

# Policy and Practice: Roles of the Guidance and Counseling Teachers in the Implementation of the Girls' Reentry Policy in Selected Schools in Lusaka, Zambia

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## Abstract

The effectiveness of the guidance and counseling teachers in Zambia is partly determined by the extent to which the schools meet the established girl's reentry policy guidelines, how they conduct their counseling sessions with the girls and what activities they put in place for the reentered girls so as to help them remain and perform well in school. This paper is based on the study which evaluated the roles of the guidance and counseling teachers in the implementation of the reentry policy from a management perspective in Lusaka, Zambia. The study's main purpose was to find out the extent to which the school guidance and counseling was helping the reentered girls in reducing teenage pregnancies. The research method design was descriptive in nature and used a qualitative approach. The research population was all the public primary and secondary schools in Lusaka district in Zambia. Head teachers and guidance and counseling teachers were interviewed while information from the reentered girls was obtained through questionnaires. The results of the study indicated that school managements had strived to implement the policy through the help of guidance and counseling departments. It was revealed from the study that the girls who did not want to go through counseling sessions had a lot of problems and dropped out of school due to lack of skills to help them contain the pressure and stigma from their peers. The results of the study also indicated that there seemed to be less sensitization on safer sex and abstinence for the girls in schools. The guidance and counseling teachers did not have regular contacts with the reentered girls as a result the girls faced a lot of problems both at home and at school which they struggled with on their own. Lack of a curriculum for guidance and counseling had also contributed to less contact which the teachers had with the girls. The results of the study also showed that the schools did not have specific programmes meant to help the reentered girls and had no system of following them up when they went on leave hence, most of the girls decided to stop school. The study results had also established that the schools had inadequate qualified guidance and counseling teachers to effectively conduct the sessions with the girls.

**Keywords:** Guidance and counseling, Teenage pregnancy, Reentered girls

## 1. Introduction

Global trends have indicated that teenage pregnancies are a major social problem and have assumed an endemic proportion among teenagers, especially in the developing nations. UNPF has identified the incidence of teenage pregnancy and declared it a serious and growing problem in the world, especially in the developing nations. Zambia is among the countries in sub-Saharan Africa whose teenage girls' pregnancy levels are high (UNPF, 2016). Statistics in the Zambia Educational Statistical Bulletins of 2015 and 2016, indicate that the numbers of pregnancies among teenagers has been rising in Zambia. The reentry policy guidelines in Zambia has ensured that guidance and counseling departments are established in educational institutions at all levels of the education system so that counseling could be offered to the girls who fall pregnant while at school (Mutombo and Mwenda, 2010; MoGE, 2016).

However, even in the presence of the reentry policy the number of girls completing secondary school in Zambia is still lower than that of boys. Mwansa (2011) stated that, despite the policy being put in place, which gives the girls a chance to return to school after delivery, in Zambia, an increasing number of girls do not return to school after giving birth. Social economic and cultural factors have been commonly cited as reasons for this failure but it was also assumed that if guidance and counseling was not effectively conducted in schools, this could lead to high drop-out rates due to teenage pregnancy. Therefore, it was deemed imperative that the study being reported in this article evaluate the roles performed by guidance and counseling teachers in schools so that we may understand why most girls do not return to school after delivery even when schools have the guidance and counselling facilities.

## 2. Literature Review

Teenage pregnancy has for a long time been identified, among other factors, as a serious and growing problem in the world. Studies done by UNFP (2013) and UNICEF (2014) in developed and developing countries have shown that most girls fell pregnant when they were in the age between thirteen and nineteen. Worldwide, rates of teenage pregnancy range from 143 per 1000 teenagers in some sub-Saharan African countries to 3 per 1000

teenagers in South Korea. Every year, 14 million teenagers out of 260 million women aged between 15 to 19 fall pregnant worldwide and the majority are in the developing countries, particularly in the Sub Saharan Africa (Stanley, 2007).

