

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented and discussed the theoretical framework that informed my study, namely Argyris and Schon's action science theory, which explains the underlying factors to people's behaviour in given socio-cultural conditions (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen et al., 2002; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Schon, 1982; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985; Smith, 2001). This chapter presents and justifies the meta-theoretical and methodological paradigms that I adopted for data collection, analysis and interpretation that culminated in the findings that are outlined in the last chapter of this research document.

To come up with the relevant research paradigm and methodology for data collection, I was guided by my research objectives and questions, which sought to explore how pregnant and former pregnant learners coped with schooling and how their teachers, peers, parents and community representatives in school governing boards responded to the educational needs of these learners. I therefore, chose to integrate the social constructivist, interpretivist and phenomenological approaches, as the epistemological and ontological paradigms that guided my research design, methodology, and the data gathering and analysis processes. Because my study sought for an in-depth understanding of how and why education stakeholders at two schools responded to the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant learners, I employed the qualitative case study research methodology. The method enabled me to critically reflect on, analyse and interpret different dimensions and relationships that surround the integration of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers into formal schools.

This chapter therefore, presents and discusses the research sample, instruments and data gathering procedures, as well as the methods that I employed to analyse and interpret the gathered data. The latter part of the chapter explains how I accounted for research rigour through data trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

4.2 Epistemological/Meta-theoretical paradigm

Research is undertaken within the realms of a given philosophical interpretation of reality and how that reality is understood and presented as a form of knowledge. Knowledge, which research generates, cannot be viewed and explained in a social vacuum. This is observed by Ambert et al. (1995) who indicate that:

...whereas methods are procedures or techniques, epistemologies constitute one's view of the world, one's assumption about how to know the social and apprehend its meanings, or what may be called one's philosophical orientation (p. 881).

Since my study sought to investigate how education stakeholders conceptualised, perceived and implemented the policy on the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal education, I chose the phenomenological, interpretivist and social constructivist paradigms to underpin my research process and data analysis. Phenomenology, social constructivism and interpretivism all view reality and knowledge as flexible rather than rigid; subjective rather than objective; multifaceted rather than uniform; contextual rather than general; and qualitative rather than quantitative (Seamark & Lings, 2004; Grbich, 2007; Berg & Gall, 1989; Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Ambert et al., 1995; Creswell, 2007; Riessman, 2002). Such a perspective to research is summed up by Seamark and Lings (2004) who posit that:

...interpretative phenomenological analysis is interested in the participant's experience of the topic under investigation and, as such, does not attempt to produce an objective statement. It is an attempt to unravel the meanings in the person's account through a process of interpretative engagement with the interviews and transcripts (p. 814).

In a nutshell, Grbich (2007) observes that the social constructivist and interpretivist research paradigms have the following major characteristics:

- They aim to explore how people interpret and make sense of their experiences;
- They explore how people's contextualities and situations have influence on their constructed meanings of reality;
- They observe that the researchers' own lived experiences have influence on their interpretation of gathered data from research participants; and
- They acknowledge that the researchers' subjectivity due to their own experiences, contributes to the construction of research knowledge.

I found this relevant and complementary to my study's theoretical framework of social action theory, which explains the causal relationship between people's lived experiences, or their theories-in action, and their policies, otherwise called espoused theories-of-action (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985; Smith, 2001). In this regard, my stance as the researcher was that people's interpretation and implementation of the policy on mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal education could be influenced more by their social and cultural governing variables than the official school policy.

For this study, the phenomenon which all the sampled participants experienced is the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers at formal schools. However, as the researcher, I believe that the manner in which the different participants gave meaning to this phenomenon (mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools) could differ due to their particular social and cultural conditions and experiences. For example, the way mainstream learners, pregnant and former pregnant learners perceive and experience schooling could be different, even if they attended the same school. This is because, from a hermeneutic phenomenological research perspective, the researcher should undertake an interpretative process of mediating between the participants' different meanings, which are more fluid and contextual than fixed or universal (Riessman, 2002; Grbich, 2007; Creswell, 2007).

The social constructivist and interpretivist paradigms to reality and knowledge, view human research participants not as objects, but as subjects who create meaning from their own lived experiences (Creswell, 1997; Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006; Riessman, 2002; Grbich, 2007). In this respect, reality and truth (knowledge) are viewed as socially constructed and a set of subjective, phenomenological, selective, partial and inconclusive representations that arise from one's culture and lived experiences. According to the social constructivist and interpretivist research paradigms, an objective interpretation of research meanings can only be arrived at by the researcher after a consideration and an understanding of their particular contextual experiences, which give rise to their multiple meanings and realities. The sum product of qualitative research, which investigates human behaviour, therefore constitutes the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the research participants' lived experiences and meanings. Contributing to this perspective of research, Grbich (2007) contends that:

...reality is viewed as socially and societally embedded and existing within the mind. This reality is fluid and changing and knowledge is constructed jointly in interaction by the researcher and the researched (p. 8).

Since my study sought to achieve a deep understanding of how schools responded to the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal education, I chose to include different categories of participants so as to gather multiple meanings on the topic or phenomenon under study. Two schools, which mainstream pregnant and former pregnant learners, were selected for the study because they had the relevant population of people who experienced the phenomenon under study, namely the enrolment of pregnant learners at their schools. The participants included pregnant, former pregnant and mainstream learners, educators, members of school governing bodies, and parents/guardians of pregnant, former pregnant and mainstream learners.

4.3 Methodological paradigm

While the phenomenological, social constructivist and interpretivist epistemological paradigms are the window through which I perceived the raw data or views from

participants and the findings or knowledge generated from the study, the real research process was undertaken using a qualitative case study research design. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), “Research design is the plan, structure, and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance” (p.221). A research design, therefore, constitutes everything that the researcher employs and does, in order to implement the research proposal, answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of the research. This means that, all the elements of a selected research design should be relevant to the particular topic being investigated. Any mismatch between the research statement of purpose or research questions and the research design could render the whole process of data gathering, presentation and analysis, fruitless. A relevant and clear research design should therefore postulate the sources of data, data gathering instruments, procedures, and types of data, data interpretation and analysis that are employed in order to answer the stated research questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000). In line with this characterisation of research design, Table 4.1 below summarises the research design, data gathering methodology and process that I selected and employed for the study. In the subsequent section, I discuss how the major elements of the research design were contextualised, in order to respond to my research objectives and questions.

Table 4.1: Outline of research methodology and process

PARADIGMATIC ASSUMPTIONS	
Epistemological paradigm	Phenomenological, interpretivist, social constructivist approaches.
Methodological paradigm	Qualitative case study.
RESEARCH DESIGN	
Qualitative case study using interactive and non-interactive data gathering methods.	
SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS	
Convenience sampling	Selection of two schools that mainstream pregnant learners as information rich sites.
Purposeful sampling	Selection of 6 pregnant, 6 former pregnant and 12 mainstream learners, 6 educators and 6 parents (non-researchers) at each school. The selected participants had experienced the phenomenon of mainstreaming pregnant learners in a formal school.
DATA GENERATION	
Data collection techniques	Data documentation techniques
Focus groups, key participant interviews, researcher reflections, documentary analysis.	Verbatim transcripts, research reflection diary and memos, school documents.
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	
Application of Atlas ti tool for content analysis of data, to generate data codes, free quotations and networks; Thematic and content interpretation of participants' views.	
QUALITY CRITERIA OF THE STUDY	
Credibility, dependability, transferability, confirmability, authenticity	
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	
Informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity of participants.	

4.3.1 Qualitative Research

Since my study sought to explore the study participants' views and perceptions towards the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal education, I chose to employ a qualitative research design to collect data that answered my research questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Ngobeli, 2001; Ambert et al., 1995; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Chigona & Chetty, 2008).

Qualitative research methods can be identified by the type of research instruments and data gathering procedures that are employed. Ambert et al. (1995) indicate that “qualitative methods are commonly known to include open-ended questionnaires, in-depth interviews, ethnographic studies, and participant observation” (p.881). These data collection instruments allow for flexibility on the part of the research participants, researcher and the type of data generated. In my study, I therefore employed both interactive and non-interactive procedures in the form of focus group and face-to-face interviews, and a study of documentary evidences on the key participants of the study. This enabled me to capture both the narrative views from participants and at the same time to make a detailed record of their non-verbal language in a reflective journal, from which I inferred their attitudes, beliefs and emotions.

To indicate the variety, naturalistic and flexibility of qualitative research, Ambert et al. (1995) list the main characteristics of the approach as based on:

- Oral words in the form of conversations, sentences or monologues;
- Written words in journals, letters, autobiographies, scripts, texts, books, official reports and historical documents;
- Recorded field notes of observers and interviewers on participants who take part in meetings, interviews, ceremonies, rituals, or any life events;
- Captured life histories or narrative stories which are either written or oral; and
- Visual observations in the form of videotapes or still pictures and any other model of expression like physical presentation, facial expressions or modes of dress.

In view of this multiplicity of sources and methods of data collection, and besides the study of documentary evidence and interviewing the research participants, I kept a reflective journal during data gathering and developed memos during data analysis, where I recorded any observations of participants' non-verbal language and my own conceptualisation of gathered data.

4.3.2 Qualitative case study

Since I used two case study sites for an in-depth exploration of how stakeholders at two schools responded to the educational needs of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, I chose to employ the qualitative case study as the data gathering strategy. I took the two schools as my cases for the study of the phenomenon of mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant learners at formal educational settings. The case study data collection strategy was found appropriate since it matched the qualitative methodological paradigm of the study as advised by Creswell (2007):

...case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explains a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and document and reports) (p.73).

Furthermore, the relevance of the qualitative case study method to my study, which sought to explore human perceptions, attitudes and feelings is also indicated by Ambert et al. (1995) who observe that “qualitative scholars see the case study as an especially potent method for probing the in-depth of feelings, context, multifaceted viewpoints, and relationships” (p.886). I therefore, regarded the two schools as bounded systems or cases with relevant sub-cases or participants within them, who had firsthand experience of the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers within the educational system or curriculum. By using two bounded cases to study my topic, I hoped to achieve a deep intensive and holistic understanding of how stakeholders responded to the educational needs of pregnant and former pregnant learners. The use of case study approach was employed to achieve this research goal because according to Berg (2001):

...case study methods involve systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how it operates or functions (p. 225).

Because of the advantage of intensive study of the selected cases, Berg (2001) adds that, “Extremely rich, detailed, in depth information characterise the type of information gathered in case studies” (p.225). The two schools were therefore selected on the basis of their richness on the topic because they both had pregnant and former pregnant learners in their streams. Merriam and Associates (2002) advise that in case studies:

...a particular person, site, programme, process, community or other bounded system is selected because it exhibits characteristics of interest to the researcher (p.179).

Proponents of the case study research view it in a broader sense as more of a research design, than simply a data gathering strategy, and therefore, advise researchers to select the type of case study design that best suits their research objectives and research questions. In this respect, Berg (2001) claims that, “the case study is not actually a data gathering technique, but a methodological approach that incorporates a number of data-gathering measures” (p.225). These include life histories, documents, oral history, in-depth interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, archives, group interviews, personal biographical, ethnographies and participant observations (Schewardt, 2007; Berg, 2001; Eisenhardt, 2006; Creswell, 2007). Out of these data gathering instruments, I made use of documentary analysis, focus group and in-depth interviews, and a reflective journal to make observations on all the interaction I had with the five groups of participants at the two case study sites. The spread of both sources of data and research instruments was a triangulation measure which helped me to achieve trustworthiness for my study.

Apart from using several data sources and research instruments, an in-depth study of participants was achieved through the selection of the relevant type of case study method. Authorities on case study methodology suggest several types of case studies, which include the intrinsic, instrumental, collective, explanatory, exploratory and descriptive (Creswell, 2007; Berg, 2001; Stake, 1994; Hanock & Algozzine, 2006). In this study I chose to use the collective case study method. What guided me to select this type of case

study as most applicable to my study were its characteristics compared to the others. I did not select the intrinsic case study because it has the disadvantages that it only focuses on studying one particular or unique case, does not seek to answer any research questions and does not relate or compare the case with any other cases. Likewise, although an instrumental case study can be guided by some research questions, I found it inappropriate because it also focuses on understanding a single issue or phenomenon based on studying just a single case.

I therefore settled for the collective case study because it is an intensive study of two or several cases within a bounded setting. The aim was to create a deep or broad understanding of an issue or phenomenon so as to explore or support a theoretical proposition (Berg, 2001; Creswell, 2007; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). In this regard Hancock and Algozzine (2006) observe that:

...collective case study research attempts to address an issue in question while adding to the literature base that helps us better conceptualize a theory (p. 33).

The collective case study method was therefore, found suitable because my study was based on two sites with several cases or participants to be studied. It was undertaken to answer stated research questions and was underpinned and informed by Argyris and Schon's social action theory (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990). Furthermore, I also sought to compare and contrast my data and findings with those from other related research studies from reviewed literature. However, while I chose the collective case study approach to select my study sites and study participants, I remained cognisant of the fact that the dividing line between the different types of case studies could be thinner than what is theoretically claimed. Some aspects of both the intrinsic and instrumental case studies could therefore, still be traceable in my study.

While the different types of case studies are meant to help the researcher in selecting relevant study sites as the bounded cases to study, the actual process in a case study can follow what is referred to as case study research designs. Hancock and Algozzine (2006), Yin (1994) and Berg (2001) all identify the exploratory, explanatory and descriptive

approaches as the main types of case study research designs which can be utilised for the purpose of data gathering. Because the case study research design depends on a multiplicity of data sources and data gathering instruments, it was not possible to strictly select one design in my data gathering process. I utilised the exploratory case study design, which is a preliminary or pilot study undertaken before a larger study to pre-test my research instruments before embarking on the actual field-work (Berg, 2001).

In the main part of the data collection process, I employed explanatory and descriptive case study designs because I sought detailed explanations of how education stakeholders at two schools perceived schoolgirl pregnancy policy guidelines and treated pregnant and former pregnant learners as they did, within their socio-cultural settings. In doing this, I followed the advice of Hancock and Algozzine (2006), who explain that, “Explanatory designs seek to establish cause-and-effect relationships” (p.33), and Berg (2004), who adds that, “Explanatory case studies are useful when conducting causal studies” (p.230). I found this applicable and relevant to my study because I did not only seek to describe the nature of institutional perceptions and responses to the policy on inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal education, but to also explore the reasons for the identified perceptions and responses. In fact one of the major objectives of using an explanatory case study design is to compare and explain how the different social contexts of multivariate cases under study could influence differential behaviour or responses. In my case study, I purposely selected one South African and one Zimbabwean study site which both mainstreamed pregnant and former pregnant learners. The reason for the selection was to compare and contrast the sampled education stakeholders’ perceptions, attitudes and responses to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education.

Yin (1994) identifies descriptive case studies as having the following characteristics:

- They are guided and seek to answer a given set of research questions;
- They select an individual, a group, a community or an institution as units or cases for investigation and analysis;
- The research is underpinned by a theoretical proposition or framework;

- There is a logical link between gathered data and a chosen theoretical proposition;
- They are based on selected criteria for data analysis and interpretation; and
- They seek to establish a link between research findings and a chosen theoretical proposition.

In the same vein, Berg (2001) comments that:

...descriptive case exploration requires that the investigator presents a descriptive theory, which establishes the overall framework for the investigator to follow throughout the study (p.230).

In line with this advice, my study had two discrete, but closely related dimensions. The first involved a critical analysis of the education policy frameworks of South Africa and Zimbabwe which was discussed in Chapter two. This was undertaken in order to examine how the policies incorporate the international principle of education as a basic right for every child (Subrahmanian, 2005; Chilisa, 2002; Stromquist, 2005; Leach, 2000), which means that pregnant and former pregnant teenagers should also exercise that right. A study of school records (Appendices 13.1 -13.5)³ on the participation and performance of pregnant and former pregnant learners at the two schools was also undertaken. This was done in order to have a clear view of their school participation, in the period before, during and after their pregnancy.

The second dimension involved an interactive data gathering process at the two schools. This was meant to identify and analyse the views and attitudes of pregnant and former pregnant learners, their parents, mainstream peers, teachers and members of school governing boards towards the policy measures on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at conventional schools. I conducted focus group and key participant interviews with the study participants and compiled memos in a researcher's reflective journal (Appendix 9)⁴ on the interaction patterns that emerged during the interviews.

³ School Records on the population and school participation of pregnant and former pregnant learners

⁴ An example of notes from the researcher's reflective journal

The rationale for the two approaches was to explore and examine the relationship between the two phenomena that were of concern to my study. These are the official policy on school girl pregnancy, which is the espoused theory-of-action; and the actual implementation of the policy by education stakeholders, which are the study participants' theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985; Smith, 2001). My objective was to understand the governing variables that influenced the study participants' attitudes and responses to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in ordinary schools.

Therefore, the theoretical thread that ran throughout my study was Argyris and Schon's science action theory, which examines the relationship between what people claim to do (espoused theory-of-action or policy), and how they actually act (theories-in-use). I found the theory to be useful analytical tool for my study, which sought an in-depth understanding of the factors that could influence the study participants' perceptions of the national policy that allow pregnant teenagers to continue with their education, and the treatment of pregnant learners at school, in the home and community.

4.4 Data collection

My research was a comparative case study conducted at two similar secondary schools, which were selected from South Africa and Zimbabwe. The major objective of the study was to examine how and why stakeholders at the two schools responded to the policy measures that allow pregnant and former pregnant teenagers to continue with their education at formal schools. Therefore, the selection or sampling process began with the identification of the two schools that would be relevant for the study. Once the schools had been identified, the selection of research participants at each school was undertaken.

4.4.1 The research sample and sampling procedures

One of the often cited challenges of using qualitative case study research is that its findings may not be generalised because in most instances the cases studied could be

small to represent a wider population (Berg, 2001; Hanock and Algozzine, 2006; Schewardt, 2007). Likewise, in my study the cases were chosen for an in-depth rather than broad understanding of the topic under study. Intensive exploration of how two schools responded to the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal education was in this case achieved by using different categories of participants and different data gathering instruments. Just like in most qualitative case studies, I used convenience, purposive or theoretical and snowball sampling methods to select my study sites and participants (Hof & Richter, 1999; Richter & Mambo, 2005; Seamark & Lings, 2004; Creswell, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Silverman, 1993, 2005; Merriam & Associates, 2006). Before describing and justifying how I used each of these sampling approaches in my study, it is important to firstly define and characterise what each of them entails.

Convenience sampling is also referred to as opportunistic sampling because the researcher selects participants on the basis of their availability and accessibility to the researcher. It is more applicable when someone is studying a rare phenomenon and, therefore takes advantage of the easily available and accessible sources of data. Although conveniently selected, the sampled participants should be able to provide suitable data for the study. In this regard, convenience sampling is closely linked to purposeful or theoretical sampling whereby “samples are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher is investigating” (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p.319). Thus, while the study site or participants could be found convenient in terms of accessibility and availability, the particular person, site, programme, process, community or any other chosen case should exhibit characteristics of importance, relevance and interest to the researcher’s objectives and research questions (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Silverman, 2005; Ploeg, 1999; Babbie & Mouton 1992). Since I sought to study how schools responded to the educational needs of pregnant and former pregnant learners, I used both convenient and purposeful sampling to identify schools that had pregnant and former pregnant learners, who were willing to participate in the study.

4.4.2 Identification of study sites

Although I am currently working, studying and residing in South Africa, a greater part of my education and working experience were in Zimbabwean schools and tertiary institutions. Because of this educational exposure to both South Africa and Zimbabwe, I chose to conduct a cross-case study (Schwardt, 2007) of two schools drawn from the two countries. I used convenience sampling to select the two schools. The choice of the two schools was based on their accessibility, which allowed me to make multiple visits for data gathering. I planned to have repeated visits in order to achieve data saturation (Merriam & Associates, 2002; Silverman, 2005; Schwardt, 2007) because the case study design, aims for in-depth understanding of the topic under study. Besides being accessible, the two schools had pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, who were currently enrolled and willing to participate in the study. Although convenience sampling can be associated with researcher bias, it was the availability of the relevant participants for the study at both schools that minimised such bias because selection of the schools was based on strictly set criteria.

Because mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant learners is not a common phenomenon at every school, I had to take advantage of those schools that implemented the school girl pregnancy policy guidelines in the two countries. Furthermore, school and university calendars in South Africa and Zimbabwe are so different that this enabled me to gather data at the Zimbabwean study site when I was on vacation from the University of Venda where I am currently teaching. Since I worked in Zimbabwe for over 25 years as a high school teacher, principal, teacher training college and university lecturer, I got the support of the principal and teachers at the selected school to identify pregnant and former pregnant learners at the school, whose parents could also be accessed and accept to participate in the study. Added to this, between 2004 and 2006, I worked in a team of three consultants for the UNICEF Zimbabwe country office in which we conducted a comprehensive national review of gender equity issues in basic education (Runhare & Gordon, 2004). It was during this experience that I developed concern and interest for, contributed to advocacy for the continued enrolment of learners who had fallen pregnant

while at school, and also kept in contact with the few schools in the country that accept not to discriminate against learners who might fall pregnant while at school. With the help of the deputy principal of the selected school, several visits were made to the homes of the learners who were pregnant at the time when the study was conducted. Convenience sampling (Creswell, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Silverman, 1993, 2005; Merriam & Associates, 2006) was therefore used to identify and select learners whose parents cooperated with school management with regards to school policy on learner pregnancy.

Identification of the South African study site was not difficult either since I stay in Limpopo province, which is one of the provinces with a high prevalence rate of teenage and schoolgirl pregnancy in the country (Monama, 2009; Berry & Hall; 2009; Panday et al., 2009). I discussed contemporary educational problems with my Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) Honours students, all of whom are practicing educators, and indicated my research interest to them. I asked for their assistance in identifying schools facing the problem of high schoolgirl pregnancy. One of the students then facilitated my first visit to the South African school that participated in the study. The school principal assigned to me the Head of Department (HoD) for Life Orientation (LO), under which HIV and AIDS education and pregnancy related issues fall. Arrangements were made for me to visit the school on any working day after lessons so that I would not disrupt the school programmes.

Since convenience and purposeful sampling are closely linked, the two schools were therefore, not chosen as a quantitative representation of the schools in the two countries. The schools were selected because they were rich in relevant information for my study because they both mainstreamed pregnant learners. Since this was a case study, in which I used convenience and purposive sampling, I was aware would not generalise my findings because of the small size of the sample. However, the strength of the study is that there was an in-depth exploration and understanding of factors that influenced the nature of the study participants' perceptions and responses towards the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools.

