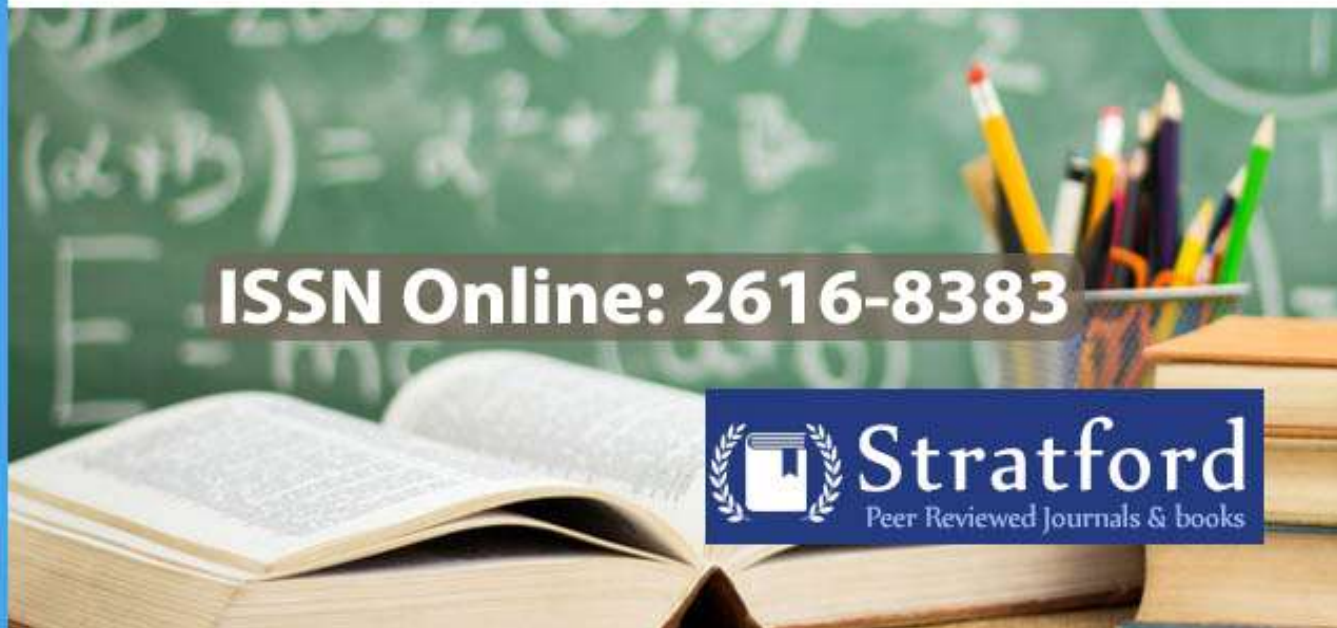




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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of parental logistical support on the education of teenage mothers in public junior schools in Bumula Sub-County, Bungoma County, Kenya. The study was guided by one research question and one null hypothesis tested at the .05 level of significance. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provided the theoretical lens, and a concurrent mixed methods design combining a cross-sectional survey with a phenomenological qualitative strand was employed. From a target population of 100 public junior schools, 145 respondents participated, including 70 re-admitted teenage mothers, 52 teachers, 10 heads of institutions, 11 religious leaders, 20 parents and guardians, and the Sub-County Director of Education. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, Pearson correlation, simple linear regression and multiple linear regression; qualitative data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Descriptively, parental logistical support was the lowest-reported dimension ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.37$), with 82.9% of girls agreeing that financial difficulties interfered with their academic performance and 90% of heads of institutions reporting that parents do not provide required stationery. On analysis of variance, the null hypothesis concerning logistical support was rejected, $F(1, 68) = 17.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .206$, accounting for 20.6% of the variance in educational outcomes. In a multiple regression model containing all four dimensions of parental support, logistical support was the only predictor to retain a statistically significant unique contribution ($\beta = .39$, $p = .001$). The finding held under three alternative scoring rules.

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Qualitatively, childcare was identified as the decisive component within logistical support, supplied without payment by ageing grandmothers and aunts, one of whom was born in 1954 and identified her own poor health as her principal difficulty. The study concludes that parental logistical support is the decisive dimension influencing the education of teenage mothers in this rural day-school setting, and recommends a targeted bursary and materials instrument, school-linked childcare provision, a named teacher-mentor for every re-admitted girl, mandatory quarterly returns of re-admitted learners, and community sensitisation that engages grandmothers, fathers and male elders.