In Kenya, Mikaye (2012) investigated the influence of guidance and counseling services in public secondary schools on students' discipline. The study findings revealed that guidance and counseling services were offered in the schools and 82.4% of the head teachers considered it important but lacked the necessary material and government support. It was found that character formation was achieved through intense formal and informal programmes for guidance and counseling. It was through guidance and counseling that students remained disciplined and focused in life. Collins (2002) indicated that through guidance and counseling students were helped to be disciplined and be able to deal with challenges and realities that they faced in their academic, social and physical environments. That study was helpful to this study through its research design as it used a descriptive method which this study also employed. Studies conducted by various scholars such as Joshua, (2014), Chigona and Chetty (2007), Ndifon and Akande (2014), Nweze and Okolie (2014), Sifuniso (2006) and FAWEZA (2004), showed that teachers had a positive attitude towards guidance and counseling in schools. The studies also revealed that though the girls were allowed to return to school after becoming mothers, they faced many challenges in trying to balance between motherhood and the demands of schooling. The result showed that teen mothers received insufficient support (physically and emotionally) and the consequence was that many quitted school and thus did not succeed with schooling. Lack of proper counseling for the teen mothers about their stigma and schooling seemed to be one of the most serious problems girls experienced. The studies also found that there was a significant relationship between guidance and counseling programme and the retention of girls in schools. It was also found that pupils had a positive attitude towards counseling services in school. Hence it was indicated in all the studies that the implementation of guidance and counseling services was well received and was likely to help learners.

### **3. Conceptual and Theoretical Foundation of Guidance and Counseling in Schools**

Guidance as a concept involves the utilization of a point of view to help an individual accept and use his or abilities, aptitudes, interest and attitudinal patterns in relations to his or her aspirations. As an educational construct it involves the provision of experiences which assist individuals to understand that help to achieve a helping relationship. Therefore, reentered teenage girls are to be provided with educational counseling so as to help them plan a suitable education programme and make progress in it. Learners are helped in choosing appropriate subjects adjusting to the school curriculum and school life especially after a separation due to pregnancy in order to help them acquire time management and study skills preparing and reducing anxieties for examinations (MOESVTEE, 2014). As the counselor and the girl continue to interact through discussions and observation more information, feelings and behavior is disclosed about a girl to the counselor. As the learner asks questions and receive feedback the open area continue to increase and the blind arena decreases. The counselor has in this case an important role in facilitating quick and direct feedback to the girls about their own blind areas. The counselor has a responsibility to cultivate in the pupils the culture of openness, honest, sensitive communication and sharing of information among the pupils so that more information is disclosed. This could be the basis on which action could be taken upon and help is offered to them in the most effective and appropriate manner (Luft 1959 and Chapman 2003).

Using the theory of Joharis window of personality discovery, the counselor's role is to aim at reducing the blind spot by giving sensitive feedback and encouraging disclosure. The counselor needs to promote a climate of non-judgmental feedback so as to reduce fear and encourage pupils to solicit for feedback in issues where they need help (Chapman, 2003).

The counselor in this case has to create an environment which can facilitate the movement of relevant hidden information to open the arena through the process of self-disclosure and exposure. Once a girl decides to confide in the counselor, it is the onus of the counselor to take advantage of the situation and influence the girl to reveal as much information as possible for the purpose of creating a basis on which counseling will be based. Alika (2010) also concluded that girls who are reentered back to school should be given individual and personal-social counseling in order to realize and harness their potentials. Counselors need to create an environment that encourages self-discovery, constructive observation and feedback so as to discover unknown aspects of an individual. The reason could be that as human beings there are a lot of things we do not know about ourselves and these can only be known through education. Education can be obtained through reading, listening to other peoples' life experiences and educational talks. People can learn much more useful information from different medias which can create self-awareness. Freire (1973) called this type of information as education for critical awareness or conscientization. In this type of education people get a lot of information on their own from other sources and from discussions. Hope and Sally (2002) argued that through dialogue a person shares a lot of useful information and issues which are needed to be dealt with. The role of the counselor in this therefore is to set a conducive environment so as to encourage the flow of information with less interference. Through this process

critical awareness is developed and a person understands their latent self.

It can be argued thus, that the main role of the guidance and counseling teachers is to increase or expand the open arena of the reentered girls through sharing of information and experiences. The guidance and counseling teachers should explain to the girls more about the re-entry policy and sex awareness. They should encourage them and show them how important education is to them. Guidance and counseling should educate the girls on how to survive with the pregnancy and how to create a balance between motherhood and education. This would help build self-confidence and reduce self-pity that the girls could have developed (MoESVTEE, 2014).

