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ROLE OF MOTHERS' UNION IN MITIGATING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH, DIOCESE OF MASENO SOUTH, KISUMU COUNTY

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ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN THEOLOGY

OCTOBER, 2026

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DECLARATION

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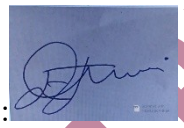
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all members of the Mothers' Union of the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South, whose tireless efforts in guiding and nurturing young people continue to transform lives and strengthen communities. I also dedicate this to my dear beloved husband, Venerable George Rowa, and to my children, Rossy Agnes, Joyce Anne, and Jonathan Gideon, for their endless support throughout my studies, particularly in the writing of this research.

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ABSTRACT

Teenage pregnancy remains a socio-economic, pastoral, and educational challenge in Kenya, especially in the rural and informal settlements. In Kisumu, and specifically within the Anglican Church, Diocese of Maseno South, increasing cases of poverty, school dropout, early marriages, and sexual and reproductive health education challenges among teenagers have raised concern among schools, families, churches, Non-Governmental Organizations, and government agencies. The study examined the role of the Mothers' Union in mitigating teenage pregnancies in the Anglican Church, Diocese of Maseno South, using a gender and theological perspective. The study was guided by the African Women's Theology and Afrocentric Womanist Paradigm. The research adopted a descriptive survey design using a qualitative approach. The target population included Mothers' Union leaders, clergy, Mothers' Union members, and teenagers within the Diocese of Maseno South. Data collection methods included semi-structured interview questions, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. The study examined theological principles underpinning the Mothers' Union's strategies and interventions in mitigating teenage pregnancies within the Diocese of Maseno South, evaluated gender dynamics influencing teenage pregnancies, and examined the effectiveness of the Mothers' Union's programs such as mentorship, Biblical teachings, economic empowerment, sexual education and counselling, among others. Existing studies indicate that the Mothers' Union play a vital role in family life, social welfare and women's economic empowerment within the Diocese of Maseno South. The findings are expected to contribute to the pastoral ministry, theological discourse, gender studies, and formulation of policies on adolescent reproductive health and church-based interventions. The findings reveal that the MU contributes significantly through spiritual formation, mentorship, and advocacy against gender-based violence. However, its effectiveness is constrained by cultural taboos surrounding sexuality, limited engagement of male counterparts, and inadequate integration of comprehensive sexuality education. The study advocates for a contextual theological approach that integrates Christian ethics with gender-sensitive and practical reproductive health strategies. It concludes by recommending inclusive, holistic interventions that involve both genders and strengthen collaboration between church and community stakeholders. The study further proposed recommendations for strengthening the church's participation in addressing teenage pregnancies through gender sensitive pastoral care approaches, contextualised theology, and gender inclusive programs.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A.C.K.	Anglican Church of Kenya
AWT	African Women's Theology
CIRLCE	Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender Based Violence
KAMA	Kenya Anglican Men's Association
MU	Mothers' Union

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DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

Mothers' Union: A global Christian women's organization founded within the Anglican Communion, committed to promoting family life, supporting marriage, nurturing children, and strengthening communities through prayer, Education, and advocacy. In this Study, it specifically refers to the branch in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South and its church-based programs that seek to address teenage pregnancy.

Teenage Pregnancy: The condition in which a girl becomes pregnant between the ages of 13-19. In the context of this research, it includes both planned and unplanned pregnancies occurring before the age of 20 within the Diocese of Maseno South. Teenage pregnancy is recognized as a major public health and social concern, often linked to lack of Education, cultural practices, poverty, and gender-based vulnerabilities.

Gender Perspective: An analytical framework that examines how cultural norms, societal structures, and power relations shape the roles, expectations, and opportunities of men and women. In this Study, it focuses on understanding how gendered socialisation, patriarchal norms, and unequal power relations contribute to teenage pregnancy and influence the strategies employed by the Mothers' Union.

Theology Perspective: The Study of God, faith, and religious beliefs, often interpreted through scripture, doctrines, and traditions. In this research, it refers to the interpretation and application of Christian theological principles, such as the doctrines of the A.C.K Diocese of Maseno South, as well as moral responsibility and community care that guide the Mothers' Union's response to teenage pregnancy.

Mitigation: The process of reducing the severity, frequency, or negative consequences of a problem. In this study, it refers to the Mothers' Union's preventive and remedial strategies

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designed to reduce the incidence and impact of teenage pregnancies in the Diocese of Maseno South.

Church-Based Interventions: Social or health-related programs initiated, supported, or implemented by religious organisations, guided by faith principles, aimed at addressing moral, spiritual, and community issues. In this research, it refers to the church-based initiatives of the Mothers' Union targeting the prevention and reduction of teenage pregnancy.

African Women's Theology: This is a contextual theological approach that emerged as a response to the marginalisation of women's voices in both African traditional cultures and the Christian Church, seeking to articulate theology from the lived experiences, struggles, and aspirations of African women, affirming their dignity and agency in the face of gendered oppression. In this research, it was used to guide the study to examine roles and strategies of Mothers' Union in mitigating teenage pregnancies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Background of the study

Teenage pregnancies remain a significant public health and socio-economic issue in Kenya. Early childbearing and marriage are common among teenage girls. According to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2022, (2023) approximately 15% of adolescent girls aged 15–19 have started childbearing; 12% have had a live birth, 1% have experienced a pregnancy loss, and 3% are pregnant with their first child. Socio-economic disparities, cultural norms and practices, limited access to reproductive health care, and inadequate sexual education contribute to the high rate of teenage pregnancy in Kenya.

In Kenya, adolescent pregnancy is not only a reproductive health issue but also affects the current and future socio-economic well-being of women. Since COVID-19, teenage pregnancies have become increasingly challenging. The outbreak led to a loss of livelihoods in low-income communities, forcing some children into income-generating activities to support their families. Additionally, Kimaiyo, (2021, p. 20) argues that school closures halted the provision of school meals and sanitary towels, which children from low-income families depended on for their well-being. This situation placed teenage girls at risk of engaging in sexual activities to obtain basic needs for themselves and their families.

Early childbearing denies girls the opportunity to complete their education and develop human capital skills vital for employment and participation in decision-making on key development issues (Were, 2007). The problem is especially increasing in rural areas, where socio-cultural norms, economic hardships, and limited access to sexual and reproductive health information increase the risk. However, the extent of the problem varies across counties, with some experiencing higher prevalence rates than others.

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The Anglican Church of Kenya (A.C.K.) Diocese of Maseno South, like many other regions in Kenya, faces the challenge of teenage pregnancies. Maseno South Diocese covers rural, urban, and informal settlements of Kisumu County. Within the Diocese, adolescent pregnancy is identified as both a moral and pastoral challenge. Teenage pregnancies remain high in this area due to key driving factors such as poverty, cultural practices like early marriage, disco "matangas" (funeral discos), gender-based violence, and limited sex education by the church due to theological interpretations of the Bible and doctrinal policies.

Given the limited resources in rural areas, girls are often forced to drop out of school or marry at an early age. Additionally, the inability to meet basic personal material needs makes teenage girls susceptible to premarital sex in exchange for trifles, predisposing them to unwanted pregnancies (Were, 2007). Within the church, sex is considered sacred and is not discussed in public. Church structures often create bias, intimidation, stigmatization, and shame toward teen mothers and their parents.

According to Chisale and Moyo (2016, p. 84), in the Lutheran Church, there was glaring discrimination in the administration of church discipline, evident in the number of young women not receiving Holy Communion who appeared to be under discipline for teen mothers. In the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South, teen mothers must go through a disciplinary panel (Parish Council) before being readmitted to Holy Communion. This practice stigmatizes and discriminates against them because the men who impregnate them are free to partake of Holy Communion.

Addressing unintended pregnancy is critical, given its adverse consequences, including intimate partner violence, depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety, stress, lower relationship satisfaction and lack of social support, and even death, (Cury, et al., 2017) pp. 65–74). Faith-based and government institutions have implemented various strategies to address teenage pregnancies in Kenya.

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Since teenage pregnancy is a societal concern, Mbogo (2021, p. 278) asserts that multidimensional, multi-sectoral, and multi-agency interventions can create programs with the potential to reduce teenage pregnancies by lowering school dropout rates, improving academic performance, offering reproductive health training, identifying and deploying talent, equipping youth for wealth creation, and addressing retrogressive cultural practices. Counselling and mentorship form integral parts of government intervention strategies aimed at reducing teenage pregnancies. The Kenyan government, through the Ministries of Health and Education and various non-governmental organisations (NGOs), has implemented numerous interventions to address teenage pregnancies (Murithi, et al., 2024, p. 83).

The Church, however, has a pastoral responsibility in addressing teenage pregnancy. For example, the Black church in America highlights the significance of pastoral care in addressing teenage pregnancies. Pastors view the church as an appropriate place to discourage the vice by training and encouraging parents to become the primary source of their teenage children's knowledge of sexuality and sex education (Murithi, et al., 2024, p. 83). This role, however, contradicts that of other churches that remain silent on matters of sex, arguing that it is the responsibility of parents to talk to their children about sexual education. In response, they blame parents for failing to offer sex education to their teenage children, asserting that the Church has no such responsibility (Murithi, et al., 2024, p. 83).

From this background, the study sought to examine the role of the Mothers' Union (M.U.) in mitigating teenage pregnancies in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South from a gender and theology perspective. Mothers' Union is a Christian organization within the Anglican Communion was founded by Mary Sumner in the year 1876 AD. She wanted to create an organization for women that brought together the rich and the poor, the talented and the unskilled, the educated and the illiterate, to build a network that would support Mothers of all kinds as they bring up their children in the Christian faith.

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Accordingly, (Mothers' Union, 2026) the organization's teachings maintain sexual abstinence, as biblically founded, as morally acceptable, while pre-marital sex, which leads to early pregnancy, is condemned; hence, teenage pregnancy is viewed as sin. The Diocese of Maseno South, through the M.U., is actively involved in women's and youth empowerment initiatives, including programs that promote moral guidance and family stability rooted in Christian teachings. The M.U. emphasizes family well-being, health education, mentorship, empowerment, and community support as crucial components in addressing teenage pregnancies.

As such, church leaders are encouraged to develop teen-friendly programs within the Church, such as counselling sessions, teen rallies, and pastoral visits, to empower youth to overcome teenage pregnancy (Murithi, et al., 2024, p. 84). Despite the efforts of the M.U. in implementing key programs, teenage pregnancy rates in the Diocese remain high, raising questions about the effectiveness and theological basis of M.U.'s interventions, particularly regarding gender issues.

While previous studies have focused on the prevalence and determinants of unintended pregnancy among women of reproductive age and on interventions from social science perspectives, research focusing on the role of church-based women's organisations in mitigating teenage pregnancy especially in Kenya remains scarce. Notably, the extent, methods, and theological basis of the M.U.'s efforts have not been comprehensively studied.

This study, therefore, examined how the M.U., a women-led organization in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South, employs theological and gender-responsive approaches to address teenage pregnancies.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Teenage pregnancy remains a serious challenge in Kisumu County, despite interventions by government agencies, schools, churches, and NGOs. Many teenage girls

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face stigmatization, school dropout, early marriage, poverty, and limited economic opportunities. Despite the active involvement of the Mothers' Union in family and community life, limited scholarly attention has been given to its role in mitigating teenage pregnancies within the Diocese of Maseno South; teenage pregnancy rates remain high. Existing literature and studies have focused on women's empowerment, family life, and community outreach within the mothers' union. Similarly, other studies have focused on the determinants of teenage pregnancy. There is limited research examining how the Mothers' Union's theological teachings and gender sensitive approaches mitigate teenage pregnancies within the Diocese of Maseno South. This study aimed to address that gap.

1.2. Research Objectives

1.2.1 General objective

This Study aimed to examine the role of Mothers' Union in A.C.K. Maseno South in mitigating teenage pregnancies.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

The following objectives guided the Study:

1. To identify key driving factors of teenage pregnancies in the A.C.K. Maseno South Diocese region.
2. To examine the theological principles underpinning the Mothers' Union's approach to mitigating teenage pregnancies in the Anglican Church, Diocese of Maseno South
3. To analyse the effectiveness of the Mothers' Union's intervention in addressing teenage pregnancies in the A.C.K Diocese of Maseno South.

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4. To assess the gender dynamics influencing teenage pregnancies within the Diocese of Maseno South.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What are the key factors driving teenage pregnancies in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South?
2. What theological principles guide the M.U.'s approach to mitigating teenage pregnancies in the Diocese?
3. How effective are the Mothers' Union's interventions in addressing teenage pregnancies in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South?
4. How do gender dynamics contribute to teenage pregnancies?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research provided insights into church-based interventions by integrating gender and theological perspectives. The findings will guide policy and program development for the Mothers' Union, the Anglican Church leadership, and other Christian organisations aiming to implement effective, theologically grounded, and gender-sensitive responses to social issues, particularly teenage pregnancy. The Mothers' Union and similar faith-based organisations will receive evidence-based recommendations to enhance their initiatives.

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1.5 Justification of the Study

Researchers such as Mbogo recommend (2021, p. 278) that multidimensional and multi-sectoral, including multi-agency interventions, can create programs with the potential to reduce teenage pregnancies. Subsequently, by lowering school dropout rates, improving academic performance, training on reproductive health, identifying and deploying talent, equipping for wealth creation and addressing retrogressive cultural practices. The study

sought to examine the MU's theological and gender perspectives in mitigating teenage pregnancies. Teenage pregnancy remains a persistent challenge in Kenya, with negative effects on adolescent girls' education, future, health, spiritual, and socio-economic prospects. The Mothers' Union, as a grassroots church-based organization, occupies a unique position of influence within the community. Its moral authority, extensive networks, and commitment to Christian family values make it a potentially powerful agent for social change. However, while the M.U's interventions in mitigating teenage pregnancies are recognized informally, there is lack of empirical research documenting their nature, scope, and effectiveness, particularly when analyzed through the combined lenses of gender and theology.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study focused on the role of MU in the ACK Diocese of Maseno South, Kisumu County, with specific Parishes such as Diemo and Greater Kisumu. Diemo Parish is in the rural part of the Diocese, while Greater Kisumu is in an informal settlement in Kisumu Town. The prevalence of teenage pregnancies in rural and informal settlements are high compared to urban settlements. The study conducted by Gillespie *et al.* (2021, p. 2128) found that adolescent girls in informal settlements live within a constellation of disadvantages that influence the risk of unintended pregnancy as well as give rise to challenges in coping with motherhood. Additionally, in the informal settlements, some adolescents lived with extended family (an uncle or a brother; a 'mother' figure was not necessarily present), or some parents were absent all day, working in distant neighborhoods (Gillespie, et al., 2021).

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1.7 Limitations of the Study

A number of factors limited the study. First, some participants assumed the research was a charitable initiative and expected a financial token. Due to the sensitivity of the research, some participants feared confidentiality. This was addressed adequately.

