

**ROLE OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN ADDRESSING TEENAGE
PREGNANCIES AMONG HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS IN TIGANIA CENTRAL,
MERU COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL
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COUNSELLING, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEGREE OF THE KENYA
METHODIST UNIVERSITY**

SEPTEMBER 2024

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university for examination.

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MAR-3-0006-1/2021

Signature Date.....

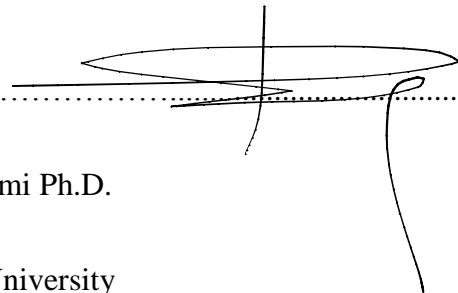
RECOMMENDATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wife Doris Kanana for the moral support throughout the course and particularly in writing this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

Teenage pregnancy is a global challenge both in the developed and developing world. It deteriorates the victim's life by causing school interruption, psychological, social, physical and economic challenges. Church leaders have an important role to play in addressing teenage pregnancies by influencing the church, schools and the community in general. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the role of church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County. The objectives of the study were to assess the pastoral role of church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County, to examine the advocacy role of church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County and to establish the role of catechism training in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County. The study was guided by Social Learning theory and Social Action theory. The study used Descriptive design embracing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Random sampling was used to sample 77 church leaders and purposive sampling to sample 50 teenage high school girls. Data from church leaders was collected using questionnaires and that from the teenage high school girls from selected churches was collected using Focus Group Discussions. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics; percentages, means, and standard deviations while the qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Quantitative findings were presented by use of tables and charts while the qualitative findings were presented in verbatim. This study concluded that the church leaders have a role to play in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania central. Sixty six (83.2%) respondents agreed that utilization of pastoral programs discipleship programs by the church leadership was key in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central. Offering discipleship and Sunday school programs were recorded as agreeable among church leadership as key in addressing teenage pregnancy with agreeability of 86.7% and 78.2% respectively. Including the teenagers in drawing these programs, appointing youth/teenagers patrons in the church and placing chaplains in church sponsored schools were some of the recommendations made. Fifty eight (82.8%) respondents agreed catechism training was a tool they used to address teenage pregnancy. The need to include younger children in catechism, having an elaborate catechism curriculum and training of catechists were noted as ways to improve on catechism training in addressing teenage pregnancy. Forty eight (68.6%) respondents admitted to using advocacy to address teenage pregnancy among high school girls. Participating in drawing school program (58.6%), teaching PPI in schools (61.5%) and working with NGOs (35%) were listed as the advocacy programs the church leadership used in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County. Getting involved with the community elders and including girls in campaign against teenage pregnancy were some of the recommendations made.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIC	African Inland Church
AIPCA	African Independent Church of Africa
AoSK	Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya
ASPE	Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
EAPC	East Africa Pentecost Church
FGCK	Full Gospel Churches of Kenya
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FPAK	Family Planning Association of Kenya
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
MCK	Methodist Church in Kenya
NACC	National Aids Control Council
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NCCK	National Council of Churches Kenya
NCHS	National Center for Health Statistics
NCPD	National Council on Population and Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
PCEA	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
PPI	Program for Pastoral Instructions
SDGs	Strategic Development Goals
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive Health and Rights
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
U S	United States

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Chapter one provided context of the entire study on role of church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County, Kenya through the background of the study. This chapter provided information about the research plan covering all major sections, work done by scholars, and the gap that this study was to fill. In this connection chapter one provided the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives and questions which acted as roadmap of the study. The chapter also highlighted the significance, limitations, assumptions, and definition of terms for the study.

1.1 Background to the study

Teenage pregnancy is defined as; ‘occurrence of pregnancy in girls aged between 13-19 years (Kassa et al., 2018). Teenage pregnancies affect teenage girls all over the world. According to UNICEF (2019), the world population comprises of 1.2 billion teenagers. This translates to 16% of the global population. In the United States of America 42 Million people are estimated to be between ages 10 and 19 years (varella, 2021) while those aged between 13-19 years are estimated to be 21-22 million (United States Census Bureau, 2019). South Asia tops with estimated 350 million teenagers followed by East Asia with 300 million. Sub-Saharan Africa is leading with highest population of teenage in the population where 23% of population is made up of people between age 10 and 19

years. In Kenya (Census, 2019), demographics show that 12 million Kenyans were aged between 10-19 years (Faria, 2021).

Teenage pregnancy is a global menace affecting both the developed and developing countries (Kassa et al., 2018). It has caused a number of risks among the teenage mothers and children they give birth to. They include, pre-term babies, babies with low birth weight, higher neonatal mortality and mothers' exposures to postpartum depression and less likely to initiate breastfeeding (Wall-Wailer et al., 2016). These risks associated with teenage pregnancy are a big cause of inequality between the girl-child and the Boy-child. The situation is quite detrimental to the extent of threatening the accomplishment of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) attainment. SDG-1 seeks to end poverty, SDG 3 - good health and wellbeing, SDG4-Offering meaningful and quality education, SDG5-Gender equality and SDG8-promoting and acquisition of good work and economic growth for all (French and Katz, 2018). This might not be achieved if the vice is not addressed. This situation may also hinder the attainment of the Kenya's Vision 2030.

A study done by Kappeler (2015) and Brindis et al. (2020) reveals that one eighth of the United State of America's teen population become pregnant at least once before they are 20 years of age. The case is not different in the United Kingdom where for every 1000 birth registered, 30 of them are teenage birth (Dickins, 2012). Korea, Japan, Switzerland, Netherlands and Sweden report the lowest numbers in teenage pregnancies (Kmietowicz, 2002). A study done by Wright et al. (2019) shows that the Church in America has a role to play in addressing teenage pregnancies. The black church in America identified the importance of pastoral role in addressing teenage pregnancies. Pastors look at the church

as a good place to discourage the vice through training parents on being the source of their teenage children's knowledge of sexuality and sex education. They also mention church programs as important if drafted with teenagers' welfare in mind (Wright et al., 2019). If the children are brought up with the knowledge and participation in programs that discourage their early sexual engagement, there is a likelihood of them postponing their first sexual intercourse hence delaying the chances of becoming victims of teenage pregnancies.

In some other parts of the world the silence of the church has caused the wide spread of teenage pregnancies. In Philippines, the catholic bishops acknowledge the prevalence of teenage pregnancy. In response, they blame the parents on lack of sex education. They don't place any responsibility to the church on offering sex education. They leave this responsibility to the parents of the teenagers. Although the Government of Philippines has proposed sex education in schools, the bishops do not support it. They term it as an avenue to increase promiscuity among teenagers (Genilo, 2021).

World Health Organization report in 2020 estimated that 21 Million girls between ages 15-19 years become pregnant every year in the developing world Africa included. Kassa et al. (2018) reveal that almost one fifth of adolescents in Africa experience pregnancy at least once before they are 20 years of age. In the bid to check on the role played by the church in mitigating this high prevalence of teenage pregnancies, a number of studies have been done. Among the measures highlighted by a study done by Obiako (2021) in Ghana on the measures taken by the church to address teenage pregnancies, the following interventions were listed: training young people on biblical ways of preventing teenage pregnancies, pulpit advocacy against teenage pregnancy, coming up with teen focused

activities addressing teenage pregnancy and partnering with agencies that enlighten teens on disadvantages of teenage pregnancy. Banning pregnant teenagers from Church and doing away with night teen activities however, were discouraged. Jibiliza (2022) presents the pastoral approach to teenage care by the Methodist church in South Africa. This include putting up committees that deal with teens welfare in place and forming structures that help in sustenance of needy teens in school. A study done by Bormet et al. (2021) in Zambia revealed that, faith-based organizations' leaders are doing a lot in advocacy on family planning. Due to this revelation, church leaders have an upper hand in leading campaign in influencing the uptake of family planning and health-seeking behavior in order to avoid teenage pregnancies.

In East African Countries Governments, civil societies and churches are in major disagreements on how the sky-rocketing teenage pregnancy menace should be dealt with. Governments and church leaders are against legalizing abortions and making contraceptives available for the teenagers while the NGOs and civil societies are advocating for the same among high school teenagers (Mugisha, 2018). Nabugoomu et al. (2020) came up with the following measures in dealing with high prevalence of teenage pregnancies in Uganda; sensitizing young people through seminars, counseling for parents of the teenagers, closing of pornographic outlets allowing children, punishing rapists and training (school and catechism) teachers and community members to empower girls.

In Kenya, the situation of teenage pregnancy prevalence is high (Omorro et al., 2017; Muturi 2021; Agutu, 2021; Kebaso, 2021). This prevalence has caused havoc by destabilizing the gains achieved by the civil societies, NGOs and local/international

women right crusaders (George et al., 2020) in their advocacy for gender equality. Kenya is ranked the highest among the East African countries in social protection aspects. This glory has been faded by high prevalence of teenage pregnancies and new HIV/Aids infections and sexual abuse (Muturi, 2021). In addition, due to its discriminative nature against girls, teenage pregnancy causes imbalance in productivity hence causing gender imbalance. Due to increased number of pregnancy cases among teenage girls who happen to be in school, cases of school dropouts have increased. According to Nyamuta and Ochieng (2020), pregnancies in teenage girls change their lives radically. They terminate their education, and their ambition for a better life is thwarted. This exposes them to poverty and exclusion from the society. World Health Organization warns on the danger of not realizing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) if investment on adolescent health will be ignored (Ayieko & Nguku, 2019).

In response to the situation of teenage pregnancies prevalence in Kenya, different organizations have shown their interest in intervention. These include the Government, Non-Governmental organizations and the church. These are the major stake-holders in the society in matters social security and moral guidance (Langat, 2022; Mwadime, 2022). Mugisha (2018) looks at the NGOs push for introduction of contraception among high school teenage girls in school an idea that the Government and the church is totally against. The Church leaders on their side advocate for abstinence where safety against teenage pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases is guaranteed. They argue that contraception should be left to the married couples (Mugisha, 2018). Although the church concern is quite valid, it is important to note that there is need for a decisive approach by the church in leading the fight against teenage pregnancy.

One of the major causes of teenage pregnancy prevalence is lack of comprehensive sexual education in schools (Mutethia, 2019). Need to provide comprehensive and age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health is highly recommended. This is expected to give teenagers empowerment in making informed decisions (Waithaka, 2019). According to Onserio (2009), the church need to train moral agents like catechists, Family Life Education program (FLEP) teachers and youth leaders on improving moral understanding of teenagers.

Waithaka (2019) laments that parents have not created an environment that can allow their children to learn about sexuality from them. Due to the absence of the parents, the teenagers are left to source knowledge from the internet, from their peers, cousins and other people. Jibiliza (2021) presents pastors and church leaders as a good tool to equip parents in helping their teenagers with the needed sex and reproductive education. Waithaka (2019) looks into inclusion of young men in advocacy against teenage pregnancy as he notes the importance of the voices of youth groups, faith-based organizations and (social) media in advocating for improved adolescent sexual and reproductive health.

It's important to note the influence the church leaders have in the society. They need to use this influence in playing a significant role in preventing teenage pregnancies and child abuse. Ooko (2019) on the world vision page presents pastoral and advocacy roles played by the pastors in West Pokot County (Kenya) by becoming advocates of the teenage girls who fall victims of teenage pregnancy. World Vision identified religious leaders as well placed to use their influence in curbing teenage pregnancies in West Pokot which happens to be one of the counties in Kenya with the highest prevalence of teenage

pregnancies (World Vision, 2019). Spiritually growing of children through mentorship is one of the practices pastors and church leaders are using to help in addressing teenage pregnancies in West Pokot (Ooko, 2019).

In Meru County alone, in the year 2020, 14,573 girls aged between 10 and 19 years were reported to have been impregnated (Judy, 2021). Some of the cases are perpetrated by people who are well known and related to the victims. Judy (2021) quotes Mercy Chidi the executive director of Ripples International who states that most of the cases were perpetrated by family members and the girls' family friends. Such cases according to her, counts to more than 70% of the cases in the year 2020 between January and June (6 months) the Kenya health information system recorded 5270 teenage pregnancies in Meru County. 170 of these girls were aged between 10-14 years while 5,100 were between 14-19 years old. Marete (2023) identifies Meru County as a hotspot after recording 10561 cases of teenage pregnancies in the year 2022. Tigania Central was named by Mutembei (2024) as one of the sub counties which contributed the highest percentage of the cases at 41% prevalence

Tigania Central is a Sub County of Meru County. It is among the 11 administrative sub counties. It is one of the two Sub Counties that make Tigania East Constituency. These Sub Counties are; Tigania East and Tigania Central Sub Counties. According to the 2019 national census Tigania Central had a total population of 104,730 people (Kenya Census Data, 2020). This research then aimed at investigating the role played by church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Ideally, students are expected to complete high school education, complete their course, have equal chances and opportunities to advance their career and participate in their social, economic and political lives (Anthony, 2017). The expectation is being degenerated by the fact that many girls drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy and the related stresses (Wall-Wailer et al., 2016). Out of 34808 pregnancies reported in Meru County in 2022 10561 (30%) were teenage pregnancies (Marete, 2023). According to Mutembei (2024), Tigania Central Sub County was one of the most affected with 41 % of the affected teenagers.

While there have been government and non-governmental policies to address teenage pregnancy, the problem has not yet been resolved. The current initiatives exclude the role of church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancy yet they are in touch with communities and families under their pastoral and spiritual care. It is therefore against this background that this study examined the role of church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of the church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County.

1.4 Objectives of this study

The objectives of the study were:

- i. To assess the pastoral role of church Leadership in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County.

- ii. To establish the role of catechism training by church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County.
- iii. To examine the church leadership's advocacy role in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County.

1.5 Research questions

- i. What is the church leadership's pastoral role in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County?
- ii. What is the role of catechism training by church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County?
- iii. Does church leadership use advocacy to address teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County?

1.6 Justification of the study

Teenage girls who experience teenage pregnancy usually experienced mental, social and economic disturbances. This creates need for action by all stake holders including the governments, community, church and family members. This study was therefore crucial in Tigania Central Sub-County. The study findings and recommendations would significantly inform the church leadership in rethinking, evaluating and constructing new strategies on their role in addressing teenage pregnancy within the catchment area of their church. The findings generated by the study would guide the expansion of the current approaches on involvement of church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancy.