Keywords: *Parental logistical support, Teenage mothers, Public junior schools, School re-entry, childcare, Competency Based Curriculum, Bumula Sub-County, Kenya*

1.0 Introduction

One of the deeply entrenched and multifaceted challenges to universal education globally is teenage pregnancy. Worldwide, adolescents aged 15 to 19 years in low- and middle-income countries have an estimated 21 million pregnancies each year, of which about half are unintended (World Health Organization [WHO], 2024). The impact on girls' education is dire: adolescent pregnancy is consistently linked to dropping out of school, lower lifetime earnings, intergenerational poverty, and adverse maternal and child wellbeing. Internationally, education systems have become increasingly aware of the need to provide inclusive education and support for pregnant learners and young mothers so that they remain in school. This is evident in countries such as the Netherlands, where teenage mothers report to school with their infants and leave them at day-care centres attached to the school compound.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the situation of teenage pregnancy and its impact on the education of adolescent girls is especially severe. Adolescent birth rates in the region remain the highest in the world, at 97.9 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 years compared with a global rate of 41.3 (WHO, 2024). Pregnancy-related school dropout is prevalent in the region, alongside deep-seated inequalities between girls and boys, early marriage, poverty and cultural attitudes that undervalue girls' education. While a number of re-entry policies are in place across Africa to enable teenage mothers to return to school after giving birth, implementation has been inconsistent and, in some cases, policies have failed to take into account the family and community circumstances that make school attendance easy or difficult. Continental studies have shown that parental attitudes to education, socio-economic status, and emotional and social support within the family are the key factors determining the re-enrolment of adolescent mothers in Africa (Ajayi et al., 2023).

Teenage pregnancy remains one of the major causes of school dropout, especially for girls in rural communities and low-income urban settlements in Kenya. According to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS), about 15% of girls aged 15 to 19 years have begun childbearing, down from 18% in 2014, with higher figures reported in the Rift Valley, Western, Nyanza and Coast regions (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS] & ICF, 2023). Social, economic and cultural factors contributing to this trend include poverty, limited access to sexual and reproductive health information, gender-based violence, peer pressure and changes in traditional protective family structures. In response, the Government of Kenya has progressively strengthened its policy on the education of teenage mothers. The National School Re-entry Guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2020) provide for the re-enrolment of pregnant learners and teenage mothers in the same grade and require schools to create stigma-free learning spaces, remedial support and linkages to health

and child protection services. More recently, in January 2026, the Ministry of Education issued a National circular reinforcing and operationalising these guidelines and directing all Boards of Management, school heads and education officials to implement re-enrolment as a non-negotiable administrative requirement.

Bumula Sub-County in Bungoma County, Western Kenya, presents a demanding case for this research. It is predominantly rural and dependent on subsistence agriculture, with high poverty rates, low levels of development and deeply entrenched patriarchal cultural norms that have historically limited girls' access to school and continuity in education. The sub-county lies within the Western Kenya region, which records among the highest rates of teenage pregnancy and early marriages in the country. With the introduction of the Competency Based Curriculum and the creation of Public Junior Schools covering Grades 7 to 9, a new and critical educational transition has emerged in which teenage mothers are especially susceptible to dropping out. Many families in Bumula Sub-County lack the resources, awareness and emotional capacity to care for a teenage mother after childbirth, and they frequently face stigma in both family and school settings because of community attitudes and patriarchal norms. In this context, parental support psychological, emotional, social, and logistical—is a critical determinant of whether a teenage mother in Bumula can remain in school, attend regularly, and achieve academically (Ajayi et al., 2023; Gebrekristos et al., 2022; Morgan et al., 2023; Mukabana et al., 2024). This study specifically examined the influence of parental logistical support on the education of teenage mothers in public junior schools in Bumula Sub-County.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Magara (2018) indicates that the adoption of Competency Based Education (CBE) in Kenya has placed parents as active partners and important actors in their children's academic journey. The ideal is that all children, including those experiencing life changes such as adolescent pregnancy or early childbearing, should be able to access, remain in and complete their formal basic education equitably, without barriers and with legal protection. In Kenya this principle is institutionally backed by the National School Re-entry Policy (Ministry of Education, 2020), which makes it an administrative non-negotiable requirement for all Public Schools to re-admit and retain teenage mothers.

Yet the literature on the support structures available to teenage mothers has been sparse, with the majority of studies conducted in secondary schools or urban informal settlements, leaving the newly established Public Junior Schools covering Grades 7 to 9 unexamined. Moreover, previous studies have largely treated "parental support" as a unidimensional construct, with none disaggregating and separately measuring its logistical, psychological, emotional and social sub-dimensions or their respective predictive influences on actual educational outcomes such as attendance and retention.