1.8. Delimitation

The study was geographically confined to the ACK Diocese of Maseno South, Kisumu County, excluding other denominations and churches within the Kisumu County, and did not cover interventions by other denominations or secular organisations. Data collection was restricted to the mentioned target area and not to other institutions like schools and hospitals in order to maintain focus and manageability. Secondly, in terms of content, the study focused on mitigation strategies rather than post-pregnancy care. The study was guided by the Afrocentric-Womanist paradigm and African womanist theology since the focus was on the Theology and Gender perspectives of M.U in mitigating teenage pregnancies. Other theories were not considered to maintain consistency in the analysis.

1.9. Assumptions of the Study

This study assumed that the Mothers' Union in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South is actively engaged in activities aimed at preventing and mitigating teenage pregnancies, hence the relevance of the study. From its vision and purpose, the M.U is a global Christian movement focused on ending poverty, violence, and social injustice in communities across the UK and the world. Gender norms and relations significantly influence both the prevalence of teenage pregnancies and the strategies employed to address them. Therefore, M.U. is now seeking to collaborate with others within communities to promote cultural and attitudinal change (Anon., 2023).

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Theological principles derived from Christian teaching seeks to shape the Mothers' Union's understanding and response to teenage pregnancy. Respondents, including M.U. leaders, M.U. members, teenagers and clergy, will provide honest, accurate, and relevant information during data collection. The Study assumes that teenage pregnancy in the Diocese is influenced by a combination of socio-cultural, economic, and spiritual factors, making an integrated gender and theology approach necessary.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the role of the Mothers' Union in reducing teenage pregnancies in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South, with particular focus on Greater Kisumu and Diemo parishes, through the perspectives of theology and gender. Despite M.U.'s ongoing efforts, emphasizing moral guidance, family stability, and youth empowerment initiatives, teenage pregnancy rates remain high in the region. The Study aimed to identify M.U.'s current initiatives, examine how Christian teachings influence their strategies, and analyse how gender responsiveness is incorporated to address the issue.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section reviewed existing studies on teenage pregnancy, gender perspectives, theological approaches, and the current strategies the Mothers' Union uses to address teenage pregnancy within the A.C.K Diocese of Maseno South. It also made recommendations to strengthen the Mothers' Union's role in reducing teenage pregnancy in the Anglican Church, Diocese of Maseno South. Additionally, the chapter examined specific theories guiding the research, such as the Afrocentric-Womanist Paradigm and African Woman Theology.

2.2. Theoretical Framework.

2.2.1 Afrocentric-Womanist paradigm

The Afrocentric Womanist Theory is a framework that centers on African Women's experiences, cultural values, spirituality, and communal agency, in addressing social issues, like teenage pregnancy. The Afrocentric-Womanist Paradigm provides a platform where the researcher is intentional about investigating the various aspects of an African culture regarding the plight of women within different contexts of the same culture (Amenyedzi, 2024, p. 219). Furthermore, the Afrocentric-Womanist Paradigm provides a single model that allows an in-depth study of the African woman in a particular African context, which, in other words, may not be easily attainable without such a step-by-step approach (Amenyedzi, 2024, p. 220). Additionally, the paradigm located a study within a typical African cultural context and tried to understand the historical, religious, socio-cultural, political, economic, and other relevant implications of a phenomenon affecting the African

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woman (Amenyedzi, 2024, p. 219). This theory guides in analysing the redemptive elements of culture, and how they would influence the appreciation of the African woman. We must admit that while some cultural practices are harmful, devaluing, and discriminating against women, others are useful in addressing the situation of African women. African Womanist challenges dominant Western paradigms by focusing on African women's voices, promoting holistic well-being, and emphasizing social justice and spiritual strength.

Afrocentric Womanist Theory critically analyses the theological and religious view of women in the context of their plights. It is essential to understand how these religious/ Theologies respect, disrespect, humiliate, celebrate, or discriminate against women; a critical analysis of the plight of the African woman from a theological/religious point of view sets the stage for general attitudes towards her in other aspects of her socio-cultural life (Amenyedzi, 2024, p. 221). How does the Bible view women? Moreover, how about the culture?

This theory is significant in understanding how the M.U. interprets biblical teachings to empower women, especially teen mothers, rather than criticize and discriminate against them. It guides M.U. in applying the biblical teachings on chastity, abstinence, and sexual and reproductive health education. Teenage mothers often face societal and church discrimination and stigma, which portrays these teen mothers as immoral, lesser women and lacking vision. Mothers of such teen mothers are not only viewed as lacking parenting skills, but also as not godly. Using the story of Hagar in Genesis Chapter 1, verse 6, the M.U. advocates for marginalised teen mothers and their mothers. This enhances the M.U.'s non-stigmatising programs and systematic advocacy.

This theory is important for M.U. in navigating harmful traditions while respecting African cultural identity. The plight of young women is motivated by early marriage as a cultural practice that drives teen girls into teenage pregnancies. Girls aged 13-19 who get

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pregnant are often forced into early marriages because of stigma and societal discrimination. The theory will guide M.U's interventions in challenging gendered double standards and communal responsibility, critically analysing gender and power dynamics in teenage pregnancies.

The relationship between culture and theological interpretation requires particular attention in this research. An Afrocentric-Womanist reading does not assume that all inherited communal practices are oppressive, nor does it regard every appeal to tradition as protective. Instead, it asks whose interests a practice serves, whether young women can exercise meaningful agency, and how the community responds when harm occurs. Amenyedzi (2024) provides a basis for examining culture from within its own historical and religious setting. Applied to the Mothers' Union, this approach invites consideration of the positive resources available through intergenerational mentoring, collective responsibility and community solidarity, alongside the need to challenge silence surrounding coercion, unequal sexual expectations and forced marriage. It also shifts attention from individual moral failure to the relationships and institutions that shape adolescents' options.

A further implication is methodological. If church leaders or parents speak about young mothers, their own accounts may disappear beneath institutional interpretations. The Afrocentric-Womanist paradigm therefore supports listening to teenagers as knowledgeable interpreters of their circumstances, while recognising differences in age, education, household resources and social position. The study can consequently assess whether Mothers' Union programmes are designed with adolescents or delivered to them. The distinction matters: a programme may be culturally familiar and well attended yet fail to address the pressures that participants identify as most important. This analytical emphasis complements, rather than replaces, the theological concern for dignity and care.

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2.2.2. African Women's Theology

The African Women's Theology (AWT) is one of the youngest 21st-century contemporary theologies in Africa. AWT was born in 1989, in Accra-Ghana, when Mercy Amba Oduyoye gave the keynote address that inaugurated the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (the Circle). The basic aim of the Circle is the need to rediscover the dignity and respect of humanity. AWT emphasizes on themes such as community care, justice, reconciliation, and the transformation of social structures that perpetuate injustice. During the inauguration of the CIRCLE, Oduyoye urged African Christianity to do a "two-winged" theology through which both women and men could communicate with God (Gathogo, 2008, p. 75). Apart from Oduyoye, other founders of the Circle include Betty Ekeya, Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike, Musimbi Kanyoro, Rosemary Edet, and Rachel Tetteh.

African Women's Theology examines African culture and demonstrates an understanding of women as a distinct group with inherent varieties within this category. Furthermore, AWT incorporates the experiences of African women into its perspectives while analysing women's subordination (Maseno, 2021). AWT basically articulates theology from the lived experiences, aspirations, and struggles of African women, affirming their dignity and agency in the face of gendered oppression.

Experiences of African women vary from context to context, influenced by factors such as educational background, socio-cultural background, and religious background, among others. According to Maseno (2021), some of these experiences include African women theologians' experiences or those that they have heard from the experiences of others on issues such as women labourers, sexual exploitation, oppressive hierarchical structures in the churches, oppressive customs, and marriage structures. Women's experiences are shared in storytelling, which is an effective approach to addressing women's issues and involves listening to their experiences as they share them. Gathogo (2008, p. 4) observed

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that storytelling as a methodology in doing African Women's theologies is an essential approach for doing any reconstructive theology in post-Cold War Africa.

The AWT expresses concern about how African Christianity has been shaped by the traditional belief in God and the transcendent order. Oduyoye (2000, p. 99) argues that proclaiming the divinity of Christ is in the dimension of faith, but his lordship over life is clear from the style of life he lived. Gathogo (2008, p. 7), explains that Jesus is seen as a conqueror, as a liberator, as a personal saviour, as the embodiment of the Spirit, as an iconoclast prophet, as a mother, as both mother and Father, Mtumishi Kwa Wote (Swahili for "servant of all"), as one who lightens burdens, as the one who midwives the birth of the new society, and as one who satisfies any circumstance, among others.

Biblical hermeneutics is a key component of AWT's concern, as expressed in the Circle. According to Mombo (2003, p. 94) the Bible has to be understood and interpreted in terms of the readers' specific situations, their problems, their needs, and their anxieties. Mombo (2003, p. 94), expounds that this new approach has been readily adopted by liberation theologians in their quest to read and understand the Bible in a manner that can liberate women and men from oppression based on gender, race, and class. This approach is referred to as the 'reader-centred approach'. AWT emphasises reading the Bible within the context and from the perspective that restores the dignity of women and liberates them from oppressive cultural practices and structures.

AWT has a whole life for a context, where African women extract meaning from it. According to Oduyoye (2001, p. 25), women's theology is crafted amid the ongoing life in Africa, overshadowed by economic exploitation, political instability and militarism. An objective critique of African cultures is a component of AWT within the Circle. Mombo, while quoting scholarly work of other theologians, acknowledges that there are 'favourable aspects of our culture which enhance the well-being of women'. Unfortunately, such aspects

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have been suppressed. On the contrary, those aspects which diminish women continue to be practised to varying degrees in our societies, often making women objects of cultural preservation (2003, p. 98).

African Women's Theology is relevant for the study in several ways. It provides a framework for analysing how M.U. members, as African Christian women, experience and respond to the challenge of teenage pregnancies within the Diocese of Maseno South. In criticising patriarchal structures, AWT offers tools for questioning socio-cultural norms and church traditions that may inadvertently contribute to the vulnerability of teenage girls. It also supports an understanding of theology as both spiritual and practical, hence calling for interventions to be biblically grounded and socially transformative.

African Women's Theology also provides a way to distinguish Christian teaching from the social practices through which teaching is enforced. Mombo (2003, p. 96) argues for interpretation that takes the circumstances of readers seriously, while Oduyoye (2001) locates theology within the struggles of everyday African life. In this study, these insights suggest that teaching about chastity should be examined together with the treatment of girls who become pregnant, the responsibility assigned to male partners, and the material support available after childbirth. A theological message about human worth becomes less persuasive when institutional procedures publicly expose a young mother but leave the father unchallenged. Conversely, confidential accompaniment, truthful discussion and practical assistance may embody the restorative dimension of Christian discipleship.

The emphasis on storytelling is especially relevant to the contrast between institutional intentions and lived experience. Leaders may describe mentorship as successful because meetings take place regularly, whereas adolescents may assess success in terms of whether they can ask questions safely, remain in school, seek help after abuse or access a trusted adult. Gathogo (2008, p. 77) and Maseno (2021) offer a rationale for taking such

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experience seriously in theological reflection. These perspectives help connect the present study's interview and focus-group evidence with its theoretical commitments. They also guard against assuming that all women share the same priorities: adult Mothers' Union members, younger unmarried girls and adolescent mothers may interpret the same intervention differently.

2.3. Empirical literature

2.4. Causes and Consequences of Teenage Pregnancy

Scholars have identified several key factors associated with teen pregnancies globally.

2.4.1. General factors

In his article, Noutche (2024, p. 152) explores the complex factors contributing to high rates of teenage pregnancy, including poverty, the child grant system, parental influence, promiscuity, and the exploitation of young girls by adult predators. For example, in Kisumu, the motorcycle riders sexually exploit teenage girls in the name of providing financial support for personal effects.

2.4.2. socio-economic factors

Researchers have defined teenage pregnancy as predominantly a social problem. Poverty is listed as the key factor causing teenage pregnancies globally. According to Were (2007, p. 322), for instance, given limited resources in rural areas, girls are forced to drop out of school or get married at an early age. Additionally, the inability to meet basic personal material needs makes teenage girls susceptible to pre-marital sex in exchange for trifles. Girls tend to get lured by men, especially the "*Boda Boda"* (motorcycle men), into unprotected sex, which leads to unwanted pregnancies and Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

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Girls from low-income contexts seem to be more vulnerable than those from high-income contexts.

The literature suggests that adolescent pregnancy should not be explained as an isolated consequence of individual decision-making. Economic insecurity interacts with household responsibilities, unequal access to education, and dependence on older partners. Were (2007, p. 228) links limited resources in rural communities with school discontinuation, early marriage and relationships formed in exchange for material assistance. This argument is particularly relevant to the present study because the Diocese of Maseno South includes both rural parishes and urban informal settlements, where households may experience different but overlapping forms of economic hardship. Poverty may restrict access to transport, school supplies, menstrual hygiene materials and reliable information, thereby reducing the choices available to adolescent girls. However, poverty alone does not inevitably result in pregnancy: the availability of supportive adults, schooling, protection mechanisms and safe livelihood opportunities may alter outcomes. Consequently, a more convincing explanation examines how material deprivation combines with gender expectations and institutional failures. A Mothers' Union response grounded in this literature would need to address immediate welfare concerns while also examining the social relationships through which financial dependence becomes sexual vulnerability. This interpretation extends the socio-economic discussion beyond attributing pregnancy to poverty as a single cause.

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2.4.3 Peer pressure and Substance use

Teens often feel pressured to conform to the behaviors of their peers, including engaging in premature sexual activities. Teens may be influenced to normalize sexual activities to fit or be accepted in the group of their peers. Across a variety of cultural settings, adolescents tend to be friends with those who are most like them. In fact, socio-demographic

characteristics are usually the strongest predictors of friendship. Different types of peer groups have unique capacities to encourage negative or positive behaviours in their members (Isuku, 2015, p. 92). Teenagers tend to rely on friends and peers for information about their character formation, and most often they are misled and misguided. Isuku (2015, p. 90) noted that if a girl of 15 does not have a boyfriend, some of her friends are going to consider her as an idiot. The next thing is that she prepares herself to prove that she is not an idiot by getting a boyfriend and end up falling pregnant and, all of a sudden, does have to take care of an unplanned child

Substance use among adolescents increases the risk of unplanned pregnancies. For instance, in the year 2011, 75% of school-going teenagers were reported to have used addictive substances such as bangi, marijuana, tobacco, alcohol, and other addictive illicit substances. Rates of unintended pregnancies are higher among substance-using women, especially opioid users. Among treatment-seeking pregnant women with opioid use disorders, 86% of pregnancies were reported to be unplanned (Heil, et al., 2011). Accordingly, Risk factors associated with unplanned pregnancy included substance intoxication during sexual activity and lack of contraceptive use (Connery, et al., 2014, p. 191).