Certain procedures had to be followed in order to gain official access to both case study sites. For the South African school, I first obtained written permission from the Vhembe District Manager to select any school within the district that I found suitable for the study (Appendix 3)⁵. I then approached the circuit manager for permission to carry out research at the identified and selected school (Appendix 4)⁶.

In Zimbabwe the process of getting permission to carry out research in schools is more centralised and conservative in that one has to go through all the different ranks of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MoESC). First, I went to the ministry's head office in Harare to motivate and provide all documentary evidence on how I would carry out the study. It was only after obtaining permission from head office (Appendix 5)⁷ that I approached the Provincial Education Director (PED), who then referred me to the District Education Officer (DEO) of the school (Appendix 6)⁸, which I had identified with the help of the Education Officer (EO) responsible for discipline in schools. Finally, the DEO authorised me to conduct the study at the selected school. With the official documents authorising me to conduct my study at the two schools, the process of identifying and selecting study participants began.

4.4.3 Identification and selection of study participants

Although the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools is gaining momentum in some of the African countries which ratified international conventions on gender equity, women's and children's rights, I considered my topic to be

⁵ District senior manager letter of permission to conduct research (South Africa)

⁶ Circuit manager's letter of permission to conduct research (South Africa)

⁷ Appendix 5: Secretary of Education's letter of permission to conduct research (Zimbabwe)

⁸ Appendix 6: Provincial Education Officer's letter of permission to conduct research (Zimbabwe)

a socially sensitive research topic because of the commonly held negative perceptions to teenage pregnancy (Chilisa, 2002; Gordon, 2000; Bayona & Kadji-Murangi, 1996). In view of the common negative attitudes towards teenage pregnancy in society, especially if it takes place out of wedlock (Chilisa, 2002; Gordon, 2000; Lee, 1993), the population of pregnant and former pregnant learners, and their parents, who were willing to participate in such a study was small. This is the reason why I chose the case study research method, and applied convenience and purposeful sampling methods to select both the study sites and participants. Where there is a limited population to sample from, purposive sampling is the most appropriate method for selecting participants, who have experienced the phenomenon under study, and therefore, most knowledgeable and informative on the topic (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Sample representative in this case was defined in terms of the participants' richness in information required for the study objectives and research questions. Consequently, at the two schools where the study was conducted, the participants were selected because they experienced or were affected in different ways by the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant learners at their schools.

At the two secondary schools where the study was conducted, subjects were selected because they were affected in different ways by policy measures on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners. From each school, the following were therefore selected for the study:

- Twenty four pregnant and former pregnant learners (twelve from each school) participated in a focus group interview and key participant interviews to explore their past and present educational needs, experiences, expectations, aspirations and challenges;
- Six parents and/or legal guardians of the identified pregnant or former pregnant learners at each school participated in a focus group and key participant interviews;
- Six senior teachers from each school participated in focus group interviews. The teachers included those who teach Life Orientation /Guidance and Counselling and provide counselling services at the two schools;

- Six community members of each school's governing body participated in a focus group interview; and
- Twelve mainstream learners from each school, who studied with pregnant and former pregnant girls, participated in a focus group interview.

There was gender disaggregation of the sampled participants for fair representation of views from both female and male gender domains. A distinction was therefore made, between the views of male and female participants in each of the above categories.

4.5 Data collection instruments and procedures

In accordance with qualitative case study research and the phenomenological, social constructivist and interpretivist epistemological positioning of my study, I used a combination of documentary analysis, focus group and key participant interviews, and the researcher's reflective and observation journal to collect data. The reason for utilising a combination of data collection instruments was to achieve data saturation by widening the perceptions of participants.

4.5.1 Documentary review and analysis

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006) documentary analysis is a non-interactive data collection method in which issues are investigated through a review of artefact or archival collections such as personal diaries, photos, video clips, minutes of meetings and other forms of organisational records. In Chapter Two of this thesis, I made a comparative review of the South African, Zimbabwean and other countries' education legal frameworks and policy guidelines in relation to international conventions that seek to protect all children's rights to education, including those of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. The two countries' specific policy guidelines on management of teenage pregnancy at formal schools (DoE, 2007; MoESC, Circular Minute, P35, 1999) were given special consideration in the second chapter, in which I discuss their strengths and weaknesses.

Related to this, I investigated the study participants' level of policy understanding and perceptions towards their respective policy guidelines on management of teenage pregnancy in schools. I found this to be necessary because the level of policy conceptualisation and rationalisation by policy duty bearers (educators, principals, parents, school development/governing bodies) and policy right bearers or beneficiaries (mainstream learners, pregnant and former pregnant learners) is one variable that can influence the extent to which a particular policy can be effectively implemented to achieve the indented objectives. Besides the policy documents, I also studied school records like attendance registers and academic profiles of pregnant and former pregnant learners in order to determine trends in their school participation and performance, before, during and after pregnancy. Such records, added to what was verbally captured, helped me to infer into the nature of service provision, problems and motivational factors that influenced pregnant and former pregnant learners' rights to, within and through education (Subrahmanian, 2005; Chilisa, 2002; Stromquist, 2005; Leach, 2000).

4.5.2 Focus group interview

Focus group interviews were the major research instrument for this study because I chose to involve most of the study participants in the discussions in which they could critique each other according to their different categories. A focus group interview is a technique that brings together a small homogenous group of participants for a semi-structured discussion under the moderation of the researcher to ensure adequate focus on the research question (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Drew, Hardman & Hart, 1996; Muranda, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Besides being a useful instrument for evaluating new policy, education and intervention implementation schemes, Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) are of the view that:

...focus groups are an important tool for accessing the experiences and attitudes of marginalized and minority groups, including racial ethnic minorities, women, children, the mentally and physically challenged, and so on (p.197).

Because of the negative attitudes associated with teenage pregnancy, I regarded the pregnant and former pregnant learners who participated in my study as a marginalised group who had no power to advocate for rights. I therefore, used the focus group interview to gather their views on their educational experiences, as well as information from those who interacted with them on a daily basis, for example their parents, classmates and educators. Apart from the advantage of saving on time and resources by accessing multiple respondents at once, the other advantage of focus groups is that new issues can emerge, which the researcher might not have anticipated (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

Since the subject of teenage pregnancy is sensitive (Kutame, 2004; Kutame & Mulaudzi, 2010), in view of commonly held negative perceptions towards pregnant teens and the participation of pregnant and former pregnant learners and their parents in focus group interviews, I took measures to de-construct negative perceptions about the study before voluntary participation was sourced from the targeted population:

- Only pregnant and former pregnant learners, who had chosen to go public about their status were invited and selected to participate in focus groups. Accordingly, for this study, a pregnant learner was defined as one who had declared her pregnancy to her parents/guardians and the school authorities, and had chosen to continue with her studies (Mensch, Clark, Lloyd & Erulkar, 2001; DoE, 2007; MoESC, Circular Minute, P35, 1999).
- I first explained how the ethical requirements of informed consent, confidentiality, right to individual privacy and anonymity of the participants would be adhered to during data gathering exercise and in reporting of the findings of the study (Appendix 7)⁹.
- The main objective of this study is to explore the social factors that could influence the perceptions of education stakeholders on policy guidelines that

⁹ Appendix 7: Letters of informed consent

extend educational rights to learners who might fall pregnant while at school. The study did not get into the individual participants' personal life, background or history of their pregnancy. I only gathered the views of teachers, learners, and community members on the relevance, utility and applicability of the policy guidelines on mainstreaming pregnant and former pregnant learners at their respective schools. This was first explained to the target population before they chose to participate in the study.

- The composition of each focus group was homogenous in terms of gender, age and power differences. Care was therefore taken to ensure that the different categories of participants were in separate focus groups. For example, pregnant and former pregnant learners did not mix with other students; community representatives in school governing boards did not mix with other parents/guardians; and for each category, male and female participants were in separate focus group interviews (Appendices 8.1 – 8.5)¹⁰.
- As a way of developing trust and truthfulness in the key participants of the study, I made several familiarisation visits to interact with pregnant, former pregnant and mainstream learners who had volunteered their participation in the study. With the company and help of the two Heads of Departments (HODs) for Life Orientation/Guidance and Counselling, who were also responsible for the welfare of pregnant and former pregnant learners at the two schools, the familiarisation visits helped to build trust in the learners. Before the interviews, I first empowered and restored any lost confidence of the pregnant and former pregnant learners by using illustrations from successful female personalities and celebrities who are either single or had been teenage mothers. Furthermore, during this initial interaction process, pregnant and former pregnant learners were given the option of taking part in individual face-to-face key participant interview at a venue of their choice.

¹⁰ Appendix 8: Focus group interview guides

- The interaction with pregnant and former pregnant learners who participated in the study is an ongoing process which has seen the study being extended to a project funded by the University of Venda's Research and Innovation directorate. The research project aims to empower the different stakeholders in surrounding schools on policy conceptualisation and advocacy, identification and promotion of the educational needs of all children, including pregnant and former pregnant teenagers.

4.5.3 Face-to-face key participant interview

Although I had planned the use focus groups to interview all the participants, I was forced to interview the parents of pregnant and former pregnant learners at the Zimbabwean school individually due to circumstances beyond my control. Most parents of the pregnant and former pregnant learners indicated that they preferred to be interviewed privately in their homes instead of being asked to come to school. Although there were no other respondents in the face-to-face interview who gave dimensions different from those of the interviewee as in focus groups, as the researcher, I probed the respondents in order to widely explore issues. Thus, although standardised by use of an interview guide (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997), the face-to-face interviewees were also given space throughout the interview to ask for clarification on any of the issues or questions discussed during the conversation. Probing added a depth to the interview and this resulted in some of the interviewees bringing unexpected dimensions to the conversation, similar to what happened in focus groups.

Accuracy in data capturing for all interviews was ensured through the use of a digital voice recorder which had capacity to capture voices up to a radius of four metres. At the beginning of every interview, I sought the permission of the participants to record the whole interview, which I would then transfer to my computer to prevent any loss of raw data. The use of a voice recorder added to data truthfulness because each transcription from voice to written script contained a one-to-one word correspondence between what

was said and what was written (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Furthermore, electronic voice capturing gave me, as the qualitative researcher the opportunity to record my perceptions and non-verbal observations in the research reflective journal while the interviews were in progress (Seamark & Lings, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). After every interview, the recorded script would be replayed for the participants to cross check their views.

4.5.4 Researcher's observation and reflective journal

When a researcher concentrates on writing notes when conducting interviews, there is a possibility of distracting the participants in the discussion and even misrepresenting facts as one tries to catch up with what the respondents are saying. For this reason, the entire interview proceedings were tape-recorded to allow the researcher to only jot down into an observation journal, what could not be auditory captured (Hebert & Beardsley, 2002).

Hebert & Beardsley (2002) characterise a research observation journal as a detailed record of the researcher's experiences during field research. Such field notes do not only include observations made about the subjects of the study, but also include the researcher's self-reflections and assessment on his/her own misconceptions, bias, reactions and attitudes, which could affect research objectivity. In this study, the research journal helped me to also record and reflect on my emotions on the pregnant and former pregnant learners' experiences and challenges on schooling. The process of data transcription and re-reading the data to identify codes, themes and sub-themes or categories of data also gave me the opportunity to reflect on the interaction process with study participants and how I might have been influenced by my own cultural perceptions, gender bias and prejudice.

4.6 Data analysis and interpretation

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) are of the view that:

...analysis and interpretation are not two distinct phases in the process of qualitative research process... the researcher often engages simultaneously in the process of data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the research findings (p. 355).

Consequently, data analysis and interpretation were closely linked to the process of data gathering in that after every data gathering visit, I engaged with the gathered data by transcribing the data, studying my reflective research journal and developing data memos on impressions, new ideas and perceptions that came to my mind from the data. I also studied how non-interactive data from documentary records, related with interactive data from focus groups and key participant interviews. Data analysis involved inductive scrutinisation of the raw data, in order to identify themes on the school experiences of pregnant and former pregnant learners, and how parents, teachers, mainstream peers and members of school governing boards perceived and responded to the educational needs and challenges of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers.

The data from interviews were processed using Atlas ti data analysis tool, which I commanded to create free quotations (Appendix11¹¹), data codes and networks, from the themes, categories and sub-categories that emerged from the gathered data (Smit, 2002; Babbie & Mouton, 2004). I used free quotations and codes to identify the main ideas that emerged from the gathered data. Using Atlas ti, I was able to make a summary of all the codes (Appendix12¹²) that I had assigned to my data and tabulated them to indicate the frequency of the different views that were expressed by the participants (Table 5.2). I also imported and edited the codes to design data networks which summarised the relationships between the views that emerged from the themes and categories of data (Figures 5.1 - 5.3).

¹¹ Appendix 11: Example of Atlas ti free quotations

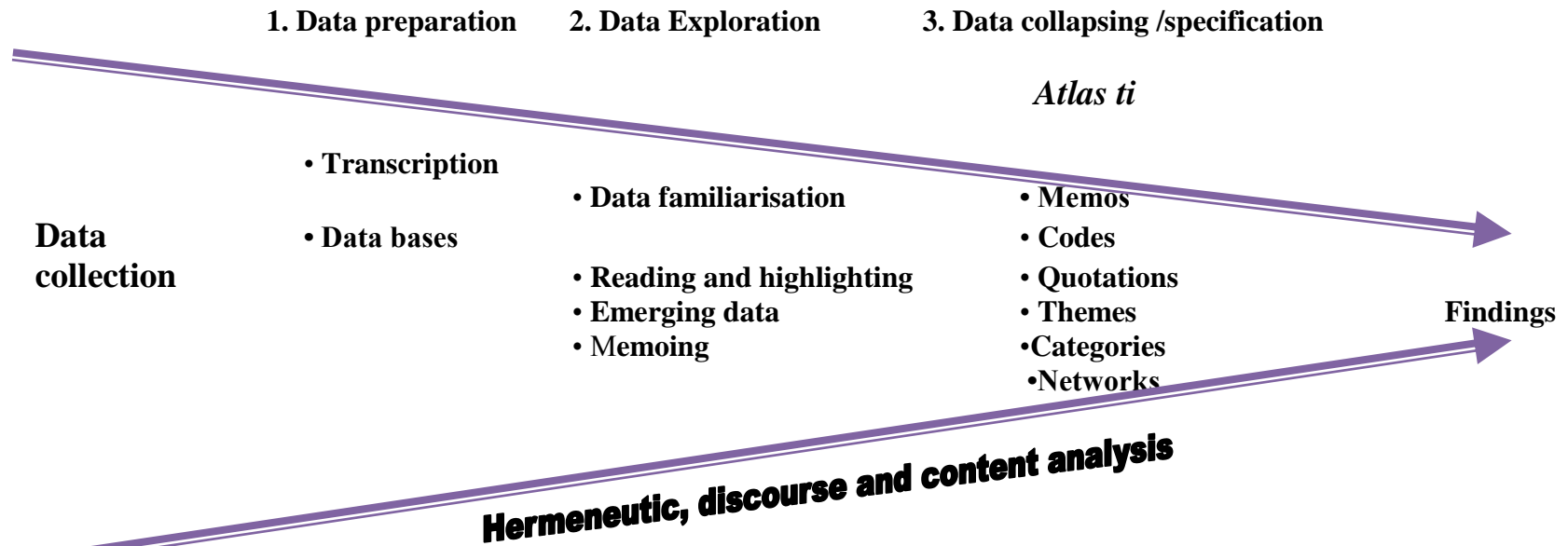
¹² Appendix 12: Example of data codes

The relationships were described using the following symbols:

- => : is cause of
- == : is associated with
- *} : is a property of
- <> : contradicts
- [] : is part of
- {18-9} :18 text passages were connected to the code and 9 other codes are linked to the code.

It was from the networks that I was able to identify and distil the gathered data into findings of the study. The use of *Atlas ti* for content data analysis by processing codes, creating free quotations and networks, saved me from dealing manually with the large amount of data that I had gathered (Stemler, 2001; Babbie, 2007; Smit, 2002; Berg, 2001). Figure 4.1 summarises the process I followed to process and analyse the gathered data.

Figure 4.1: Process of data analysis and interpretation



Adapted from Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006)

In line with the phenomenological, social constructivist and interpretive epistemological paradigms and the qualitative methodological paradigm chosen for this study, data were analysed using a mix of the hermeneutic, content and discourse analysis approaches (Babbie & Mouton, 2004; Luke, 1996; Ploeg, 1999; Thorne, 2004; Seamark & Lings, 2004; Cromer & McCarthy, 1999; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). The three approaches are inductive methods of data analysis in which written texts, phrases, sentences or paragraphs and spoken words or narratives are examined and broken down into meaningful units or data bits. Consideration was given to different data sources or the participants' social realities such as differential power relations, socio-economic, ethnic, cultural, and gender differences.

Hermeneutic analysis puts emphasis on meaning-bestowing, whereby the broken parts of data or data bits should be understood in the context of all the gathered data or the holistic context of the study participants (Ploeg, 1999; Thorne, 2004). For example, in my data analysis, the views of an individual on a particular issue were compared and contrasted with those of other individuals, as well as the general group perceptions. Discourse analysis is the recognition that social inequalities like power, culture, gender and social class can influence people to perceive the same phenomenon in different ways (Thorne, 2000; Luke, 1996). In this regard, I considered how different participants at the same study site perceived the policy that allows for the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools, and the educational needs, aspirations and challenges of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. For example, differences and similarities were explored on data from the Zimbabwean and South African study participants, given their different socio-cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the views of pregnant and former pregnant learners were also juxtaposed because their educational experiences, needs and challenges, though similar, may also have some different dimensions. Moreover, the views of parents of pregnant or former pregnant learners were compared with parents of the mainstream learners.

While the hermeneutic and discourse analysis were used for inductive interpretation of gathered data, I applied content analysis, which involved coding and memoing, to break

down my raw data into meaningful units or themes and categories, which could be summarised into research findings (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Cromer & McCarthy, 1999; Babbie & Mouton, 2004; Ploeg, 1999). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) advise that to qualitative researchers, “coding helps to reduce data and memoing assists with thinking about how to organize our data into meaningful categories and patterns” (p.358). They also indicate that the process of data coding follows three major stages, namely data preparation, exploration and specification.

4.6.1 Data Preparation

Data preparation involves creating a database where transcribed data are stored in their original form (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Seamark & Lings, 2004). At the end of each engagement with research participants, I created a memo in my reflective journal (Appendix 9¹³) for every interview that had been conducted. In the journal memos I wrote non-verbal information like the emotions, atmosphere and gestures that I observed during interaction with participants. Writing memos as I transcribed raw data and studying the reflective journal helped me to deeply engage with my data. This I did by listening, reading and re-reading, and thinking about the relevance of the data to the study’s research objectives and questions. I personally transcribed all data, word for word, from oral into written text. Where translation was required, like in the case where a vernacular language was used during the focus group and key participant interviews, I sought the services of two specialist translators, who separately translated each audio script from vernacular to English word for word. I then listened to and compared the two English translations on the script in order check on accuracy. Where there were some differences the process was done again until a consensus was arrived at. As I listened to the audio scripts and read the written transcriptions over and over in order to check for accurate correspondence between oral and the written words, I got to identify and understand some of the hidden meanings in my data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

¹³ Example of reflective journal memo

4.6.2 Data exploration

The actual analysis of data began at the stage of examining the transcribed scripts in order to make sense out of the data in relation to the research objectives and questions. This involved data coding to identify data themes and categories (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Grbich, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As I read the transcribed scripts of raw data, I also developed memos on what came to my mind on participants' gestures and body language. At this stage, data coding and memoing were therefore interrelated aspects of data analysis which I undertook simultaneously. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006):

Coding usually consists of identifying 'chunks' or 'segments' in your textual data ... and giving each of these a label (code). Coding is the analysis strategy many qualitative researchers employ in order to help them locate key themes, patterns, ideas, and concepts that may exist within their data (p. 349).

Following this advice, I broke down my raw data into themes and categories of meaningful ideas and concepts in relation to my research questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Grbich, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). I then commanded Atlas ti, a powerful computer package for qualitative data analysis (Smit, 2002; Babie & Mouton, 2004), to allocate codes to my data (Appendices 11 and 12¹⁴)

After transcribing each set of raw data from focus group and key participant interviews, I read through each of them several times in preparation for open-coding (Berg, 2001). I open-coded each written transcript by analysing it word for word, line by line, phrase by phrase and paragraph by paragraph, in order to identify emerging concepts and turn them into general data themes and categories (Table 5.1), which I could further break up into sub-categories (Grbich, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Open-coding helped me to critique, infer and understand my data by repeatedly reading and questioning the data. Through this process, I also developed memos on each set of data, in which I summarised the main ideas and reflected on what happened during the

¹⁴ Appendices 11 and 12: Examples of Atlas ti free quotations and codes.

interviews. The general categories of data that I developed during open-coding were based on general patterns or concepts that emerged from what the participants said in the transcribed texts. For example, I used open-coding to identify the main challenges that pregnant and former pregnant learners faced at school, at home and in the community. At this point, the coding was descriptive in that I made reference to the actual words used by the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). For easier identification of similar words or phrases, I colour coded such words or phrases with the same colour in the written texts. From the colour-coded words and phrases, I identified common interpretive codes, which I grouped together to generate emerging themes for the study (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I then commanded Atlas ti to capture the codes on each of the free quotations from my data (Appendix 12¹⁵).

4.6.3 Data specification

The final process of data-coding involved further breaking data into sub-categories, which had more detailed inductive concepts on raw data (Grbich, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Richter & Mlambo, 2005; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). In doing this, I followed the advice by Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2006) that:

In focused coding a researcher examines all the data in a category, compares each piece of data with every other piece, and finally builds a clear working definition of each concept, which is then named. The name becomes the code (p. 352).

Within the coded data, I looked for similarities and differences in the way the same category of participants perceived the same aspect. This involved looking for differences in the seemingly similar patterns of data and similarities in the seemingly different patterns of data. For example, the views of pregnant and former pregnant learners from the different study sites and within the same study site were compared and contrasted to create sub-categories or analytical dimensions on an identified concept or aspect. Reflective coding, therefore, enabled me to go beyond transcribed data in that I clarified

¹⁵ Appendix 12: Example of free quotations with codes.

and explored concepts from the text, but also took care to safeguard the meaning of the concept or idea from the participants' perspectives (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). This is an important aspect of qualitative data analysis, which involves both participants and the researcher co-constructing the data, but at the same time making a clear distinction between the two voices in the presented data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Moss, 2004; Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). In exploring the similarities and differences in gathered data, I made reference to the participants' social and cultural values or governing variables that could influence their perceptions on the same issue. For example, society's governing values on pregnancy in marriage, and out of wedlock were found in this study to be viewed differently by most participants at the two schools, where I conducted the study.

