

The implementation of an educational re-entry policy for girls after teenage pregnancy: A case study of public secondary schools in the Kuria District, Kenya

Kodek Migiro Omwancha

Abstract

A new policy was introduced in Kenya in 1994 that enabled teenage mothers to continue schooling after delivery. The re-entry policy for girls who drop out of school after becoming pregnant while still at school is of international concern. The Kenyan government has already signed numerous international and regional declarations guaranteeing all children the right to education. However, it is not well known to what extent girls are taking advantage of the policy, how aware school managers are of the policy, and what challenges they meet in its implementation. Little is known in the international literature about the girls' experiences in attempting or succeeding in being able to re-enter school. This study investigated the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy. This study used critical theory in identifying the importance of the study which also aimed to sensitise stakeholders to the issues involved in teenage pregnancy by raising them for discussion. A qualitative method using a case study approach was chosen. Standard open-ended interviews were used to obtain in-depth information from the Ministry of Education (MOE) officials, head teachers, current students, teenage mothers and parents. Data were analysed thematically, using a social constructivist lens. Particular attention was given to the young girls' experiences by presenting them as narratives. The study revealed that there are conflicting views as to the value, nature and implementation of the policy. There was a concerning lack of awareness and understanding of both the policy and the guidelines. The findings further showed that many socio-cultural factors were important in preventing young mothers from returning to school. Hence there was a strong desire from the participants to be involved in any discussions about the policy. Findings from this study will help in creating awareness of the policy among all Kenyan stakeholders. The findings provide insights into inclusive policies, valuing and listening to voices not typically heard with an objective to enhancing the education of young mothers in Kenyan schools. They will also help in understanding the challenges in policy implementation in the context of limited resources, diverse viewpoints and expectations, and in studying the problems of pregnancy policy implementation in specific cultural settings. They will also contribute to the literature that calls for more understanding of the experiences of the young mothers.

Full text: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/41337684.pdf>