2.4.4 Cultural practices

Cultural practices require contextual rather than uniformly negative interpretation. The existing chapter discusses early marriage, initiation practices and funeral discos as circumstances associated with adolescent vulnerability. Such settings may increase exposure to unsupervised interactions in some communities, but their risks depend on the specific organisation of events, adult safeguarding and broader social conditions. African Women's Theology encourages critical engagement with culture, recognising both practices that sustain communal well-being and those that diminish the dignity of girls (Mombo, 2003;

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Oduyoye, 2001). This approach avoids equating African cultural identity with harm. Community celebrations can potentially become spaces for protective messaging, intergenerational dialogue and collective responsibility. Conversely, social expectations that pressure families to arrange early marriages or conceal abuse require explicit challenge. The Mothers' Union may have access to community networks that formal institutions find difficult to reach, yet effectiveness depends on whether its members can question harmful norms without alienating the people whose participation is needed. The present study can therefore examine how culturally sensitive interventions are negotiated in practice and whether adolescents themselves have a voice in identifying unsafe environments.

2.4.4 Peer networks, digital environments and the need for critical interpretation

This factor can sometimes influence adolescents positively and negatively. However, it has been demonstrated that peer pressure and social media, if not guided by parents or adults, can result in immoral behavior that may influence increased teenage pregnancy cases, which have resulted in high levels of school dropout. Notably, findings by Ameripus et.al (2022) revealed that students' access to social networking sites had increased, with much focus on sexually explicit music, sexual videos, and socialisation on media. There was limited use of social media for academic purposes. The Study concluded that social media contributed to teenage pregnancy, which affected educational performance.

The existing literature in this thesis associates some media consumption with adolescent vulnerability, but correlation should not automatically be interpreted as proof that social media causes pregnancy. A stronger analysis asks what information young people encounter, how they evaluate it, and whether they have trusted opportunities to discuss it. For the Mothers' Union, this suggests moving from blanket condemnation of technology

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toward media literacy, mentoring and constructive communication. Such interventions could address online pressure, exploitation and misinformation without assuming that all adolescents have identical digital access or experiences. The distinction matters in rural and informal-settlement contexts where access to phones, data and private communication may differ substantially.

2.4.5 Lack of Sexual and Reproductive Education, Health consequences and access to appropriate care

Lack of comprehensive education on sex and reproductive health leaves teenage girls and boys vulnerable. Kimaiyo (2021, p. 21), argues that lack of comprehensive sex education, a global coverage measure related to sexuality education, estimates that only 36% of young men and 24% of young women aged between 15-24 years in low and middle-income countries have comprehensive and correct knowledge of how to prevent pregnancy. Lack of exposure to preventive measures for early pregnancies leaves girls vulnerable. Sex education is effective within both the family context and the church. Furthermore, Kimiyo (2021, p. 20), states that efforts to incorporate sex education in the education systems have faced a lot of opposition from conservative and religious groups. Currently, when sex education is taught, the focus is primarily on HIV/AIDS prevention and abstinence, which means teenagers' knowledge of reproduction and sexual health is often limited. According to researchers, comprehensive sexuality education has long been acknowledged as an effective deterrent for early and unplanned pregnancies among young girls. Health consequences and access to appropriate care

Teenage pregnancy can create substantial physical and psychological health needs, although outcomes vary with age, pre-existing health, nutrition and access to timely care. Pregnancy and childbirth may involve complications, and adolescents who fear disclosure may delay antenatal attention. The thesis also identifies anxiety, stress and limited social

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support among possible consequences of unintended pregnancy (Cury et al., 2017). These effects should not be treated as universal experiences: some adolescent mothers receive strong family and community support, while others face isolation or violence. A careful literature review therefore distinguishes possible risks from inevitable outcomes. In pastoral settings, confidentiality and non-judgmental listening may determine whether a pregnant adolescent seeks professional assistance. The Mothers' Union cannot replace trained health workers, but its networks may facilitate information-sharing, accompaniment and appropriate referral. It is equally important that health discussions do not reduce a pregnant adolescent to a medical problem; her agency, educational goals and spiritual life remain relevant. A holistic framework connects health care with protection, family support and the reduction of stigma, providing a basis for evaluating whether church programmes respond to the full circumstances of adolescent motherhood

The reviewed literature is relevant because the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South operates within the same socio-cultural environment where poverty, funeral discos (disco matanga), peer influence, and inadequate reproductive health education contribute to teenage pregnancy. However, while previous studies identify these determinants, they do not examine how the Mothers' Union responds to these factors through its church-based interventions, biblical teachings, mentorship programmes, counselling, and community outreach.

The consequences of adolescent pregnancy should be considered as a connected sequence rather than as isolated outcomes. Pregnancy may interrupt schooling, but whether interruption becomes permanent can depend on household support, childcare arrangements, stigma and the responsiveness of educational institutions. Economic hardship can precede pregnancy and intensify after childbirth, creating a cycle in which reduced educational opportunity limits future earning capacity. Were (2007, p. 330) draws attention to the

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economic pressures facing girls in resource-constrained settings. For the present study, this means that prevention cannot be evaluated only by the number of moral instruction sessions delivered. It is also necessary to ask whether church-based support strengthens girls' ability to remain in education, obtain reliable guidance and avoid relationships marked by material dependence.

Risk factors may also interact differently in rural and informal-settlement contexts. The thesis identifies Diemo and Greater Kisumu as contrasting parish settings. In one setting, travel distances, household livelihoods and customary expectations may shape access to services; in another, overcrowding, insecure income and reduced parental supervision may create different vulnerabilities. These are possibilities to investigate, not findings that can be presumed from location alone. The literature on informal settlements cited in the thesis, including Gillespie et al. (2021, p. 2130), supports attention to the wider conditions of adolescent life. A contextual review therefore asks which factors are shared across settings and which require locally adapted Mothers' Union responses.

2.4.6 Synthesis of causes, consequences and implications for Mothers' Union interventions

The reviewed literature establishes teenage pregnancy as a multidimensional concern rather than a single moral or behavioural problem. Poverty, unequal gender relations, educational barriers, limited access to reliable information, peer expectations and unsafe social environments can interact to shape vulnerability (Were, 2007; Kimaiyo, 2021; Mella, 2022). The consequences likewise encompass schooling, livelihoods, health, relationships and participation in religious life. These factors are not experienced identically by every adolescent, and evidence from other locations should not be assumed to describe Maseno South without local investigation. The principal gap for this study is therefore not simply identifying another list of causes, but understanding how a specific Anglican

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women's organisation interprets those causes and translates its theology into action. A comprehensive response would combine prevention, safeguarding, referral, mentoring, educational continuity and compassionate support for adolescent parents. It would also address male responsibility and avoid placing the entire burden of sexual morality on girls. The Afrocentric-Womanist Paradigm and African Women's Theology provide tools for assessing whether programmes respect cultural resources while challenging harmful power relations. In this way, the causes-and-consequences literature directly informs the study's examination of the Mothers' Union's theological foundations, gender responsiveness and perceived effectiveness

2.5 Gender dynamics on Teenage Pregnancy

Mella (2022, p. 25) explains that norms are attributed to firmly held beliefs about the characteristics ascribed to specific groups of people, in this case, gender; in addition, people are deeply immersed in the gender ideologies of their community and the construction of how men and women should think and behave by the time they start to learn how to socialize. Research on teenage pregnancy from a gender lens reveals complex dynamics and norms. Among the challenges of gender equality are those expectations that communities have about girls and early motherhood, sexual violence, and rape, early marriages of children to older men coupled with the unique risks faced by these girls during pregnancy, for example, the interruption of their education, health risks, such as HIV, premature birth, and increased maternal mortality, denying the girls the right to live a healthy life (Risenga & Mboweni, 2023). There is a great possibility that these constructs on how men and women should behave have a significant influence that leads adolescents to engage in early sex, hence resulting in early pregnancy (Mella, 2022, p. 26). Gender norms and attitudes are evident in many contexts. For example, Mella (2022, p. 27) states that gender norms in the Philippines are apparent in various aspects of society, including

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school systems, dating, marriage, and especially families. Even in church and religious contexts, gender norms significantly influence people's attitudes and behaviour toward one another. These social expectations from family and peers define roles within relationships and the gender empowerment gap. For instance, teenage girls who use contraceptives are perceived as immoral. Therefore, contraceptive usage as a means of preventing teenage pregnancy out of wedlock is socially unacceptable.

Various factors define men and women differently in terms of their gender roles. Teenage pregnancy is deeply embedded in patriarchal structures, unequal access to education, as well as restrictive cultural and social norms and attitudes. According to United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) Executive Director's statement, teenage pregnancy is a development issue that is deeply rooted in poverty, power imbalances between adolescent girls and their male partners, lack of education, gender inequality, and the failure of systems and institutions to protect their rights (Mella, 2022, p. 26). In some countries and some communities in Africa, parents' decisions in educating children are somehow gendered. In low-income families, boys are registered in private schools for better education, while girls are not; hence, they are less likely to be exposed to gender equality ideas through education. Therefore, conventional ideas suggest that putting girls under the power of any male figure in their lives makes them vulnerable to teenage pregnancy. These norms may play a significant role in determining teenagers' engagement in sexual activity (Mella, 2022, p. 30). Most often, men assume power and authority to exploit and abuse young girls and women sexually.

Additionally, girls from poor backgrounds often drop out of school to support their families economically. Some end up as house help or are even married off to support their families. Mella (2022, p. 26) notes that prevailing gender norms still adhere to the conservative view of women, where familial roles are focused on, and gender power

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relations are deemed unequal, and these experiences may have had a significant impact on why they become young mothers at an early age. Women and girls unconsciously accept and cope with such traditional standards in their communities, hence making them more susceptible to being victims of teenage pregnancies. Girls are made to believe that they are meant to satisfy the needs of boys sexually; therefore, they are obligated to be loyal towards abuse and sexual exploitation. Mella (2022, p. 26) observed that girls are constantly under pressure to engage in sexual activity and that they continually feel obligated to satisfy the needs and desires of boys.

The cultural perception of nurturing girl-children as future women or wives makes them vulnerable to early marriage, leading to abuse by boys and older men. In most communities in Kenya, for example, the Maasai, Boys are taught to be providers for the families, while women are nurtured as wives. Gender-based expectations often place the burden of sexual morality on girls while overlooking male responsibility. Researchers found that women were expected to uphold family honour, serve their families, and show respect for their husbands and in-laws, values that are associated with femininity. These values translate into commonly accepted roles and standards of behaviour. Therefore, there needs to be critical reflection and engagement with men and boys on issues of masculinity, including their role in child-rearing, as well as examination within families of their engagement with supporting pregnancy prevention and responses to pregnancies (Jewkes, et al., 2009). The call for the involvement of both boys and girls, men and women, is significant in mitigating teenage pregnancies.

The literature shows that gender norms, unequal power relations, patriarchal structures, and cultural expectations increase girls' vulnerability to teenage pregnancy. Mella (2022), Jewkes *et al.* (2009, p. 687) and Risenga and Mboweni (2023, p. 61) argue

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that gender inequality limits girls' decision-making power while reinforcing male dominance.

These studies are directly relevant because the current research examines how gender dynamics influence both teenage pregnancy and the effectiveness of Mothers' Union interventions within the Anglican Church. The literature supports the argument that addressing teenage pregnancy requires transforming harmful gender norms rather than focusing solely on girls. The present study therefore investigates how the Mothers' Union integrates gender-responsive approaches within its theological and pastoral programmes.

2.6 Dogmatic and patriarchal influences in teenage female upbringing

Christian theology addresses sexual morality, human dignity, and care for the vulnerable, drawing from biblical texts, such as 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, which emphasizes the importance of honouring the body, and Luke 4:18, which highlights the ministry to the marginalised. Many Christian churches traditionally promote abstinence until marriage (1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5). The church teaches that abstinence before marriage to both boys and girls is a sign of purity. However, strict measures are placed upon girls who become pregnant out of wedlock. For instance, the Lutheran church's discipline and subsequent process of public absolution to adolescent girls who become pregnant out of wedlock is considered a form of virginity testing that the church practices to control and shape women's sexuality at an early age (Chisale & Herbert, 2016, p. 89). Such a disciplinary process, as a gendered power issue, is used to control and shape adolescent girls' sexuality. Similarly, in the Anglican Church girls are obligated to undergo an assessment by a panel that processes her pardon for re-admission to the Lord's Table, while boys are free to live their lives. Chisale e*t al.,* (2016, p. 90) argue that abstinence is, in fact, a focus on virginity as a form of purity, which is a way of controlling and shaping women's sexuality, since in most cases, girls seek absolution after giving birth and those who make

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them pregnant are not usually visible. This way, those who seek absolution are no longer virgins, ideally implying that those who have not fallen pregnant are still virgins and pure. This concept views teenage pregnancy as a sin and immoral behaviour, which needs pardoning by the church. In theory, church discipline offers a congregant who acknowledges sin an opportunity to engage in introspection and meditation, seeking to change from a life of sinfulness to a holy life as expected by the church, as an agent of the will of God on earth. (Chisale & Herbert, 2016, p. 90).

Church patriarchal structures often create bias, intimidation, stigmatization and shame on teen mothers and their mothers. According to the findings of Chisale *et al.,* (2016, p. 91), in the Lutheran church, there was a seemingly glaring discrimination in the administration of church discipline, as evidenced by the number of young women not receiving Holy Communion who appeared to be under discipline. The church enforces Biblical sexual teachings through punishment, in the name of discipline. Critical hermeneutics is necessary to view the Bible as a redemptive tool for teenage mothers. The place and role of the church should be clearly understood to ensure that it is meaningfully engaged in the practical realities of life, but maintaining its distinct theological basis (Magezi, 2016).

The Church's teaching on abstinence and discouraging the use of contraceptives leaves teenagers without alternative means of self-protection. It therefore exposes adolescents and youth to increased risk of HIV infections and early pregnancy, once they become sexually active. Such a conservative approach to Biblical teachings provides room for teen pregnancies. Magezi (2016), argues that the churches, however, are caught in a dilemma where on the one hand they have to uphold the biblical moral teaching and values of abstinence, and at the same time respond to the realities of youth who are engaging in sex. This calls for practical Theology that practically addresses the issue.

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The church's teaching on abstinence and not contraceptives leaves teenagers without alternative means of self-protection. It therefore exposes adolescents and youth to increased risk of HIV infections once they become sexually active. Churches do not provide space for teens to discuss sexual and reproductive health issues. The conservative approach to Biblical teachings provides room for teen pregnancies. Magezi (Magezi, 2016), argues that the churches, however, are caught in a dilemma where on the one hand they have to uphold the biblical moral teaching and values of abstinence, and at the same time respond to the realities of youth who are engaging in sex. This calls for practical Theology that addresses the issue in a practical manner.

These findings provide an important theological foundation for the present study because they explain how church teachings influence responses to teenage pregnancy. However, the current study specifically examines whether the Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Maseno South applies these teachings in ways that are restorative, gender-sensitive, and pastorally supportive rather than punitive.