As already alluded to, data coding and memo-writing were simultaneously undertaken because memoing assisted me to develop meaningful codes. Grbich (2007) defines a memo as a descriptive record of ideas, concepts, insights, and themes, which assist one in hypothesis or theoretical development and testing. In my memoing, I therefore recorded the participants' literal views, made inferences and related them to my study's theoretical positioning and research questions. The reflections which I developed throughout data collection and analysis helped me to record any plausible or unexpected ideas that necessitated further exploration and clarification through a second round of visits to study sites and interviews with participants. I used memo writing as a pathway to develop a summary of my research findings. Each memo on a particular data gathering visit raised different aspects on the study. For example a summary of main ideas that were generated, illustrations in the form of actual words said by participants and expansion of ideas in data bits were undertaken during memo writing. It was from the memos that I ended up with themes and categories of data, such as pregnant learners' educational needs and aspirations; challenges faced by pregnant teenagers at home, within the community and in the school; and different education stakeholders' understanding of, perceptions and attitudes towards the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers in formal schools. The data themes and categories were explored to make conclusions from my study and to compare them with findings from other related studies that I discussed in Chapter two, as well as

relating them to Argyris and Schon's action science theory, which informed the conceptualisation of the study.

From the codes and quotations which were created with the assistance of Atlas ti data processing computer tool, I then applied content data analysis to make inferences, identify similarities, differences and consistencies in the views of participants (Stemler, 2001; Babbie, 2007; Berg, 2001). Content data analysis, therefore shaped the way I presented and discussed the narrative data that emerged from this study by comparing and contrasting the statements made by participants on each theme and in relation to my research questions and objectives.

4.7 Quality criteria measures

While in quantitative studies, research rigour is measured by validity and reliability, qualitative researchers use data trustworthiness to measure the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of their gathered data and research findings (Moss, 2004; Drew, Hardman & Hart, 1996; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Cohen; Morrison & Morrison, 2007; Moore, Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004). In this regard Moss (2004) observes that:

Trustworthiness as a science in qualitative research has been delineated by Lincoln and Guba (1985) within four criteria- credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (p.362).

To achieve data trustworthiness in my study, I employed several measures that included triangulation of research instruments and participants, audit trail, member checking, peer debriefing, critical reflectivity, thick descriptions of data in the form of verbatim transcriptions and selection of relevant and various data sources (Moore, Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Drew, Hardman & Hart, 1996; Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006).

4.7.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe credibility or what is internal validity in quantitative research, as the extent to which results of a study are truthful or realistic, taking into account the social and cultural contexts of the participants and conditions under which data were gathered. In this regard, Hardman, Drew and Hart (1996) remind researchers that:

...it is uncommon for qualitative research to be conducted in different cultures, where language differences exist and subtle nuances may be overlooked or misinterpreted (p.235).

To achieve credibility, I therefore employed multiple data gathering instruments and a variety of data sources as a triangulation measure, so as to cross-check the accuracy and consistency of the information I gathered. The corroboration of different research instruments and data sources in the form of documentary evidences, different categories of participants, multiple focus group discussions and key-participant interviews helped me to verify the perspectives of participants, as well as to obtain thick descriptions and data saturation.

I also employed member checking (Moore, Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006) to allow participants to have access to the gathered data before they are documented into a research report. According to Lietz, Langer and Furman (2006):

...member checking, also known as respondent validation, allows participants to review findings from the data analysis in order to confirm or challenge the accuracy of the work (p.453).

In line with this, after every interview, I allowed the participants to listen to the recorded text so that they could make comments, clarifications corrections and additions on the views they had expressed. Furthermore, transcription from vocal to written scripts was done word for word and where participants were quoted in the final report, this was done verbatim. Follow-up or repeated interviews were also used to explore emerging or unexpected issues or themes, as well as to verify and elaborate on information I had written in my reflective journal and data memos.

Peer review or debriefing, a process of engaging in dialogue with colleagues outside my study to critique the data gathering techniques and process was used to safeguard my research credibility (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006; Moore, Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). I shared my research instruments, data gathering procedures, oral and written raw data, and detailed notes on my data interpretation with my supervisor and interested colleagues so that they could help me check for any contradictions and detect any biases that I might have held as a researcher. Their comments were recorded in my reflective journal and where necessary I went back into the field to make the required adjustments. These measures helped me to maintain the distinction of both the participants' perceptions and my own interpretation as the researcher. Therefore, apart from supervision and professional editing of my thesis, I sought the services of a critical reader for every section of the research.

4.7.2 Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research refers to the extent to which research findings of a particular study can be applicable to a similar sample of respondents and research context or setting (Ritcher & Mlambo, 2005; Krefting, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since my research was a case study of only two schools, I cannot generalise my findings to all schools in South Africa and Zimbabwe that mainstream pregnant and former pregnant learners. However, the results could be transferable to schools and respondents that match the description of my two study sites and selected participants. For this reason, in an earlier section of this chapter, I outlined a rich description of the criteria that were used to select both the study sites and participants.

Furthermore, in my analysis and interpretation of gathered data, I took note of the socio-cultural governing variables that were most likely to influence participants' views, perceptions and attitudes towards the policy and practice of mainstreaming pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools. From the thick contextual descriptions of the perspectives of learners, educators and parents, my study should therefore provide a deeper understanding of the educational needs and challenges faced by pregnant

teenagers who choose to continue with their education at formal schools. Only internal generalisation or transferability to similar schools as outlined in my study can be claimed, provided it is also justified by other researchers, who might be interested in comparing and applying their findings to those from my study. This is proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who point out that transferability depends on the degree of similarity between the sending and receiving contexts.

4.7.3 Dependability

Dependability is replication of research in which the same findings can be repeated if the same research instruments and data gathering procedures were conducted on a similar research sample and under similar conditions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lietz, Langer and Furman (2006) advise that audit trail or data inquiry audit helps to achieve dependability in qualitative studies. Following this advice, I made careful selection, description and application of my research instruments and data gathering procedures to suit my research questions, objectives and the unique circumstances of my data sources. To maintain accuracy in data collection and interpretation, I kept a record in my reflective journal, of all eventualities and observations that might have required re-adjustments of my data gathering procedures, as well as my personal impressions. The process of data analysis, interpretation and memoing were simultaneously undertaken. From the memoing I developed my data themes, categories and conclusions, which culminated into the research findings of the study. The careful selection of relevant research instruments, maintenance of a reflective journal and data memos were instrumental in guarding against my personal bias and emotions that could infringe on the accurate presentation of data from the perspectives of the participants.

4.7.4 Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability is about research objectivity, whereby gathered data and findings should truly represent the participants' views and perspectives or meanings rather than that of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Cohen, Manion &

Morrison (2007) advise that “in qualitative data, validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher” (p.133).

Verbatim transcription from audio-recorded to written scripts of every interview session was one way by which I ensured that the views of the participants were truly captured. I also sourced the voluntary participation of participants before undertaking the data gathering process. This I did by making preliminary discussions where I explained the nature, objectives and expected outputs of the study. Furthermore, I got the support of a senior member of staff to select relevant participants who were willing to participate in the study at each school. This was helpful in earning the confidence and trust of the sampled learners. As a form of prolonged engagement, I first interacted with the selected participants during the process of obtaining their informed consent so that they would open up and become honest in their opinions (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006).

4.8 Ethical considerations

The phenomenon or subject of my study was teenage pregnancy and parenting within a formal school setting. As such this could involve some encroachment into the private life of the pregnant and former pregnant learners who participated in the study. This could cause emotional injury if not carefully handled by the researcher. Just like any research that involves human subjects, measures were taken to ensure that the necessary ethical concerns with regard to voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, emotional and psycho-social security were taken care of (Cohen, Morrison & Manion, 2006; Best & Kahn, 1993). The subject of schoolgirl pregnancy or early motherhood is sensitive in that the affected students are in most cases negatively perceived as an illustration of their moral inadequacy or failure (Chilisa, 2002; Weiner, 1987; Chogona & Chetty, 2008). In this regard, Cohen & Manion (1994), therefore warn that:

If the research involves subjects in a failure experience, researchers must ensure that the subjects do not leave the situation humiliated, insecure and alienated than when they arrived (p.363).

Consideration was therefore taken to protect the personal dignity, confidentiality and emotional stability of the pregnant and former pregnant learners, and their parents, who were key participants in the study. Ethical measures were therefore undertaken prior to the identified participants taking the decision to participate in the study. Before the learners volunteered to participate in the study I explained what the study was all about and its main objectives to allay any misconceptions. Furthermore, participants are not identified by their actual names when their views are cited in this thesis.

4.8.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation

In order for the targeted participants to make a decision on their willingness to be subjects of the study, they needed to be fully informed about the purpose of the research, how and to whom the results will be published (Christensen, 1994; Cohen & Manion, 1994). This is summed up by Bennett, Glatter & Levacic (1994) who insist that:

...research involving human subjects all requires that the participation of individuals be completely voluntary.... they must be given an explicit choice about whether or not they wish to participate on the study (p.93).

To conduct the study among learners who were still minors, I first sought the permission of the relevant departments of education in both South Africa and Zimbabwe, the school principals where the study was conducted and parents of the learners. In seeking the permission, I first explained all aspects of the study and attached research instruments as well as the approval by the University of Pretoria's Research Ethical Committee¹⁶, in order to clear any suspicions and misconceptions that could mystify the rationale behind the study. The explicit permission from the university, departments of education and school principals helped to build confidence in the identified population to willingly participate in the study. Participants were also informed that anyone could withdraw his/her participation from the study without being asked to give reasons. For example, parents of the pregnant and former pregnant learners were interviewed individually at their homes after most of them expressed unwillingness to be asked to come to school to

¹⁶ Appendix 2.2: University of Pretoria ethical clearance certificate

participate in focus group interviews. This was accepted, in order to protect their confidentiality. It was only after a full understanding of what the research involved and their roles in the data gathering process that the selected participants expressed their willingness to participate. They did this by signing the relevant consent declaration forms¹⁷.

4.8.2 Confidentiality and anonymity of participants

Disclosing confidential information about an individual can be damaging to that individual's personality and dignity. Christensen (1994) argues that, "Information obtained about the research participants during the course of an investigation is confidential unless otherwise expressed upon" (p.147). Therefore, before undertaking the study, the participants were assured that the information that they would provide would only be used for this research. To ensure confidentiality, they were informed that their actual names would not be referred to in the thesis.

Furthermore, before the finalisation of the research findings, the participants were given an opportunity to verify the accuracy of the views they expressed, especially the quoted statements. During the data gathering process, after every interview, the participants listened to the audio-taped text, in order for them to make comments and cross-check the accuracy of their captured views. In line with this and as a way of information dissemination, all key stakeholders and any interested parties were invited for the oral defence of the thesis, which is open to the public. Furthermore, the schools where the study participants were drawn from will participate in a pilot research project which aims to empower key stakeholders in schools to interpret school policy and be sensitive to the educational needs of pregnant and former pregnant learners. The project is funded by the Research and Innovation, University of Venda.

¹⁷ Appendix 7: Participant consent forms

4.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined and justified why I employed the social-constructivist, interpretivist and phenomenological approaches as the epistemological and methodological paradigms that underpinned my case study research. In line with my study objectives and questions, I chose the qualitative case study method to sample the study participants, design data collection instruments, and gather and analyse data, in order to achieve an intensive exploration and understanding of how and why the sampled participants at the selected schools responded to the educational needs of pregnant learners. Due to the qualitative nature of case study research, I also discussed how the selected research sample, instruments and method of data analysis enabled me to compile a multi-faceted description of the participants' perceptions and my own interpretation as the researcher. In the next chapter, I present a detailed description and analysis of data gathered from the sources of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented and discussed the research methodology, data gathering strategies and the methods I used to present and analyse the gathered data. In this chapter, I therefore present and analyse the data that emerged from the study. I report on data gathered from interviews I conducted with five categories of participants of the study, namely pregnant and former pregnant learners, mainstream learners, educators, members of school governing bodies and parents of both pregnant and mainstream learners. Data from interviews were interpreted using content analysis. The analysis was based on themes, codes, quotations and networks that emerged from *Atlas ti* qualitative data analysis package that I employed to code the data (Stemler, 2001; Babbie, 2007; Smit, 2002). I corroborated data from interviews with observations that I recorded in my reflective research journal and documentary records that were made available at the two schools. By using content analysis, I was able to compare and contrast the views of the participants according to the study site, category and gender, and also with research findings from other studies. The attractive features that made me to employ content analysis were that I was able to handle a large volume of quoted statements, count frequency of codes that expressed similar ideas (see Table 5.2), make inferences, and identify and monitor consistencies or any changes in the views of participants (Stemler, 2001; Babbie, 2007).

5.1.1 Emerging themes and categories

The following were the categories of participants from each one of the study sites; pregnant and former pregnant learners, mainstream learners, educators, members of school governing bodies, parents of pregnant, former pregnant and mainstream learners. Data were presented, analysed and interpreted using qualitative approaches as outlined in chapter four. Five major themes emerged from gathered data. These themes were further

subdivided into categories or sub-themes. I further broke down the categories into sub-categories, in order to present and analyse the views of the participants in line with the identified themes and categories. Table 5.1 summarises the themes, categories and sub-categories that emerged from gathered data, and upon which the presentation of data was organised.

Table 5.1: Emerging themes, categories and sub-categories

Themes	Categories	Sub-categories
5.2 Theme 1: Educational needs and aspirations of pregnant teens	5.2.1 Motivating factors to pregnant teens' educational aspirations 5.2.2 Demotivating factors to pregnant teens' educational aspirations	5.2.1.1 New goal setting after pregnancy 5.2.1.2 Desire for self-efficacy 5.2.1.3 Strategies against hate language 5.2.1.4 Support to pregnant learners 5.2.2.1 Negative effects of pregnancy on learning 5.2.2.2 Negative labelling of pregnant learners
5.3 Theme 2: Responsiveness of stakeholders to policy on mainstreaming pregnant teens in formal education	5.3.1 Knowledge of teenage pregnancy school policy 5.3.2 Positive views on teenage pregnancy school policy 5.3.3 Negative discourses on teenage pregnancy school policy	5.3.1.1 Inadequate policy dialogue among stakeholders 5.3.1.2 Policy as political symbolism 5.3.2.1 Policy as fulfilment of universal right to education 5.3.2.2 Policy as instrument for gender equity in education 5.3.2.3 Policy as avenue for upholding teenage morality 5.3.3.1 Policy as cause of increase in teenage pregnancy 5.3.3.2 Policy as cause of learner indiscipline 5.3.3.3 Policy as cause of declining educational standards 5.3.3.4 Policy as cause of moral decay in schools 5.3.3.5 Call for separate schools for pregnant learners
5.4 Theme 3: Responsiveness of the school to the educational needs of pregnant teens	5.4.1 Opportunities and challenges to mainstreaming of pregnant teens 5.4.2 School participation: Opportunities and challenges to pregnant learners	5.4.1.1 Institutional incapacity to handle learner pregnancy 5.4.1.2 Infrastructural incapacity to mainstream pregnant learners 5.4.1.3 Inadequate educator assistance to pregnant learners 5.4.1.4 Male educator incapacity to pregnant learners 5.4.1.5 Inadequate counselling service provision 5.4.1.6 Hate language 5.4.2.1 Learner pregnancy and absenteeism 5.4.2.2 Learner pregnancy and school performance
5.5 Theme 4: Responsiveness of the family to educational needs of pregnant teens	5.5.1 Family-based determinants to pregnant learners' educational opportunity	5.5.1.1 Parental reactions to teenage pregnancy 5.5.1.2 Pregnant teens' loss of child rights 5.5.1.3 Study conditions in the home 5.5.1.4 Home-school partnerships
5.6 Theme 5: Responsiveness of community to educational needs of pregnant teens	5.6.1 Socio-cultural contextualisation of teenage pregnancy	5.6.1.1 Gender bias against pregnant teens 5.6.1.2 Pregnant teenagers' loss of social status in the community 5.6.1.3 Cultural beliefs and limitations on pregnancy and motherhood

5.2 Educational needs and aspirations of pregnant teens

In this theme I identify and report on the educational needs and aspirations of pregnant and former pregnant learners at the two schools where I conducted the study. The theme describes the factors that inspired pregnant and former pregnant teenagers to remain in school, as well as factors that could inhibit their educational endeavours.

Besides the affected teenagers, I also report on how the significant others in the life of pregnant learners shaped their educational aspirations. The theme identifies both motivating and demotivating factors. The sub-categories, namely the new goals that emerged after pregnancy, the desire to achieve a self-reliant life, resilience to fight any form of stigma and support from other people were found to be some of the motivating factors, while negative effects of the condition of pregnancy on learning and negative labelling by the significant others were found to act as the demotivating factors to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers' educational plans.

5.2.1 Motivating factors to educational aspirations of pregnant teens

This category consists of three sub-categories that report on positive factors that contributed to the educational aspirations of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, who chose to continue with their education at the two schools where this study was conducted. First, pregnant and former pregnant learners who chose to continue with schooling were found to have set for themselves new goals after falling pregnant. Second, it appeared that another factor that motivated pregnant learners to be resilient with schooling was the need to become self-reliant so that they could fend for their babies. Third, pregnant and former pregnant learners also got support from other people like parents and fellow female learners to remain in school.

5.2.1.1 New goal setting after pregnancy

Interviews with participants of this study revealed that teenage pregnancy is a phenomenon that is unexpected, unprepared for, could change and even disrupt the career

plans and aspirations of the affected teenagers. However, for those pregnant and former pregnant teenagers who chose to continue with their schooling, all hope for a bright future was not lost. This was illustrated by a Zimbabwean pregnant learner, who was resolute to remain in school because she felt that even though,

I betrayed many people, but I have to face the future and make sure that I achieve my goal of going further with my education (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 2) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:6 (20:20).

Another Zimbabwean learner expressed the desire to rise beyond her current circumstance in order to restore her reputation. She responded that:

I want to show people that I can become something in life, especially my mother who has forgiven what I did (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 3) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:3 (30:30).

Similar goal oriented sentiments were also expressed by their South African counterparts. However, one of the South African pregnant girls showed that although she was goal focused, pregnancy could delay achievement of her educational goals. She acknowledged that:

My plans are not affected in any way.... Pregnancy is not a barrier to achieving my goal. I will achieve my goal but a little bit longer than expected (SA Pregnant Learner 3) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:15 (21:21).

In the same vein, the fifth South African pregnant learner also accepted that:

Although my educational plans have not changed because I am now pregnant, when I recall, it was good in the past when I was not pregnant because I got lot of help from teachers and my friends (SA Pregnant Learner 5) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:35 (48:48).

All four extracts illustrate that new goal setting is an important factor that could influence pregnant teenagers' decision to remain in school, despite challenges such as possible delays in achieving their goals, change of support from friends and educators, and feelings of disappointing among some people close to them.

Other participants also confirmed that some of the pregnant learners had shown signs of positive change after realising the mistake of falling pregnant. This was pointed out by a South African educator, who sympathised with pregnant learners because,

...others they do change after giving birth; they become more serious since they are awakened and now know their goals and eager to achieve them (SA female educator 1) P 2: F.G. Interview doc - 2:37 (77:77).

Another educator from the Zimbabwean study site supported the observation that some pregnant learners seemed to learn from their mistakes and therefore should not be denied the educational access. He therefore argued that:

If they are given time after pregnancy and return to school ...maybe they will have matured, so we should allow them the second chance to learn from their mistake. Who knows, we might deny a future doctor, nurse, (Zimbabwean male educator 4) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:28 (58:58).

Making reference to her own situation, a South African parent confessed that she had seen that her own daughter had become more focused on her schooling after falling pregnant. She commented that:

My daughter has changed since she got the pregnancy. She used to make a lot of demands when going to school but now she knows that what she did hurts us so she is quiet... All she does is to go to school (SA female parent 4) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:24 (39:39).

The common idea that I identified from the above cited participants is that some teenagers seemed to have positively changed their attitude towards education after getting pregnant. These statements could indicate that there are some child rights duty bearers who support pregnant learners' educational aspirations. These considered the future more than the past history of the pregnant learners. This could imply that parents and educators with such positive views are likely to assist pregnant teenagers in pursuing their educational goals.

5.2.1.2 Desire for self-efficacy

It emerged that one motivating factor for pregnant teenagers who continued with schooling, was the need to achieve financial independence and to be able to fend for their babies. This is illustrated by one South African pregnant learner, who insisted that:

A person will need education in order to support her child and without education how am I is going to support the child (SA Pregnant Learner 1) P 4: F G Interview.doc - 4:28 (42:42).

This was supported by another pregnant learner from the same study site, who felt that pregnancy should not compromise her future even if she did not get married because,

...it was just an accident and I want to continue with my education so that I can look after my child even if he [child's father] does not marry me (SA former pregnant learner 6) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:53 (71:71).

Apart from the pregnant learners themselves, a Zimbabwean mainstream learner concurred with the view that pregnant learners needed to continue with schooling. The learner argued that:

...because education is the foundation of life; one day they can be successful just like the one who is not pregnant (Zimbabwean mainstream female learner 2) P 9: F.G. Interview.doc - 9:11 (39:39).

The advice that pregnant learners should be educated in order to look after themselves and even protect them from sexual abuse also came from adult participant. For example, a Zimbabwean parent who felt that:

Those who go to school and college, they are better and cannot accept to be cheated again by men because they can look after themselves (Zimbabwean female parent 5) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:29 (48:49).

Financial independence is indeed an important reason why governments and social welfare organisations advocate for the continued enrolment of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. Some related research findings from elsewhere indicated that most recipients of welfare grants are unemployed single mothers, who have a low education and are financially unstable (Brindis & Philliber, 1998; Arai, 2003; Kelly, 1996). In South Africa, concerns have been expressed that there could be a causal relationship

between increased teenage pregnancy in poor communities and the government child support grants (Panday et al., 2009; Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) & Education Policy Consortium (EPC), 2005).

