross-sectional survey design under quantitative research approach will be used. The study utilized two data collection instruments: structured and semi-structured questionnaires. A purposive and snowballing sampling was used to select the study respondents. A significant proportion of respondents lived in urban areas. All respondents were enrolled in school and attended from home during the survey. The study adopted a Cross-Sectional survey design which is a quantitative design but used snowballing which is a none probability sampling technique for a qualitative study. The current study used a convergent parallel design under mixed method research approach with a cross-sectional survey design embracing simple random, purposive, with both questionnaires and interviews in the same study for data collection.

In Ethiopia, Lobo (2023) sought to examine school emotional support and school engagement for teenage mothers: the study looked at family, teacher and peer support as key determinants of teenage student's school participation. The study found that families, teachers and peers provided support through modelling respectful behaviour, caring for them, providing materials essential for their learning, encouraging, offering feedback, reinforcing good behaviour and punishing poor behaviour. The study used a mixed research approach and concurrent triangulation. Sample size determination assumption of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was used to choose samples for quantitative data. Stratified sampling approach was used to sample 284 students which comprised of 150 males and 134 females. A random sampling was used to choose a sample from all of the strata based on grade levels and gender. Twelve students and four teachers were chosen for interviews for qualitative data.

In Kenya, Opondo et al. (2020) investigated the guidance and counseling programme and adjustment of teenage mothers in secondary schools in Ugenya Sub-county. The study adopted ex-post factor causal-comparative research design. The study used a sample of 138 re-admitted teenage mothers who underwent counselling programme and 104 re-admitted teenage mothers who were integrated back to school without going through the counseling programme. The study used questionnaires to assess the academic, social, emotional and psychological adjustments. The study found that teenage mothers who had gone through formal counseling generally registered higher adjustments than those who did not pass through formal counseling. The teenage mothers' attitude had a meditating effect on the relationship between guidance and counseling and the overall adjustment of teenage mothers. Thus the study confirmed that guidance and counseling program was effective in boosting readjustment of teenage mothers in school and therefore improving the retention of teenage mothers.

### 3.0 Research Methodology

The study was carried out in Kajiado North sub-County, Kajiado County. The location was selected due to its strategic location in between the slums like the slum communities of Ongata Rongai and Mathare which contribute more to the vulnerability of girl child. In addition, Kajiado County is predominantly with a people of Maasai descent whose strong cultural practices hails boy child education and promotes early marriages for girl child. Besides, Kajiado North Sub-county was ranked second on cases regarding teenage pregnancies (Kenya News Agency: Information for Development, November, 2022). The research used convergent design under mixed method research approach supported by Cross-sectional survey design and phenomenology design to collect qualitative data and quantitative data. The research targeted 16 public secondary schools, 16 principals, 257 teenage mothers, 16 guidance and counselling teachers, and 16 Board of Management (BOM) chairpersons.

The research used stratified random sampling, a method that involves separating the population into distinct groups (strata) and picking a random sample from each stratum. The secondary schools were categorized into three strata: mixed day schools, mixed boarding schools, and single gender schools. Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) argued that a population size of 10 to 30% is sufficient. Consequently, the researcher selected a sample of 30% of the schools, resulting in a sample size of five schools. The single gender school was automatically included in the study since it was the only single gender and boarding school in the sub-county. The researcher then organized 15 articles labeled with the initials of the remaining specific schools and selected 4 papers at random.

The sample size of teenage mothers was determined using Yamane 1967 formula shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n=Number of samples

N= Total population

e= Error tolerance (0.05)

$$\text{Therefore: } n = \frac{257}{1 + 257(0.05)^2} = 157$$

Therefore, the sample size of Teenage mothers who were included in the study was 157 following the results of the Yamane 1967 formula. This was then followed by a simple random sampling to obtain the sampled size.

Purposive sampling was used to intentionally select participants for the study. 5 guidance and counselling teachers, 5 BOM chair persons, and 5 principals from each of the five selected schools were included in the study using purposive sampling.