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2.7 The M.U's Interventions in addressing teenage pregnancies.

The Mothers' Union is a global Anglican women's movement whose focus is on ending poverty, social injustices, and violence in all communities across the UK and the world. In 1876, Mary Sumner, the wife of the Rector of Old Alresford in Hampshire, introduced innovative membership cards for her parish mothers' meeting. Nine years later, at the 1885 Portsmouth Church Congress, she took the opportunity to address an audience of women on her aspiration that mothers should lead the moral regeneration of the nation (Anderson-Faithful, 2017, p. 835). M.U. has been active for nearly 150 years, with over 4 million members across 84 countries, working with people worldwide to transform lives, strengthen families, and advocate for change. Accordingly, they forged strong links with local people and the Anglican Church. They worked to support one another and give a voice to disadvantaged women while addressing broader societal issues. (Anon., 2024). The organization's objective of creating a better society for families has enabled it to gain significant popularity in the community.

In Kenya, the M.U. is unique in that the members seek to work together to solve challenges in their communities. By helping to restore and strengthen relationships within families and communities, the M.U. movement gives individuals a sense of belonging and purpose. According to the M.U.'s global website (Anon., 2024), Mothers' Union works by creating safe spaces and listening, breaking down barriers between and within people. The organization aimed at creating an environment where God's love is revealed through loving, respect and flourishing relationships through programs, campaigns, community outreach and prayers (Beja, et al., 2018, p. 14). Members often utilize participatory exercises, such as Bible study, to spearhead sensitive issues and challenge harmful norms. Its programs have included workshops on parenting, mentorship, empowerment, preventing gender-based violence, and reproductive health education. Chisale & Herbert (2016, p. 84) noted that,

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church leaders should develop teen-friendly programs within the Church, such as counselling programs, teen rallies, and pastoral visit programs, to empower them to overcome teenage pregnancy. Within the Diocese of Maseno South, M.U. is involved in teen programs, including mentorship, sex education during youth rallies, and parenting programs for mothers.

The M.U. advocacy initiatives are significant in addressing challenging societal issues, especially those that dehumanize women and girl. During the organization's early stages of growth, Mary Sumner, the founding member, disseminated the agenda of the Mothers' Union via publication. She produced numerous pamphlets that communicated sympathy with the challenges faced by mothers on topics such as negotiating the trials of married life and keeping children from corrupting influences (Anderson-Faithful, 2017). Additionally, Mary Sumner's assertion of the capital value of motherhood was complicit, and was accomplished within, notions of desirable womanly capital predicated on the misrecognition of the legitimacy of the Anglican/Christian religious doxa (Anderson-Faithful, 2017). The M.U. is significant in teaching the importance of upholding marriage based on biblical teachings. This teaching, however, gives men power over women, which is often abused. It legitimizes patriarchal dominance by asserting the authority of men over women as divinely ordained (Anderson-Faithful, 2017). Most of M.U.'s teachings do not address gender inequality but instead promote male dominance over women.

The reviewed literature confirms that the Mothers' Union has the organisational capacity to address teenage pregnancy. However, little empirical evidence exists regarding the effectiveness of these interventions within the Diocese of Maseno South. This study therefore evaluates how the Mothers' Union's programmes, including mentorship, counselling, sexuality education, economic empowerment, and biblical teaching, contribute to reduce teenage pregnancy in the Diocese.

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2.8 Research Gaps.

Most existing studies focus on the determinants of teenage pregnancy from public health and social science perspectives. Little attention has been given to the role of church-based women's organisations, particularly the Mothers' Union, in responding to these determinants through theological and pastoral approaches. Few studies specifically examined the role of the church in addressing teenage pregnancies, or the specific role of the Mothers' Union in teenage pregnancy mitigation.

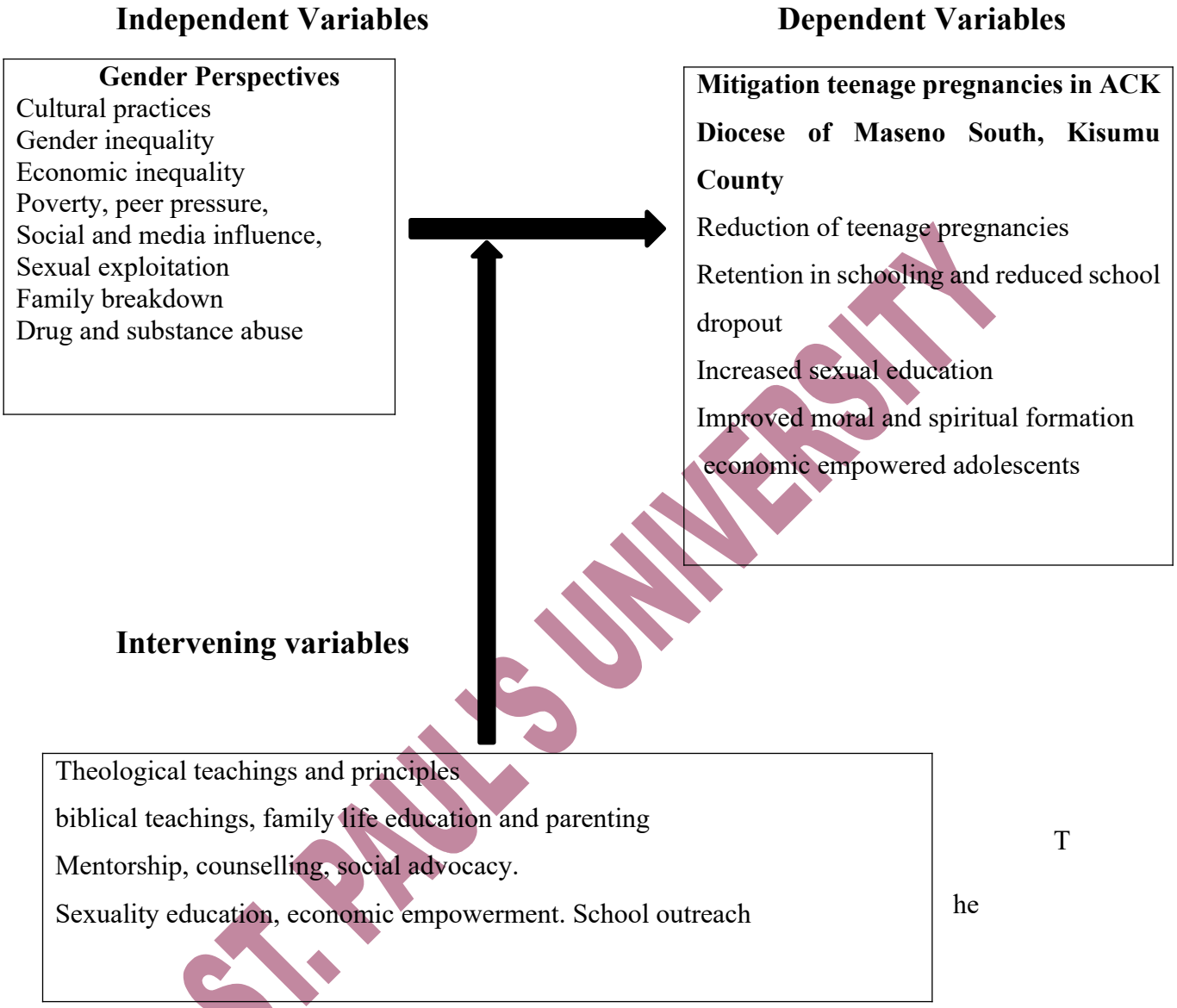
Although previous studies recommend engaging boys and men in preventing teenage pregnancy, they provide limited evidence on how church organizations practically involve men and boys in faith-based interventions. Furthermore, few studies examine gender dynamics within Anglican Church structures or within the Mothers' Union's programs. Previous studies largely focus on church discipline and theology generally but do not examine how Anglican Mothers' Union programs interpret biblical teachings in practice or how theology influences intervention strategies aimed at preventing teenage pregnancy.

Most literature describes the Mothers' Union's general mission rather than evaluating its effectiveness in mitigating teenage pregnancy. There is limited empirical evidence regarding; the effectiveness of its interventions, theological principles guiding its programs, gender responsiveness of its interventions, and challenges experienced during implementation in the Diocese of Maseno South.

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2.9 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2. 5 Conceptual framework diagrams



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The conceptual framework represents the organization of central ideas and concepts from theories, key findings from research, policy statements, and other professional wisdom that guided the research study. A conceptual framework organizes the key concepts in the study to define the focus and direction for the study (Shikalepo, 2020). The conceptual framework for the study illustrates that the MU works as an independent variable through various interventions and strategies aimed at mitigating teenage pregnancies within the Diocese of Maseno South. The MU's interventions, such as mentorship, counseling, sexual education,

theological/biblical teaching, economic empowerment, and parenting, influence the reduction of teenage pregnancies within the Diocese of Maseno South.

However, the effectiveness of these interventions may be influenced by intervening variables recognized by the framework as gender dynamics, such as gender inequality, gender bias, patriarchy, cultural practices, sexual exploitation, social media, poverty, and lack of sexual and reproductive health education. These factors are recognized as either weakening or strengthening the MU's efforts in mitigating teenage pregnancies.

Mitigation of teenage pregnancies is the dependent variable, which is measured through reduced prevalence, improved school retention, increased moral and spiritual transformation, and empowerment of girls.

The framework, hence demonstrated that a successful implementation of the MU's theological and gender-responsive interventions can contribute to the reduction of teenage pregnancies within the Diocese of Maseno South, Kisumu County.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter focused on both theoretical and empirical reviews. Both Afrocentric-Womanist theory and African Women's Theology offer a robust lens to analyse M.U.'s strategies for mitigating teenage pregnancies. The two theologies emphasized cultural relevance and faith-based empowerment of girls, analyzed gender inequalities, and promoted church-driven solutions that align with Christian values. This approach helps to understand how M.U.'s programs can be culturally and gender-transformative in addressing teenage pregnancies.

The literature indicated that teenage pregnancies in Kenya are driven by factors such as poverty, cultural practices, gender inequality, peer pressure, and limited access to quality sexual education. The researchers highlight that faith-based organisations, such as the M.U., play a critical role in community health and moral development by implementing strategies

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for interventions focused on moral guidance, family well-being, youth education, and empowerment.

Theological teachings from Christianity emphasised purity, human dignity, and morality and family values. These principles influence M.U.'s approaches to addressing teenage pregnancies. It is worth noting that the interpretation of these teachings varies, which in turn affects how programs are designed and received. Analysing gender roles and inequalities significantly increases young girls' vulnerability to teenage pregnancies.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the methodological framework employed to examine role of the Mothers' Union (M.U.) in mitigating teenage pregnancies in the A.C.K Diocese of

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Maseno South, with special emphasis on Diemo and Greater Kisumu Parishes. It begins by outlining the research design and method that guided the study, followed by a description of the study area to provide geographical and contextual background. The chapter details the sampling technique, sample size, and target population to ensure the representativeness and credibility of the findings. Furthermore, the chapter explains the data collection instruments and methods for analysing qualitative data.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive case study design that used a qualitative method. The qualitative design was significant because the study sought to obtain in-depth insights into the experiences, perceptions, and strategies of the Mothers' Union in mitigating teenage pregnancies. The case study approach enabled an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences within its real-life context, specifically in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South, which covered both rural and informal communities in Kisumu County, with selected parishes such as Diemo, which is in the rural part of the Diocese, and Greater Kisumu Parishes, which covers the informal settlement. The two areas were identified due to reported cases of teenage pregnancies, as per the latest demographic report of Kisumu County (Atieno, 2021), and active Mothers' Union involvement.

3.3 Target Population

The target population comprised individuals and groups directly involved in or affected by the issue of teenage pregnancies and the Mothers' Union's interventions. These included Mothers' Union leaders from Diemo and Greater Kisumu Parishes, Diocesan leaders, clergy, and members of the M.U who were also mothers. The youths included

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teenage girls, ages between 13-35 year, who have experienced teenage motherhood or have awareness of teenage pregnancy.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study employed a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling helped in identifying participants who possessed relevant knowledge and experience with the research topic. According to Tajik et.al., (2024, p. 1), purposive sampling is the intentional selection of units, such as individuals, cases, or events, based on their relevance to the research questions, and it is valued for exploring complex phenomena in depth. The total sample consisted of 59 participants drawn from both Diemo and Greater Kisumu parishes. These participants were carefully chosen to reflect a diversity of geographical settlements and active engagement in the Mothers' Union movement within the Diocese.

The sample size included five M.U. leaders from the Diocesan M.U. office, twenty M.U. members each from the two parishes (Diemo and Greater Kisumu parishes), five teenage girls, each from the two parishes, and four clergy (two male and two female). The sample size of 59 participants offered practical and effective means of collecting valuable data. It provided sufficient depth of qualitative interviews and allowed a manageable research process without compromising the quality of data or the ability to draw meaningful conclusions.

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3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection for this study involved primary data sources. The research adopted instruments such as interview guides and FGD guides. The qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions allowed deeper understanding lived experiences and perspectives of participants. These instruments were designed to capture information on factors that led to increased teenage pregnancies, gender norms, theological

perspectives, intervention strategies, and the perceived effectiveness of the M.U.'s strategies in mitigating teenage pregnancies within the Diocese.

3.5.1 Interviews

The research adopted semi-structured interviews, which were conducted with M.U. leaders from the two parishes, clergy, and teenagers. This method allowed flexibility in probing and clarifying responses while ensuring that all key topics were covered.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus group discussions were held with M.U. members and teenage girls. These enabled participants to share experiences and perspectives on addressing adolescent pregnancies within their communities.

3.6 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data were gathered through face-face interviews and focus group discussions. A thematic analysis approach was used to identify recurring patterns and emerging themes related to the topic of the research. Themes were categorized based on the research questions and were interpreted in light of study's theoretical framework and literature review.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Study

The study employed measures such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the findings to ensure trustworthiness. These measures ensured that the study maintained an audit trail of the research process, grounded data in participants' voices, avoided researcher bias, and provided rich, thick descriptions to allow readers to determine applicability in other contexts.

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3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought approval from the relevant research ethics committees, particularly St. Paul's University and NACOSTI. Permission was also obtained from the Diocese and parish leadership. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and assent was sought from teenage participants in conjunction with parental or guardian consent. Anonymizing responses and securely storing data also ensured confidentiality.

Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter provides details of the research design, including the qualitative method, the study population, the study area, sampling techniques, and data collection instruments, such as focus group discussions, interviews, Key informants, and document analysis. It addresses data analysis procedures and ethical considerations.

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CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the study's findings, based on data collected from Mothers' Union leaders, clergy, and adolescents in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South. The study's objectives and research questions guided the analysis, which integrates perspectives from Afrocentric Womanist theory and African Women's Theology. Data were presented thematically, supported with quotations from interviews and focus group

discussions, as well as descriptive statistics where applicable. The study relied on primary data, which were collected through semi-structured interviews.

