

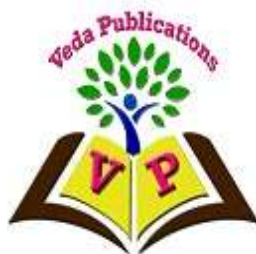
## EFFECTS OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY ON ACADEMIC TRANSITION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NANDI COUNTY, KENYA

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### Abstract



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Teenage pregnancy involves females under the age of 18 and it is an interplay of several factors; social, biological, economic and psychological. Teenage pregnancy has been widely studied, but attention in relation to Africa has been largely limited to its prevalence. In particular, little work has been done on the effect of teenage pregnancy on academic transition, since the girls' enrolment in Nandi County keeps fluctuating. The objective of this study was to examine the effect of teenage pregnancy on academic transition of girls in Nandi County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to examine the socio-cultural effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition; to establish the socio-economic effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition; and to investigate the psychological effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition. A conceptual framework that outlined the relationship between teenage pregnancies and academic transition was conceived. Positive psychology and roots of motivation theory were the theoretical frameworks that underpinned the study. The study targeted a population of 161 respondents from 80 public primary schools in Nandi County. A sample of 115 respondents were drawn from Nandi County. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and adopted a mixed methods methodology. Both open and closed ended questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were used as methods of data collection. Simple random sampling technique was used to select study respondents. Validity and reliability of instruments was determined through piloting. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed using themes. Findings revealed that socio-cultural effects of teenage pregnancy which included lack of knowledge by the girls, how the girls have been socialized in society, peer pressure and the influence of mass media all affected the academic transition of girls; socio-economic effects of teenage pregnancies especially poverty caused most of the girls to engage in sex and hence drop out of school; The girls who had fallen pregnant and readmitted were psychologically stigmatized and discriminated by the rest of the pupils.

**Keywords:** *Academic Transition, Teenage Pregnancy.*

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## 1. Background to the Study

Pregnancy related school dropouts have become a matter of public concern in the world today. Several studies have shown that the age at first intercourse is reducing, suggesting that today's young adults are becoming sexually active at increasingly younger ages. In addition, some studies have shown that few adolescents use contraceptives and are at risk of pregnancy (Yambolskaya et al, 2002).

United States records the highest teen birth rates in the industrialized world, twice as high as that of the United Kingdom which is a developed country with the second highest rate of teen pregnancy (NASBE, 2000).

In Africa, especially the sub-Saharan Africa countries, there are concerns about high rates of pregnancy-related school dropouts, also leading to the reported gender disparities in education in the developing world (Lloyd & Mensch 2008).

Mngoma (2010) argues that school girl pregnancy is considered to be a disaster by most people. Yet school girl pregnancies are increasing in number each year and are occurring at younger ages. Although this trend is noticeable all over the world, the problem is greater in developing countries such as Kenya (Devenish et al, 2004)

In recent years, Kenya has seen an alarming rise in teenage pregnancies, forcing thousands of girls to abandon their education early (Daily Nation, 2014). Therefore, this study investigated the effects of pregnancy on academic transition in selected primary schools in Nandi County.

A study by Varga (2003) on how gender roles influence sexual and reproductive health among South Africa adolescents indicated that after the family, the peer group is the most important socialization agent. In Kenya, a study carried out by Agarwal, (2006) found that some of the reasons leading to school dropouts were poverty, early pregnancy and early marriages, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and low self-esteem. The study done in South Africa was on the influence of peer pressure on behavior while the one done in western Kenya was on the causes of early school dropout. This study focused on early sexual involvement among teenage girls and their effect on the academic transition in Nandi County. The gravity of high teenage pregnancy is not new in Kenya. Data from the Demographic and Health Surveys show that almost 2 out of 10 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are reported to be pregnant or have had a child already. This trend has been fairly consistent for more than two decades with little change in prevalence between 1993 and 2014. Teen pregnancies are a major challenge for socioeconomic development because they deprive our young girls the opportunity to further their education and attain their career goals. It also exposes them and their children to major health risks. According to World Health Organization, "pregnancy and childbirth complications are the leading cause of death among girls aged 15–19 years globally.