5.2.1.3 Strategies against hate language

Having decided to continue with schooling, some pregnant learners indicated that they had developed strategies like openness and teaming up with others to withstand the challenges they confronted within the formal school environment. South African pregnant learners said they used openness and answering back verbal insults as ways to repulse negative pressure from other learners. One of the pregnant learners supported openness rather than concealment of pregnancy. She argued that:

Even if you want to hide, people will see that you are always wearing the dry maker. It's better to tell them if they ask than to hide because people want to tease those who are pregnant. Even if you have a baby at home they know it and want to talk about it to make fun of you. But if you show that you do not care, it is better. It will not hurt when they talk (SA pregnant learner 1) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:38 (51:51).

Her colleague at the same school also argued that it was better to continue at the same school where there are other learners in her situation than to hide her pregnancy. She maintained that:

I feel that I should just continue at this same school simply because I see that there are other pregnant girls in the school.... Even if some talk about it, they know it happens and we have to go on with our education and progress with life (SA pregnant learner 2) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:45 (57:58).

The other benefit of openness, according to South African pregnant learners was that they could team up to encourage and protect one another against any hostility and abuse from their mainstream peers. This was illustrated by one such learner, who had experienced that:

Some of the girls also pregnant, they come to you to tell you and encourage you that it is common. Some answer back... if you answer back they see that you are still a human being with rights even if you are pregnant; (SA pregnant learner 4) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:43 (54:54).

The openness of the South African pregnant learners was found to differ from that of their counterparts at the Zimbabwean study site who seemed to use concealment of pregnancy as a way of avoiding mockery from other learners. Concealment of pregnancy was illustrated by one Zimbabwean pregnant learner, who expressed fear that she would have left school if other people had seen her pregnancy. She revealed:

I had to keep it as a secret and fortunately I did not get sick. I finished writing when I was about five months and quickly left home. If it was going to be long I would have left school because what would people say seeing my tummy? (Zimbabwean former pregnant learner 1) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:17 (11:11).

Concealment of pregnancy seemed to get support in Zimbabwe as illustrated by suggestions that it was better for former pregnant learners to transfer to another school where they were unknown. Besides, as expressed by one Zimbabwean educator, concealment of pregnancy seemed to have been effectively done by suspending school attendance until after delivery. She therefore seemed to advise pregnant learners that:

At another school they will be free because nobody will know their past which can make them to continue with their schooling. But it is better to come back after delivery because a teen mother is just normal unless someone knows her (Zimbabwean male educator 3) P 7: Focus Group Interview.doc - 7:79 (149:149).

Even the parent who acted as chairperson of the school development committee at the Zimbabwean school supported the idea of concealing pregnancy because he also believed that:

It's better for the girl to go to another place, where she is not known ... (Zimbabwean female SDC member 1) P 6: Focus Group Interview.doc - 6:14 (15:15).

To confirm that concealment was common at the Zimbabwean school, a mother of one former pregnant learner revealed that her daughter had to transfer to another school because:

It's better at another school; that is what she said also and we agreed because at this new school, teachers and other children do not talk about her; may be only those who know it can talk but not much

(Zimbabwean female parent 6) P10: Focus Group Interview.doc - 10:45 (71:71).

It appeared that the South African learners were open because there were more pregnant learners at the school with whom they shared support against any abuse. This observation seemed to concur with earlier studies by Zellman (1981), Burdell (1996) and Kelly (1996) who found that one advantage of setting up non-curriculum special programmes alongside ordinary schools is that pregnant and former pregnant teenage learners could team up and support each other against stigma from other learners.

When I analysed the South African and Zimbabwean official policies on management of school girl pregnancy, it appeared that openness and concealment seemed to match the policy provisions. On one hand, in Zimbabwe for example, the policy encourages pregnant learners to transfer to another school in order to reduce stigmatisation. On the other hand, the South African policy guidelines encourage pregnant learners to stay at the same school to avoid grade repetition (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P. 35, 1999; DoE, 2007). Consequently, at the South African study site, and in the country in general, it is more common to find enrolled pregnant learners than at Zimbabwean schools. Based on what actually obtained at the two study sites, I concluded that concealment in Zimbabwe and openness in South Africa could have been influenced by the differences in the policy guidelines on how to manage learner pregnancy.

5.2.1.4 Support to pregnant learners

Pregnant learners from both study sites expressed that they received support from some of their mainstream peers, particularly girls who were either also pregnant or had friendship ties with the pregnant learners. At both study sites, friendship ties were mentioned by many pregnant learners as one important source of support. However, it would seem that the Zimbabwean pregnant learners benefited more from friends because they got academic support unlike their South African counterparts, who seemed to get more support in the form of encouragement and fighting back hate speech. Such support however, could also be a mechanism to help restore positive self-image and encourage

them to pursue their educational aspirations. One pregnant learner at the South African school expressed that she had the motivation to remain in school despite verbal abuses from other learners because:

My friends help me to answer back because they still like me. They even do help to get me water, and at break time they can share with me what they have. I do not feel bad or isolated at school (SA pregnant learner 3) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:40 (52:52).

It also emerged that besides teaming up on their own, some of the pregnant learners felt accommodated by their non-pregnant friends, who maintained close ties with them. Another South African pregnant learner said she depended on such support, and therefore was grateful:

I get encouragement from my friends. They have not left me. We still play together and they can cheer me up sometimes and tell me not to worry about what other learners say (SA pregnant learner 4) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:39 (52:52).

At the Zimbabwean school, some pregnant learners indicated that the support they got from their friends went beyond the moral support and encouragement to remain in school. Most South African learners expressed the same sentiments. In this regard, one such pregnant learner, who was now at home awaiting delivery, illustrated the academic support she got from her friends by pointing out that:

My friends are still good to me, they pass through here most of the time and we do some school work, or during the weekend. I have not heard them say that their parents are unhappy that they play with me because I am pregnant. I can even go to their homes, and we discuss school work (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 3) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:3 (33:33).

In the same vein, another Zimbabwean pregnant learner, in a similar situation, concurred with the view that friendship ties could be depended upon the help one gets to catch up with schoolwork, which might be covered in class in the absence of the pregnant learner. She was also pleased and grateful that:

Even now as I am at home, I do ask my friends what they are doing and I study so that I do not remain behind, I know I will join them again (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 2) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:6 (20:20).

From what the pregnant learners and their parents at both sites said, I concluded that support from mainstream female peers encouraged them to persevere with their education within a formal school setting. My conclusion concurs with Mensch et al. (2001), who studied interaction patterns within the school and found that the decision by pregnant learners to either quit or continue with schooling largely depended on the nature of perceptions and attitudes that teachers and other students held towards pregnant teenagers.

5.2.2 Demotivating factors to pregnant teenagers' educational aspirations

In the previous category I reported on the views of study participants that revealed some of the factors that motivated pregnant learners to continue with schooling within a formal education environment. In the following category, I present participants' views on factors that could discourage pregnant learners from pursuing their educational aspirations. The category has two sub-categories, namely the negative effects of pregnancy on learning and the negative labelling of pregnant learners for their desire to remain in formal school.

5.2.2.1 Negative effects of pregnancy on learning

Pregnant and former pregnant learners expressed how they physically felt during the period of pregnancy. They described symptoms like dizziness, laziness, slumbering, low morale, worry and depression. One South African pregnant learner acknowledged the following:

We all know the conditions we face like sicknesses, some pains. But we should be allowed to come to school (SA Pregnant Learner 5) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:30 (44:44).

A former pregnant learner at the same school narrated symptoms, which were similar to what the pregnant learner described. She gave a more elaborate description of the physical effects of pregnancy in the following manner:

I used to be lazy, tired, and dizzy and I would sleep a lot when I was pregnant. Sometimes you cannot avoid being worried because you may not be sure about the baby. May be the baby may be deformed and it worries..... I used to skip school many days and even if I came, I would

not be in the mood (SA former pregnant learner 3) P 4: F.G.
Interview.doc - 4:52 (69:69).

The view by the South African former pregnant learner 3 that she used to skip school and was so low spirited that she found it difficult to learn also emerged from a Zimbabwean pregnant learner, who felt that if given a choice, she would rather not go to school during pregnancy. She expressed that her pregnancy had changed her situation in the following manner:

I do not feel the same as I was before; even my morale to go to school and do many other things I used to do is down because of my situation now. I feel more comfortable at home than to go to school in this situation (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 3) P 8:K.P. Interview.doc - 8:5 (24:24).

Further, the negative effect of pregnancy on school attendance was also illustrated by one Zimbabwean former pregnant learner, who remembered and recounted the following:

I was sleeping a lot and feeling tired during the day that time. I would leave to go and rest at home and teachers thought I was just becoming stubborn by dogging lessons (Zimbabwean former pregnant learner 2) P 8:K.P. Interview.doc - 8:8 (14:14).

The symptoms of pregnancy which were described by learners were also confirmed by adult female participants since they had also undergone the experience of pregnancy. Speaking from her experience as a mother and educator, one female South African participant said she had observed that pregnant learners could not perform well:

If a person is pregnant you find that in many cases they cannot concentrate well. You can find sometimes when you are in the class, she sleeps, sometimes she says I am feeling dizzy and you know that this is the result of being pregnant (SA female educator 2) P 2: F.G. Interview doc - 2:2 (7:7).

In agreement with the view that pregnancy could adversely affect school participation and performance, another South African educator also repeated the same pregnancy symptoms described by pregnant and former pregnant learners and further concluded that:

Pregnancy time is very much demanding, even if you are an adult woman; you need to rest, you feel tired quickly, you always want something and sometimes get sick. Most times as a pregnant person you

will be sleeping because you are tired (SA female educator 3) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:12 (86:86).

The descriptions of pregnancy symptoms were found to be similar at both study sites. One Zimbabwean female parent, who was a retired educator, also agreed that there were physical as well as emotional side effects from pregnancy. She even added that pregnancy could retard a learner's participation in subjects that had a practical component. She therefore argued that:

The emotional status of a pregnant person is not stable; she has to cope with emotions as they change from time to time even suddenly. Even the physical condition, they can suddenly feel dizzy because they have another life growing in them. They cannot concentrate in practical subjects (Zimbabwean female parent 2) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:16 (33:33).

I found these statements to be important to my study because teenage pregnancy is largely unplanned and unexpected and has been found to cause psycho-emotional problems like depression, hypertension, identity diffusion, loss of self-concept and stress (Ritcher & Mlambo, 2005; Miller et al., 2008). I therefore interpreted the described symptoms of pregnancy to mean that the condition of pregnancy itself could bring challenges that could negatively affect the pregnant teenagers' zeal to learn because of the emotional changes that seem to accompany the physiological state of pregnancy.

5.2.2.2 Negative labelling of pregnant learners

Related to the described common effects of pregnancy, there was a culturally informed belief by most mainstream learners at both study sites, that sitting near a pregnant learner could cause them to also sleep and lose concentration in their school work. This was illustrated by one pregnant learner, who complained that:

Some of the students you get them saying now we are slumbering here in class, we feel like sleeping because of the ladies who are pregnant her in the class So some boys, you hear them saying they do not want to sit next to the mother, she causes sleeping osmosis (SA Pregnant Learner 4) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:14 (19:19).

This view was confirmed by some mainstream learners themselves, who complained that pregnant learners created an atmosphere of laziness in class because they believed that pregnant learners were lazy and would also influence them to become lazy. The statements expressing the myth that sitting near a pregnant learner made another student sleepy and lazy, mostly came from boys, most of whom were alleged to verbally abuse pregnant learners more than female learners. The allegation seemed to be confirmed by one South African male learner who claimed that:

Pregnant learners spend most of their time sleeping, lazing around just because biologically they are weak. This also causes other children to sleep especially when it is hot. It causes a lot of laziness in the class if there is a pregnant learner (SA mainstream male learner 3) P 5: F.G. Interview.doc - 5:21 (15:15).

A similar allegation was also expressed, without any justification, by another male learner at the Zimbabwean study site who also complained that:

A person who is pregnant can cause other people to feel sleepy or dizzy while at school if they sit next to her (Zimbabwean mainstream male learner 2) P 9: F.G. Interview.doc - 9:4 (20:20).

I interpreted these views to be cultural beliefs which were important for the researcher to understand how some male mainstream learners treated pregnant learners. For example, some boys refused to sit next to a pregnant girl because they claimed that it caused them to sleep or to feel dizzy in class. The effect of such superstitious beliefs might be isolation of pregnant learners at school, which could result in them feeling, demotivated to remain in school. The observation from this study that boys had such negative responses to pregnant learners seemed to concur with findings by Mensch et al. (2001) and Gordon (1995, 2002), who concluded that school boys were more responsible for bullying and verbally abusing female students.

Interviews with educators from both study sites revealed that most people in the school and community held stereotypical and discouraging judgements on a learner once she was discovered to be pregnant. The educators indicated that most pregnant teenagers were labelled as failures, untrustworthy, useless and morally loose children, who did not deserve extra assistance.

One male educator at the South African school revealed how pregnant learners could be predestined for failure. He based this view on the assumption that:

Most of these girls who become pregnant will fail school anyway because they are the stubborn ones; so to go to their home and try to help them is a waste of time (SA male educator 1) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:24 (62:62).

Likewise, another educator at the Zimbabwean school also indicated that educating pregnant learners was like wasting resources because:

...school girls who are pregnant do not pass. It can be just a waste of their parents' money in these difficult times (Zimbabwean female educator 3) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:19 (44:44).

The negative effect of labelling was illustrated by one female educator at the South African school, who noted that:

I haven't experienced a problem where a pregnant girl will come to me and complain; they humble themselves; they accept it (SA female educator 1) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:14 (84:84).

Further reinforcement and acceptance of failure as pregnant learners' master social status could be from society's perception of teenage pregnancy as a sign of poor morals. From educational theory on labelling and streaming of learners, teachers are a significant frame of reference for their learners, to the extent that their labels and predictions on their learners are usually self-fulfilled and confirmed by the pupils (Haralambos & Holborn, 1996; Bleckledge & Hunt, 1992). This seems to corroborate with earlier findings by Grant & Hallman (2006) and Ritchters & Hof (1999), that the teenage mothers who usually drop out of school, are those who had poor academic performance during their pre-pregnancy period of schooling. Because they saw pregnant learners as failures, educators might be less prepared to render extra assistance to such learners, resulting in failure of the pregnant learners being fulfilled.

5.3 Responsiveness of stakeholders to policy on mainstreaming of pregnant teens in formal education

In this theme I report on the participants' perceptions on the current policy guidelines that allow for the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in both South African and Zimbabwean formal school systems. I identified three categories, namely reports on the level of policy conceptualisation at each study site; reports on positive views on current policy guidelines; and negative views expressed by stakeholders against the current policies, which allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools. I interpreted the views expressed on the policies as indicating how the stakeholders at the two schools responded to the educational needs of the pregnant teenagers who chose to continue with their education through the formal school system.

5.3.1 Knowledge of teenage pregnancy school policy

This category outlines the different participants' level of understanding of the existing policy guidelines that direct schools on how to manage pregnant learners within the formal school setting. The first sub-category presents their views on the nature of policy dialogue and consultation, and the second sub-category focuses on the participants' explanations on how, due to inadequate implementation, policy was some form of 'smoke and mirrors' at their schools.

5.3.1.1 Inadequate policy dialogue

Focus group discussions indicated that stakeholders at both study sites had not been consulted about the policy guidelines on inclusion of pregnant learners at their schools. Most reported that they had informally learnt about the policy. It also emerged that, apart from the national policy guidelines, the schools did not formulate their own particular guidelines at local level.

Most educators at the South African school generalised that they only knew that such a policy existed, but they had not seen it on paper. The educators seemed to be aware from mere observations, that there was a policy which allowed pregnant learners to attend school. As a result they could not give any further detail on any provisions of the policy. This is partly illustrated by one female educator, who admitted the following:

I haven't seen that policy in the school before. Yes, I have heard about it that learners are allowed to continue when they are pregnant, but I haven't seen where it is documented (SA female educator 2) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:1 (4:4).

Further evidence that educators at the South African school were not sure about the provisions of the policy was revealed by a male educator, who also argued in the following manner:

I do not know whether there is a policy or not because I have not seen it, but it is said that the girls who are pregnant must be allowed to come to school. I haven't seen it but I have heard about it and I think we are implementing it since they are not expelled like before (SA male educator 2) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:18 (33:33).

However, at the Zimbabwean study site, some educators correctly cited the key provision of the MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35 of 1999 as illustrated by two Zimbabwean educators, who indicated that they knew that the policy required a pregnant learner to transfer to another school.

To show her understanding of the policy, one female educator was able to critique one provision of the policy and expressed the concern that:

While the pregnant learner or teen mother is allowed to continue with her education, it is bad to remove her from the original school. Those who made the policy did not consider that changing a school can have negative consequences on learning (Zimbabwean female educator 3) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:9 (24:24).

The same shortcoming of the Zimbabwean policy was also highlighted by another educator who saw it as a disadvantage because according to him:

This idea of forcing the once pregnant girl to transfer should be removed from the policy. It is a disadvantage especially to the brilliant child. It gives the right to education with one hand but takes it from her

with another hand (Zimbabwean male educator 1) P 7: F.G.
Interview.doc - 7:14 (35:36).

This study therefore, indicated that Zimbabwean educators had more information on the policy guidelines that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools than their South African counterparts. A study by Gordon (2002) and a UNICEF country report on gender issues in Zimbabwe's education system by Runhare and Gordon (2004) both found that most Zimbabwean Education Officers (EOs), school principals and educators had little knowledge on the MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35 (1999), which outlines what should be done should a girl fall pregnant while at school. The Zimbabwean educators, who participated in this study, seemed to contradict the earlier research findings on this particular matter.

Policy dialogue is an important means of ensuring that policy duty bearer and beneficiaries understand their rights and responsibilities. At both schools, it emerged that the school administration did not formally discuss or inform parents about the policy provisions that allow pregnant teenagers to enrol. With regard to policy, it is uncommon for ordinary members of the community to lack adequate knowledge on how schools function. Because of their working relationship with school principals, I expected members of school governing bodies (SGBs) or school development committees (SDCs) would be more informed about the policies that guide schools on how to mainstream pregnant learners. In fact, they are part of the school administration structure. At both schools, members who represented parents in the school administration revealed that they had not discussed such a policy with the school management and, like educators and other parents; they only knew the basic principle that pregnant learners should not be expelled from school.

At the South African school, SGB members disclosed that they had not formally discussed the policy with school management. One of the members illustrated lack of policy dialogue by indicating that:

We have not ever discussed this policy and what to do with the pregnant learners in the meeting. We only know that they are allowed to

come to school and they should not be expelled (SA male SGB member 3) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:8 (9:9).

The same sentiment was narrated by the chairperson of SDC at the Zimbabwean school who also confessed that there was no formal discussion on the policy and this could be one reason why he did not value the policy. The chairperson disclosed the lack of policy dialogue by stating that:

We have not discussed the policy with the school head but I know that it is the right of every child to education. To me it's not really an important matter..., (Zimbabwean male SDC member 1) P 6: F.G. Interview.doc - 6:20 (7:7).

Because of the direct effect on their daughters, it was expected that parents of pregnant and former pregnant learners would know more about the policies on mainstreaming of pregnant learners. From what the parents at the Zimbabwean school said, it appears they only got to know about the policy when their daughters fell pregnant. However, nothing substantial was explained to them by school management. In the case of South Africa, the parents also indicated that they had not discussed the matter with school management when their daughters fell pregnant. This was illustrated by one female parent who showed that she was prepared to discuss any problem with school management, but had not received such an opportunity when her daughter fell pregnant. She therefore acknowledged that:

...we were not called to school to discuss that our daughter is now pregnant... May be they can call us if she causes a problem at school or if she is sick (SA female parent 5) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:30 (48:48).

Like her counterparts in the SGB and SDC, one mother of a former pregnant learner at the Zimbabwean study site also revealed that although school management had not issued a formal statement on school girl pregnancy policy, she knew that her daughter had the right to attend school. However, from mere observations she was sure that:

...having a baby does not mean a child should not go to school from others. We know many such girls; so we knew our daughter can also go back to school. I never heard this being announced by the school but we just see it happening (Zimbabwean female parent 6) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:46 (73:73).

From what the educators, parents and members of school governing bodies said, it appears that policy matters were largely a preserve of top school management as there seemed to be no formal consultative process on policy related issues at both schools. This observation is in agreement with Van Wyk and Lemmer (2004), Mncube (2007) and Mncube and Harber (2008), who found that parents and learners in South African School Governing Bodies (SGBs) did not have much, say on policy issues, and therefore the decision-making was largely centralised in the hands of school principals.

5.3.1.2 Policy as political symbolism

Political symbolism is when an organisation has a policy which is not implemented either because there is no political will on the part of leadership or there are no implementation strategies in place (Jansen, 2002; Jansen, 2001; Hess, 1999). Both admission records and observations on the ground indicated that the South African school had more pregnant learners, who were physically present when I visited the school (Appendix 13.1¹⁸). While it was easy to find the six pregnant learners and six former pregnant to participate in focus group discussions at the South African study site, it was not easy in Zimbabwe. I had to visit the pregnant and former pregnant learners of the Zimbabwean study site at their homes. After observing that there were few pregnant and former pregnant learners at the Zimbabwean school compared to its South African counterpart, I made inquiries on the reasons for this.

From what the Zimbabwean school principal, his deputy, a member of SDC and one of the parents said, the school implicitly encouraged girls to voluntarily withdraw from school if they became pregnant. The school principal felt that there was no commitment throughout the ranks in the whole ministry to popularise and implement the policy. He therefore, felt concerned that:

There is secrecy enshrouding the policy in the ministry, the ministry keeps it on paper because no advocacy on the policy has been made, especially to parents (Zimbabwean school principal) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:6 (18:19).

Appendix 13.1:¹⁸ Population of enrolled pregnant and former pregnant learners at the study sites

The deputy principal of the same school revealed the school management's lack of commitment to implement the policy when he said that enrolling pregnant and former pregnant learners into the school was on condition that the learner's parents made a formal request and pledged to cooperate with the school. I viewed the conditions as a way of frightening pregnant learners away. The deputy principal insisted that:

We accept a pregnant girl back into school provided the parents have made such a request.... not every pregnant girl or one with a baby does benefit from the policy. Only those whose parents insist to cooperate with the school have their daughters served by the policy (Zimbabwean deputy principal) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:40 (179:179).

The frightening statements were also repeated by the SDC chairperson at the same school, who also pointed out the need for parents to declare their commitment to have their pregnant learner continue with schooling. He also revealed the school administration's lack of commitment to policy implementation when he claimed that the policy was unimportant and that it should be ignored because it could encourage pregnant girls to attend school. Therefore, according to him:

It is upon the parents of the pregnant child to make a decision to have the child continue with her education.... To me it's not really an important matter; there are important issues like improving the passes for the school than this policy because we should not be like encouraging pregnant girls to be in school (Zimbabwean male SDC member 1) P 6: F.G. INTERVIEW.doc - 6:20 (7:7).