4.2. The Response Rate

The table below presents the response rate, showing the number of respondents targeted and those who actually participated. 59 participants identified for the data collection fully participated, achieving a perfect response rate of 100%. This level of participation indicated participants' exceptional level of commitment, hence strengthens the quality and reliability of data collected. Such outcome, therefore, enhances validity of the study's findings.

Table 4.1 Response Rate

No	Category of Participants	Participants who responded	Percentage Rate
1	M.U Diocesan Leaders	5	8.47%
2	M.U parish members Diemo Greater Kisumu	20 from each Parish= 40	67.80%
3	Teenage girls	5 from each parish =10	16.95%
4	Clergy	4 (2 male, 2 female	6.78%
5	Total	59	100.00%

Source: **Research** Data 2025

4.2 Respondents Analysis

86% response rate indicated a high level of participation and reliability of the data collection. The study employed a physical method of interviews and Focus Group Discussions. The 14% non-respondent was attributed to unavailability and general reluctance by teenagers to engage in sexuality and reproductive health topics, which is considered taboo within the community of study. Additionally, the lack of sufficient research personnel partly contributed to this.

The ages of M.U. members and leaders ranged from 32 to 60 years. These were women with families, who were knowledgeable on teenage sexuality and behaviour, which

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was significant in providing relevant information about the study problem. Their educational background also varied; among them were those who spoke English, while others only spoke Kiswahili and Dholuo. The clergy interviewed included two males and two females, of whom one male and one female came from rural areas, while the other two came from the informal settlement within the Diocese. It enabled the researcher to get perspectives on teenage pregnancy from both male and female clergy, as well as from different contexts. The teenagers interviewed were between 14 and 19 years old. Teenagers at this age are sexually active, and this may lead to pregnancy.

Participant codes were assigned as; MUDL1-MUDL5 for Diocesan leaders, MUPMD1-MUPMD20 for Diemo parish MU members, MUPMG1-MUPMG20, for Greater Kisumu MU parish members. TEENG1-TEENG5 for teenage girls from Greater Kisumu parish, while TEEND1-TEEND5 represented teenage girls from Diemo parish. finally, MCL1-MCL2 for male clergy, and FCL1-FCL2, represented female clergy. The findings are organized according to the study's four objectives; key driving factors of teenage pregnancies, theological principles underpinning the M.U's approach to mitigating teenage pregnancies, the effectiveness of the M.U's interventions in addressing teenage pregnancies, and gender dynamics influencing teenage pregnancies within the Diocese of Maseno South.

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4.3. Findings and Analysis

4.3.1Key Factors Driving Teenage Pregnancies

Based on the findings, teenage pregnancies are associated with factors such as socio-economic, cultural, lack of education, religious, and gender issues.

Table 4.2: Teenage Pregnancies Driving factors

No	Factor	Number of Responses	percentage

		out of 59	reported %
1	Socio-economic	21	36%
2	Cultural Factor	15	25%
3	Religious Factor	11	19%
4	Gender Factors	12	20%
	Total	59	100%

Source: Research Data (2025)

4.3.1.1. Economic Factors

When asked about factors causing teenage pregnancy, a total of 21 respondents, representing 36%, described socio-economic factors as key causes of adolescent pregnancies. The respondents mentioned various economic factors, including poverty, peer influence, exposure to social media, inadequate sexual and reproductive health education, and inadequate parental guidance, among others. When asked why they felt that poverty is associated with high teenage pregnancy, the respondents mentioned that many adolescent girls from relatively low-income families tend to become pregnant as they engage in sexual activities to secure their basic needs, such as sanitary pads, pocket money, and to be at the same status as their friends. For instance, MUPMD1, responded *that "some of the boda-boda (motorcycle) men lure our young girls into early sex by offering them money to buy their things".* There is a considerably lower rate of teenage pregnancy among teenagers from wealthy families, as they can obtain their necessities without having to engage in sexual intercourse to secure them. Mbogo (2021, p. 275), found out that living with one parent, specifically single mothers, implies that children are likely to suffer from a lack of basic needs and amenities related to a low socio-economic background. It may compound their ability to stay in school, perform well or even have a good attitude toward school, especially when their peers may be more privileged.

While at it, some other respondents mentioned that most teenage girls between the ages of 13 and 14 become pregnant due to dropping out of school because of finances. Teens who drop out of school are likely to continue with their education in higher levels. as

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supported by study of Mella (2022, p. 5), due to poor performance and low esteem, teens who drop out of school tend to have no realistic expectations about education or occupations; thus, pregnancy viewed as an alternative path to economic in-dependence and adult status. Economic insecurity interacts with household responsibilities, unequal access to education, and dependence on older partners. Were (2007) links limited resources in rural communities with school discontinuation, early marriage and relationships formed in exchange for material assistance. Respondents confirmed that many households from both rural parishes and urban informal settlements experience forms of economic hardship. Poverty may restrict access to transport, school supplies, menstrual hygiene materials and reliable information, thereby reducing the choices available to adolescent girls.

Peer pressure is also associated with teenage pregnancy since many teenagers, both boys and girls, would want to follow what their peers are doing. Other studies have shown that peer pressure, as an agent of socialisation, has negative consequences on the lifestyle of teenagers, especially in the area of productive health (Ameripus, et al., 2022).

Lack of parental guidance and education is mentioned as another cause of teenage pregnancy. Some parents may not have been taught good parenting skills, leading to neglect or poor upbringing. It has led girls to seek teachings from misleading forums. Other studies established that parental guidance is significant in the adolescent stage. Were (2007), for instance, determined that Adolescents should be equipped with the relevant knowledge to enable them to make informed choices regarding sexual relationships.

4.3.1.2 Cultural Factors

The study determined that youths who are idle and do not plan their leisure activities may end up wasting time in unproductive ways. For example, when asked why youths fall into bad companies, TEENG1, responded that*, "most of young boys and girls in our ghetto idle around after school, and some of them get involved in bad behaviours that lead to*

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pregnancies and diseases". Cultural practices such as early marriages and funeral dances are commonly observed within the Diocese of Maseno South, particularly among the Luo, the predominant community. For instance, some parents marry off their daughters at an adolescent age since they still view them as a source of wealth from the bride price. Early marriage of orphaned girls was identified as a cultural practice that leads to teenage pregnancies. 25% of the respondents described cultural factors as the cause of adolescent pregnancies. TEEND1 responded*, "When my father died, my mother asked me to get married since she could not pay my school fees".*

Another cultural practice that enhances irresponsible sexual behavior among teens that lead to teenage pregnancy is *disco matanga*. This a cultural practice among the Luo community. Whenever a member dies, the family holds a night vigil until the deceased is buried, which lasts for a few days afterwards. Such night vigils, accompanied by secular music and dances, are culturally meant to keep the family of deceased companyand calm the spirit of the deceased, hence the name "funeral discos," commonly known as Disco matanga." Girls and boys who attend are generally not guided, thus leading to irresponsible sexual activities that end in early teenage pregnancies.TEENG2 said, *"during disco matangas, we are lured to sex by older boys in the name of providing security throughout the night, and to ensure that we are safe".*

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4.3.1.3 Religious Factor

19% of the respondents mentioned the religious factor associated with teenage pregnancies. When asked about the role of the church in adolescent pregnancies, respondents noted that the church and the M.U. have not embraced sexual education, and sex is still a topic that is not discussed by church leaders together with the teenagers. It is considered taboo to talk about sex. When asked about the church's approach to teenage sexuality, MUPMD2., said that *"Teen mothers are condemned as immoral and impure, no*

one is free to engage in topics about sex" Pastoral care by M.U. members and the church is reactive and not systematic.

When asked about the church's teachings on broader sexual and reproductive health education, MCL1responded *that "we teach girls to abstain from sexual behaviours, and even condemn contraceptives, according to biblical teachings, but we do not give them an alternative way of remaining pure until marriage. It leaves them with no option but to engage in early sex*".

The church does not have a mentorship program that guides teenagers. The respondents noted that youths do not have someone they can look up to shape their morals, while avoiding indulgence in pre-marital sexual activities that lead to teenage pregnancy. When asked about teen pastors and mentorship, MCL2 said, *"Youth and teen pastors are mainly found in urban parishes, but in rural parishes, youths and teen programs are headed by fellow youths, and there are no mentors or role models for teens and youths."* The aspect of mentorship is not sufficient in all churches.

4.3.1.4 Gender Norms factors

From the findings, 12% of the respondents indicated that girls, especially orphans, often take up adult responsibilities, increasing exposure to exploitation. MUPMG1 commented, *"girls taking the role of parenting in the absence of parents, especially orphans, which leads to increased vulnerability".*

Subsequently, the findings also showed that due to economic disparity, men sexually exploit young school-going teenage girls by giving them money in exchange for sex. TEENG2 said, *"I was promised a school bag by my uncle only if we had sex with him, I later realized that I was pregnant".* This vulnerability exposes girls to abusive men who impregnate them. Other studies determined that girls are constantly under pressure to engage in sexual activity and that they continually feel obligated to satisfy the needs and desires of

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boys because of their unequal power relationships, especially when it comes to sex (Mella , 2022, p. 7).

4.3.2. The Theological principles Underpinning the M.U.'s mitigations

The study examined the theological principles that guide M.U.'s interventions regarding teenage pregnancies.

Table 4.3 The theological principles

NO.	**Theological/biblical principles**	**Number of respondents out of 59**	**Percentage of respondents**
1	Biblical teachings on sexual purity	28	47%
2	Theology of human dignity and spiritual transformation	10	17%
3	Theology of the Christian family and moral life	10	17%
	Church's doctrine and discipline	11	19%
	TOTAL	59	100

Source: Research Data (2025)

4.3.2.1 Biblical teachings on sexual purity

The study found out that the Anglican Church, Diocese of Maseno South, through M.U., emphasised abstinence as the only sure way to avoid unintended pregnancies among youths, furthermore, focus on virginity as a form of purity is a way of controlling and shaping women's sexuality. The findings show that 30 respondents, representing 51% indicated that the M.U. teachings are rooted in biblical messages of sexual purity, chastity, and abstinence, drawing from scriptures such as 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5 and 1 Corinthians 6:18. While confirming the Biblical teaching, the *response was "The body is the temple of God; therefore, no sexual immorality is allowed. It is condemned",* MUPMG2. These biblical teachings are directed to teenagers, especially girls, to guide them in living a morally upright and godly life, hence preventing early pregnancies. However, other studies observed

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that the church encourages sexual abstinence to all those who are not yet married because of the teachings of the Hebrew Bible. Still, the emphasis seems to be directed to adolescent girls and single adult women (Chisale & Moyo, 2016, p. 97). Abstinence is emphasised as the standard for moral and upright Christian character. Findings reveal M.U.'s firm reliance on biblical teachings of purity and abstinence in mitigating teenage pregnancy and addressing teens' sexual behaviour. However, these teachings are often presented in exclusive and punitive ways, failing to provide compassionate reintegration for adolescent mothers.

4.3.2.2. Theology of Human Dignity and Spiritual Transformation

From the findings, adolescents are taught godly values that shape their character, starting in Sunday school, youth fellowships, and Bible study. Prayer meetings, revival fellowships, and intercessory gatherings are organized regularly within the Diocese of Maseno South to pray for families, schools, and young people. Teenage pregnancy is therefore approached not merely as a social issue but also as a spiritual challenge requiring divine guidance and transformation. During the interview, TEEND3 said: *"We are always taught that our bodies are the temple of God, and that we should respect our bodies".* TEENG4 added, *"We are told during youth rallies that we should not accept being used by men as sex objects, we are special before God".* The MU teaches girls to respect their bodies and not to engage in irresponsible sexual activities. Although the bible narrates the significance of virginity, its emphasis is on women and girls, not men and boys. Christian education is meant to regulate and prevent young people from engaging in early sexual activity that can lead to pregnancy

Mothers' Union members engage in income-generating activities, which help reduce poverty, indirectly lowering teenage pregnancy risks. MUDL3 explained that*, "most of our*

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Parishes have involved mother table-banking as a means of self-independence in matters finances." Table banking empowers members of the MU economically and reduce financial burden that most women in the rural and informal settlement experience. Other studies established that the adoption of table banking and merry-go-round concepts by the Mothers Union (MU) revolutionized their economic power by uplifting them against poverty, oppression, and diseases such as HIV and AIDS (Beja, et al., 2018).

4.3.2.3 Theology of Christian Family Life

From the findings, youths are taught godly values that shape their character, right from Sunday school, youth fellowships, and Bible study. Christian traditional teachings, such as premarital sexual activities and fornication, are regarded as sin. The discipline of moral values is instilled in young people, especially girls. Such education is based on scriptures such as 1 Corinthians 6:18, which urges young people to "flee from sexual immorality". The body is referred to as "the temple of God," emphasising the importance of abstaining from impurity. However, the theology of sin dominates biblical teachings on morality, rather than compassion and forgiveness. Though the Bible narrates the significance of virginity, its emphasis is on women and girls, but not men and boys. Christian education is meant to regulate and prevent young people from engaging in early sex activities that can lead to pregnancy.

From the responses, 10 participants (17%) confirmed that M.U is deeply rooted in the Anglican teachings concerning family life and marriage. When asked about their role in ensuring girls are taught moral responsibility, the MUPMG3 responded that *"we are guided by two main objectives that encourages parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the church"*. This theological emphasis is based on the MU objectives, which encourage mothers to promote conditions in society favorable to stable family life and the protection of children, and to encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and

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life of the Church (Anon., n.d.). Parents, through MU, are encouraged to discuss sexuality openly with their adolescents and to guide and monitor their social life. During their meetings, mothers are given skills in Christian parenting, mentorship, counselling, and communication strategies to guide teenagers responsibly. The bible text on Proverbs 22: 6 "train up a child in the way he should go" is commonly used in parenting. Such skills enable mothers to guide the adolescents in making right choices in life, hence mitigating teenage pregnancies.