Data was collected using questionnaires, interview guides, and document analysis guides. The researcher acquired a letter of recommendation from the Director of Post Graduate Studies at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa. Subsequently, the researcher submitted an application for a research permission to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Nairobi, Kenya, through the National Commission Science and Technology Initiative (NACOSTI). Prior to collecting information from the respondents, the researcher

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obtained permission from the principals and from the respondents. The researcher analyzed both the qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data was systematically arranged, tabulated, and analyzed using SPSS 26 software. The qualitative data analysis included transcribing the written text and audio data from open-ended questions, and then deductively coding them based on thematic categories. The research used correlation and regression analysis to investigate the nature and magnitude of the associations between the variables under investigation.

#### **4.0 Findings and Discussion**

This research included 157 teenage mothers, 5 principals, 5 guidance and counselors, and 5 Board of Management (BOM) chair persons. Questionnaires were administered to teenage mothers, while the remaining participants were interviewed. Out of the 157 teenage mothers who received surveys, 152 of them completed and returned them, resulting in a response rate of 96.8%. Likewise, all the principals, guidance counselors and BOM chair persons participated in the study resulting in a 100% response rate in each of these categories. The total response rate was above the accepted norm for surveys. Previous researchers posited that the typical rate of response for empirical studies is 65% of the sample (Holtom, Baruch, Aguinis & Ballinger, 2022).

Demographic results revealed that majority of teenage mothers in the studied schools were between 16-19 years old, comprising 55.9% of the sample. The results indicate that the majority of teenage mothers in the studied secondary schools (87.5%), had one child, while 12.5% had two children. It was evident that majority (65.8%) of the teenage mothers attended mixed secondary schools, and majority of them (65.8%) attended day schools, while only 34.2% were in boarding schools. This indicates that most teenage mothers in Kajiado North sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya, prefer or have access to day schools over boarding schools.

#### **4.1 Descriptive Analysis**

The research question was, what is the influence of principals' guidance and counselling resources on retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-County? The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Principals’ Guidance and Counselling Services**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
The guidance and counselling teachers always conduct an initial assessment to understand each teenage mother’s academic strengths, and weaknesses.	13 (8.60%)	0 (0.00%)	40 (26.30%)	60 (39.50%)	39 (25.70%)	3.74	1.11
The guidance and counseling teachers encourage teenage mothers to seek the help of other students to catch up missed lessons	14 (9.20%)	0 (0.00%)	28 (18.40%)	24 (15.80%)	86 (56.60%)	4.11	1.26
The guidance and counselling teachers direct teenage mothers to form discussion groups to help them learn	26 (17.10%)	1 (0.70%)	0 (0.00%)	40 (26.30%)	85 (55.90%)	4.03	1.46
The guidance and counselling department provides material support to teenage mothers	13 (8.60%)	0 (0.00%)	32 (21.10%)	36 (23.70%)	71 (46.70%)	4	1.21
The guidance and counselling teachers encourage teenage mothers to seek one on one learning with subject teachers.	11 (7.20%)	0 (0.00%)	18 (11.80%)	62 (40.80%)	61 (40.10%)	4.07	1.08
The Guidance and Counseling teachers always talk to all students about respecting the right of the teenage mothers to education	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	10 (6.60%)	108 (71.10%)	34 (22.40%)	4.16	0.52
The guidance and counseling teachers readily listen to teenage mothers	15 (9.90%)	0 (0.00%)	37 (24.30%)	38 (25.00%)	62 (40.80%)	3.87	1.24
The guidance and counseling department guides and counsels parents of teenage mothers and encourage them to accept the young mothers and support their education	14 (9.20%)	0 (0.00%)	55 (36.20%)	11 (7.20%)	72 (47.40%)	3.84	1.28
Guidance and counseling teachers’ advice other students not to call teenage mothers names.	13 (8.60%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	35 (23.00%)	104 (68.40%)	4.43	1.13
Other students do not call teenage mothers names	0 (0.00%)	13 (8.60%)	31 (20.40%)	48 (31.60%)	60 (39.50%)	4.02	0.97
The guidance and counseling teachers encourage teenage mothers to freely interact with other students	1 (0.70%)	11 (7.20%)	35 (23.00%)	43 (28.30%)	62 (40.80%)	4.01	1
The guidance and counseling teachers encourage teenage mothers to actively participate in extracurricular activities	10 (6.60%)	0 (0.00%)	11 (7.20%)	78 (51.30%)	53 (34.90%)	4.08	1.01
Guidance and counselling teachers organize life skills talks for all students	10 (6.60%)	0 (0.00%)	56 (36.80%)	48 (31.60%)	38 (25.00%)	3.68	1.06
Guidance and counseling department invites experts to advice and direct all students on life issues	12 (7.90%)	1 (0.70%)	38 (25.00%)	38 (25.00%)	63 (41.40%)	3.91	1.18
There is a good relationship between guidance and counselling teachers and teenage mothers	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	30 (19.70%)	50 (32.90%)	72 (47.40%)	4.28	0.77
<b>Overall Mean</b>						<b>4.015</b>	