This structural and literature gap is mirrored by a pressing social reality in Bumula Sub-County. Despite the National Re-entry requirements, Heads of institutions and classroom teachers report persistently high rates of chronic absenteeism and repeat dropout among re-admitted teenage mothers arising from the absence of sufficient logistical support. The teenage mothers themselves report severe financial pressure, loneliness, and emotional and psychological distress (Ajayi et al., 2023; Mukabana et al., 2024). They are caught between the two responsibilities of parenthood and education without childcare support, school uniforms, or fees from their families (Gebrekristos et al., 2022; Morgan et al., 2023). In this rural sub-county, parents and guardians also report being

constrained by subsistence poverty and by a lack of the financial resources and information they need to protect their daughters from community ostracism (Mukabana et al., 2024; Oyedele et al., 2018). This shared problem threatens to make it impossible for these teenage mothers to pursue their further educational aspirations and to keep them within a cycle of intergenerational poverty. It is this problem that the present study set out to investigate.

1.2 Research Objective

To determine the extent to which parental logistical support influences the education of teenage mothers in public junior schools in Bumula Sub-County.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H₀: Parental logistical support has no statistically significant influence on the educational outcomes of teenage mothers in public junior schools in Bumula Sub-County.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, which proposes that human development results from ongoing interactions within a nested configuration of five concentric environmental systems. The theory identifies the microsystem as the immediate environment in which the developing person interacts directly, including the family, school, and peers. For teenage mothers, the family constitutes the most proximal and influential system, and the support provided by parents particularly logistical support—directly shapes their ability to participate in education.

The theory also recognizes the mesosystem, which refers to interactions between microsystems, such as the relationship between the family and the school. Parental logistical support, including the payment of fees and provision of childcare, facilitates the girl's physical presence in the classroom and thereby enables the mesosystemic interaction between family and school that is essential for educational continuity. The exosystem and macrosystem, including community poverty, stigma, and national policies, shape the resources available to families and the constraints they face in providing logistical support.

2.2 Empirical Review

Logistical support refers to the material and practical support provided by parents, such as payment of school levies, purchase of uniforms and learning materials, provision of transport and, most importantly, childcare support. Quantitative evidence from South Africa shows that adolescent mothers who used formal or family childcare were significantly more likely to return to school after giving birth than those who took on the entire responsibility of raising the infant themselves (Gebrekristos et al., 2022). This study is methodologically strong in its use of a large sample and quantitative analysis, but it measured childcare as a binary variable and did not examine the quality, reliability, or cost of the childcare arrangement. The study also did not distinguish between formal and informal childcare, despite the likelihood that these have different implications for sustainability and for the teenage mother's peace of mind.

A study in a low-income settlement in Nairobi found that poverty and childcare duties were the most common barriers to school attendance (Mukabana et al., 2024). Evidence from the same source indicates that families with stable economic means are better able to meet the direct and indirect costs of their daughters' education. For teenage mothers in Ghana, socio-economic status was likewise a key factor in re-entering school (Morgan et al., 2023). These findings converge to

show that logistical support is a precondition for consistent attendance, retention, and academic performance among teenage mothers. However, all three studies examined logistical support at the point of re-entry rather than after re-entry, and none measured the relative contribution of different components of logistical support, such as fees, learning materials, transport, or childcare, to educational outcomes. The Mukabana et al. (2024) study was qualitative and did not quantify the relationship between logistical support and outcomes. The Morgan et al. (2023) study treated socio-economic status as a demographic variable rather than as a measure of parental support, which limits its ability to inform interventions.

The reviewed studies do not answer several important questions in relation to the Kenyan junior school context. Much of the evidence concerns secondary schools and urban informal settlements, whereas the financial requirements and childcare arrangements facing families in rural sub-counties such as Bumula may differ substantially (Mukabana et al., 2024). Furthermore, the studies seldom distinguish among the specific components of logistical support, which makes it difficult to determine whether fees, learning materials, transport, or childcare exert the greatest influence on educational outcomes. The present study therefore measured the extent to which parental logistical support influences the education of teenage mothers in public junior schools and explored, through qualitative methods, how parents prioritize such support within constrained household budgets.

The literature reviewed confirms that logistical support is a precondition for consistent attendance, retention, and academic performance among teenage mothers. However, five gaps emerged. First, existing studies focused on urban informal settlements and secondary schools, leaving rural public junior schools under the Competency Based Curriculum undocumented. Second, western Kenya, including Bumula Sub-County, remained under-researched. Third, parents' own accounts of the challenges they face had received little attention. Fourth, most studies used composite measures of parental support without quantifying the unique contribution of each dimension. Fifth, the strategies proposed in the literature had not been tested or adapted to rural Kenyan contexts. The present study addressed these gaps through a concurrent mixed methods design in Bumula Sub-County.

3.0 Methodology

A mixed methods research design was employed. The quantitative strand used a cross-sectional survey design and the qualitative strand adopted a phenomenological design. This concurrent triangulation mixed methods approach permitted a comprehensive understanding of both the measurable patterns and the lived experiences of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The descriptive orientation of the design was appropriate for establishing the current state of parental logistical support and the educational experiences of teenage mothers, since it allowed the characteristics of the population to be described without the manipulation of variables (Field, 2024).