With the introduction of County Governments, the study would assist in coming up with means of handling cases of teenage pregnancy at the County level through churches and other religious organizations. The study would also bring about content to be used in civic education by faith-based organizations for better understanding of addressing teenage pregnancies in Tigania Central Sub County. The study would create a structure through which the church leadership can be involved in a constructively genuine dialogue in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls.

The findings of this study would also inform the curricula content to be taught in theological institution in order to verse the clergy with skill and knowledge on how to address teenage pregnancy. Finally, the study findings would enrich other researches in Kenya, Africa and the world on strategies in addressing teenage pregnancies by churches and faith-based organization.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study aimed at increasing the understanding of the role of church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls. This study would be useful by policy makers in both national and devolved governments by influencing the church leaders who are major stakeholders in the society to involve themselves in the fight against teenage pregnancies. It would also inform the Non-Governmental Organizations on how to involve church leaders in the fight against the vice.

On the side of the church the study would enlighten theological colleges and church leaders on the programs to address teenage pregnancies in their pastors' training curriculum and preaching. It would also enlighten church leaders on improving the catechism training curriculum in order to meet the needs of the society in addressing

teenage pregnancy among high school girls. Finally, the study would enrich the available literature on church leaders' role in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls.

The study findings and recommendations would inform the leadership of the church in coming up with more effective and active roles in advocating against teenage pregnancies among high school girls. This study would also help the County and National Government in designing ways of addressing teenage pregnancy through collaboration with church leadership. It would also assist the faith-based organizations on coming up with comprehensive solution to teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County.

1.8 Scope of the study

This research was conducted in Tigania Central Meru County. It involved church leaders from NCCK member churches within the location of study. It sought information from church leaders from Methodist Church in Kenya, Anglican Church of Kenya, Africa Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa, East African Pentecostal Church, Full Gospel Churches of Kenya, African Inland Church and Presbyterian Church in East Africa. The study was confined within the role of church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County.

It also included teenage high school girls from the mentioned churches. The girls were included in order to affirm if or not church leaders played any role in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls. The independent variables in this study were;

pastoral role, catechism class/training and advocacy role while the dependent variable was teenage pregnancy

1.9 Limitations of the study

Teenage pregnancy is prevalent in many places both in Kenya and world in general. It is not confined only in Tigania Central Sub-County. Due to limitation of time and resources, the researcher chose to confine the study within Tigania Central Sub County. Secondly, the issue of teenage pregnancy requires a multifaceted approach. Both the Government and other community leaders are stake holders in the community. They too have a voice in addressing teenage pregnancy. This study focused only on the church leadership. Thirdly, there are many church denominations within Tigania Central Sub County but this study only focused on the NCKK member Churches. Finally, there was experienced language barrier due to some church leaders failing to understand English. This was resolved by having some questionnaires in Kimiiru and allowing respondents affected to answer in Kimiiru language.

1.10 Assumptions of the study

The study was guided by the assumptions that the respondents would be willing and truthful in giving the needed information. It also assumed that the information obtained from the respondents would be meaningful and would help the researcher make useful and meaningful inferences. The study further assumed that the respondents would cooperate with the researcher during the study, and finally the study assumed that the sampled respondents would have adequate knowledge on the subject under study.

1.11 Operationalization of Terms

Advocacy: Campaigns and partnerships that are interested in passing information to the public or select group in order to change the attitude in the community aimed at addressing teenage pregnancies.

Catechism training: The teachings offered to children and new church members in order for them to be acquainted with knowledge of God and church doctrines. This was used in the bias of addressing teenage pregnancies.

Church leadership: The people who are entrusted to serve others and spearhead programs, services and liturgical order in a church. In this study church leaders entailed the pastors, the church chairpersons, catechists and youth patrons from each church participating in the study.

Pastoral programs: These are programs that focus on the theory and principles of pastoral care and prepare clergy and other church leaders to provide non-clinical pastoral counseling to (in this study) Teenagers on addressing teenage pregnancy.

Pastoral role: Spiritual guidance and church programs that assist in entrenching morality and godliness among church members particularly teenagers in addressing teenage pregnancies.

Teens: This term is used in the study to mean children who are aged between 13-19 years of age

Teenage pregnancy: This is the pregnancy acquired by a girl below 19 years of age.

Teenage pregnancy prevalence: This was used to show/define how widespread teenage pregnancy was.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter involved reviewing of the available literature on the role of the church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls. It entailed review of the work done in Kenya and other parts of the world on the role played by the church in addressing teenage pregnancy. The study reviewed teenage pregnancy and the roles played by the church leadership which include: pastoral role, advocacy role, and catechism training.

This chapter provided theoretical framework. This entailed presentation of the research theory that was used in order to assist in coming up with independent variables and how they would be able to influence the dependent variables. It also included the conceptual framework. This showed the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables.

2.1 Teenage pregnancy

Worku et al. (2021) note that teenage pregnancy affects both developed and developing countries. The global prevalence is recorded as at 25% where Africa has a prevalence of 18% where 19.3% is recorded in Sub-Saharan Africa. Eastern Africa carries the highest prevalence at 21.5%. Out of this high prevalence it is recorded that approximately 3.9 million girls execute unsafe abortions. These abortions lead to high maternal deaths (Worku et al., 2021).

The study on determinants of adolescent pregnancy in Africa published by Kassa et al. (2018) revealed that the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Africa is at 18.8%. East Africa has the highest prevalence with 21% while North Africa has lowest prevalence at 9.2%. The causative factors raised were: rural residence, ever married, not attending school, no maternal education, no father's education, and parents not communicating with adolescents about sexual and productive health (Kassa et al., 2021; Ahinkorah et al., 2021).

Hatibu et al. (2018) presents prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Ethiopia as 28.6%. Factors involved were: increase in age, non-use of contraception and marital status of the parents. The findings of Hatibu et al. (2018) revealed some similarities in prevalence with other studies done in; Turkey (29%), Jordan 25%), Sudan (31%) and Kenya (31%). The similarity is explained by related, social-demographics, culture and individual adolescent characteristics.

Worku et al. (2021) refers teenage pregnancy as a common health problem in East Africa. They state that the common factors leading to it are: age, utilization of contraceptives, marital status, working status, household, wealth status, community-level of using contraceptives, age at which sex is initialized, exposure to media, literacy level and how one is related to the head of the family. Ahinkorah (2021) gives an additional list of factors which include knowledge on contraception and unmet need for contraception.

Kenya has reported many cases of teenage pregnancy. 1 out of 5 girls between 15-19 years of age (majorly the high school age) is either pregnant or a mother (Kenya Data and Health Survey, 2014). Out of teenage pregnancies 13,000 teenage girls are reported to have dropped out of school due to pregnancy and pregnancy-related challenges (KDHS,

2014). Muturi (2021) reported this as detrimental on the education, health and opportunities of a girl child. She regards this as a failure of a whole society. Global child report applauds Kenya for leading the East Africa in social protection aspects but rates it very poorly on prevention of teenage pregnancy, HIV/Aids infection and sexual abuse. Muturi (2021) explaining the reason of high prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Kenya opines that society is moving away from the traditional safe discussion about sex. She also looks at poverty as one of the reasons for high prevalence in teenage pregnancy.

2.2 Pastoral role of church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancy

Pastoral care is one of the commonest programs of the church leaders. According to Wright et al. (2020), all pastors look at pastoral activities as important/key in addressing teenage pregnancy. This was noted in the responses in a study done in the black church in USA on pastors' perceptions on health status of black community. Pastors noted that pastoral care should be done inclusively to teens, teens' parents and church general congregation. However, the study by Wright et al. (2020) identified two major obstacles including parents' resistance and discomfort in discussing such issues as use of condoms. This notwithstanding, Ford (2022) looks at the church leaders as key players in guiding teenagers on the ways to avoid unplanned teenage pregnancies.

Gross et al. (2018) emphasizes on the importance of pastoral approach to prevention of teenage pregnancy by noting that women are the cornerstone of the black church. In the view of Nangambi (2014) one of the major causes of high prevalence of teenage pregnancy is the lack of pastoral leadership. Nangambi (2014) emphasized on the church's role to take leadership in protecting the cultural activities that promote delayed teenager's first sexual encounter.

Pastoral care according to Wright et al. (2019) is very important in addressing teenage pregnancy. They opine that pastoral role is very influential in the society. Wright (2019) looks at pastor as a provider of emotional support to mitigate the hardship that comes across. Through pastoral care, church leadership has a role to influence teachers, parents and schooling systems in order to assist teenage girls to concentrate on entering career path (Wright et al., 2019). In his pastoral letter, the archbishop of Uganda instructed the church leadership to not just argue with each other on the high prevalence of teenage pregnancy. He insisted on the church leadership to help teenagers understand their sexuality and how to overcome peer pressure. He instructs church leaders not to look at the teenage pregnancy as anyone else's problem but "our problem (Ntagali, 2019). In the bid to include all, the male teenagers should also be involved. They need to realize that teenage pregnancy also affects them as members of the community hence need for their involvement in the programs set by the Church leadership (Vargas, 2017).

Church leaders' keen intervention in empowering parents of the teenagers in handling their growing children need to be emphasized in the effort to address teenage pregnancies. Some parents may not be aware of how to handle their teenage girls particularly those in high school. Parents in the black church in the USA supported pastoral intervention in addressing teenage pregnancy (Wright et al., 2019). In this study, some parents felt that sexuality information to the teens should have no boundaries. Others saw parent-teenagers' communication as important. They all felt that pastors and youth directors should give sexual education to the youths. They also felt that church should come up with teen's pregnancy prevention programs. Mbabu (2005) in this regard feels that teenage counseling programs are an essential tool for the church leadership to

adopt. This is one of the routes when navigated well could assist teenagers to deal with most of situations and feelings that lead to teenage pregnancies.

Apart from parental ignorance/negligence, peer pressure is a key influencer of teenage sexual irresponsibility which leads to teenage pregnancy among high school girls. Cortes (2021) presents the responsibility of faith leaders in countering this irresponsibility. He presents a need for the pastors to help the young generation in navigating peer pressure and other societal influence that lead to sexual behavior attracting teenage pregnancies among school girls. Cortes (2021) looks at church leaders as shepherds who are at a powerful position to help young generation of teenagers to move in the right direction in their lives. He poses a challenge to the church leaders to act as educators, mentors and guides to the children. This in return will help the teens to build healthy relationships and at the same time preserve their sexual purity as well as being safe from sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies (Wilkins et al., 2022).

Makokha et al. (2020) are of the opinion that church is expected to draw her programs in a way that they will be relevant in molding a society that is morally upright. They opine that the silence of the church on sensitive matters in the society like matters reproductive health leads to failure of the society to get direction. Chemel (2022) states that the majority of today's Christians are said to have come to know Christ in their formative (teenage) years. He challenges the church to be proactive and intentional in providing guidance and role model for the teenagers to be focused in their strife for self-identification and identifying their value and purpose in life. Makokha et al. (2020) reveals the importance of the teaching/instructional role of the church in ensuring that people know what it means to fear and honor God in fulfillment of Proverbs 17 which

says “the fear of the Lord is beginning of wisdom.” On his part Moberg believes that religion plays a very key role in healing the society from crime and delinquency. The major cause of teenage pregnancy is irresponsible sex behavior which is mostly caused by prevalence of delinquent behavior. Makokha et al. (2020) looks at the church as called to nurture, disciple and equip her members. This includes giving information, developing and transforming people in order for them to improve on their position in the society. Chemel (2022) challenges the church not to wait for government and NGOs to provide solution to young people’s problems. All solutions should be Christ centered. If the church leaders manage to present to the teenagers Christ-centered workable solutions to their daily challenges of life, teenage pregnancies will be a thing of the past.

Diffey (2015) gives insight on the importance of instructions given in the church. He notes the emphasis of instruction in the bible quoting proverbs chapter one as a good example of many verses in the Bible on instructions. Emphasis is laid on chapter 1:2-7. Verse 7 ends with the words: “Fools despise wisdom and instructions,” meaning that instructions are such important tool to distinguish between the wise and the foolish. This is why the church leaders need to play an instructional/teaching role in order to help address teenage pregnancy in their pastoral duty. St. Paul as the advocate of instructions directs Timothy to develop love that emanates from a clean heart, a good conscience and non-hypocritical faith (1Tim. 1:5). Bellefeuille (2018) records the ministries that God calls the church to exercise. These are: witness, service, worship, and preaching and teachings ministry. Pastoral role is not just directed towards teenagers but also their parents. Nangambi (2014) opines that the church leaders have a role in encouraging parents to openly discuss sex and morality issues with their children. Nangambi (2014)

says that parental positive and frequent talks with their children results to postponement of the first sex encounter among the children (teens).

Miriti et al. (2021) shows the importance of schools and churches getting involved with instructional and pastoral services by offering programs like sex education, contraception and abortion. Currently schools are not willing to continue due to cost implication. Churches too can't preach on abortion and contraception due to conventional debates surrounding the matter. The church cannot leave its traditional belief which is against the vices.

Nangambi (2014) gives guidance on how the church can be involved in pastoral role in the school setting. Being the home for many, and following the example of Christ who always associated himself with the poor they should demonstrate that the teenagers also have a special place in the heart of Jesus. Miriti (2021) opines that church leaders can use their personal experiences in discerning God's intention for human sexuality and involve the teenagers in the drafting of the curriculum. Pastoral role of the church leaders should be intended to help the teenagers to define themselves by identifying their personal worth (Nangambi, 2014). In extension, Aventin (2020) indicates the importance of involving parents of the teenagers in perfecting instructions. Parents should be instructed to have time with their children and talk about sex and morality. A family that has frequent communication about human sexuality leads to postponed sex experience in their children. This means if parents talk to their children openly/freely about sex they will address issues causing teenage pregnancy. While Genesis 2, 4 and 5 reveals that sexuality is a God given gift, children need to be taught what their church tradition says about sex. The study also reveals the importance of using health professionals/educators in

performing the church's instructional role among the teenagers. These will be having the professional advice and young people may be freer with them than they may be with their regular church leaders.