A study by Wood & Jewkes (2006) in the USA indicates that not only is the peer group a primary source of information on sexuality but they also create an environment in which peer pressure is exerted on the teenager to indulge in sex because “everyone does it” or because they do not want to “feel left out”. School girls who became pregnant have fewer opportunities to complete their education after childbirth and have fewer opportunities for socioeconomic advancement. Among the media fraternity, pregnancy is increasingly being mentioned as a reason for premature school drop out in the region. In Nandi County the academic Transition of girls is wanting especially among the girls in primary schools.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Teenage pregnancy has a direct implication on school dropout among girls and a subsequent contributor to the disparities experienced in the education of both girls and boys (Nduli, 2012). A number of studies concur that many young girls dropped out of school as a result of pregnancy. In Kenya, a study conducted in 1985 estimated that about 10% of female students dropped out of primary schools because they were pregnant. In 1986, 11,000 Kenyan girls dropped out of school because of pregnancy. In Nandi County, the girls’ academic transition of teenage girls has been fluctuating over the years. However, whereas there had been issues raised with regard to teenage pregnancy and its subsequent influence on school dropouts (Newman, 2008). The effect of teenage pregnancy on the academic transition of girls was exacerbated with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. In Kenya, the first case of Covid-19 virus was recorded on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020. This necessitated the president of Kenya to put strict measures to curb the spread of the virus. Among the restrictions placed was closure of schools and churches and the restriction of movement among other measures. According to statistics revealed by the Ministry of Health, over 328,000 girls became pregnant, while 100,000 got married during the Covid-19 period. This has been attributed to the economic down town and job loses which affected incomes and households. The report further reveals that approximately 250,000 girls and 125,000 boys who were in school at the onset of the pandemic in March last year had not reported back by February 2021 {Opera news}.

## **3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of teenage pregnancy on academic transition of girls in primary schools in Nandi County.

## **4. Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives to:

- i. Examine the social-cultural effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition of girls in primary schools in Nandi County.
- ii. Establish the socio-economic effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition of girls in primary schools in Nandi County.

- iii. Investigate the psychological effects of teenage pregnancies on the academic transition of girls in primary schools in Nandi County.

## 5. Research Questions

In pursuit to achieve the above objectives the researchers inquired answers to the following questions

- i. What are the socio-cultural effects of teenage pregnancy on academic transition of girls in primary schools in Nandi County?
- ii. What are the socio-economic effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition among girls in primary schools in Nandi County?
- iii. What are the psychological effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition among girls in primary schools in Nandi County?

## 6. Justification of the Study

Kenya was ranked among the countries with a large number of adolescent pregnancies globally. Worldwide, 7.3 million of the births were by girls between the age of 15 and 19 years of which two million births of these were by girls under the age of 15 (Vundule *et al.* 2001). Out of the two million births, 90% of them were already in marriage, revealing that girls were being married off at a very tender age before they complete their education and therefore there was no academic transition.

The high number of cases was blamed on a multitude of causes, such as early marriages, broken families, rape, peer pressure, inadequate sex education and alcohol and substance abuse. In Kenya, girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy were estimated about 13,000 every year (Centre for the Study of Adolescence (CSA,2003).

Many cases of teenage pregnancies went unreported. Often enough, this was because the girls were impregnated through rape by someone they knew, such as a male relative, teacher, pastor or neighbor. Some of the cases were not reported due to stigma and fear, while others never saw the corridors of justice after the local administration and police were bribed.

Over a period of three months in lockdown due to COVID-19, 152,000 Kenyan teenage girls became pregnant — a 40% increase in the country's monthly average. These numbers, from early July, are some of the earliest pieces of evidence linking the COVID-19 pandemic to unintended pregnancies. Public health officials and women's rights advocates worry that the ongoing pandemic is delaying an adequate response to a growing sexual reproductive health crisis. One survey conducted by the Kenya Health Information System found that 3,964 girls under the age of 19 were pregnant in Machakos County alone

There was no data on the number of girls who got pregnant while in school but only data on those who left school because they were about to give birth. In addition, the data was limited on whether these girls ever returned and completed or progressed with their academic work, and even more limited was what these girls went through trauma in such instances. Therefore, it was necessary to carry out a study in Nandi County to find out the effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition.