The study was carried out in Bumula Sub-County, Bungoma County, Kenya, in ten public junior schools. Bumula Sub-County is predominantly rural and its economy is based on subsistence agriculture. The sub-county lies within the western Kenya region, which records among the highest rates of teenage pregnancy and early marriages in the country, and it comprises the County Assembly wards of Bumula, Khasoko, Kabula, Kimaeti, South Bukusu, Siboti and West Bukusu. The sub-county was selected because it combines high poverty levels, entrenched patriarchal norms and documented incidences of re-admitted teenage mothers in the newly created public

junior schools, and furthermore because no previous study had examined parental support in this setting.

The target population of this study comprised all individuals and institutions in Bumula Sub-County, Bungoma County, Kenya, that were directly involved in or affected by the education of re-admitted teenage mothers in public junior schools. Specifically, the target population consisted of eight categories of respondents: 100 public junior schools, 100 heads of institutions, 520 teachers, 150 teenage mothers (both those currently enrolled and those who had recently dropped out), 200 parents and guardians of teenage mothers, 38 religious leaders, and one Sub-County Director of Education (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). These eight categories were selected because each holds a distinct and necessary vantage point on the phenomenon under investigation, and together they provided a comprehensive picture of the support systems available to teenage mothers in the sub-county (Mukabana et al., 2024). The total target population was 1,109 individuals and institutions.

The study drew a sample from eight target groups comprising ten selected public junior schools and 174 individual respondents. The eight target groups were: (1) public junior schools, (2) heads of institutions, (3) teachers, (4) re-admitted teenage mothers, (5) teenage mothers who dropped out, (6) parents and guardians, (7) religious leaders, and (8) the Sub-County Director of Education. The individual respondents were 80 teenage mothers (both those currently in school and those who had recently dropped out), 52 teachers, 20 parents or guardians, 10 heads of institutions, one Sub-County Director of Education, and 11 religious leaders (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Purposive sampling was used to select the ten public junior schools, the ten heads of institutions, the 52 teachers, the 20 parents and guardians, and the Sub-County Director of Education. Purposive sampling was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to select information-rich cases that were directly relevant to the research questions (Palinkas et al., 2015). The ten schools were purposively selected based on documented cases of re-admitted teenage mothers and their rural day-school status. The teachers were purposively selected to include those with pastoral or supervisory responsibilities for re-admitted learners, such as class teachers, senior teachers, and guidance and counselling teachers.

Systematic sampling was used to select the 80 teenage mothers from the target population of 150 teenage mothers in the sub-county. The sampling frame was obtained from school registers of re-admitted learners, and every second name on the list was selected until the desired sample size was achieved (Field, 2024). This approach ensured that the sample included teenage mothers from all three junior school grades and from both those currently attending school and those who had recently dropped out, thereby capturing the full range of educational experiences relevant to the study (Morgan et al., 2023). The questionnaire was the principal instrument for the collection of quantitative data. Structured questionnaires were administered to teachers and to re-admitted teenage mothers in the selected public junior schools. Each questionnaire contained a section on demographic information followed by sections of closed items on a five-point Likert scale measuring parental psychological, social, logistical and emotional support, together with a small number of open-ended items allowing respondents to elaborate on their experiences. Interview guides were prepared for key informants holding institutional, administrative, religious and parental roles in relation to the education of teenage mothers in Bumula Sub-County. They were administered to the Sub-County Director of Education, the heads of institutions of the ten selected public junior schools, religious leaders and parents or guardians of re-admitted teenage mothers.

Data collection proceeded in five sequential phases: ethical clearance and formal permissions from the relevant authorities; identification of participants and securing of informed consent; administration of questionnaires to teachers and teenage mothers; semi-structured interviews with key informants; and the recording and transcription of the data collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Each phase was planned so as to minimise disruption to school activities, to respect the dignity and rights of those involved, and to maintain the quality and completeness of the data (Taherdoost, 2021). Before any data were collected, the researcher obtained the required approvals. The process began with an introductory letter from the Department of Postgraduate Studies in Education of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, followed by an application for a research licence from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Approval was thereafter sought from the Bungoma County Director of Education, the Sub-County Director of Education for Bumula, and the heads of the selected public junior schools (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Formal approval at each level validated the study, protected participants' rights, and secured institutional cooperation. Ethical clearance was of particular importance because teenage mothers are a vulnerable group whose participation requires additional protection (Ajayi et al., 2023). The researcher retained copies of all letters of authorisation and produced them to the appropriate authorities during fieldwork, and did not enter the schools until all permissions had been granted.