4.3.2.4 Church's doctrine and discipline

According to the findings above, 19% of the respondents indicated that the church's doctrine and policies regarding sexuality and morality have little impact on mitigating teenage pregnancies, instead they stigmatise and discriminate against girls. TEENG5, confirmed that *"According to our church, all teachings regarding morality are directed to girls and teen mothers must go through a disciplinary panel before being readmitted to the Holy Communion."* Teen mothers are subjected to discipline at the Parish Council, questioning their morality, while boys are not involved. While analysing the Lutheran church's doctrine of virginity testing, Chisale& Moyo (2016, p. 90) discovered that the pregnant girl is suspended from active ministry and participation in the Eucharist for the duration of the church discipline, which is usually equivalent to the duration of the pregnancy. According to tradition, a person under church discipline is expected to refrain from playing any leadership role and participating in the Eucharist, also known as Holy Communion. This is the case of A.C.K. Maseno South, where pregnant girls and teen mothers are subjected to discipline to give a warning to other teenagers. This kind of church doctrine is traditionally meant to encourage girls to protect their virginity, which is referred to as purity, hence mitigating teenage pregnancy. On the other hand, this practice does not include men and boys who are perpetrators, but stigmatises and shames teen mothers and

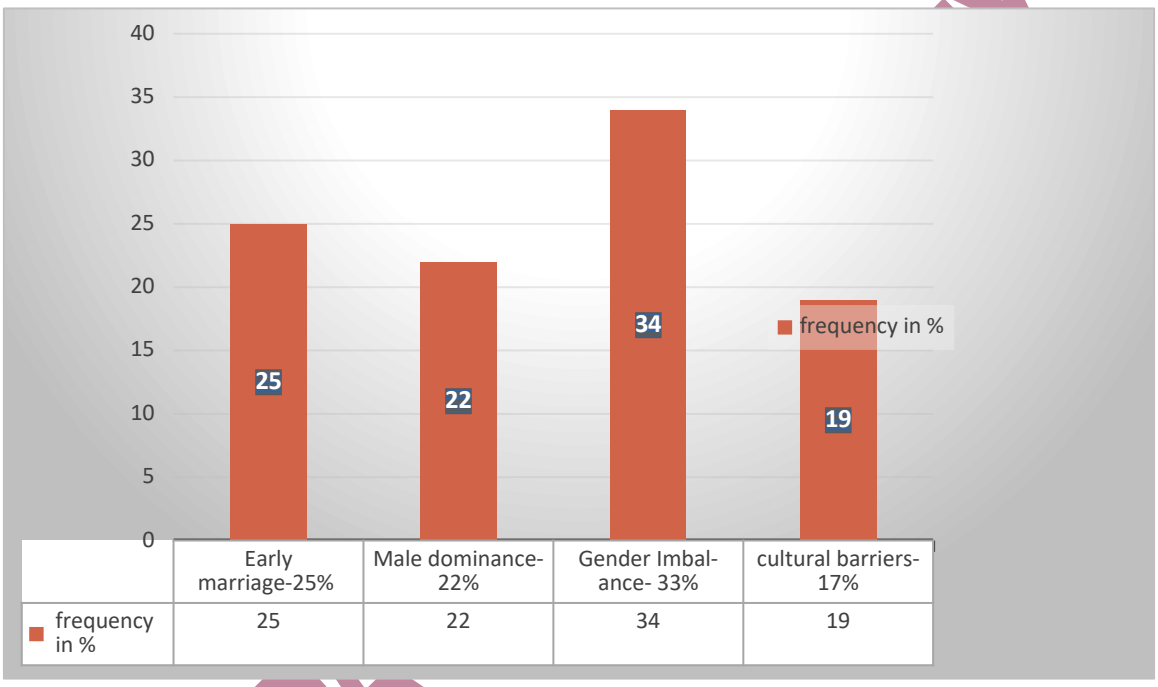
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portrays them as sinners. However, there is limited theological guidance on forgiveness, restoration, or gender inclusivity, which many teens and clergy identified as a gap.

4.3.3. Gender dynamics influence Mothers' Union interventions

The following were the findings on the gender norms and dynamics identified from interviews and the FGDs, and how Mothers' Union leaders adapt their strategies in response

Figure 4.2: Gender Dynamics and their influence



Source: Research Data (2025)

4.3.3.1. Cultural Barriers

According to the findings above, cultural norms and beliefs portray girls as victims of their own circumstances. 17% of the respondents indicated that girls carry the burden of blame for teenage pregnancies more than boys and men, within the society and the church. For example, TEENG4 commented that, *"Girls are normally blamed for early pregnancies and sexual abuse. The church and society blame us for being the cause of sexual abuse, molestation and even rapes that lead to pregnancies".* The cultural perceptions hinder mitigative interventions for teenage pregnancies girls are conditioned to behave in a godly

manner and show decency. It is always believed to be the girls and women's mistake to be pregnant out of wedlock, instead of addressing the perpetrators, which leads to the cycle of unintended teenage pregnancies.

4.3.3.2. Male dominance

The researcher sought to find instances of male dominance and power that influence teenage pregnancies from the respondents. The respondents answered in the affirmative and explained that men prove their power over women and girls through sexual exploitation and abuse, for example, M.UPMD3 responded to male dominance, *"Boys at the adolescent stage tend to prove their manhood by engaging in sexual behaviours with girls, which leads to pregnancies, hence having control over girls. By making a girl pregnant, you prove to be man enough"*. This attitude and perception of boys "proving manhood" through impregnating girls, reinforces patriarchal dominance. Young boys are taught that to be a man, one must dominate women in all areas, especially in sex. Power is achieved through male dominance, hence controlling women sexually. It contributes to sexual abuse and exploitation by men. Moreover, other studies have shown that this exploitation demonstrates the lack of power or control young women have in making the decision to engage in sexual activity. Sexual decision-making is not the girls' agency (Mella , 2022, p. 28).

The research determined that due to the low-income background of many families, girls are exposed to sexual exploitation by "*boda boda"* men who control girls economically. 22% of the respondents confirmed that men sexually exploit girls in exchange for economic sustainability. Similarly, other studies showed that the adolescents explained that having sex with a rich man helped them to get money to take care of their basic needs, such as a place to stay when they were far away from home, more specifically, at tertiary institutions, when they were from a poverty-stricken family (Risenga & Mboweni, 2023, p. 60).

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4.3.3.3 Gender imbalance

From the findings, 34% of the respondents determined that the M.U. and church teachings predominantly target girls, reinforcing stereotypes that women must guard sexual morality. Most of the M.U. programs primarily focus on girls, leaving out boys, who are often the perpetrators or part of the problem. M.U. members reported limited engagement with men or fathers in youth forums**.** For example, *"We teach girls, not boy, because our society often blame mothers incase their girls get pregnant. We leave boys to be taught by members of K.A.M.A and male ,"* admitted MUDL4. Clergy emphasised the need for a more balanced approach, one that involves both genders in moral and reproductive education. The respondents also highlighted passive gender roles imposed on girls. Clergy also admitted that most sermons address more of girls' sexual behaviours than boys. *"Our sermons are directed towards girls' and women's behaviours",* FCL2. From the responses, the research deduced that there is bias in sexual and reproductive health education, both within families and the church. It leaves boys uninformed and uneducated about their sexual responsibility and behaviour, hence leading to teenage pregnancies. From the African Women's Theology perspective, African women's theology asserts a relationship with African men. In this theology, women work in colaboration with men of goodwill to reconstruct a cultural and religious praxis of equality (Maseno, 2021, p. 6). Hence, the study adopted the theory of African Women's Theology, which advocates for communal gender balance and equity. Gender-sensitive approaches, which incorporate male engagement and equality, are crucial for achieving sustainable change.

4.3.3.4. Early Marriage

The findings identified that early marriage is a catalyst for teenage pregnancies. Orphaned girls and girls from poor backgrounds tend to drop out of school due to a lack of school fees and get married. Subsequently, teen mothers are often married off or sent away.

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For instance, Were (2007), reported that, given limited resources in rural areas, girls are forced to drop out of school or get married at an early age. Additionally, the inability to meet basic personal material needs makes teenage girls susceptible to pre-marital sex in exchange for trifles. When asked why girls get into early marriage, MUPMG2 said *"due to economic strains by single mothers and widowed mothers, in some families, girls often drop out of school and they are married off so as to support their siblings financially"*. Within the Luo community, taboos forbid pregnant girls from staying in the same house with their parents. Therefore, in their teenage years, some parents send their girls to be married to avoid the shame of being pregnant which leads to recurrent pregnancies. For example, another M.UPMD3 mentioned that, *"When my girl got pregnant, I looked for a man to marry her. She can't stay in my house".* This practice is coupled with shame and stigma surrounding teenage pregnancies.

4.3.4. Effectiveness on Mothers' Union's interventions

The table below describes the strategies used by M.U in mitigating teenage pregnancies.

Table 4.4: M.U.'s interventions

No.	Interventions	Number respondents	Percentage %
	Mentorship and Life Skills Training	13	22 %
	Parental Education	20	34%
	Spiritual and moral formation	11	19%
	Social Action and advocacy	15	25%
	TOTAL	59	100%

Source: Research Data (2025)

4.3.4.1. Parental Forums

According to the findings above, 20 respondents, representing 34%, stated that parents forums are a strategy for mitigating teenage pregnancies. Such forums enable M.U.

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members to receive practical parental teachings that promote parent-child relationships. Other studies on Mother Union acknowledge that among its roles include teaching the young women on the value of marriage, creating awareness on issues that affect women directly, such as family planning, HIV and AIDS, among others (Beja, et al., 2018, p. 17). Similarly, other studies have shown that inadequate parental guidance on adolescent behaviour can lead to pregnancy. Were (2007, p. 329) , noted that the lack of parental guidance on issues of sexuality and sex education was reinforced by cultural taboos that inhibit such discussions. TEENG4said, *"MU has parenting teachings, which sometimes address the issue indirectly but guide us on how to talk to our girls about sexual behaviours"*. However, these M.U.'s parental forums largely reinforce patriarchal expectations by addressing girls alone while neglecting boys' responsibilities.

4.3.4.2 Social Action and Advocacy

25% of the respondents acknowledged that the M.U. often creates awareness on the consequences and impact of teenage pregnancies by motivating and empowering girls to be self-reliant and avoid sexual activities that can lead to the challenge. TEENG and TEEND responded, *"In most of the gatherings with MU members, we are encouraged to be independent and not to rely on men for personal needs and to be vigilant to sexual abuse and exploitation"*. Mothers and teenage girls are educated on the consequences of irresponsible sexual activities, and girls are warned from engaging in early sexual activities that can not only lead to pregnancy, but also sexually transmitted diseases. MU members engage in programs that donate sanitary towels to girls in schools. When asked about programs that the MU engage in, MUPMD4 explained that, *"we always ask mothers to donate sanitary towels to girls and we distribute to vulnerable girls in schools"*.

The MU also carries out a school outreach program through the weekend challenge program in A.C.K. sponsored schools, which serves as a forum for talks on the challenges

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faced by adolescents. For example, MUDL5 confirmed that *"we are sometimes invited to our sponsored schools to speak to girls on topics such as sexuality, empowerment, and life skills".* These programs allow M.U. to engage youths in general sex education. Such education is significant since it is at this stage that girls and boys are sexually active, and in most cases, engage in activities that can lead to early unwanted pregnancies. Though such engagements are not structured, they can be used to minimize irresponsible sexual behaviors among teenagers

4.3.4.3. Spiritual and Moral formation

The MU emphasizes biblical teachings on chastity, self-control, and responsible living. This moral framework influences adolescents' attitudes toward sexuality. TEENG5 said, *"We are taught about sexual abstinence and to keep ourselves pure for the right man who will marry us."* The MU involves teenage girls and mothers in biblical teachings about purity. The biblical teachings on sexual and moral behavior enhance awareness of godly character, hence preventing girls from indulging in behaviors that may lead to early pregnancies.

4.3.4.4. Mentorship and life skills programs

The findings determined that although the M.U. has few mentorship programs, they help in mitigating irresponsible sexual behaviours among teenagers, hence reducing teenage pregnancies. For example, when asked about the role of M.U. in mentorship and coaching of teenagers, a M.UPMD6 responded that *"we teach mothers to be role models to young girls and at the same time we teach girls ways of safeguarding themselves against irresponsible sex behaviours that can lead to early pregnancies".* Within the M.U. activities, mentorship programs and life skills empower young girls to become independent and focused on their future. Similarly, Mbogo (2021, p. 284) argues that mentorship forums can be used to address the needs of pre-teen and adolescent girls. Young people are taught to

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respect themselves and others, and to live a disciplined life. Accordingly, the MU holds teachings sessions where the elderly MU members have a teaching sesions with the teenagers, teen mothers, and younger women on various issues in life such as the values of marriage, chastity and self-dependence. The teens are guided and counseled on moral values, good grooming, being responsible, participating in church activities, choosing good friends, among others (Beja, et al., 2018).

4.4. Discussion of the Findings

4.4.1 Key Factors Contributing to Teenage Pregnancy

The study established that poverty, peer pressure, cultural practices, gender inequality, inadequate parental guidance, and limited sexuality education were the major drivers of teenage pregnancy within the ACK Diocese of Maseno South. These findings are consistent with Were (2007, p. 330), who argues that poverty exposes adolescent girls to transactional sexual relationships because of their inability to meet basic needs. Similarly, Kimaiyo (2021, p. 21) found that limited comprehensive sexuality education leaves adolescents vulnerable to early sexual activity and unintended pregnancies.

The findings also support Noutche (2024, p. 152), who identifies poverty, parental neglect, exploitation by older men, and weak family support systems as significant contributors to teenage pregnancy in African contexts. Likewise, Ameripus et al. (2022, p. 2670) observed that peer influence and unrestricted social media exposure increase adolescents' likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behaviour.

The findings further agree with Mbogo (2021), who argues that teenage pregnancy is a multidimensional social problem requiring coordinated interventions involving families, schools, churches, government agencies, and community organizations. Within the Diocese of Maseno South, the present study demonstrates that these factors interact simultaneously, thereby requiring integrated church-based responses rather than isolated interventions.

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From an Afrocentric-Womanist perspective, these findings confirm that teenage pregnancy cannot be understood solely as an individual moral failure but must be interpreted within broader socio-economic and cultural structures that disadvantage girls. This interpretation supports the study's argument that the Mothers' Union should complement biblical teaching with economic empowerment, mentorship, and sexuality education.

Teenage pregnancies remain a pressing issue, associated with factors such as cultural, socio-economic, gender-based, religious and economic factors. The M.U.'s responses are intentional, but seem to be inadequate, especially in engaging men and boys, empowering teenagers and teenage mothers, and overcoming cultural taboos. Theological and biblical teachings, however, require contextualization to offer hope and restoration, rather than stigma and condemnation.

4.4.2 Theological Principles Underpinning Mothers' Union Interventions

The study found that the Mothers' Union grounds its interventions in biblical teachings emphasizing chastity, Christian family values, pastoral care, mentorship, counselling, forgiveness, restoration, and human dignity. These findings support Magezi (2016, p. 7000), who argues that practical theology should move beyond moral instruction to provide practical responses to the realities experienced by young people.

The findings also agree with Oduyoye (2001), who maintains that theology should emerge from the lived experiences of African women and respond to oppression, injustice, and social exclusion. Likewise, Mombo (2003, p. 91) argues that biblical interpretation should be reader-centred and contextually relevant, enabling Scripture to liberate rather than stigmatize vulnerable persons.

Similarly, Gathogo (2008) emphasizes that African Women's Theology promotes restorative pastoral care by integrating Christian faith with social justice and community transformation.

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However, the study also found that some theological interpretations unintentionally reinforce stigma against pregnant teenagers. This observation concurs with Chisale and Herbert (2017), who found that church disciplinary practices often place greater responsibility on girls than on boys, thereby perpetuating gender inequalities within Christian communities.