### **7. Significance of the Study**

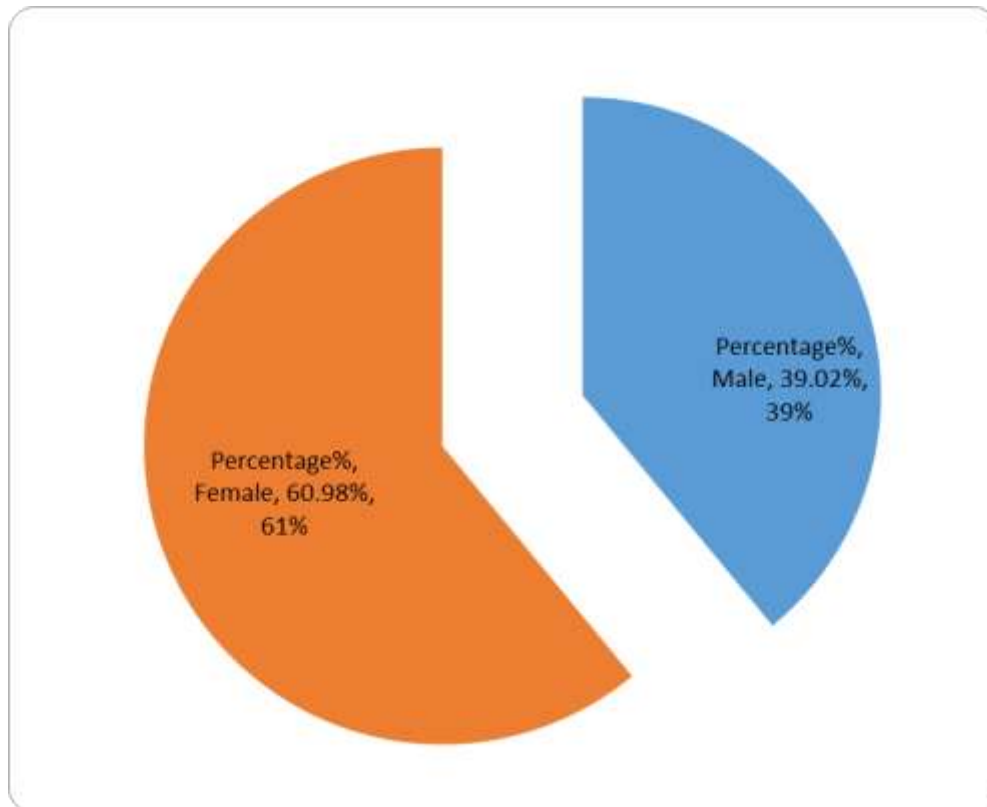
It is the hope of the researchers that this study will help the government, parents and teachers since school dropouts and absenteeism could be minimized. It will help the Ministry of Education to come up with the necessary policy to ensure those who fall victim to teenage pregnancy are well catered for, including being readmitted to school to continue with their studies. Parents will know the social cultural factors and Social-economic factors leading to teenage pregnancies and try to avoid them. Teachers will also get to know those factors affecting teenage pregnancy and attempt to guide and counsel students against such vices. Teacher counselors will also guide and counsel the readmitted students on how to cope with stigmatization and discrimination by the other students.

### **8. Research Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design and utilized the mixed methods research paradigm. This design was considered suitable for the study because it gives the researcher the opportunity of obtaining the opinion of the sampled population to infer the opinion of the entire population. The target population of the study was 80 public primary schools and a total of 161 respondents from Nandi County. Nandi County was selected because it has one of the highest girl dropout rates due to teenage pregnancies. Purposive and Simple Random Sampling Techniques were used in the study. Simple random sampling was used to select 115 study respondents. Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were used as tools for data collection. A structured questionnaire with both open and closed ended questions was used in obtaining relevant data for the study. The questionnaire items were face-validated to ascertain their suitability for use in data collection by an expert in the field of study. The language, contents and the structure of the items were critically examined and possible corrections and suggestions were made. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using a test –retest method. A reliability co-efficient of 0.746 and 0.724 were obtained respectively for the instruments using Pearson Product Moment Correlation co-efficient in a pilot study conducted with 30 teachers in two primary schools in the neighboring Uasin Gishu County. The research instrument was administered personally by hand to the teachers in the public primary schools selected. This was after obtaining permission from NACOSTI and the relevant heads of the institutions. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics by the aid of SPSS. Qualitative data was organized into themes of the study.