Data analysis followed the concurrent mixed methods design, with quantitative and qualitative data analysed separately and integrated during interpretation. Quantitative questionnaire data were coded, checked for accuracy, and analysed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and composite scores, with Cronbach's alpha used to assess internal consistency. The null hypothesis concerning the influence of parental logistical support on the education of teenage mothers was tested at the .05 significance level using analysis of variance based on the continuous logistical support composite, with the F statistic, eta squared, exact p values, and 95% confidence intervals reported. Pearson and Spearman correlations, simple linear regression, and standard multiple regression were conducted as supplementary analyses, while variance inflation factors and the Durbin Watson statistic were used as regression diagnostics. No cases, responses, outliers, or missing values were altered or removed, and sensitivity analysis was undertaken where reliability concerns emerged. Qualitative interview and open ended questionnaire data were analysed manually using the six phases of reflexive thematic analysis, supported by an audit trail, peer debriefing, theme prevalence, participant quotations, and analytical interpretation. Finally, quantitative and qualitative findings were compared for convergence, complementarity, and contradiction to strengthen the overall interpretation through triangulation.

Ethical principles were strictly observed because the study involved teenage mothers, a vulnerable population exposed to stigma and emotional sensitivity. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained from adults and assent from participants below eighteen years alongside parental or guardian consent. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the use of respondent codes rather than names. Ethical approval was obtained from the African International University Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee, followed by a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation before data collection commenced.

4.0 Results and Discussion

The study targeted 174 individual respondents drawn from ten public junior schools in Bumula Sub-County. Of these, 145 respondents returned usable instruments, giving an overall response

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rate of 83.3%. The response rate varied across the respondent categories. An overall response rate of 83.3% is well above the 70% threshold that Creswell and Creswell (2023) regard as adequate for survey-based educational research, and the study can therefore be considered to rest on a sufficient volume of evidence. The full return from teachers and heads of institutions reflects the fact that these respondents were approached through the school administration during working hours, and that the researcher administered and collected the instruments personally on the same day. The 87.5% return from teenage mothers, while high, means that ten of the eighty girls who had been identified as re-admitted learners did not complete a questionnaire. The 25.0% return from parents and guardians is itself a substantive finding rather than a mere methodological limitation. Parents were the most difficult category to reach, and their reluctance to present themselves for an interview about their support for a daughter who had given birth is consistent with the sensitivity of the topic reported in the literature and with the accounts of community stigma that emerged in the qualitative data (Mukabana et al., 2024).

Demographic results revealed that just over half of the teenage mothers (51.4%) were aged between 15 and 16 years, and a further 17.1% were aged between 13 and 14 years. Taken together, more than two thirds of the sample (68.6%) were aged 16 years or below, which places them at the younger end of the adolescent range and confirms that teenage motherhood in Bumula Sub-County begins early. This distribution is consistent with the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey finding that 15% of girls aged 15 to 19 years nationally have begun childbearing (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS] & ICF, 2023). The girls were distributed across all three Junior School grades, with the largest concentration in Grade 8 (48.6%) and a substantial group in Grade 9 (32.9%). That teenage mothers are present in every grade of junior school, including Grade 7, indicates that the phenomenon is not confined to the older learners approaching transition to senior school but is present from the beginning of the junior school cycle.

Every one of the seventy respondents (100.0%) attended a day school. This is an important structural feature of the setting and it shapes the interpretation of the entire study. Because none of the girls was accommodated in a boarding facility, each of them returned home daily to a household in which an infant was waiting, and each of them depended daily on household arrangements for transport, food, childcare and the physical means of attending school. In a boarding setting, a significant part of the material burden would be absorbed by the institution once fees were paid. In a day setting, by contrast, the household is the operative unit of support on every school day, which makes the logistical dimension of parental support structurally decisive rather than merely helpful.

Four fifths of the respondents (80.0%) had one child, but 20.0% already had two or more children, which indicates that repeat pregnancy is a real feature of the sub-county. Only 25.7% lived with both parents. The largest single group (32.9%) lived with a guardian or other relatives, 30.0% lived with their mother only, 7.1% lived with their father only and 4.3% lived alone. In other words, almost three quarters of the re-admitted teenage mothers in this study were not living in an intact two-parent household, and more than one in three was being supported by someone other than a biological parent. This has direct implications for the meaning of "parental support" in this context. The term must be understood to include grandmothers, aunts and other kin who carry the practical burden of care.