In the research done by Onserio (2017) on the influence of catholic theology of sexuality on teenage girls in Njoro deanery Nakuru County, instructional and pastoral role of the church leaders can be executed through four different platforms: these include: seminars and workshops, home instruction, Pulpit instructions; pastoral program instructions and teaching. Kumalo (2015) quoted Rev. Trevor Hudson as the spoken in part Elizabeth MCSA conference in 2001, where he said that Christians (our people in the Church) had lots of hunger for food to feed and nurture their faith and lives. The church is not giving this food so they tend to go looking for it. They feed on whatever they find even if it ends up destroying them. In a research done by Wright (2019) on the parents' beliefs of the church's role in teen pregnancy prevention, parents believed that church pastors, youth pastors and youth directors/leaders are supposed to be disseminating sexual health information to teenagers.

2.3 Catechism training and addressing teenage pregnancy

Catechism according to Delatorre (2017), is the means to create a culture of the church doctrine in the minds of the catechumen. This kind of training helps the new church members and the children to know the church doctrine and create a Christian culture that would help them to make informed decisions on life issues. Catechism is such an important tool in passing faith from one generation to the other (Burke, 2017). According to Chilongozi (2017), any development and program is influenced by culture. If the church Leadership takes catechism program seriously, children will grow knowing their

church's stand on premarital sex/pregnancies. This will help them to make informed choices on matters sexual responsibility. This will in return delay their sexual activity and possibility for teenage pregnancy. Nangambi (2014) opine that it is the role of the church leaders to teach the traditions of the church about sex to the teenagers. He says that children who are aware of their church's traditions on sex, love, marriage, childbearing and teenage pregnancy in particular will postpone their sexual activities. This postponement reduces the chances of getting involved in teenage pregnancy.

Therefore, catechism is capable of creating a culture that can address teenage pregnancy among school girls. Chilongozi (2017) cites Samuel and Sudgen (1987) and Kanyoro (2002) who present culture as God-given and a means to define and identify any given community. One of the roles of catechism class (training) is to create religiosity among young believers' and newly converted adults. Whitehead et al. (2001) citing Wilcox et al's study on adolescent's religiosity and sexual behavior state that there is support for the fact that religiosity leads to delayed sexual activities among the teens. The study however found out that religious teens that become sexually active are not likely to use contraceptives. Manlove et al. (2019) says that parents' religiosity is also one of the factors that delay sexual encounter among teens. This is brought about by engagement in family religious activities on daily basis. However, it is not proven to translate to improved use of contraceptives by teens who engage in sex.

Onserio (2009) cites the need for catechism as a way to instruct teenagers on how to avoid teenage pregnancies. He also cites the need for seminars, workshops and conferences in the effort to teach sexuality to the teens in order to avert teenage pregnancies. Ojiambo (2021) notes that there is a challenge on the fact that teachers are

not adequately ready/trained to handle these programs. The program he notes needs lots of personal awareness and sensitivity in both handling and delivery. Unfortunately, there is no formal training given to them. This is where the church needs to get in order to sensitize the teachers on handling the training of the teens on how to handle their sexuality. This will guide them to avoid being victims of teenage pregnancies which will definitely improve the quality of their lives.

Tomko (1993) in his circular “guide for catechists” cites that catechists are very important evangelization agents who are very sensitive and favorable in influencing Christian message. He places catechists at a very key position which is irreplaceable. He actually calls them “the pride of the mission church”. Martin Luther placed a lot of emphasis on catechism noting that the unwillingness of a church to study catechism equals to denying Christ. These words were echoed by another reformist who said that the church of God needs catechism in order for it to be preserved (Burke, 2017).

Including sexual education and sexual health education in the catechism curriculum is noted as one of the ways the church leadership can avert teenage pregnancies. Onserio (2017) notes how important it is to teach the beliefs and traditions of the church to the children (teenagers) in order for them to build their culture around this tradition. Land (2022) notes the Church beliefs that sex is ordained for a husband and wife. Obiako (2021) notes the importance of the church training the young people on sex responsibility and how to avoid teenage pregnancies. Land (2022) look at marriage as the institution where sex is allowed presenting it as an institution created by God himself. They also note the fact that Jesus used marriage to signify his relationship with the church. This makes it sacramental. Onserio (2017) quoted Lawler et al. (1996) who say Thomas

Aquinas, Jerome, St. Augustine of Hippo and other theologians of medieval period supported properly ordered sexuality and education for children. They were against homosexuality, premarital sex and other deviant sexual activities. Literature in Armstrong (2018)'s words present catholic church as a church that teaches about sex to their children insisting on sex for procreation, and companionship within marriage covenant. ASPE (2014) reported that preventing teen pregnancy needs building of a culture that induces values, personal standards of behavior, power, parent- child relationships, feelings and beliefs. What Christians/religious communities teach, pray about and communicates matters a lot in the choices made by teenagers about their sexuality citing a national survey of family growth (1995) 48% of girls aged 15-19 years were virgin. Asked why they did not engage in sexual activities 50% of them gave their reason as to keep their religious morality (NCHS, 1995). This means that if the church leadership implanted the church doctrine in the teenagers and children through catechism classes, the issue of teenage pregnancy will be addressed among high school girls in Tigania Central. The challenge in this is lack of catechism programs in especially the Pentecostal churches. Rebecca (2008) states that most of Pentecostal churches neither have catechism materials or program in place.

2.4 Advocacy role of church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancy

Bormet et al. (2021) in their article "faith-based advocacy for family planning works," look at the church (faith-based organizations) as very well placed in advocacy against teenage pregnancy. They present four points in showing how religion/faith-based organization (where church belongs) is important in the advocacy against teenage pregnancy. Firstly, they state the support of the religious organization on timing and

spacing of children/pregnancies. Secondly, they state the evidence that religious leaders are important in shaping policy and reaching community in support of family planning. Thirdly they mention the willingness of religious organizations' leaders' to participate in advocacy but are limited by the low priority given to them by the governments, donors and Non-Governmental organizations in supporting them financially in training and commodity support which leads to lack of services to the poor population. Fourthly, faith leaders in association with the Government and donors help in developing a church position on family planning.

Ooko (2022) reveals how the Church leaders are well placed in becoming the voice of the voiceless girls in the community by becoming the advocates to the victims of teenage pregnancy and offering counseling to the victims and their parents. Bormet et al. (2021) look at faith as a big contributor of the societal belief on healthcare and behavior; Church leaders in this regard are a good influence in advocating for positive behavior that could be useful in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls. Finley et al. (2018) decry the loose ends in engaging key stakeholders in addressing teenage pregnancy. They cite involvement of key policy makers like; leaders in business, education, health, human service sectors, parents in actualization of role of advocacy role.

Advocacy of the church leadership against teenage pregnancy can be seen in the role played by Catholic Church in her association with family planning association in Kenya (FPAK). Karueru (1996) note that involvement of the Church in the agreement between the Catholic Church and F.P.A.K on the problems of youth in regard to reproductive health and also their disagreement on how they can be solved. These they agree are major causes of school dropout rate, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, drug

abuse and family breakdown. Aineah and Atamanke (2021) present an advocacy project conducted by Catholic Sisters that was geared towards equipping teachers with skills to address teenage pregnancies. They observe that teachers have a duty to observe the girls who enter puberty stage before others for psychological guidance. Sister Regina Nthenya states that the organization (AOSK) that she coordinates across 25 dioceses in Kenya is working in responses to reported high prevalence in teenage pregnancies in Kenya and increased gender-based violence (Aineah & Atamanke, 2021). Oyedele (2014) also brings the importance of actively involving the community in the united fight against teenage pregnancy. This can be done by the church initiating programs that are not only operational within the walls of the church but looking at the whole community as a crucial stake holder. Schools being one of the largest communities where most of the teenage girls spend most of their time, the church leaders need to corroborate with them to come up with programs that would help them avoid being involved in teenage pregnancy (Torres et al., 2017).

2.5 Research gap

The researcher consulted a number of previous literatures in relation to the role of church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancy in different places in the world. Studies done by Hatibu et al. (2018), Worku et al. (2021), Ahinkorah et al (2020) among others have brought about the factors that lead to prevalence of teenage pregnancy. They are only based with the factors causing prevalence and rate of prevalence. Another study done by Whitehead et al. (2021) has dealt with the role played by religious and faith communities in general and not specifically the Church leaders. Onserio (2017) study deals with the influence of Catholic Church (only) to sexuality theology. Nabugoomu et al. (2020) study

is about a general approach in reducing teenage pregnancy. Nangambi (2014) study investigates on the role of the church in assisting schools to prevent teenage pregnancy.

Hardly any literature exists on the role church leadership play in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls and more particularly in Tigania Central Meru County. This qualified this study.

2.6 Theoretical framework

This study investigated the role of church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County. The researcher chose Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura and Max Weber's social action theory to guide the research study. The theory indicates that behavior is learnt through observation from others.

2.6.1 Social Learning Theory

The researcher chose to use the Albert Bandura's (1925-2021) Social Learning Theory. Albert Bandura founded this theory in 1960's and published it officially for use in 1977 (McLeod, 2023). The theory indicates that behavior is learnt through observation from others. Those from whom the behavior is learnt are known as the models. The theory states that children are more likely to learn behavior from those who are perceived to be similar to them. It also states that reinforcement and punishment directed towards the child by people in relation to the behavior performed can either encourage or discourage the child to continue performing the behavior.

Social Learning Theory suggests that learning happens through observation, motivation, attitude and emotions. People learn a behavior by observing the consequences of other

people's behavior (Cherry, 2022). The Social Learning Theory bridges between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories hence including attention, memory, and motivational processes (Sutton, 2021) Albert Bandura gives four stages of behavior forming though social learning theory which are attention, retention, reproduction and motivation (Sutton, 2021).

2.6.1.1 Significance of Social Learning Theory to the study

This theory is appropriate for this study. Teenage girls can learn the effects of teenage pregnancy by observing the lives of the adults who happen to have been victims of teenage pregnancies during their teenage life. They can also be guided to observe the successful lives and families of those who did not fall to the trap. The church leaders in the view of this theory should be looked as the models by the teenagers. They should also help the parents of the teenagers to become models for their teenage daughters. For the leaders to be the models of the teenage girls, they need to bridge the gap between them and the teenagers by coming up with teens-friendly programs in the church. Catechism program can be of great importance in the young children so that as they approach teenage they will have attained the disciplines and doctrines of the church in regard to teenage pregnancies and sexuality. At this point the attention of the children can be directed as they approach their teenage.

Church leaders can also create attention on the teenage girls through advocacy against teenage pregnancy and coming up with church programs tailor-made for the teenagers that would create awareness of teenage pregnancy among teenage girls. Pastoral care can also be used in order to take care of any challenges teenagers are going through. These challenges can be such like, peer pressure, familial challenges like poverty, sexual abuse,

and non-cooperative parents among others. This will encourage the teenagers to choose to adopt the most acceptable behavior by the church leadership rather than otherwise. The church leaders can choose the right procedure to encourage the teenage girls to avoid teenage sexual activities which causes teenage pregnancies. This can be done through appropriate reinforcement by applauding those who remain un-pregnant and also empathetically encouraging those who become pregnant to continue with education and discouraging them from repeating the mistake. They can also train the parents on how to become models to their teenage girls.

2.6.2 Max Weber's social action theory

Social Action Theory was founded by Max Weber in 1936. It was meant to inform social scientists about both the intent and context of human action (Nickerson, 2024). Weber's social action theory states that all human actions, or social actions, are informed by the unique experiences, desires, and contexts that every human interacts with. There is no guarantee that a singular social action will be taken by all humans, or by one human over and over again, even in a similar setting (Conklin, 2023). Human beings, according to Weber, adjust their activities in response to social settings and the influence that their actions have over other people's behaviors.

Therefore, Weber defines social action as a catalyst for social actors and social interaction to attain a specific goal. For Max Weber, as noted by (Avendaño, 2023) social action explains the behaviors, effects and consequences of human behavior and how this behavior can influence the behavior of other people and become a social movement, where it is no longer an isolated behavior, but part of a whole (society). According to

Max Weber, social action can trigger means and ends for social actors and social interaction who want to achieve something specific.

Conklin (2023) looks into four influences of social action theory. These are;

People must consider the actions and presence of others contextually in the way they consider their own, intention of the people, the subject's activity must be symbolic in nature and people's actions in social situations are impacted by their perceptions of the importance of others' actions and then their own.

2.6.2.1 Significance of the theory

This theory is very much applicable in this study. This is a theory that can be used to influence the actions of the high school teenagers and create a change of attitude towards teenage sex which causes teenage pregnancy. The Church leadership can be intentional to create an environment and information that would empower the teenage girls to make informed choices. This will create a conducive environment for the teenage high school girls to shun teenage pregnancy. The fact that human beings adjust their activities in response to social settings, the church leadership through their pastoral role, catechism training and advocacy can create a social setting that can discourage sexual activities among high school teenagers hence delaying their chances for teenage pregnancy. With strong and sustainable programs by the church leadership, there is a possibility for the creation of such a sustainable human behavior that can influence the behavior of other people and become a social movement, where it is no longer an isolated behavior. When this culture is created among the teenage girls, it will be a cycle that will eventually stamp out the culture of teenage pregnancy. The theory also gives room to the subjects (teenage girls) to create their perception on teenage pregnancy by evaluating the

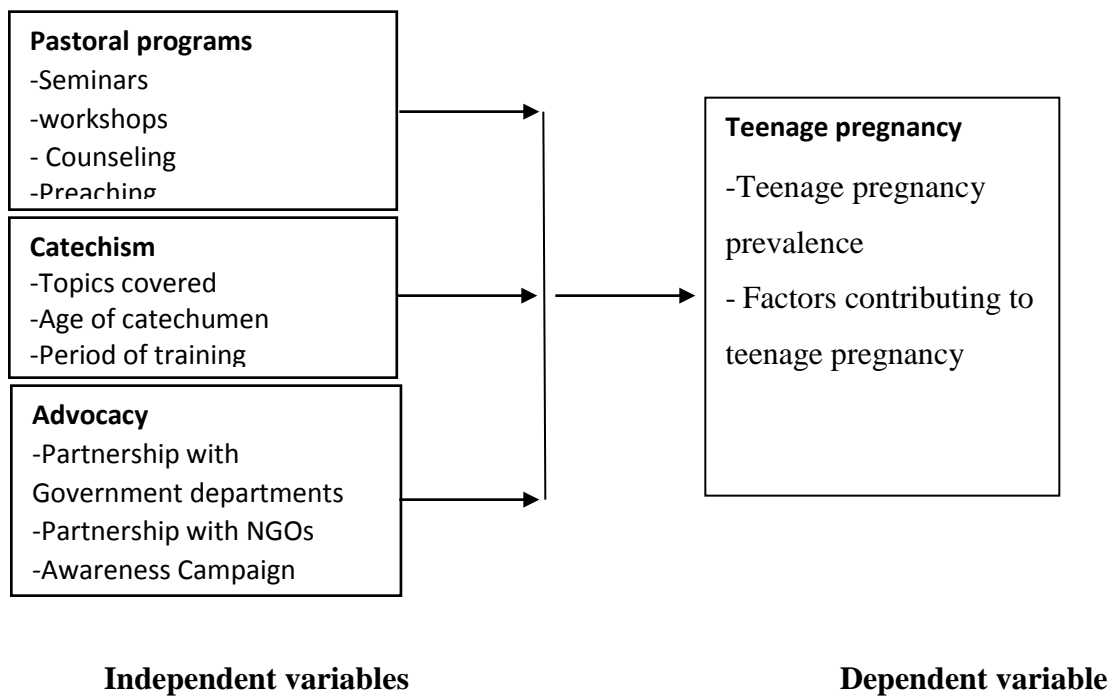
importance of others' actions and then their own. This makes them not only the subject of the anticipated change but also as important stakeholders on the same.