## 9. Findings

**Pie Chart 1 Demographic description of participants by type of school**



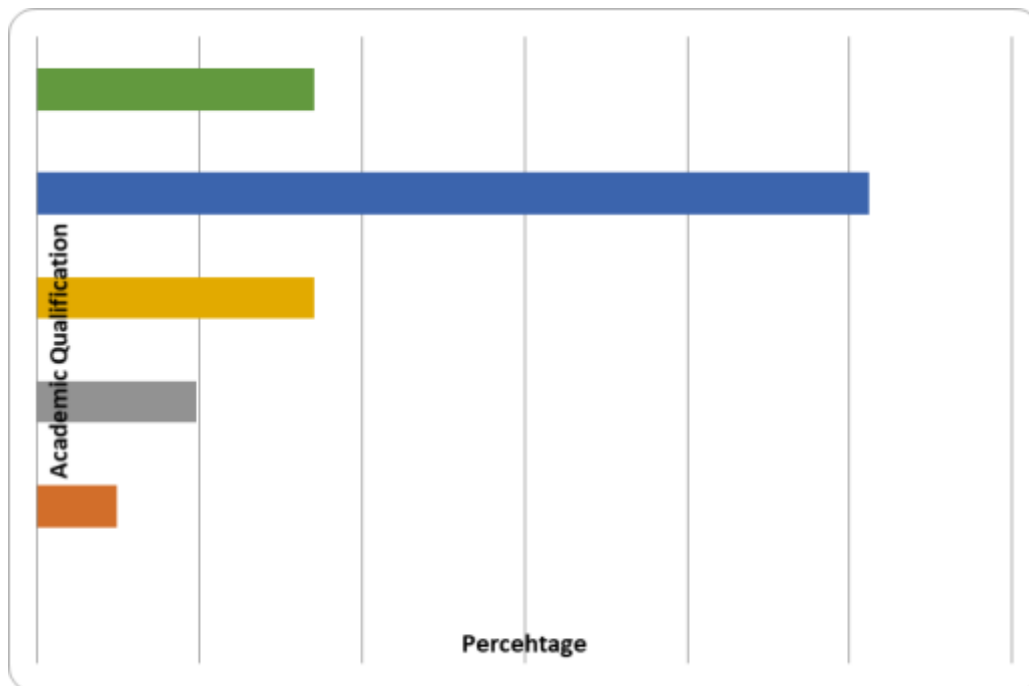
From Pie Chart 1, it was revealed that day primary schools in Nandi County have more of female teachers (60.98%) compared to male teachers (39.02%). It was also revealed that Day primary schools gave 100% participants; there were no participants in the Day/Boarding and Boarding Primary Schools. Experience of the teachers was also used to describe the participants.

The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic description of participants by experience.**

Experience	Male	Percentage %	Female	Percentage%	Total
1-3yrs	2	12.5 %	4	16 %	6
4-6yrs	2	12.5 %	3	12 %	5
7-10yrs	1	6.25 %	1	4 %	2
11 and above years	11	68.75 %	17	68 %	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>41</b>

Results in Table 1 indicate that 14.25% of teachers had been in the teaching profession for one to three years. Another 12.25% of teachers had been in the profession for four to six years. Teachers with the experience of seven to ten years were the least with 5.13%. Finally, 68.38% of the teachers have been in the experience for eleven and above years. This could be explained by the fact that retirement age was increased from 55 to 60 years while recruitment of teachers has been done annually. This gives a representative sample as academic transitions in schools are concerned. The longer the experience the more the teachers understood the pattern of pupils as far as teenage pregnancy and academic Transition is concerned.

**Bar Chart 1. Demographic description of participants by Academic Qualifications**

The results in Bar Chart 1 indicates that 51.22% of teachers had academic qualification of P1 and it was the leading academic qualification for the teachers in Nandi County schools. It was followed by 17.07% of teachers who are undergraduates and who had other qualification. Only 4.88% of the teachers had a qualification of Master and 9.76% had post graduate diploma. This could be explained by the fact that there is low academic transition for teachers in Nandi County schools. This gives a representative sample as academic transitions in schools are concerned.