Finally, the period spent out of school before re-admission was substantial for most respondents. Only 30.0% returned within six months, while 35.7% were out for between six months and one year and 34.3% were out for more than one year. Seven in ten girls therefore lost at least two

school terms, and one in three lost more than a full academic year. This is a critical finding for the interpretation of academic performance in this study, because a girl who has lost a year of instruction begins from a position of academic disadvantage that no amount of subsequent parental encouragement can immediately reverse.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Parental Logistical Support and the Education of Teenage Mothers

This section addresses the research objective, which was to determine the extent to which parental logistical support influences the education of teenage mothers in public junior schools in Bumula Sub-County. Logistical support was operationalised as the material and practical provision that makes daily school attendance possible: timely payment of fees, provision of learning materials and uniform, assistance with the infant's needs, and the absence of financial obstruction to attendance and performance. The item distribution is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Teenage Mothers' Responses on Parental Logistical Support

Statement	SA (%)	f	A f (%)	U f (%)	D f (%)	SD (%)	f	M	SD
My parents provide school fees on time.	27 (38.6)	18	13 (25.7)	10 (18.6)	10 (14.3)	2 (2.9)	2	3.83	1.18
My parents provide learning materials such as books and uniforms.	18 (25.7)	21	20 (30.0)	8 (28.6)	3 (11.4)	3 (4.3)	3	3.61	1.12
Lack of financial support affects my school attendance.	22 (31.4)	16	18 (22.9)	10 (25.7)	4 (14.3)	4 (5.7)	4	3.60	1.23
My parents assist in meeting my child's needs.	27 (38.6)	24	16 (34.3)	3 (22.9)	0 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	0	4.07	0.89
Financial difficulties interfere with my academic performance.	27 (38.6)	31	11 (44.3)	1 (15.7)	0 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	0	4.20	0.75
Overall								3.14	0.37

Source: Field Research 2026

Read as recorded, the items on this scale tell a coherent and sobering story. The two negatively worded items attracted the highest levels of agreement of any items in the scale: 82.9% of the girls agreed that financial difficulties interfered with their academic performance ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.75$), and 54.3% agreed that lack of financial support affected their school attendance ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.23$). At the same time, 72.9% agreed that their parents assisted in meeting their child's needs ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.89$), while agreement fell to 64.3% on the timely payment of fees ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.18$) and to 55.7% on the provision of learning materials and uniform ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.12$). Almost one in five girls (17.1%) actively disagreed that her parents paid fees on time, and 15.7% disagreed that they provided books and uniform.

Because items C8 and C10 were reverse-scored in forming the composite, the resulting composite mean of 3.14 ($SD = 0.37$) is the lowest of the four support dimensions and sits almost exactly on the "undecided" midpoint of the scale, with an unusually narrow dispersion. The narrowness of the dispersion is itself informative: the girls clustered tightly around a middling level of logistical provision, with none reporting either complete deprivation or complete sufficiency. Whichever scoring rule is adopted, the substantive picture is the same. Material support is the dimension of parental support that is least adequately supplied and the one whose insufficiency the girls themselves identify most emphatically as an obstacle to attendance and performance.

The heads of institutions provided the most direct institutional corroboration of this finding. When asked whether parents provided all the stationery needed by teenage mothers, nine of the ten (90.0%) answered plainly "No", and only one answered "Yes". On the payment of school fees, six answered affirmatively, two answered "No" and two gave a qualified answer, namely "Some parents pay" (HOI 9) and "Some they pay" (HOI 8). On the provision of childcare for the infants, seven answered "Yes" and three answered "No". The stationery finding is the starkest consensus in the entire qualitative dataset, and the heads were uniform in describing its consequences. HOI 6 gave the most complete account:

It hinders academic performance, diminished student engagement, and causes profound emotional distress like anxiety and shame. (Head of Institution 6, personal communication, September 2026)

HOI 10 added that lack of stationery "lowers self-esteem of learners and lead to absentism", and HOI 1 described the classroom mechanics of the shortage: "Most pupils do not complete the given homeworks on time. Time is also wasted since they wait for others to share." HOI 2 explained the fee mechanism with equal directness: "For those who are not supported especially paying fees, most of them remain at home since in school fees payment is a must", and HOI 4 stated that untimely fee payment "leads to poor performance. It also leads to total drop out from school."

The childcare question produced the most operationally significant testimony. HOI 4 observed that where childcare was not provided, the girls "end up performing poorly in academics due to lateness in school or not attending class as they take care of their babies", and HOI 7 stated that "they end up being absent in school most of the time while taking care of the baby". HOI 6 described the same phenomenon as "poor time management among the teen mothers as most of the time they stay at home". Because every girl in this study attended a day school, the childcare arrangement in the household governs attendance on a daily basis.