Viewed through African Women's Theology, the findings suggest that the Mothers' Union has significant potential to reinterpret biblical teachings in ways that promote healing, restoration, inclusion, and gender justice.

4.2.3. Gender Dynamics Influencing Teenage Pregnancy

The findings revealed that patriarchal cultural norms, unequal power relations, gender stereotypes, and unequal responsibility for sexual behaviour significantly influence teenage pregnancy.

These findings are consistent with Mella (2022, p. 27), who argues that gender norms shape adolescent sexuality by assigning unequal expectations to boys and girls. Similarly, Risenga and Mboweni (2023, p. 63) found that adolescent girls experience greater vulnerability because of unequal access to education, limited autonomy, and early marriage.

The study further supports Jewkes et.al., (2009, p. 680) who recommend engagin boys and men in reproductive health programmes to transform harmful constructions of masculinity. Within the Diocese of Maseno South, respondents similarly emphasized that pregnancy prevention cannot succeed without involving fathers, male youth, and Kenya Anglican Men's Association (KAMA).

African Women's Theology interprets these findings as evidence that patriarchal structures continue to shape both church and community responses to teenage pregnancy.

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Consequently, gender-transformative ministry should involve both women and men while promoting equality, justice, and shared responsibility.

4.3.4. Effectiveness of Mothers' Union Interventions

The study found that mentorship programs, parenting seminars, counselling, youth rallies, economic empowerment initiatives, and biblical teaching have positively influenced awareness and moral formation among adolescents. Nevertheless, respondents indicated that these interventions remain insufficient because of financial limitations, inadequate male involvement, stigma surrounding sexuality discussions, and inconsistent implementation across parishes.

These findings agree with Mothers' Union (2024), which emphasizes mentorship, family strengthening, advocacy, and community transformation as central organizational priorities. Likewise, Anderson-Faithful (2017, p. 834) notes that the Mothers' Union has historically empowered women through education, pastoral care, and community development.

The findings also support Beja, et.al. (2018, p. 21), who found that faith-based organizations strengthen family relationships and community resilience through counselling, prayer, and empowerment programmes.

However, the study extends previous research by demonstrating that although these interventions exist within the Diocese of Maseno South, their effectiveness depends on stronger collaboration among churches, schools, families, health professionals, and community leaders. This finding supports Mbogo (2021), who advocates multi-sectorial approaches to adolescent pregnancy prevention.

From the Afrocentric-Womanist perspective, the findings suggest that sustainable intervention requires empowering girls socially, economically, spiritually, and

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educationally while simultaneously transforming the patriarchal systems that perpetuate vulnerability.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter critically synthesizes the study's findings by intergrating qualitative data insights. It provides well-founded conclusions drawn from the evidence collected and suggests actionable recommendations for the s for the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Maseno South, the Mothers' Union, policy makers, and other stakeholders. wish to enhance approaches to teenage pregnancy approaches in Kisumu County. The objectives of the study were to assess the effectiveness of existing M.U interventions in mitigating teenage pregnancy. Additionally proposes areas for further research necessary to deepen understanding of the church-based approaches to mitigating teenage pregnancies.

5.2 Summary of Findings.

5.2.1 Factors Contributing to Teenage Pregnancies

The study established that teenage pregnancy within the ACK Diocese of Maseno South results from the interaction of socio-economic, cultural, gender, and educational factors rather than a single cause. Poverty emerged as one of the strongest drivers, exposing

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adolescent girls to transactional sex, school dropout, and early marriage. Cultural practices such as disco matanga, peer influence, substance abuse, inadequate parental supervision, and limited sexuality education further increased adolescents' vulnerability. The respondents also identified social media, family instability, and sexual exploitation as contributing factors. These findings indicate that teenage pregnancy is a multidimensional problem requiring coordinated responses from families, churches, schools, communities, and government institutions

According to the study,35% of respondents demonstrated that the most prevalent factors contributing to teenage pregnancies within the community is socio-economic, cultural and educational. In addition, the respondents identified poverty, especially from low-income families, peer pressure, lack of parental guidance, orphanhood, exposure to social media, and lack of sexual and reproductive health education as major contributors. Teenage girls from poor families often resort to unwanted sex to meet basic needs.

While acknowledging that culture is an integral part of society, Socio-cultural factors (25%) contribute to the risk of teenage pregnancies. Practices such as early marriages and *disco matanga* (funeral dances) expose girls to unprotected sexual activity. Orphaned girls were found to be particularly vulnerable, with some parents encouraging early marriage as a means of economic sustainability.

19% of the respondents recognized the role of religion in the moral formation of youths, , particularly the strict interpretation of the Bible texts on abstinence and chastity**.** The church and M.U. emphasize abstinence and chastity but do not provide alternative guidance on sexual and reproductive health. This approach stigmatizes teenage mothers and discourages open dialogue about sexuality. Accordingly, the researcher determined that gender factors (20%)**,** for instance, male dominance and gender inequality, emerged as significant drivers. Girls are often blamed for pregnancies, while boys and men are rarely

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held accountable. Boys proving their manhood by impregnating girls indicates an imbalance in power, showing toxic masculinity. Sexual exploitation of girls by older men, including boda-boda riders, was highlighted as a recurring problem.

5.2.3 Theological and Biblical Principles in M.U.'s Response

The study found that the Mothers' Union bases its interventions on biblical teachings emphasizing Christian family values, holiness, chastity, pastoral care, counselling, forgiveness, and restoration. These principles shape programs such as mentorship, parenting education, youth fellowships, Bible study, and counselling. The study identified that biblical and theological teachings generally shape the M.U.'s interventions. Since girls and boys between the ages of 12 and 19 years are sexually active, Biblical teachings that guide their behaviour are significant. For example, biblical texts such as 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 and 1 Corinthians 6:18, which strongly emphasise purity, also strongly emphasise abstinence and chastityHowever, respondents acknowledged that some traditional interpretations of Scripture may unintentionally stigmatize pregnant adolescents instead of facilitating healing and restoration. The findings therefore demonstrate the need for contextual biblical interpretation that promotes compassion, inclusion, and dignity while maintaining Christian moral values.

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5.2.3 Gender Dynamics Influencing Teenage Pregnancy

The study established that patriarchal cultural norms, unequal gender relations, and unequal responsibility for sexual behavior significantly influence teenage pregnancy. Girls were found to bear greater social, educational, and spiritual consequences than boys. Respondents further observed that limited male involvement in pregnancy prevention weakens current interventions. Consequently, effective prevention requires transforming harmful gender norms while promoting shared responsibility among women, men, boys,

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and girls. Male dominance normalizes sexual exploitation and equates masculinity with impregnating girls. Church and M.U. programs frequently target girls, leaving boys and men uninvolved and uneducated on sexual responsibility and behavior. Additionally, the practice of early marriage, especially among dropout teenagers, is often used as a coping mechanism for teenage pregnancy, leading to cycles of poverty and exclusion.

5.2.4. Effectiveness of Mothers' Union Interventions

The findings revealed that the Mothers' Union contributes significantly to reducing teenage pregnancy through mentorship, counselling, parenting programs, youth rallies, economic empowerment initiatives, prayer, and biblical teaching. These interventions have strengthened moral formation, increased awareness, and improved psychosocial support for adolescents. Nevertheless, their effectiveness remains constrained by inadequate financial resources, limited collaboration with external stakeholders, inconsistent implementation across parishes, cultural resistance to discussing sexuality, and insufficient involvement of men and boys. The M.U. engages social action and advocacy**,** sensitizing teenage girls on the dangers of irresponsible sexual behaviours and the dangers of early pregnancies.

5.3. Conclusions

The study concludes that teenage pregnancy within the ACK Diocese of Maseno South is a complex socio-economic, cultural, theological, and gender-related challenge that cannot be addressed through moral instruction alone. While poverty, peer influence, cultural practices, inadequate sexuality education, and gender inequality remain major contributing factors, the church possesses unique opportunities to influence behavioral change through pastoral ministry and community engagement.

The study further concludes that the Mothers' Union plays a significant role in mitigating teenage pregnancy by integrating Christian teaching, mentorship, counselling,

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parenting education, and community outreach. However, these interventions require strengthening through greater theological contextualization, gender-responsive programming, stronger collaboration with government agencies and schools, and increased participation of men and boys.

The application of African Women's Theology and the Afrocentric-Womanist Paradigm demonstrated that church ministry should move beyond punitive approaches toward restorative pastoral care that affirms the dignity of adolescents while challenging harmful cultural and patriarchal structures. Consequently, sustainable reduction of teenage pregnancy requires holistic interventions integrating spirituality, education, economic empowerment, gender justice, and community participation.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Strengthening Sexual and Reproductive Health Education

The M.U. need to introduce structured, comprehensive sexual education that goes beyond abstinence to include safe practices, consent, and gender equality. Additionally, encourage open communication on sexuality between parents, church leaders, and adolescents.

Implementation should begin with consultation among clergy, Mothers' Union leaders, parents, teachers, and appropriatly qualified health practioners, so that the content is accurate, age-appropraite, and consntitent with Diocese's pastoral commitments. Sessions should distinguish between Christian values and essential information about bodiliy development, healthy relationships, consent, coercion and sources of help. Facilitators require training to respond sensitively to abuse and to refer young people to competent protection and and health services.

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5.4.2 Recommendation on Gender Responsiveness

The Diocese should intentionally involve men and boys through Kenya Anglican Men's Association (KAMA), fathers' fellowships, youth ministries, and clergy programs. An inclusive approach to adolescent sexuality and reproductive health is significant in mitigating teenage pregnancies.

A practical Diocesan strategy would assign shared responsibilities to the Mothers' Union, KAMA, youth leaders, and clergy, rather than expecting M.U to carry the programme alone. Joint workshops and seminars could explore harmful expectations of masculinity, respectful relationships and the responsibilities of fathers.

5.4.3 Contextualizing Biblical teachings

The Anglican Church should adopt contextual biblical interpretation that combines moral teaching with compassionate pastoral care. Churches should establish adolescent-friendly ministries, reduce stigma associated with teenage pregnancy, and provide safe spaces where young people can discuss sexuality, relationships, and reproductive health within a Christian framework.

The church and M.U. need to shift from punitive and a theology of sin approaches towards a compassionate, restorative theology that emphasizes forgiveness, healing, and reintegration. Adopting the concept of African Women's cultural hermeneutics is essential in interpreting Biblical texts and Christian teachings that portray girls' teenage pregnancy as immoral and sinful, hence stigmatizing and shaming them. Adopting and providing training for clergy and M.U. leaders in contextual theology and professional counselling will enable a more relevant approach to such issues.

Training contextual interpretation should use examples that arise from the experiences described in the study, including stigma, poverty,and unequal treatment of adolescent parents. Clergy and layreaders can examine how teachings about forgiveness,

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responsibility, and restoration are communicated in sermons, youth meetings and pastoral visits.

5.4.4 Expanding M.U. Interventions

The Mothers' Union should strengthen mentorship programs, establish structured peer-support groups for adolescents, expand counselling services, and develop age-appropriate sexuality education grounded in Christian values. The organization should also strengthen programs for teenage mothers to facilitate their

Additionally, the M.U. intervention needs to broaden awareness campaigns to include economic empowerment, equipping girls to resist exploitation. The M.U. and the larger Christian body need to challenge harmful cultural practices such as early marriage and *disco matanga*. Mentorship programmes should have clear safeguarding rules, defined referral arrangements and supervision by trained adults. Support for teenage mothers should address practical barriers to education, including school re-entry and family relationships, through patnerships with appropriate institutions. Economic empowerment initiatives should be designed around locally identified needs and should avoid creating expectations of assistance that the MU cannot sustain.

5.4.5 Policy and Institutional Collaboration

The ACK Diocese of Maseno South needs to formulate a diocesan policy on adolescent reproductive health and pastoral care that integrates theology, gender equality, child protection, counselling, and community participation. The policy should guide clergy and Mothers' Union members in responding consistently and compassionately to teenage pregnancy. Additionally, for effectiveness and a broad approach, the M.U. needs to foster collaboration with government agencies, NGOs, and schools to harmonize efforts addressing teenage pregnancies.

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Subsequently, the Ministries of Health and Education, county government, schools, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations should strengthen partnerships with the Mothers' Union to provide comprehensive sexuality education, reproductive health services, economic empowerment initiatives, and school retention programs for vulnerable adolescents.

5.5. Suggestions for further studies and research

1. The study recommends further research in the following areas:
2. The role of Kenya Anglican Men's Association (KAMA) in preventing teenage pregnancies.
3. Comparative studies on Mothers' Union interventions across different Anglican dioceses in Kenya.
4. The effectiveness of church-based comprehensive sexuality education programs among adolescents.
5. The influence of digital media and social networking on adolescent sexual behavior within faith communities.
6. Longitudinal studies evaluating the long-term effectiveness of Mothers' Union mentorship and empowerment programs in reducing teenage pregnancy

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APPENDICES

INTERVIEW GUIDES

1.2 Appendix A: interview guide for Mothers' Union leaders

Section A: Leadership Background

1. What leadership position do you hold in the Mothers' Union?
2. How long have you served in the organization?

Section B: Teenage Pregnancy Situation

3. What trends have you observed regarding teenage pregnancies within the Diocese?
4. What factors do you think contribute most to teenage pregnancies among girls?

Section C: Mothers' Union Programs

5. What programs has the Mothers' Union introduced to address teenage pregnancies?
6. How are these programs implemented at parish and diocesan levels?
7. How do you involve clergy, parents, and schools in these programs?
8. What strategies are used to mentor adolescent girls?
9. How do you support teenage mothers spiritually and emotionally?

Section D: Gender and Theology

10. How does the Mothers' Union integrate theological teachings into its programs?
11. How does the organization address gender inequalities affecting girls?
12. In your opinion, what role should men and boys play in preventing teenage pregnancies?
13. How does the Mothers' Union promote dignity and empowerment among girls?

Section E: Effectiveness and Challenges

14. How effective have Mothers' Union programs been in reducing teenage pregnancies?
15. What indicators do you use to measure success?
16. What challenges hinder the effectiveness of the organization?

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17. What support does the Mothers' Union require from the church or government?

Section F: Recommendations

18. What recommendations would you propose for strengthening interventions against teenage pregnancies?
19. How can theological education help address teenage pregnancy?
20. What future plans does the Mothers' Union have regarding adolescent ministry?

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Appendix B: Interview Guide for A.C.K. Clergy

Section A: Background Information

1. What is your position in the church and how long have you served in the Diocese of Maseno South?
2. What roles do you play in youth and family ministry within the church?

Section B: Teenage Pregnancy in the Diocese

3. In your opinion, how serious is the issue of teenage pregnancy within the Diocese of Maseno South?
4. What do you consider to be the major causes of teenage pregnancies among adolescents in this region?
5. How has teenage pregnancy affected the church, families, and the community?