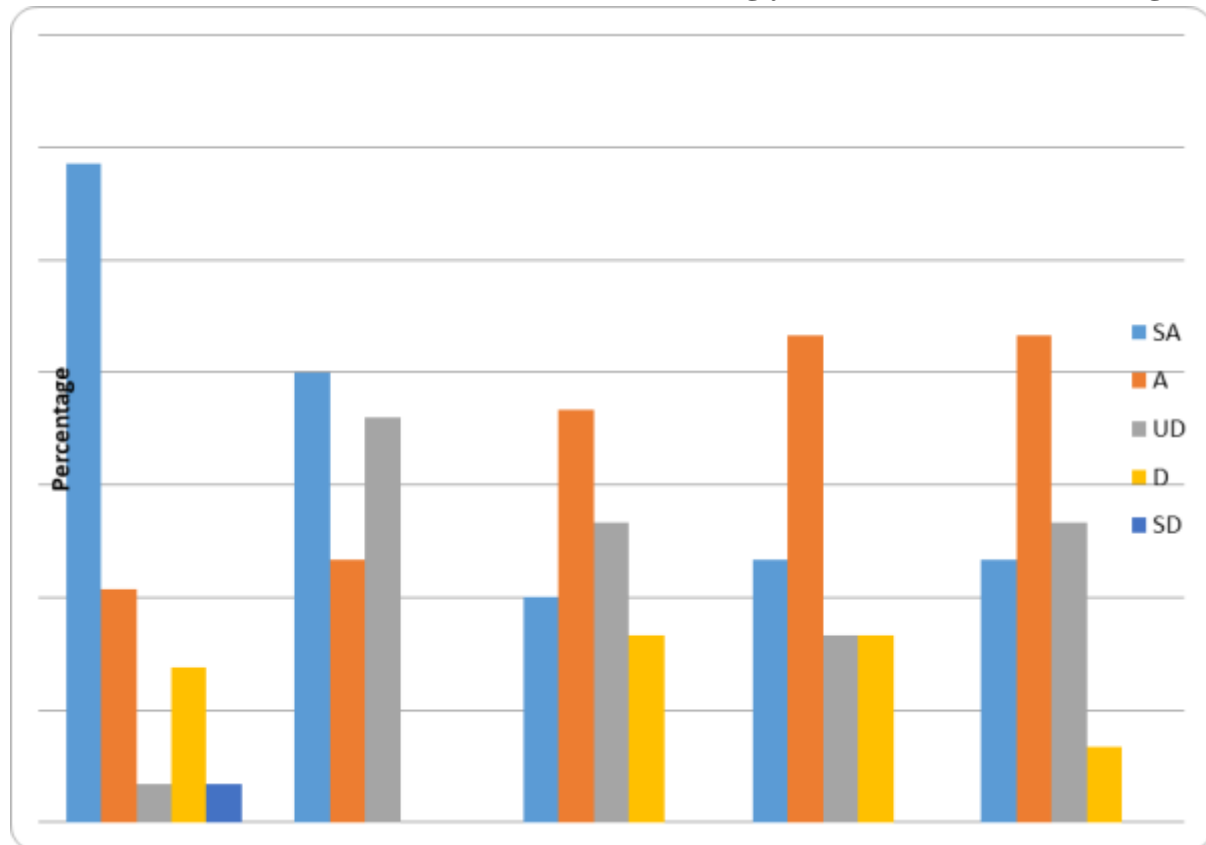
### **Reasons contributing to Tteenage pregnancy rating**

The first objective was to examine the social-cultural effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition of girls. To achieve this objective, the following research question was posed; what are the socio-cultural effects of teenage pregnancy on academic transition of girls? To answer this research question, participants were requested to respond to section B of the teachers' questionnaire and head teacher's interviews. The items were rated on a five-point likert scale. The responses of the participants were scored.



**Chart 2. The ratings of teachers**

Ratings ranged from SA- Strongly Disagrees, A-Agree, UD-Undecided, D-Disagree, and SD