2.7 Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework shows the relationship between independent and dependent variables (Orodho, 2004). In this research study, conceptual framework showed the relationship of the independent variables which are the role played by the church leaders on addressing teenage pregnancies among the same. The conceptual framework below revealed the relationship between dependent variable which was teenage pregnancy and the independent variables which were pastoral role, catechism role and the advocacy role of church leaders. The relationship between the variables is as depicted in figure 2.1:

Fig 2. I

Conceptual framework



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used in the study. It identified the location of study. It presents the research design and methods, gave the target population and sampling technique which included tools used to collect data and methods and techniques for analysing data. It finally presented the ethical considerations in conducting the study.

3.1 Research Design

Kothari (2004) defines research design as a conceptual structure which research is conducted. It involves collection, measurements and analyzing of data. In choosing the research design to be used, the researcher needed to put into consideration a design that would be efficient and yield maximum required information. It also was to be effective with minimal expenditure of time, money and effort. This study used descriptive survey design. This design involved gathering of fact, through administration of questionnaire to a sampled group of church leaders and high school girls. It described the opinions and the feelings of the respondents on the role of the church leadership in averting teenage pregnancies among high school girls without influencing it (Brink et al., 2006).

This design enabled the researcher to describe events, organize, tabulate and depict data collected. The study embraced mixed approach whereby data was collected using quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Mixed approach gave the researcher a room to include numerical data and narratives in one study (Roulston, 2015). This allowed research results generalization for future studies (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

3.2 Location of study

The study was done in Tigania Central Sub County. Tigania Central Sub County is located in Tigania East constituency in Meru County. It is among the 11 administrative sub counties in Meru County. It is one of the two Sub Counties that make Tigania East Constituency, Tigania East and Tigania Central Sub Counties. According to the 2019 national census, Tigania Central had a total population of 104,730 people (Kenya Census Data, 2020). In 2022, out of 34808 pregnancies reported in Meru County, 10561(30%) were teenage pregnancies (Marete, 2023). According to Mutembei (2024), Tigania Central Sub County was one of the most affected with 41 % of the affected teenagers. This high prevalence rate justified the choice of the study locale.

3.3 Target population

Kimalu and Marimba (2014) quoting Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) present population as the “entire group of individuals or objects bearing common observable characteristics”. In this study, target population included church leaders from NCKK member churches in Tigania Central as listed on table 3.1. These church leaders consisted of 52 pastors, 76 church chairpersons, 54 catechists and 76 youth patrons a total of 258 church leaders. This information was gotten from individual churches’ membership lists. These churches were selected because they have a clear leadership structure. They are also known to be involved in religio-social forums in advocacy on human right, gender-based violence, education and health issues including discouraging early pregnancy and irresponsible sexual behavior all together.

Table 3.1*Target population of the church leaders both clergy and laity*

Church	Pastors	Chairpersons	Catechists	Youth patrons	Total
MCK	12	30	30	30	102
ACK	1	3	3	3	10
AIPCA	10	10	10	10	40
FGCK	7	7	7	7	21
EAPC	15	15	15	15	45
AIC	5	5	5	5	20
PCEA	2	6	6	6	20
TOTAL	52	76	54	76	258

Table 3.1 presents the population of the Church leadership of the NCCK member churches within Tigania Central sub County of Meru County. It involves 102 leaders from MCK, 10 leaders from ACK, 40 leaders from AIPCA, 21 from FGCK, 45 from EAPC, 20 from AIC and 20 from PCEA this totals to 258 leaders in total.

Table 3.2

Church	Number of teenage high school girls
MCK	200
ACK	10
AIPCA	95
FGCK	80
EAPC	95
AIC	10
PCEA	10
TOTAL	500

Target population of the teenage high school girls

Table 3.2 presents the population of the high school teenage girls drawn from the NCCK member churches within Tigania Central sub County of Meru County. It involves 200 girls from MCK, 10 from ACK, 95 from AIPCA, 80 from FGCK, 95 from EAPC, 10 from AIC and 10 from PCEA this totals to 500 teenage high school girls in total.

3.4 Sample size and sampling technique

According to Mohajan (2018) and Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a sample is a representative number used in a study representing the whole target population. The sample picked to represent the population need to give a cross-section representation in order to pick the possible characteristics, of the whole population (Gay, 1996). According to Khan (2020) and Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), sample size of between 20-30% of the population is well representative hence highly recommended.

This study purposively selected a sample of 30% from all the respondents. This meant 16 Pastors, 23 chairpersons, 15 catechists, and 23 youth patrons from the identified churches totaling to 77 church leaders. It also purposively sampled 50 high school teenage girls from the identified churches. The total sample size was 127 respondents. Table 3.3 and 3.4 show distribution of the sample size in both the church leadership and teenage high school girls respectively.

Table 3.3

Leaders	Total population	Sample (%)	Sample size
Pastors	52	30	16
Chairpersons	76	30	23
Catechists	54	30	15
Youth patrons	76	30	23
TOTAL	258	30	77

Sample size of church leaders

Table 3.3 represented the distribution of the sample size of the Church leadership. The table revealed that the respondents in the study included 16 pastors, 23 chairpersons, 15 catechists and 23 youth patrons. This was a total of 77 respondents from the Church leadership.

Table 3.4

Leaders	Total population	Sample (%)	Sample size
MCK	200	10	20
ACK	10	10	1
AIPCA	95	10	10
FGCK	80	10	8
EAPC	95	10	9
AIC	10	10	1
PCEA	10	10	1
TOTAL	500	10	50

Sample size of high school teenage girls from different Churches involved

Table 3.4 represented the sample size derived from the teenage high school girls from the Churches from Tigania Central. 20 from MCK, 1 from ACK, 10 from AIPCA, 8 from FGCK, 9 from EAPC, 1 from AIC and 1 from PCEA this totals to 50 teenage high school girls in total.

3.5 Research instruments

Data collection instrument are ways through which data is collected from the sampled respondents (Kothari, 2004). The choice of instrument depends on the objectives of the study because some studies may require use of only one instrument of collecting data

while others require use of different instruments (Gay et al., 2006). This study used both self-administered questionnaires and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) as the tools to collect data.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

In this study questionnaires were used to obtain data on the role of church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central Sub County. The questionnaire was constructed in relation to the three objectives. They were grouped in five sections; demographic data as section A, section B tested the dependent variable which was teenage pregnancy and sections C, D, and E were composed of open-ended questions to cover the study objectives. The researcher used this method to collect data from the sampled church leaders. The reason for using questionnaires was to enhance simplicity of collecting data within a short time. Mombo and Tromp (2006) identify questionnaire as an instrument capable of gathering data from a large sample saving time and upholding confidentiality. It also discourages researcher's bias. In this case data was assigned numerical value. All questions were open ended. Questions from section B to E were on a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 whereby 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Do not know, 4 = Agree and 5 = strongly agree.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions

According to Stewart et al. (2007) Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was formerly known as focused interview. It involve bringing people from similar background and experiences for a discussion where they are asked questions in a specific topic FGDs were used to collect qualitative data from teenage high school girls in the identified

churches. The FGDs were organized in groups of up to ten participants at a time. This translated to five FGDs in total. The FGDs were coded as FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4 and FGD 5. The findings from the FGDs gave an in-depth understanding of the girls' perception of the church leadership role in helping high school girls to refrain from getting pregnant.

3.6 Pretesting of research instruments

According to Mitchell and Jolley (2012), in order to do a quality, and efficient study a researcher needed to conduct a pre-test. Pre-testing of instruments on a different sample reduced shortcomings in conducting proposed research. According to Bryman (2012), pretesting assured the effectiveness of research instruments. It helped the researcher to remove ambiguity in questions and helped in determining whether the questions were understood by respondents (David & Sutton, 2011). This study was supposed to check on the logistics and information before engaging with the larger study. The pre-test on the instruments would bring out the weaknesses of the design of the proposed study which needed to be addressed before the major study was carried out. Pretesting in this case was done in Buuri East Sub County. Buuri East Sub County had the same characteristics with Tigania Central Meru County in terms of geographic, social and demographic aspects. It involved two randomly selected churches. These were one MCK church and one AIPCA church. The results of the pretest revealed the important role the Church leadership played in addressing teenage pregnancy. The pretest also helped in improving the validity and reliability of the instruments. Table 3.5 shows the pilot study;

Table 3.5

Pretesting of the instruments

Church	No. of leaders	No. of teenage girls	Total
MCK	3	4	7
AIPCA	3	4	7
TOTAL	6	8	14

3.6.1 Validity of instruments

Validity of research results meant that the results were accurate and meaningful. This meant that the results acquired from the data represented the situation that was under study (Kathuri & Pals, 1993). Taherdoost (2020) as cited by Lewis et al. (1995) and Boudreau et al. (2001) says that validity involves testing if the survey instruments contain all the required items. It also removes the items that are not necessary in a particular study hence determining research findings/results (Denzin & Lincoln, 2020).

The study used both construct validity and content validity. Construct validity checked if the test was measuring the concept it was intended to measure while the content validity checked whether the test was fully representative of what it aimed to measure (Salkind, 2010). To ensure construct validity, the study questions were cross checked to ensure they were reflective of the study variables while content validity was checked by ensuring the questions covered the study objectives exhaustively.

3.6.2 Reliability of the instruments

Reliability according to Middleton (2019), is the measure of consistency. This is to say that if a repeat test was done the same result would be attained. Reliability is a test of dependability of data collected using the instruments. This study used test - retest

reliability. Test-retest reliability according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and Kombo (2006), means a measure of reliability obtained by administering the same test twice over a period of time to a group of individuals. The scores from Time 1 and Time 2 then correlated in order to evaluate the test for stability over time. Test-retest technique was used to measure reliability. Eight questions were given to the five respondents and after one month, the same group of people were given the same questions. The two set of answers were taken and then analyzed using Cronbach's alpha. The correlation between the first set of questions and the second set of questions should give a Cronbach's coefficient value of 0.7. This indicated the dependability of the instrument.

3.7 Data collection procedures

This is the process through which data is collected systematically in a reliable way in order that if the procedure was repeated the same results would be obtained. In this study, the researcher personally administered questionnaires and FGDs. He presented questionnaires to the respondents. The filled questionnaires were collected from the Church leaders immediately after filling them. He arranged with the Church pastors and chairpersons on the dates and time he would conduct the FGDs with the teenage high school girls at the Church grounds. Focus Group Discussions were conducted by the researcher and recorded by use of phone.

3.8 Methods of data analysis and presentation

According to Islam (2020), data analysis is the process of manipulating, categorizing and interpreting the summarized data for the purpose of get answer to the research questions. It entails simplifying complex information into simpler information to be clarified in

smaller elements. Firstly, the researcher did data planning by checking if all questionnaires were filled correctly. He then coded and cleaned them.

The quantitative data from the church leaders on addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls were analyzed using descriptive statistics like percentages, means, and standard deviations. The qualitative data obtained through open ended questions and Focus Group Discussions were analyzed thematically. The quantitative findings were presented using frequency, distribution tables and charts while the qualitative findings were presented in verbatim.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are related to the principles and values to be upheld while the research is on progress. To fulfill ethical requirements, the relevant research permits were obtained. These included permits from Kenya Methodist University and NACOSTI in order to be allowed to collect data. To avoid research bias in conducting this research, the researcher selected respondents randomly. He did not pick himself as one of the respondents. The researcher also used both the questionnaires and FGDs as data collection tools.

The participants were informed on the purpose of the study via a cover letter. The respondents' right of participation or not were made known to them. Their participation was within their consent. An assurance that the information obtained from them was for research purpose only was given. Confidentiality of the information availed by the respondents was also assured. As way of assuring respondents on the privacy, they were discouraged from including their names or any other identifier marks in the

questionnaires. All possible identifiers in the information shared by respondents were removed hence assurance of privacy of information that was provided. The respondents were also required to fill the questionnaires at their convenient time but within the time limit of the study. All sources used in this research were referenced appropriately to avoid any kind of plagiarism.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the Study findings on role of church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County.

This has been done in accordance to the objectives of the study. The objectives of the study were:

- i) To assess the pastoral role of church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County.
- ii) To establish the role of catechism training (class) by church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County.
- iii) To examine the church leadership's advocacy role in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central Meru County.

4.1 Results on Response Rate

Out of the 77 questionnaires administered to church leaders in Tigania Central, Meru County. 70 (90%) were correctly filled and returned. Out of the 50 respondents expected for FGDs, 40(80%) of them turned out and participated. The study therefore, had an overall response rate of 86.6%. Response rate obtained in the study was excellent. A response rate of 50% should be adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% good and a response rate of 70% and over excellent (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). Table 4.1 shows the response rate of the FGDs.

Table 4.1*Response Rate*

Tools	Expected response	Turned up	Percentage
Questionnaire	77	70	90.9%
FGDs	50	40	80%
TOTAL	127	110	86.6%

This response rate of 86.6% was good. Babbie and Mouton (2001) asserts that a response rates of 60% and 70% are classified as good and very good; while, a study which establishes a response rate of 50% is still adequate for carrying out data analysis.