Section C: Role of the Mothers' Union

6. What role does the Mothers' Union play in addressing teenage pregnancies within the Diocese?
7. Which programs or activities organized by the Mothers' Union specifically target adolescents?
8. How effective do you think these programs have been in mitigating teenage pregnancies?
9. Can you share examples of successful interventions by the Mothers' Union?

Section D: Gender and Theology Perspectives

10. How does the church use biblical teachings to address teenage pregnancy?
11. In your view, how do gender inequalities contribute to teenage pregnancies?
12. How does the church address issues such as sexual exploitation, poverty, and gender-based violence affecting girls?
13. How does the church balance moral teaching with compassion and pastoral care for teenage mothers?

Section E: Challenges and Recommendations

14. What challenges does the church face in addressing teenage pregnancies?
15. What challenges does the Mothers' Union encounter in implementing its programs?
16. What recommendations would you give for strengthening church interventions against teenage pregnancies?

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Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion for Teenage Girls

Section A: General Understanding

1. What do you understand by teenage pregnancy?
2. How common is teenage pregnancy among young people in your community?
3. What do you think causes teenage pregnancies among adolescents?

Section B: Social and Gender Issues

4. How does peer pressure influence teenage relationships?
5. How does poverty affect young people's decisions regarding relationships?
6. Do girls and boys receive equal guidance concerning sexuality? Explain.
7. How does social media influence teenage behavior and relationships?
8. What challenges do teenagers face when seeking reproductive health information?

Section C: Church and Mothers' Union

9. What role does the church play in guiding young people?
10. Are you aware of programs organized by the Mothers' Union for teenagers?
11. Have you participated in any mentorship or counseling programs by the Mothers' Union?
12. How helpful are church teachings on sexuality and relationships?
13. Do teenagers feel free to discuss sexuality issues in church? Explain.

Section D: Experiences and Perceptions

14. How are teenage mothers treated within the church and community?
15. What support do teenagers expect from the church?
16. What kind of programs would help young people avoid teenage pregnancies?

Section E: Recommendations

17. What can the Mothers' Union do differently to better support adolescents?
18. How can parents improve communication with teenagers?
19. What advice would you give to other young people concerning teenage pregnancy?
20. What recommendations would you give to the church in addressing teenage pregnancies?

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Appendix D: Focus Group Discussion with M.U. members

General Understanding

1. What do you understand by the term teenage pregnancy?
2. How common is teenage pregnancy within your community and church?
3. What are the main causes of teenage pregnancy among adolescents in this area?

Section B: Mothers' Union Activities

4. What activities does the Mothers' Union undertake to address teenage pregnancies?
5. How do you mentor or guide adolescent girls within the church?
6. What role does prayer and spiritual guidance play in your work with teenagers?
7. How do you involve parents in addressing teenage pregnancy?

Section C: Gender and Social Issues

8. How do poverty and lack of education contribute to teenage pregnancies?
9. In your opinion, how do cultural practices affect adolescent girls?
10. How do boys and men contribute to teenage pregnancies?
11. What challenges do teenage mothers face within the church and community?

Section D: Theological Perspective

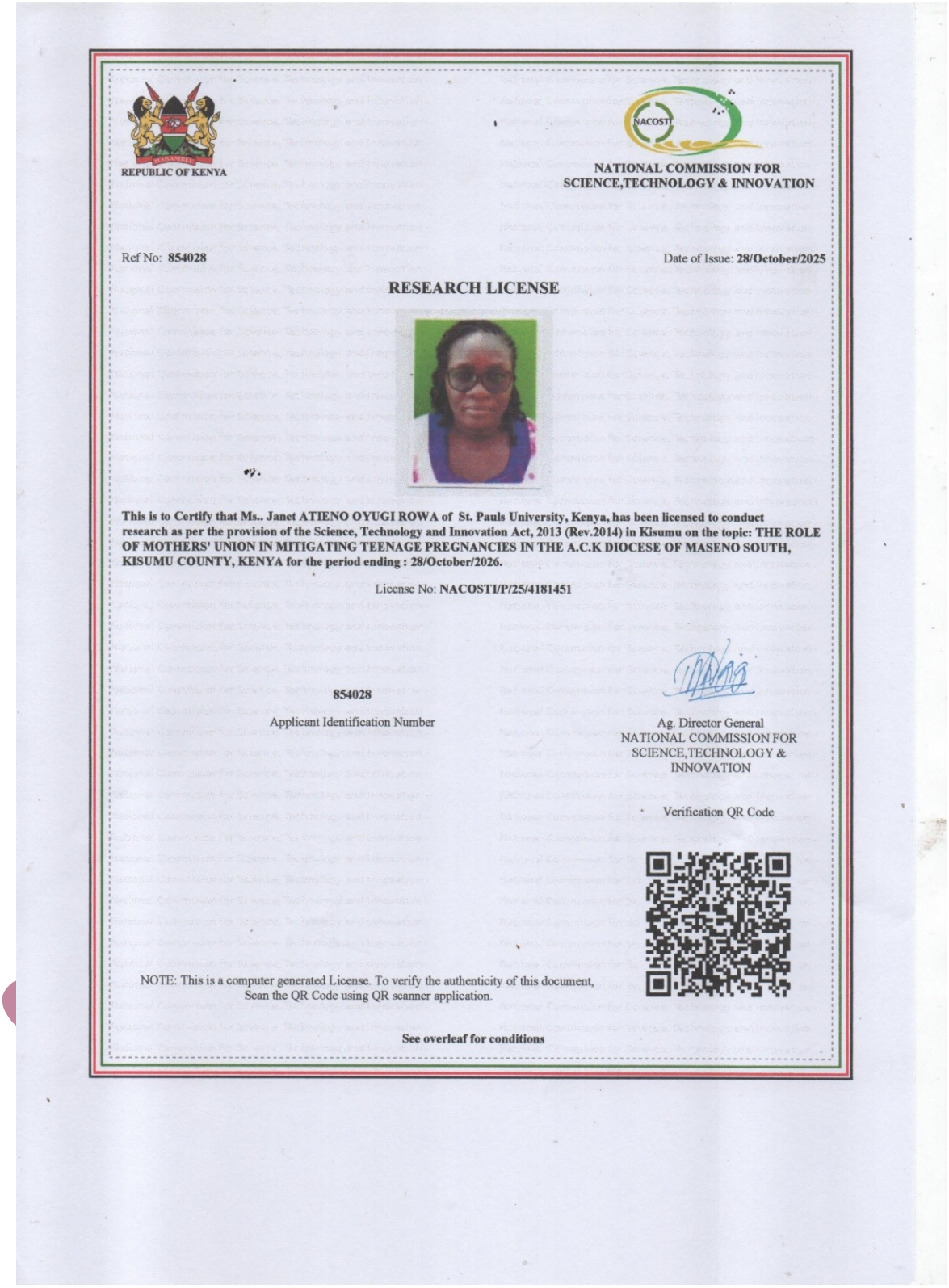
12. Which biblical teachings guide the Mothers' Union in working with adolescents?
13. How does the church respond to teenage mothers?
14. How can the church improve pastoral care for vulnerable girls?

Section E: Challenges and Recommendations

15. What challenges do you face when mentoring teenagers?
16. Are young people willing to participate in church programs? Explain.
17. What changes would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of the Mothers' Union?

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Appendix E: NACOSTI Permit



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **854028**

Date of Issue: **28/October/2025**

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Ms.. Janet ATIENO OYUGI ROWA of St. Pauls University, Kenya, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kisumu on the topic: THE ROLE OF MOTHERS' UNION IN MITIGATING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES IN THE A.C.K DIOCESE OF MASENO SOUTH, KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 28/October/2026.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/25/4181451**

854028

Applicant Identification Number

Ag. Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

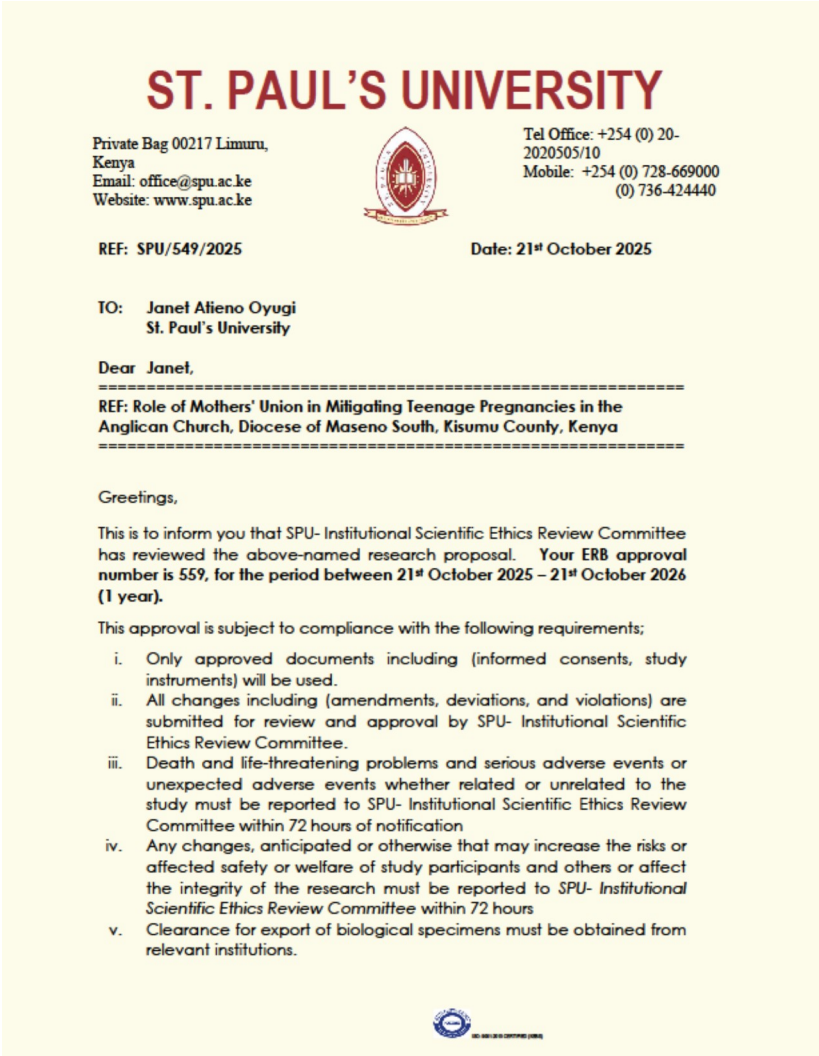
Verification QR Code

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

St. Paul's University Repository

APPENDIX F: Letter of Approval



ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 Limuru,
Kenya
Email: office@spu.ac.ke
Website: www.spu.ac.ke

Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
Mobile: +254 (0) 728-669000
(0) 736-424440

REF: SPU/549/2025 **Date: 21st October 2025**

TO: Janet Atieno Oyugi
St. Paul's University

Dear Janet,

REF: Role of Mothers' Union in Mitigating Teenage Pregnancies in the Anglican Church, Diocese of Maseno South, Kisumu County, Kenya

Greetings,

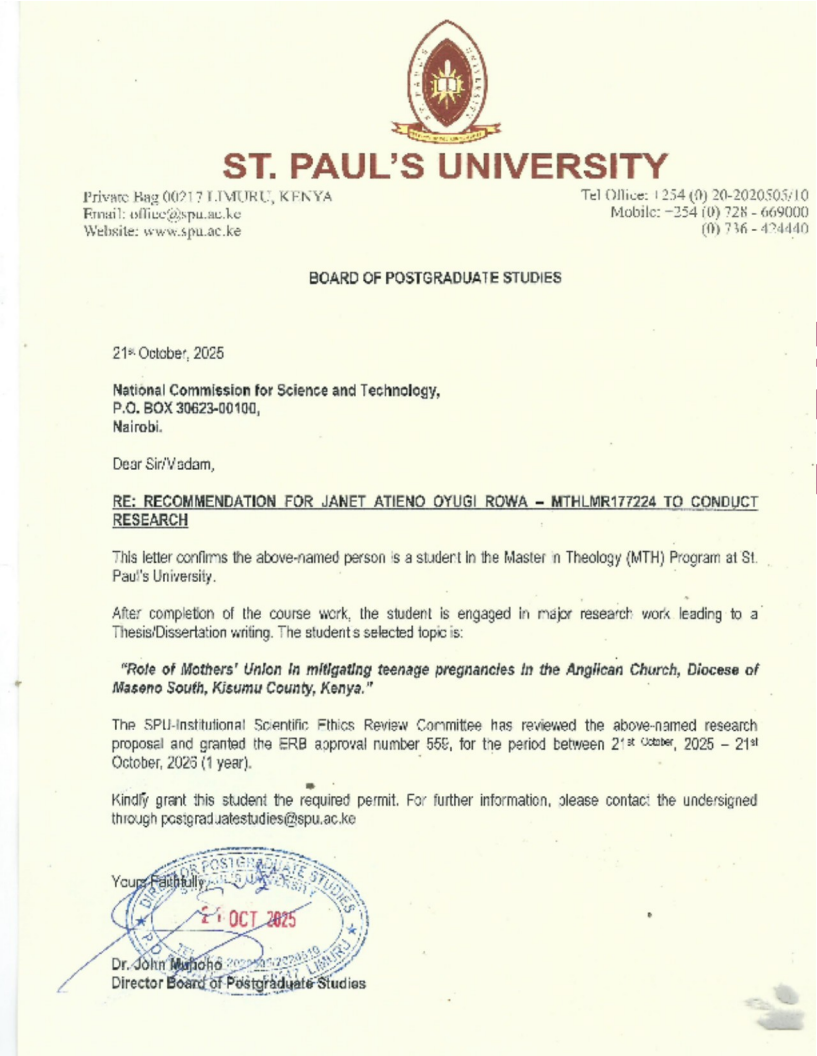
This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 559, for the period between 21st October 2025 – 21st October 2026 (1 year).**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours
v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.

St. Paul's University Repository

APPENDIX G: Letter of Recommendation



ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 LIMURU, KENYA
Email: office@spu.ac.ke
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(0) 736 - 424440

BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

21st October, 2025

National Commission for Science and Technology,
P.O. BOX 30623-00100,
Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RECOMMENDATION FOR JANET ATIENO OYUGI ROWA – MTHLMR177224 TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter confirms the above-named person is a student in the Master in Theology (MTH) Program at St. Paul's University.

After completion of the course work, the student is engaged in major research work leading to a Thesis/Dissertation writing. The student's selected topic is:

"Role of Mothers' Union in mitigating teenage pregnancies in the Anglican Church, Diocese of Maseno South, Kisumu County, Kenya."

The SPU-Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal and granted the ERB approval number 559, for the period between 21st October, 2025 – 21st October, 2026 (1 year).

Kindly grant this student the required permit. For further information, please contact the undersigned through postgraduatestudies@spu.ac.ke

Yours Faithfully,

21 OCT 2025

Dr. John Muhoho
Director Board of Postgraduate Studies