Results in Chart 2 shows the rating of teachers on the reasons that contributed to teenage pregnancies among girls in Nandi County as discussed below. A majority 58.62% of the teachers strongly agreed that the reason for teenage pregnancies was due to lack of knowledge, 20.69% of the teachers agreed with the fact, 13.79% disagreed, while those teachers who were undecided and those that strongly disagreed were 3.45%. This was an indication that a larger percentage did agree that there is lack of knowledge about sexuality in the schools. On peer pressure as a cause of teenage pregnancies, 40% strongly agreed, 23.33% agreed while 36.67% of the teachers were undecided on peer pressure as a cause of teenage pregnancy. Results on independence showed that 20% and 36.67% both strongly agreed and agreed respectively, 26.67% were undecided while 16.67% were in disagreement with the cause. Mass Media as a cause of teenage pregnancy scored 23.33% of the teachers who strongly agreed, 43.33% of the teachers agreed, 16.67% of the teachers were undecided, while 16.67% of the teachers disagreed that media was the cause of teenage pregnancies in Nandi County. Poor socioeconomic conditions gave 23.33% of the teachers who strongly agreed that it was the cause of teenage pregnancies 43.33% agreed, while 26.67% and 6.67% of the teachers were undecided and disagreed respectively.

### Socioeconomic effects of Teenage Pregnancy on academic transition

The second objective was to establish the socio-economic effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition of girls. To achieve this objective the following research question was posed; what are the socio-economic effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition among girls? To answer this research question, participants were requested to respond to section B of the teachers' questionnaire and Head teacher's interviews. The responses of the participants were scored. In order to establish the socioeconomic effects of teenage pregnancy on academic transition, descriptive statistics on poverty were rated. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in table 2.

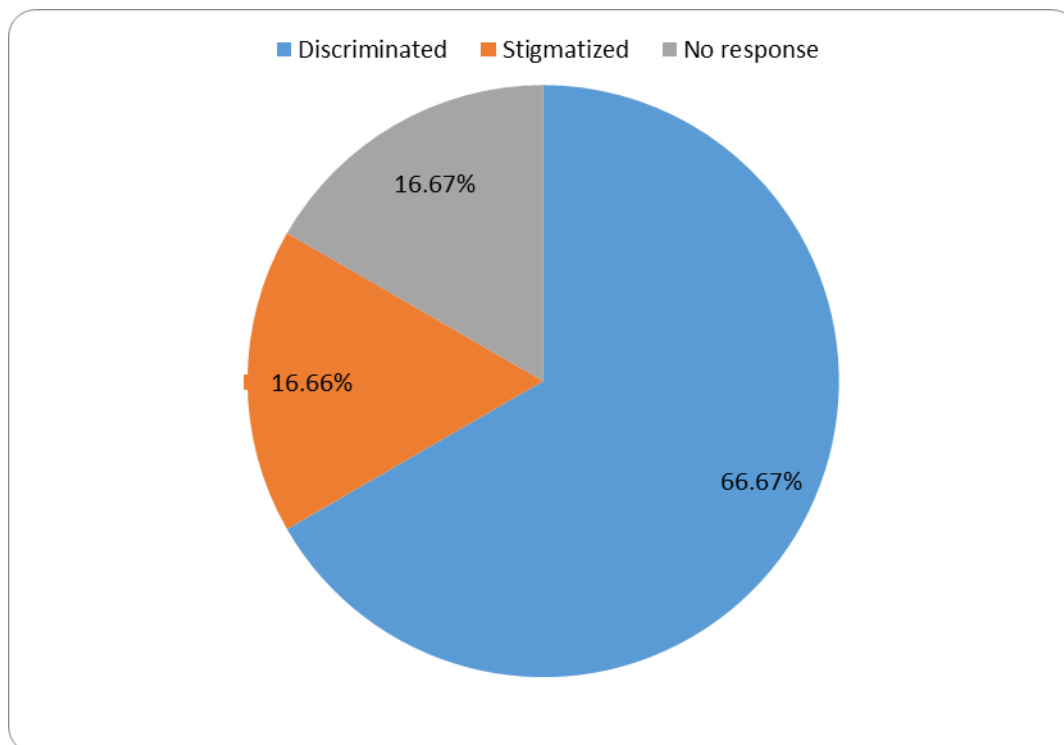
**Table 2. Descriptive statistics on socioeconomic effects**

<b>Poor Socioeconomic Conditions</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
SA	7	23.33
A	13	43.33
UD	8	26.67
D	2	6.67
SD	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results in Table 2 show that 43.33% of the teachers agreed that poor socioeconomic status of parents caused teenage pregnancies. Another 23.33% strongly agreed, while 26.67% and 6.67% of the teachers were undecided and disagreed respectively that poor socioeconomic status of parents was the cause of the teenage pregnancy.