Therefore, it is important for guidance and counseling teachers to know the things that are known to the pupils only such as home environment setting and financial status that pupils may not be willing to share with others and have the potential of affecting their education. The model therefore advocates for more exposure of information in order to effectively help the person in a given situation. Information about the girls can only be obtained through effective guidance and counseling activities. If guidance and counseling teachers do not understand the life of the reentered girl it would be difficult to give them the right help that they need. The counselor may help the pupils to be aware of the problems and consequences they expect to face after becoming pregnant. As the guidance and counseling teachers begin to share various experiences and discuss with the girls the dangers of pregnancies and how to overcome them, the girls would be able to identify their problems and begin to come up with ways in which they could overcome such pressures and problems. It is through counseling where girls can realize their problems and learn different ways of solving them. Through counseling the hidden issues are exposed as the girls will open up to bring out their pressing challenges which could have made them drop out of school.

#### **4. Methodology**

According to Kothari (2014) a research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. It is a blueprint for collection, measurement and analysis of data. It gives direction and systematizes the research. The survey approach was used in this study. The reason for this approach was entirely for the basis of getting information from the environment which could then be interpreted, contextualized and understood by explanation and narration of meaning about a phenomenon (Burns, 2003). The study used a descriptive survey design so as to narrate and explain issues on how the guidance and counseling departments were meeting the established guidelines of the reentry policy and determine the effectiveness of the guidance and counseling activities in the school in reducing teenage pregnancy. The study area was the actual place where data was collected. This study was conducted in 3 primary and 3 secondary schools in Lusaka district of Zambia. The schools were selected because they admitted pupils from townships where most girls fell pregnant in their teenage years. In this study, the population comprised of all head-teachers, all guidance and counseling teachers and all reentered girls from all the schools in Lusaka. The study employed purposive sampling for teachers and head teachers, and simple random sampling for learners. (Patton, 1990).

In this study, interviews schedules were used to collect data from teachers and school administrators while questionnaires were used to collect data from the reentered girls. Through these instruments the researchers sought to finding out the effectiveness of guidance and counseling activities and establish the views of the reentered girls about the guidance and counseling activities found in the school.

Data from questionnaires and interviews was analyzed by subjecting it to coding, tabulation and descriptive statistics. Data was presented in form of themes and presented using percentages, frequencies and means. The graphs and charts were developed using Microsoft excel.

#### **5. Results**

##### *5.1. The roles of guidance and counseling teachers in helping the reentered girls*

When the head teachers were asked to state their roles in helping the reentered girls they stated that the schools had set committees of counselors which comprised of at least one male and two or more female teachers. The head teachers stated that counseling sessions were conducted by the guidance and counseling teachers who helped the girls to be aware of various issues concerning teenage pregnancies. The head teachers also indicated that schools had no specific curricula or programmes to ensure that the girls were counseled in those areas but they were sure that the guidance and counseling sections were executing their roles very well. The head teachers were not very sure which days and what exactly was discussed during the sessions as there was no time table and guidance and counseling curriculum. Most head teachers and counseling teachers argued that there was need to have a curriculum so that counseling could be taught just like any other subject in the school.

On the other hand the guidance and counseling teachers were asked to state their main role in the implementation of the reentry policy. All the guidance and counseling teachers' views convened on this issue and stated that their main roles were to conduct counseling session on a daily basis with the girls on how to take care of themselves and the baby. And also to encourage them on how to remain focused and determined in order to

meet their goals, which was completing their primary or secondary education. One teacher commented that;

*We tell the girls that pregnancy is neither a death sentence nor is it the end of the world. We encourage them to be strong as what has happened has happened; the only way was to move on so that they can reach the end which is completing school. This does not mean that we approve of their wrong deed, but we tell them not to indulge in sexual activities again because pregnancy affects their childhood and schooling.*

All the guidance and counseling teachers said that they encouraged the girls to abstain from sex as it was the only way they could avoid falling pregnant again so as to avoid being reentered for the second time. The guidance and counseling teachers were also asked to give their opinion on the roles of the counselor in helping and preventing teenage pregnancy. They indicated that the most important thing that they did was to make the girl realise that a mistake was made and that they was need for the girls to be remorseful. The guidance and counseling teachers further stated that their main role was to continue encouraging the girls to stay away from sex and abstain completely. They also said that their main role was to give hope to the girls so that they realise that there was life after pregnancy. One guidance and counseling teacher said that;

*We tell them to take responsibility and make informed choices. We encourage them to resist negative pressures, build their positive self-esteem, discuss issues affecting them openly and, avoid risky behaviors.*

Another guidance and counseling teacher further stated that;

*We tell them to look after themselves well especially when they had given birth. Most of them look weak and pile and so we encourage them to go home and recuperate fully before they can start school again. And we make them understand that if they fell pregnant for the .second time they would not be allowed to be readmitted in school again.*

On the question about how many people conducted counseling with the girls, the guidance and counseling teachers from one of the selected secondary schools revealed that there were three of them who conducted counseling of the reentered girls. One was a male teacher while the others were female teachers. In one primary school, guidance and counseling teachers stated that it was only two of them who conducted counseling sessions with the reentered girls, while in another secondary school there was only one teacher appointed by the head teacher to be in-charge of the guidance and counseling section. At another school counseling was done by only one teacher and the deputy head. Almost all of them complained of being over whelmed with a lot of work because they had heavy teaching loads and had lesser time to conduct counseling sessions with the girls.