Based on the results in Table 1 most of the respondents (99, 65.2%) agreed that guidance and counselling teachers always conducted an initial assessment to understand each teenage mother's academic strengths and weaknesses. This statement had a mean of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 1.11, indicating that while there is strong agreement, responses varied. This implies that initial assessments are recognized as crucial for identifying the academic needs of teenage mothers, thereby facilitating targeted interventions. Additionally, the majority (110, 72.4%) of respondents agreed that guidance and counselling teachers encouraged teenage mothers to seek help from other students to catch up on missed lessons, with a mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 1.26. This high level of agreement suggests that peer support is a widely endorsed strategy, which can create a supportive learning environment and enhance the academic continuity of teenage mothers. This is in line with Gomez et al.(2023) findings: peer group learning helps teenage mothers understand complex concepts, have more time to practice skills and catch up on academic content they may have missed greatly retains teenage mothers in schools.

Moreover, most respondents (124, 82.2%) agreed that guidance and counselling teachers directed teenage mothers to form discussion groups, reflected by a mean of 4.03 and a standard deviation of 1.46. This high agreement, despite some variation in responses, indicates that discussion groups are seen as effective in promoting collaborative learning and helping teenage mothers manage their studies alongside their responsibilities. Additionally, 107 (70.4%) of respondents agreed that the guidance and counselling department provided material support to teenage mothers, with a mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 1.21. This result suggests that material support is considered an important aspect of the guidance and counselling services, which can significantly aid teenage mothers in continuing their education. These results are consistent with observations made by Ofosuhene et al (2023) that there is a positive effect of material support on retention of teenage mothers.

Furthermore, 123 (80.9%) of respondents agreed that guidance and counselling teachers encouraged teenage mothers to seek one-on-one learning with subject teachers, as shown by a mean of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 1.08. This high level of agreement highlights the value placed on personalized academic support for teenage mothers. The majority (142, 93.5%) of the respondents agreed that guidance and counselling teachers always talked to all students about respecting the right of teenage mothers to education, with a mean of 4.16 and a low standard deviation of 0.52, indicating strong consensus. This suggests that fostering a respectful school environment is a key focus of the guidance and counselling efforts. These responses are in agreement with the conclusion made by Ashley (2023) that reinforcing the long-term value of psychological support to helped teenage mother's complete high school.

Similarly, 100 (65.8%) of respondents agreed that guidance and counselling teachers readily listened to teenage mothers, yielding a mean of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 1.24. This indicates that while most respondents recognized the availability of teachers for support, there is some variation in perceived accessibility. A majority (83, 54.6%) also agreed that the guidance and counselling department guided and counseled parents of teenage mothers, encouraging them to support their children's education, with a mean of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 1.28. This result underscores the importance of parental involvement in the educational success of teenage mothers. Lobo (2023) found that families, teachers and peers provide support through modelling respectful behaviour, caring for them, providing materials essential for their learning, encouraging, offering feedback, reinforcing good behaviour and punishing poor behaviour.

Further, 139 (91.4%) of respondents agreed that guidance and counselling teachers advised other students not to call teenage mothers names, shown by a mean of 4.43 and a standard

deviation of 1.13. This high agreement reflects strong efforts to create a supportive and non-judgmental school environment. Despite these efforts, only 108 (71.1%) of respondents agreed that other students do not call teenage mothers names, with a mean of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 0.97. This suggests that while there is a general effort to reduce stigmatization, some issues still persist. These findings concurs with the findings of Okondo's(2022) that despite the efforts by principals and other stakeholders, teenage mothers still face stigmatization from their peers, teachers and parents resulting to absenteeism or dropout.