### Psychological effects of Teenage Pregnancy on the academic performance

The third objective of this study was to investigate the psychological effects of teenage pregnancies on the academic transition of the girls. This objective was achieved by asking the participants to respond to the head teachers' interviews on how the pregnant school girls came back to school and coped with the rest of the pupils in school. The results of a descriptive statistics were recorded in Pie chart 2.

**Pie Chart 2. how the pregnant teenage coped up with the rest in school**

The results in pie chart 2 shows that the head teachers' response was that 66.67% of the girls who came back to school for the transition of their studies were discriminated by the rest of the pupils. Another 16.66% of the girls were stigmatized by the rest, while 16.67% of the girls seemed not to have either been discriminated or stigmatized. This showed that there 'were much psychological effects on the teenage pregnant girls who came back to continue with their studies. These subjected the girls to have low self-esteem and hence interfered with their academic transition.

#### **Descriptive statistics on pregnant girls in a class**

Findings further revealed that the leading number of pregnancies 46.15% were in class seven, followed by 38.46% of the girls in class eight who were pregnant. Those pregnant in class six and five were 7.69%. This shows that in every school in Nandi County, there are many reported cases of school girls getting pregnant with class seven pupils leading the list.

#### **10. Positive Psychology and the Roots of Motivation Theory**

A positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) thread through this study as it focused on positive growth, instead of pathology, which was what the researcher signified.

In 'Authentic Happiness' (2002), Seligman encouraged readers to focus on the improvement of normal life and the nurturing of individual human talent. The very essence of positive

psychology was its focus on human happiness and the focus stem from its humanistic psychology roots which focused on human fulfillment and happiness.

Humanistic theorists such as Maslow (1943) and Rogers (1961) developed theories relating to human fulfillment and self-actualization. Rogers was predominantly concerned with healthy development in terms of individual perception and claimed that an individual should see equilibrium between their view of who they are (self) and their view of who they think they should be (ideal self).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model (1943) was based on a classification of five levels of lower and higher human needs on the principle that individuals were motivated by need.

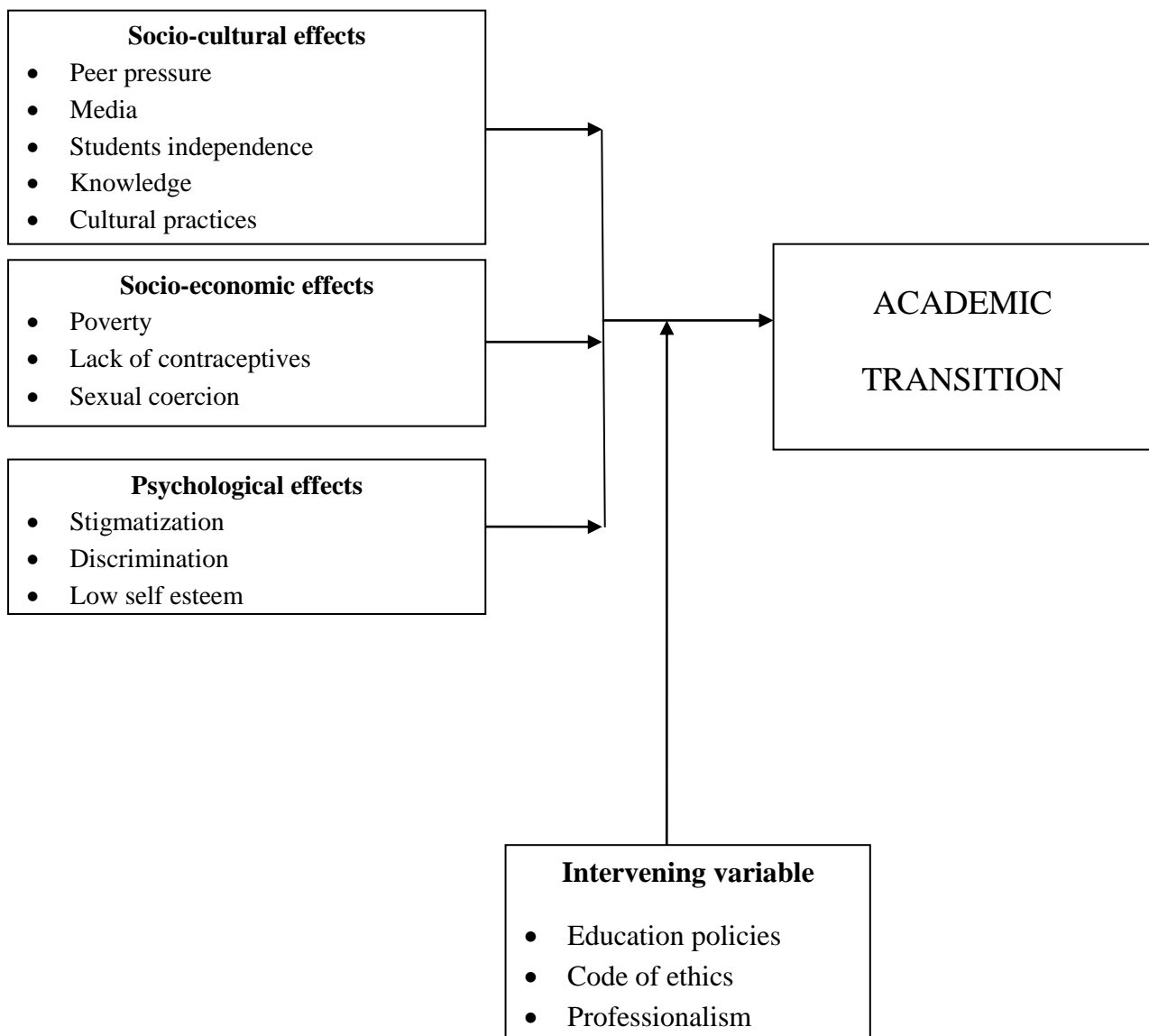
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs stated that an individual must satisfy each level of needs in turn, starting at meeting an individual's physiological, or basic needs (such as shelter, food, clothing), through to safety needs (security, protection), social needs (love and a sense of belonging), self-esteem needs (recognition) and ultimately, self-actualization (success and personal achievement).