### 5.2. Issues discussed with the Girls during Counseling sessions

Girls were asked to find out whether the guidance teachers had talked to them on how to never fall pregnant again and about having sex at an early age. 24(77%) of the girls stated that they were not talked to on how to never fall pregnant again and also on not having sex at an early age. While 7(23%) were talked to by the counselor. This could be attributed to the busy schedules guidance and counseling teachers have as already explained in the preceding passages. The guidance and counseling teachers have to attend to classes and conduct guidance and counseling sessions at the same time. Thus, they seems to be left with very little time to sensitize the girls on issues of sexuality and teenage pregnancy. Most of them said that they had a lot of periods for teaching their subjects and that it hindered them from spending enough time to conduct guidance and counseling sessions with the girls. Since most of the schools did not have trained counselors schools used teachers who seemed to have knowledge and experience on how to go about counseling from life experiences and those with skills and qualification in special education. As a result these teachers had many other responsibilities in school apart from guidance and counseling.

One of the male counselors interviewed pointed out that he had over 35 periods per week and suggested that the Ministry of General Education in Zambia should employ more trained counselors to schools in order to alleviate the problem of shortage of this specialized staff, the guidance and counseling teachers. The counselors further alluded to the fact that despite them not having enough time to go round to talk about issues of safer sex, they did sensitize pupils during school assemblies, through drama, songs and poetry and they also encouraged learners to join clubs such as SAFE and anti AIDS clubs.

However, the girls who were asked to state what lessons they had learnt during the counseling sessions reported that they had learnt that indulging in sexual activities at an early age may led to unwanted pregnancy and contracting of diseases such as HIV/AIDS. One girl explained that;

*When you sleep around with men you will come out with two things that is diseases and you can come out being pregnant.*

The girls further revealed that the counselors encouraged them to study hard because pregnancy was not the end of the world.

### 5.3. Activities Conducted in School to help the Girls in their School work

The head teachers, guidance and counseling teachers and the reentered girls were asked to state other activities and programmes which were put in place for the reentered girls. The guidance and counseling teachers specified that most of the schools had no specific activities or programmes or clubs for the reentered girls only but had general activities and clubs for all the pupils such as SAFE club, Girls are not brides, Anti AIDS, interact group club, debate and drama clubs. These clubs were mostly taken care of by the school counselors and teachers (matrons/patrons). In one school a club called Girls Are Not Brides was handled by the pupils in conjunction with an NGO called Girl Child Alive.

The girls were also asked to state if there were clubs in school and state which one of them they belonged to. Figure 1. indicates the clubs existing in schools which could have helped the girls if they took part in the activities carried out in the clubs.