Because of the lack of political will to implement the policy by school administration, it was no surprise that pregnant learners at the Zimbabwean school were said to voluntarily withdraw from school. This was despite the fact that they might have been aware that they could not be legally expelled from school. This was observed by one parent who indicated that:

The policy, although it is there, it is not practical. It is just on paper because even a girl knows that there this policy ...she just leaves school to stay at home or somewhere. We see it, nobody expels a pregnant girl, and they just feel like a fish out of water being at school in that situation (Zimbabwean male parent 1) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:20 (39:39).

I interpreted these views as some of the reasons why the Zimbabwean school did not serve as many needy pregnant teenagers as its South African counterpart. On the ground,

I observed that the two schools differed in that one was more accommodating and open in accepting pregnant learner attendance, while the other was conservative and less accommodative. Even the policy guidelines were also different in that, while the South African guidelines explicitly encouraged continuation at the same school, the Zimbabwean policy implicitly encouraged pregnant and former pregnant learners to transfer to another school as a de-stigmatisation measure. This condition, which was also criticised by many educators at the Zimbabwean school, was found to be one factor which made pregnant and former pregnant learners suspend their studies or withdraw from formal schooling altogether.

5.3.2 Positive views on teenage pregnancy school policy

In this category, I report on three sub-categories which all illustrate the views that were expressed by study participants in support of the national policy guidelines on mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools. Some participants who expressed positive views based their arguments on the premise that education is a basic human right and that inclusion of pregnant teenagers in schools promoted principles of gender equality and morality. This support for the policy demonstrates positive attitudes and treatment of pregnant learners by some of the adult participants or duty bearers who participated in the study.

5.3.2.1 Policy as fulfilment of universal right to education

Some of the adult participants, irrespective of gender and study site, felt that the policy that allowed pregnant learners to continue with schooling promoted the principle of education as universal basic right for all children. There were two categories of those who supported the policy and viewed it as a promotion of the basic right to education. One group gave unreserved support for the policy and argued that pregnant teenagers should have equal educational rights like any other child. The second group consisted of those who were cautious. This group argued that while every child should have the right to education, the right should only be given to responsible children.

Of those who gave unreserved support to the policy was a Zimbabwean male educator who based his argument on the view that pregnant learners should get equal treatment because:

...a pregnant child also needs equal opportunity to learn just like any other girl, despite her condition (Zimbabwean male educator 4) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:29 (61:61).

While the above statement seems to lay emphasis on equality in educational opportunity, one South African parent took it a step further and argued that education is important for pregnant learners because it would allow them to be independent even if they remained single mothers. Such a view was important for this study because of some negative attitudes towards single motherhood that are prevalent in most societies (Chilisa, 2002; Kelly, 1998; Burdell, 1998).

Furthermore, in South Africa, there are some allegations that child grants could be promoting teenage pregnancy and single motherhood in the country. One South African female parent argued that:

If you look at educated women, they have no problem even if they are not married (SA female parent 2) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:3 (14:14).

Some SGB members at the South African school, however, raised concern about giving absolute educational rights to pregnant teenagers. They argued that this needed to be exercised with care because some of the pregnant learners were irresponsible children, who deserved to lose some of their civil rights so that they do not ‘spoil’ other children. One such SGB member argued that democracy should be enjoyed by responsible people, and therefore was concerned that:

Although it helps that those who are pregnant can still go to school. This is changing schools into something else not a real school... During our days this would not happen. Democracy has been taken too far today (SA SGB male member 3) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:5 (7:7).

The SGB chairperson seemed to concur with his colleague because he was of the view that while the policy benefited the pregnant learners, it had some negative consequences on mainstream learners. A similar concern was expressed by the SGB male member 3

who complained that the policy was destroying the quality of schools, and that it changed schools into something else. The chairperson expressed concern that education authorities did not consider the negative consequences of this policy and to him it looked like:

Everyone is just following the policy because everyone has the right to be educated in this country. This is why we never discuss this policy in schools; whether it is the best for other children who are not pregnant
SA SGB male member 1) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:12 (11:11).

Like the cited South African participants, the Zimbabwean male educator 2 seemed to fear that enrolling pregnant learners could compromise the quality of schools and therefore, preferred suspension of schooling during the period of pregnancy. However, he supported the principle that pregnancy should not result in a permanent disadvantage to the affected learner. He argued that:

...the mistake made by the pregnant learner should not deprive her of the right to education, but this should be after delivery not during pregnancy... (Zimbabwean male educator 2) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:5 (17:17).

I interpreted such mixed views to be similar to those of Kelly (1998) and Burdell (1998), which they termed liberal and conservative discourses found among educators at schools that had school-based programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in the USA. On one hand conservative teachers perceived pregnant teenagers and girls with babies as showing off with their babies and that the ordinary school was not really meant for them (Weiner, 1987; Kelly, 1998; Burdell, 1998). Liberal teachers, on the other hand insisted that schools should cease to be regarded as institutions that served a homogenous group of children.

5.3.2.2 Policy as instrument for gender equity in education

There were some adult participants from both study sites who added the dimension of gender equity. They argued that policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners promoted every child's right to education. I put these views in their own sub-category because they were more in line with international conventions like CEDAW, EFA and MDG, which call for measures to ensure continued schooling for girls who may fall pregnant while at school (Tsanga et al., 2004; Stromquist, 1999, 2005; Subrahmanian,

2005; Daniel, 2003). Views expressed touched on issues like the need to improve pregnant girls' lives, the disadvantaged plight of women in education and employment, education as a means of reducing prostitution, gender bias and the need to free women from home and child care responsibilities. These views were another indication that some duty bearers' treatment of pregnant teenagers could be influenced by equal human rights principles. It emerged that there were more female child right duty bearers who voiced their support for the policy of mainstreaming pregnant teenagers in formal schools as a gender equity measure than male participants.

During focus group discussions, the South African SGB female member 1 responded to men who opposed the policy by pointing out that such men were gender biased. Her views represent the concern of some that it is unfair to punish girls for being pregnant by expelling them from school, and that some men opposed the policy because they do not experience what women go through, for example, being sexually abused and expelled from school. She turned emotional on the issue of gender equality to the extent of making reference to the then female Minister of Education Dr Naledi Pandor in her defence of the policy. She therefore, saw opposition to the policy as based on male unfair tendencies because:

If it were men who are affected and are to be expelled from school, you will find that most men would support it. But just because it's us women; then men just oppose it without fairness. This is why the minister supports it; she knows what we go through as women. These girls, otherwise it's not their fault but men have abused them (SA SGB female member 1) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:15 (16:16).

Although making reference to equal educational opportunity, one female Zimbabwean educator seemed to agree with the South African SGB member cited above who said that the policy was important because it protected women from unfair discrimination. She argued that:

Education is a fundamental right of every person, whether male or female, pregnant or not pregnant. How about boys who do not fall pregnant, should girls be punished for being women who fall pregnant (Zimbabwean female educator 2) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:30 (62:62).

Her submission emphasised the sex responsibilities of men and women. This was similar to inferences made by the SA SGB female member¹ who argued that males are responsible for teenage pregnancy, yet nothing is being done to them. Both participants called for equal treatment of both the pregnant girl and the male partner responsible for the pregnancy. Research from elsewhere has found that one major weakness in the implementation of schoolgirl pregnancy policies in most societies is the focus on the girl child while the boy or male responsible for the pregnancy is covered up (Chilsa, 2002; Gordon, 2002; Bayona & Kadji-Murangi, 1996; Hubbard et al., 2008; Mitchell et al., 1999). To feminist theoretical perspectives, this is a manifestation of how education, the school in particular, is an agent that mirrors and reproduces male domination in terms of decision making, policy formulation, hierarchical power structures and procedures (MacDonald, 1981; Leach, 2000; Chilsa, 2002; Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004).

Furthermore, the South African female parent 2 and the Zimbabwean female educator 3 both saw the policy of mainstreaming pregnant teenagers in school as a means of redressing gender imbalances in education and employment. The SA female parent 2 supported the policy because she believed that it economically empowered women. She added that educating women strengthened the whole country:

It's better if the mother is educated. Many single mothers are looking after their children without the help of any man. Let us give these women a chance because they say if you educate a woman you have educated the nation (SA female parent 2) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:1 (13:13).

The Zimbabwean female educator 3 saw the policy as contributing to redressing gender inequality in education and employment. This argument was similar to that of SA female parent 2 who saw the economic benefits of educating pregnant girls. Therefore, the Zimbabwean educator also saw the gender equity provision in the policy as,

...important for giving every girl child the provision to continue with education as we know that women are really disadvantaged when it comes to things like education and employment (Zimbabwean female educator 3) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:11 (30:30).

5.3.2.3 Policy as avenue for upholding teenage morality

Arguing from a moral point of view, some of the participants supported the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal schools. Their views were based on the arguments that this protected pregnant teenagers from social pressure that could lead to abortions and suicide.

There were some participants at both study sites who blamed parental pressure for teenage baby dumping, abortions, prostitution and suicides. Participants such as one female educator at the South African school, for example, supported the policy because it alleviates the parental pressure that pregnant teenagers experience. This pressure could lead to serious problems because:

...some of the parents are unable to help their kids, you see them chasing them away from their homes, and they end up in streets. Some just kill the babies and dump them in dustbins (SA female educator 3) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:36 (74:74).

The view by the SA female educator 3 was very common among most female participants at the Zimbabwean study site, who also supported the policy. They argued that if pregnant learners were punished from all quarters, they would end up making emotional and wrong decisions such as aborting or dumping the baby. Thus, like the SA female educator 3, a Zimbabwean female SDC member also viewed the policy as promoting moral values among pregnant teenagers in that:

When you go deeper on this issue, may be those who allow the pregnancy to go on are actually right. Many go for abortion secretly because of fearing their parents. Now if schools refuse to accept them, this is like double punishment....This is why some abort, kill or dump the baby (Zimbabwean female SDC member 1) P 6: F.G. Interview.doc - 6:1 (35:35).

At both schools, female mainstream learners also supported the view that pregnant learners should not be expelled from school because it was not a crime for a girl to fall pregnant. Most girls at both schools supported the policy because it protected pregnant learners and prevent them from aborting the pregnancy, an act which they viewed as immoral and criminal. One Zimbabwean girl argued that it was unfair to focus on the

pregnant learner while protecting those who aborted. She therefore, felt that the policy was morally right because:

We should accept people who are pregnant because they haven't killed anybody.... How about a person who has committed abortion, we need to talk about that one, (Zimbabwean mainstream female learner 2) P 9: F.G. Interview.doc - 9:16 (61:61).

The female learners who brought up the issue of abortion were so emotional as if they knew of some people in the community who had aborted, and yet they went about looking smart as if they had never fallen pregnant. Some of the girls used terms like 'killers, sinners and criminals' to refer to people who had aborted or dumped babies. One such participant was SA mainstream female learner 1 who felt concerned that:

That person who is pregnant, otherwise there is nothing wrong with her, just that the tummy is big. She shouldn't be teased about it as if she killed a person. What about somebody who abort a child? That person is the sinner, but the one who is keeping the pregnancy is better. Why don't we talk about those who abort? Why tease those who are not killing (SA mainstream female learner 1) P 5: F.G. Interview.doc - 5:39 (41:41).

Of interest to note is that there was no difference between the views of female participants at the two study sites. They argued that the policy of mainstreaming pregnant learners in formal schools would help to prevent abortions and suicide among teenagers. This concern could be of value given the background of research findings that teenage pregnancy in most cases resulted in psycho-social problems like depression, stress, hypertension, isolation and suicidal tendencies (Ritcher & Mlambo, 2005; Millers et al., 2008; Jackson & Abosa, 2007).

5.3.3 Negative discourses on teenage pregnancy school policy

I identified five different arguments that opposed the policies that allow for inclusion of pregnant learners at formal schools. Many interviewees perceived school girl pregnancy policies as the cause of increased teenage pregnancy, moral decay, school indiscipline and poor educational standards. They therefore called for separate schools for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers as a solution to these problems.

5.3.3.1 Policy as cause of increase in teenage pregnancy

Many participants at both study sites believed that mixing pregnant learners with their mainstream counterparts made teenage pregnancy an infectious social problem. There was no clear gender distinction on this opinion although more adult participants seemed to be more vocal on the allegation that pregnancy is a form of ‘deviance’ which can be socialised through association, from a pregnant to the non-pregnant teenagers. On the part of mainstream learners, there was a general feeling against mixing pregnant learners with other learners because it could encourage other girls to also become pregnant. A female Zimbabwean learner criticised the policy for being too permissive, and therefore complained that:

The policy... encourages children so that they fall pregnant any time they wish as they may think it is very acceptable in the community....
(Zimbabwean mainstream female learner 1) P 9: F.G. Interview.doc - 9:9 (37:37).

The SA mainstream male learner 4 also opposed the policy on the same ground as the cited Zimbabwean female learner by pointing out that because the policy implied that there is no punishment for teenage pregnancy, more girls could become sexually permissive. He felt that the policy could mislead girls into believing that:

...to become pregnant is a fashion at school and this encourages other children to become pregnant as they see that there won't be any problem if they become pregnant. This is not good for their future because girls will end up planning pregnancy instead of concentrating on school. This is why we see one pregnant girl today and tomorrow another one; it has become a fashion because nothing is done to correct this bad situation (SA mainstream male learner 4) P 5: F.G. Interview.doc - 5:2 (5:5).

Likewise, educators at both schools also viewed the education pregnancy policy as an encouraging factor for teenage pregnancy. They argued that it appeared to be rewarding bad behaviour. One South African female educator also blamed the policy for encouraging girls to experiment with sex. According to her:

...it makes other girls to also want to try and see what happens when you are pregnant because they take it like others who are pregnant are

given privileges (SA female educator 2) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:20 (39:39).

At the Zimbabwean school, there was a feeling that this policy was to blame for the poor standards in the schools because pregnant learners were a bad influence to other learners. They therefore, concurred with the common view that the policy was one cause for increased school girl pregnancies. One Zimbabwean educator complained that because of the policy:

Early pregnancy is becoming a national problem today because we have turned schools to become some sort of hospital wards. What do others learn from a teenage mother? (Zimbabwean male educator 1) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:31 (64:64).

5.3.3.2 Policy as cause of learner indiscipline

Related to the claim that mainstreaming pregnant learners at formal schools was a cause of increased teenage pregnancy and moral decay, some of the participants expressed concern that this policy was also a cause of indiscipline in schools. Most adult participants or child rights duty bearers argued that pregnant learners were difficult to discipline both at home and at school. This view was expressed by one South African parent who argued that most pregnant teenagers are children whose parents would have failed to discipline them, and so were equally stubborn at school. She laid all the blame on the pregnant girl child. She was therefore convinced that:

If you find a girl getting pregnant, that girl is stubborn even at home to her parents. They will have failed to control her and we expect teachers to control them. You find they do not listen to their own parents; and we hear that they even challenge teachers (SA female parent 3) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:6 (18:18).

One male educator at the same school also believed that pregnant learners took advantage of their condition as an excuse to be stubborn at school. She observed that because of this policy, educators could be disempowered in their attempts to control pregnant learners because:

...these who are pregnant know that the teacher will not do anything to them; some you see they sleep while you teach, and we just leave them like that because if you threaten them and they develop complications,

you get into problems with the law (SA male educator 3) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:24 (48:48).

Views expressed by Zimbabwean participants differed from those of participants at the South African school. The Zimbabwean participants brought in a cultural dimension to pregnancy and motherhood. They argued that the pregnancy policy created disciplinary problems in the school. There was a common view in Zimbabwe that if a woman fell pregnant or had a baby, she was now an adult regardless of her age. A male educator at the Zimbabwean school therefore was concerned that some former pregnant learners were not obedient at school because they regarded themselves as having graduated into adulthood. He complained that former pregnant learners did not respect them because:

After delivery, these girls won't listen to instructions since they will be considering themselves the same with teachers. They think because they have a baby then they are adults (Zimbabwean male educator 2) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:33 (70:70).

The Zimbabwean SDC chairperson agreed with the male educator that cultural beliefs on pregnancy and motherhood made it difficult for educators to effectively control former pregnant learners since they were now adults and equal to educators. He therefore, felt that the policy complicated school discipline as culturally a man cannot discipline a mother. He opposed the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools by reminding other participants that:

...at a school, children not old mothers are taught. The moment a girl is pregnant and she has a baby, she becomes an adult woman according to culture despite her age. So it is difficult for teachers to control her because she is now an adult woman (Zimbabwean female SDC member 1) P 6: F.G. Interview.doc - 6:13 (15:15).

5.3.3.3 Policy as cause of declining educational standards

Besides being blamed for causing increased teenage pregnancy and indiscipline in schools, adult participants from both study sites expressed concern that mainstreaming pregnant learners at formal schools could cause poor educational standards. Some claimed that pregnant and former pregnant learners did not focus on their education but had divided attention and lacked concentration on academic issues. The mere presence of

pregnant learners at a school was also seen as something that could devalue the quality of the school in the community.

One such concern was raised by a male Zimbabwean educator, who argued that the presence of pregnant learners in a school could make the school to lose its value as a normal school. Because pregnant teenagers lose their social status in the community, the educator also believed that teenage pregnancy could also cause the school to equally lose its social status in the community. He made reference to another school, in order to emphasise the point that:

A school with many teen mothers can lose its reputation in the community. I remember our next door school was once nicknamed a maternity ward by people because there were too many pregnancies there (Zimbabwean male educator 2) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:48 (128:128).

Unlike the Zimbabwean educator who was rather general on loss of school reputation, the SA male SGB member 3 was specific that pregnant learners could make a school's academic performance decline. I found this view to be linked to the negative labelling of pregnant learners as failures. According to her, there was a correlation between schools that enrolled pregnant learners and low school performance. She observed that:

If you check you find that the schools with such girls do not even perform well (SA male SGB member 3) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:3 (5:5).

Like the Zimbabwean educator, who made reference to one school that had lost its reputation because of enrolling pregnant learners, one SA SGB member also cited a school that maintained its good educational standards because it did not enrol pregnant learners. To show his opposition to the policy on schoolgirl pregnancy policy, he asked some questions of other participants:

If you go to Mbilwi¹⁹, do you think you will find any pregnant girl there? Or private schools where people with money send their

¹⁹Mbilwi is a South African public high school which has been obtaining top position in Matric examinations in Limpopo Province since 1994. It is a member of the prestigious national Club 100, which was established by the former Vice President, Phumzile Mlambo-Ncguka and former Minister of

children.... We cannot maintain good standards at a school if learners are mixing with people in maternity.... This thing is killing education (SA male SGB member 1) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:2 (5:5).

A survey of how enrolment of pregnant learners was viewed by communities and district education administrators in America also revealed that school teachers and principals felt that schools should not be in business of caring for babies and pregnancies (Ladner, 1987; Weiner, 1987). In Botswana, studies by Chilisa (2002), Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996), Meekers & Ahmed (1999) and Hubbard et al (2008) found that communities opposed the re-enrolment of former pregnant teenagers into school on the ground that schools are purely meant for children.

5.3.3.4 Policy as cause of moral decay in schools

While some of the participants felt that the policy could promote good morals among teenagers, there were others who expressed exactly the opposite view. For example, there are those who said the policy could be another cause of increased teenage pregnancy. They also claimed that the policy could also make teenagers fail to realise that premarital sex is immoral. The concern was illustrated by the Zimbabwean male parent 2, who complained that the policy set a bad example to society since it sent the wrong message to children about teenage pregnancy. He made the observation that:

...when one has committed such a thing like being pregnant, it shows they were playing with boys... It's not a good example when such a child is allowed to continue in school.... It encourages the sense of promiscuous around the school (Zimbabwean male parent 2) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:9 (26:26).

The SA SGB female member 1 made a similar statement as she also believed that the policy indirectly allowed children to experiment with sex at a young age. To her, this policy could be an indication of sexual moral decay in society. She gave an illustration to express the concern:

Education, Naledi Pandor, to recognise good performing schools in the country (Tshikhudu, 2008:3). It is located in the small town of Thohoyandou, 50 km from the school where this study was conducted.

Today you can hear that prostitutes want to be given a license and pay tax during 2010 soccer. This is the same when we allow pregnant people to go to school; it's giving our children license to sleep around (SA SGB female member 1) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:7 (11:11).

These views illustrated that teenage pregnancy was perceived in the community culturally, as a phenomenon that infringed up on the notion of ideal motherhood and, therefore was not supposed to be left socially unpunished. Observations from studies by Kelly (1998) and Burdell (1998) also indicated that the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal schools was regarded in the community as rewarding sexual immorality.

5.3.3.5 Call for separate schools for pregnant learners

As a solution to the problems surrounding teenage pregnancy and schooling, some participants suggested that separate schools should be created where only pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are enrolled. Others, mostly at the Zimbabwean study site, suggested that once a girl fell pregnant, she should pursue her educational aspirations through the non-formal system.

Learners at both schools generally expressed the wish to be separated from pregnant and former pregnant learners. They used the argument that because of their different condition, they lived in different social worlds. Some of the mainstream learners complained that pregnant and former pregnant learners showed off by discussing issues related to sex and babies, and therefore they should be moved to their own schools where they could discuss their common problems and share solutions.

To one South African female learner, separating pregnant and former pregnant learners could be advantageous to them in that they would be placed in a common environment, which would allow them to share their experiences. She therefore advised that:

...the best is to allow these pregnant ladies to have their own school where they are free to talk about their issues with those with babies (SA mainstream female learner 4) P 5: F.G. Interview.doc - 5:11 (71:71).

Although in agreement with his South African counterpart on the issue of separating pregnant learners from non-pregnant learners, the Zimbabwean mainstream male learner 5, went further to argue that pregnant learners should study at non-formal schools where there are no behavioural restrictions. He also gave the advice that:

It is better for a pregnant girl to learn at a night school where she can feel comfortable since she will associate with others who can give her ideas about going on with pregnancy and looking after the baby (Zimbabwean mainstream male learner 5) P 9: F.G. Interview.doc - 9:7 (30:30).