This theory was based on the premise that an individual would start at the bottom of the hierarchy, seeking to, or motivated to fulfill basic physiological needs; once these basic needs have been satisfied, the individual will then seek to fulfill or be motivated to fulfill the next level of needs.

In terms of application, where this model was useful is when practitioners or professionals were involved in supporting individuals who become stuck on the lower levels of the Hierarchy, due to disruption in their life, stigmatization, early insecurity, and this related to some of the participants in this study.

It also highlighted the possibility that an individual whose basic physiological needs or lower level needs were not met was not motivated to learn at higher levels and this encouraged practitioners to be conscious and responsive to the practical needs of particularly vulnerable individuals.

This model was also particularly useful during consideration of the individual characteristics of particular individuals, and in the differentiation of intrinsic motivation in identifying specific interventions that the Educational Psychologist (EP) made in the support of motivation in varying levels of identified need.

**11. Conceptual Framework****INDEPENDENT VARIABLE  
VARIABLE****DEPENDENT****Figure 1. Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework that guided the study was constructed from independent variables; socio-cultural effects, socio-economic effects and psychological effects and how they relate

to the dependent variable which is academic Transition, the intervening variables were also identified.

## 12. Conclusion

1. There were socio-cultural effects of teenage pregnancy which included lack of knowledge by the girls, Peer pressure and the influence of mass media and this had an effect on academic transition of the girls.
2. There were socio-economic effects of teenage pregnancies. Poverty caused most of the girls to fall prey to men who had money therefore enticing them to have sex with them and hence getting pregnant, this had an effect on the academic transition of the girls.
3. There were psychological effects of teenage pregnancies on academic transition among the girls. The girls who were pregnant came back to school to continue their studies but were greatly stigmatized and discriminated by the rest of the pupils. There was more discrimination as opposed to stigmatization. These subjected the girls to have low self-esteem and hence interfered with their academic transition.

## 13. Recommendations

The findings from the study formed the basis for the following recommendations

1. Teachers and administration should work as a team so that counseling programs of the affected in schools will be developed and used effectively. It seems most schools, especially public schools have no counseling programmes in schools.
2. The County and National governments should come up with poverty alleviation programmes that aim at raising the income levels of households to prevent young girls falling prey to men who entice them with money and woo them to sex.
3. The girls who become pregnant and are readmitted back to school through the girls' readmission policy should be allowed to continue their studies without stigmatization and discrimination by the rest of the pupils through proper guidance and counseling support programmes and taking firm action against those who stigmatize and discriminate them.

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