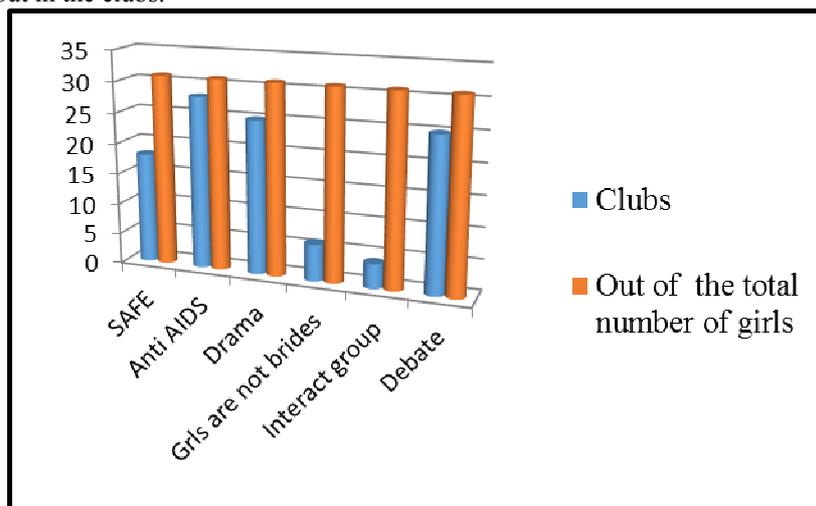


Figure.1. Frequency distribution of clubs existing in schools

The data presented in figure 1 shows that girls had an idea that such clubs existed in schools. The result of the study shows that 80% of the girls knew that there was drama club and debate in school, while 90% knew that there was ant-AIDS club. 58%, 19% and 12%, knew that there was SAFE club, Girls Are Not Brides and interact group respectively in the school. Unfortunately, despite the existence of such clubs in schools most of the girls when asked to state which club they belonged to, 80 % did not belong to any of the clubs.

The guidance and counseling teachers also said that these girls were engrossed with self-pity and this made many of them to drop out of school and some even decide to get married due to victimization in schools. They said that some girls would come to them crying due to stigmatization from their friends or from teachers who tell them to just get married if they happen to perform poorly in some subjects.

### 5.4. Future plans for the guidance and counseling and reentered girls in school

The head teachers, the guidance and counseling teachers and the reentered girls were asked explain what should be done and put in place in order to improve guidance and counseling of the reentered girls in school. Guidance and counseling teachers requested that if the schools could be planning for their sections in terms of allocating time, enough funds and other resources for the section then it would be easier for them to help the girls in many ways including monitoring and visiting them at home, or calling them by phone so that the girls could be helped during the times that they were not in school.

The girls were asked to state what guidance and counseling should do for them so that they can be helped in their school work. They stated that they were grateful that the policy had given them a second chance. However, they explained that, if the guidance and counseling could help them to find rooms for them to study from and also help them with materials which could help them to catch up with their school work they would appreciate that so much. The girls also indicated that teachers and friends teased them that they were mothers so if the counselors could from time to time talk to the rest of the school so that they could stop stigmatizing them. The girls further revealed that they had problems with finances. If the school could sponsor them or find well-wishers to come to their aid, then their problems could be eased.

The girls also stated that if it was possible, different individuals and organisations could be frequently coming to the school to talk to them about the dangers of having sex at an early age it could prevent many from getting pregnant while in school. The girls also stated that if it was possible, the guidance and counseling teachers could come up with various activities in school which they could be involved in to keep them busy and help them improve in school work.

The head teachers from the schools visited desired to invite more often some role models to the schools so that they would come to talk to the girls especially the reentered girls. They said that Parents and the communities were not helping in preventing girls pregnancies at their various levels. They suggested that Parents should be giving guidance and counseling to their children so that what was being done at schools could be continued and reinforced at home. This would help the girls to be able to complete their secondary education without getting pregnant.

## **6. Discussion and Implications**

### *6.1. Roles and Activities of Guidance and Counseling in School*

Guidance and counseling teachers had different roles which were clearly spelt out in the policy guidelines. These roles require innovativeness on the side of the counselors so that they would utilize these new ideas and activities in order to help the girls in an effective way. The result of the study showed that the head teacher's main role was to provide leadership in the implementation of the reentry policy and to interpret the reentry policy issues so as to ensure that they were being implemented accordingly. The head teachers said that whenever a girl was reported pregnant she was sat down together with the people responsible and their parents to ensure that they understood what was required of them. The head teachers agreed that they were in-charge of organizing sensitizations which were done during the assemblies through songs drama and poems. Issues presented in the sensitization were to do with HIV/AIDS, early pregnancies and marriages and school work. The results indicated that there were rare cases when they conducted sensitization themselves and it was also rare that other organisations came into the school to conduct sensitizations. The head teachers and guidance and counseling explained that there were few organisations that went to their schools to talk to the girls so that they can remain in school and complete their primary or secondary school. The results showed that girls were not being fully educated on issues to do with teenage pregnancy and sexuality. Teenagers are left on their own to learn everything from reading on the internet on the computer or phones and pamphlets. This stage is a very sensitive stage which the parents and teachers should work together to help shape the character of the youngsters or adolescents. This stage need close supervision and monitoring so that the girls are corrected and shown the right things to do in life. Childhood and adulthood are taken to be experientially different; with adolescence being the transition period that bridges the two. Although adolescence is viewed as a transition period and preparation for adulthood (Phoenix, 1991; Nsamenang 2002), adolescents are still perceived as minors and children as is evident in the Convention of the Right of the Child (CRC) that defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 years. Phoenix (1991) further stated that young mothers below 20 years of age (often referred to as teenage mothers) are in an ambiguous status as they have taken on adult roles of mothering at a time when they are not considered mature enough. By taking on adult roles, the young mothers blur the social divide between childhood and adulthood (De Boek & Honwana 2005).