4.2: Results on Reliability Tests

Before proceeding to analyze the coded data, the study assessed its reliability. This was achieved by computing Cronbach alpha values comprising of the correlation coefficients of independent and dependent variables. The results showing the Cronbach alpha values obtained were displayed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2*Reliability results of study variables*

Main variables of the study (N = 70)	Cronbach's Alpha
Pastoral role (X1)	0.814
Church leadership's advocacy role (X2)	0.829
Church catechism training role (X3)	0.866
Teenage pregnancy (Y)	0.851

From Table 4.2, the presented results indicate that the Cronbach's values for the four variables were greater than 0.7, ($\alpha > 0.700$). The interpretation accorded to this finding implies that it is reliable. This interpretation is anchored by the reiterations of Bryman

and Bell (2011), who submitted that, data with a Cronbach's alpha values greater than .700 is reliable enough, hence, useful in analysis.

4.3 Background Characteristics of Respondents

The study sought the background characteristics of Church leaders. Some of the background features of participants included; gender, educational qualification levels attained, the leadership position and length of service. The gender feature was used to determine the representation of divergent views from both gender. With the presence of gender inclusivity the views of Church leaders was considered well advised. Education qualifications were sought because the researcher wanted to be sure of Church leaders' levels of understanding the questions and offering informed responses. The leadership positions held by the church leaders was sought in order to make sure that the respondents had positions that helped them to interact with the policies and programs that interact with teenage girls. The length of service was sought to gauge if the respondent had enough time to understand their roles in leadership.

4.3.1 Gender Characteristics of Church Leaders

The gender distribution of Church leaders was established. The findings were as presented in figure 4.1

Figure 4.1

Respondents' Gender

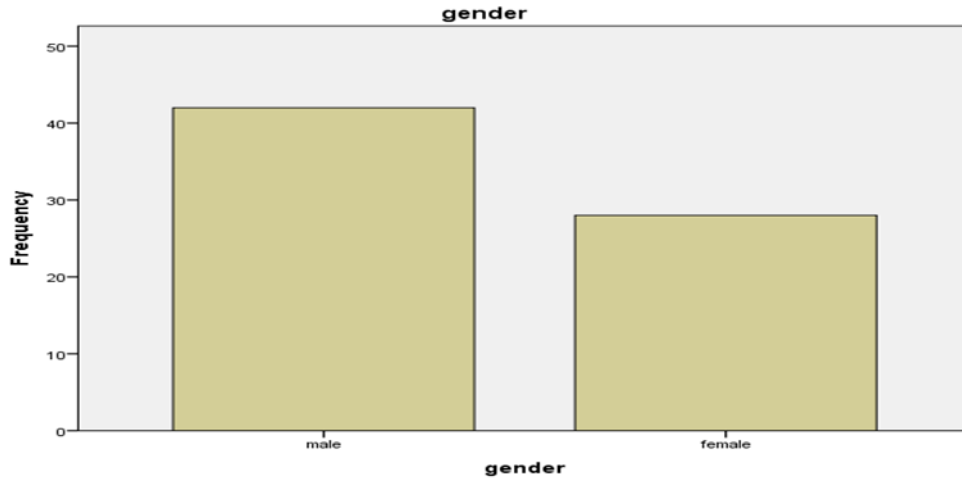


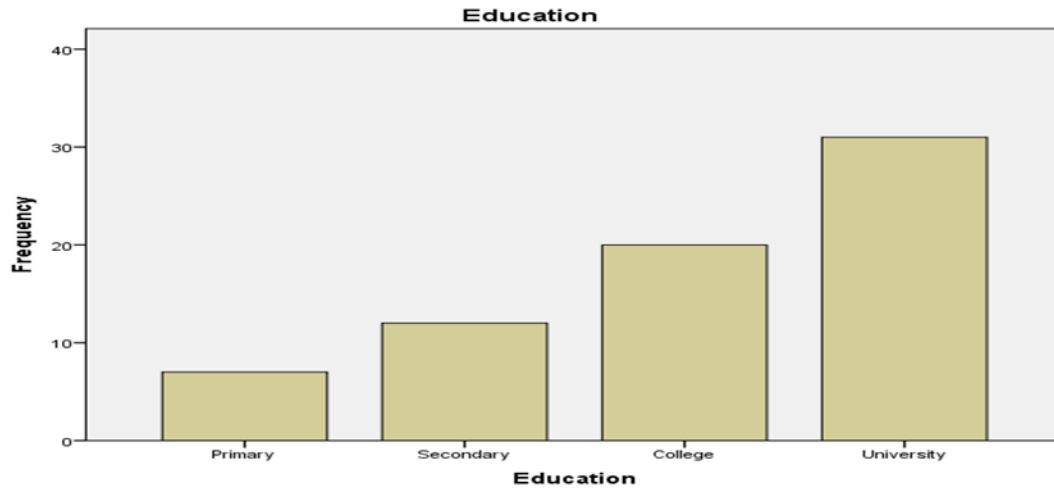
Figure 4.1 displays that 42 (60.0%) of Church leaders were male while 28 (40.0%) were female. This shows that there are more male Church leaders than their female counterparts in Tigania Central, Meru County. The results indicate the existence of gender partiality between male and female Church leaders. This may imply that the female views and voice in the Church on addressing teenage pregnancy is not loud enough yet very important. The voice of women leaders is very important in the matter. The demographic findings concur with the observation made by Audette et al. (2018) that Church leadership positions are dominated more by men despite the high number of female memberships.

4.3.2 Education Characteristics of Church Leaders

The second characteristic sought about the Church leaders was their education level. Figure 4.2 presents the findings.

Figure 4.2

Education Characteristics



The results show that most Church leaders, 31(44.3%) had reached university levels and attained their degrees; 20(28.6%) had college education, 12(17.1%) completed secondary school education while only 7(10.0%) had attained primary school level of education. The results generally indicate a good number of Church leaders had attained certificates, diploma and Bachelors education at their various placed Churches of service. This indicates that most of the respondents are beneficiaries of education and understand the impact of teenage pregnancies in the community. In Tigania Central High education attainment was deemed important as it enables leaders to be open minded and knowledgeable with the issues pertaining teenage pregnancies having been exposed in their various institutions enrolled earlier.

4.3.3 Leadership Positions of Church Leaders

Among the demographic characteristics of Church leaders sought was the leadership position one had served in their respective Church at Tigania Central, in Meru County.

The findings were as presented in Table 4.3

Table 4.3

Leadership Position of Church Leaders

Aspect of demography	Description	Frequency	Percent
Leadership position of a church leader	Clergy	17	24.3
	Chairperson	20	28.6
	Youth Patron	17	24.3
	Catechists	16	22.9
	Total	70	100.0

According to table 4.3, the leadership positions exercised by the sampled Church leaders were: 17(24.3%) clergy, 20(28.6%) chairpersons, 17(24.3%) youth patrons and 16(22.9%) Catechists. The results generally indicate a good representation of the different levels of Church leadership positions in Tigania Central. This distribution of leaders shows that the respondents are expected to be aware of the issues surrounding the teenagers, especially teenage pregnancy. The representation of leadership reveals that the respondents are in a position of influence in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls. The positions they held gave them direct access to the teenagers, understand them and be a support system to them. This corroborates Cortes (2021) opinion that

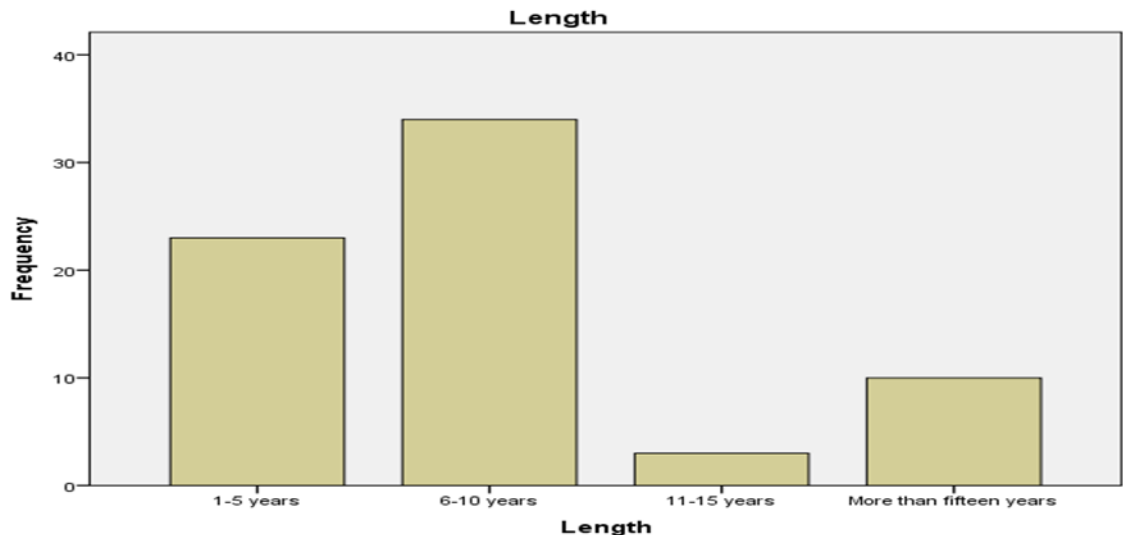
Church leaders are shepherds who are at a powerful position to help teenagers to move in the right direction in their lives.

4.3.4 Leadership Experiences of Church Leaders

The last demographic characteristic sought from the participants was their duration of experience in their stated leadership positions in Churches at Tigania Central, in Meru County. The responses were as presented in figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3

Leadership experience of Church leaders



According to the results in figure 4.3, 23(32.9%) Church leaders had served between 1-5 years while 34(48.6%) had served between 6-10 years in their position of leadership. Ten (14.3%) of the Church leaders had worked over fifteen years while only 3(4.3%) had served from 11 and 15 years. The results imply that, at least 47(67%) Church leaders had served in their respective positions for more than six years. Therefore, a good number of the respondents were adequately experienced on the subject of addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County. The leadership

experience was regarded sufficient in providing credible information on pastoral role, contributions of catechism training and Church leadership advocacy role on addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls. This agrees with the assertions of Golman et al (2020) that experience of the Church leaders is important in helping teenage girls in reducing teenage high birth rate.

4.4 Teenage Pregnancies among High School Girls

Teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County, was the dependent variable in this study. The data from Church leaders and teenage high school girls attending the Churches located in Tigania Central, Meru County was evaluated to identify the prevalence of pregnancies among high school teenagers, the causative agents to early pregnancies and possible practices and mechanisms for improving the described condition. The Church leaders were asked to rate their responses where; strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, Disagree (D) = 2, Do not know (DNK) = 3, Agree (A) = 4 and Strongly Agree (SA) = 5. The FGDs were codes as FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4 and FGD 5. The responses from Church leaders were summarized and presented in table 4.4: Table 4.4 shows responses on the prevalence of teenage pregnancy among high school girls and its causes in Tigania Central, Meru County. Five statements were posed to respondents as shown on the table

Table 4. 4*Teenage pregnancies among high school girls*

Sentiments on Averting Teenage pregnancies (N = 70)	SD(1)	D(2)	DNK(3)	A(4)	SA(5)	Mean	S.Deviation
There are cases of teenage pregnancy among high school girls	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.4%)	45 (64.3%)	24 (34.3%)	4.33	.503
Teenage pregnancy is prevalent in high schools within Tigania Central	2 (2.9%)	2 (2.9%)	6 (8.6%)	46 (65.7%)	14 (20.0%)	3.97	.816
Attitude towards pre-marital sex plays a role in increasing teenage pregnancy among high school girls	0 (0.0%)	3 (4.3%)	3 (4.3%)	38 (54.3%)	26 (38.1%)	4.24	.731
Cultural norms towards sexual behaviour plays a role in increasing teenage pregnancy among high school girls	2 (2.9%)	7 (10.0%)	4 (5.7%)	39 (55.7%)	18 (25.7%)	3.91	.989
Teenagers' view on contraception plays a role in increasing pregnancy among high school girls	0 (0.0%)	4 (5.7%)	9 (12.9%)	41 (58.6%)	16 (22.9%)	3.99	.771

The leaders highly agreed with all the statements with a mean of 4.1. There was an agreement that the rate of teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central was largely high. This is attested by a summation mean of 4.33 and a standard deviation of .503. 69 respondents (98.6%) confirmed the presence of teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County.

The findings agree with a study carried out by Muturi (2021) which reported a rampant rate of teenage pregnancy especially for girls who were in secondary school levels. Muturi ascribed the high rate of pregnancy among girls to be resulting from society's drifting away from the traditional safe discussion about sex and puberty. Notably, Muturi

(2021) reported this as detrimental on the education, health and opportunities of a girl child.

Furthermore, the results presented a level of agreement between the rate of cases of pregnancy and the prevalence. This was further confirmed by the high levels of agreement 60(75.7%) pertaining the sentiment posed on the prevalence of teenage pregnancies among secondary school girls in Tigania Central. The findings are in support with the reiterations aired out by Kassa et al. (2018) who echoed that the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Africa is at 18.8%, East Africa has the highest prevalence with 21% while North Africa has lowest prevalence at 9.2%. This means there is need to find solutions to avert teenage pregnancies in Tigania Central, Meru County.

Consequently, the results show concurrence of Church leader's opinions on the prevalence and rate of teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central. Ten (14%) Church leaders disagreed that teenage pregnancy is prevalent in high schools in Tigania Central, Meru County, but, 60 (86%) of the respondents agreed that teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central is prevalent. The results from teenagers who participated in the focused group discussion too noted the same. During the focused group discussion, the five groups that participated had a consensus on the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Tigania Central Sub-County. The respondents therefore, admitted unanimously that there is evidence of teenage pregnancies experienced among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County. Respondents from FGD3 noted that;

“In our school, about ten girls did not do their various exams because some were pregnant and others nursing their newly born babies”.

Respondents from FGD 2 shared that;

“These days becoming pregnant while in high school is almost becoming a normality. You will find very few people getting surprised that a student became pregnant before completing high school studies”.

The study also sought the contributory factors which led to the high prevalence of teenage pregnancy among teenagers in high schools. The findings revealed that the attitude towards pre-marital sex plays a role in increasing teenage pregnancy cases among high school girls in the Churches that took part in the study 64(92.4%). Teenage girls were also influenced by culture aspects and norm systems on sexual behaviours. Cultural aspects and norm systems (81.4%) were recorded to increase teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central. In this hand, the results contradict with the submission of Kassa et al. (2021) who found out that, high pregnancy rate among teenagers resulted from factors such as rural residence, ever married, not attending school, no maternal education, no father’s education, and parents not communicating with adolescents about sexual and productive health. On the other hand, Worku et al. (2021) concurred with some of the presented causes in the study where they reported that, teenage pregnancy was caused by cultural aspects, parental status, community-level of using contraceptives, age at which sex is initialized, exposure to media and literacy level of families. The results posed implications on the need to establish a conducive cultural and belief systems which discourage early exposure of teens to pre-marital sex.