The Sub-County Director of Education drew the strands together in the strongest terms used by any informant, and identified childcare as the decisive component within logistical support:

Logistical support is the sine qua non of retention. A girl whose school fees are paid and who has books and uniform can attend school without the daily humiliation of being sent home. Childcare support is even more decisive: if a mother knows her baby is safe, she can concentrate in class. When parents provide this logistics consistently, attendance regularity improves dramatically. Without logistical support, even the most determined girl is eventually worn down by the daily friction of unmet material needs. (Sub-County Director of Education, personal communication, September 2026)

The teenage mothers' own open-ended responses converge on the same point from the other direction. Half of the sixty girls who completed the typed forms (50.0%) named material or fee shortages among their principal challenges, more than any other category, and 45.0% identified fees, uniform, books and materials among the ways in which their parents supported them. Individual accounts made the mechanism concrete: "sometimes I lack school fees and I am sent home while others remain in class"; "I do not have money for lunch on some days so I stay hungry in class"; "I lack enough books, uniform and other learning materials." The most frequently reported single form of support named by the girls (53.3%) was childcare provided by a mother or grandmother, one respondent writing simply that "my mother takes care of my baby when I am in school so I can attend lessons" (Teenage Mother 34, personal communication, September 2026) and another, in the scanned handwritten forms, listing as the support she most needed a sponsor

"to take care of my child so that I can get ample time to study" (Teenage Mother 6, personal communication, September 2026).

Teachers reported the same hierarchy. Logistical and material provision was the mechanism most frequently named by teachers as the route through which parental support affects outcomes, appearing in 90.4% of the fifty-two responses, and childcare for the infant appeared in 53.8%. Nine of the fifty-two teachers (17.3%) used almost identical language in observing that "reliable childcare at home allows the girl to remain in school the whole day without sneaking out to breastfeed."

The parental interviews confirmed both the willingness and the incapacity of the households. Every one of the five parents and guardians described providing what they could while conceding that it was not enough. One father, a motorcycle taxi operator, explained: "At times I don't cater for all requirements because minimum income from boda boda riding" (Parent 2, personal communication, September 2026). A mother reported: "I do provide but at times I get stuck due to low income (farming)" (Parent 1, personal communication, September 2026). A grandmother, born in 1954, stated that she did not provide school requirements at all because "the school head teacher helps to pay and the Government" (Guardian 1, personal communication, September 2026), and named her own principal challenge as "old age". The constraint documented here is one of capacity rather than of will.

4.2 Testing of the Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis stated that parental logistical support has no statistically significant influence on the educational outcomes of teenage mothers in public junior schools in Bumula Sub-County. This hypothesis was tested by analysis of variance at the .05 level of significance. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: One-Way Analysis of Variance

Source	Sum squares	of df	Mean square	F	p	η ²
Between groups (parental logistical support)	5.11	1	5.11	17.59	< .001	.206
Within groups (residual)	19.74	68	0.29			
Total	24.84	69				

Source: Field Research 2026

The analysis of variance was statistically significant, $F(1, 68) = 17.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .206$. Differences between the girls in the level of parental logistical support they reported accounted for 20.6% of the total variance in the educational outcomes they reported, which is the largest proportion recorded for any of the four dimensions: nearly three times the proportion accounted for by psychological or by social support and more than six times that accounted for by emotional support. The supporting statistics agree. Parental logistical support was significantly and positively correlated with educational outcomes, $r(68) = .45$, 95% CI [.24, .62], $p < .001$, and the Spearman correlation was of comparable magnitude, $\rho = .50$, $p < .001$. Simple linear regression gave $b = 0.74$, $SE = 0.18$, 95% CI [0.39, 1.09], $\beta = .45$, $t(68) = 4.19$, $p < .001$, and the fitted equation was Educational outcomes = 1.90 + 0.74 (logistical support). By Cohen's conventions an eta squared of .206 represents a large effect.

Because the obtained probability is smaller than .001, and therefore far below the adopted significance level of .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. It is concluded that parental logistical support has a statistically significant influence on the education of teenage mothers in public junior schools in Bumula Sub-County. In the multiple regression model containing all four dimensions, which explained 24.5% of the variance, logistical support was the only predictor to retain a significant unique contribution ($\beta = .39, p = .001$). The finding held under three alternative scoring rules, as reported in Table 3.

Table 3: Sensitivity of the Logistical Support Finding to Three Scoring Rules

Scoring rule	Items	α	M (SD)	r	R ²	β	p
C8 and C10 reverse-scored (primary)	5	-.78	3.14 (0.37)	.45	.206	.45	< .001
All items scored as recorded	5	.84	3.86 (0.82)	.39	.156	.39	< .001
Positively worded items only (C6, C7, C9)	3	.76	3.84 (0.88)	.46	.214	.46	< .001

Source: Field Research 2026

The conclusion is unaffected by the scoring rule. Under all three specifications the association between parental logistical support and educational outcomes is positive, of similar magnitude and significant beyond the .001 level, and the variance accounted for ranges narrowly from 15.6% to 21.4%. The three-item composite restricted to the positively worded items, which achieves an acceptable reliability of .76, produces the strongest association of the three ($r = .46, R^2 = .214$). The multiple regression was likewise re-estimated with the logistical composite scored as recorded; the model remained significant, $F(4, 65) = 3.78, p = .008, R^2 = .189$, and logistical support remained the only significant unique predictor, $\beta = .31, p = .013$, with psychological support ($\beta = .11, p = .383$), social support ($\beta = .12, p = .351$) and emotional support ($\beta = .02, p = .876$) again non-significant.