The above interpretation was supported by Wanda (2006) who posited that there was need to introduce family life education, which would initiate sex education in schools. He acknowledged that the active sexuality of school girls outside the socially sanctioned arena of marriage is high and it needed to be given the high priority. Wanda (2006) contended that the silence shown by the educational policy makers and schools demonstrates the low priority given to the education of pregnant schoolgirls and student-mothers. Ahlberg et al. (2001) also supported the above assertion that awareness of the adolescent sexuality needed to be monitored, collecting data on pregnant schoolgirls and student mothers would therefore be a tacit acknowledgement that schools have failed to rein in the school girls' sexuality.

### *6.2. Roles of guidance and counseling teachers in helping the teenage girls*

On the other hand results indicated that the guidance and counseling teacher's main roles in the implementation of the reentry policy were to conduct counseling sessions on a daily basis with the girls on how to take care of themselves and the baby. And also to encourage them on how to remain focused and determined in order to meet their goal, which was completing their primary or secondary education. The guidance and counseling teachers said that they encouraged the girls to abstain from sex as it was the only way they could avoid falling pregnant again. Furthermore, the guidance and counseling teachers' most important thing which was done was to make a girl realize that she had made a mistake. When this was done then they, continued encouraging her to stay away from sex and abstain completely. They also said that their main role was to give hope to the girls so that they could realize that there was life after pregnancy. They told them to be responsible and make good decisions. The counselors also educated the girls on how to resist negative pressures, build their self-esteem, discuss issues affecting them and avoid risky behaviors. The guidance and counseling teachers further contended that they told the girls to look after themselves very well after they deliver so that they could come back in good shape to continue with their school.

The study had further revealed that school management had put counseling committees in place which were comprised of at least one male teacher and two or more female teachers, except in primary schools. Most

primary schools had no specific rooms or committee in place to counsel the pupils. In most primary schools, there were only one or two teachers who conducted counseling sessions. Almost all the counselors from the selected schools complained of being overloaded with a lot of work because they had a lot teaching loads and conducted counseling at the same time.

They encouraged the girls that pregnancy was neither a death sentence nor is it the end of the world. They encouraged them to be strong and be determined. They implored them not to indulge in sexual activities again because pregnancy affected their schooling and childhood. All the respondents said that they encouraged the girls to abstain from sex as it was the only way to avoid falling pregnant again. Respondents maintained that this did not mean that they approved of the girls wrong deeds, but they encouraged them so that they could have some confidence in them and move forward with life. ASCA (2002) agreed that a school counselor's work differentiates according to the developmental stages of their student population. Students in elementary school were developing their understanding of the self, peers, family, and school. They were beginning to gain communication and decision-making skills as well as character values. School counselors focus on peer relationships, effective social skills, family issues, self-image, self-esteem, and multicultural awareness. In addition, school counselors assisted students in developing interests regarding the world of work to increase students' career awareness.

This was in line with MoESVTEE (2014) and FAWAZA (2001) which stated that schools should through their guidance and counseling departments receive the reentered girls and change the perceptions of viewing them as mothers and offer support and acceptance. All schools must have a counseling committee headed by a trained counselor and the school guidance should help find places for the teen mother. In some cases provide textbooks, learning materials and find bursaries to those who cannot afford to pay school fees. Other Policy alternatives may include: the provision of school counseling services to give sex education; the provision of facilities such as school restrooms and day care centers to ease the burden of young mothers; the provision of guidance and counseling to expectant girls and mothers to cope with their pregnancy and childcare as they continue with their studies; the re-orientation and training of teachers to effectively and supportively manage pregnancy issues in the classroom; sensitization of the public, especially community leaders and creation of networks with relevant organization who can educate and support the teen.

Bowers and Hatch (2002) added that it had been realized that schools could not focus on cognitive development only but also on psychosocial support if education for all are to be achieved hence the need for guidance and counseling in school. The above discussion was also in agreement with Luff (1969) whose theory postulated that the main roles of the guidance and counseling teachers was to increase or expand the open arena through sharing of information and experiences. The guidance and counseling teachers should help the girls open up by encouraging them to share information so that they can be able to receive the help they need about the reentry policy, the importance of education, how to survive with a pregnancy and creating a balance between motherhood and education. This would help build self-confidence and reduce self- stigma in the school girls.