From the results provided in Table 4.4, the other cause for the high rate, cases and prevalence of teenage pregnancies among high school girls was also deduced. In this instance, 57 (82%) of Church leaders confessed that teenagers’ view on contraception

plays a role in increasing pregnancy among high school girls. Only 4 (5.7%) disagreed and 9(12.9%) did not know about the effect of contraception. The results underscore that, teenage pregnancies was majorly caused by attitudes towards marital sex, cultural values and norms, sexual behavior and perspectives towards contraception utilization. In agreement, Ahinkorah (2021) also reported that, knowledge on contraception and unmet need for contraception was a common factor which contributed to high rate of teenage pregnancies among youth.

4.5 Pastoral Role of Church Leadership in Addressing Teenage Pregnancy

The first objective of the study aimed to describe the pastoral role of Church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County.

The Church leaders were asked to rate their responses where strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Do not Know = 3, Agree = 4 and strongly agree = 5. . The FGDs were coded as FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4 and FGD 5. For interpretation and reporting, the respondents that chose strongly agree and agree were summed up as agreeing while strongly disagree, disagree and don't know summed up as disagreeing. In presenting the descriptive findings, percentages, mean values and standard deviation for each statement in the table were computed and the findings presented in table 4.5. The participants in the FGDs were given codes from respondent 1 to respondent 40.

Table 4.5*Pastoral Role of Church Leadership in Addressing Teenage Pregnancy*

Statements on Pastoral Role (N = 70)	SD	D	DK	A	SA	Mean	S.Deviation
I use pastoral programs in encouraging addressing teenage pregnancy	0(0.0%)	1(1.4%)	3(4.3%)	40(57.1%)	26(37.1%)	4.30	.622
I participate in pastoral care with teenagers in order to address teenage pregnancy	0(0.0%)	1(1.4%)	4(5.7%)	51(72.9%)	14(20.0%)	4.11	.553
I offer pastoral care to teen's parents in order to assist them address teenage pregnancy among high school girl	0(0.0%)	5(7.1%)	5(7.1%)	40(57.1%)	20(28.6%)	4.07	.804
I use my pastoral role in helping teenagers change behaviour	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	2(2.9%)	41(58.6%)	26(38.6%)	4.36	.539
I offer pastoral care to assist teenagers to resist peer pressure towards irresponsible sexual behaviour	0(0.0%)	1(1.4%)	3(4.3%)	41(58.6%)	25(35.7%)	4.29	.617
I mentor teenagers on addressing teenage pregnancy	1(1.4%)	2(2.9%)	2(2.9%)	36(51.4%)	29(41.4%)	4.29	.783
I draw relevant programs that help in addressing teenage pregnancy	0(0.0%)	5(7.1%)	5(7.1%)	39(55.7%)	21(30.0%)	4.09	.812
I instruct teenagers on how to avoid irresponsible sex behaviour	2(2.9%)	2(2.9%)	3(4.3%)	38(54.3%)	25(35.7%)	4.17	.868
I offer discipleship programs in addressing teenage pregnancy	0(0.0%)	7(10.0%)	3(4.3%)	37(52.9%)	23(32.9%)	4.09	.880
I offer Sunday school programs that encourage delay the first sexual encounter among children /teenagers	0(0.0%)	11(15.4%)	5(7.1%)	32(45.7%)	22(31.4%)	3.93	1.012
I offer bible-based instructions in addressing teenage pregnancy	1(1.4%)	4(5.7%)	4(5.7%)	39(55.7%)	22(31.4%)	4.10	.854
I offer age- appropriate sex education to children/teenagers	0(0.0%)	6(8.6%)	5(7.1%)	46(65.7%)	13(18.6%)	3.94	.778
I use health professionals to offer education on addressing teenage pregnancies	0(0.0%)	6(8.6%)	7(10.0%)	40(57.1%)	17(24.3%)	3.97	.834
I conduct seminars/workshops/home instructions on addressing teenage pregnancies	0(0.0%)	7(10.0%)	4(5.7%)	35(50.0%)	24(34.3%)	4.09	.897

Table 4.5 indicates that pastoral contributions towards changing teenage behavior (mean = 4.36, SDv=.539), pastoral programs that encourage addressing teenage pregnancy (mean = 4.30, SDv =.622), pastoral care assistance for helping teenagers resist peer pressure towards engaging poor sexual behavior (mean = 4.29, SDv= .617), mentorship programs for teaching teenagers (mean= 4.29, Sdv= .783), instructing teenagers to avoid irresponsible sexual behaviour (mean = 4.17, Sdv= .868), offering bible-based instruction on addressing teenage pregnancy (mean = 4.10, Sdv= .854), conducting seminars, trainings and teenage workshops on teenage pregnancy aspects (mean = 4.09) and developing discipleship programs which equip teenagers on addressing teenage pregnancy. The only pastoral leadership role that was less famous in addressing teenage pregnancy was the offer of Sunday school programs that encourage delay the first sexual encounter among teenagers (mean= 3.93, Sdv= .1012). The standard deviation is around one; hence, there was no significant rating variation from the average mean for various statements characterizing the pastoral role. Concerning the utilization of pastoral programs, the response noted an agreement level of 40(57.1%). The practice which had the highest level of agreement was pastoral care with teenagers, which attracted 51(72.9%).

This is an indication that the Church leaders in Tigania Central Churches were generally in agreement with most of the statements posed on the pastoral role of Church leadership in addressing of teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County with the highest mean of 4.30 and the lowest 3.93. The high level of agreement reveals a fact that the Church leadership is positive in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central. They are trying to create pastoral programs

that will help in reversing the vice. According to the Church leader's responses, all aspects on pastoral role of Church leadership played a role in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County. This is because, the mean value for each indicator was above 3.9

The descriptive results from Church leaders in Tigania Central Churches underscored several aspects relating to pastoral role of Church leaders. Consequently, the results also indicated a level of agreement in how the pastoral activities undertaken in the various Churches in Tigania Central Sub-County were improving their role in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Meru County. Some of the pastoral activities that had been put in place from the open ended question in the Church leaders questionnaire (written narration) were narrated as follows: One pastor was of the opinion that;

“As part of pastoral care, teenagers need to be helped on how to resist peer pressure which leads to early sexual exposure, be mentored by the adults and be offered with bible based instructions both in schools and Churches”.

In addition, a youth patron said that;

“There is need to expose our teenage children through Church sponsored seminars, workshops and youth camps. These will help them get exposed to the knowledge about causes, disadvantage and effects of teenage pregnancies and how to avoid being victims of the same”.

Pastoral programs leveraged towards changing teenage behavior, pastoral care assistance for helping teenagers resist peer pressure towards engaging poor sexual behaviors, mentorship programs for teenagers, offering bible-based instructions, seminars, trainings

and teenage workshops on teenage pregnancy and discipleship programs. These responses clarified that Churches located in Tigania Central had put in place mechanisms to ensure the offer of pastoral care services to teenagers. The results support the argument outlined by Cortes (2021) that, Church leaders are shepherds who are at a powerful position to help young generation of teenagers to move in the right direction in their lives by educating, mentoring, counselling, teaching and guiding their young congregants.

When high school girls were asked in the focused group discussion to suggest what required to be done in order to improve, pastoral role of Church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancies, respondents from FGD. 1 said,

“Home visits by the Church leaders should not only focus on the parents. Teenagers can appreciate more when special home visits are prepared specifically for them by the Church leader. Again parents should be talked to in order to take proper care and be responsible to the needs of their teenage children”.

Another response from FGD5 noted that;

“Preaching to teenagers/children on need for purity, avoiding negative peer pressure is important in addressing teenage pregnancy. The Churches too should consider appointing school chaplains to work with the teenagers while in school”.

Other notable interventions presented by the respondents included mentorship programs, guidance and counselling, seminars, youth camps and appointing youth patrons to guide

the teenagers. FGD 4 narrated the important of Church leaders visiting teenagers in their homes:

“When church leaders visit their homes they feel wanted in the Church hence regaining energy to continue following the Church doctrines especially abstinence in order to avoid teenage pregnancies”.

In addition respondents from FGD 1 narrating the importance of the Church leadership talking to the parents of the teenagers on taking good care and being friendly and open to their children said;

“Church leaders talking to parents on taking proper care and being responsible to the needs of their teenage children helps teenagers to get proper sexually related information and love from the right people (parents) hence avoiding teenage pregnancy”.

Apart from the said suggestions, FGD 4 emphasized;

“The Church should link up with our school to offer teachings and preaching to all girls on responsible behavior, need for sexual purity, and importance of abstinence and tactics of living out exemplary life without falling prey of poor sexual behavior”.

Yet respondents from FGD 3 stated;

“Our school should appoint and employ a school chaplain who will guide, educate, counsel and offer spiritual support to us while in school premises”

Despite the detailed suggestions aimed at alleviating teenage pregnancies in Tigania Central, one conspicuous drawback arose from the discussion by the focus group discussion. The teens expressed that they felt that the Church leaders were not doing much in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school teenagers. Respondents from FGD1 said;

“We appreciate the fact that the Church leadership has come up with very important programs like youth camps and workshops. But I doubt if they follow up on the content of the training. Sometimes they present some outdated solutions that are not popular with the youths”.

Respondents from FGD5 in addition said;

“It is important for the youths and teenagers to be included in the discussion on the content and curriculum used in the workshops and camps”.

The presentation of such mixed reactions, opined the need for the stated mechanisms to be strengthened to encourage more involvement of teenagers in different practices, programs and activities. This was in line with the observations of Osiche et al. (2023) who submitted that, the effectiveness of pastoral education towards addressing teenage pregnancy among secondary school girls were ineffective in Mombasa diocese. Osiche et al. (2023) stipulated that, these programs could be strengthened through educating the pioneers, developing training manuals for peers, collaborating with secondary schools and regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching effectiveness on the learners.

Out of the above responses, the researcher came up with six themes out of the given suggestions which were: home visits by Church leaders and parent education to meet

feminine needs, care and being responsible so as not to put their girls at risk behavior. The others were: mentorship programs, guidance and counselling, youth camps and appointing youth patrons.

In agreement, Makokha et al. (2020) found that, tailor made Church programs for youths are relevant avenues for molding a society that is morally upright. Educational programs such as discipleship classes, youth seminars and teachings on reproductive health were deemed effective for empowering schools going teenagers (Makokha et al, 2020). This implies the need for the Church to be proactive and intentional in providing guidance and role modelling to teenagers on self-identification, career goals, aspirations, identity and value or purpose in life.

The results underscored the need to give close attention to teenagers by taking care of their stated needs, guiding them on the way, training them on being responsible people which require close collaboration between the Church, home and school stakeholders. Therefore, addressing teenage pregnancy required concerted efforts of spiritual leaders, the parents or guardians support as well as the school stakeholders. These efforts require the availability of clear communication, collaboration and established spiritual programs which can be introduced at school.

4.6 Catechism Training/Class by Church leadership in addressing Teenage Pregnancy

The second objective of the study aimed to describe the role of catechism training/class in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County.

The Church leaders were asked to rate their responses where; “strongly disagree” (SD) = 1, disagree (D) = 2, do not know (DNK) = 3, agree (A) =4 and strongly agree (SA) = 5. . The FGDs were coded as FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4 and FGD 5. For interpretation and reporting the catechism training/class’ role Church leaders responses, the total number that chose strongly agree and agree was summed up to represent the agreement status, while the total number of those who chose strongly disagree, disagree and do not know was summed up to represent the disagreement status. In presenting the descriptive findings, percentages, mean values and standard deviation for each statement in the table was also computed. The responses were as presented table 4.6

Table 4. 6

Sentiments on catechisms training (N = 70)	SD(1)	D(2)	DNK(3)	A(4)	SA(5)	Mean	S. Deviation
My Church offers catechism training classes	1 (1.4%)	7 (10.0%)	4 (5.7%)	29 (41.4%)	29 (41.4%)	4.11	1.001
I train children on the Church beliefs on premarital sex in order to address teenage pregnancy	0 (0.0%)	3 (4.3%)	7 (10.0%)	37 (52.9%)	23 (32.9%)	4.14	.767
The content of catechism class I offer is tailored to address teenage pregnancy	1 (1.4%)	11 (15.7%)	8 (11.4%)	34 (48.6%)	16 (22.9%)	3.76	1.028
I teach a culture that discourage teenage pregnancy among high school girls	0 (0.0%)	7 (10.0%)	7 (10.0%)	35 (50.0%)	21 (30.0%)	4.00	.901
I offer training to catechists on how to handle teenage pregnancy topic	1 (1.4%)	16 (22.9%)	4 (5.7%)	36 (51.4%)	13 (18.6%)	3.63	1.079

Catechism Training by Church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancy

Table 4.6 shows that Church leaders strongly agreed that, children and teenagers were taught Church beliefs on premarital sex in addressing teenage pregnancy, 37(52.9%). Moreover, according to the study responses, not all aspects on catechism training/classes were effectively implemented to address teenage pregnancy among high school girls in

Tigania Central, Meru County. Presented results indicated that, the Church leaders in Tigania Central were in agreement with most of the statements posed on catechism training/classes. This was evidenced by the presence of mixed reactions from Church leaders who reported they did not know or disagreed with some catechism training aspects. Moreover, this notation is justified by the lower mean values for indicators such as offering of training and competency development to catechists on how to handle teenage pregnancy and availability of tailor-made content of catechism class to address teenage pregnancy (3.63, 3.76) and also a standard deviation of 1 and above respectively. High levels of agreement regarding catechism training/classes was expressed in the statements like training children on Church beliefs on premarital sex, (mean = 4.14, Sdv=.767), presence of catechism trainings on offer (mean = 4.11, Sdv= 1.001) and teaching a culture that discourage teenage pregnancy among high school girls (mean = 4.00, Sdv= .901). The standard deviation is around one for each statement posed hence, there was no significant rating variation from the average mean for various statements characterizing catechism training. The results indicate moderate catechism practices at the Church. Presented results also revealed, that Church leaders in charge of catechisms classes require training and professional development (mean= 3.63). This was one way to achieve the better educational outcomes for teenagers attending catechism classes. Other aspects which determined the contributions of catechism classes were the availability of tailor-made content/teaching manual for catechism classes and training and competency development for catechists on how to handle teenage pregnancy. This was represented by a mean greater than 3.5 coupled with a level of agreement chosen by respondents for most sentiments. However, the Church leaders expressed moderate concerns on the

levels of training and competency development for catechists on how to handle teenage pregnancy aspects.