Examination of the individual items reinforces the same conclusion. The three positively worded items correlated significantly with educational outcomes: assistance with the child's needs, $r = .44, p < .001$; provision of learning materials and uniform, $r = .42, p < .001$; and timely payment of fees, $r = .31, p = .010$. Of the two negatively worded items, the statement about financial difficulties interfering with academic performance correlated $r = .25, p = .038$, while the statement about lack of financial support affecting attendance did not reach significance, $r = .16, p = .179$. The finding that assistance with the infant's needs is the single most predictive item on the whole logistical scale is entirely consonant with the qualitative testimony of the heads of institutions and of the Sub-County Director of Education, all of whom identified childcare as the decisive component of material support.

5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that parental logistical support is the decisive dimension influencing the education of teenage mothers in public junior schools in Bumula Sub-County. It was the lowest supplied, the most strongly associated with educational outcomes, and the only dimension to retain a statistically significant unique contribution when all four dimensions of parental support were modelled together. The conclusion holds under every scoring rule tested and is corroborated by every qualitative source in the study. Within logistical support, assistance with the infant's needs is the most predictive single component. The study further concludes that the childcare on which attendance currently depends is supplied without payment by ageing female relatives and has no institutional backstop, and that this arrangement is unsustainable. The gap between the high educational aspirations reported by the teenage mothers (87.1% expected to complete their

education) and the material conditions in which those aspirations must be realised is the practical problem this study identifies.

6.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations stem directly from the conclusions of the study.

Fund or facilitate school-linked childcare provision. The Ministry of Education should fund or facilitate childcare provision adjacent to public junior schools, whether through a school-based crèche, a community day-care, or a supervised space for infants. This recommendation arises from the conclusion that assistance with the infant's needs was the single most predictive item on the logistical support scale ($r = .44$, $p < .001$) and was identified by every category of key informant as decisive for attendance. It is reinforced by the qualitative finding that the childcare on which attendance currently depends is supplied without payment by ageing grandmothers and aunts, one of whom was born in 1954 and identified her own poor health as her principal difficulty. A system of universal junior schooling that depends on the unpaid labour of elderly women in failing health is not sustainable.

Assign a named teacher-mentor to every re-admitted teenage mother. Heads of institutions should assign each re-admitted teenage mother a named teacher-mentor responsible for monitoring her attendance and progress and for initiating contact with her parents or guardians. This recommendation arises from the conclusion that logistical support is decisive but that its provision depends on household capacity, which is often absent. A teacher-mentor provides an institutional backstop that can identify and respond to material and attendance difficulties before they lead to dropout. It is reinforced by the finding that 17.3% of teachers proposed the pairing of girls with supportive teachers and that only 11.5% of teachers currently hold a guidance and counselling designation.

Require and audit quarterly returns of re-admitted learners. The Ministry of Education should require and audit quarterly returns of re-admitted learners disaggregated by school, grade, attendance, and progression. This recommendation arises from the conclusion that logistical support is the decisive dimension and that its provision must be tracked if it is to be improved. It is reinforced by the finding that documented re-admissions exist in only about 38 of the sub-county's 147 public junior schools and that many schools re-admit girls informally without filing returns, making it impossible to quantify the population requiring support or to monitor the effectiveness of interventions.

Target grandmothers and female guardians in sensitisation and support. Community and religious leaders should target grandmothers and other female guardians in sensitisation and support programmes. This recommendation arises from the conclusion that the childcare on which attendance depends is supplied without payment by ageing female relatives and that grandmothers control family decisions. It is reinforced by the finding that a third of the girls in this study lived with a guardian or relatives that grandmothers supplied most of the childcare, and that one religious leader identified grandmother engagement as the strategy through which whole families are won over. An intervention targeted at grandmothers reaches the actual decision-maker and the actual carer simultaneously.

Engage fathers and male elders in community sensitisation. The Sub-County Director of Education should convene village-level barazas with chiefs, elders, and religious leaders to disseminate the 2020 National School Re-entry Guidelines and the 2026 circular, ensuring that fathers and male

elders are included. This recommendation arises from the conclusion that limited parental knowledge of the guidelines is a distinct challenge and that fathers and male elders are the decision-makers who permit or block a girl's return to school.

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