It was evident from the research findings that there was a significant relationship between counseling and of the retention of pregnant girls into school. The findings gave credence to the vital role that counseling played in reentry into school by girls. The findings showed that the girls who went through counseling had benefited much more and had less challenges in terms of their stay in school and at home than those who did not go through counseling. The girls who went through counseling were determined to finish their secondary education and were very appreciative of the reentry policy and guidance and counseling. The findings of this study were in agreement with the findings of Wilson (1997) who found out that students receiving counseling enjoyed a high retention advantage over non-counseled students.

### *6.3. Commitment shown by guidance and counseling towards teenage girls*

The results of the study showed that, the girls who were interviewed indicated that, they had learnt from the counselors that indulging in sexual activities at an early age leads to unwanted pregnancy and contracting diseases such as HIV/AIDS. The girls further revealed that the counselors encouraged them to study hard because a pregnancy was not the end of the world.

The assertion above is in line with Ubah et al (2012), whose findings showed that guidance and counseling services enhanced students' skills for entrepreneurship development which in turn boosted productivity, sustainable livelihood and national development. Girls needed a lot of support from their teachers, more especially the guidance and counseling teachers. They needed emotional and academic support from their teachers. Teachers should understand and encourage them to continue schooling for their own good. This in a long run would give them confidence and hope to face life. Female guidance and counseling teachers were more suited to support the pregnant girls against discouragement and insensitive remarks from fellow students and other members of the teaching staff. It is proved that it was easier for the pregnant girls to confide in female teachers who could in turn help them cope with their situation than the male teachers who may take advantage of their vulnerable situation and abuse them (Wanda, 2004).

This to some extent revealed that counseling in school was some how rhetoric. The findings showed that girls were not well counseled unlike rhetoric sentiments may imply. Girls were asking for more attention from the guidance and counseling teachers and the administration to help them in many areas such as provision of rooms and financial support which was a hindrance to their retention in school. Unfortunately, the administrations did not have laid down programmes to ensure that the girls were well counseled. This could be attributed to the failure to include the guidance and counseling on the timetable so that it could be known when it should be conducted. Guidance and counseling teachers also revealed that they did not have enough time to conduct one on one guidance and counseling with the girls due to over loads which they had in school. Counseling of the reentered girls was mostly done once immediately the girl was reported pregnant and once when the girl returned to be readmitted and that was all. Counseling of girls should be frequently done so that the problems hindering their performance were well known and ways of solving these problems were provided in order to help the girls more adequately. This study's revelations were in agreement with (Bowers & Hatch, 2002) who postulated that counseling is aimed at helping clients to come to terms with the problem and help the client with skills to solve it and most likely solve future problems in the same way. ASCA (2000) also argued that the main purpose of counseling was to create an environment in which the client felt encouraged and begun to relate with others more effectively. Through counseling a person was able to develop an understanding of the problems, acquire new behaviors or actions and develop meaningful relationships.

The results of the study showed that there was limited commitment to the guidance and counseling of girls in the schools. Too much attention was directed to other issues such as conducting examinations and issuance of results other than counseling of girls to ensure that they stayed and performed well in school. The guidance and counseling teachers failed to have constant contact with the reentered girls and as a result the girls faced a lot of problems both at home and at school. However, most of the head teachers suggested that there was need to have a curriculum for guidance and counseling in schools so that it could be taught just like any other subject. To integrate guidance and counseling in the curriculum would ensure that students move up the educational ladder with guidance and counseling knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

Lack of a curriculum of guidance and counseling had been revealed to be one of the challenges faced by the schools. It was revealed that since the schools had no guided curriculum which could have been facilitating the counseling services, it was difficult to place it on the time-table so that it was also considered as one of the core subjects. The results were in agreement with a study conducted by Ndifon and Akande (2014) who recommended that the government should endeavor to employ professional counselors in schools and integrate counseling and guidance services in the school curriculum.

Olivier (2000) explained that teen mothers who came back to school without going through any counseling to prepare them to deal with their stigma, parenthood, and schooling simultaneously got overwhelmed by their situation in school and some failed to cope resulting in them dropping out. In addition, Sifuniso (2006) argued that even when they attend school they often were discriminated against due to the teaching methods that stem from teacher beliefs about female incompetence's. The results of this study were also in line with the study conducted by Chigona and Rajendra (2008) whose findings showed that many teen mothers failed to succeed with schooling because they lacked support to avoid the numerous disruptions to school attendance. Many girls who became mothers before completing secondary or high school considered academic qualifications to be very important but they could not succeed academically because the support they needed to complete their secondary school studies was insufficient. Usually, instead of getting support, the teen mothers endured misunderstandings and pressure.