These results are appreciating the presence of catechisms training classes, although there were moderate responses on their operationalization.

Noting the contributions of catechism classes in addressing teenage pregnancies among teenagers in secondary schools, the participants contributed ideas on how to improve catechisms trainings. They were Answering to a narrative question in the questionnaire on how to improve the outcome of catechism training in their Church. Respondents from FGD 5 opined that;

“There is a need to have open forums during catechism to discuss teenage pregnancy issues, training catechumen on the place of teenage pregnancy in Christianity and Church doctrines”.

Response from FGD 2 also suggested;

“It is important to enroll young girls at a tender age so that before they grow to be teenagers they are already aware of the teenage pregnancies and how to avoid being victims and disciplining them to be good Christians”

Still respondents from FGD 3 noted with concern the absence of an elaborate manual for training catechists.

“There is need for an elaborate manual for training catechists in the Church with a well stipulated curriculum and syllabus to be covered for one to qualify as a catechism trainer”.

The presence of a catechisms training manual is very important in speculating what is covered with respect to addressing teenage pregnancies in Tigania Central Sub-County. Therefore, the results underscore the contributions of developing catechisms training manual, offering of tailor-made teachings and educating teenagers on the Church beliefs on premarital sex in order to address teenage pregnancy. This meant that despite the moderate existence of catechisms trainings in some Churches, there was room for improvement. This underscores the need to strengthen catechisms trainings through developing a syllabus manual. Agreeably, Chilongozi (2017) findings also appreciates the effectiveness of a comprehensive catechism manual/program which communicates the Church doctrinal basis and the Church's stand on premarital sex or teenage pregnancies.

The findings are also illustrating the need to implant a positive Church culture and doctrine which discourage the engagement of teenagers in premarital sexual behavior. This has implications on the Church culture, religious beliefs, practices and values. Noting that, a good Church environment, policies, belief system and organizational culture possesses the potential to influence teenage behavior, it needs to be strengthened. In this connection, Nangambi (2014) has also postulated that, keenness of church leaders in teaching the traditions of the Church about sex to the teenagers promotes awareness on Church's traditions on sex, love, marriage, childbearing and teenage pregnancy. Empowered teenagers will develop resilience character that reduces the chances of getting involved in teenage pregnancy. This implicates on the need to strengthen the Church catechisms training manual as well as commitment of designated teachers who have been delegated the teaching responsibility.

Another conspicuous drawback arising from the information gathered from the Church leaders was insufficient coverage of the Church belief systems, doctrine and culture and cultural practices to teenagers. Some of the practices for improving this include; communicating the Church doctrine and integrating Church belief systems and values teachings in the catechisms training manual. These results concur with past findings by Onserio (2017) who noted the importance of teaching the beliefs and traditions of the Church to the teenagers in order for them to build their culture around this tradition. Agreeably, Land (2022) also expressed that, communicating the church beliefs to teenagers such as sex is ordained for a husband and wife enables grow with an understanding and a good perception towards early engagement in pre-marital sex.

Training and professional development practices to catechists aim at boosting passage of knowledge and impacting them with skills and competencies. This helps on how to handle teenage pregnancy issues. In support, Osiche et al. (2023) who submitted that training and skills development is a key human resource facet that equip educators with skills on how to handle victims of teenage pregnancy. It enables them to effectively deliver the spiritual and life skills education curriculum to high schools teenagers. This implicates on the Church to conduct training to catechisms trainers and resource persons in order to enrich their skills. Another results which noted lack of formal training to catechisms teachers was that of Ojiambo (2021). Ojiambo (2021) also advocated for the need to train catechisms trainers in order to enrich their personal awareness and sensitivity in both handling teenagers and delivery of catechism manual contents.

In the focus group discussions conducted, teenagers were asked to elaborate how Church leaders used catechism training in addressing teenage pregnancies. Respondents from FGD 3 indicated that,

“Church leaders use catechism training to present teachings which instilled moral values, such as building one’s self esteem, purity, sin and holiness and instilling a godly character”.

The above were leveled as helpful in discouraging girls from engaging in premarital sex. Moreover, training on morality was found helpful in enlightening girls about the consequences and dangers of teenage pregnancies. Chilongozi (2017) indicates other benefits affiliate to the consistency in conducting catechism classes by noting that information sharing equips teens, hence enabling them make informed choices on matters sexual responsibility. For Armstrong (2018), catechisms training contributed to the aversion of teenage pregnancies through spelling out the Lords’ intended design for sex to their children insisting on sex for procreation and companionship within marriage covenant. This empowered girls to abstain from early sexual behavior. The presented results emphasize the need to put air tight mechanisms aimed at addressing teenage pregnancies.

4.7 Advocacy Role of Church Leadership in Addressing Teenage Pregnancy

The last objective of the study aimed at examining the Church leadership’s advocacy role in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County. Information about the advocacy role of church leadership was obtained from the Church leaders and teenage high school girls attending the churches located in Tigania

Central, Meru County. This particular role was evaluated to identify its contribution towards addressing teenage pregnancies among secondary school girls. Some of the aspect of this role included the utility of advocacy activities, Church leaders participation in drawing pastoral program instruction and curriculum in schools, involvement of Church leaders in teaching P.P.1 in schools and collaboration of Church leaders with close N.G.Os and community in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls. Information gathered from both the Church leaders and focused group discussions for the teenagers also took into consideration the role of Church leader's advocacy in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County.

The Church leaders were asked to rate their responses where; (1) stood for "strongly disagree" (SD), (2) is to disagree (D), (3) = do not know (DNK), (4) =agree (A) and (5) = strongly agree (SA). The FGDs were codes as FGD 1, FGD 2, FGD 3, FGD 4 and FGD 5. For interpretation and reporting the Church leaders advocacy role responses, the total number that chose strongly agree and agree was summed up to represent the agreement status, while the total number of those who chose strongly disagree, disagree and do not know was summed up to represent the disagreement status. The contributions of the aforementioned sentiments were assessed with relation to their contributory role in teenage pregnancy among high school girls. In presenting the descriptive findings, mean values and standard deviation for each statement in the table was also computed. The responses from Church leaders were summarized and presented in Table 4.7:

Table 4.7*Response on Advocacy Role*

Sentiments on advocacy role of church leadership (N = 70)	SD(1)	D(2)	DNK(3)	A(4)	SA(5)	Me an	S. Deviation
I use advocacy in addressing teenage pregnancy	1(1.4%)	12(17.1%)	9(12.9%)	30(42.9%)	18(25.7%)	3.74	1.073
I participate in drawing pastoral program instruction in schools which helps in addressing teenage pregnancy	1(1.4%)	17(24.3%)	11(15.7%)	30(42.9%)	11(15.7%)	3.47	1.073
I am involved in teaching P.P.1 in schools which helps in addressing teenage pregnancy	1(1.4%)	17(24.3%)	9(12.9%)	27(38.6%)	16(22.9%)	3.57	1.137
I work with N.G.O and community in addressing teenage pregnancy	8(11.4%)	29(41.4%)	8(11.4%)	14(20.0%)	11(15.7%)	2.87	1.307

The presented results in Table 4.7 are indicating that a good number of Church leaders engage in teaching P.P.1 in schools (mean= 3.57, Sdv= 1.137). Church leaders participation in drawing pastoral programs and instructional curriculum in schools (mean = 3.47, Sdv= 1.073). This summation of results indicates that the advocacy role of Church leaders in Tigania Central, Meru County was largely moderate as attested by a summation mean of 3.34 and a standard deviation of 1. This attests a small deviation of the responses from the mean score; meaning that the response scores for each variable did not deviate significantly from the mean of 3.34.

A sizeable number of Church leaders expressed reservations on the collaboration of Church leaders with close N.G.Os and community in addressing teenage of pregnancies

among high school teenagers (mean= 2.87). The Church leader's responses shed light that there was a moderate level of participation in the stated programs as presented by a very large standard deviation of more than one from the means of the advocacy role aspects.

Church leaders were in agreement with most sentiments regarding the advocacy role of Church leaders as indicated by a good representation of mean values which were greater than 3.5. The table also indicates that there was high level of consensus on the involvement of Church leaders in advocacy towards addressing teenage pregnancy (mean = 3.74, Sdv= 1.073).

The above results imply that the ratings from Church leaders on the four aspects of involvement in advocacy role were largely moderate. This emphasizes the important contribution of each Church leader advocacy role in addressing teenage pregnancies among secondary school girls in Tigania Central Sub-County, Meru County. The results agreed with the opinions of Bormet et al. (2021) who reported that, faith based organizations, the Church or religious leaders can be helpful in mitigating teenage pregnancies in the society through training families on timing and spacing of children pregnancies, developing policies, reaching out to the community, creating awareness on family planning and collaborating with NGOs, FBOs and the government in educating the society on how to address teenage pregnancies. In this study therefore, the results stress the need for Church leaders to take the wakeup call though collaborating with government, FBOs and NGOs, creating awareness and spreading the word on family planning aspects.

The presented findings are also communicating that, Churches in Tigania Central have paid attention to promote the advocacy role of Church leaders. Some of the noted aspects

of involvement by Church leaders were: utility of advocacy activities, Church leader's participation in drawing pastoral programs instruction and curriculum in schools and involvement of Church leaders in teaching P.P.1 in schools. These aspects were found to be playing a role in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls hence, required to be strengthened among the sampled Churches in Tigania Central Sub-County, Meru County.

Undoubtedly, Church leader's participation in advocacy programs particularly in secondary school is important in planting good behavior among teenagers as they spend the best of their time in schools especially those that study in boarding secondary schools. Therefore, the level of participation of Church leaders in drawing pastoral programs instruction and curriculum as well as in teaching P.P.1 in schools requires to be strengthened. Doing this, requires good collaboration between the schools and religious leaders, good communication and competent/knowledgeable Church leaders Comparably, Ooko (2022) explained that, Church leaders are well placed in becoming the voice of the community by becoming the advocates to the victims of teenage pregnancy. Finley et al. (2018) findings echo the findings of the current study in the essence that, the Church leaders are the best stakeholders for influencing change that is desirable in line with addressing teenage pregnancy challenges. They can do so by participating in developing key policies, cooperating with education institutions where they offer education on teenage pregnancy as well as equipping parents who can help their children out and in the long run, actualize the advocacy role. The results burden Church leaders to take up the mantle in policy making, equipping parents who will speak on their behalf and actively engage in school PPI programs.

The findings also point out a need for Church leaders to collaborate closely with N.G.Os and the community in addressing teenage pregnancy. Engaging N.G.Os such as charitable bodies, Faith Based organizations and community driven groups which have best interest for girl child are essential in seeking financial, material and educational support. For example N.G.Os can offer specialist who can train, educate and create awareness to teenagers about good behaviour, discipline, abstinence among others which discourage early pregnancies. Therefore, Church leaders need to go out of their way to identifying close N.G.O bodies in the County and seek to collaborate with them. Without doubt, similar approaches have been exercised by investing in seeking partnerships and collaborative engagement with NGOs, FBOs, Government bodies and charitable organizations to offer specialized courses and conducting trainings to trainers on how to handle teenage pregnancy menace (Bormet et al., 2021). Bormet et al. (2021) also acknowledged the input of charitable organizations' specialists who can train, educate and create awareness to teenagers about good behaviour, discipline, abstinence and also offer humanitarian support.

Moreover, in order to instil confidence among teenagers in secondary schools, there is need for the Church to undertake rigorous advocacy practices so as to make teenagers aware of the benefits of abstinence, dangers of pre-marital sex among other challenges. The Church can employ this through actively participating in school spiritual nurture programs and allocating them a responsible patron who guides them. Aineah and Atamanke (2021) present an advocacy project conducted by Catholic Sisters who conduct trainings, nurture programs and also training trainers who can spearhead the provision of

sexual, reproductive health education to teens. This can be replicated in other Churches by the Church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls.

Noting the moderate involvement of Church leaders in advocacy activities, the teenagers were engaged in a focus group discussion to suggest what required to be done in order to improve the Church leadership advocacy role. The high school students attending the sampled Churches in Tigania Central Sub-County provided a number of suggestions.

Respondents from FGD 2 mentioned, teenagers' involvement in open air campaign against teenage pregnancy, Church sponsored bill boards and posters in schools discouraging teenage pregnancy, use of professionals to educate the community about the dangers of teenage pregnancy and campaigns through NGOs and CBOs in discouraging teenage pregnancy among high school girls.

“Advocacy can entail teenagers’ involvement by Church leadership in open air campaign against teenage pregnancy, Church can also sponsored bill boards and posters in schools discouraging teenage pregnancy. They can also use professionals to educate the community about the dangers of teenage pregnancy and campaigns through NGOs and CBOs in discouraging teenage pregnancy among high school girls”.

Respondents from FGD 5 said,

“Church need to collaborate with the community elders in fighting teenage pregnancy. They can also come up with a strategy to rally up community boys and young men in the fight against teenage pregnancies. The Church should also come up with a campaign to help members of the community to understand that girls who have given birth also have right to education even after delivery”.

Yet respondents from FGD 1 presented Church involvement with helping high school girls with basic needs as a way to do advocacy. This can be done through collaboration with some NGOs to finance the initiative. This can be spread widely than just limited to Church members but all the needy girls in the community.

These suggestions were analyzed into five major themes. These were: carry out Church campaigns against teenage pregnancy among youths to create awareness, involvement in designing and implementing PPI curriculum, guidance and counselling to encourage girls' victims to go back to school even after delivery, helping the needy in the society by paying their school fees and buying them personal effects especially sanitary towels and Church collaboration with community based, faith based, NGOs, community elders and community health professionals to educate and create awareness to the community on teenage pregnancy. Oyedele (2014) also brought out the importance of actively involving the community in the united fight against teenage pregnancy. Oyedele stated that, engaging community and providing them with their basic requirements such as sanitary towels, food, clothes and school fees improved advocacy attentiveness, effectiveness and attractiveness. The above findings indicate that teenagers were aware of what was required to be put in place by the Church leadership in order to have effective advocacy programs both in the Church, at school and in the community.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine the role of Church leadership in addressing teenage pregnancy in Tigania central, Meru County, Kenya. Chapter five presented the summary, conclusion and recommendations. The summary, conclusion and recommendations are presented as per the objectives of the study.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The study has revealed that the Church leadership has a role to play in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls. The high rate of teenage pregnancies in Tigania Central, Meru County was confirmed by 69(98.6%) respondents who agreed it was a social menace.