At the Zimbabwean school a similar call for pregnant learners to use the non-formal means of education was also repeated by adult participants. One SDC member for example cited the country's current vice president as an example of the success of the non-formal education system. He argued that it was the best option for those pregnant and former pregnant teenagers who had assumed adult social status. Therefore, in her opposition to mainstreaming pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in ordinary schools, she made the observation that:

There are many who learn after they have children or when they are married without creating any problems to other people. Even our Vice President Mrs Mujuru²⁰, she returned to school and got educated. But she did not go to learn with young children, she used other means. This is a good example which the whole country should follow (Zimbabwean female SDC member 1) P 6: F.G. Interview.doc - 6:6 (25:25).

The opposition discourses against the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools are not unique to my study. My observation is consistent with findings from studies carried out in countries like the USA, the UK and Canada, where policies on the right to education for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers have been in place for decades but continue to meet resistance from the public (McGee & Blank, 1989; Burdell, 1998; Kelly, 1998; Weiner, 1987). Such criticisms, according to Kelly

²⁰ Mrs Joice Mujuru is the first woman to become Vice President in Zimbabwe. As a young girl, she left school while in Form three (Grade 10), to fight for independence and had to do most of her education up to university level through distance learning.

(1998) and Burdell (1998), are based on conservative views which define pregnant and former pregnant teenagers as people who are sexually irresponsible.

Despite such opposition, different types of separate or special programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are found in developed nations where mainstreaming has been in place since the early 1980s. Such special programmes are meant to cater for both academic and life skills development for the pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, and are therefore usually located within the mainstream school (Roosa, 1986; Kelly, 1996; Mitchell, 1999; Zellman, 1981; Burdell, 1996; Key, Barbosa & Owen, 2001). The observations I made at both study sites revealed that although pregnant and former pregnant learners were admitted, educators did not make provisions for the needs of pregnant learners, such as for counselling and psycho-social coping strategies.

5.4 Responsiveness of the school to the educational needs of pregnant teens

Although many factors that influence learning can be traced to environments outside the school, the school environment has a direct bearing on the learners' readiness and capacity to achieve. The school consists of both human resource and material support systems that can be utilised to achieve effective learning. In this theme, I report on how stakeholders at the two schools perceived and responded to the educational needs of pregnant learners. In the first category, I present the participants' views on the human, structural and functional preparedness of the schools to cope with the mainstreaming of pregnant learners. In the second category, I report on the main challenges that were encountered by pregnant learners within the structures and functioning of the school. I compare and contrast what obtained at the two schools, in terms of what was said by participants and what I observed and recorded in my reflective research journal.

5.4.1 School capacity: Opportunities and challenges to mainstream pregnant learners

The school is a complex system with both human and physical resources, which should function in an interconnected manner, in order to achieve the major objectives of learner behavioural and academic development. In the sub-categories that are presented in this section, the explanations made about human and material factors that contributed to the institutional capacity to mainstream pregnant learners are outlined.

5.4.1.1 Institutional incapacity to handle learner pregnancy

Concerns that both schools had no capacity to identify and deal with the needs of pregnant teenagers were echoed by all the categories of participants of the study. What came out from discussions at both schools was that in terms of human resource capacity to deal with any pregnancy related issues, educators were generally incapable and not confident to assist. All educators said they were concerned that they were entrusted with pregnant learners, yet they lacked the basic skills and knowledge to assist pregnant learners on issues that could emanate from the condition of pregnancy. This was illustrated by the SA female educator 1 who felt that the care of a pregnant teenager required a multi-skilled person. She explained that being just a trained educator, she was limited to assist a pregnant person,

...because we are like social workers, we are like nurses whereas we have been trained as teachers only. If the pregnant child is dizzy, vomiting, we don't know what to do (SA female educator 1) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:4 (9:9).

The concern of inadequate skills to assist pregnant learners was also reported by Zimbabwean educators. One Zimbabwean female educator illustrated that due to lack of training, she feared to assist pregnant learners because she was not authorised. This, in her view was dangerous because:

If you help and something goes wrong with the pregnancy, you can be in trouble with the law because we are not qualified to give health service to pregnant women (Zimbabwean female educator 2) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:82 (155:155).

The concerns of educators appeared justified in view of the multifaceted nature of psycho-social challenges that could accompany teenage pregnancy (Ritchter & Mlambo, 2005; Miller et al., 2008). In developing countries where school-based programmes for pregnant learners are established alongside formal schools, there are service providers for antenatal, baby health and counselling services (McGee & Blank, 1989; Roosa, 1986; Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2001).

5.4.1.2 Infrastructural incapacity to mainstream pregnant learners

Added to the concern that the two schools had no basic human resource capacity to meaningfully mainstream pregnant learners, participants also described the existing school infrastructure as unsuitable to cater for the condition of pregnant learners. The SA female educator 1 suggested that, in order for schools to effectively mainstream pregnant learners, educators should first be trained and necessary facilities should also be put in place. She therefore complained that:

...we do not have facilities for them, and as educators we haven't been trained for that and there are a lot of problems. If the policy needs to be applied those facilities must be there (SA female educator 1) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:17 (31:31).

This was corroborated by a male mainstream learner at the South African school who gave an example of how hospitals had the right facilities for pregnant women. However, his statement had an exclusion connotation in that he did not see the need for schools to act like hospitals since their responsibility was education not midwifery. This argument seems to imply that schools should not accommodate pregnant learners. His concern was that:

If you go to a hospital you find that the toilets have bathing rooms and showers for the pregnant women to bath from time to time. But here at school we do not have such facilities. We do not need them because a school is for students not mothers (SA mainstream male learner 4) P 5: F.G. Interview.doc - 5:25 (22:22).

A similar argument was made by an educator at the Zimbabwean study site who pointed out that school toilets were too small, dark and lacked privacy to cater for the condition of pregnancy. His observation and contention was that:

...one who is fully pregnant cannot fit in these small toilets. There is no privacy. There should be a policy that if a school wants to admit a pregnant learner, there is certain standards to be met health wise (Zimbabwean male educator 3) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:86 (165:165).

His view concurred with that of the SA female educator 1 who also suggested that only schools that met given health conditions should be allowed to enrol pregnant learners. Such a condition could serve as a barrier to educational access for girls who would fall pregnant while at a school which does not meet the stated standards.

With regards to facilities, in countries like the USA, the UK and Canada where school-based programmes for pregnant teenagers are now well established, there are a variety of facilities and service provisions like counselling services, health and baby care laboratories, life skills and family life education (Weiner, 1987; Duncan, 2007; Searmark & Lungs, 2004; Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2001; Brindis & Philliber, 1996; Kelly, 1996; Mitchell, 1999; Burdel, 1981/1996; Roosa, 1986; Zellman, 1981). From the descriptions given by participants in this study, it would appear that the two schools need to improve on both their human resource base and facilities if they are to meaningfully mainstream pregnant learners.

5.4.1.3 Inadequate educator assistance to pregnant learners

According to the South African policy guidelines for management of pregnancy in schools, educators are required to give, monitor and mark school work during the period a pregnant learner is unable to come to school while awaiting delivery (DoE, 2007). Narrated evidence from pregnant learners and educators revealed that this provision was not observed at the South African school. Zimbabwean school learners also reported that there was no initiative by educators to assist pregnant learners. Pregnant and former pregnant learners at the South African school denied ever receiving academic assistance

from educators whenever they failed to attend school. To illustrate the danger of missing classes, the South African pregnant learner 1 indicated that she had to attend school up to delivery time, in order not to miss out on her studies. From her experience, she recounted and warned that:

No teachers will come to you to tell you what she or he taught others while you were away, so it's better to come to school until when I am about to deliver (SA pregnant learner 1) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:37 (49:49).

The same seemed to be the trend at the Zimbabwean school, where one pregnant learner also said she had to depend on well-wishing friends when she failed to go to school. Even if some teachers were prepared to give individual assistance, the learner seemed hesitant to accept such assistance because of community pressure. The hesitancy stemmed from the claim that some male educators sexually abused school girls. This was a common view held by some of the adult participants at both study sites. The Zimbabwean pregnant learner therefore concurred with her South African counterparts that:

There is no teacher who comes to help me with school work here at home. It's only my friends with whom I do the subjects with who come so that we discuss whatever they will have covered. I do not wish to approach teachers because people in the township speak rumours too much (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 2) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:1 (38:38).

The cited educators at both study sites confirmed the pregnant learners' statements that they did not assist pregnant learners with academic work during the period of absence from school while they were awaiting delivery. South African educators confessed ignorance of the policy provision that required them to assist pregnant learners with schoolwork if they failed to attend classes. This was illustrated by the SA female educator 1 who was open that:

There is no such arrangement that we help these girls when they stay at home for labour. I haven't heard the principal or anybody talking about it. So when the pregnant girl is at home or having just given birth, I have never seen anyone here making some follow ups (SA female educator 1) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:28 (59:59).

Zimbabwean educators also accepted that most of them did not take an extra mile to help pregnant learners cope with their academic work. There seemed to be lack of political will from Zimbabwean educators because of the conviction that pregnant teenagers should not be given the right to formal schooling. This belief, which I also attributed to the small population of pregnant learners who were enrolled at the Zimbabwean school, was implied in one of the educators' statement:

Most teachers do not support them academically because they think a pregnant teenager's place is at home not school (Zimbabwean female educator 3) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:65 (100:100).

5.4.1.4 Male educator incapacity to assist pregnant learners

Still on the issue of educator assistance to pregnant learners, a gender related dimension emerged from focus group discussions with educators and parents. All adult participants from both schools, irrespective of gender, concurred that there were several risks male educators would encounter in their attempt to assist pregnant and former pregnant learners. According to most adult participants at both study sites, the risks associated with male educator assistance to pregnant and former pregnant learners included being suspected of seeking sexual favours or being thought to be responsible for the pregnancy. These fears seemed to make it difficult for male educators to assist pregnant learners. Some of the male educators themselves confirmed similar sentiments. For example, the SA male educator 1 argued that:

As a male teacher I am not comfortable working with pregnant learners because people are suspicious... (SA male educator 1) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:42 (89:89).

Because former pregnant learners were viewed as children with loose sexual morals, another male educator at the Zimbabwean school also expressed the same fears as the South African educator. To him, helping a former pregnant learner could be misunderstood by the public, especially other learners and educators, who were said to:

...raise a lot of eyebrows once they see a male teacher helping a teenage mother, even on purely academic matters. They think you are trying to ask for sexual favours because these girls are seen by most people as easy sex targets (Zimbabwean male educator 2) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:50 (122:122).

Indeed, the fears and suspicions held against male educators were confirmed by some of the parents, who alleged that some male educators could not be trusted with girls, especially former pregnant learners. One such allegation came from a Zimbabwean female parent, who was concerned that some of the educators could not be trusted because:

.....teachers can also ask for sex from a girl with a baby because they know that such girls know all about it, they are easy targets because they are of loose morals (Zimbabwean female parent 3) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:8 (24:24).

The same allegation was levelled against male educators by another female participant at the South African study site, who suspected some of the male educators to be responsible for teenage pregnancy and warned that:

Some of the teachers are playing games. They can impregnate a learner and go to the parents secretly to pay a bill and promise to marry the girl (SA female parent 1) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:34 (7:7).

Research findings from elsewhere have also indicated that negative perceptions towards pregnant and former pregnant teenagers is a common phenomenon, especially if the teenager remained single (Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Kelly, 1996; Burdell, 1996; Weiner, 1987; Ladner, 1987). According to the conservative discourse, teenage pregnancy is an indication of irresponsible behaviour and single motherhood distorted the real structure of the family (Kelly, 1998; Burdell, 1998). I interpreted the view that male educators are at risk to help pregnant learners as a cultural variable that originated from negative perceptions towards pregnant teenagers. From what the participants of this study alleged against male educators, it would appear that male educators are not free to assist pregnant teenagers. This could compromise the educational participation of these learners.

5.4.1.5 Inadequate counselling service provision

Counselling is an important intervention for the social condition of teenage pregnancy and early motherhood. Counselling has been found to be one key element of programmes

like Second Chance Clubs (SCC), New Feature Schools (NFS) and Teen-Age Parenting Programmes (TAPP), which give educational opportunities to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in the USA and Canada (Ladner, 1987; Weiner, 1987; Roosa, 1986; Burdel, 1998; Kelly, 1999; Brindis & Philliber, 1998; Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2001). It also emerged from policy analysis that both national policy guidelines on management of school girl pregnancy for the two countries emphasised the need to report pregnancies and counsel both pregnant learners and their parents (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute, P.35, 1999). However, educators explained that they were not trained on basic counselling and there were no formal counselling structures at the two schools where this study was conducted.

All the South African and Zimbabwean pregnant learners made a common observation that there was no formal reporting system and that none of them had been counselled. One pregnant learner at the South African school confirmed this by pointing out that:

When we fall pregnant at school we do not report the case to anyone in the school ...I just come to school as usual. Not even a single teacher comes to us to ask about our pregnancy or to counsel us (SA Pregnant Learner 4) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:3 (6:6).

Apart from not being counselled, the Zimbabwean pregnant learner 3 illustrated that some pregnant learners doubted the integrity of educators to counsel them. As already alluded to, this was possibly because some educators gave negative labels and held negative attitudes towards pregnant learners. The cited Zimbabwean pregnant learner reported her distrust of educators as counsellors and indicated that:

I was not counselled because as for me I did not report. But I do not think teachers would have helped me because some who got to suspect me started to whisper and I could see that they would talk about me (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 3) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:7 (17:17).

The Zimbabwean school principal who indicated that “girls keep away from lady teachers” also seemed to confirm the cited pregnant learner’s report that she could not confide in educators. The principal also concurred with statements by the learners and educators that there was no systematic counselling at the Zimbabwean school. The

principal described the counselling approach as ad hoc and narrated the challenges that the school faced in this regard:

The school has counsellors yes, but the counselling they know is very limited. They are not professionally trained and so one can say they just help the situation by trial and error. Those who teach Guidance and Counselling also play the role of counselling but you find that girls keep away from lady teachers (Zimbabwean school principal) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:83 (158:158).

The situation at the South African school, as described by SA female educator 2 was similar to what was happening at the Zimbabwean school. The school also lacked trained counsellors and a counselling structure. She made the following observations and recommendations:

There is no such structure for counselling the pregnant learners here at school. Teachers are just helping them out of the knowledge that they have... I think that structure for counselling them must be there but being done by trained people not just any ordinary teacher because most of us do not have the knowledge (SA female educator 2) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:13 (26:26).

The need for counselling for all the stakeholders in the school was summed up by one Zimbabwean educator who raised the concern that:

What I see is that the focus is on counselling the pregnant or girl mother. How about the other pupils and teachers? They also need counselling on how to interact with these girls. Nobody in the school knows how to avoid stigmatisation... (Zimbabwean male educator 2) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:87 (161:161).

However, contrary to this, some of the boys seemed not to value the view that they also needed to be counselled. This thinking is represented by one SA mainstream male learner, who complained that:

It is not good to be counselled as learners who are not pregnant because it will encourage others to be pregnant. What wrong have we done that we should be counselled for the sake of those who are pregnant? Those who are pregnant are the ones who should be counselled not us, so that they can stop it next time (SA mainstream male learner 1) P 5: F.G. Interview.doc - 5:22 (17:17).

I interpreted such a judgmental opinion against pregnant learners to mean that counselling is viewed as something that should be confined to pregnant learners only because they are culturally perceived as children who are guilty of misbehaving and as such need behavioural remediation. This could be one form of stigmatisation to pregnant learners.

5.4.1.6 Hate language

According to most participants, although the use of hate language took place throughout the community, it appeared that the school environment had most incidences. I made a distinction between hate language reported by the pregnant learners themselves and direct speeches of hate language, which I picked up as some of the participants were talking.

More pregnant and former pregnant learners at the South African school complained of hate language. This hate speech came in the form of being shouted at, or being used as examples of what a bad child is during lesson discussions. It also emerged from the pregnant and former pregnant learners at both schools that female educators were allegedly more verbally abusive of pregnant learners than their male counterparts. At the Zimbabwean study site, one pregnant learner complained that female teachers “taught” about them all the time. What she meant is that female educators ridiculed them in class. A similar view was found widespread among South African pregnant learners, who also complained that female educators gave more problems to them, by shouting at them, using them as guinea pigs in lessons and changing topics to teenage pregnancy, in order to embarrass them.

A pregnant learner at the Zimbabwean study site implicated female educators and boys for passing bad comments about them. She complained that while the school was generally hostile to her as a pregnant learner, it was female educators and boys who gave her more problems. She even contemplated withdrawing from school as she narrated that:

I would not like to go to school in this situation because I know I will be made ashamed by teachers and other children; especially female teachers, they will teach about you all the time. You can find a person

like a boy can greet you and say how is your baby today? (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 1) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:4 (28:28).

Judging from reports made by pregnant learners, it would seem that more female educators at the South African school had poor relationships with pregnant learners than those at the Zimbabwean school. One former pregnant learner at the school complained that:

...it is the lady teachers who give us more problems. They can shout at you for a small thing and start to talk about being pregnant and babies to silence you among other students (SA former pregnant learner 3) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:51 (67:67).

This was supported by a pregnant learner at the same school who complained that some of the female educators used them as guinea pigs and made them examples to elaborate on a topic, which may have nothing to do with pregnancy. Her statement tallied with what was said by Zimbabwean pregnant learner 1 and SA former pregnant learner 3 who also argued that educators 'taught' about them in order to silence or embarrass them. To further underline how female educators abused them, the SA pregnant learner also complained that:

With me I have problems with female educators; they are the ones who make this example about us who are pregnant.... You find that the teachers are elaborating about a novel and then he/she will make use of me as an example. There are teachers who use us as guinea pigs in the classroom (SA pregnant Learner 5) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:23 (37:37).

A similar example was given by another South African pregnant learner who also brought up the problem of being used by female educators as examples of bad children. She was worried that:

...some of the female teachers, they can start a good topic and then suddenly change it to teenage pregnancy, HIV and AIDS so that they find a way of talking about us as bad examples. Sometimes you end up being worried that maybe I have the virus of HIV (SA Pregnant Learner 2) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:12 (17:17).

Besides female educators, female mainstream learners accused boys of using abusive language on pregnant learners. The most common forms of hate speech from boys are represented by the statements below from two Zimbabwean and two South African

mainstream female learners. The hate speech included mocking the girls about sex, giving names to their unborn babies, accusing them for making them sleep in class and mocking their friends.

How pregnant learners were ridiculed by boys was illustrated by a Zimbabwean mainstream female learner, who accused some boys of making statements such as:

...how it feels to have sex or how she had sex with her husband or boyfriend last night (Zimbabwean mainstream female learner 5) P 9: F.G. Interview.doc - 9:15 (52:52).

Another Zimbabwean female learner made similar accusations against boys and added that educators seemed to support such abusive boys because they usually did not rebuke the boys. She had this to say:

Most girls when they are pregnant, they are given the name '*mai vaFuture*' ('mother of Future') by teacher and boys even in class... teachers may know this but they do not do anything about it (Zimbabwean mainstream female learner 6) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:10 (18:18).

Besides hate language, the South African female learner 2 came up with a new accusation against school boys. She made an observation that boys encouraged mainstream learners to isolate those who were pregnant. She had expressed that:

If I am a girl and this other one who is my friend is pregnant, a boy will come and say to me; 'why are you sitting next to this person who is pregnant?' (SA mainstream female learner 2) P 5: F.G. Interview.doc - 5:35 (45:45).

During focus group discussions, I detected that in the process of explaining an issue, some of the boys ended up being abusive in their language. Some of the participants who used hate language during group discussions talked as if they were directing complaints to authorities whom they were requesting to stop the practice of mainstreaming pregnant learners at their school. This is illustrated by the South African male learner who seemed to confirm the allegation that some learners diverted topics in class as way of embarrassing pregnant learners. His statement seemed to be an indirect complaint that pregnant learners should not be protected as he sounded unhappy that:

When there is a pregnant girl in class, some of us are not able to speak out our mind in class. If you speak something against teenage pregnancy in the country, let's say in LO, the girls think that you are attacking them (SA mainstream male learner 2) P 5: F.G. Interview.doc - 5:10 (13:13).

One Zimbabwean boy brought in the issue of bride price to mock pregnant learners in the presence of the researcher. This was another indication of the boys' careless speech. Like the above cited SA mainstream male learner 2, who complained about the presence of pregnant learners in class, the Zimbabwean mainstream male learner 1 complained that pregnant learners should not be included in the school. I interpreted both statements as aimed at excluding pregnant learners from school. The Zimbabwean learner said that:

The pregnant girl should remain home with her mother for her mother to take care of the pregnancy not the teachers. *Lobola* (bride price) is paid to the mother not teachers so she should look after her pregnant child (Zimbabwean mainstream male learner 1) P 9: F.G. Interview.doc - 9:3 (16:17).

According to these data from the participants and the observations I recorded in my reflective research journal, there seemed to be no marked differences in the nature and degree of verbal abuse directed at pregnant learners at the two schools. What seemed to come out from both schools was that boys and female educators were singled out for being more verbally abusive.

Some research findings on gender inequality in education revealed that boys could both bully and abuse girls at school (Gordon, 1995; Gordon, 2002; Mensch et al., 2001; Dorsey, 1989b). It emerged from this study that verbally abusing pregnant teenagers was not an isolated phenomenon within the school, but seemed to be widespread and implicitly condoned by the community as a social control measure, which was meant to indicate that teenage pregnancy was shameful to society. This was expressed by some female mainstream learners who complained that educators did not reprimand boys who verbally abused pregnant learners even in their presence. One other disturbing fact on hate language against pregnant learners is that despite the policy guidelines on management of pregnancy in schools for both countries pointing out that schools should put in place measures to eliminate any forms of stigmatisation and hate language (DoE,

2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute, P.35, 1999), this is ignored by the school. It appeared from gathered data that some educators, instead of playing a leading role in this respect, could have exacerbated the situation.

5.4.2 School participation: Opportunities and challenges of pregnant learners

In the previous category, I outlined that structural and functional factors within the schools seemed to influence the manner in which pregnant learners' educational needs were responded to. In this category, I present and describe how the different participants described and explained the nature of school attendance, participation and performance by pregnant learners at the two schools where the study was conducted. Besides what the respondents told me, I also made my own observations based on documented school records that were made available.

5.4.2.1 Learner pregnancy and absenteeism

Some of the comments by some educators and parents at both schools revealed that they associated the period of pregnancy with irregular school attendance by pregnant and former pregnant learners. Participants identified burdens like attending to antenatal health procedures, illness, household duties or baby care, low motivation and unsuitable school facilities, as some of the barrier to regular school attendance by pregnant learners. The Zimbabwean male educator 2 cited all such problems as he narrated the more common reasons why pregnant and former pregnant learners absconded from school most of the time. According to him, the circumstances of former pregnant learners could be beyond their control because:

Most such girls become domestics at their own homes. Those who might be lucky to be allowed to come to school, you find that they cannot attend every day, sometimes there is no one to look after the baby or if the baby has to go to clinic or is sick, the mother has to go also (Zimbabwean female educator 2) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:2 (13:13).