Additionally, 105 (69.1%) of respondents agreed that guidance and counselling teachers encouraged teenage mothers to freely interact with other students, as indicated by a mean of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 1.00. This reflects efforts to promote inclusivity and social integration. A significant 131 (86.2%) of respondents agreed that guidance and counselling teachers encouraged teenage mothers to actively participate in extracurricular activities, with a mean of 4.08 and a standard deviation of 1.01. This indicates that extracurricular involvement is seen as beneficial for the holistic development of teenage mothers. However, only 86 (56.6%) agreed that guidance and counselling teachers organized life skills talks for all students, with a mean of 3.68 and a standard deviation of 1.06, suggesting room for improvement in this area. This is in line with Kabiru et al's (2023) findings which identified community health workers efforts in equipping teenage mothers with knowledge and life skills to navigate challenges of motherhood and education.

Finally, 101 (66.4%) of the respondents agreed that the guidance and counselling department invited experts to advise all students on life issues, shown by a mean of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 1.18. This reflects recognition of the value of external expertise in addressing students' life challenges. In general, the responses yielded an average mean of 4.015, indicating general agreement with the positive influence of guidance and counselling resources on the retention of teenage mothers. The varying standard deviations suggest differing levels of consensus among respondents. These results indicate the importance of comprehensive guidance and counselling services in supporting the educational retention and overall well-being of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. These results are consistent with findings of Opondo et al. (2020) who found that students who had gone through formal counseling generally registered higher adjustments than those who did not pass through formal counseling. The teenage mothers' attitude had a meditating effect on the relationship between guidance and counseling and the overall adjustment of teenage mothers.

During the interviews with the school principals, guidance and counselling teachers, and board of management chair persons were asked to discuss in detail the influence of principals' provision of guidance and counselling services on retention of teenage mothers in their schools in relation to academic guidance, emotional and psychological support and social and life skills development. One of the principals, in an interview carried out on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024, explained that;

As a principal, I have observed that providing academic guidance is crucial for the retention of teenage mothers in our school. When these students return after giving birth, they often face academic setbacks due to missed classes and assignments. By offering personalized academic counseling, we help them identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop tailored study plans to catch up with their peers. This includes arranging one-on-one sessions with teachers, organizing remedial classes, we offer them psychological support through guidance and counseling, we educate other students not to call them

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names and creating flexible timetables that accommodate their unique circumstances that affords them time whenever they ask to attend to their babies. Such academic support not only boosts their confidence but also ensures they stay on track with their studies, which is essential for their overall retention.

Apart from that, a Guidance and Counseling teacher on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2024 said that: As a guidance and counseling teacher, I have seen first-hand how the principal's provision of academic guidance services significantly influences the retention of teenage mothers in our school. When these young mothers return to school, they often struggle to catch up with their coursework. The academic guidance provided includes personalized tutoring sessions, tailored study plans, and access to additional learning materials. We also collaborate with subject teachers to ensure that these students receive the necessary support to understand and complete their assignments. This focused academic assistance helps them bridge the gap caused by their absence and encourages them to stay in school and pursue their educational goals.

Further, one of the board of management chairpersons on 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, explained that:

As a BOM chairman, I have led parents to support the guidance and counselling services in order to promote the education of our daughters who are young mothers. In our efforts, we have deliberately included 7 ladies in the BOM and they regularly talk to the teenage mothers and all students on teenage motherhood. Beyond this, we have engaged Maasai ladies who advise and counsel teenage mothers in the local language. We counsel both the parents and the teenage mother. We support teachers to offer one on one tutoring, for them to catch up with their colleagues on missed lessons. We talk to other students not to call them names and from observation; the other students do not judge teenage mothers. We have some teenage mothers who have had repeated pregnancies but they still come back to school. Our combined efforts to accept them as they are, and regularly hearing supporting