5.2.1 Summary on Dependent Variable

The study noted a number of the reasons why there was high prevalence of teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania central. These were attitudes towards premarital sex, cultural values and norms, sexual behavior and perspectives towards contraception utilization.

5.2.2. Summary on Pastoral Role of Church Leaders in Addressing Teenage Pregnancy

The study revealed that in the effort to address teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central, the church leadership used their pastoral role as church leaders. The study revealed that high number of church leaders (57%) utilized pastoral programs.

These programs included pastoral care with teenagers, pastoral contributions towards changing teenage behavior, pastoral programs that discourage teenage pregnancy, pastoral care assistance for helping teenagers resist peer pressure towards engaging poor sexual behavior, mentorship programs, instructing teenagers to avoid irresponsible sexual behavior, offering bible-based instruction that discourage teenage pregnancy, conducting seminars, trainings and teenage workshops on teenage pregnancy aspects and developing discipleship programs which equip teenagers with knowledge on teenage pregnancy. The only pastoral leadership role that was less famous in addressing teenage pregnancy was the offer of Sunday school programs that encourage delay of the first sexual encounter among teenagers. The above findings were a clear indication that the Church leadership in Tigania Central were trying to create pastoral programs that helped in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls.

The girls too in their FGDs, agreed with the sentiments of the church leaders by giving the following as the pastoral programs that their Church leaders offered and were helpful. They included home visits by church leaders, talking to parents on taking proper care and being responsible to the needs of their teenage children, mentorship programs, guidance and counselling, seminars, youth camps and appointing youth patrons to guide them, preaching to teenagers/children on need for purity, avoiding negative peer pressure, and churches to appoint school chaplains to work with the teenagers while in school.

5.2.3 Summary on Catechism Training in Addressing Teenage Pregnancy

Findings also revealed that the church leadership included catechism training for children and teenagers as one way of averting teenage pregnancy among high school girls. This was aimed at training children and teenagers on the church doctrines which discourage

premarital sex which is the cause of teenage pregnancies. Although the findings revealed some discrepancies from the respondents on availability of tailor-made content/teaching manual for catechism classes and training and competency development for catechists on how to handle teenage pregnancy. It was clear that church leadership was using catechism training as one of the avenues used to avert teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County. The findings revealed the need for strengthening catechism trainings through developing a syllabus manual and training the catechists on the way to approach the topics that deal with a church doctrines that discourage premarital sex.

The girls too from the FGDs, supported the importance of catechism in averting teenage pregnancy. They cited instilling moral values such as building one's self esteem, purity, sin and holiness and instilling a godly characters which are helpful in helping girls not engage in premarital sex, training on morality, enlightening girls about the consequences and dangers of teenage pregnancies as some of the benefits of catechism in averting teenage pregnancy.

5.2.4 Summary on Role of Church Leadership Advocacy in addressing Teenage Pregnancy

The findings of the study revealed that church leadership were involved in advocacy in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls. In perfecting this, they employed a number of activities. These included, pastoral programs (PPI) in schools and church leaders' participation in drawing pastoral programs and instructional curriculum in schools. The leaders also presented collaboration of church leaders with close N.G.Os and community in averting teenage pregnancies among high schools. However a good

number of leaders were not practicing this kind of advocacy. According to the findings, the participation of church leaders in advocacy role were largely moderate. This pronounces on the important contribution of each church leader advocacy role in addressing teenage pregnancies among high school girls in Tigania Central Sub-County, Meru County.

5.3 Conclusions

This study concludes that the Church leadership has a big role to play in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls. The fact that the teenagers are members of the Church and have high regard for their church leaders is an opportunity the church leaders have to intervene and help them in avoiding being victims of teenage pregnancy. The church leadership use their influence to guide the teenagers. They also use the opportunity to talk to them and also act as their role models. They also help the parents on how to influence their teenage children positively.

There was high agreement that utilization of pastoral programs by the church leadership was key in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central. These programs included pastoral care through parent involvement, mentorship programs, teenage programs, discipleship programs, sex behavior trainings, workshops and seminars, Sunday school programs and bible related instructional and counselling programs. Including the teenagers in drawing these programs, appointing youth/teenagers patrons in the church and placing chaplains in church sponsored schools were some of the recommendations made.

Offering catechism training among the teenagers was noted as key in addressing teenage pregnancy. Catechism training was noted as a tool in addressing teenage pregnancy. Having children grow in the knowledge of their Church doctrine on teenage pregnancy and sexuality, have a relationship with God and acquiring self-confidence in order to avoid negative peer pressure were identified as important in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls. The need to include younger children in catechism, having an elaborate catechism curriculum and training of catechists were noted as ways to improve on catechism training in addressing teenage pregnancy.

Church leadership involvement with advocacy programs against teenage pregnancy among high school girls was noted as key. There was a high admission to use of advocacy to address teenage pregnancy among high school girls. Participating in drawing school program, teaching PPI in schools and working with NGOs were listed as the advocacy programs the Church leadership used in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County. Getting involved with the community elders and including girls in campaign against teenage pregnancy were some of the recommendations made.

5.4 Recommendations

This study makes the following recommendations as per the objectives of the study;

5.4.1 Recommendations on Pastoral Role

The church leadership should help in;

- i) Addressing the harmful traditional practices that may be related to socio-cultural and religious beliefs, including female genital mutilation/cutting, early marriage, gender based violence, and violent discipline.
- ii) Provide services and programs to protect children and teenagers from being exposed to both consented or/and forced sexual activities which lead to exposure to teenage pregnancies among high school girls.
- iii) Organize conferences, seminars and trainings for the children and teenagers and giving them a platform to come up with their own tailor-made and friendly solutions to the problem. This can be a good opportunity for the church leadership to understand how best to tackle the challenge of teenage pregnancy from the teenagers perspective.
- iv) Organizing special training for the pastors, other church leaders and parents on how best to handle teenage pregnancy in their respective areas of leadership in order to prevent the occurrence of teenage pregnancy.
- v) Being proactive by strengthening the educational programs, introduce mentorship programs, guidance and counselling and church welfare which takes care of the needs of needy teenagers.
- vi) Being intentional in preaching and providing moral guidance and need for total avoidance of sin (especially sexual sin) in order to avoid teenage pregnancies among high school girls.
- vii) The study also made a recommendation to have theological training institute come up with a program that will train the pastors they train on how to handle teenage pregnancy

5.4.2 Recommendations on Catechism Training

- i) Church leaders should take Catechism class seriously by in order to make sure that children grow with the knowledge of the church doctrines especially on sexual morality.
- ii) Church leadership should come up with a well thought mechanism of training catechists in order to help them articulate the biblical and doctrinal principles that will discourage teenage sexual involvement that leads to teenage pregnancy
- iii) Church leadership should revisit catechism curriculum in order to make sure it is effectively handling the issues about teenage pregnancy.

5.4.3 Recommendations on advocacy role

- i) The church leaders should collaborate with local and national authorities for effective prevention of teenage pregnancy among high school girls.
- ii) Pastors among other church leaders should take a leading role in creating awareness on teenage pregnancy in places where some cultural practices are detouring advances against this problem.
- iii) The church leadership should partner with the schools in order to invite professionals and children supporting NGOs, FBOs and CBOs to talk to teenagers and children in their schools on how to avoid teenage pregnancy.
- iv) The Church leaders should engage the members and other well-wishers in order to pool up resources that could be used in assisting the girl child in getting the basic needs like the sanitary towels in order to boost their self-esteem and reduce dependency on borrowing money from the wrong sources.

- v) The church leadership should also collaborate with the schools they sponsor in order to develop chaplaincy department. This will help teenagers to have someone they can be comfortable sharing their issues with without fear of possible disciplinary repercussions in addressing teenage pregnancy.
- vi) The study also made a recommendation that the Government (both national and devolved) should be involving the church in their discussions and interventions towards addressing teenage pregnancy.
- vii) The government also should incorporate the church leadership in coming up with a proper and widely acceptable sex education curriculum for both primary and secondary schools.

5.4.5 Recommendation for Further Research

The study recommends further research on;

- i) Inclusion of church leaders in policy making processes pertaining teenage pregnancy among high school girls.
- ii) The content of the catechism curriculum on addressing teenage pregnancies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix i: Letter of Introduction

I am a post graduate student at Kenya Methodist University pursuing a master' s degree in Religious Studies. The title of the study is: **“ROLE OF CHURCH LEADERS IN ADDRESSING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES AMONG HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS IN TIGANIA CENTAL, MERU COUNTY”**. I would be grateful if you consent to participate in this survey, through filling the questionnaire provided. The information provided will only be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with uttermost confidentiality.

Thank you for consenting to participate in this study.

Yours Sincerely

Signature

Itonga Silas Murithi

Appendix ii: Informed Consent

I Having been informed of the purpose of this research on “ROLE OF CHURCH LEADERS IN ADDRESSING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES AMONG HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS IN TIGANIA CENTAL MERU COUNTY” and having been assured of the confidentiality of my information do hereby consent to participate in the research.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix iii: Church leaders research questionnaire

Section A: General introduction

Please tick the answer appropriately

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Highest level of education
 Primary
 Secondary
 College/Technical institution
 University
 None
3. Please identify the position you hold in your Church
 Clergy
 Chairperson
 Youth patron
 Catechist
4. Please indicate the duration of your service as a Church leader
 1-5 years
 6-10 years
 11-15 years
 More than 15 years

Section B: Teenage pregnancy

Please tick the most appropriate answer

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
There are cases of teenage pregnancy among high school girls					
Teenage pregnancy is prevalent in high schools within Tigania Central					
Attitude towards pre-marital sex plays a role in increasing teenage pregnancy among high school girls					
Culture and attitude towards sexual behavior plays a role in increasing teenage pregnancy among high school girls					
Teenagers' view on contraception plays a role in increasing pregnancy among high school girls					

Section C: Pastoral role of Church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancies

Please tick the most appropriate answer

	Strongly agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
I use pastoral programs in addressing teenage pregnancy					
I participate in pastoral care with teenagers in order to address teenage pregnancy					
I offer pastoral care to teen's parents in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls					
I use my pastoral role in helping teenagers change cultural beliefs that promote teenage pregnancy					
I offer pastoral care to assist teenagers to resist peer pressure towards irresponsible sexual behavior					
I mentor teenagers in order to address teenage pregnancy					
I draw relevant programs that help in addressing teenage pregnancy					
I instruct teenagers on how to avoid irresponsible sex behavior					
I offer discipleship programs in addressing teenage pregnancy					
I offer Sunday school programs that encourage delay the first sexual encounter among children /teenagers					
I offer bible-based instructions that address teenage pregnancy					
I offer age- appropriate sex education to children/teenagers					
I use health professionals to offer education that address teenage pregnancies					
I conduct seminars/workshops/home instructions in addressing teenage pregnancies					

Section D: Catechism training in addressing teenage pregnancies

Please tick the most appropriate answer

	Totally agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
My Church offers catechism training (class)					
I train children on the church beliefs on premarital sex in order to address teenage pregnancy					
The content of catechism class I offer is tailored to address teenage pregnancy					
I teach a culture that discourage teenage pregnancy among high school girls					
I offer training to catechists on how to handle teenage pregnancy topics					
Write your suggestion on how to improve catechism training in addressing teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Tigania Central, Meru County					

Section E: Advocacy role of Church leaders in addressing teenage pregnancies

Please tick the most appropriate answer

	Strongly agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
I use advocacy in addressing teenage pregnancy					
I participate in drawing pastoral program instruction curriculum in schools. which helps in addressing teenage pregnancy					
I am involved in teaching P.P.1 in schools which helps in addressing teenage pregnancy					
I work with N.G.O and community in addressing teenage pregnancy					

Appendix iv: Focus group discussion

1. How prevalent would you say teenage pregnancy is among high school girls?

.....
.....

.....Explain some of the activities Church leaders have been involved in as a way of helping to address teenage pregnancy among high school girls

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Explain some of the pastoral activities Church leaders engage in and how they help in reducing teenage pregnancy among high school girls.

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. Please explain how Church leaders can use catechism instruction to discourage teenage pregnancy among high school girls.

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Explain some of the advocacy activities your Church leaders engage in to help in reducing teenage pregnancy among high school girls.

.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix v: NACOSTI research permit

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 509423	Date of Issue: 30/June/2023
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Rev.. SILAS MURITHI of Kenya Methodist University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Meru on the topic: ROLE OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN AVERTING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES AMONG HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS IN TIGANIA CENTAL, MERU COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 30/June/2024.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/23/27258	
509423 Applicant Identification Number	 Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
	Verification QR Code 
NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.	
See overleaf for conditions	

Appendix vi: Introduction letter from KeMU



KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

P. O. Box 267 Meru - 60200, Kenya

Fax: 254-64-30162

Tel: 254-064-30301/31229/30367/31171

Email: deanrd@kemu.ac.ke

DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

June 13, 2023

Commission Secretary,
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations,
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: ITONGA SILAS MURITHI – (REG. NO. MAR-3-0006-1/2021)

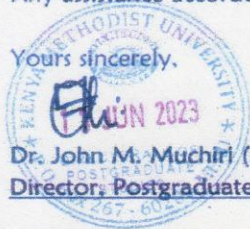
This is to confirm that the above named person is a bona fide student of Kenya Methodist University, in the School of Education and Social Sciences, Department of Theology, Religious Studies and Counselling undertaking Master of Arts Degree in Religious Studies. He is conducting research on: "Role of Church Leadership in Averting Teenage Pregnancies among High School Girls in Tigania Central, Meru County, Kenya".

We confirm that his research proposal has been presented and approved by the University.

In this regard, we are requesting your office to issue a research license to enable him collect data.

Any assistance accorded to him will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. John M. Muchiri (PhD)
Director, Postgraduate Studies

Cc: Dean SESS
CoD, TRSC
Program Coordinator - TRSC
Student Supervisors