With sufficient guidance and counseling students remain disciplined and focused in life. Collins (2002) also indicated that through guidance and counseling students were assisted to be disciplined and were able to deal with challenges and realities they faced in their academic, social and physical environment.

Quality and effectiveness of counseling can only be attained when there was enough personnel and conducive rooms for the counseling sessions to be conducted in. This was in accordance with a study which was done by Mikaye (2012), the study revealed that guidance and counseling services had an influence on students' discipline. And schools should provide an office where privacy was made a priority. This would encourage more students to visit the office.

Another challenge that hindered effective counseling in schools was lack of qualified staff to conduct guidance and counseling of the reentered girls. From the information gathered from this study it was quite clear that the schools did not have well qualified guidance and counseling teachers but only depended on teachers who had been appointed by the school head teacher to help in that area. Mikaye (2012) advised that schools should have guidance and counseling teachers who were well trained on how to carry out their duties. There should be adequate provision of guidance and counseling materials as well as application of peer counseling, there was need to make proper budgeting for acquiring the needed materials and provision of other resources such as funds and time respectively.

According to the guidelines given from the Ministry of General Education (2014) schools need to form

counseling committees which should comprise of at least one trained counselor. The situation at hand in school was not satisfying which the Ministry of General Education should consider alleviating. The use of teachers who had other demanding responsibilities was interfering with the counseling programmes. The head teachers admitted that they were trying their best, but if the Ministry of General Education could send well qualified counselors and psychologists then counseling in schools was going to be more effective than it was. They admitted that most of the counselors were not well qualified but conducted counseling through experience gained from churches or from workshops. Others did counseling due to the passion they had for the field. The other challenge was the lack of modern equipments such as computers to help them keep information for the girls. Oleary and Oleary (2007) argued that computers are essential equipments to be used in modern institutions. Schools needed to have such equipments for them to store information in an effective manner.

## 7. Conclusions

The study revealed that guidance and counseling in school was being conducted and girls who went through them benefited a lot. However, there were shortcomings which needed to be looked into urgently so that counseling of the girls could be more effective. The success of guidance and counseling in schools depends on the school management support. It was revealed that there was less support from school management toward the guidance and counseling department. Lack of resources in schools for guidance and counseling hindered the activities. The schools had no special rooms where the girls could do their extra work after classes. There were no extra lessons to help the girls catch up with the school work which they could have missed during their absence. The rooms which were provided in schools were not suitable for guidance and counseling because they did not assure privacy and the comfort it deserved. There was lack of equipment such as computers so that it could help keep records. Most of the schools did not have a proper way of storing information. The records were poorly stored and thus made it difficult to make follow ups. There was need for school management to derive proper systems of storing records for the reentered girls if effectiveness and efficiency was to be achieved. There seemed to be less sensitization done to inform the learners on the dangers of illicit sex and the importance of abstinence from sex in schools. The girls who fell pregnant while at school faced a lot of stigmatization from both the teachers and the pupils. But the girls who were adequately counseled were able to contain the challenges of stigma while those who did not receive any counseling suffered a lot and failed to resist but decided to go away from school, hence dropping out. From the information gathered it was quite clear that the schools had inadequate qualified guidance and counseling teachers who could effectively conduct the sessions with the girls. The situation in school was not satisfying and the Ministry of General Education should consider alleviating the shortage of guidance and counseling teachers by deploying the required staff to the schools. Lack of skilled human resource made the counseling of the reentered girls to be less effective because they lacked the skills. Apart from skills these teachers were overloaded with other work especially the teaching loads which made them spend less time with their clientele. Lack of proper counseling for the teen mothers about their stigma and schooling seem to be one of the most serious problems girls experienced. Parents and the community did not help enough to counsel the girls and help in combating teenage pregnancy. Parents and the community at large should help with the counseling of the girls so that teenage pregnancies could be reduced. Lack of a curriculum of guidance and counseling was also revealed to be one of the challenges faced by the schools. It was revealed that since the schools had no guided curriculum which could have facilitate the counseling of girls it was difficult to place it on the time-table, so that it could be considered as one of the main subjects to be taught in school.

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