While the cited Zimbabwean educator sounded sympathetic to the plight of former pregnant learners, the SA female parent 1 cited below accused former pregnant learners of using lame excuses to absent themselves from school. According to her, former pregnant learners were generally not serious with school. She observed that:

...one day she is at the clinic, the other buying groceries with the grant.
In the end she comes from school with nothing at all (SA female parent
1) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:36 (9:9).

In order to cross check on what was said in the focus group discussions, I looked at records of attendance for pregnant and former pregnant learners at the two schools. At the South African school, the Head of Department (HoD) for Life Orientation (LO) had the responsibility of coordinating all issues concerning pregnant and former pregnant learners. Unfortunately, the record he kept did not have much detail. It only showed the population of pregnant learners by age and grade. There was no information on attendance, performance and other issues that were specific to pregnant learners. School registers and records of performance did not identify pregnant learners.

While claims were made that pregnant and former pregnant learners' school attendance was erratic, attendance records did not reflect any anomalies. On the particular days of my visits to the school, the class-teachers and HoD for LO could not give exact details of the pregnant learners, who were present or absent on the day. This could be an indication of inadequate interaction between educators and pregnant learners. It appeared from these observations that there might have been inadequate preparedness by the school or lack of political will to identify and seek interventions to the challenges that pregnant learners could have been facing.

5.4.2.2 Learner pregnancy and school performance

Learner participation has a direct influence on academic performance. However, both learner participation and performance can be influenced by a multiplicity of factors that could emanate from both inside and outside the school. With regards to school participation and academic performance of pregnant learners, most of the participants of

this study seemed to agree that the condition of pregnancy is detrimental to good school participation and achievement. Some of the statements made by participants brought out two perceptions about pregnant learners' school participation and performance. One group of participants underestimated pregnant learners and labelled them failures that wasted resources by being in school. The other educators expressed concern that pregnant learners faced limitations in subjects like LO, that had practical components or required their active participation.

The underestimation of pregnant learners' academic potential was illustrated by the Zimbabwean female educator 2, who believed that:

...most school girls who are pregnant do not pass. It can be just a waste of their parents' money in these difficult times (Zimbabwean female educator 2) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:19 (44:44).

Another female educator at the South African school made a similar claim and added that the physical condition of pregnant learners disadvantaged them and made it difficult for them to be active in practical subjects. She gave the example of practical requirements in Life Orientation:

...in subjects like LO we also encounter problems because we have physical training when we are supposed to do some activities on the ground there, so they won't participate and for me as a teacher is a problem because we allocate marks there. So, this means that she ends up not having the entire task required for her to complete (SA female educator 2) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:27 (57:57).

Since school performance is recorded, I decided to check academic records rather than depend entirely on the superficial judgements from focus group discussions. Academic records indicated that pregnant and mainstream learners had a common academic curriculum at both schools. However, except at the Zimbabwean school, where two of pregnant learners were in upper sixth (equivalent to Grade 12), the rest were at the basic level and none of them studied specialist subjects like pure mathematics, physics or chemistry. At the South African school, all pregnant learners were studying Mathematical

Literacy²¹, which is meant for low performing students, who cannot cope with Mathematics. The subjects studied by most of the pregnant learners who participated in this study seemed to suggest that they were mediocre to below average learners in academic performance even before they fell pregnant. It therefore appeared that, subject selection had nothing to do with the learners' current state of pregnancy, but reflected on their pre-pregnancy school participation and performance.

Several studies that have been carried out on causes of pregnancy and school dropout have produced findings that indicated that there could be a correlation between poor school performance and teenage pregnancy (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hof & Richters, 1999; Gordon, 1995; Gordon, 2002; Dorsey, 1989b). With specific reference to South Africa and Zimbabwe, Grant and Hallman (2006), and Hof and Richters (1999) found that poor school participation and performance more than pregnancy, caused most of the teenage mothers to drop out of school. Both studies indicated that most pregnant teens dropped out of school before becoming pregnant. The current study therefore seemed to concur with existing knowledge that some of the pregnant learners might have been weak in their pre-pregnant school participation and performance.

5.5 Responsiveness of the family to the educational needs of pregnant teens

The interconnectedness of and interdependence between the school and the home on learner performance, especially with regard to pregnant and former pregnant learners, has been alluded to through both educational theory and research (Weigand, 2005; Chigona & Chetty, 2009; Ahn, 1994; McGraha-Garnett, 2007). The current study revealed that the family setting had significant influence on pregnant teenagers' realisation of their educational needs and resilience. In this theme, I report on how the social context and

²¹ In South Africa, when learners get to Grade 10 they can either study Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy. Mathematics is for those who can pursue courses that require Mathematics. Mathematical Literacy is a syllabus for the basics in number which is not recognised for university entry to study sciences.

interaction in the pregnant learners' family might have influenced their educational participation.

5.5.1 Family-based determinants to pregnant learners' educational opportunity

The views of participants, which are presented in this category, seem to suggest that the home presented some obstacles to pregnant learners' educational aspirations and needs. However, there were some families that created opportunities for the pregnant learners through parental support and establishing home-school partnerships for their pregnant daughters. Parents reacted differently to their children's pregnancy. The nature of the reaction was found to influence the nature and level of parental support to the pregnant learner.

5.5.1.1 Parental reactions to teenage pregnancy

There were two main types of parental reactions to their daughters' pregnancy that were reported by study participants. Most parents were reported to react angrily while only a few were reported to continue supporting their pregnant daughters. It therefore appears that the nature of parental reaction has implications on the level of support the parents would give to their pregnant daughter's educational needs and school participation.

All the adult participants at both study sites agreed that it is normal for parents to be disturbed or shocked by news of a daughter getting pregnant while still at school. Such sentiments appear evident in the quoted Zimbabwean mother of one pregnant learner, who was "shocked" and blamed her daughter for her condition. She noted that they gave her everything. She said the family felt betrayed by their daughter and this explained why she said her whole family felt:

...shocked because we did not suspect our daughter could do such a thing to us. We gave her everything and we don't know what went into her mind (Zimbabwean female parent 4) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:33 (55:55).

Because of hard feelings against her pregnant daughter, the SA female parent 5 said she was embarrassed to the extent that she did not have the energy to protect her daughter from verbal abuse. Such reactions were likely a source of hostility against the pregnant learner and could negatively influence the extent to which the parents supported their daughter educationally. This is evident from the refusal to give social protection. Instead of standing by her daughter to fight against the wide range of negative reactions against pregnant teenagers, the SA female parent 5 wailed at her daughter and reminded her:

...not be shy because it was her choice; people cannot stop to laugh because it's what she liked. If she knew it would pain her then she should have looked after herself. I remind her to leave the people and stop blaming others yet she is the one who caused it (SA female parent 5) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:25 (42:42).

At the Zimbabwean study site, there were more indications that most parents reacted by chasing away their pregnant daughters to the men suspected to be responsible for the pregnancy. In another section of this report, views from Zimbabwean pregnant learners revealed that they used concealment of pregnancy as a coping strategy. The statement made by the Zimbabwean female educator 1 further indicated that some Zimbabwean parents also concealed their daughters' pregnancy by either sending them to stay elsewhere or forcing them into marriage. Such parental reaction seemed to further explain why many pregnant learners in Zimbabwe were said to withdraw from school. According to the educator, school withdrawal once a girl fell pregnant was expected by the community because:

Such a thing is a shame in the community and some parents send away the girl to the rural home or some distant place to hide the shame. This is why most girls withdraw from school without giving clear reasons (Zimbabwean female educator 1) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:45 (167:167).

To illustrate that marriage was a common expectation for any teenager who fell pregnant, the Zimbabwean former pregnant learner reported that she was sure that her parents would chase her away if she had not moved away on her own. External pressure from the community seemed to be the source of parental hard reactions. This is because other

people laughed at parents whose pregnant daughters did not get married. The pregnant learner therefore had this to say:

I am sure they would have chased me away from home to my boyfriend; they would not allow it because other people would have laughed at them. So soon after writing I went away to my boyfriend's home (Zimbabwean former pregnant learner 2) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:12 (7:7).

The school principal at the Zimbabwean school explained that the reactions of parents were due to the fact that they expected the marriage once the girl fell pregnant... Marriage was viewed as a better consolation for teenage pregnancy than remaining in school. The principal therefore made the observation:

At least if the girl gets married, that is some consolation in African culture but generally parents feel betrayed and disrespected by their daughter. They are shocked, angry, repulsive and disappointed and chase the girl away to the responsible person and some beat up the child (Zimbabwean school principal) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:44 (169:169).

From such views pointing out to more hostile parental reactions in the Zimbabwean community than at the South African school, I interpreted that chasing pregnant girls away to get married or go into hiding could be one reason why some pregnant learners at the Zimbabwean school seemed to prefer to suspend school attendance till they delivered. I considered that this could account for the difference in the population of pregnant learners between the two study sites. With regard to Zimbabwe, statistical data released by MoESC (2004) indicated that pregnancy and marriage were reasons for girls dropping out of school even at primary school level. Such data seemed to concur with the smaller number of pregnant learners who were currently enrolled at the Zimbabwean school compared to the number of reported and suspected pregnancies (Appendix 13.1²²).

From what was said about parental reactions, I observed that there was a relationship between the nature of parental reactions to a daughter's pregnancy and the level of parental support they gave to their pregnant daughter. From my observations during

²² Appendix 13.1: Population of pregnant learners at the two study sites

interviews, I noted that parents of pregnant learners who expressed extreme anger were parents of pregnant learners who also reported more hostility in home environments. From this I concluded that reactions that were based on negative emotions such as betrayal, shame and anger could influence the parents to chase away the daughter to the man responsible for the pregnancy or send her to grandparents. In such cases, the girl could be forced to temporarily or completely withdraw from school. This observation from the current study was found to agree with a study by McGraha-Garnett (2007), who concluded that “Adolescent mothers who dropped out evidenced greater distance in their involvement with their parents” (p. 109).

5.5.1.2 Pregnant teenagers’ loss of child rights

Interviews with pregnant and former pregnant learners, their mainstream counterparts and their parents revealed that once a school girl was discovered to be pregnant, she would cease to enjoy some of her childhood rights within the home. One Zimbabwean former pregnant learner gave a detailed account of her home experience which illustrated how her parents changed their treatment of her from the time she fell pregnant.

Her statement showed that she was no more confident of her parents’ support, and this made her to regret her situation:

Being pregnant or having a baby can be tricky. Even if you get a chance to go to school, you cannot ask for any favours from parents. You are like an adopted child because if you ask for pocket money you hear the mother saying “We look after your baby and you always ask for more money” Even asking for school fees, one has to go through other children because you are sure that some nasty comments will follow, even if you are given the fees (Zimbabwean former pregnant learner 1)
P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:13 (5:5).

The same lack of confidence and loss of child rights which the Zimbabwean former pregnant learner reported were also experienced by the SA pregnant learner 4, who indicated that she also feared to make requests to her parents. The statements by both participants revealed that pregnant and former pregnant learners at both study sites were not free to ask for help from their parents. They accepted whatever was done to them

because of feeling guilty. In the words of the SA pregnant learner 4, it was regrettable to have fallen pregnant because,

The love of my parents will never be the same even if they have accepted this. They have changed from the past when I compare. We do not communicate well now and sometimes it makes me feel that if I ask for something I will be troubling them; from the way they react. They can keep quiet or take time to give you what you ask for compared to the other children in the house. As a child and knowing this mistake I have to accept it to avoid quarrelling (SA pregnant learner 4) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:46 (59:59).

The loss of childhood rights means that pregnant and former pregnant learners no longer enjoy normal childhood privileges like asking for pocket money or even school fees, and even freely communicating with their parents. What the pregnant and former pregnant learners experienced seemed to agree with earlier studies by Weigand (2005) and Brindis and Philliber (1998), who found that, unlike other marginalised groups such as the disabled and minority ethnic groups, teenage mothers in most societies are one marginalised group that has not yet gained recognition for self-advocacy on their concerns.

5.5.1.3 Study conditions in the home

Former pregnant learners and their mothers reported on problems that the home environment could present to pregnant and former pregnant learners in situations where parents do not give their full support. They made reference to the burden of baby-care, household chores and divided commitment between the mother and father of the pregnant and former pregnant learners. Parents and siblings did not always cooperate in sharing baby care responsibility because some parents restricted their assistance to the time when the teen mother is attending school, while most siblings only gave voluntary assistance. This could mean that after school, the former pregnant learner would assume full responsibility for the baby and at the same time has to cater for her studies. This is the situation which the SA former pregnant learner 3 found herself in and so had to come up with strategies such as to:

...try and finish all my school work during school time because the moment I arrive home I have no time at all. The baby will not give me a chance and my parents, because I give them the burden to look after the baby, I cannot give them more trouble when I am there. My other sisters will be doing their school work (SA former pregnant learner 3) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4: (76:76).

There was a gender dimension in the manner in which the parents responded to their daughter's pregnancy, and this had direct implications on the pregnant girls' school participation. It would appear that in the Zimbabwean community, blame was laid on women once a daughter fell pregnant. This was implied by one mainstream learner, who complained that:

Lobola (bride price) is paid to the mother not teachers so she should look after her pregnant child (Zimbabwean mainstream male learner 4) P 9: F.G. Interview.doc -9:3 (16:17).

Such gender bias against teenage pregnancy was even reported in the family and created a barrier for mothers who wished to assist with baby care so that the former pregnant learner could have time to study at home. Some female parents, most of whom were more sympathetic to the plight of pregnant and former pregnant learners, reported that the pregnancy of a daughter could create spousal division because some male spouses discourage mothers from giving baby care assistance. In one of the Zimbabwean families, a mother complained that some men were unfair to such an extent that:

...if the baby is crying and you help out so that the daughter can study, your husband can tell you that you are ignoring him because of this baby (Zimbabwean female parent 4) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:39 (63:63).

These reactions seemed to put pressure on female parents of pregnant teenagers to compromise the educational needs of their daughters, because of society's punitive expectations on teenage pregnancy. After observing that male community members at both schools showed less concern to participate in this study, which discussed the problems of pregnant learners, I concluded that teenage pregnancy seemed to be regarded as a feminine social problem and responsibility.

5.5.1.4 Home-school partnerships

Despite the negative perceptions and labels associated with teenage pregnancy in most societies (Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Kelly, 1996; Burdell, 1996), there were some parents of pregnant learners who stood by their daughters in support of their educational needs. Some of the educators and parents of pregnant learners at both schools described cases in which school management and families of pregnant families established linkages, in order to facilitate pregnant teenagers' access to schooling.

In line with the MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35 (1999), which encourages school principals to allow pregnant learners to write public examinations, the school management at the Zimbabwean school is also reported to have initiated dialogue with parents, in order to facilitate the writing of final school examinations by pregnant learners. The initiative was reported by the Zimbabwean female parent 5, who appreciated that:

The idea that she can write exams came from the headmaster. He is a good man. He came to tell us that she can write and finish school (Zimbabwean female parent 5) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:34 (55:55).

A few mothers reported that they had to protect their pregnant daughters from verbal abuse by accompanying them to school, to clinic and similar public places. The benefit of linking up with schools was realised by one Zimbabwean mother of a former pregnant learner who was pleased that,

I had to take my daughter to school daily as she was writing her examinations and they would not say anything because I was present (Zimbabwean female parent 6) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:42 (67:67).

The approach of accompanying pregnant learners to and from school was employed at the South African study site by parents who stood by their pregnant daughters regardless of what the community thought. The SA female parent 5, who was eager to ensure that her daughter did not lose her right to education, said that she:

...has the right to go to school even if she is very pregnant as long she can do what is wanted at school. I sometimes go with her and go to fetch her if she phones me while at school. The other friends also help

her to walk with her (SA female parent 5) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:29 (46:47).

The claim that some parents indeed stood by their pregnant daughters was also supported by some pregnant learners and educators, especially at the South African school, which had more pregnant learners at the time when the study was conducted. One pregnant learner who was pleased with the support she received from her parents had this to say:

The love of my parents has not changed. They still treat me as their child just like my sisters and brother. They show me by the way they still give me chance to still come to school just like other children. We discussed the matter ...they understand that it was just a mistake (SA pregnant learner 1) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:47 (60:60).

A female educator at the same school made a statement that corroborated what the SA pregnant learner 1 said. She argued that there were parents who remained resolute to educate their pregnant daughters. She based her view on some parents, whom she had observed giving such support. She said that these parents:

...treat them [pregnant learners] well as before, because you find them even hiring people to look after their kids while they are at school. And giving them everything clothes, anything they do for them (SA female educator 2) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:18 (73:73).

The importance of parental involvement and support as a motivating factor for former pregnant teenagers to remain in school was also reported by Grant and Hallman (2006), McGraha-Garnett (2007) and Chigona and Chetty (2008), who found that most teenage mothers who had either withdrawn from school or found it difficult to cope with schooling had not received adequate support from their adult family members.

5.6 Responsiveness of the community to the educational needs of pregnant teens

One of the main objectives of my study was to investigate how the stakeholders at the two schools and their neighbourhood perceived and responded to pregnant learners' educational needs and aspirations. Based on gathered views during focus group discussions, I identified that gender bias, cultural beliefs and limitations on pregnancy and motherhood were some of the governing variables that constrained participants'

attitudes and responses to pregnant learners. I interpreted and related such socio-culturally defined governing variables of the participants to the school setting, in order to find how they might have influenced the educability of pregnant teenagers.

5.6.1 Socio-cultural contextualisation of teenage pregnancy

This category presents data on three main ideas that emerged from the focus group discussions on how study participants' views on pregnant learners were influenced by gender bias or the patriarchal nature of their communities, as well as the cultural beliefs on pregnancy and motherhood. From what participants at both study sites expressed, it appeared that gender ideologies, cultural limitations on pregnancy and breast feeding had some negative effects on pregnant and former pregnant teenagers' educational access.

5.6.1.1 Gender bias against pregnant teens

Some female participants of the study expressed concern that the unfair treatment given to pregnant teenagers emanated from gender imbalances in society. They complained that men who opposed the admission of pregnant girls into formal schools were insensitive to gender equality in society. Some of the women were unhappy that schools seemed to punish pregnant girls while nothing was done to boys who might be responsible for the pregnancies. The argument raised by the SA female member 2 illustrated how some women viewed the expulsion of pregnant girls from school as an unfair practice that was aimed at perpetuating male domination in society. She complained that because men did not carry the pregnancy:

...this is a gender problem. If it were men who are affected and are to be expelled from school, you will find that most men would support it [the policy]. But just because it's us women, men just oppose it (SA SGB female member 2) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:13 (12:12).

A female educator at the Zimbabwean school also referred to the gender inequality discourse to critique the unfair implementation of the schoolgirl pregnancy policy by school administrators. Her argument was based on the fact that if it took two to fall pregnant, then it was unfair that:

Schools only look at the girl because she is the one who bears the pregnancy. Boys are protected and this is not fair. To be fair the two should not be allowed to come back to school but to go to non-formal school (Zimbabwean female educator 3) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:18 (44:44).

The views that men were insensitive to the plight of pregnant girls seemed to corroborate concerns which were raised by some female parents of pregnant learners who said that their husbands were not supportive enough. Further, it also emerged that men were generally less interested in participating in this study because they seemed to view schoolgirl pregnancy as a feminine social problem.

The argument that there is unequal application of policy to school boys and girls who have been involved in a relationship that resulted in pregnancy also emerged from earlier studies carried out in Botswana, Malawi and Namibia to investigate the implementation of re-entry schoolgirl pregnancy policies. Evaluation studies of the schoolgirl policy implementation in all three countries found that only the girl got suspended from school, where two learners were involved in a relationship that resulted in pregnancy (Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kadji-Murangi, 1996; Hubbard et al., 2008). This was despite the fact that the schoolgirl pregnancy policies of these countries, like those of South Africa and Zimbabwe where the current study was conducted, provided for equal treatment of both learners.

5.6.1.2 Pregnant teenagers' loss of social status in the community

The community at the Zimbabwean study site appeared to be more conservative and negative to pregnant teenagers than at the South African school. Most Zimbabwean participants reported that pregnant learners lost their social status in the family, at school and in the community, to the extent that they would not be entrusted with responsibilities at school, home and in the community. Most educators at the Zimbabwean school expressed how pregnant teenagers were negatively treated in the community, especially if they remained unmarried. A number of them reported that pregnant learners were viewed with suspicion and denied benefits or responsibilities in most institutions of the

community such as the family, church and school. One Zimbabwean female educator gave a detailed description of a pregnant teenager who was despised in the community and in the home. The female educator was disturbed that:

...in the community, the girl loses her pride, nobody trusts her and people talk about her behind her back whenever she appears. A pregnant girl or teen mother is seen in society as a social problem. Even her young sisters can have more power than her in the family (Zimbabwean female educator 1) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:57 (79:79).

Of great concern is an observation made by the Zimbabwean male educator 3 that school also demote girls who become pregnant if they had responsibilities such as head-girl or prefect. He observed that:

Even the school admin is not truthful with this policy because you find that if a girl was a school prefect or head-girl and then becomes pregnant, she is automatically demoted (Zimbabwean male educator 3) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:63 (108:108).

The principal at the Zimbabwean study site gave a bigger picture of why pregnant learners lost their social status by making reference to common perceptions towards teenage pregnancy in African societies. His statement implied that pregnant girls could not be given responsibilities in the community because they were a reflection of failure. He reasoned that the negative treatment of pregnant learners within the local community was to be expected given that:

...in African communities, teenage pregnancy is highly despised, taken as a curse and such girls are denied any benefits be it in family, church, they are not given positions because they are of loose character who remove dignity in whatever is happening if they are leading (Zimbabwean deputy school principal) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:47 (132:132).

Because the tendency to ‘socially demote’ pregnant teenagers was more prevalent at the Zimbabwean study site, I concluded that the Zimbabwean community was more conservative towards teenage pregnancy than the South African community. This also

coincided with the observation that the Zimbabwean school had less pregnant learners than the South African school (Appendix 13.1²³).