The above thematic analysis results from school principals, guidance and counselling teachers, board of management chairpersons revealed that the provision of academic guidance, emotional and psychological support, and social and life skills development by principals influences the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-County. Academic guidance, through personalized tutoring and flexible scheduling, helps teenage mothers catch up with missed coursework and boosts their academic confidence. Emotional and psychological support, including individual and group counselling sessions, addresses the emotional challenges these students face, such as stigma and stress, fostering resilience and a positive outlook. In addition, social and life skills development programs equip teenage mothers with essential skills for managing their responsibilities, promoting a sense of community and belonging. These comprehensive support systems collectively contribute to reducing dropout rates and enhancing the educational engagement and success of teenage mothers. This holistic approach points to the critical role of supportive school environments in retaining teenage mothers and ensuring their academic and personal development.

#### 4.2 Correlation Analysis Results

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to evaluate the strength of the association between two quantitative variables. (2017). Table 2 shows correlation analysis results.

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix**

		Retention	Guidance and Counselling Resources
Retention	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Guidance and Counselling Resources	Pearson Correlation	.448**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

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

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As depicted in Table 2, there was a moderate positive and significant association between principal’s guidance and counselling services and the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-county ( $r=0.448$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) at the 1% level of significance. This implies that improvements in guidance and counselling services are associated with higher retention rates of teenage mothers. The results support the conclusion that effective guidance and counselling can play a crucial role in helping teenage mothers stay in school by addressing their academic and personal needs.

#### 4.3 Regression Analysis Results

Tables 3, 4, and 5 provide the summary of the model, the analysis of variance (ANOVA), and the findings of the regression coefficients, respectively.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.448a	0.201	0.195	0.6748

a Predictors: (Constant), Principal’s Guidance and Counselling Resources,

The findings shown in Table 3 indicate that the coefficient of determination (R squared) is 0.201 at a 95% significant level. This implies that principals' guidance and counselling services, accounts for 20.1% of the variation in the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub- County.

**Table 4: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.161	1	17.161	37.686	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	68.304	150	0.455		
	Total	85.464	151			

a. Dependent Variable: Retention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Principal’s Guidance and Counselling Resources,

The ANOVA results in Table 4 demonstrate that the model was statistically significant in explaining the influence of principals' guidance and counseling services, on the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-County. The statistical analysis reveals an F-value of 37.686 and a p-value of 0.000, both of which are below the predetermined significance threshold of 0.05.

**Table 5: Multiple Regression of Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.215	0.257		8.605	0.000
Principals' Guidance and Counselling Resources	0.397	0.065	0.448	6.139	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Retention

The regression model therefore became;

$$Y = 2.215 + 0.397X$$

Where:

Y = Retention

X= Principals' Guidance and Counselling Services

Regression coefficients in Table 5 show that principal's guidance and counselling resources had a positive and significant effect on the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-county ( $\beta = 2.215$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). This led to the rejection of  $H_0$ . The study thus finds that there is significant influence of principals' guidance and counselling services on the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools in Kajiado North sub-County. The regression analysis findings are largely supported by the empirical studies provided.

## 5.0 Conclusions

The study concludes that principal's guidance and counseling services play an important role in supporting the retention of teenage mothers in public secondary schools. While the influence was not statistically significant, the positive correlation suggests that these services contribute to creating a supportive environment for teenage mothers. The provision of initial assessments, encouragement of peer support, formation of discussion groups, and promotion of one-on-one learning with subject teachers all contribute to addressing the unique academic and emotional needs of teenage mothers. However, there is room for improvement in areas such as organizing life skills talks and ensuring consistent material support. To enhance the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services, schools should focus on increasing the availability of trained counselors, securing adequate funding, and addressing cultural barriers that may prevent teenage mothers from seeking support.

## 6.0 Recommendations

In view of the findings and the conclusions, this study recommends that Kajiado North sub-County Secondary schools invest in comprehensive training programs for guidance and counselors, specifically tailored to address the unique needs of teenage mothers. This specialized training should focus on providing emotional support, academic guidance, and life skills coaching. By enhancing the expertise of counselors, schools can offer more effective and targeted support to teenage mothers, potentially increasing their chances of staying in school and succeeding academically.

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