5.6.1.3 Cultural beliefs and limitations on pregnancy and motherhood

There were revelations at the Zimbabwean study site that it was culturally expected for teenage girls who fell pregnant to get married, in order to restore their social integrity. Most Zimbabwean adult participants indicated that most people regarded marriage as an important social role for women, to the extent that once a schoolgirl fell pregnant, she was supposed leave school and get married regardless of her age. This view was widespread among women, who justified it by arguing that a married woman is more respectful and dignified in society, even if she is uneducated. Adult participants argued that given a choice between schooling and marriage, a pregnant schoolgirl, should choose marriage. For example, the Zimbabwean female parent 1 who was convinced that marriage is better than schooling said that:

Once one is pregnant and stays at home than get married, that person loses her rights. She is not seen as a person any more. To me it is better to get married than to go to school. Who will respect you there?
(Zimbabwean female parent 1) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:27 (45:45).

More evidence that marriage was more valued in the community than education, once a girl fell pregnant was also provided by the school principal of the Zimbabwean school, who added that:

...some very intelligent girls leave school to get married to a man that has no future at all just because they want to maintain their female dignity (Zimbabwean deputy principal) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:37 (184:184).

To the young pregnant girls, getting married was seen as an achievement, which could restore their social status and bring new opportunities, even if it meant that one had to leave school. The Zimbabwean mainstream female learner 6 also supported the observation that it was justified for a pregnant girl to leave school because:

²³ Appendix 13.1: Population of pregnant and former pregnant learners 2008 - 2009

If the girl is impregnated by a single working man, most parents are happy and proud because they will get *lobola* (bride price) and their child will start a happy life (Zimbabwean mainstream female learner 6) P 9: F.G. Interview.doc - 9:1 (11:11).

The marriage expectation was found to be more prevalent at the Zimbabwean school and it was also in Zimbabwe where more parents were reported to be chasing their pregnant daughters away to the men suspected of impregnating them. This seemed to further explain why the Zimbabwean school had fewer pregnant learners than the South African school (Appendix 13.1²⁴).

Related to the expectation that pregnancy should culminate in marriage, some of the study participants at both study sites explained that it was culturally contradictory for a pregnant teenager to remain in school because she had assumed an adult role by becoming pregnant. This view is represented in the three statements below which show that educators and other learners would find it difficult to address pregnant learners by their first names because that would be culturally disrespectful. I interpreted the statements to imply that pregnant teenagers should withdraw from school, since school was perceived as an institution only for children, not pregnant teenagers. By becoming pregnant they were seen to have assumed an adult role.

A detailed explanation of how pregnancy culturally changed a teenager's social role in the community was narrated by the chairperson of the SDC at the Zimbabwean study site. He argued that the school was not the right place for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers to be because:

What we know is that when a person has a child he or she should be called by her child's name or that of her husband; like *mai Teresa* (mother of Teresa) Mrs so and so. At school, how do teachers and other children address such a person? Will she be easy to control and be told by teachers to run and jump and such other activities. A person with a child should be respected because even if she is of young age, she is an adult according to our culture (Zimbabwean male SDC member 1) P 6: F.G. INTERVIEW.doc - 6:9 (21:21).

²⁴ Population of pregnant and former pregnant learners 2008 - 2009

The same view was shared by one South African female parent who also pointed out that once a girl became pregnant; she became a woman, who should be treated with respect in the community. This view implied that such a situation could result in role conflict for pregnant and former pregnant learners, as well as their educators. Like the Zimbabwean SDC chairperson, the SA female parent 3 had the same conviction:

If we look at real African culture, once a person has a child, she is no more a child. You need to respect that person as a woman not a girl (SA female parent 3) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:11 (24:24).

The Zimbabwean mainstream male learner 4 also made exactly the same point when he said that the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools complicated the relationship educators with their learners since on the one hand, they are culturally expected to respect a pregnant or former pregnant learner as a mother or married person, and on the other hand treat her as a school pupil. According to him, the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant learners in ordinary schools contradicted cultural norms on marriage and motherhood because:

When a girl is pregnant or has a baby, she is considered to be a mother. She should not be called by her first name but by her husband's surname or her child's name. This does not fit at a school. Do we expect teachers to call a pupil they teach by that type of respect? (Zimbabwean mainstream male learner 4) P 9: F.G. Interview.doc - 9:6 (26:26).

The social role conflict was also illustrated by one South African pregnant learner who disliked being respected as an adult due to pregnancy. She even equated this to hate language because she still regarded herself as a child despite the fact that the community saw as an adult. The SA pregnant learner 3, who was caught up in this challenge complained that:

...you get the people changing my name calling with this respect of calling me Mrs whatever.... I dislike being called by these other names rather than my original name (SA pregnant learner 3) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:17 (23:23).

Earlier studies by Richter and Mlambo (2005), and Miller et al. (2008) also found that teenage pregnancy could create identity confusion because early motherhood usually resulted in a sudden change of social status and roles. This was found to bring challenges

to the pregnant teenager, such as having to cope with society's expectations and her responsibilities as a mother.

During the period of pregnancy and breast feeding, most participants at both study sites agreed that a woman is expected to limit her movements. As illustrated by statements from two Zimbabwean parents and one SA female educator cited below, the limitations were based on fears of miscarriage, witchcraft, putting one's marriage at risk and the need to look after the husband. That being the case, it implies that pregnancy, marriage and breast feeding could be limiting factors for pregnant teenagers in their resolve to continue with their education.

According to some of the adult participants, during the period of pregnancy, a woman is expected to limit travelling for both health and cultural reasons. Some of the female participants at the Zimbabwean study site argued that for the first pregnancy, a girl is culturally compelled to live with her own family until delivery, even if she is married. This Zimbabwean cultural pregnancy norm was outlined by one of the Zimbabwean female parents, who also strongly believed that:

Culturally, once a person is pregnant, she should be home bound than be a public figure (Zimbabwean female parent 3) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:1 (14:14).

From the point of view of the SA female educator 2, although the cultural limitation to pregnancy was also a valued norm, she seemed to emphasise the physiological condition of pregnancy as a major limiting factor. She however, also believed that a pregnant learner could face limitations with regards to free movement because:

...there are some cultural limitations for pregnant people because if you are pregnant you are not allowed may be to travel long journeys, because anything can happen and I think it is the very same thing that can happen if a child is from home to school (SA female educator 2) P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:5 (12:12).

Most male participants in Zimbabwe sounded uncomfortable to have their spouses in school or even college because there are suspicions that women could be swayed into

sexual relationships by educators, college lecturers and even fellow students. These suspicions were summed up by the Zimbabwean school principal, who felt that male educators needed to be careful in their interaction with former pregnant learners. As a result of the negative perceptions by the community towards male educators in this respect, the principal explained that:

Most teachers are not free to assist a married woman because that can put the teacher into some danger. It can be misunderstood that such a teacher has interest in some other person's wife (Zimbabwean school principal) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:39 (182:182).

The allegation that the community did not trust male educators with pregnant and former pregnant learners also came out in an earlier section of this report. Research findings by Gordon (1995), Mitchell and Mothobi-Tapela (2004) and Bayona and Kadji-Murangi (1996) also found that male educators were among some of the adult males who sexually abused schoolgirls. The findings seem to be in line with the sentiments expressed by participants of this study.

According to Argyris and Schon's action science theory, which I applied as the study's theoretical framework, people's actions or theories-in-use are informed by social governing variables, which are socially constructed within their socio-cultural environment and experiences (Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Burger & Luckman, 1974). The reported views from this study seem to indicate that the treatment of pregnant teenagers at school, in the family and the community was premised on how the study participants culturally and socially defined and experienced teenage pregnancy in their communities, which McDade (1992) calls "social pregnancy" (p.50). However, the opportunity for educating pregnant teenagers in both communities could lie in the fact that since cultural factors that inform human actions are socially constructed, those that militate against pregnant learners' right to education could equally be socially deconstructed.

5.7 Code-frequency count

It was not possible to quote and include all statements made by participants into this chapter. Table 5.2 gives a summary of the sub-categories that emerged from codes, and that were linked to quotations that were cited and discussed in the chapter. The frequency represents the number of times the sub-category was mentioned by study participants during the interviews. In compiling the table, I considered whether each statement in the sub-category expressed a positive or negative perception to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools.

Table 5.2 Code-frequency count

Sub-category	Frequency
Cultural beliefs and limitations on pregnancy	30
Hate language	27
Inadequate knowledge of policy	26
New goal setting after pregnancy	20
Call for separate schools	20
Gender bias	17
Educator incapacity to handle learner pregnancy	17
Inadequate educator assistance to pregnant learners	16
Negative labelling of pregnant teens	16
Male educator incapacity to handle learner pregnancy	15
Learner pregnancy and teenage immorality	14
Mainstreaming as cause of teenage pregnancy	14
Inadequate Parental support for pregnant learners	14
Learner pregnancy and poor school participation	13
Mainstreaming as promotion of equal right to education	13
Negative Effects of learner pregnancy to learning	13
Mainstreaming as cause of school indiscipline	11
Mainstreaming as cause of poor educational standards	11
Negative parental reactions to daughter pregnancy	9
Loss of child rights	8
Loss of social status	7
Support from others	7
Infrastructural incapacity to mainstream	6
Inadequate counselling service provision	6
Concealment of pregnancy	6
Unsatisfactory study conditions in home	6
Policy as political symbolism	5
Mainstreaming as promotion of gender equity	3
Home-school partnerships	3

The most common aspect of content analysis in qualitative research is word- frequency count, which is based on the notion that “ the words that are mentioned most often are the words that reflect the greatest concerns” (Stemler, 2001, p.3). Table 5.2 indicates that cultural beliefs and limitations on pregnancy, hate language and inadequate knowledge of policy on management of pregnancy in schools were the most mentioned sub-themes. From the table, I concluded that cultural beliefs, hate language, and participants’ inadequate knowledge of policy guidelines on learner pregnancy were the most influential governing variables on the nature of the response by the social institutions to the educational access and participation by pregnant learners. My analysis of the statements made by participants in relation to the tabled sub-categories revealed that with the exception of new goal setting after pregnancy; mainstreaming as promotion of equal right to education; support from others; mainstreaming as promotion of gender equity; and home-school partnerships; most of the statements tended to portray negative attitudes on mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal schools. I considered the positive sub-categories to be an indication that there were opportunities for the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers in formal schools. However, it appears that where positive views were expressed, they came from very few participants, most of whom were females.

5.8 Relationships between themes and categories

In order to distil gathered data into findings of the study, I applied networks to display the nature of relationships that emerged within the themes, categories and sub-categories that I identified from the data. Networks are visual images that present a summary of the relationships between ideas emerging from gathered data (Smit, 2002). Figures 5.1 to 5.3 are the networks that I designed to summarise the views from the participants and the relationships that I assigned to them.

Figure 5.1 Network relationships on the responsiveness of policy to educational needs of pregnant teenagers

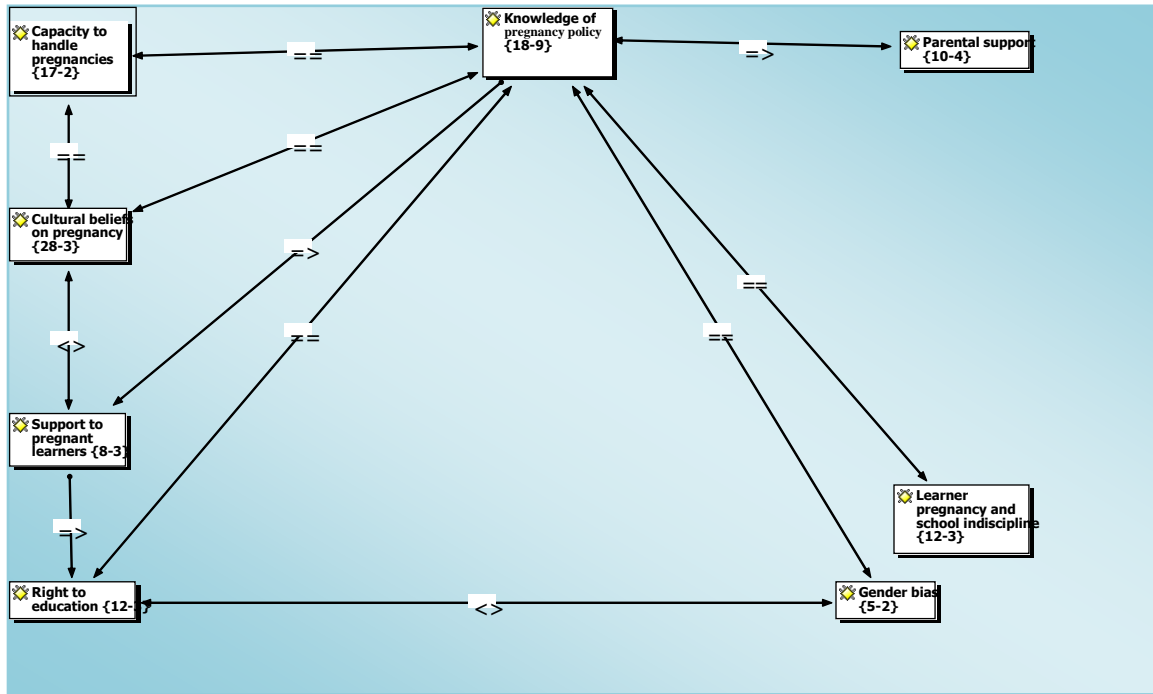


Figure 5.1 shows that knowledge of learner pregnancy policy is inter-related to all the other factors in different ways. For example, gender bias, support to pregnant learners, right to education, capacity to handle pregnancies at school and parental support can have a causal relationship with participants' knowledge of policy guidelines on management of learner pregnancy in schools. From the network of relationships, I concluded that improving participants' knowledge of international and national policies on the right to education and gender equity and linking them to policy guidelines on management of teenage pregnancy, will most likely turn all the other factors into positive.

Figure 5.2 Network relationships on the responsiveness of the school to educational needs of pregnant teenagers

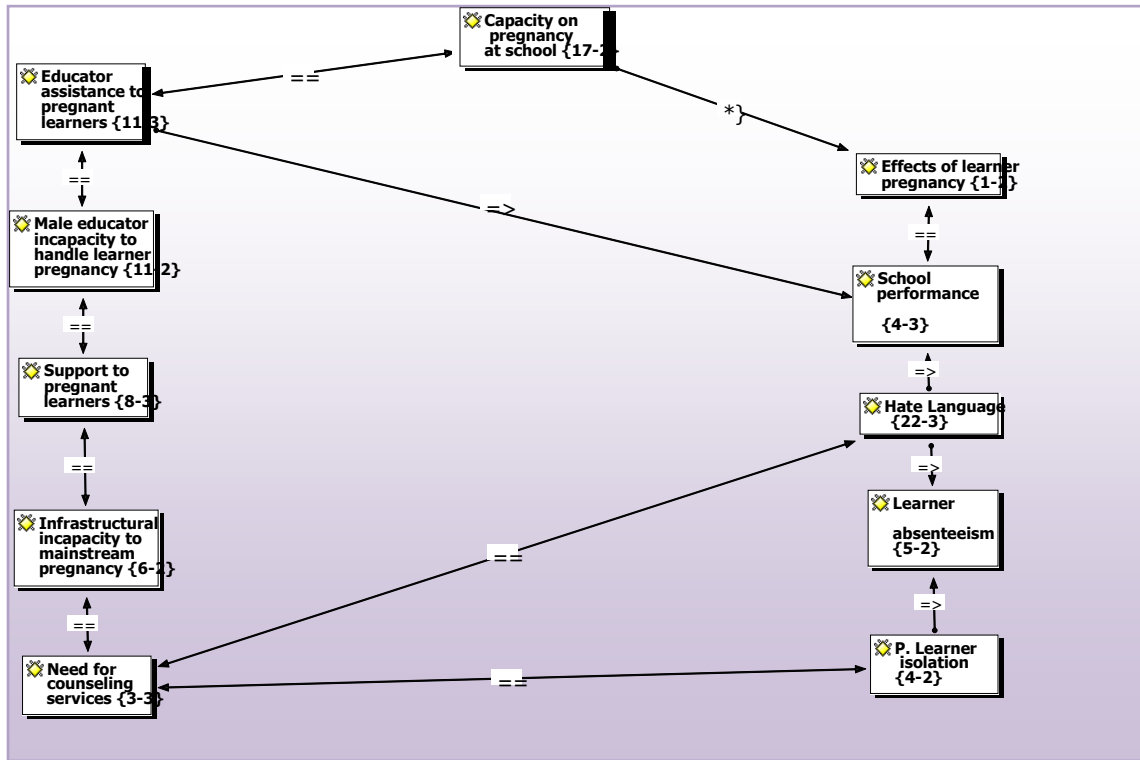


Figure 5.2 illustrates the interrelated factors that influenced educational access and service provision to pregnant learners within the formal school setting at the two study sites. The figure shows that the school capacity to handle pregnant learners' needs was associated with factors such as educators' willingness to assist pregnant learners, support given by other stakeholders, counselling services and availability of infrastructural facilities. In this study, it emerged that inadequate availability of such services at the schools had negative effects on pregnant learners' educational opportunity. This was revealed in the form of hate language and isolation of pregnant learners, which might attribute to school absenteeism and low participation. From what I observed and what most of the participants said during interviews, hate language was one of the most common factors, especially in the school environment. The network shows that hate language is linked to pregnant learner isolation, absenteeism, participation and performance. In general, if the variables to the left are improved, those to the right would

most likely turn into positive, thereby improving the institutional capacity to identify and respond to pregnant learners' educational needs.

Figure 5.3 Network relationships on the responsiveness of the home/family to educational needs of pregnant teenagers

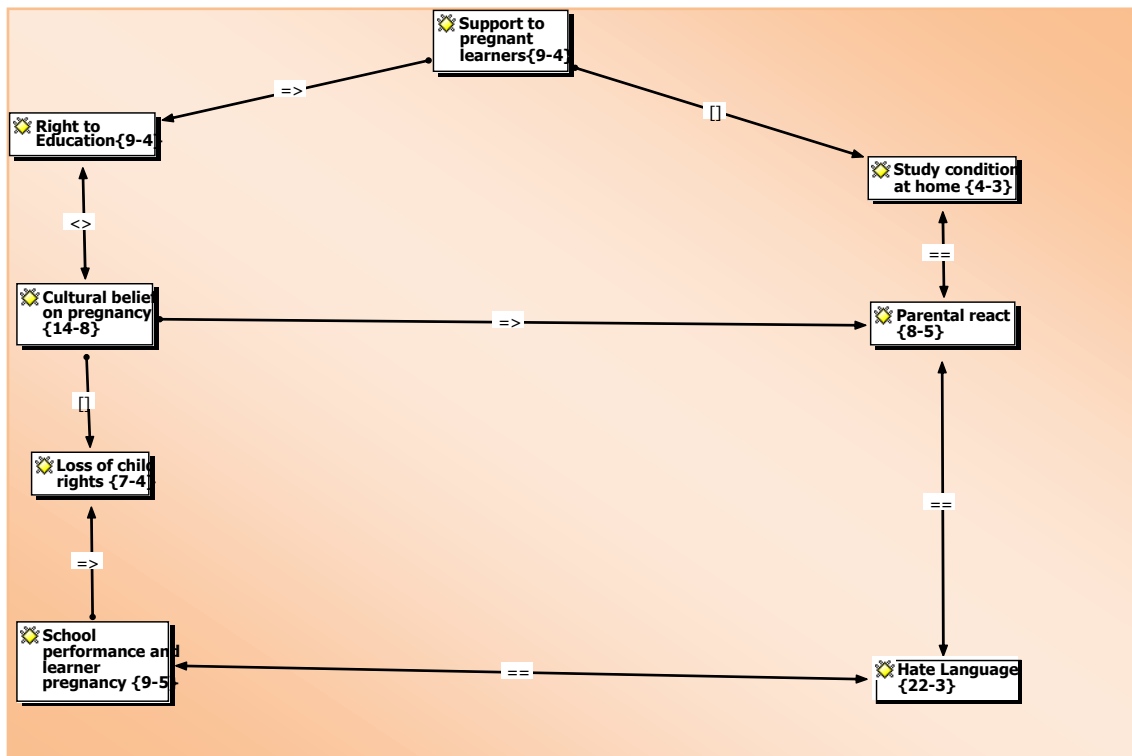


Figure 5.3 is not limited to the home because what happens in the home is influenced by the socio-cultural context of the community at large. Most of the factors referred to in the network equally apply to the community's socio-cultural setting of the two study sites. For example, cultural beliefs on pregnancy influenced the nature of parental reactions and support, support from other people, right to education and rights of pregnant children. From the network, I concluded that changing the community's negative traditional cultural beliefs could result in changing the other factors in the network from the negative to the positive, thereby improving the community, home and school's responsiveness to the educational access, participation and performance of pregnant learners.

5.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the empirical data that I gathered through focus group and key participant interviews, observations and reflections that I made from the interviews, and available documentary records on pregnant learners' school participation and performance (Appendix 13²⁵). The major purpose of the chapter was to explore and understand the lived experiences of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in the family and community affected the extent to which they could exercise their educational rights.

Closely related to this was the need to understand and compare how the selected education stakeholders at the two sites were responding to the nature and implementation of policy guidelines that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers at formal schools in South Africa and Zimbabwe. In the presentation, I consciously made a distinction between the views and perceptions of the study participants and my own interpretations and reflections. Data were presented and analysed following five interrelated themes, namely the educational aspirations of pregnant learners, and how the policy, school, home and community environments presented opportunities and challenges to the realisation of the pregnant learners' educational needs and aspirations. From the presented data, the general picture that emerged was that there were more similarities than differences in the manner in which pregnant learners were perceived and treated in the school, family and the community at both the South African and Zimbabwean sites where I conducted the study.

The South African study site was found to be more accommodative in its policy and admission procedures for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. The Zimbabwean policy and study participants were more conservative in the way pregnant and former pregnant teenagers were perceived and accommodated in the formal school system. As a result, on the ground it emerged that there were currently more pregnant learners at the South African school than at its Zimbabwean counterpart. I therefore concluded that

²⁵ Appendices 13.2 -13.5: Performance of Pregnant and former pregnant learners 2008 - 2009

although the challenges presented by other people's perceptions and treatment of teenage pregnancy were similar at both study sites, the South African school served more pregnant teenagers through its more open admission procedure, though with similar negative perceptions as found at the Zimbabwean school.

In the next chapter, I identify and discuss the findings that emerged from data presented in chapter five. The discussion centres on establishing and explaining relationships between data from the two case study sites. The data is further linked with findings from other related studies, as well as the theoretical framework that underpinned my study.